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# Multidisciplinary Journal of School Education

**Teaching Methods and Their  
Pedagogical Effectiveness**

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## Editorial

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The present volume of the Multidisciplinary Journal of School Education complements theoretical articles from Issue no. 15 with the practical research-based articles by such authors as Stuart Dickinson, Montse Freixa-Niella, Immaculada Dorio-Alcaraz, Franciele Corti, Izabela Przybylska, and Marta Gràcia with her two large groups of collaborators.

Theory and practice; practical experiences proceeding from Anglo-Saxon, Mediterranean or Central-European educational systems – these different perspectives make a solid contribution to the research and academic reflection and debate on as crucial an aspect of education as the effectiveness of teaching methods, as well as the relevant teacher training.

Marcin Kaźmierczak  
Paweł Kaźmierczak  
Editors-in-Chief





# Thematic Articles

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**Stuart Dickinson**

Belfast Metropolitan College

## Project Based Learning: Extending Social and Educational Reach

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**Abstract:** Project based learning approaches are being employed in the college as a creative and innovative means to engage and motivate learners through a transformative curriculum model for both further and higher education students. This article will examine how these pedagogical approaches have made a positive impact on our Childhood Studies' students with regards to retention, achievement and success set within the context of widening participation and social engagement with and for those in society who are the hardest to reach including those children from the travelling community who have been integral partners in our Erasmus project. It will highlight the benefits of social learning, not only as a means of developing vocational skills for our students, but it will also examine the wider impacts of developing softer skills for our students, particularly with regards to employability skills, whilst considering the wider impacts this approach has had on society and building community cohesion.

**Keywords:** social learning, project based learning, motivation, collaboration, employability skills, technology enhanced learning

### Project Based Learning: Context and Rationale

The twenty first century student is living and learning in a world which by its very nature challenges us as educators to react and respond to how pedagogical approaches should be shaped and employed. Technology

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enhanced learning as a response has meant that many educators have been driven to consider how 'they do things' which has been energising for some and demotivating for others. Innovation in assessment is an unavoidable necessity. As technological influences bombard and touch our students we too have a responsibility to reach out to our learners; otherwise the distance between us may become too great and ultimately impact on our connectedness. Dunn (2017: 18) acknowledges this and discusses the fact that the evolutionary next step is involving the students themselves as 'digital leaders and curators of knowledge' and the value of this collaborative approach will be examined later on in this paper. This further demonstrates how much we, as a college community, value the importance of positive internal and external working relationships to achieve shared goals and this very much underpins our core values of collaboration, ambition, respect and excellence. As a people oriented organisation the college has however experienced a seismic shift in technologically inspired learning over a number of years as we embrace a more blended learning model of curriculum delivery, which includes e portfolio, and a greater emphasis has been placed on increased functionality of virtual learning environments as well as considerable investment in staff attending international technological conferences such as the OEB Summit in Iceland and Berlin. This is in direct response to an acknowledgement that our students are growing up in a world where technology enhanced learning is expected as an intuitive response to their already established digital literacy. We have to be of course mindful of the fact that current research, as supported by a recent article published in the Irish Times (09/02/18), maintains that a blended approach to instruction has the best results for students academically as opposed to digitally overriding the curriculum or in other words encouraging a complete digitisation of pedagogy where interfacing with hardware and software being the only requirement in leading students to learning.

In the Early Years classroom a new generation of digitally literate children are being nurtured and our students will have a responsibility as educators to, like we as educators, respond to new platforms of innovation. However, although technology has an important role to play in preparing

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our young people for life and work, there is a growing demand for our learners to be able to reach beyond the tablet to connect and interface with people on a human level which reflects the world of work; it is the synergy between online and offline modes of learning which is challenging us with regards to curriculum development and review. Keengwe and Onchwari (2009) underscore this where they refer to employing a constructivist approach to technology use in the Early Years whereby technology is integrated into the curriculum as opposed to shaping the curriculum around the technology which has the potential to return a more superficial result. This active and collaborative approach through social learning is an interesting concept as we often assume that the use of technology is a solitary and isolating pursuit. However, there is a common belief or perception amongst many Early Years educators and teaching staff that many of our college students are 'zoning out' as opposed to 'zoning in' as the temptation of interfacing virtually can override the need for human physical contact. This should not be altogether surprising as we consider how as a world we are communicating with each other as new technologies limit the requirement to have face to face contact with other human beings. It is this intuitively evolving digital literacy which we must respond to otherwise a traditional teaching model will become as foreign to a student as a digital model would be for those who are self-confessed digitally illiterate. However, this may understandably raise concerns with regards to what impact this may have on students working collaboratively as part of a multi-disciplinary team with young children and staff in the Early Years sector unless technology is being used in a more collaborative manner. This profession still requires humans to manage and relate to other humans; in fact managing people, whether children or adults, is a key skill in relation to working in the Early Years; an algorithm will not solve this problem. This issue has been raised on multiple occasions where placement supervisors inform college tutors that students do not often readily have the communication skills necessary to carry out the role. A widely read article published in *The Independent* (16/08/15) supports this view and was very critical of the role of higher education institutions in that they were presented as being more concerned with grades and

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academic ability as opposed to nurturing rounded individuals who are work ready. It could be argued though that none of us have these skills 'ready-made' but the article suggests that the situation is deteriorating and technology could be suggested as playing a part in this. In certain disciplines lone and sole working may be the norm but these are in the minority and what we do not want is for students to have their first experience of problem solving, conflict resolution or teamwork as they assume their role working in the Early Years as ironically many of these potentially under developed skills could be what is driving their day to day working. In training our students there is a dichotomy between providing them with the vocational skills and knowledge appropriate to the field of study while considering and appreciating that many do not have the relevant communication skills necessary to operate in a world where people still need people to achieve their common goals. This is not about apportioning blame but about balance and adjustment. The college has been piloting several additionality or enhancement accredited qualifications for full time students in addition to their main programme of study to assist with providing students with the skills for functioning in the workplace. Some of these have included Skills for the Workplace, Team working Skills and Presentation Skills. Often it these students who have a strong academic profile who need the most support in this area as they have not entered on to a prior vocational pathway and gained this work readiness experience over a number of years. Project Based Learning approaches have been employed as a vehicle to drive this curriculum also.

### **Play and Learning in Higher Education**

In the Early Years we are mindful that motivation and learning are born out of discovery and exploration where children are encouraged to play together, however as we grow older we can sometimes become less playful and more introverted. This conjures thoughts of when George Bernard Shaw famously penned, 'We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing' (Anderson, 2018).

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Some may argue that technology is facilitating this while stealing the necessity to build relationships with others therefore a more playful approach to learning will encourage that reconnection with us as educators while modelling best practice in the Early Years thus generating a culture of learning reflecting a 'play within a play'. A recent article in *The Telegraph* (23/12/15) suggests that children in recent times are more proficient at using a tablet or electronic device as opposed to traditional childhood goals of riding a bike, tying a shoelace or swimming unaided. However there are many other benefits that technology can bring and again the issue of balance comes into focus.

This playful approach to learning can be achieved through project based learning while integrating technological influences with the primary aim being that students' levels of motivation are kept high as students remain interested and engaged with the task in hand. This categorically does not detract from the importance and necessity for academic discovery and theoretical research but considers the possibilities of maximising outcomes for students while integrating theory and practice within the parameters of an educational institution to achieve shared goals. Our Early Years Higher Education students in the college are traditionally assessed through observation of placement practice while completing written essays, assignments and presentations. We often refer to this as the 'know how' and 'show how' with both having equal relevance and importance. As part of an evolution of assessment I would imagine that the majority of these assessment strategies will remain constant however there is potential to reshape and reconsider how we assess learners in a much more practical and relatable way where theory and practice can meet within the same environment as opposed to the current on site and off site model of delivery where there is potential for theory to be theory and practice to be practice and neither the two shall meet.

Project Based Learning is not a new phenomenon so before we explore the benefits and challenges it is important to define what it is, set within the context of this Erasmus project. Belfast Metropolitan College's wider Project Based Learning Framework (2017) characterises this approach as about active and engaged learning which aims to motivate

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learners, increase their ability to apply what they have learned, and aid them to obtain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the applications of their skills (Heggarty, 2017). Essentially Project Based Learning reflects a socially constructivist approach to learning which underpins the thinking of Dewey and Piaget with reference to constructing knowledge through hands on interaction. This is not to be confused with group learning, according to Race (2000), where collaborative learning is used as a tool to motivate and engage learners as a pedagogical goal. Whilst this is a very palpable undercurrent running through the Project Based Learning methodology, a key product of assessment may not necessarily be available where the process and social benefits are deemed to be the primary goal. A Project Based Learning approach has these core skills embedded iteratively throughout the journey. Largen, Mergendoller and Boss underscore this by highlighting the importance of setting clear aims and objectives, formulating a challenging question or problem, carrying out the task through sustained inquiry and critiquing and reflecting on the result (Larmer, 2015). All of these aspects have been integrated into our assessment for learning strategy for our Higher Education students which sits very comfortably alongside more traditional means of assessment discussed earlier. It would be foolish to expect a paradigm shift in practice as there are many combating variables, including established culture, attitude and belief, but over the past number of years there has been a greater engagement at all levels with what Miller and Pound (2011: 104) refer to as 'active participatory learning'. This has been increasingly cemented in the culture of learning in the department by both positive student and staff feedback as well as consistently positive external quality assurance reports. There is undoubtedly an argument which could potentially erode the authenticity of this approach which states that more traditional methods of assessments facilitate the capturing of evidence in a more straightforward manner however for our Early Years students there is an interesting link between this project based learning approach for their own studies but also how children learn through play in the early years while forging deeper community cohesion. This has been accentuated through our partnerships with St Ursula's College, Dusseldorf and St Mary's Primary School, Belfast.



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## **Extending Our Reach: The Impacts**

Our very special relationship with our partner organisations began several years ago with many meetings and exchange visits to discuss what we could achieve together. This philosophy is very much at the heart of Northern Ireland's regional Further Education Means Success (2016: 17) document where it states:

'Colleges will strengthen their partnership working with a range of other organisations in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors in order to improve the services delivered to employers and individuals.'

As we were teasing out the key aims and objectives, a fundraising opportunity presented itself where the Childhood Studies students at Belfast Metropolitan College worked collaboratively with St Mary's Primary School to raise money for the chosen BBC charity 'Children In Need'. This was hugely successful and student feedback was extremely positive. This started our Project Based Learning journey in earnest and our higher education students and staff were tasked with developing a project where they could capture evidence in an innovative way which still maintained the integrity of the qualification. This was a challenging endeavour but proved to be an empowering one as staff and students worked collaboratively to jointly construct an aspect of their curriculum. This was an interesting approach as students became co constructors in their learning which paved the way for a new approach to teaching, learning and curriculum design. This echoes the thinking of Broadhead (2006) cited in Sproule and Walsh (2017) who, when referring to children in the Early Years, discussed the non-convergent viewpoint that assessment of children should be accomplished with the child as opposed to be on the child. Contextually this may seem irrelevant given the fact that the college students are so much older than our children in the Early Years however why should this approach be none the less relevant?; the same principles, even if only to mirror the optimal practice in the field they will work, will return a positive result; these positive learning dispositions demonstrate that the students are indeed extending their reach further

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than they perhaps realise and the challenge is not in the experiencing but in the evaluating. Mc Millan (2017) also underscores the importance of a determined and intentional socially constructivist approach through co creation of play, exploration and planning in the Early Years; in effect these are key cornerstones of skills for life which can sometimes be overshadowed and overpowered by more academic goals as students progress through their course of study; the challenge is keeping what was most agreed, relevant and planned for still agreed, relevant and planned for otherwise we lose focus of what we really want our students to be and continues the conversation about the value of occupational competence which incorporates a very strong social and personal dimension where academic prowess is deemed to be not wholly enough. At the heart of a socially constructivist approach it is important to reflect upon what happens in society in order to contextualise the learning. It could be argued that Piaget and Vygotsky were more concerned with the process over product but in this model of project based learning the product and process are given equal value; the journey and journey's end are taken into consideration owing to the complex nature of multiple goals. The given context of St Mary's Primary School is also a unique one given that the majority of the children are members of the travelling community which incorporates a very unique social perspective; one which the majority of students will not have experienced until now thus allowing them to extend their reach with regards to knowledge, approach and experience.

As a result of this deeper collaboration between staff and students a project was devised, working with St Mary's Primary School, which centred around language and literacy which is a primary component of the degree students Promoting Language in the Early Years module in Semester Two. As part of the assessment the students traditionally have been tasked with presenting and evaluating a story sack to their peers but under the new project based learning delivery model the students planned, produced and presented their story sacks as part of a themed World Book Day event to a class of learners from St Mary's primary school in the college lecture theatre. This meant that the students had to negotiate the use of this space with the estates team, consider how the space

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would be set up, reflect on what snacks would be provided for the children, consider health and safety arrangements which very much supported the development of those softer skills mentioned earlier in this paper. This was truly holistic learning following an anti-compartmentalised but integrated approach. Miller (2006) refers to this in the Early Years as 'organic, emergent, experimental and based on cooperation'. It is noteworthy that regardless of a student's academic ability, hands on vocational competency is something which the learner still needs to achieve beyond the pages of a textbook and this approach has given learners an opportunity to 'flip the classroom', not in a technological sense, but against the backdrop of a staged and simulated learning environment which they have co developed as a group bringing together all of their experiences from practice. An unavoidable observation however is that this synergy and progress has been achieved through non technological collaboration and it really cements the notion of the importance of embracing a blended approach to learning with a range of teaching strategies incorporating collaborative practice. In my view using technology for this simulated activity would not have enhanced the learning and in fact it may have detracted from the learning as it allowed students, staff and children to focus on developing their communication and observational skills. This approach also allowed for college staff to assess their students within the parameters of the college as opposed to the traditional environment of a school which generated a unique yet valid learning opportunity. The benefits also heavily impacted on the children and wider school community in that the school staff were able to sit back and observe the children with our students which gave them a unique opportunity for reflection with all staff expressing delight in what they had learned about their children's learning in a very different and unexpected context. Feedback from the school staff also illustrated that they were inspired by our approaches to learning and would take this back to the school context. There was much discussion surrounding how the formal classroom environment can often inhibit creativity and the staff felt that the informal nature of the delivery of the session lend itself to learning as this session was delivered in an open space with picnic rugs and cushions

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very much reflecting the Reggio Emilia philosophy. This was extremely empowering for the students and it had the unexpected outcome of them hearing about how inspiring they were by other qualified teaching staff. This formed very much part of the student's evaluations which were richer and more evidence based as they had lived and breathed the project from inception to completion. Student feedback on the event was unanimously in favour of this approach to learning as they believed it was more engaging and purposeful. They clearly enjoyed developing the project which met their assessment goals while allowing them to work with their peers and the children from the primary school. Much of the Erasmus project focuses on the importance of extending reach and social commitment. Projects such as this have also made way for greater community cohesion as St Mary's uniqueness as a school which welcomes many different minorities which is something that it shares in common with the college. Northern Ireland still remains a very divided society as a result of legacy issues associated with the conflict which ended in 1998 therefore reaching out in this manner has broadened the students scope while enhancing the children's experiences. Many of our students live and will have placements in schools which will be close to where they live; it may have been the case that this experience for them would be the first opportunity they would have had to work with children from a different culture or religion. This is a necessary component of creating and engendering a normalised and shared future for Northern Ireland so in this respect this project has extending its reach in a different direction to support and encourage learners to promote mutual understanding, respect and tolerance.

These multi-faceted benefits have been supported also by the external examiner whose revalidation report in 2016 suggested more innovation in assessment where group assessments were muted as a possible action for improvement. I feel that this approach indeed goes further in that regard in terms of providing a greater holistically beneficially experience, which has an academic thread throughout, but at the same time experientially supporting our learners through collective engagement in developing key employability skills needed for the workplace. This

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cannot wholly replace a purist notion of higher education as many teaching and learning approaches should be employed which is supported by Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences but it is merely another student centred adaptation or evolution of an already muted method of assessment; a resurgence of evidence gathering (Gardner, 2010).

In terms of student retention there has been an 8% increase in the number of students remaining on the degree programme between 2016/2017 and 2017/2018. It would be short sighted of me to suggest that this is entirely as a result of a project based learning delivery model but it has definitely enhanced student engagement and has been successful for the students on a personal level with reference to building confidence and self-esteem which potentially has been eroded as a result of technological influences. This conjures up thoughts of Walsh et al. (2006) in their study of quality indicators where they refer to aspects such as motivation, concentration, independence, social interaction and respect. These behaviours are not isolated to the Early Years however they are behaviours which can be quick to dissolve as they are the very traits and characteristics of best practice that often we struggle to find in our students. Therefore we have a duty to re-establish for our learners what has been lost in a gentle and supportive way of modelling best practice which should in turn support learners as they continue to build up their experience of working in the Early Years which very much underpins the importance of developing the 'whole' student.

### **Summary and Key Findings**

Journeying has been at the centre of this approach to project based learning. The planned journey has been complimented by many different unplanned experiences which have been mutually beneficial for staff and students at Belfast Metropolitan College as well as other key community stakeholders both locally and internationally. At a student level the benefits have far outweighed the challenges and although staff and students cited that more effort was required in setting up the project,

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as opposed to following more traditional methods, the assessment process was made much more meaningful which was supported by a hands on vocationally relevant experience designed by and implemented by the students. Some staff initially were cynical as to the impacts this approach would have but as a result of observing and experiencing further projects the idea of project based learning as a valid and reliable assessment tool is becoming much more attractive; this has generated a cultural shift in the department towards experimentation of curriculum delivery and the department is now taking an evolutionary step towards blending a project based learning approach with virtual learning environments with the view and purpose of responding to the needs of our modern day student.

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## First Year Students' Perceptions in Transition to University: The Students' Experience

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**Abstract:** Studies about the transition to university emphasise the importance of the process of adaptation in the first year as a determining persistence factor. This article presents the results of the focus groups held with students of two undergraduate degree programmes, Pedagogy and Business Management and Administration, at the University of Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain) that dealt with the more significant situations they experienced in the process of adapting to life at university. The results are based on the five main tasks in the process of transition to university: starting and developing new social relationships; adjusting expectations about the university and degree programme; adapting to new academic codes at university; coping with academic/exam results; and construction of the university identity. These five tasks are identified in three moments in the initial period of adaptation. This study forms part of a Research+Development project<sup>1</sup>.

**Keywords:** transition to university, academic adaptation, persistence, higher education, university students.

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<sup>1</sup> "Trayectorias de abandono, persistencia y graduación en Ciencias Sociales: validación de un modelo predictivo" (EDU2012-31568), an R&D project. Ministry of Education, Spain.

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## Introduction

Thousands of students gain admission to university every year. The majority enrol in first-choice degree courses although there are also students who ultimately have to enrol in courses that were not among their initial preferences. Nevertheless, for all new-entry students, admission to university represents an important personal and academic achievement.

According to Gairín, Figuera and Triadó (2010), student drop-out within the context of the public universities in Catalonia (Spain) is as high as 34.1%. The University of Barcelona is the university with the highest annual number of student enrolments (62.995 students in 2017–18). So, studies and surveys on retention and drop-out are of the highest priority.

There is a consolidated theoretical corpus in the current literature on the academic background of university students and its connection with persistence and drop-out (Pascarella, Terenzini, 2005; Habley, Bloom, Robbins, 2012; Tinto, 2012a; Braxton 2014). Various studies by the TRALS team –focusing on the study of the first-year transition of students at the University of Barcelona and analysis of the determining factors– show that persistence and drop-out are complex phenomena in which numerous personal and institutional factors play a role (Figuera, Torrado, 2014a, 2014b). They also highlight the importance of disciplines and study programmes as noteworthy factors (Dorio & Corti, 2014; Triado, Aparicio, Freixa, Torrado, 2015).

A contextual perspective at undergraduate level is essential for understanding the decisions made by students based on their experience at university and for the design and planning of courses of action. The experiences of students taking different degree courses show the importance of their being able to express their views.

The groundwork for this paper was the R&D project *Trayectorias de abandono, persistencia y graduación en Ciencias Sociales: validación de un modelo predictivo*, which looks at two degree programmes (Pedagogy and Business Management and Administration) at the University of Barcelona. Using mixed methods of research, the objective was to gain a better understanding of the process of academic and social integration

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and to identify the personal and institutional factors for academic persistence and drop-out among first-year students.

This article presents the results and findings of the focus groups that looked at the more significant situations faced by students during adaptation to their first year at University of Barcelona. These situations are dealt with during three different stages in the process of personal, social and institutional adaptation and adjustment facilitates the transition to university and contributes to the building of their identity as university students.

### **Student transition**

Despite the increased attention over the concept of student transition, "there is no agreed-upon definition of what constitutes a transition" (Ecclestone, Biesta, Hughes, 2010: 5). Gale and Parker (2014) identifies in the research literature three distinct ways in which student transition is conceived in higher education: as induction, as development, or as becoming.

Whether the period or stage, researchers agree that the first year may be difficult for students. According to Tinto (2012a), the way students experience their first year at university is decisive for continuance or university drop-out. Hussey and Smith (2010) argue that the positive or negative perception of their experiences, i.e. the quality of the students' experience during this transition period, later on determines whether they will persist or drop out of their studies and the system as a whole.

### **Transition as induction**

The definition of transition as induction evokes metaphors such as 'journey' and 'pathway' (Furlong, 2009; Wyn, Dwyer, 2000; Pallas, 2003). This transition pathway or 'period' is conceived as a linear progression through a number of 'phases'.

Burnett (2007) describes different phases: pre-transition (or beginning to think about university), transition (or preparing for university),

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orientation week, first year student induction programs, the middle years, and the capstone or final year experience. Buglear (2009) distinguishes four periods enrolment: early weeks of teaching; middle-to-end of teaching period; first/second assessments; and the final assessment period. Therefore, the student transition is understood as the first-year experience.

The first year of study at university is –in terms of the transition to higher education– the most convulsive, stressful and critical time that students experience (Krause, 2005) as young adults, particularly for non-conventional students (Kift, 2009). It is when occurs the highest percentage of drop-outs (Burnett, 2007).

The transition as induction draws attention to situational difficulties. Therefore, difficulties in adapting to a university context due to the lack of personal and social skills and in forming part of the institution or group may prove to be a barrier to successful transition (Morrow, Ackermann, 2012; Buote et al., 2007; Oswald, Clark, 2003). Finding themselves in an institutional context that is non-conducive to interpersonal relations, insensitive to the students' needs and/or that fails to stimulate them – intellectually speaking – also makes it difficult for students to integrate and adapt (Stieha, 2010). In addition to meeting the demands of academic life, the difficulty of finding meaning in what one is studying and of being motivated to get down to study compound a long list of obstacles that certain students have to face in their transition process during the first year in the university (Lent, Brown, Hackett, 2000; Terenzini, Reason, 2005).

### **Transition as development**

Transition as development means "a shift from one identity to another" (Ecclestone, Biesta, Hughes, 2010: 6), "a time during which students develop their identity as a university student" (Krause, Coates, 2008: 500). In other words, transition is a development process from one life stage to another. The researchers employ metaphors like "trajectory" to describe transition as a way of signalling 'a series of stages linear, cumulative and non-reversible' (Baron, Riddell, Wilson, 1999: 484).

The transition as development draws attention to individuals' internal difficulties rather than external. Situations of risk and critical moments can arise during the first year and lead to students dropping out. These include academic difficulties stemming from deficits or gaps in student's previous studies; economic problems; difficulties with interpersonal relationships; and failing to understand how the university system works, as mentioned by Tinto (2012a). According to both Yorke and Longden (2008), socio-demographic variables such as age, sex, access issues (admission grade and entrance qualifications), in addition to student dedication to study, also play a significant role in student drop-out. They also show the influence of the choice of degree course in first-year student drop-out through the identification of students who are prone to drop-out, but who successfully transfer to another degree course.

### **Transition as becoming**

The third concept of transition has come from the life transition literature and emphasise the complexities of life. In this sense, like the concepts of transition as induction and as development, transition as becoming is (Gale, Parker, 2014: 26):

- (1) a particular time of crisis;
- (2) part of a linear progression'; and
- (3) universally experienced and normalised.

However, it is a more dynamic view of student transition, since the crisis does not imply a negative experience for all students, but rather it may be a time of great challenges (Baron, Riddell, Wilson, 1999: 484). Also, the 'transition as becoming' concept does not present fixed identities or linear and normative pathways the student transition is not unique, there is as much transition types as the number of different students. So, the Student transition is 'a condition of our subjectivity' (Quinn, 2010: 123).

The research focuses attention on different students, on their difference, rather than on the changes to be made by institutions and systems in order to accommodate difference. The narrative research design (story-telling methodology) renders the voiceless student capable to speak 'in one's own name' (Sellar, Gale, 2011).

There are therefore different factors of a personal, social and institutional nature (Lent et al., 2000; Lent, 2004; Barnett, 2007; Lent, Taveira, Sheu, Singley, 2008; Yazedjian, Toews, Sevinand, Purswell, 2008) that interlink during the first year of transition to university.

### Materials and methods

Focus group interviews were used to obtain first-hand the views and perceptions of students on their experience during their first year at university.

For the monitoring process, two points in time were chosen: one at the end of the first semester in year one, just after the students received their exam grades, and the other at the start of the first semester in year two.

The focus group topic guide was based on the dimensions given in Tinto and Pusser's transition model (2006), together with dimensions from Lent's social cognitive model (2004). The major issues that the moderators had to cover during the focus groups are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Dimensions for analysis in the focus group interviews.**

Dimensions for analysis	Indicators
Prior to admission to university	Prior experience and choice of degree course. Support from the student's immediate surroundings (family, friends).
Starting at university, and continuing	Social and academic integration. Institutional support. Study behaviour.
At the end of the first year	Achievements.
Perception of self-efficacy and of the institutional context	Personal and institutional strengths and weaknesses.
Persistence and/or drop-out	Success and drop-out risk factors. Factors influencing the decision to persist and/or drop-out.

The prescribed number of focus group interviews in the research project was one group in the morning and one in the afternoon for each degree course on each of the two occasions they were organised. The aim was to obtain perceptions that were representative of the students' impressions, taking into account significant variables in their socio-demographic profile and identifying parameters, i.e. age, sex, job situation, entrance qualifications, the order in their choice of studies, and morning or afternoon focus group session. The focus groups thereby reflected the diversity of students who currently gain admission to the University of Barcelona.

A total number of 58 students voluntarily participated in the focus groups, 45 from the Pedagogy degree course and 13 from the Business Management and Administration degree, as shown in tables 2 and 3. Group size continues to be an open issue in the literature on the subject: groups of 6 to 10 subjects are ideal, but smaller groups – with just 3 or 4 subjects – also are considered acceptable (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, Robson, 2001; Wilkinson, 2008). At the end of the first semester, six focus groups were held (see Table 2). At the start of the second year, four focus group interviews were organised (see Table 3).

**Table 2. Distribution of the focus group interviews (first session).**

Focus group	Sex	Age	Path of admission	Order of the choice of course	Job situation
<b>1st FG: Pedagogy, Morning n= 7</b>	57% female 43% male	57% 19-22 43% 28-29	43% UEE 29% VT 28% already studying	86% 1st choice 14% other	57% not working 43% working
<b>2nd FG: Pedagogy, morning n=5</b>	60% female 40% male	60% 19-22 40% 28-29	60% UEE 20% VT 20% already studying	80% 1st choice 20% other	60% not working 40% working
<b>3rd FG: Pedagogy, afternoon n=8</b>	75% female 25% male	50% 20-23 50% 24-37	57% UEE 29% VT 14% already studying	43% 1st choice 57% other	57% not working 43% working

4th FG: Pedagogy, afternoon n=2	100% female	22-24	100% UEE	50% 1st choice 50% other	50% not working 50% working
5th FG: Business Management and Administration, morning n=3	100% female	19-22	67% UEE 33% already studying	100% 1st choice	67% not working 33% working
6th FG: Business Management and Administration, afternoon n=5	75% female 25% male	50% 20-23 50% 24-37	57% UEE 29% VT 14% already studying	43% 1st choice 57% other	57% not working 43% working
* In Spain, the main paths of admission to university are entrance exams (UEE, or <i>prueba de acceso a la universidad</i> , taken on completion of upper secondary school education) and vocational training (VT).					

**Table 3. Distribution of the focus group interviews (second session).**

Focus group	Sex	Age	Path of admission	Order of the choice of course	Job situation
1st FG: Pedagogy, morning n=10	90% female 10% male	50% 20-23 50% 24-37	57% UEE 29% VT 14% already studying	43% 1st choice 57% other	57% not working 43% working
2nd FG: Pedagogy, evening n=3	100% female	21-24	100% UEE	67% 1st choice 33% other	33% not working 67% working
3rd FG: Pedagogy, evening n=10	100% female	30% 19-22 30% 23-25 40% 26-29	30% UEE 40% VT 10% already studying 10% second degree 10% > 25	30% 1st choice 70% other	60% not working 40% working
4th FG: Business Management and Administration, morning n=5	80% female 20% male	80% 19-20 20% 25	100% UEE	100% 1st choice	60% not working 40% working



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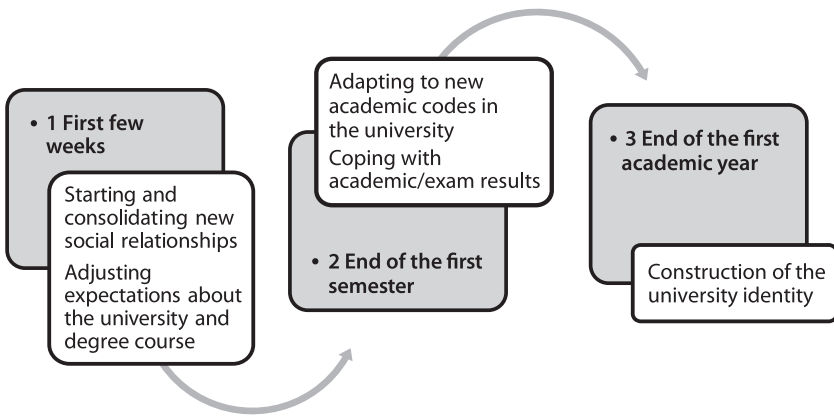
All the focus group interviews were recorded and transcribed, including features of oral expression and intonation through the use of symbols. ATLAS.TI, the qualitative data analysis programme, was used for the content analysis that provided the initial categories and links. Once these categories and links were identified, the transcriptions were re-examined and five main issues identified, named and defined that were finally considered in the final analysis. In order to guarantee the credibility of the data, procedures like those used in research with qualitative data, for example, by Gullifer and Tyson (2010), were employed. In our study, an initial coding was carried out by several members of the TRALS group, which was then assessed by other members of the group and students who were collaborating.

## Results

The analysis of the data showed that there were five tasks and challenges that the students had to deal with in their first-year university. These tasks were grouped in three sequential stages from the start to the end of the academic year. These five tasks and challenges can be summarised as being:

- Starting and consolidating new social relationships;
- Adjusting expectations about the university and degree course;
- Adapting to new academic codes in the university;
- Coping with academic/exam results;
- Construction of the university identity.

Figure 1 shows the sequence of stages with the corresponding tasks and challenges. A description is given below of the stages with the corresponding tasks and challenges as perceived by the students.



**Figure 1. Stages, tasks and challenges in the first year at university.**

### **First few weeks**

During the first few weeks, the students in our study were faced with the two important tasks of starting and developing new social relationships and adjusting their expectations about the university and their degree course.

#### **Starting and developing new social relationships.**

The clearest memory that the student participants had of their first week at university was feeling nervous about starting new relationships with their classmates. Going on from what is, generally secondary school, where friendships are already consolidated, to university, where they find themselves surrounded by people who are totally unknown, can lead to fear and anxiety in some students, and they have to apply their skills and abilities to establish new social relationships (Oswald, Clark, 2003). In order to fit in socially, students need to be able to create a new network of friendships that is strong enough to become a solid support network, both personally and academically speaking, during the rest of their time at university (Buote et al., 2007).

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I was worried about finding friends who I could connect with and also get support from if I was feeling down or if I needed to talk to someone about things like that. (Student in Pedagogy)

If by the end of the semester the student participants had become aware of the importance of establishing a support network, this group provided a protective shield that prevented individuals from dropping out, which is one aspect that was mentioned much more by the Pedagogy students in both focus groups.

I feel that having a good relationship with the group also helps one to continue. For example, there were times when I was on my own and the thought 'I can't go on, I just can't go on' would go round and round in my head, but there are moments when your friends say, 'come on, you can do it', 'I'll give you a hand' or 'you can borrow this'; which is a real help. (Student in Pedagogy)

This experience of companionship, however, was not so common among students of Business Management and Administration, who had to deal with much more individualism right from the start, which only increased after they received their first exam results.

Everybody does their own thing here. I thought it would be more of a group thing, and for study as well, but no. They all go to class, take notes and then leave. (Student in Business Management and Administration)

Research (for example, Lent et al., 2008; Yazedjian, Toews, Sevin, Purswell, 2008) has shown that social adjustment plays a significant role during the process of transition. This process depends mainly on the student's personality and their ability and skill in establishing positive social relationships with their peers. As the student participants themselves explained, an extrovert personality was an advantage in establishing relationships with classmates and overcoming this initial stage of communication.

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I'm very open as a person, so it's not hard for me to talk to other people. I always chat to people and likely as not I'll be the first to start up a conversation. (Student in Business Management and Administration)

The process of social adjustment depends not just on personal factors however but also on the context (Lent et al., 2000). In this regard, these authors point out that students feel less stressed when they perceive that they fit into a context where they feel accompanied and where there is a structure and organisation that facilitates the process of socialisation and adaptation. An awareness and understanding of the new context is therefore the first step, or link, to mitigating the stress factors. For the students in Pedagogy, the new context was difficult, probably because the faculty is located on a big campus where the buildings house various faculties and non-university institutions, unlike the setting of the Faculty of Economics and Business Studies.

The second link is the teaching staff, who play an important role as facilitator in the socialisation process of students at university (Zabalza, 2003; Johnston, 2013). In this regard, the students in Pedagogy described cooperative learning strategies, such as team work, which encouraged the start of relationships and promoted student participation and involvement in learning and study activities.

### **Adjusting expectations about the university and degree course.**

Before actually going to university, the student participants had an imaginary idea of what it was like. From day one, however, the students in both Pedagogy and Business Management and Administration realised that reality was a world apart.

My best friends are older than me and when they went to university they told me a lot. Then you see things like tiered lecture theatres in American movies, but then when you get here it's almost worse than secondary school because hardly anything fits in the desk you've been given. (Student in Pedagogy)

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Of course, I imagined it to be like they portray it in films, didn't I? You see universities being like that... That was what I expected. And when you experience it yourself, it's nowhere near so 'yuppy' as they make out. (Student in Business Management and Administration)

Once they had redefined the university and their place in it, the student participants then had to come to terms with their initial expectations about their degree course and deal with two elements in the situation they found themselves in, namely, their choice of degree course and the academic requirements and demands.

The findings of Willcoxson, Cotter and Joy (2011) show that the awareness of the career opportunities of a degree is associated with a lower probability of drop-out. Many students enrolled in Pedagogy because they had been unsuccessful with their first choices of course at university. They were often unaware of the profession (professional profile) associated with the degree although they did associate it with the field of Education. In such circumstances, a student may decide to drop out, as illustrated by the following comment:

Lots of fellow students dropped out because they didn't like their degree course (...) there are lots of students who took Pedagogy because their grades were only good enough for this subject. (Student in Pedagogy)

The students in Business Management and Administration already knew about the academic context and career opportunities of their degree, mostly through the experience of family members or relatives working in business and corporate contexts.

My mother's an accountant and my father has run different businesses, so it kind of runs in the family and right from the start it was fairly clear to me that I was going to take some degree in the Social Sciences. (Student in Business Management and Administration)

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A wrong choice therefore emerged as one of the causes for a student dropping out.

There was also a difference between the students in Pedagogy and Business Management and Administration in relation to their expectations of the academic requirements and demands of their respective degree course.

In general, there was a lack of motivation among students in Pedagogy. Some referred to the degree course as being unchallenging right from the outset. This perception was affirmed for the students by their exam results, where they did well despite their admission of not committing much time or effort.

The students in Business Management and Administration had to deal with certain unexpected situations. One of the first was the competitiveness and aloofness when trying to establish and consolidate social relationships.

We all got into university and here we are, sixty of us, all equal. If there was any competitiveness at the beginning, now there's more. I mean, we're all equal, but I'm better than you because I get higher marks, I'm going to finish before you will. And this creates anxiety in everyone. (Student in Business Management and Administration)

Another was not gauging the level of difficulty of different courses in terms of study time and personal effort.

I never used to study anywhere near as much as I do now, I would look at it one or two days beforehand, but now, I need one or two weeks for the exam and, well, what I do is organise what I have to do (...) so now I study every day, and yes, I study quite a lot more. (Student in Business Management and Administration)

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## End of the first semester

In the second stage, student participants had to deal with two tasks and challenges: adapting to new academic codes in the university and coping with academic outcomes.

### **Adapting to new academic codes in the university.**

With the start of classes, students become aware that university is different to their previous learning contexts and that they need to learn or discover new codes as previous ones do not work within the context of the faculty or university.

The student participants became aware of the size of their class group on entering the classroom for the first time. In their previous learning experiences, the number of students made it possible to have one-to-one relationships with classmates and the teacher, whereas at university they are scared of just being one more unknown face for the teachers.

You're new, you're anxious about things, you're a university student. People had told you things like, you're off to university, it'll all be difficult, complicated, the lecturers won't talk to you, they'll make it hard'. (Student in Pedagogy)

The students' perception of depersonalisation at university can be alleviated by the institution itself, more specifically by the teachers. This was confirmed by one student in Business Management and Administration and another in Pedagogy when describing their amazement when a teacher called them by their name.

I don't have any contact with the teachers, at school I did, all of them, but I guess it's partly because there are so many of us and how can the teachers be expected to know all of our names. (...)  
The teachers don't often speak to you much. (Student in Business Management and Administration)

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I have a friend who studies Law and when I told her that there's a teacher who says, 'right, Mireia?'; she replied 'How come she said "right, Mireia"?'. I said, 'well, there are no more than sixty of us and she knows all of our names', to which she replied, 'well, there are sixty of us, but the teachers don't know any of our names'. I guess Law is more impersonal, everyone does their own thing. (Student in Pedagogy)

In this regard, Barnett (2007) has shown that the fact that students are known and valued contributes to their intent to persist at university.

Students also have to learn new learning behaviour codes. As with the study by Willcoxson et al. (2011), the students in our research, in particular those in Pedagogy, perceived that their learning skills were inadequate.

Now there's so much material, which is something we didn't have in Bachillerato (A levels/UK, High school/US). There they wouldn't say get this book, this one and that one and read up on the info. You have so much to read that you can't squeeze everything into one day and learn it all. For me, this was the most important change. (Student in Pedagogy)

In Business Management and Administration, the students were very clear about feeling ill-prepared by their previous studies to cope with the academic demands of study at university, a variable also described by Yorke and Longden (2008).

Accountancy was very difficult because we didn't know anything at all and had no idea, because we were lacking the basics, so you could say that it was the hardest course to pass. (Student in Business Management and Administration)

Teaching and learning activities in the classroom during the first semester provide the students with an experience that enables them to acquire the codes to relate with the class group and teachers. How one acts



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and behaves in the presence of teaching staff, together with how one acts and behaves with the class group, constitutes the classroom atmosphere, a factor highlighted in recent research (Tinto, 2012b).

The student participants found there were different kinds of teachers. In some cases, the teachers were motivating and their classes fascinating whereas other teachers were devoid of empathy. Nevertheless, all the students in the focus group interviews however drew attention to the teaching staff's command of the course content.

In relation to their peer groups, both groups of student participants identified the types of behaviour that were inappropriate student conduct: indifference, lack of academic motivation, childish behaviour, and a lack of respect towards the teacher.

Things like someone comes to give a talk, and half the class is chattering away. Things like that annoy me a lot and as a result I don't share so much with my class group. (Student in Pedagogy)

The student participants also commented on certain forms of behaviour by the teachers that they viewed as being inappropriate within the university, such as, for example, taking a role call, or to quote a student in Business Management and Administration, 'they treat us like kids'.

The educational relationship between the teachers and students is what creates the atmosphere in the classroom and is regarded as being one of the explanatory factors for persistence. Tinto (2012b), Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) and Braxton (2000) have shown the importance of student experiences in the classroom and their intention to persist. Active and collaborative approaches to teaching and teachers who are skilled in these approaches encourage the academic integration of students. This is evident from comments made by both groups of students.

I think they should encourage more workgroups, presentations in public, things like that... It's really important to know how to speak and communicate. There should be more group activities

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and not so much individualism. (Student in Business Management and Administration)

A teacher of a more theoretical course doesn't need to just stick to the rules and not say anything, whereas they do need to be particular about gaining people's attention and respect. Whereas a teacher of a course that's more practical needs to know how to engage and spur the dynamics of the group and, as far as possible, be demanding. (Student in Pedagogy)

### **Coping with academic/exam results.**

Academic achievement is a predictive factor of the decision to drop out or persist, and it marks a tipping point where the student's beliefs of academic self-efficacy are put to the test. For this reason, participant students thought of either dropping out if their exam results fell below their expectations or persisting if their expectations were fulfilled.

During exam period, you feel overwhelmed, tired, your exam results aren't what you really expected or for your classmates it's sometimes an uphill climb. (Student in Business Management and Administration)

The student participants mainly attributed their academic success to self-discipline, hard work and dedication to study. This was acknowledged much more by students in Business Management and Administration, where the perception that the degree course was difficult was more widespread than in Pedagogy, as mentioned above.

For me, for example, this had me wondering whether I should drop out of Business Management and Administration at a time when I felt that all the effort I'd put into study hadn't been rewarded. (Student in Business Management and Administration)

When their academic results fell below their expectations, in general they attributed this to not having enough time to combine the demands

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of having to study with other responsibilities (work, family, etc.) and a lack of motivation.

A negative experience in the first semester was often a cause for student participants to consider dropping out, especially when they were not motivated. Some students however gave themselves a second opportunity, either because they managed to connect with their studies in the second semester, or because they needed a university degree for professional purposes.

When the students' academic experience resulted in a negative academic performance, however, the idea of dropping out became more acute. In such critical moments, the social support provided by fellow students becomes a key factor in handling negative exam results and thereby reinforcing the idea of persistence (Tinto, 2012a). In addition to the emotional support, learning strategies for mutual assistance were created with fellow students, for example, preparing for courses as a group and sharing class notes. This conversation between students in Business Management and Administration shows how they were organised:

- What you're doing now is to share notes, one person does one topic and the other does another, but of course if you haven't read up on the subject at all even though she does topic one and I do topic two, if I haven't read up anything on topic one it's going to be any use to me at all, that's not the way to go about things.
- Instead of doing five different sets of notes, there's one for everybody, get it, and we divide it up.
- Maybe individually we each work on a different topic, but then all together we cover the subject. (Students of Business Management and Administration)

Students who include teaching staff in their support network have a higher probability of persisting. Different studies (Tinto, 2012b; Stieha, 2010) have shown the importance of teacher-student relationships in academic success. The students on both degree courses assessed, on the one hand, the quality of teaching aids and material in tutorials and, two,

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a good relationship with the teachers and the degree to which they were accessible and willing to help.

The students themselves also need to individually plan and develop adaptation strategies, however. Their experience stimulates them to either improve on strategies that they have already used or look for new ones in order to achieve the success they are seeking. Students on both degree courses said that the best and most common used strategies for passing courses were: attending classes; attentiveness in the classroom; asking questions to the teacher and fellow students; keeping up-to-date with study work; and attending tutorials.

### **Final academic year**

The student participants reported the different tasks and challenges that they had to face during their transition to university and their perceptions on this. All of this experience served them to build their identity as university students. As they themselves pointed out, some felt that they fitted into the role of being at university, whereas others had difficulties.

#### **Construction of the university identity.**

On completion of the first academic year, student participants who persisted had acquired skills and experience for the following year. A few of them still had the idea of university being elitist and that it was difficult for them to fit in.

I don't think of myself so much as a university student, because the way I study is very simple and basic, like in vocational studies. My idea of a university student is someone who is very intellectual, with a vast amount of knowledge, maybe I'm just not there yet. (Student in Pedagogy)

For such non-conventional students, persistence at university and constructing an identity for themselves at university is more compli-

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cated. Over the course of their studies, they have to combine various tasks, with the consequent difficulties that this entails, of different roles, such as the employee, the mother with a family, etc., along with those of being a student.

In building their identity at university, on the one hand, they acquire and/or improve certain skills, such as adapting to the context of university, dedication to study and effort put into both individual and group study. On the other, they construct their role as students.

The student participants began their studies at university with the idea that the teacher was the point of reference for, or source of, knowledge, and even by the end of the first year some continued to have this as the only way of relating to what they were learning. Given the teacher's passive role, they would ask for his or her involvement and put the full responsibility of their learning to bear on the teacher.

I think it's up to the teacher to provide the basics for how we have to do it and how he wants it done. If he has a way of doing things, but he sees that the students don't get it, then he should do something to change things a bit. (Student in Pedagogy)

Other students however began to learn that, in the new teaching-learning paradigm, they themselves were the protagonists.

You give me a stack of notes and I don't know where to begin. On the other hand, with the vast amount of information in my mind, I think about all these ideas, reflect on them, they go round and round in my head and things begin to fit. (Student in Pedagogy)

As they took on this new role, they would criticise teachers who did not follow this rationale.

For me, the involvement of the teachers at university is also very important for the students and especially for assessment and

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the Bologna plan, don't you think? But what the teachers do is say, 'Right then, I'm off, class is finished, bye.' That was how things used to be, but not now, now they have to get involved with the students. (Student in Pedagogy)

In building this "university identity", the students learned the importance of certain factors that encourage persistence. Group support was mentioned the most in all the focus groups, followed by the motivation to continue, especially if their results fell below their expectations.

Some students faced obstacles that made it difficult or even impossible to become a university student. The main reasons according to the students in both Pedagogy and Business Management and Administration were family problems, in particular issues concerning the health and illness of either their parents or the student concerned, and economic problems.

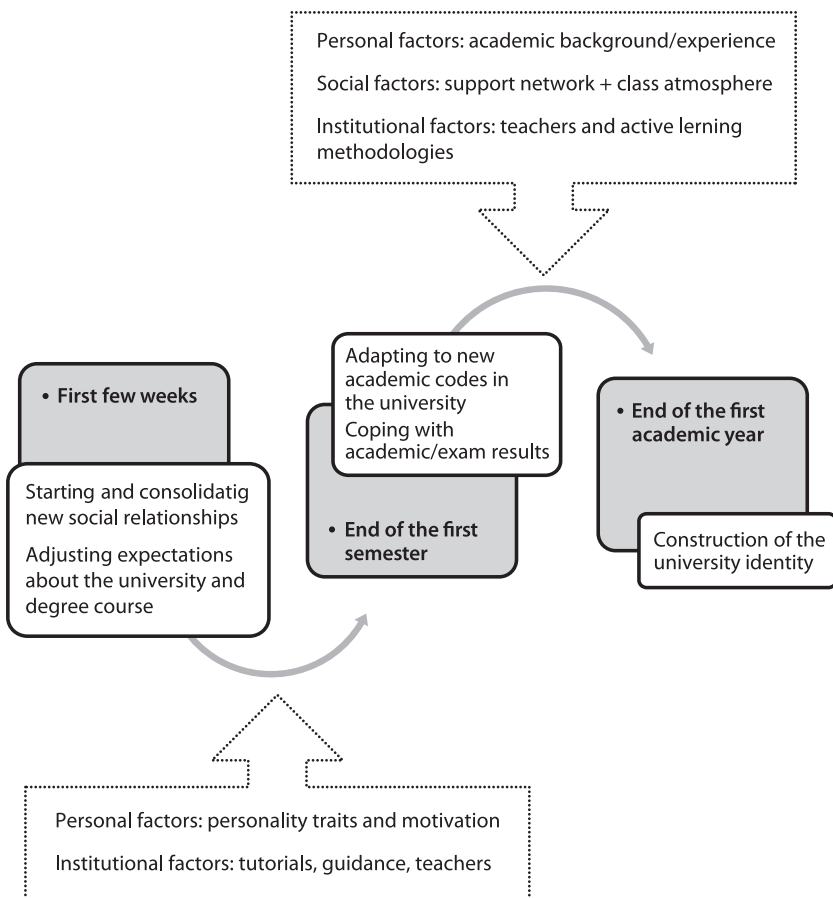
## Discussion

The students demonstrate in their assertions that the five tasks analyzed form a continuum that favour the adaptation to the new university context and help it to become a university student at the end of the first course. Therefore, from the results obtained on this study emerges the concept of the transition as a personal process lived by each student in accordance with their own possibilities and limitations (Quinn, 2010).

In this sense, understanding the transition as becoming, the student participants identified, throughout the first year, three points in time (three stages) that were critical according to their experience: the first few weeks, the end of the first semester, and at the end of the first academic year, when they had to deal with certain tasks and challenges (Tinto, 2012).

These tasks and stages need to be dealt with successfully in order for the transition to university to be positive and thereby help forge the student's university identity, which is a new identity that has to be constructed in many cases with no family reference to refer to, as in this case of a student in Business Management and Administration "I had no idea of

what life was like here because I'm the eldest sister, my parents didn't go to university. I had no experience". Their ability to overcome times like this is determined by different factors, as shown in the Figure 2. These factors of a personal, social and institutional nature emerged in conversation with the students. They described different actions, situations, experiences, etc., that either facilitated or hindered their adaptation to university. The diagram shows these factors in their whole process of transition to university.



**Figure 2. Model for adapting to the first year at university.**

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The students in the focus groups talked about their experience and the factors that facilitated their academic and social integration. In this study, the social factor of family support was not taken as an element for discussion. Nevertheless, various studies have shown that the family context is associated with the process of transition and with the student's ability to adapt and establish relations with new classmates and fellow students, as the family atmosphere contributes to the way of interacting (Schnuck, Handal, 2011), together with the type of support that the student receives from their family (Figuera, Dorio, Forner, 2003). In our focus groups, only the non-conventional students mentioned their own family (children) as a difficulty in combining both roles.

The impressions of these students in Pedagogy and Business Management and Administration show the importance of institutional factors in persistence in the first year at university, which supports the literature on the subject (Yaun, 2010; Tinto, 2012b). Among these institutional factors, consideration should be given to the context, as mentioned by the students, since the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Economics and Business Studies are different, especially in terms of academic codes. For example, according to the students' perceptions, the Faculty of Education was less demanding in academic terms and teaching was based more on collaborative work, whereas teaching in the Faculty of Economics and Business Studies was, according to the students, more conventional and the demands for academic achievement were higher.

A direct deduction of all this is the importance that the student's previous life has in his success while university student and in his future professional career. Thus, according to Quinn (2010), the transition periods described in the Figure 2 should not be generalized as problematic periods –since each student gives to them a specific signification and importance within his/her unique life.

The value of this study lies in the perceptions and opinions of students of Pedagogy and Business Management and Administration at the University of Barcelona being put into words. Based on their comments, it has been possible to mark out various stages in their process of transition during their first year at university.



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With these stages the authors have been able to propose a model for student adaptation to university within the context, on the one hand, of the University of Barcelona and, on the other, of two undergraduate degree programmes, Pedagogy and Business Management and Administration. The research work and models on the first year of students at university point to academic and social integration as being the main indicators of a good transition to university because they (indicators) transcend any cultural and geographical differences (Strydom, Metntz, 2010; Tinto, 2012b). Nevertheless, Tinto (2012a) as well as Cabrera, Pérez and López (2014) point out that the complexity of the factors that are involved in transition call for in-depth study of the organisational contexts.

The words and comments of the students of these two undergraduate degree programmes show where the milestones are located within the context of each degree programme. The path to be followed and the stages are similar, or even the same, but the milestones that show the student what to do in each stage are of different colours and hues according to the degree programme, as they themselves have described. It is up to each student to look through the tools in his or her backpack and find the factors that will give them to successfully pass through these stages of their first year at university.

If we want to go in direction of transition as becoming, we should to move forward to an institutional model that embrace the whole diversity of students pathways. Consequently, the adaptation model to be offered must start from the consensus of the students themselves and adapted to the academic and organizational context.

The challenge faced by the University of Barcelona nowadays is how to guide the students preserving their idiosyncrasies. The model of transition of becoming need to know more thoroughly the organizational characteristics of this university context and of its each degree. This knowledge would allow to address the transition of first-year students from their microcontext by providing the support and guidance mechanisms contextualized in each grade and in each student. But this task can be difficult without the complicity of the teachers, one of the

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primary agents for adaptation as the students have commented. Therefore, it would be necessary to triangulate this study with the voices of the university professors as well as of the administrators and staff.

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**Diseño y construcción de un Sistema de Soporte a la toma de Decisiones de los docentes sobre las interacciones comunicativas y lingüísticas en el aula<sup>2</sup>**  
**[Design and Construction of a Support System for Teacher Decision Making on Communicative and Linguistic Interactions in the Classroom]**

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**Resumen:** La creación de contextos comunicativos ricos que favorezcan el desarrollo de habilidades de lengua oral de los alumnos supone un reto en la práctica educativa de maestros. Con este objetivo, se diseña y construye el Sistema de Soporte a la Toma de decisiones EVALOE-SSD, a partir de la Escala de Valoración de la Lengua Oral en contexto Escolar (Gràcia et al., 2015), para ayudar a los maestros a reflexionar y a autoevaluar su propia práctica y a tomar decisiones informadas para mejorarla. El artículo presenta las características de la EVALOE-SSD, una herramienta digital semi-inteligente, y expone los diferentes ajustes llevados a cabo para su uso por parte de maestras de educación infantil y primaria en escuelas de diferente tipología.

**Palabras clave:** autoevaluación, lengua oral, metodología conversacional, sistema de soporte a las decisiones

**Abstract:** The creation of rich communicative contexts that facilitates the development of oral language skills of students is a challenge in the educational practice of teachers. With this purpose, the EVALOE-SSD Decision Support System is designed and constructed, based on the Oral Language Assessment Scale in the School context (Gràcia et al., 2015), to help teachers reflect and self-assess their own practice and make informed decisions to improve it. The article presents the characteristics of the EVALOE-SSD, a semi-intelligent digital tool, and exposes the different adjustments carried out for use by kindergarten and primary school teachers in different types of schools.

**Keywords:** self-assessment, oral language, conversational methodology, decision support system

## Introducción

El enfoque interactivo y funcional parte de la base de que la adquisición y el desarrollo del lenguaje se realiza en los contextos naturales, familiar y escolar principalmente, gracias a las características del contexto,

a las interacciones sociales en las que el niño participa desde muy pequeño, así como las relaciones que se establecen entre estos contextos (Bruner, 1983; Gràcia, 2003; Gràcia, Ausejo, Porras, 2010; Vygotsky, 1981). Sobre la base de componentes neurológicos, fisiológicos y biológicos, durante las interacciones naturales con los adultos, especialmente los adultos significativos, los niños desarrollan la lengua oral. El potencial del contexto natural como parte del aprendizaje del lenguaje está garantizado por los modelos que son ofrecidos por los adultos en sus interacciones, y las oportunidades que tiene el niño para interactuar con otras personas expertas. Numerosas investigaciones han hallado correlación positiva entre la *responsiveness* de las madres, y el desarrollo comunicativo y lingüístico de los niños (Bornstein, 1989).

En el contexto familiar, el adulto se comunica con el niño a través de la lengua oral y de otros medios lingüísticos como son las lenguas de signos u otras formas de comunicación como los Sistemas Aumentativos y Alternativos de Comunicación (SAAC), y es así como los niños cambian su forma de mirar el mundo, de interactuar, de comportarse y de conocerse (del Rio Gracia, 1996). En este contexto, el adulto utiliza algunas estrategias comunicativas y educativas para favorecer la adquisición y el desarrollo del lenguaje. A partir del análisis de situación de interacción entre adultos y niños, del Rio, Gràcia (1996) y más adelante Gràcia (2001, 2003) proponen una clasificación de estrategias que las madres de niños pequeños pueden utilizar para contribuir al desarrollo del lenguaje de estos: 1) creación de rutinas interactivas; 2) adecuación del entorno; 3) estrategias comunicativas y lingüísticas (estrategias de gestión de la conversación; estrategias para mejorar el ajuste del lenguaje; y estrategias educativas implícitas). El análisis de situaciones de interacción entre madres y niños pequeños con síndrome de Down y el asesoramiento a las madres en base a las estrategias citadas, permite constatar que son útiles para continuar avanzando en el conocimiento de estas situaciones y en su mejora, no únicamente en el contexto familiar, sino también en el escolar (Gràcia, 2001, 2003; Gràcia et al., 2010).

Dada la gran importancia de las interacciones lingüísticas en contexto escolar y la necesidad de sensibilización de los docentes sobre

la pragmática del lenguaje, en base a los resultados obtenidos en estudios en contexto familiar a los que nos acabamos de referir (Gràcia, 2001, 2003), y con el objetivo de disponer de un instrumento para que los especialistas en desarrollo del lenguaje valoraran las habilidades y las estrategias utilizadas por los docentes para promover el desarrollo de la competencia oral en el aula, se construyó la Escala de Valoración de la Lengua oral en contexto Escolar – EVALOE (Gràcia et al., 2015). Es un instrumento diseñado y construido para ayudar a un observador a valorar la actuación del docente y de los alumnos en relación con la lengua oral. La primera parte es una escala de observación con un total de 30 ítems agrupados en tres ámbitos (Contexto y Gestión de la comunicación, Diseño Instruccional, y Funciones Comunicativas y Estrategias). La segunda parte comprende un conjunto de preguntas para desarrollar una entrevista semiestructurada con el docente observado, con el fin de evaluar los aspectos incluidos en la primera parte con más profundidad. La EVALOE ha sido adaptada para su uso en el contexto de escuela de educación especial (Gràcia, Vega, Galván-Bovaira, 2015) y traducido al portugués (Vega, Gràcia, Domeniconi, Benítez, 2017).

La propuesta metodológica que está en la base de la construcción de la EVALOE es la Metodología Conversacional que entiende las aulas como espacios comunicativos en los que la enseñanza y la reflexión sobre la lengua oral es un fin en sí mismo, además de un instrumento para ayudar a los alumnos a aprender los contenidos relacionados con todas las materias (Gràcia, Galván-Bovaira, Sánchez-Cano, 2017).

En la actualidad, la reflexión de los docentes con otros profesionales y posteriormente de manera individual, permite a los primeros generar conocimientos sobre su práctica, lo que promueve una mejor comprensión de esta, a la vez que la transforma y también transforma su entorno (Farrel, 2007). A través de la reflexión, los docentes pueden hacer evidentes muchos aspectos subjetivos implícitos de los cuales no siempre son conscientes y que tienen un gran peso en la actuación profesional. Los resultados de los estudios citados ponen de manifiesto que, a partir de la reflexión conjunta con los especialistas sobre la propia práctica en el aula, los docentes pueden reflexionar sobre esta y llegar

a cambiar su concepción respecto a lo que significa enseñar y aprender lengua oral.

La reflexión sobre la propia práctica debe entenderse como un paso para tomar decisiones fundamentadas, a partir de la ayuda o asesoramiento de un experto o de alguna otra manera. En los últimos años se ha empezado a plantear la posibilidad de construir Sistemas de Soporte a la toma de Decisiones (SSD) con el fin de ayudar a docentes a revisar y mejorar la calidad de su educación. Se plantean los SSD como recurso complementario al asesoramiento tradicional proporcionado a los profesionales, con el fin de empoderarlos para ayudar a definir y clarificar cuáles son las decisiones más importantes y las consecuencias que cada una de ellas supone (Eom, Kim, 2006). El uso de SSD en el ámbito de la educación todavía se encuentra en una fase inicial, aunque existen ya algunos estudios que ponen de relieve que es posible usarlo para ayudar en el proceso de toma de decisiones en el ámbito de la educación especial (Gregg, 2009) o en contextos de aprendizaje virtual (Xu, Wang, 2006).

La constatación de que es posible complementar, o sustituir en algunas ocasiones, los asesoramientos tradicionales con algún tipo de tecnología, nos llevó a tratar de transformar la EVALOE en un Sistema de Soporte a las Decisiones (EVALOE-SSD). Los cambios que supuso se recogen en Gràcia et al. (2018) y pueden resumirse de la siguiente manera: 1) se transforma en un formulario virtual; 2) se plantea como un instrumento de autoevaluación por parte del docente, a quien se pide en cada ítem que la respuesta, entre tres posibilidades, que se acerca más a su actuación docente; 3) incluye la propuesta de toma de decisiones al final de la autoevaluación, a partir de ésta; 4) incluye ayudas en forma de texto escrito para los docentes, para cada uno de los 30 ítems con el fin de tomar decisiones respecto a su práctica docente.

Una vez construida la primera versión de la EVALOE-SSD se diseña un estudio piloto para probar su eficacia y para detectar elementos de mejora (Gràcia et al., 2018) con cuatro maestras de 3 centros educativos: una escuela ordinaria, una escuela rural y una escuela de educación especial. Los resultados de esta primera versión digital ponen de relieve la necesidad de mejorar algunos aspectos que se recogen en la Tabla 1.

**Tabla 1. Comentarios de las maestras participantes en el estudio piloto para probar la primera versión de la EVALOE-SSD y decisiones de los investigadores para mejorar la herramienta.**

Valoraciones de las cuatro maestras participantes en el estudio piloto respecto a la primera versión -formulario digital- de la EVALOE-SSD	Cambios en la versión digital EVALOE-SSD
Hay ítems que resultan más complejos que otros.	Establecer diferencias de complejidad entre los ítems.
Resulta pesado leer la formulación del ítem y después leer las tres posibilidades de respuesta.	Simplificar la manera de responder, por ejemplo, con tres colores diferentes, que sean significativos: verde, ámbar, rojo.
No es suficiente la explicación del ítem y con la ayuda por escrito para entender el ítem y para tomar decisiones.	Elaborar un conjunto de apoyos o ayudas de tipo diverso para que el docente tome decisiones más adaptadas y precisas: 1) revisar el texto escrito y tratar de que sea más comprensible; 2) incorporar cortes de vídeo que ilustren la incorporación de la acción vinculada al ítem en una situación real de clase; 3) elaborar viñetas en las que se recoja alguna secuencia real observada en alguna clase; 4) registrar en audio algunas explicaciones o ideas; 5) captar una imagen de una clase real y añadir algunos globos con intervenciones extraídas de situaciones reales.
Es demasiado largo.	Introducir un algoritmo en el sistema digital con el fin de que el cuestionario que se genere en la primera autoevaluación de la maestra no incluya los 30 ítems y que progresivamente, a partir de los resultados de las autoevaluaciones se vayan generando cuestionarios que incorporen más ítems, hasta llegar a los 30. Ello supone la necesidad de saber cuál es el punto de partida de cada maestra, lo cual implica que, antes de que ella se autoevalúe, un experto tiene que evaluar una clase y a partir de ahí se genera un cuestionario con un número determinado de ítems.
Posibilidad de hacer una pausa y continuar en otro momento.	El sistema en el que se incluye el cuestionario permite que se pueda hacer una pausa y continuar en otro momento.
Cuando es el momento de tomar decisiones no se tienen criterios y además no se recuerda la información vinculada a cada ítem.	Proponer seis ítems como resultado de un algoritmo a partir de las respuestas de la maestra en las autoevaluaciones anteriores de los que tengan que elegir 3. En el momento de la elección es necesario que la maestra pueda revisar la descripción de los 6 ítems, así como las ayudas de diferente tipo vinculadas a los ítems.
Al final de cada autoevaluación no se sabe la puntuación ni las decisiones tomadas.	Generar un cuadro resumen al final de cada autoevaluación que recoja todos los ítems del cuestionario y las respuestas en forma del color elegido (verde, ámbar, rojo), así como marcar de alguna manera las decisiones tomadas, por ejemplo, introduciendo alguna señal en los tres ítems elegidos.
Cuando se realiza una nueva autoevaluación no se recuerda el resultado de la anterior.	Antes de cada autoevaluación, la maestra puede revisar el mismo cuadro resumen que ha aparecido al final de la autoevaluación anterior y también todas las autoevaluaciones anteriores que ha realizado.
Algunos ítems no están ajustados al nivel educativo.	Generar diferentes versiones del instrumento en función del nivel y del contexto educativo, ajustando también el tipo de ayudas o la manera como se presentan teniendo en cuenta la tipología de escuela y de alumnos. Este ajuste también supone traducir la herramienta a las lenguas de las maestras que se prevea que vayan a usarla.

A partir de los resultados descritos en la Tabla 1 y de otras reflexiones de los investigadores durante el proceso de recogida de datos del estudio piloto al que nos acabamos de referir, nos proponemos realizar un segundo estudio que tiene como objetivo diseñar, construir y validar una segunda versión digital de la EVALOE-SSD incorporando los cambios que se derivan de las necesidades de las maestras participantes en el primer estudio, así como de las reflexiones de los investigadores, con el fin de mejorar su usabilidad. En este trabajo se presentan los resultados vinculados al diseño y la construcción de la herramienta.

## **Método**

### **Participantes**

En este estudio diversos investigadores del área de la psicología de la educación, por un lado, y de la ingeniería informática, por otro lado, han trabajado con el fin de mejorar la primera versión de la EVALOE-SDD que ha sido descrita en el apartado anterior. Una maestra ha participado en la traducción de una de las versiones del instrumento y una estudiante de grado de Psicología ha participado en la elaboración de diferentes tipos de ayudas y recursos.

### **Procedimiento**

Los investigadores de las áreas citadas se han reunido durante un periodo de 7 meses con el fin de tomar decisiones respecto al diseño, la construcción y la validación del instrumento a partir de la versión anterior, teniendo en cuenta las valoraciones de las maestras y las reflexiones llevadas a cabo durante el proceso de recogida de datos por parte de los investigadores (ver Tabla 1).

A partir de las decisiones que toman los investigadores en las reuniones a las que se ha hecho referencia, el técnico informático A partir de las decisiones que toman los investigadores en las reuniones a las que se ha hecho referencia, el técnico informático desarrolla las funcionalidades acordadas. Con el objetivo de mantener un entorno de integración continua de

funcionalidades y cambios, se han desplegado dos fases: una primera fase con un Sistema de test, y una segunda fase con el Sistema de producción. El primero -test- es un entorno controlado y sólo accesible por los investigadores, donde se pueden encontrar las últimas funcionalidades, y sirve para validar estas nuevas funcionalidades y detectar posibles inconsistencias del sistema antes de ser desplegadas a la siguiente fase. La segunda fase -producción- es el entorno público, al que pueden acceder las maestras y los investigadores para usar la aplicación con normalidad. El despliegue a la primera fase es automático y se produce varias veces al día. En el momento en el que el técnico considera que la fase de test ha superado las validaciones, el sistema de producción está preparado para que los investigadores del área de la psicología de la educación lo utilicen, y entonces se produce el despliegue a la segunda fase. A partir de este momento, los investigadores pueden acceder a través del enlace de la aplicación web. A continuación, se presentan las características del sistema de producción.

## Resultados

El resultado del trabajo conjunto entre los expertos en el área de psicología de la educación y de ingeniería informática ha sido la construcción de un Sistema Digital que incluye la herramienta semi-inteligente de autoevaluación y de toma de decisiones.

El Sistema de producción EVALOE-SSD incluye:

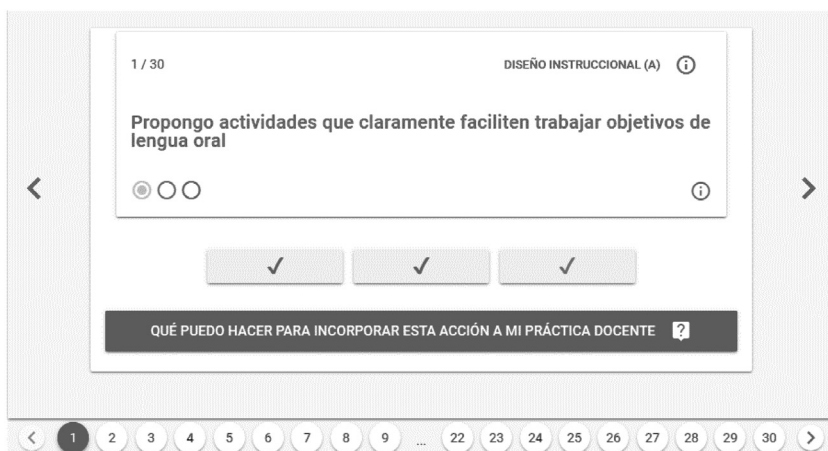
- 1) Una primera pantalla en la que se muestran recuadros en función del perfil del usuario. Así, al investigador, le aparecen cuatro recuadros (Gestionar escuelas, Gestionar usuarios, Responder cuestionario, Ver resultados), mientras que al docente, dos (Responder cuestionario y Ver resultados).
- 2) El primer recuadro, Gestionar escuelas, permite al investigador dar de alta como usuarias a las escuelas participantes en la validación. En el momento en el que se da de alta a las escuelas se introduce



una serie de informaciones sobre la escuela, como es el nombre, la dirección de e-mail, el tipo de escuela, etc.

- 3) Un segundo recuadro, Gestionar usuarios, permite al investigador dar de alta a otros usuarios, que pueden ser otros investigadores o docentes. Cuando se da de alta a un investigador o a un docente, éste se vincula a una tipología de escuela y a una lengua.
- 4) El siguiente recuadro (Responder cuestionario) permite al investigador, y posteriormente al docente, empezar a contestar un cuestionario.
- 5) Cuando el docente recibe el enlace que le permite entrar en el sistema aparecen en la pantalla únicamente los dos últimos recuadros (Responder cuestionario y Ver resultados), puesto que los docentes no pueden dar de alta a escuelas nuevas y a usuarios, tal como está diseñado el Sistema en este momento.
- 6) Cuando el investigador o el docente entran en Responder cuestionario, les aparecen una serie de pantallas emergentes con la siguiente información:
  - a) “Cómo usará la EVALOE-SSD”, y a continuación aparecen una serie de pasos que permiten al usuario entender qué tiene que hacer para contestar. Una vez leído puede cerrar o decidir que no se vuelva a mostrar esta pantalla emergente.
  - b) Si se trata de una evaluación por parte del investigador de una sesión observada, éste hace clic en un icono que aparece en la esquina inferior derecha y se abre una pantalla en la que se solicitan algunas informaciones sobre la sesión a observar (escuela, profesor, fecha, nivel educativo, número de alumnos y un espacio para escribir una descripción de la clase observada). Una vez completada esta ficha se puede “empezar”, clicando un recuadro verde en la esquina inferior derecha de la pantalla.
  - c) A continuación, aparece una ventana emergente en la que se explican los tres niveles de complejidad que puede tener cada ítem, así como las tres opciones de respuesta a los ítems posibles. Una vez leído el contenido de la pantalla, esta se puede cerrar o bien seleccionar que no vuelva a aparecer.

- d) En esta misma pantalla, o en todas las pantallas que aparecen a lo largo del cuestionario, se puede volver a acceder a estas ayudas iniciales sobre el instrumento haciendo clic en un icono situado en la esquina superior derecha de la barra de herramientas.
- e) Una vez se cierran todas las pantallas emergentes aparece la primera pantalla con uno de los ítems (ver Figura 1). En este caso se espera que el usuario, docente o investigador, lea el título del ítem; haga clic en el icono de información para leer la descripción del ítem; clique el icono de información que hay junto a la dimensión a la que pertenece este ítem para recordar qué ítems se incluyen en esta dimensión, en este caso Diseño Instruccional, y haga clic en el botón inferior para poder ver qué tipo de ayudas incorpora este ítem en particular.



**Figura 1. Ejemplo de pantalla para responder en relación con uno de los ítems.**

- f) Cuando se clicca el botón inferior (que en el original es de color azul) se muestran en color blanco resaltado cuatro iconos que informan al usuario del tipo de ayudas que incorpora (texto, vídeo, audio e imagen), tal como se aprecia en la Figura 2.



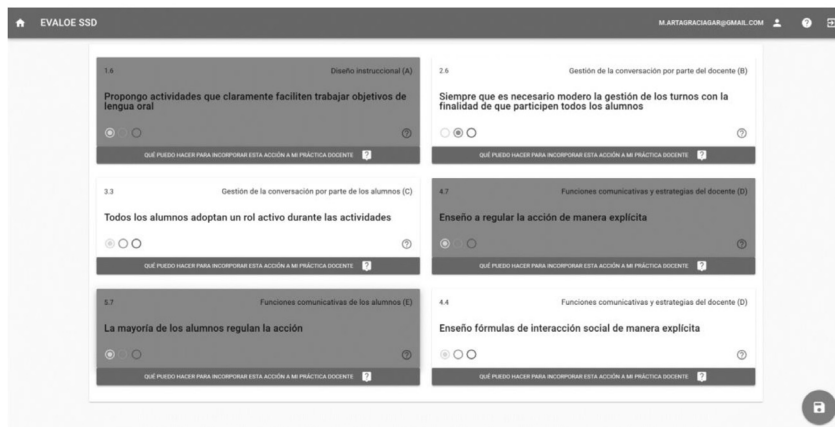
**Figura 2. Tipo de iconos que informan de las diferentes opciones de ayuda.**

- g) El usuario puede revisar estas informaciones en cada una de las pantallas que le van apareciendo. Posteriormente, el usuario selecciona una respuesta en función del grado en el que su actuación en la clase evaluada se acerca a una de las tres opciones. Las posibles respuestas aparecen en forma de tic (✓): tic verde, que indica que el usuario ha incorporado esta acción claramente; tic ámbar, la ha incorporado de manera poco clara o con poca frecuencia; y tic rojo, no ha sido incorporada.
- h) Una vez el usuario ha contestado todos los ítems, le aparece un resumen de sus respuestas tal como aparece en la Figura 3.

Diseño instruccional (A)	Gestión de la conversación por parte del docente (B)	Gestión de la conversación por parte de los alumnos (C)	Funciones comunicativas y estrategias del docente (D)	Funciones comunicativas de los alumnos (E)
Los alumnos administran su comportamiento comunicativo	Facilita que los alumnos inicien las interacciones comunicativas	Durante las actividades de conversación, discusión y/o debate adoptamos un formato de interacción en red	Enseño a escuchar y/o entender conclusiones	Los alumnos escuchan y/o escuchan conclusiones
Evalúo el comportamiento comunicativo de los alumnos ★	La disposición del mobiliario, de los alumnos y del docente se ajusta a las características de la actividad	Los alumnos gestionan su participación en la conversación sin que yo dé turnos de palabra	Enseño a dar información ★	Los alumnos mejoran su enunciado después de mi espereación
Me refiero a las normas de conversación	Doy tiempo a los alumnos para que terminen la turno ★	Los alumnos adoptan un rol activo durante las actividades ✓	Enseño a dar información ✓	Los alumnos mejoran su enunciado después de mi clasificación ✓
Revisamos los conocimientos previos que tenemos de lengua oral	Respondo a las interacciones comunicativas iniciadas por los alumnos		Enseño fórmulas de interacción social ✓	Los alumnos utilizan fórmulas de interacción social ✓
Explicito los objetivos relacionales con la lengua oral	Adopto un rol activo de guía y orientación durante las actividades de lengua oral		Expando los enunciados de los alumnos ✓	Los alumnos obtienen información ✓
Propongo actividades que facilitan trabajar objetivos de lengua oral ✓	Modelo la gestión de turnos con la finalidad de que participen todos los alumnos		Clarifico los enunciados poco claros de los alumnos ✓	Los alumnos dan información ✓
			Facilito que los alumnos inicien las interacciones comunicativas ✓	Los alumnos regulan la acción ✓
			Valoro positivamente los enunciados de los alumnos ✓	

**Figura 3. Ejemplo de cuadro resumen después de terminar una autoevaluación. En el Sistema los colores son tres tonos diferentes de violeta, y los colores de los tics son verde, ámbar y rojo. Las tres estrellas nos informan de los tres ítems o acciones que ha decidido introducir en sus proximas clases.**

- i) Si el usuario es un docente, en la misma pantalla en la que aparece este cuadro se puede seleccionar “Continuar” y aparece la pantalla que se presenta en la Figura 4. Si el usuario es investigador, no ve esta pantalla porque el sistema no está preparado para que los investigadores tomen decisiones.



**Figura 4. Pantalla que permite al docente seleccionar 3 de entre 6 opciones de respuesta, lo que supone la toma de decisión respecto a qué ítems incorporará a su práctica docente. Los tres ítems seleccionados se marcan en color verde, igual que la flecha del extremo inferior derecho, que permite al docente salir del sistema y terminar todo el proceso de autoevaluación.**

El Sistema de producción incluye la posibilidad de entrar en cuatro versiones del cuestionario, algunas de las cuales en más de una lengua: 1) educación infantil (catalán, español e inglés), 2) educación primaria (catalán), 3) educación especial (catalán) y 4) educación primaria en escuelas con proyecto bilingüe intermodal lengua oral-signada (español). Las versiones construidas, así como las lenguas disponibles en cada versión, están vinculadas a las escuelas que se han seleccionado para participar en el proceso de validación, del cual no se presentan resultados puesto que está en proceso de desarrollo.

A continuación, se concretan las características de la versión de educación infantil, a partir de la cual se han hecho las adaptaciones en las otras versiones.

### **A) Versión contexto de educación infantil (catalán, español e inglés)**

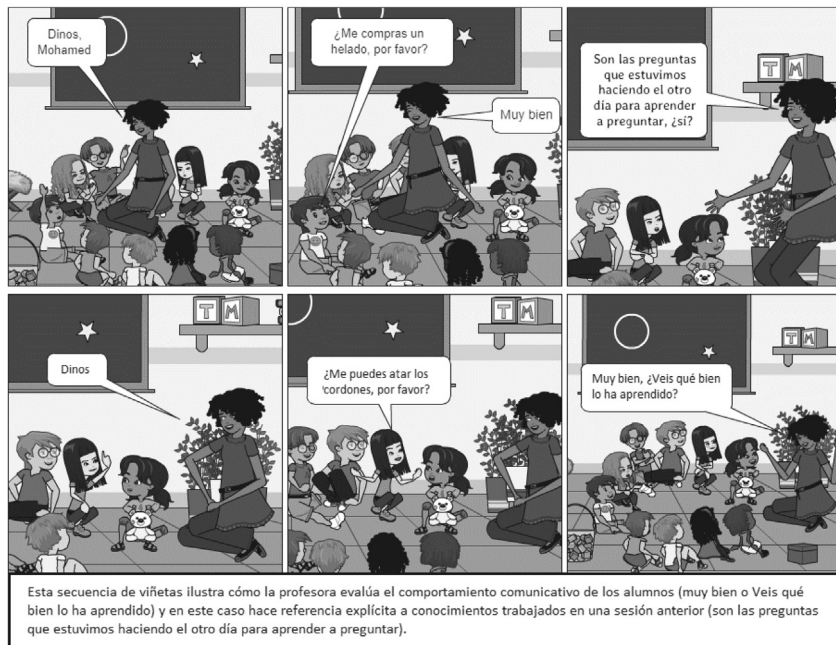
La versión que ha servido de base para introducir los cambios, ajustes y adaptaciones en las otras versiones ha sido la de educación infantil, en lengua catalana, que posteriormente se ha traducido al español y al inglés. Se trata de una versión diseñada para que pueda ser usada por docentes del nivel de educación infantil de 3 a 6 años en escuelas catalanas (lengua catalana), españolas (traducción al español) y en escuelas donde la lengua vehicular sea el inglés (traducción en inglés). La traducción al español la han realizado las investigadoras, así como una primera traducción al inglés. Posteriormente, una maestra de nacionalidad inglesa, que tiene como lengua materna el inglés y trabaja como maestra en una escuela internacional en Catalunya, ha participado en la revisión de esta traducción.

Las características del cuestionario de la versión de educación infantil que se ha construido para poder validar esta segunda versión son:

- 1) Está formado por 30 ítems, de los cuales 6 son de complejidad alta, 12 de complejidad media y 12 de complejidad baja.
- 2) Los 30 ítems están agrupados en cinco subescalas.
- 3) Cada uno de los 30 ítems tiene al menos un tipo de ayuda. En la tabla 2 se presentan los tipos de ayuda que tiene esta versión y un ejemplo de cada una.

**Tabla 2. Ayudas que incluye cada uno de los ítems de la versión de educación infantil.**

Tipo de ayuda	Ítem	Ejemplo
Ayuda escrita	Todos	<p><b>Ítem:</b> Durante la sesión de trabajo la disposición del mobiliario, de los alumnos y del docente siempre se ajusta a las características de la actividad que realizamos.</p> <p><b>Ayuda escrita:</b> ¿He pensado que es importante ajustar el mobiliario, los participantes, y los materiales dependiendo de las características de la actividad? ¿Soy consciente de que mientras estamos discutiendo y conversando, para poder dar oportunidad a los alumnos de utilizar el lenguaje en actividades reales y funcionales, las sillas, las mesas y los participantes tendrán que estar en forma de círculo, para conseguir que todos nos podamos mirar a la cara cuando hablemos, lo que ayudará a mantener la atención y a seguir la conversación de forma activa?...</p>
Secuencia de vídeo	5 ítems	<p><b>Ítem:</b> Los alumnos autoevalúan su comportamiento comunicativo.</p> <p><b>Resumen de la secuencia de vídeo:</b> En esta secuencia podemos observar que los niños y la maestra están sentados en círculo conversando. La maestra solicita a los niños que evalúen la corrección de la pregunta que ha formulado una niña. Algunos contestan diciendo que no es correcta y ella les hace ver que la pregunta sí está bien formulada, pero que no es correcto el contenido (refiriéndose a que no está bien la acción de arrancar flores).</p>
Audio	2 ítems	<p><b>Ítem:</b> Revisamos de manera explícita y clara los conocimientos previos que tenemos de lengua oral relacionados con la actividad que propongo.</p> <p><b>Ayuda en audio:</b> Cuando propongo alguna actividad o hago algunas preguntas para activar conocimientos previos, ¿hago referencia explícita a conocimientos previos relacionados con la lengua oral?, como ¿cuándo aprendieron a decir o a pedir algo?, o ¿qué palabras nuevas aprendieron?, o ¿qué maneras diferentes sabemos sobre cómo describir a una persona o cómo explicar por qué preferimos hacer una actividad y no otra?...</p>
Imagen viñeta	2 ítems	<p><b>Ítem:</b> Evalúo de manera explícita el comportamiento comunicativo de los alumnos en relación con los objetivos de lengua oral.</p> <p><b>Ayuda en imagen:</b> ver Figura 5</p>
Imagen foto	2 ítems	<p><b>Ítem:</b> La mayoría de los alumnos aportan información.</p> <p><b>Ayuda en imagen:</b> ver Figura 6</p>



**Figura 5. Ejemplo de ayuda en formato viñeta de la versión de educación infantil en español.**



**Figura 6. Ejemplo de ayuda en forma de imagen, concretamente en soporte fotografía de una situación natural de aula.**

Como se ha señalado, la versión en catalán es la original, lo cual supone que en la traducción al español y al inglés los vídeos están subtítulos. Las ayudas en formato imagen están traducidas, tal como se aprecia en las figuras 5 y 6, mientras que las ayudas en formato audio únicamente se incluyen en la versión original en catalán.

### B) Versión contexto de educación primaria (catalán)

En estos momentos la versión de educación primaria está exclusivamente en catalán y la distribución de tipos de ayudas es la que se presenta en la Tabla 3.

**Tabla 3. Ayudas que incluyen los ítems de la versión de educación primaria.**

Tipo de ayuda	Ítem	Ejemplo
Ayuda escrita	Todos	<b>Ítem:</b> Durante las actividades de conversación, discusión y/o debate siempre adoptamos un formato de interacción en red. <b>Ayuda escrita:</b> ¿Tengo ideas sobre cómo conseguir que adoptemos un formato de interacción en red cuando participamos en conversaciones, discusiones o debates, es decir, durante la mayor parte de las actividades que realizamos en clase? ¿He reflexionado sobre el hecho de que probablemente el elemento más importante que debo tener en cuenta para ello es que los alumnos se den cuenta que lo que ellos dicen es interesante tanto para mí, como para todos los compañeros de clase? ...
Secuencia de vídeo	6 ítems	<b>Ítem:</b> Siempre que puedo, modelo la gestión de los turnos con la finalidad de que participen todos los alumnos. <b>Ayuda en formato de secuencia de vídeo:</b> Una maestra y sus alumnos de cuarto de primaria están conversando sentados en círculo en el suelo. La maestra facilita que los niños inicien una interacción sobre una temática que les interesa, el estreno de una película de una saga que les gusta mucho.
Imagen viñeta	4 ítems	<b>Ítem:</b> Expando los enunciados de los alumnos siempre que es necesario. <b>Ayuda en imagen (viñeta):</b> ver Figura 7.

Los cambios en la redacción de los ítems se han llevado a cabo siguiendo un criterio de ajuste a las actividades más habituales en este nivel, así como la referencia a las áreas del currículum o ejemplos concretos de algunas estrategias que puede utilizar el docente.

En la Tabla 4 se recogen algunas de ellas.



**Tabla 4. Algunos ejemplos de diferencias en la explicación de algunos de los ítems entre la versión de educación infantil y de educación primaria.**

Ítem	Versión educación infantil	Versión educación primaria
Clarifico los enunciados de los alumnos siempre que es necesario.	Por ejemplo, un alumno de educación infantil puede decir: "Sa chafa a futa" y la maestra puede tratar de clarificar el enunciado diciendo: "Sí, se ha chafado la fruta, ¿verdad?" (...)	Por ejemplo, un alumno de educación primaria puede decir "A mí me parece que el mostro tiene os ojos sierros" y la maestra puede tratar de aclararlo diciendo: "¿Quieres decir que el monstruo tiene los ojos cerrados?"
Expando los enunciados de los alumnos cuando es necesario	Por ejemplo, si el alumno dice: "A peota" mientras mira el cuento, la maestra puede decir: "Sí, la pelota roja".	Por ejemplo, si un alumno dice: "Fui al partido" mientras mira una foto, la maestra puede decir: "¿Fuiste a jugar un partido de futbol?" o "Fuiste al partido de futbol de tu hermano, verdad?"

Las ayudas en forma de vídeo o de imagen (viñeta y foto) son todas diferentes a las de la versión original de educación infantil, puesto que son secuencias de vídeo de clases de educación primaria (ciclo inicial, medio y superior) o viñetas o imágenes elaboradas a partir de situaciones reales de clase de los mismos niveles educativos.



**Figura 7. Ejemplo de ayuda en forma de imagen, concretamente en soporte viñeta, elaborada a partir de una situación natural de aula (primer curso) (Traducción: Maestra: *Tenemos que llevar dos cosas*; Alumno: *Bocadillos o fruta*; Maestra: *Bocadillo. Un bocadillo o fruta*).**

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### **C) Versión contexto de educación especial**

En la versión de educación especial se ha realizado un esfuerzo importante para incorporar en la descripción de los ítems, así como en las diversas ayudas, los Sistemas Aumentativos y Alternativos de Comunicación (SAAC). También se han incorporado algunos ajustes en la redacción de las ayudas, vinculados al hecho de que, en general, se trata de grupos de alumnos muy reducidos y en los que muy a menudo están presentes dos o más educadores. Tanto las ayudas en forma de vídeo, como aquellas en formato imagen (viñetas y fotografías), incorporan ejemplos reales de situaciones de interacción en contexto de educación especial entre maestros y alumnos que en muchas ocasiones utilizan SAAC.

### **D) Versión contexto bilingüe intermodal lengua oral-lengua signada**

Teniendo en cuenta las características del contexto en el que se pretendía utilizar la versión bilingüe intermodal, esto es, una escuela ordinaria en la que están escolarizados alumnos que se comunican usando la lengua oral y la lengua de signos catalana (o LSC), en la que esta última es utilizada como lengua vehicular para los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje tanto en educación infantil como primaria, se han introducido cambios de diversa índole (Lacerda, Gràcia, Jarque, 2017).

De los 30 ítems, 23 fueron modificados en algún sentido en relación con la terminología específica de las lenguas de signos (Jarque, 2016; Lacerda, Santos, Martins, 2016). Han sido substituido los términos que se refieren a la modalidad de expresión y recepción oral (hablada) de las lenguas por los términos equivalentes en la modalidad signada; se han modificado las estrategias auditivas por estrategias visuales, y se han realizado algunas modificaciones respecto a alusiones a estrategias de uso de voz o entonación vocal por alusiones a estrategias de expresión facial y/o corporal. En la Tabla 5 se presentan algunos de estos cambios.

**Tabla 5. Algunos ejemplos de cambios relativos a terminología en la versión bilingüe intermodal.**

VALOE-SSD de educación infantil	Versión EVALOE-SSD contexto bilingüe intermodal (modalidad lengua signada)
Lengua oral	Lengua de signos
Hablar	Signar, conversar, explicar, expresar.
Palabras	Signos, producciones
Entonación	Algunos recursos lingüísticos, como la expresión facial y la amplitud del signado
Escuchar	Prestar atención
Su escucha	Su atención a lo que el otro expone
Competencia oral	Competencia comunicativa
Dar la palabra	Dar el turno

Otro tipo de cambios son los ajustes en los ejemplos de estrategias educativas como la expansión o la clarificación. Se han introducido cambios de este tipo en 2 ítems (ver Tabla 6).

**Tabla 6. Ejemplos de cambios relativos a la ejemplificación en la versión bilingüe intermodal.**

VALOE-SSD de educación infantil	Versión EVALOE-SSD contexto bilingüe intermodal (modalidad lengua signada)
<b>Clarificación</b> 'Por ejemplo, un alumno de educación infantil puede decir: "Sa chafa a futa" y la maestra puede tratar de clarificar el enunciado diciendo: "Sí, se ha chafado la fruta, ¿verdad?" (...)	'Por ejemplo, un alumno hace un signo de manera incompleta o en un punto de articulación o movimiento equivocado resultando incomprensible o raro (Por ejemplo, signa BLANCO con el movimiento de GRIS).
<b>Expansión</b> Por ejemplo, si el alumno dice: "A peota" mientras mira el cuento, la maestra puede decir: "Sí, la pelota roja".	Por ejemplo, si el alumno se refiere en lengua de signos a un compañero presente produciendo únicamente su signo nombre, sin utilizar un deíctico, la maestra puede recoger la emisión añadiéndolo.

También, se han introducido algunos cambios en la forma de presentación escrita de la EVALOE-SSD, con el objetivo que resulte más atractiva visualmente, por lo que optamos por simplificar la sintaxis en

prácticamente todos los ítems (por ejemplo, reduciendo el número de subordinadas que se enlazan).

Además, se han introducido ajustes en las ayudas añadiendo información específica vinculada a estrategias de comunicación fundamentales en la modalidad signada, tal como se recoge en la tabla 7.

**Tabla 7. Cambios relativos a las ayudas escritas.**  
**El texto añadido se indica marcado en gris.**

Tipo de información	Versión EVALOE-SSD contexto bilingüe intermodal (modalidad lengua signada)
Elementos en enumeración	He pensado que es <b>necesario ajustar</b> el mobiliario, los participantes y los materiales dependiendo de las características de la actividad, de los participantes (altura, . . .) y de las condiciones lumínicas
Complemento	La disposición en forma de círculo o U de las mesas, silla y/o alumnos y/o docente permite el contacto visual de los participantes durante la conversación. En las interacciones en lengua de signos, visualizar bien las manos, la cara y buena parte del cuerpo es fundamental para una comprensión adecuada de lo que se está expresando.
Elemento de reflexión	He reflexionado sobre la <b>preferencia de utilizar una pantalla grande o una pizarra digital para proyectar recursos de apoyo</b> (imágenes, vídeos, texto, etc.) que permita eliminar mesas, posibilitando mayor confortabilidad en el signado y favorezca una mayor visibilidad del objeto de atención y de los participantes

En relación con las imágenes, se han introducido fotografías de situaciones comunicativas en contextos bilingües intermodales, en las cuales aparecen alumnos y docentes signando, en una disposición espacial adecuada, en la que se aprecia cómo la distribución en el espacio de estos posibilita el contacto visual y una óptima visibilidad de los articuladores, permitiendo así la comunicación. También se han elaborado viñetas que representan situaciones de aula donde los docentes proporcionan ayudas a sus estudiantes. Finalmente, se hay incorporado secuencias cortas de vídeo de actividades en aula que ilustran formas de interactuar adecuadas entre personas que se comunican utilizando una lengua de signo.

## Discusión

A lo largo de las páginas anteriores se han presentado las características principales del Sistema Digital EVALOE-SSD, diseñado a partir de los resultados obtenidos en un estudio piloto (Gràcia et al., 2018), así como los ajustes que se han realizado en cada una de las cuatro versiones del mismo. Se trata de una investigación que todavía está en fase de desarrollo, puesto que se están validando las cuatro versiones con el uso que están haciendo un conjunto de maestras de diferente tipología de escuela y nivel educativo.

Los objetivos del Sistema Digital EVALOE-SSD son similares a otros Sistemas de Soporte a la Toma de decisiones en otros ámbitos de conocimiento, como la medicina, agricultura o la economía, es decir proporcionar al usuario una herramienta que mejore el proceso de toma de decisiones, resultando en decisiones más informadas (Andres, Poler, 2016; Eom y Kim, 2006). Sin embargo, la búsqueda de ejemplos de SSD que tengan algún tipo de vinculación con el que aquí se presenta ha sido poco fructuosa. Como se ha señalado en la introducción de este artículo, encontrar trabajos en los que se utilicen los SSD en ámbito educativo es difícil. Se ha publicado algún trabajo centrado en el ámbito de la educación especial (Gregg, 2009), bastante alejado de los propósitos del Sistema EVALOE-SSD, y también a algunos usos en contextos de aprendizaje virtual (Xu, Wang, 2006).

En estos momentos lo que más se parece al instrumento que hemos diseñado en sus diferentes versiones continúa siendo un asesoramiento presencial en la que el asesor ajusta las ayudas a las características del docente, su grupo de alumnos y objetivo que se pretende, entre otros aspectos (Gràcia, 2003; Gràcia et al., 2010; Martín, Mauri, 2011; Monereo, Pozo, 2005). La diferencia fundamental entre el asesoramiento educativo, tal como lo entienden los autores citados, y la propuesta que se presenta en este artículo, es que el asesoramiento no lo realiza un asesor u orientador personalmente, sino que se realiza a través de un instrumento diseñado para tal fin.

Esta diferencia implica que el docente, cuando utiliza este instrumento puede estar sólo físicamente, pero interactúa con una herramienta

que le proporciona recursos de diferente tipología, que le ayuda a pensar en su práctica diaria; en los objetivos que se propone; en una manera determinada de entender el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa y lingüística oral, y su contribución a este desarrollo; que le ayuda a entender las clases como espacios comunicativos en los que los alumnos son diferentes y tienen ideas, conocimientos, dudas e ideas que hay que escuchar.

También le ayuda, o al menos es lo que se pretende, a reflexionar sobre sus actuaciones, sobre aquello que tiene incorporado en su práctica diaria, que no siempre funciona; y las estrategias que puede incorporar, a pensar en sus clases; a tomar decisiones. Le puede ayudar a conocer otras formas de hacer propuestas; otras maneras de organizar las clases; de hablar a los alumnos; a observar cómo interactúan y se comportan en general otros alumnos diferentes de los suyos, pero de edades similares; y también otros docentes. La presencia de los diseñadores del instrumento no es directa, aunque el instrumento se haya diseñado con el fin de que las autoevaluaciones que lleva a cabo el docente y sus decisiones influyan en las características del cuestionario que se genera. Pero la diferencia más importante, sin duda, es la variedad de ayudas que se proporciona al docente, los modelos de otros docentes, que suponen para ellos un recurso en general muy útil y al que a menudo no tienen acceso.

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## Musical Assertiveness Training (MAT) as a Method Supporting the Development of Intra- and Interpersonal Relation

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**Abstract:** The paper introduces the topic of the Musical Assertiveness Training (MAT), developed in 2014. The method is based on selected psychological theories such as the cognitive theory of social learning by Bandura, the theory of multiple intelligences by H. Gardner and the concept of self-efficacy, self-presentation and self-esteem. The article describes the basic concepts of assertiveness and refers to the latest worldwide achievements in the field of assertiveness training. The perspective of music therapy brings a new quality to assertiveness training known for years, giving it a new character and allowing for development of the same skills but in a different way. The MAT-programme is divided into the cycle of twelve music-therapeutic sessions and leads step by step to the basic skills of assertive behaviour. It is designed as a workshop and has been used so far in in the process of educating future pedagogues both as an educational and therapeutic method, supporting the development of emotional, communication and social competences.

**Keywords:** music therapy, art therapy, mixed arts therapies, assertive, assertiveness training, education, emotional competences, social competences, communication

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## Introduction

The original Musical Assertiveness Training was developed by me in 2014 and has been used in my music therapy practice in the process of educating future pedagogues both as an educational and therapeutic programme, supporting the development of emotional, communication and social competences. It is called Musical Assertiveness Training since it is mostly based on the use of music and techniques commonly applied in music therapy. Nonetheless, it should not be identified solely with music therapy. It does draw on the variety and resources of related fields of arts therapies such as: drama, dance or drawing. This type of training provides students with an opportunity to get to know themselves better, to experience their strengths and to accept their weaknesses. The work is directed towards the development of intrapersonal intelligence, the improvement of interpersonal communication, the increase in satisfaction from functioning in a community and getting to know arts therapies methods – significant for future pedagogue technique – in the most effective way, i.e. through experiencing. The programme is beneficial both for the functioning in the present educational situation and useful for future professional work.

During its creation I combined the knowledge offered by selected scientific theories with my own scientific explorations of the area of music therapy, I drew inspiration from reliable assertiveness training programmes developed by psychologists, which I indicate below. The perspective of music therapy brings a new quality to assertiveness training known for years, giving it a new character and allowing for development of the same skills but in a different way.

Two American behaviourists were the pioneers of the concept of assertive behaviours: a psychologist, Andrew Salter and a psychiatrist, Joseph Wolpe.

The first publication by Salter, in which he described the basic techniques of assertiveness, though he actually did not use this term, was a book published in 1949 in New York entitled "Conditioned Reflex Therapy". He distinguished, among other things, the skills which are essential

in order to overcome inhibitions, such as: verbal and non-verbal expression of feelings, accepting oneself, opposing other people, "I" statements. J. Wolpe discusses these issues for the first time in the book published in 1958 in Stanford entitled "Psychotherapy by Reciprocal Inhibition". The subject has been addressed and explored by subsequent generations of scientists and since then numerous papers, books and guides related to the issue of assertiveness have come out. Also, special training courses have been designed. The development of group forms of assertiveness training directed towards healthy people was observed in many countries particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. In Poland, it was observed in 1990s.

The most famous textbook for assertive behaviours, entitled "Your Perfect Right. A Guide to Assertive Living" was written by two psychologists: Robert Alberti and Michael Emmons. The book has been translated into more than twenty languages and published ten times, the first one in 1970 and the last reissue in 2017, which proves that the concept of assertive behaviours has been arousing constant interest till today both on the part of the readers and the scientific world.

In Poland, the promoter of the assertiveness trainings in the 1990s was a therapist, Maria Król-Fijewska, who published several books in this field: "Trening asertywności" ["The Assertiveness Training"] (1991); "Stanowczo, łagodnie, bez lęku" ["Firmly, Gently, without Fear"] (1993); "Asertywność menedżera" ["Manager's Assertiveness"] (along with P. Fijewski, 2000). They are still popular today, being reissued.

However, to the best of my knowledge, there are no publications devoted to assertiveness trainings based on music or art therapy, which motivated me to embark on my own studies in which music and its influence affect this area of human life. As a result, I have developed a programme called Musical Assertiveness Training (MAT).

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### **The concept of assertiveness and the ability to behave in an assertive way**

Analysing extensive literature concerning assertiveness as a type of behaviour and attitude, common, repeated aspects can be enumerated, such as: being oneself, behaviour in accordance with one's own feelings, desires, beliefs, intentions, the ability to express oneself fully in contact with others with simultaneous respect for other people's rights. It is deeply connected with the sense of dignity and respect for oneself.

Referring to world-famous experts, let me quote the definition of assertiveness proposed by R. E. Alberti and M. L. Emmons:

Assertive self-expression is a direct, firm, positive, and – when necessary – persistent activity which leads to the development of equality in interpersonal relations. Assertiveness allows us to act in our best interest, to defend our position without too much fear, to exercise our own rights without violating other people's rights, and to genuinely express our feelings (e.g. attachment, love, friendship, dissatisfaction, irritation, anger, regret or sadness) (Alberti, Emmons, 2015: 18).

According to the definition above, the concept of assertiveness, contrary to popular belief, does not deal with the rules on how to force through one's own interests in the most effective way in situations when people make things difficult for us. Thus, it does not teach how not to become shouted down or to win all the time. Assertiveness is an idea about how to use one's own rights to the full without infringing other people's rights. In this concept "a healthy man claims the right to exist the way they are, (...) without questioning their own thoroughly understood being 'OK', thus they do not question themselves. Although they respect their own privacy, they do not live in the atmosphere of hiding their true nature" (Król-Fijewska, 1993: 93).

The attitude 'I am OK' denotes internal acceptance of one's own existence in the current form. Human being may crave for a change, expe-



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rience dissatisfaction from their actions, but it should not initiate a deep sense of guilt and shame due to the fact they are someone they should not be. If they feel 'OK', then they are able to agree with the fact that some part of their actions does not appeal to themselves or other people. They accept it and they can make an attempt to change their actions. They are also able to get used to the thought that there are people who have a negative opinion of them, though they themselves do not believe it is justified. They also feel comfortable when somebody reveals their strengths (cf. Król-Fijewska, 1993: 100).

Król-Fijewska (1993: 14) mentions the following as part of the block of basic skills of assertive behaviour:

- Saying 'no'
- Defending one's own rights
- Expressing positive feelings
- Expressing negative feelings
- Accepting the feelings and opinions of other people (accepting judgement, criticism, praise, reacting to criticism and attack)
- Establishing one's own laws
- Expressing one's own opinions and beliefs
- Speaking in an open forum – public speeches
- Assertive reaction to one's own sense of injustice and guilt
- Working on an internal monologue (recognising and transforming anti-assertive statements into pro-assertive ones).

Olga Castanyer shows the following main spheres of work in assertiveness trainings (Castanyer, 2008: 8):

- increasing respect towards oneself and other people
- improving the quality of relations
- raising self-esteem

According to this author, only someone exhibiting high self-esteem, respecting and appreciating oneself can enter satisfying relations with

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others, relations based on the principle of equality, not superiority or inferiority. Other people may outclass them in certain abilities, but they do not feel worse because of that. The irresistible need to be appreciated by others characterises non-assertive people, both shy and the opposite: aggressive people, trampling on others. A satisfying relation depends on whether we feel appreciated and respected. This in turn should not depend on another person, but on the abilities allowing to provide correct feedback in a given situation and on the set of beliefs concerning oneself, which determine whether we feel good with ourselves (cf. Castanyer, 2008: 17).

Retaining dignity requires, among other things, respecting and accepting one's own pace of reacting. Contrary to popular belief, there are very few situations in which man needs to react immediately. It is also important not to get your revenge with aggression, but to stay assertive in the face of aggressive behaviour.

The majority of the above-mentioned abilities to behave in an assertive way have been treated as guidelines for me and work in these spheres has become a part of the MAT programme.

### **Cognitive theory of social learning by Bandura / Modelling**

This approach to personality refers to social learning, from which I drew inspiration. It combines the rudiments of the theory of learning, with emphasis on interactions in social situations, it puts emphasis on cognitive processes taking part in acquiring and maintaining behaviour models, thus shaping personality.

Modelling, in therapeutic practice, is understood as acquiring skills through imitating another person, it is based on the results of research indicating that learning also takes place through observing other people's behaviours and finding the results of these behaviours. Observations show what is appropriate for an individual, what leads to reward, and what remains unnoticed or leads to punishment. Due to memory, one can predict potential consequences of one's own actions, without

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actually experiencing them. It is therefore possible to acquire certain skills, attitudes and beliefs, observing other people in action and its consequences (Bandura, 1971).

This capacity to learn from watching as well as from doing is extremely useful. It enables you to acquire large integrated patterns of behavior without going through the tedious trial-and-error process of gradually eliminating wrong responses and acquiring the right ones. You can profit immediately from the mistakes and successes of others. (Gerrig, 2013: 168).

Furthermore, one can “also learn an emotional reaction from those who reveal their reactions of pain, pleasure etc. in response to specific stimuli. The modelling technique does not only allow to create behaviour which the patient has not had in their repertoire so far. It is also possible to lead to an inhibition or disinhibition of these reactions which they are capable of showing. Therefore, it can result in inhibiting undesirable behaviours (e.g. aggressive ones) and disinhibiting adaptation behaviours (assertive ones etc.)” (Grzesiuk, 2005: 487).

Developing his theory, Bandura introduced the central concept of the sense of **self-efficacy** (Bandura, 1997). It consists in individual’s conviction that they will manage a given situation effectively. Even if individuals are actually able to do something and truly want it, they may not undertake required actions, or they may not strive to complete them, since they believe they do not have the right abilities. “Self-efficacy judgements influence how much effort you expend and how long you persist when faced with difficulty in a wide range of life situations” (Gerrig, 2013: 373).

It can be said that MAT provides an opportunity and conditions conducive, among other things, to raising the sense of efficacy mentioned above. Through implemented techniques of modelling – group members provide models of assertive behaviours for one another. Group training enables creating behaviours resulting from observation, which clients have not had in their repertoire so far. Moreover, modelling with swapping roles allows clients to confront the challenge and to practise the new models

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on themselves. The procedure is repeated until client's reactions as perceived by themselves, the group and the music therapist become assertive enough, thus leading to the sense of *self-efficacy* getting stronger.

### **Self-presentation**

Since one of the stages of working in MAT is self-presentation, I referred to the category described by Bogdan Wojciszke, who depicts self-presentation as shaping one's own image, controlling the way in which others perceive us (Wojciszke, 2002).

The author summarises the reflections and results of numerous researchers, which point to three significant motives for self-presentation:

- Deriving material and social benefits whose obtaining depends on other people.
- Self-enhancement understood as maintaining and raising self-esteem.
- Shaping the desirable personal identity.

In MAT, clients are motivated to practise self-presentation. In this way, they acquire skills often useful later in life, e.g. applying for a job. Raising self-esteem is equally valuable – it facilitates assertive communication. Also, presenting oneself in the way which confirms aspirations for selected identity (the identity of an assertive person) is highly desirable in MAT, since – as the author indicates later in the text – it has both interpersonal consequences (it affects the image created by others) and intrapersonal consequences (it affects the presenter themselves). In other words, the majority of self-presentation acts raise self-esteem and thus modify the presenter's concept of self (Wojciszke, 2002). Citing Tice's research of 1992, the author reveals that beliefs concerning oneself follow the self-presentation made, particularly when it has a public character.

This research justifies the application of self-presentation techniques in MAT.

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## Self-esteem

“Self-esteem is man’s affective reaction to themselves” (Wojciszke, 2002: 147). It can take on the nature of an emotion or an intellectualised judgement. Self-esteem measured with questionnaires, for instance the Rosenberg self-esteem scale involves variables such as: the sense and desire for internal control of events, justification for achievements, satisfaction with life, perseverance and the need for social approval, frequent experiencing of positive emotions, and rare experiencing of negative ones, e.g. anxiety, depression or the sense of hopelessness (Rosenberg, 1965). Furthermore, considerable research indicates that people with high self-esteem are characterised by better mental state, better state of somatic health and higher level of life achievements (Solomon, Greenberg, Pyszczynski, 1991).

Since researchers do not agree as to what the cause and what the result is, and the relations between self-esteem and the variables enumerated are systematic, it encourages to affect self-esteem in a positive way, to create opportunities to raise it in therapies or trainings, for instance MAT. However, raising self-esteem can be a – so to speak – side effect resulting from therapeutic work on other aspects of personality and social functioning, for instance assertiveness training, since “high self-esteem correlates with other ‘good’ aspects of personality and social functioning” (Wojciszke, 2002: 148).

Presumably, providing self-knowledge, self-discovery, insight into MAT have a positive influence on clients’ self-esteem, since, as Wojciszke comments later, “people with low self-esteem appear not to know well what kind of people they are – good, or bad (...). Uncertainty of beliefs concerning oneself also explains the frequently observed phenomenon of a greater plasticity of people with low compared to high self-esteem, i.e. greater susceptibility of their judgements and behaviours to feedback” (ibid.). Since people with irregular self-esteem react more strongly to feedback received from others, and their self-esteem is built more systematically, it portends well for MAT and constitutes its theoretical foundations for building positive self-esteem as a result of reinforcement received

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from the therapist and the group after completing tasks involving assertive behaviours. Providing opportunities to experience success in safe conditions, often in a symbolic dimension with the use of music or drama techniques, appears to be one of the most effective means of therapeutic influence, because you can assume that high self-esteem is a consequence of success. Therefore, influencing clients in order to improve solely their self-judgements will not result in them achieving success (Gerrig, Zimbardo, 2006).

### **Reference to the theory of multiple intelligences by H. Gardner**

The term of multiple intelligences was introduced by Howard Gardner in 1983, when he distinguished seven types of intelligence: linguistic, mathematical-logical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal (Gardner, 2002: 27). In later publications, the author also distinguished the eighth type of intelligence – the naturalistic, and subsequently: spiritual, existential, moral and philosophical intelligence.

Gardner explains that individuals differ from one another in the intelligence profile. These are biological potentials, which teachers can help develop in their students. He encourages to select teaching methods most suitable for a given individual. Moreover, Gardner emphasises the importance of understanding the world by the student, which is connected with emotions, reflection, efficient adaptation to the social environment. He believes that students understand only when they can put the knowledge acquired into practice in natural situations – i.e. the ones, in which it will be naturally useful.

In MAT, I concentrated on two types of intelligence distinguished and on the ways of providing opportunities to understand and experience them in safe, therapeutic conditions. Namely:

- **Interpersonal intelligence** understood by Gardner as the capacity to discern and react appropriately to the moods, temperaments and desires of other people.

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- **Intrapersonal intelligence** understood as access to one's own emotions, the capacity to differentiate between them and to rely on them while managing behaviour. Also, as knowledge of one's own strengths, desires, intelligences and weaknesses.

These are the types of intelligence which should be developed in every pedagogue, without them, they will not be able to help their students, who they will be taking care of some time in the future. The opportunity to develop these, as offered in MAT, thus represents a contribution to broadening the competences of a future pedagogue and a true value supporting effectively functioning interpersonal relations.

### **What is Musical Assertiveness Training (MAT)?**

MAT is designed as a workshop on the development of personality and ability to communicate in an assertive way, which constitutes a value, translating into satisfaction with relations, both professional and referring to private life. It enables the development of the abilities mentioned above through well-thought-out original arts-therapeutic strategy, based on the current scientific achievements in the field of social skills trainings, including assertiveness trainings. MAT draws on the theory of learning including cognitive processes; it uses, among other things, behavioural and cognitive techniques, such as shaping techniques; it applies the concept of self-presentation. Moreover, it refers to Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, in particular to the intrapersonal and interpersonal types. The theories and concepts mentioned as well as their reference to MAT are described further in the paper.

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### **The objective of Musical Assertiveness Training (MAT):**

The main objectives of MAT were developed on the basis of the key assumptions of the assertion theory, and they are realized in the following areas:

- **In the cognitive dimension** – extending knowledge of oneself, stimulating reflection, obtaining insight, extending knowledge on the subject of assertive behaviours, stimulating mental activity: imagination and fantasy, creative thinking. Raising awareness as to one's own strategy for behaviours, influence on other people and being influenced.
- **In the emotional dimension** – facilitating access to emotions and needs, raising awareness of and naming emotions, activating emotions and training how to express them in a socially accepted way, releasing tensions and strong negative emotions, catharsis, gaining control over emotions, arousing desirable emotions, sensitising, shaping the attitude of empathy, restoring emotional balance.
- **In the personality dimension** – musical projection enables reaching unwanted and frequently driven away spheres of personality and allows to integrate it better – both the wanted and unwanted traits through discovering and enhancing the positive and through accepting and getting rid of excessive concentration on the negative; it aspires to raise self-esteem, it shapes and develops new attitudes and behaviours. It supports development.
- **In the social dimension** – perfecting skills of interacting in a group, taking advantage of social support; self-presentation and elements of self-promotion in a group. MAT corrects the attitude of excessive anxiety, withdrawn or aggressive (opposite attitudes). It leads to reducing unwanted behaviours in situations connected with social exposure, avoidant behaviours.
- **In the communication dimension** – acquiring a new language of communication, maintaining satisfying relations with others.



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- **In the motivation dimension** – arousing readiness for change, acquiring perseverance despite adversities.
  - **In the psycho-motor dimension** – reducing psycho-physical tensions, learning to relax, breathe properly, shaping physical expression.

### **Who is MAT for?**

It is directed to everyone who wants to develop their personality, who wants to deepen their knowledge of themselves, to improve intra- and interpersonal communication, who aspires to improve the quality of life. Moreover, in therapeutic conditions, it is meant for those who contend with low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence, those who are not able to deal with criticism, those who have difficulties saying 'no' and defending their own rights, those who feel anxiety in social situations, those who feel exploited by others, those who feel obliged to meet other people's expectations, those who do not manage conflictual situations.

### **The MAT programme**

I divided the proposal for the programme into the cycle of twelve music-therapeutic sessions. The first part of the programme, i.e. sessions 1-6, constitute a kind of foundation. The work is largely intrapersonal, within the scope of *I*. It provides clients with self-knowledge, it provokes reflection and taking care of oneself, it develops creative attitudes in aspiring to improve the quality of life. It enables access to one's own emotions, it trains the ability to distinguish and express them as well as to regulate emotions and to relax.

In the second part of the programme, i.e. meetings 7-12, the training concerns the skills of interpersonal communication, holding assertive dialogues, defining and defending one's own limits, rights and beliefs. By assuming roles in various types of drama scenes, clients observe their

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relations with other people and have an opportunity to go through them. The scenes also provide opportunities to experience one's own effectiveness, since the exercises are practised for such a long time for the group and the music therapist as to accept the behaviour as sufficiently assertive. Clients observe their group roles. They have an opportunity to express themselves in a creative way in the process of self-presentation with elements of self-promotion.

The topics of individual sessions are thought through on the principle "from inside towards outside", they grade attaining assertive behaviours step by step. Each of the topics is important and shall be omitted in working on assertiveness. However, the selection of exercises may be subject to therapist's individual decisions and opinions, adaptation to the level and openness of the group. For example, there are numerous exercises which reveal group roles and I am far from imposing one "golden" exercise, since it does not exist. Therefore, I do not include detailed scenarios, but only a framework of the issues explored in individual meetings.

The editorial restrictions do not allow for including a description of particular exercises for each music therapy session, that is why I presented only the outline of the strategy and the subject of each session.

### **The highlights of individual meetings**

- Meeting 1:** Introducing. Establishing rules. Integrating exercises. Identifying emotions that accompany us every day and their expression.
- Meeting 2:** Feeling, experiencing pleasure. Experiencing one's own corporeality and physical closeness to others. Massage with sound.
- Meeting 3:** Getting to wounds, lack of acceptance, suffering, pain – providing care for oneself, experiencing relief. Intensifying relief by taking advantage of the social support of the group. Fostering the sense of one's own dignity.

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- Meeting 4:** Discovering and expressing needs and desires.
- Meeting 5:** Getting to know one's own strengths, integration of weaknesses. Positive affirmation of oneself, which is also expressed in boosting other people's confidence (resulting in raising self-esteem).
- Meeting 6:** Expressing negative emotions. Relieving tensions, learning to relax – breathing exercises, visualisation.
- Meeting 7:** My place in the group, getting to know and discussing group roles.
- Meeting 8:** Grading reactions of anger, assertive reactions to somebody else's anger. Practising open, direct and honest communication. Defining and defending one's own limits.
- Meeting 9:** Saying *no* / reprimanding. Expressing requests / accepting refusal. Defending one's own position.
- Meeting 10:** Criticism. Accepting other people's emotions and opinions and reacting in an assertive way. Assertive reaction to aggression, receiving praise.
- Meeting 11:** Self-presentation in public, speeches. My voice as my tool, my strength – exercises in vocal expression.
- Meeting 12:** Laughter therapy. Releasing tension, abreaction. Building a positive approach to the world, distance from oneself. Expressing gratitude.

### **The forms of music therapy used in MAT**

MAT employs traditional techniques and methods used in music therapy, including receptive and active music therapy techniques. It also contains elements of other arts therapies such as dance movement therapy, dramatherapy and art therapy. My contribution lies in the selection of activities, their sequence, gradation of problems, and the development of detailed plans for 12 meetings.

1. Receptive music therapy
  - a) imaginary and projective techniques:
    - free associations while listening to music
    - techniques of directed imagination
    - sentence completion tasks
    - drawing while listening to music
  - b) visualization / relaxation
  
2. Active music therapy
  - a) improvisation techniques (instrumental, vocal, movement)
    - individual improvisation
    - group improvisation
    - a musical dialogue between a therapist and a patient or between patients
    - movement to music
  
3. Other arts therapeutic techniques
  - a) drama
  - b) dance
  - c) drawing

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## La competencia comunicativa y lingüística en la formación inicial de maestros: un estudio piloto<sup>1</sup> [Communicative and Linguistic Competence in Initial Teacher Training: a Pilot Study]

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**Resumen:** La evaluación de la competencia comunicativa (hablar y escuchar) de los estudiantes en la formación inicial de maestros constituye un ámbito de estudio con pocas investigaciones a pesar de su importancia, tanto para el propio proceso de aprendizaje como para el posterior desempeño profesional. En este artículo se presentan los resultados de un estudio piloto cuyo objetivo es identificar los cambios en las habilidades de los estudiantes de dos grupos del grado de maestro al introducirse una innovación docente con el propósito de contribuir a mejorar su competencia comunicativa y lingüística oral. Los instrumentos de evaluación utilizados son la EVALOE y una rúbrica relativa al texto argumentativo. Los resultados ponen de manifiesto la adecuación de estos instrumentos tanto como recursos de innovación docente para la mejora de la competencia oral de los estudiantes, como de su evaluación.

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**Palabras clave:** competencia lingüística oral, evaluación, formación inicial de maestros, rúbrica

**Abstract:** The assessment of communicative competence (speaking and listening) of students in initial teacher training is a field of study with few research despite its importance both for the learning process itself and for the subsequent professional performance. This article presents the results of a pilot study designed to identify the changes in the students' abilities from two groups in the initial teaching training when introducing a teaching innovation with the purpose of contributing to improve their oral communicative and linguistic competence. The evaluation instruments used are EVALOE and a rubric about the argumentative text. The results show the adequacy of these instruments as teaching innovation resources for both the improvement of the students' oral competence and its assessment.

**Keywords:** oral linguistic competence, assessment, initial teacher training, interaction, rubric

## Introducción

La competencia comunicativa (hablar y escuchar) forma parte actualmente de la mayoría de currículums, desde la educación infantil hasta la universidad. Sin embargo, en todos los niveles educativos, exceptuando la educación infantil, los objetivos y contenidos vinculados al desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa en todas sus dimensiones (gestión de la conversación, argumentación, cohesión, coherencia...) se trabajan, habitualmente, de manera poco sistemática y explícita, excepto en las presentaciones orales formales (Gràcia, Galván-Bovaira, Sánchez-Cano, 2017).

Para conseguir que los alumnos en las etapas de educación infantil y primaria desarrollen las habilidades a las que se acaba de hacer referencia en el apartado anterior, es necesario que sus maestros sean



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conscientes de esta necesidad y que, al mismo tiempo, hayan desarrollado competencias para ayudar a sus alumnos a desarrollarlas.

Tal como señala Peña (2008) en un trabajo sobre competencias básicas en educación superior, y específicamente sobre la competencia oral y escrita, el valor de la lectura, la escritura y la expresión oral radica fundamentalmente, en su consideración como instrumentos poderosos para producir y transformar el conocimiento, mejorar la calidad de los aprendizajes, desarrollar el pensamiento crítico de los estudiantes y hacerlos partícipes en el proceso de su formación. Además de su contribución a los citados logros académicos, la capacidad para comunicar las ideas de una manera clara y convincente en forma oral, en el caso de los estudiantes que se preparan para trabajar de maestros, es una condición indispensable para su desempeño profesional, puesto que van a tener que ayudar a sus propios alumnos a desarrollar esta capacidad.

En un estudio realizado sobre el desarrollo de las competencias orales y escritas en el marco del Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior (Ruíz-Muñoz, 2012), se pone de relieve la carencia de publicaciones en las que se describan experiencias centradas en la competencia oral y escrita de los estudiantes universitarios.

Por su parte, Monarca (2013), en un trabajo de reflexión sobre la importancia de fomentar la participación de los estudiantes universitarios en las clases como elemento de construcción del pensamiento crítico, señala que este enfoque conlleva una serie de concepciones sobre la construcción del discurso didáctico (Acosta, 2012), la construcción del conocimiento como producto social compartido, la construcción del conocimiento como proceso subjetivo y de aprendizaje del sujeto, por tanto, una idea sobre cómo se aprende y cómo se enseña. Coincidimos con el autor en que esta participación, entendida en su mayor parte como participación a partir de intervenciones orales en las clases, supone entender que se trata de una práctica y una competencia que se aprende, cuyo aprendizaje forma parte de la historia del sujeto y que, por tanto, este debe ser contemplado por quien enseña, lo cual requiere que forme parte de la propuesta didáctica, de la acción educativa. Sin embargo, y a pesar de los planteamientos anteriores, es evidente que en los últimos

veinte años, esta competencia ha sido uno de los contenidos más importantes de la formación inicial de maestros (Ogienko, Rolyak, 2009).

Los resultados de un estudio realizado por Gràcia y colaboradores (Gràcia, Vega, Castells, Vinyoles, Galve, 2015; Gràcia, Vega, Jarque, Biten-court, 2015; Gràcia et al., 2016, 2017) sugieren la necesidad de introducir cambios en la formación inicial de maestros con el fin de ayudar a los estudiantes a mejorar su competencia comunicativa, como estudiantes universitarios y como futuros maestros. Los estudiantes necesitan tomar conciencia de que la habilidad de intervenir en clase, durante la revisión de conocimientos previos, durante el trabajo en pequeño grupo en clase (Li, Zheng, Tang, Sang, 2015), en las puestas en común posteriores, es fundamental para dar sentido a los contenidos y para aprenderlos con un elevado grado de significatividad, y ello incluye la reflexión sobre sus competencias para gestionar una conversación, para generar textos coherentes y cohesionados, para argumentar sus opiniones, para contraargumentar o refutar las de los compañeros o el profesor, para formular preguntas que enriquezcan la discusión, etc.

Como futuros maestros, estas estrategias les serán útiles para convertir las clases en entornos comunicativos en los que los alumnos participen, pregunten, gestionen, reflexionen sobre el lenguaje para mejorar su competencia comunicativa y para dar sentido al aprendizaje de todos los contenidos.

A partir de los resultados obtenidos en la primera fase del estudio citado (Gràcia et al., 2016, 2017), los investigadores se propusieron probar la eficacia de algunos instrumentos, recursos y estrategias con el fin de mejorar la competencia comunicativa y lingüística de los estudiantes universitarios de los grados de maestro de educación infantil y de educación primaria. Concretamente, se propusieron contribuir a la mejora de las habilidades conversaciones de los estudiantes, especialmente argumentativas, cuando trabajan en grupos cooperativos en el aula, así como favorecer el desarrollo de habilidades discursivas y argumentativas durante las discusiones en gran grupo, antes o después de realizar alguna actividad en grupo cooperativo, y sus habilidades para construir textos orales monogestionados que forman parte del proceso de evaluación de la asignatura.

Uno de los instrumentos que fue utilizado como herramienta de innovación docente fue la EVALOE (Gràcia, Galván-Bovaira et al., 2015; Gràcia, Vega, Galván-Bovaira, 2015), una escala formada por 30 ítems, agrupados en tres subescalas que pueden ser puntuados del 1 al 3. Se trata de un instrumento validado para observar y valorar sesiones de clase en contexto de educación infantil y primaria respecto a la manera como la maestra gestiona la clase como entorno comunicativo, es decir, para promover el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa y lingüística de los alumnos. La base de esta herramienta es la Metodología Conversacional (Gràcia et al., 2017), propuesta en la que el discurso oral es objeto y mediador en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje. En el caso del estudio al que nos hemos referido en contexto universitario, esta metodología incluyó recursos y estrategias como trabajar los contenidos de los diferentes contenidos otorgando especial importancia a la lengua oral, tanto desde el punto de vista expresivo (hablar) como comprensivo (escuchar); promover la capacidad metalingüística de los alumnos; explicitar los objetivos que se pretenden alcanzar; utilizar estrategias para reformular las producciones de los alumnos y para promover el uso del lenguaje con diferentes intenciones (preguntar, aclarar, sugerir...); trabajar en grupos cooperativos; incorporar a la evaluación la construcción de textos argumentativos monogestionados y plurigestionados registrados en vídeo.

Además del instrumento descrito anteriormente, se elaboró una rúbrica para evaluar la discusión argumentativa como recurso para enseñar y aprender, que tenía como objetivo observar, registrar y evaluar la competencia comunicativa y lingüística relacionadas con la conversación argumentativa en grupo cooperativo y en grupo clase. La rúbrica estaba organizada en 7 dimensiones: 1) gestión de la interacción, que hace referencia a la capacidad para gestionar la interacción en red y que comprende cuatro subdimensiones (uso de marcadores interactivos que favorecen la participación en red, tanto lingüísticos como gestuales, la participación en turnos comunicativos, la gestión de la participación y el uso de estrategias de cortesía) (Schegloff, 2007); 2) capacidad de poner en marcha los recursos multimodales que caracterizan la interacción social, que incluye el uso de gestos que contribuyen cualitativamente

a la expresión verbal: gestos manuales, batutas, faciales y corporales; 3) uso de la prosodia, es decir, a la capacidad de poner la locución al servicio de la expresión clara del contenido y la transmisión de emociones, que comprende dos subdimensiones (uso de la entonación en las diferentes construcciones lingüísticas y características que presenta la locución, tanto con relación a elementos prosódicos como paralingüísticos) (Selting, 2010); 4) coherencia, es decir, la exposición, agrupación y secuencia de las ideas que proporcionan un sentido unitario y un carácter completo al contenido de la información; 5) cohesión textual, que incluye tanto la conexión entre fragmentos y oraciones mediante conectores, como el tratamiento de la información mediante marcadores discursivos u operadores modales (Pertusa, Jarque, 2015); 6) capacidad de formular y argumentar razonadamente una posición con el objetivo de llegar a un consenso que presenta siete subdimensiones (formulación de la tesis, validez de los argumentos, exposición de contraargumentos, identificación de falacias, formulación de conclusiones, uso de construcciones evidenciales que indiquen la fuente de la información y uso de patrones en la secuencia argumentativa (Cano, 2010; Kuhn, Zillmer, Crowell, Zavala, 2013; Felton, Garcia-Milà, Villarroel, Gilabert, 2015); 7) capacidad de expresión precisa y variada teniendo en cuenta dos subdimensiones (léxico común y terminología del área).

Los resultados obtenidos en la segunda fase del estudio al que nos estamos refiriendo (Gràcia et al., 2017), en el que participaron dos grupos de estudiantes de una asignatura anual de primer curso de educación infantil (Gràcia et al., 2017; Gràcia, Jarque, Astals, Rouaz, en prensa) y dos grupos educación primaria de la misma asignatura muestran que los grupos en los que se introdujo la innovación obtenían mejores puntuaciones en la rúbrica a la que se ha hecho referencia anteriormente, y en la EVALOE, que aquellos en los que no se había introducido.

A partir de los resultados obtenidos en el estudio de Gràcia et al. (2017), se diseñó el estudio que se presenta, que tiene como propósito identificar los cambios que se producen en las habilidades de los estudiantes universitarios de dos grupos del grado de maestros a lo largo de un semestre cuando sus profesoras introducen una innovación docente

que tiene el propósito de ayudarles a mejorar sus competencias comunicativas y lingüísticas orales, específicamente las de tipo discursivo y argumentativo.

### **Método**

El estudio presenta las características de una investigación-acción (Latorre, 2003; Riba, 2009) en la que las investigadoras están directamente implicadas en la formación de las participantes con el fin de que implementen la innovación docente en sus asignaturas. Al mismo tiempo se trata de un estudio de casos (Yin, 2009) que se analizan con cierta profundidad, entendiéndose por caso al grupo de estudiantes y sus respectivas profesoras.

### **Participantes**

Han participado en esta investigación dos docentes del grado maestro y sus grupos estudiantes de dos asignaturas del grado de maestro de la Universidad de Barcelona. El primer grupo está formado por 50 estudiantes de una asignatura obligatoria para estudiantes del grado de educación primaria de segundo curso, *Escuela inclusiva*, y la segunda por 48 estudiantes de una asignatura optativa de cuarto curso, *Intervención en las dificultades de la comunicación y lengua escrita*, de la mención de *Atención a la diversidad*, que mayoritariamente están cursando el grado de maestro de educación primaria. La asignatura de primer curso tiene 6 créditos, que supone dos clases de dos horas semanales y la de cuarto curso tiene 3 créditos, que supone una clase de dos horas semanales. Las dos profesoras tienen una experiencia de más de tres años en las asignaturas implicadas.

Han participado también en la recogida de datos dos estudiantes de grado de Psicología proporcionado apoyo en los registros de vídeo de clases y en el almacenado y análisis de los datos registrados y recogidos.

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### *Instrumentos*

*A continuación se presentan un conjunto de instrumentos de intervención y de evaluación y análisis elaborados ad hoc para esta investigación en algunos casos y validados en otros.*

#### **1. Construcción de Textos Argumentativos en la Formación de Maestros (CTA)**

Se trata de un documento de 40 páginas elaborado por el equipo investigador que presenta los fundamentos teóricos que están en la base de la rúbrica. Concretamente se centra en la descripción de lo que son los textos argumentativos, los tipos de argumentos, contraargumentos, falacias, etc. Incluye numerosos enlaces a textos orales de diferente tipo vinculados al área de conocimiento de las asignaturas implicadas, psicología del desarrollo y de la educación. Los diferentes textos son analizados desde el punto de vista argumentativo. El documento incluye al final un glosario de 3 páginas que recoge y describe aquellos términos susceptibles de generar dudas. Es decir, se trata de un glosario de los términos más complicados, técnicos o muy específicos del campo.

El documento CTA es un instrumento elaborado para las profesoras participantes y para los estudiantes. En el primer caso, constituye un ingrediente más de la propuesta de innovación, y en el segundo se propone proporcionar a los estudiantes herramientas para la reflexión sobre la actividad argumentativa y la construcción de sus propios textos.

#### **2. Seguimiento, Registro y Evaluación de la Conversación Argumentativa: Rúbrica**

Este instrumento, construido *ad hoc* para el conjunto de proyectos en el que se incluye este trabajo, y que ya ha sido justificado a nivel teórico en el apartado introductorio del artículo, tiene como objetivo observar, registrar y evaluar la competencia comunicativa y lingüística relacionadas con la conversación argumentativa en grupo cooperativo y

en grupo clase. La rúbrica comprende dimensiones, indicadores, una breve explicación de indicadores y una breve explicación de cada uno de los descriptores (del 1 al 4).

**Tabla 1. Dimensiones e indicadores de la rúbrica.**

Dimensiones	Indicadores	1	2	3	4
Gestión de la interacción	Marcadores interactivos				
	Turnos comunicativos				
	Estrategias de cortesía				
Coherencia y estrategias argumentativas	Tesis y validez de la argumentación				
	Contraargumentos y refutaciones				
	Selección y organización de la información				
	Construcciones evidenciales				
Léxico y terminología	Léxico común y terminología				
Cohesión textual: conexión	Conexión entre fragmentos y oraciones				
	Tratamiento de la información				
Multimodalidad	Gestos manuales, faciales y corporales				
	Posición corporal y gestualidad				
Prosodia	Entonación				
	Locución				

### **3. Escala de Valoración de la Enseñanza de la Lengua Oral en Contexto Escolar (EVALOE)**

Tal como ya se ha explicado en el apartado introductorio, la EVALOE es una escala formada por 30 ítems agrupados en tres subescalas que pueden ser puntuados del 1 al 3. Se trata de una escala validada en contexto de educación infantil y primaria (Gràcia, Galván-Bovaira et al., 2015) que en el conjunto de proyectos en el que se enmarca este trabajo ha sido utilizada en contexto universitario para valorar la manera como los profesores participantes enseñan lengua oral en clase (ver tabla 2).

**Tabla 2. Breve descripción de las tres subescalas que forman la EVALOE y puntuación total que se puede obtener en cada una y en el instrumento.**

Subescalas	Descripción	Puntuación
Contexto y gestión de la comunicación (7 ítems)	Evalúa de manera global la organización del contexto aula y de la comunicación (contexto físico y normas)	-/ 24
Diseño instruccional (8 ítems)	Evalúa aquellos objetivos, actividades y la evaluación en relación con la lengua oral, para ver si se incorpora dicha información y si se hace explícita en las programaciones	-/ 21
Funciones comunicativas y estrategias (15 ítems)	Evalúa cómo el maestro enseña a utilizar los recursos de la lengua oral para determinados propósitos sociales (informar, preguntar y otros), así como el uso de ciertas estrategias educativas para promover la expresión de los alumnos	-/ 45
TOTAL		-/ 90

#### **4. Innovación Docente para la Mejora de la Competencia Comunicativa Oral de los Estudiantes del Grado de Maestro**

Las estrategias, orientaciones e instrumentos que configuran la innovación docente que implementan las dos profesoras participantes están recogidas en un documento de siete páginas en el que se sistematizan los elementos clave que se pretende que las docentes incorporen en sus clases, incluyendo el uso concreto de los instrumentos que acabamos de presentar.

Por una parte, se introducen en este documento las estrategias que las docentes pueden utilizar para hacer ver a sus estudiantes la importancia de incorporar, en las discusiones argumentativas orales, las dimensiones que se recogen en la rúbrica que se presenta, así como la importancia de que se haga de manera sistemática para que estas discusiones puedan ser útiles para aprender los contenidos de la asignatura y al mismo tiempo para desarrollar la competencia lingüística oral. También se incluyen orientaciones para que las profesoras hagan ver a los estudiantes que ellas mismas son un modelo de uso de estas estrategias y elementos comunicativos, como son las estrategias de gestión de la interacción (cortesía, gestión de turnos...), la gestualidad, los argumentos y contraargumentos, el uso adecuado de la terminología, la entonación, entre otras.



Por otra parte, el instrumento recoge las estrategias que están en la base de la EVALOE, proporcionando ayudas a los docentes para que planteen sus clases como espacios comunicativos en los que los alumnos sean conscientes de los objetivos vinculados a la lengua oral que se pretende trabajar, la utilización de estrategias de gestión de la conversación, la evaluación y autoevaluación de sus competencias comunicativas como un elemento más de las clases, entre otros aspectos.

En definitiva, se trata de un instrumento que pretende ser el “manual” de las profesoras para poder implementar la innovación de manera similar, con las necesarias adaptaciones a su grupo de alumnos y asignatura, a partir de su experiencia y conocimientos previos.

### ***Procedimiento de recogida de datos***

El proceso de recogida de datos se ha desarrollado siguiendo una serie de pasos. En primer lugar, la investigadora principal se reunió con las dos profesoras escogidas para llevar a la práctica el proyecto de innovación docente y se acordó un programa de reuniones con el fin de compartir con ellas la propuesta de innovación, que consistió básicamente en: 1) proporcionarles una serie de documentos en los que se recogían los resultados de los proyectos anteriores del equipo sobre la temática, así como los instrumentos elaborados específicamente para este proyecto; y 2) la realización de cuatro reuniones de dos horas a lo largo del primer semestre del curso en las que se trabajaron los documentos. Durante las cuatro reuniones, en las que participaron dos investigadoras, así como dos estudiantes de grado, además de las dos profesoras, se presentaron y discutieron las líneas generales del proyecto de innovación docente y se tomaron decisiones conjuntas sobre la implementación en las dos asignaturas. Se realizaron conjuntamente los calendarios de cada asignatura, incluyendo actividades en clase y actividades evaluativas, en las que se recogían elementos vinculados al uso de discusiones argumentativas en pequeño grupo y en gran grupo, así como la manera como se recogerían los datos en cada grupo.

Teniendo en cuenta los resultados de los estudios anteriores desarrollados por el equipo investigador vinculados a los proyectos ARMIF

(Gràcia et al., 2017), así como las características de las dos profesoras, se introdujeron los ajustes necesarios a la propuesta de innovación docente inicial. Como parte de la evaluación de las asignaturas las profesoras pidieron a sus estudiantes actividades que implicaban realizar discusiones argumentativas para dar respuesta a alguna cuestión y que las registrasen en vídeo.

Durante el segundo semestre del curso, al mismo tiempo que se estaba introduciendo la innovación docente en las dos asignaturas y se estaban recogiendo los datos, las dos investigadoras se reunieron semanalmente con las dos profesoras y las dos estudiantes de grado con el fin de compartir el proceso de implementación, de resolver las dudas que se iban planteando sobre la propia invocación y sobre la recogida de datos. Con el fin de que las reuniones fuesen más productivas, las dos profesoras recogían sus impresiones sobre cada una de las clases en un diario de campo, sin un guion ni estructura preestablecida, que en algunos casos nos ha sido útil para interpretar los resultados.

### *Procedimiento de análisis de datos*

Las sesiones de clase registradas en vídeo han sido analizadas por las dos investigadoras y por las dos estudiantes del grado. Se analizaron todas las grabaciones en vídeo de las clases. En cuanto a los registros en vídeo de las actividades evaluativas, se analizaron todos, aunque por razones de espacio en este artículo únicamente se presentan los resultados de cinco grupos de una de las asignaturas.

Los instrumentos utilizados para analizar las sesiones de clase registradas fueron la rúbrica y la EVALOE. Los audios de los grupos pequeños se analizaron con la rúbrica.

### **Resultados**

**Se presentan los resultados de los dos grupos relativas a las sesiones de clase y las conversaciones en grupos pequeños fuera de clase. Por**

## razones de espacio no se presentan resultados de las conversaciones en grupo pequeño realizadas en clase.

### *Discusiones en grupo clase*

En las Tablas 3 y 4 se presentan los resultados vinculados al análisis de las sesiones de clase del grupo de segundo curso y del grupo de cuarto curso. En los diarios de campos las profesoras recogen las características de las sesiones en general, y en particular de las registradas. La profesora del grupo de segundo curso refiere que dedica algunas sesiones a discutir con los estudiantes el documento de Construcción de Textos Argumentativos al que ya hemos hecho referencia, así como a discutir la rúbrica y revisar las puntuaciones que han asignado a algunas de las discusiones que llevan a cabo en clase. También indica que trata de incorporar las propuestas de la innovación docente diseñada por el equipo en todas las clases, teniendo en cuenta los aspectos de gestión de la conversación, de diseño instruccional y de funciones comunicativas y estrategias. Por su parte, la profesora de cuarto señala que también usa los instrumentos mencionados en clase y los comenta con sus estudiantes, teniendo en cuenta la propuesta metodológica diseñada.

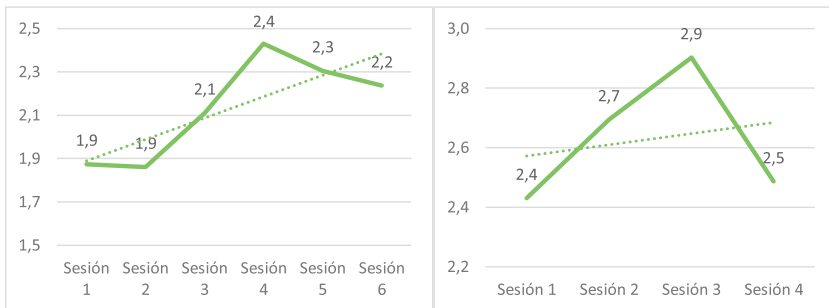
**Tabla 3. Resultados relativos al análisis de las seis sesiones de clase con la rúbrica en el grupo de segundo curso.**

Grupo de segundo curso						
Dimensiones	1	2	3	4	5	6
Gestión de la interacción	2,0	1,7	1,7	2,3	2,3	1,7
Coherencia y estrategias argumentativas	1,8	1,5	2,0	1,8	2,0	1,8
Léxico y terminología	2,0	2,0	2,0	3,0	2,0	2,0
Cohesión textual: conexión	1,5	2,0	2,5	2,5	2,5	2,5
Multimodalidad	2,5	2,0	3,0	3,0	3,0	3,0
Prosodia	1,5	2,0	1,5	2,0	2,0	2,5

**Tabla 4. Resultados relativos al análisis de las cuatro sesiones de clase con la rúbrica en el grupo de cuarto curso.**

Grupo de cuarto curso				
Dimensiones	1	2	3	4
Gestión de la interacción	2,3	2,7	2,7	2,7
Coherencia y estrategias argumentativas	2,3	2,5	3,3	2,8
Léxico y terminología	2	3,0	3,0	2,0
Cohesión textual: conexión	3	3,0	3,5	3,0
Multimodalidad	2,5	2,5	2,5	2,5
Prosodia	2,5	2,5	2,5	2,0

En la Figura 1 se muestran los resultados relativos a los cambios en las competencias discursivas y argumentativas de los estudiantes y las profesoras de los dos grupos a lo largo de semestres.



**Figura 1. Resultados totales de la evaluación de las sesiones de clase con la rúbrica en los dos grupos (grupo primer curso a la derecha y segundo curso a la izquierda). Se muestran los totales de las diferentes sesiones que han tenido lugar, puntuando del 1 al 4 en función del ajuste a la descripción cualitativa que se incluye en la rúbrica.**

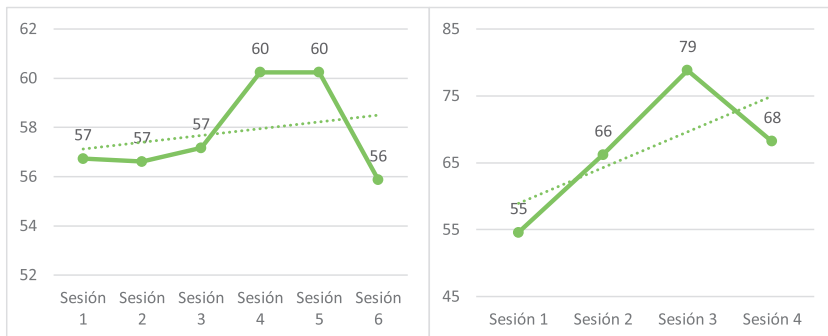
**En las Tablas 5 y 6 se presentan los resultados vinculados al progreso de los estudiantes y las profesoras en cuanto a la gestión de la comunicación, el diseño instruccional y las funciones y estrategias comunicativas medidas a través de la EVALOE.**

**Tabla 5. Resultados vinculados al análisis de las sesiones de clase del grupo de segundo curso con la EVALOE. Se muestra el porcentaje alcanzado en cada sesión.**

Grupo de segundo curso						
Subescalas	Sesión 1	Sesión 2	Sesión 3	Sesión 4	Sesión 5	Sesión 6
Contexto y gestión de la comunicación	71%	67%	75%	75%	75%	67%
Diseño instruccional	57%	48%	48%	52%	52%	48%
Funciones comunicativas y estrategias	42%	56%	49%	53%	53%	53%

**Tabla 6. Resultados vinculados al análisis de las sesiones de clase del grupo de cuarto curso con la EVALOE. Se muestra el porcentaje alcanzado en cada sesión.**

Grupo de cuarto curso				
Subescalas	Sesión 1	Sesión 2	Sesión 3	Sesión 4
Contexto y gestión de la comunicación	63%	79%	92%	83%
Diseño instruccional	52%	57%	71%	52%
Funciones comunicativas y estrategias	49%	62%	73%	69%



**Fig. 2. Resultados totales del análisis de las sesiones de clase con EVALOE en el grupo de segundo curso (izquierda) y de cuarto curso (derecha) Caso 2.**

*Discusiones en grupos pequeños fuera de clase*

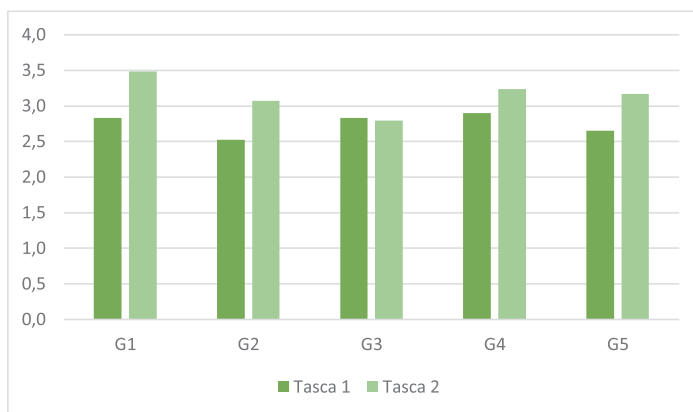
En la Tabla 7 se presentan los resultados relativos al progreso de los cinco grupos pequeños del grupo de cuarto curso. Se muestran resultados de la Tarea 1, vinculada al primer bloque temático de la asignatura, y de la Tarea 2, vinculada al tercer bloque de la asignatura, con relación a la incorporación de las estrategias discursivas y argumentativas en las discusiones en pequeño grupo fuera del aula, llevadas a cabo como parte de la evaluación de la asignatura.

**Tabla 7. Resultados del análisis de las discusiones en pequeño grupo de cinco grupos de trabajo del grupo de cuarto curso registradas en vídeo.**

Grupo cuarto curso										
	G1		G2		G3		G4		G5	
Dimensiones	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2
Gestión de la interacción	3,0	3,7	2,7	3,7	3	3,0	3,7	3,7	2,7	3,0

Coherencia y estrategias argumentativas	2,0	3,3	2	2,8	2,5	1,8	2,8	3,3	2,3	3,0
Léxico y terminología	3,0	4,0	3	3,0	3	3,0	3	4,0	3	4,0
Cohesión textual: conexión	3,0	4,0	2,5	3,0	2,5	3,0	3	2,5	2,5	3,0
Multimodalidad	3,0	3,0	3	3,0	3	3,0	2,5	3,0	3	3,0
Prosodia	3,0	3,0	2	3,0	3	3,0	2,5	3,0	2,5	3,0

En la Figura 3 se presentan los resultados totales vinculados a la actividad evaluativa de cinco grupos de trabajo del grupo de cuarto curso analizados con la rúbrica.



**Fig. 3. Resultados totales del análisis con la rúbrica de las dos tareas vinculadas a los bloques temáticos 1 y 3 de la asignatura de cuarto curso.**

## Discusión

El propósito del estudio era identificar los cambios que producen en las habilidades de los estudiantes universitarios de dos grupos del grado de maestro a lo largo de un semestre cuando sus profesoras introducen una innovación docente que pretende ayudarles a mejorar sus compe-

tencias comunicativas y lingüísticas orales, específicamente las de tipo discursivo y argumentativo. Se han presentado resultados de dos grupos clase que tienen diferentes características. Si bien el objetivo de la investigación no era comparar los dos grupos, los resultados ponen de relieve algunas diferencias entre ellos, que probablemente tengan relación con las estrategias y estilo docente y los conocimientos teóricos y prácticos vinculados a la propuesta de innovación docente.

Los resultados relativos al análisis de las sesiones de clase ponen de manifiesto que el instrumento elaborado al mismo tiempo como herramienta de innovación docente y de análisis, nos ha permitido detectar que los dos grupos clase parten de puntos diferentes. Mientras la puntuación de la primera sesión registrada del grupo de segundo curso es de 1,9, la de cuarto curso es de 2,4. En el primer caso se produce un incremento de las puntuaciones totales, de la misma manera que en el grupo de cuarto curso, a pesar de un descenso en la última sesión. A pesar del incremento en los dos casos, en el grupo de cuarto curso es más elevado, puesto llega a una puntuación de 2,9, mientras el grupo de segundo curso se queda en 2,4. En todos los casos se trata de puntuaciones sobre un total de 4.

Estos resultados parecen indicar que la profesora y sus estudiantes de segundo curso, respecto a las estrategias de gestión de la interacción, hacen algún uso de los marcadores interactivos aunque no de manera sistemática, la extensión de los turnos es a menudo asimétrica, en general, debido a que la profesora participa más que los estudiantes; y que utilizan algunas estrategias de cortesía pero no de manera muy evidente; sin embargo, se aprecia un ligero aumento de los resultados de esta dimensión en algunas de las sesiones. Respecto a la coherencia y a las estrategias argumentativas, los resultados manifiestan que, en general, se aportan pocos argumentos y contraargumentos, que el patrón de organización de la información a menudo es inconsistente y que con poca frecuencia se indica la fuente de la información en la que se basan los argumentos. También en este caso se aprecia una ligera mejora en dos de las sesiones, pero poco relevante. En cuanto al léxico, los resultados parecen indicar que todavía se comenten algunos errores conceptuales



cuando se utiliza la terminología específica de la asignatura o del tema que están tratando, se entiende que es por parte de los estudiantes. En una de las sesiones la puntuación es bastante más alta, probablemente porque hay mayor participación de los estudiantes. Los resultados también están indicando que la conexión entre los fragmentos del texto oral construido conjuntamente todavía es baja. Por su parte, el uso de los elementos multimodales y la prosodia parece ir mejorando a lo largo de las sesiones.

En general, los resultados van en la misma línea que los hallados en trabajos previos del equipo (Gràcia et al., 2016, 2017) y sugieren que no ha habido un trabajo previo sistemático en general vinculado a la lengua oral, tal como señalan Peña (2008) o Ruíz-Muñoz (2012), a pesar de que en la mayoría de planes de estudio de las asignaturas del grado de maestro de esta universidad se incluyan estas competencias (Ogienko, Rolyak, 2009).

En relación con las características de las clases analizadas con la EVA-LOE, los resultados van en la misma línea que los anteriores. Mientras en el grupo de segundo curso el porcentaje que se alcanza respecto a las tres dimensiones se sitúa en general por debajo del 60%, en el caso del grupo de cuarto, se sitúa alrededor del 70%. Ello significa que las profesoras están incorporando estrategias de gestión de la conversación, que tratan de hacer conscientes a sus estudiantes de la incorporación de contenidos vinculados a la lengua oral en las clases y a su evaluación, y que tratan de utilizar algunas estrategias comunicativas en sus clases, como las clarificaciones o las síntesis de lo que se ha dicho durante una actividad de discusión o debate. Sin embargo, las puntuaciones, incluso las de las últimas sesiones, están ligeramente por debajo de aquellas obtenidas en la validación de la herramienta y en estudios posteriores (Gràcia, Galván-Bovaira et al., 2015; Gràcia, Vega, Galván-Bovaira, 2015). Además de lo que ya se ha comentado respecto a los resultados en base a la rúbrica, estos hallazgos sugieren que se trata de un instrumento no validado en contexto universitario. Probablemente una revisión de algunos de los ítems para ajustarlos a este contexto sería necesaria para poder utilizarlo con mayor validez como herramienta de análisis.

Los resultados vinculados a las discusiones en pequeño grupo fuera del aula parecen indicar que también la rúbrica ha resultado útil como herramienta de evaluación de actividades de los alumnos incluidas en plan docente de la asignatura. Este resultado puede entenderse como una puerta abierta a generalizar el uso de esta herramienta, con los ajustes que se consideren necesarios, a todos los profesores de las asignaturas, así como a otras en las que el profesorado se plantee realmente trabajar de manera sistemática y evaluar contenidos vinculados al trabajo de la lengua oral. Esta generalización supondría que se ha alcanzado uno de los objetivos de la administración autonómica catalana, mejorar la calidad de la formación inicial de los maestros a partir de los instrumentos que se generen en los diversos proyectos de investigación.

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