

Citizenship Oriented to Justice in Higher Education: Didactic Experience and Revision in the Bachelor's Degree in Primary School Education

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Abstract

Inequality is a relevant issue related to politics, society, culture, economy or history. In this way, critical thinking is considered an essential step to allow teachers to educate for a citizenship oriented to justice in a school understood as the engine of social change. Moreover, several studies have shown the effectiveness of debates and argumentation in social sciences classes in order to teach significantly. This is possible starting from conflicts and socio-environmental realities in order to construct a truly democratic citizenship. According to this, it is presented one of the latest versions of the didactic experience design, "let's buy!", in addition to the evaluation and reflection of this experience based on the information collected by the teacher's diary, peer assessment and interview sheets for classroom group with a sample of 317 third-year students of the Bachelor's Degree in Primary School Education at the University of Huelva. In general, in coherence with the results of some relevant researches on citizenship education and initial training of teachers and taking as a reference the reflection on the action, it is concluded that didactic experiences where socio-economic problems of the daily environment of students are analyzed can

contribute to awareness and professional predisposition of future teachers to consider situations that could affect the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: citizenship education, teachers training, equality, didactical experience, teaching of social sciences

12.1. Introduction

According to data from the National Institute of Statistics (2016, 2017), the Spanish population, in 2014, presented a 29'2% risk of poverty or social exclusion. On the other hand, the population below the poverty risk threshold (or percentage of people with low incomes in relation to the population as a whole) decreased slightly to 22.1% in 2015 (compared to 22.2% in 2014). However, despite the fact that between 2014 and 2015 the poverty risk rate decreases more sharply for the population under 16 years of age, this would be the group most affected with risk figures close to 30%.

In contrast to these data and based on the Annual National Accounts of Spain, UNICEF has echoed the impact on households with children and adolescents the reduction of 11,500 million euros in investment for the social protection of families and childhood between 2009 and 2015. According to the organization, and as was published in *El País* newspaper (April 15, 2017), this reduction has placed Spain as the third country in the European Union, behind Romania and Greece, with an "anchored" poverty of almost 40% in the infant population.

The inequality of wages is the one with the greatest weight in the income of households. In this situation, didactic of the social sciences where the relevant issues are addressed in relation to politics, society, culture, economy or history is considered desirable. In this way, it is necessary to refer to the Gini coefficient in addition to contributing to the orientation of public policies of equality and economic development because they help us to justify the need to be aware to the problems related to the family economies at school.

Although according to Eurostat data, in the last 3 years, in Spain, inequality has decreased significantly, in general terms, we must speak of an increase between 2007 (31.9) and 2016 (34.5)

due in large part to the destruction of employment and the flexibilization of labor rights that have occurred throughout this period.

According to the data, it is very probable that, in the classroom, the teacher meets students with depressed socioeconomic background, with family members who are unemployed or who have difficulties in satisfying their basic needs. It is pertinent to consider the importance for teachers to develop an attitude of commitment to the relevant problems linked to the socioeconomic reality of families; supporting the construction of a critical through the promotion of empathy, solidarity and a vision oriented to justice (Delgado-Algarra, Bernal-Bravo, & López Meneses, 2019), a vision in the face of the humanization of neoliberal policies. That is why we present the analysis of the implementation of a proposal for the initial training of teachers in bachelor's degree in Primary School Education that has been designed during eight academic years.

In this chapter, we present the latest version of the didactic experience design, "let's buy!"; in addition to the evaluation and reflection of the didactic experience based on the information collected by the teacher's diary, peer assessment and interview sheets for classroom group with a sample of 317 third-year students of the Bachelor's Degree in Primary School Education at the University of Huelva from two academic years (2016-2017 and 2017-2018).

In general, in coherence with the results of some relevant researches on citizenship education and initial training of teachers and taking as a reference the reflection on the action, it is concluded that the didactic experiences where socio-economic problems of the daily environment of students are analyzed can contribute to the awareness and professional predisposition of future teachers to consider situations of social injustice that could affect the teaching and learning process.

12.2. Epistemological bases of experience: theoretical and research review

This section describes the theoretical references and researchers on which it is based the design and the practical experience "let's buy!".

Theoretical bases: education for a citizenship oriented to justice and social commitment

Critical thinking, in general, implies sensitivity to social and environmental problems. Therefore, based on the model of emotional competence defined by Bisquerra and Pérez (2007) and supported by the conceptions of citizenship proposed by Delgado-Algarra (2015), a desirable citizen profile is configured. Citizens able to identify and self-regulate their own emotions and able to develop social skills such as use of effective persuasion tactics, listening to others and the elaboration of convincing messages, resolution of disagreements with others, inspiration and guidance to others, initiation and administration of new situations, reinforcement of interpersonal relationships within the group and work with others.

Linked to the profile of a citizen oriented to justice, we also highlight the adaptation of the “demand for global distributive justice” of cosmopolitan citizenship as one of the epistemological references on which the didactic experience is based. In this dimension, underlies the so-called egalitarianism of luck that distinguishes between luck (circumstances) and agency (decisions), so that:

An unequal distribution is legitimate only if it can be traced back to the agency of individuals, while deviations that go back to luck (not assumed by agency) are illegitimate. This implies that egalitarian justice should aim to neutralize the effects of undeserved circumstances in the lives of individuals. The possibility of realizing one’s life plan should not depend on the natural and social lottery (Loewe, 2015, p. 162).

On the other hand, and from a perspective more directly linked to citizen action in the public sphere, an alternative to “consensus in the center” (center-right and center-left) is proposed, which, according to Mouffe (2016), serves as a way to humanize a neoliberal globalization to which most parties have surrendered, convinced that there are no other alternatives.

Thus, there is a need to reopen the democratic debate on the ways in which public institutions and social relations can be organized. In this line, as indicated by Westheimer and Kahne (2004), the citizen oriented to justice must learn to question and

look for the causes of problems, catalyzing the change in the systems and structures established when they reproduce injustices over time. In this way, in the aforementioned experience, it was considered as a fundamental axis the need to educate competent citizens to drive profound changes in systems that reproduce structural inequalities over time.

Research bases: citizenship education and justice

Below are several investigations that have been especially relevant for the design, justification and updating of the didactic proposal to develop the experience "let's buy!". In this sense, some studies have shown the effectiveness of the debate and the argumentation in social science classes when it comes to teaching significantly starting from conflict and social reality in order to construct a truly democratic citizenship (Yeager and Humphries, 2011).

These results are coherent with the research on the social representations of Law, Justice and Law previously carried out in the Spanish context by Pagés and Oller (2007). Among other issues, the results of this research, highlight the potential of interactive methods, the inclusion of relevant problems for responsible citizenship education in the teaching of social science. Taking into account the aforementioned research results, we present an experience around an intentionally unfair daily situation where intra-group and inter-group interaction predominate.

Delgado-Algarra and Estepa-Giménez (2017), meanwhile, through an extensive study, show that teachers in Huelva and its province (Andalusia, South of Spain) have a sensitivity towards social intervention and criticism, although not towards the transformation of reality. On the other hand, some aspects of the majority profile of the teachers surveyed in this research suppose the existence of very significant divergences between the thinking and the practice, which could be negatively influencing the citizen's education of the students.

This fact, converges with the extensive study developed by Trafford (2008) in the United Kingdom, whose conclusions show that the democratic school is a minority model, reflecting the existence of a disciplinary tradition where the experiences in which the student is encouraged to make use of critical awareness and to assume the role of a citizen committed to social reality has no

place. That is why, from the experience that is presented, it has been considered essential to encourage students to make use of their critical capacity during the development of the proposal and sharing.

Critical thinking is essential to take the step towards education for a citizenship oriented to justice in a school understood as the engine of social change. Thus, in terms of social justice, Lazar (2013) carried out qualitative research of an interpretative nature based on case studies where 3 new teachers were followed up for 2 years. To do so, teachers who had participated in educational programs related to social justice were selected.

The research concluded that the design of teacher training programs and activities that analyze everyday situations such as poverty and basic aspects related to social justice provide greater security to new teachers who work for the first time in high poverty districts. The results of this study have been very important for updating and justifying the design of the proposal presented in this chapter and practice. This is because, in this didactic experience, the different groups have assumed the role of families with budgets assigned with an intentionally unequal criterion based on the egalitarianism of luck.

Finally, consumerism, closely related to responsible consumption and with a supportive attitude, is present in our proposal. In this sense, Caurín, Morales, & Solaz (2012) carry out research on sustainable development where it is concluded that, when designing programs to achieve a change of attitude regarding consumption, it is necessary to take into account the socio-economic aspects of the students.

12.3. Design of the proposal "let's buy!"

In this section a description of the general aspects of the proposal will be made. In addition, it will be presented the structure of the activity, some numerical data related to the selection and organization of the participants and instruments of information collection from an approach that integrates in a natural way the didactic action and the research activity for the evaluation of the experience development and for its improvement in the future.

General description and structure

In general, structuring teaching around problems allows breaking the rigid structure of traditional school knowledge, facilitating the integration of concepts, procedures and values; opting for a school research model where a triangulation is established between problem, daily knowledge (previous ideas) and scientific knowledge that allows to build a meaningful school knowledge (García-Pérez, 2017).

Through the design of a healthy menu with a specific budget, the aim is to develop teamwork and make decisions about everyday situations such as making a responsible purchase. Nowadays the terms that define a healthy diet are well defined. In this sense, research in Nutrition such as Nestle (1995) and Aranceta (2001) have repeatedly and consistently demonstrated that the best diets are those that are based mainly on the consumption of fruits, vegetables, cereals and legumes, using food from animal origin with moderation. There is an urgent need work on issues such as food and nutrition in schools; educating teachers, children and their families in healthy eating habits, in order to prevent the obesity of children and adolescents and improve their health and quality of life Salinas *et al.* (2014). Moreover, in the classroom, we must insist on the existence of a set of solid criteria of sciences, mainly because students are conditioned by everyday knowledge or beliefs (Lorca-Marín, González, & Velo, 2019).

On the other hand, through the emotional potential of the process of adopting roles in simulation (before an intentionally unfair budget distribution), the decision-making, sharing and confrontation of different socioeconomic realities is intended to achieve the following purpose “to raise awareness and sensitize future teachers about the situations of social and economic injustice that may be faced by the families of some of their future students” (table 1).

In other words, taking into account the difficult situation that many families face daily in our country (and in the world), the main purpose of this activity is that teachers in training face situations of social injustice in a simulation, awaken their sensitivity to real problems that can go unnoticed, problems that, from the area of social sciences, are fundamental in order to construct a critical, committed and justice oriented citizenship for the configuration of a fairer society.

Table 1. Structure of the didactic proposal

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY: Let's buy!		
Time: 1h.30min.	Organization: Grupal	Space: Classroom
Objectives: Define a healthy menu based on a budget. Make decisions in groups around daily consumption situations. Raise awareness and raise awareness about the disparity of the family economy and social injustice.	DEVELOPMENT PHASE1: Diagnosis of previous ideas Task 1. Diagnosis of ideas and previous experiences in relation to the purchase, usual consumption foods, weekly budgets, daily problems, etc. Teacher diary is used in all tasks. PHASE 2: Decision making Task 2. Distribution of the group work sheet, explanation of the activity, how it will be developed and what roles will be assumed. Task 3. Distribution of group budgets, selection of volunteer co-evaluators and meeting with co-evaluators outside the classroom where they are given their respective co-evaluation sheets. Task 4. Group discussions and decision making regarding the purchase trying to respect the conditions indicated in the group worksheet. At the same time, co-evaluator students guide and support the groups with which they assume the responsibility for co-evaluation by taking annotations (max 2 groups per co-evaluator). PHASE 3: Sharing and reflection Task 5. Sharing and reflection in a large group with support from guiding questions. Interspersed with teacher's explanation when necessary.	
Contents: Responsible consumption. Design a healthy menu according to a limited budget. Group decision making in situations of consumption to meet the needs of food. Awareness and awareness about the disparity of the family economy and social injustice.		
Competences: Social and civic competences		
Resources: Team work sheet (appendix 1) Co-evaluation sheets (appendix 2) Sample issues (appendix 3)		

The activity called "Let's buy!" is planned for the development in a single session, but it can be integrated into a sequence of activities. Likewise, although we present the version aimed at teachers in training, as has been demonstrated in practice, it can be easily adapted to the primary and secondary school by reducing the number of menus, adding manipulative elements such as money or objects as a shopping workshop, adapting the rules or even agreeing them previously, etc.

Participants

In the academic year 2016-2017, the proposal was carried out with 117 initial training teachers of third course of the Bache-

lor's Degree in Primary School Education and within the subject Didactic of Social Sciences I. In the academic year 2017-2018, it was carried out with another 200 initial training teachers of the same course, grade and subject. Thus, we have worked with initial training teachers distributed in 5 shifts and organized as indicated in table 2:

Table 2. Information about the participant students of the Bachelor's Degree in Primary Education experience

BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION				
Area: Didactic of Social Sciences				
School year	Shifts	Initial training teachers		Team groups
3º 2016 - 2017	Shift 2 (Afternoon)	50	117	33
	Shift 5 (morning)	67		
3º 2017 - 2018	Shift 1 (morning)	78	200	46
	Shift 3 (morning)	70		
	Shift 4 (Afternoon)	52		
TOTAL			317	79

Information Collection

Information collection is integrated into the design of the proposal itself and as indicated above, has been adapted and improved throughout different academic years since 2009-2010. This adaptation has been possible thanks to a parallel spiral action research process that has been developed through four consecutive phases in order to improve the proposal and the quality of the teaching practice every year.

A spiral process implies that the reflection phase of an action research process leads to decision making to be implemented in the planning phase of the next one (Delgado-Algarra, 2017); this approach has made possible the progressive improvement of the proposal and its implementation year after year. Thus, integrating the action and observation phases, the information collection instruments would be the observation grid (co-evaluation sheet), semi-structured group interview (see table 3) and teacher's diary.

Table 3. Information about the evaluation and information collection instruments

Instrument	Description	Task	Appendix
Observation grid	Completed by students who assume the role of volunteer co-evaluators who, in addition to observing the development of the session, have supports the assigned groups.	3	2
Semi-structured group interview	Developed by the teacher taking as initial reference a basic script that is specified and adapted for different groups of the classroom and depending on the answers.	5	3
Teacher's Diary	Additional information is collected.	1-5	-

12.5. Development, analysis and discussion

The proposal presented, previous adaptations and successive improvements, has been carried out both with primary school students and with initial training teachers of the Bachelor's Degree in Primary School Education; however, we will focus on the latest version implemented between the academic years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 with the students of the aforementioned university degree.

Phase 1: Diagnosis of conceptions

It corresponds to **task 1**, after a brief introduction about the design of the session, and without going into detail about the final purpose of this activity. It is asked about issues related to the purchase and about previous economic experiences. It should be noted that a considerable number of initial training teachers in the University of Huelva (Andalusia, Spain) come from towns and reside in the city of Huelva during their study period, so, most students indicate that they have experience with the purchase and with the adaptation to a tight budget.

They affirm that, although they take into account the price, they pay attention to the quality of the food. To reach a desired level of critical reflection in an autonomous way, it was necessary not to indicate the ultimate purpose of the experience; directed to

the sensitization of the future teachers around the possible situations of social and economic injustice to which some of the families of their future students will face.

The importance of awareness and the value of the proposal that has been put into practice, to date, is supported by the research of Caurín, Morales, & Solaz (2012), Lazar (2013) and Delgado-Algarra & Estepa- Giménez (2017). Thus, converging the conclusions of these investigations, it is clear the need for an empathic teaching practice, aware and committed to the economic and social problems that could be present in the daily environment of their own future students.

For all of this, from the beginning, and following Estepa (2007), an approach based on school research and resolution of relevant problems is assumed. From this approach, desirable school knowledge is not based only on scientific (or disciplinary) knowledge; in addition it is necessary to take into account metadisciplinary knowledge and it must be based on an enrichment of everyday knowledge; knowledge constituted by systems of ideas that evolve after overcoming the difficulties raised during phase 2.

Phase 2: Decision making

The decision-making phase of initial training teachers corresponds to tasks 2, 3 and 4. In this phase, to achieve the ultimate goal of the proposal, it is necessary that some teams experience a simulated situation in which they see themselves forced to sacrifice the nutritional quality of food to be able to make the purchase of 3 days adapting to an indicated budget.

The 117 teachers in third year of the 2016-2017 academic year and the 200 in the 2017-2018 academic year were organized in a total of 33 and 46 working groups, respectively. In this way, taking as reference Loewe (2015) and from the approach of the “egalitarianism of luck”, illegitimate unequal distribution is made based on luck (circumstances) and not on agency (decisions), a luck that affects both to families in the first world as to a great social majority in the third world.

This phase was especially impressive for all those students who, in the diagnosis phase, affirmed that “the priority is the quality of the food although the price is taken into account”. In contrast to

this situation of economic deprivation, a minority of groups were assigned an exaggeratedly high budget.

In **task 2**, the group work sheet is distributed (appendix 1) and the activity dynamics are explained, how it will be developed and what roles will be assumed. In **task 3**, group budgets are distributed (between 5 and 150 euros for 3 days) and voluntary co-evaluators are selected (one for each two teams, never coinciding with their own group).

During the time of reading the worksheet by teams, in the meeting with the co-evaluators outside the classroom they are given their respective observation grids (appendix 2), making clear the following message “as a reviewer of the development of the activity “let’s buy!” you should observe the operation of the team, talk with members, ask what is necessary and complete this table with total sincerity. Your work is also supportive; that is, when the group needs it, you must resolve doubts as long as you do not give the final answer”.

The implementation of the figure of the co-evaluator that offered support to the groups, did not only serve to gather an enriching information about the internal functioning of the groups and with a view to the continuous evaluation; but it offered relevant information for the evaluation of the proposal itself. In convergence with González-Bellido (2015) and Moral, Amores, & Ritacco (2016), respectively, and based on the decisions made in previous years, it has been understood that the action of this support figure based on the cooperative learning method of peer tutoring and distributed leadership enhances the dynamism of the session and it is accepted by students in a natural way.

During **task 4**, the decision-making of the groups took place. Thanks to the work of support and collection of information on the functioning of the groups carried out by the co-evaluators, it was possible to understand to what extent the groups respected the conditions indicated in the group work sheet both in quantitative terms (table 4) and in qualitative terms.

Except for 3 groups where part of its members did not participate actively, it was possible an active participation for almost full students in decision making (f.2.1). However, coinciding with the groups that were assigned low or very low budgets, 41.8% managed the purchase for a healthy menu partially or, directly, did not take into account that aspect.

Table 4. Level of development of the different items by the groups during phase 2 of decision making (tasks 2, 3 and 4)

Phase	Cod	Item	Op	f	%
f.2. Decision making	f.2.1	The members of the group listen to each other and make decisions together	Yes	76	96,2%
			S/t	3	3,8%
			No	0	0%
	f.2.2	When buying, group is taking into account that the food is healthy	Yes	46	58,2%
			S/t	26	32,8%
			No	7	9%
	f.2.3	When buying, group is taking into account that all members of "the family" should eat	Yes	67	84,8%
			S/t	9	11,2%
			No	3	4%
	f.2.4	The group adapts to the indicated budget	Yes	72	91,1%
			S/t	7	8,9%
			No	0	0%
	f.2.5	The group completes a menu for 3 days	Yes	59	74,6%
			S/t	18	22,7%
			No	2	2,7%
	f.2.6	The shopping list is filled in and the data is correct	Yes	68	86%
			S/t	11	14%
			No	0	0%

The qualitative information in the observations column corroborates the relationship between allocated budget and the configuration of a healthy menu. Some observations make direct reference to this issue, so that in order for all the members to eat, some groups were forced to sacrifice the quality of the food. Complementing the information obtained about item f.2.2 and regarding item f.2.3, 4% of the lower income groups opted to guarantee the quality of the food. However, they did it in exchange for some family members skipping meals. The difficulties to complete the menu (f.2.5) and adapt to the budget (f.2.4), as expected, were more pronounced in the groups with low budgets assigned.

Phase 3: Sharing and reflection

It corresponds to the task 5 of sharing and reflection in class group supported by guiding questions. Thus, the problems registered in the decision-making phase were shared in phase 3, taking as reference 4 **questions for sharing** from a semi-structured approach. Questions 1, 2 and 3 are linked to item f.3.1 and the question 4 is linked to item f.3.2 (appendix 3, first half).

Thanks to the responses of the respective teams, the co-evaluation students were able to record information on the reflection phase (table 5). This record was contrasted with the notes recorded by the professor in his teacher's diary and in the context of the parallel action research process.

Tabla 5. Level of development of the different items by the groups during phase 3 of reflection (task 5)

Phase	Code	Item	Op	f	%
f.3. Sharing and reflection	f.3.1	The group is aware that it has problems when buying / that other groups have problems when buying.	Yes	77	96'7%
			S/t	0	0%
			No	2	3'3%
	f.3.2	Group members look for solutions with partners	Yes	67	80'2%
			S/t	12	19'8%
			No	0	0%

As we can see 77 of the 79 teams came to show awareness of the problem. This is corroborated through qualitative records, so that the students were able to recognize their situation and the contrast between different situations. On the other hand, based on Bisquerra (2007), the experience was considered taking into account the potential of the emotional factor in learning.

In this sense, in relation to question 3 "What did you feel during the preparation of the purchase?", important differences were observed between groups with lower budgets, which indicated feeling of helplessness and stress, and groups with a larger budget. Although the climate during the sharing was deliberately relaxed,

the move to **questions for reflection** radically changed the tone of the session (appendix 3, second half).

These exclusive questions of the 2017 version were not present in any item of the co-evaluator's record sheet and were intended to contrast with what had been done so far. In general terms, they concluded that you cannot expect a high school performance of students whose families are in critical socioeconomic situations unless they receive some kind of social support, which as indicated in the introduction of the chapter, has been reduced in recent years. Most acknowledged that, although he was aware of something that may seem so obvious, this activity had made them feel in first person the seriousness of the matter and had made them understand that you must to be professionally prepared for when you meet with this type of cases in the classroom.

12.6. Conclusions

Through the simulation initial training teachers have been able to experience first-hand situations that many families experience in Spain in addition to families of some of their future students. Due to the experiential character of the experience, its connection with the professional reality and the data and information obtained in situ, we can highlight the success of the proposal in terms of the purpose "to raise awareness and sensitize future teachers about situations of social injustice and economic situation that the families of some of their future students may face".

Likewise, apart from the recognition by future teachers of the significance of the experience presented here with regard to their professional future, the conclusions reached in this respect are coherent with those of Lazar's research (2013) where it is considered that teachers' training activities integrated with everyday situations such as poverty or injustice provides new teachers with greater preparation, greater security and a high predisposition for service with the community when they enter to work for the first time in high poverty districts.

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