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# Innovative didactic experience in the training of teachers of primary education. Didactic subject of the social sciences

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# ABSTRACT

The article brings together experiences, stories and testimonies of an innovative didactic experience developed in the subject Didactics of the Social Sciences in the training of teachers of Primary Education. The collection of information was carried out using techniques such as participant observation and conducting interviews with students, and instruments such as field diaries were used to document the significant aspects observed in the classroom. The results of the systematization describe a set of didactic methodologies that, without claiming to be a methodical outline of solutions, lead the reader to a niche of self-reflection about what is beyond what we do daily in the classroom. Therefore, in his writing each of the following methodologies developed are described: Pedagogical innovation at the beginning and end of a class, innovative didactic strategies, socialization, participation and collective

construction of learning, and the classroom epicenter of innovation. At the end, a brief reflection is made on the emerging challenges that teachers have in front of pedagogical innovation as an inescapable task in the learning processes of the XXI Century, and by way of conclusion, it is maintained that the implementation of participatory methodologies generates more motivation and greater conditions for the construction of significant learning in the student body.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The subject Didactics of the Social Sciences (DCS) is part of the Curriculum of the Pedagogy career with mention in Primary Education of the Faculty of Education and Languages of the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, Managua (UNAN-Managua). This subject in the Curriculum (2013) is taught to the students of III year of this career, who have anticipated and taken subjects of the composition of Basic Training, General Didactics and Special Didactics, for this reason, within the objectives of their permanence in the curriculum is that students develop knowledge, skills and abilities around didactic planning, implementation and innovation of didactic strategies, elaboration of didactic resources, and implementation of processes of accompaniments and student advice in the classroom.

Thus, the present systematization corresponds to the didactic subject of the Social Sciences taught during the II semester 2020, which had the particularity of having been developed in an exceptional modality due to the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, and for this reason the following essential contents were scheduled: (1) Problems of the teaching and learning of Social Studies in Primary Education,(2) The Teaching and learning strategies in the didactic planning of Social Studies, (3) Resources and materials in the teaching and learning of Social Studies,(4) Didactic workshop of evaluation of learning in Social Studies,(5) Educational innovation in Social Studies the teaching of Social Studies in Primary Education.

The didactic methodology with which the course was developed was characterized by being active, participatory and innovative, with a marked emphasis on cooperative work, problem solving, case analysis and the contextualization and linking of the contents with the educational realities of primary schools in Nicaragua. In this sense, this article describes this experience of pedagogical innovation in the training of teachers of Social Studies of Public Education, with the aim of generating spaces for reflection that motivate the implementation of innovative learning processes in the training of future teachers of Social Studies of primary schools, and at the same time, to motivate teachers in training to implement innovative methodologies in the learning process.

#### 2. DEVELOPMENT

#### 2.1. Theoretical perspectives

In principle, it is necessary to clarify a set of terms related to the social sciences within the theoretical framework of scientific knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, therefore, firstly, it is appropriate to establish differences between the social sciences, social studies and didactics of the social sciences. With regard to the first, in Orozco y Díaz (2018) it is expressed that the social sciences "are composed of a set of disciplines that are responsible for studying the human being as a social agent" (p.17), and as for social studies, Jordán (2009) clarifies that "the social sciences provide a wide collaboration to social studies, since they provide them with the knowledge generated by social scientists, who are responsible for applying them, but with a foundation and educational purposes" (pp.8-9).

Having this deliberation as a starting point, it is important to note that the didactics of the social sciences is an area of knowledge belonging to the specific didactics and of recent temporality, in the case of Spain, Miralles, Molina and Ortuño (2011) recognize "the year 1984 as the founding moment of the DCS in Spain" (p.151), which coincides with the idea raised by Prats (2002,p.81),who considers that the DCS "begins its journey in the second half of the 1980s" from the experience of a group of teachers who taught "the contents of geography and history that were considered necessary for the training of future teachers".

Thus, the didactics of the social sciences has been a field of knowledge that has been strongly consolidated within the specific didactics, and is considered by Benejam and Pagés (1997) – precursors of the DCS in Spain – as "a discipline that deals with the initial and permanent training of teachers of social sciences in order to guide their intervention in the teaching and learning processes of this subject" (p.11). However, this theoretical conjugation between the Social Sciences as an axis of research and production of knowledge, to Social Studies as a school discipline in charge of educational processes, and to the Didactics of the Social Sciences as a discipline formed to teachers who direct the learning process, it is important to emphasize that this confluence between scientific and pedagogical knowledge is indispensable for the implementation of successful pedagogical experiences in the classroom.

On the other hand, this systematization of didactic experience is part of the new currents of educational innovation recently promoted in the different disciplines of pedagogy, which invite teachers to rethink their teaching practice to achieve greater impact on learning. In this sense, the concept of pedagogical innovation has been assumed

from the perspective of the teacher who, from the classroom, modifies the hierarchical structure that guides pedagogical practice, and introduces new learning methodologies that imply an important change in the ways of teaching and learning, in other words, consists of a kind of pedagogical transformation that "relates to creative and novel processes that produce a change" (Rodríguez-Dueñas, Denegri and Alcocer, 2017, p.2).

This conception of innovation leaves openly exposed the indispensable involvement that the didactic methodology has in process innovations. It is for this reason that in this didactic systematization has opted for the implementation of active and participatory methodologies in opposition to the traditional perspective of learning, being understood this as a form of teaching that is based on the protagonist of the student and the group, and are based on the process of exchange of knowledge, experiences, experiences and feelings to solve problems collaboratively and build knowledge jointly (López Noguero, 2007).

In this sense, in this systematization describes the entire learning process developed in the subject Didactics of the Social Sciences, however, this was documented through field journals of the research teacher, interviews were also conducted with the student body to assess the strategies developed in each didactic session, and at the end a focus group was made with the aim of obtaining the assessment of the students. It is worth mentioning that, for ethical reasons in the investigation, the confidentiality of the identities of the informants has been resorted to, choosing to use pseudonyms, this based on what Abreu (2017) proposes: "it is essential to safeguard their physical and mental integrity for that it is necessary not to disclose in some cases the source or particular names of the people who provided a certain information" (p.343).

On the other hand, given the characteristics of any educational systematization process, this is a descriptive study according to what Bernal (2010) proposes, because "in such studies, facts, situations, traits, characteristics of an object of study are shown, narrated, reviewed or identified" (p.113). Therefore, this research has been segmented into different sections that reflect the different methodologies implemented, in addition, they contain a brief theorization, the description of the experience and brief valorative testimonies of the student body.

# 2.2. Description of the didactic experience

## 2.1.1. Pedagogical innovation when starting and ending a class

The moments of beginning and end of a class are as important as all the didactic moments that we develop in the classroom, however, we tend to be hasty to the focus our best effort of planning in the development this under the so-called What is here where students "learn new content "Dismissing Like this the importance of didactic actions at the beginning and end of the learning process. At other times, methodologies that we use when starting and ending the didactic session they are usually the same, to such a point that the student anticipates every action that teachers will take in class, hence that they always provide for direct oral questions to the start and assign tasks at the end of the class. About this content, Lopez Noguero (2007), specialist in participatory methodologies, provides insights significant on teaching strategies for both didactic moments:

We suggest starting and ending the sessions with an "epilogue / surprise prologue", that is, with some resource (unsolvable problem, poetry, shocking phrase, story, photographs, cut phrase, etc.) that serves to capture the attention of the student from the first moment or to intrigue or stimulate him for the next session (p.130).



**Figure 1.** Students participating in integration dynamics

## • Resolution of soup of letters

The letter soup was a dynamic used at the beginning of the class for the purpose of making a recapitulation of the class that had been taught in the previous meeting. The orientation given to the students was to find five key words that were related to the previous topic. Once the students found it, a group conversation was held where they

Education SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES explained how these words were related to the previous content. This strategy was valued positively by the student body, one of them expressed the following: *"The innovations of the teacher made us work in an affective climate, which is very important. He gave us confidence and his strategies created empathy with the group to develop good communication with everyone"* (Morales, 2020).

## • Interpretation of cartoons

This strategy was applied when starting a didactic session in order to provide the student body with an innovative experience at the beginning of the class. The exercise was carried out with two caricatures in which the student body had to write down ideas about what they interpreted from it, later, through a conversation they were asked to express their ideas, the teacher took notes on the blackboard and at the end collectively the concept of what was inferred in the caricature was built. This strategy was positively valued, and one student expressed the following: "the cartoon strategy was an innovative idea that taught us to use other resources to innovate our classes" (Castillo, 2020); another student said that "the strategies were great. After we came from lunch we didn't want to do anything, but the teacher would come and activate us with his strategies and we would end up laughing" (Rivera, 2020).

## • Realization of group integration dynamics

The dynamics of group integration are one of the strategies that teachers frequently use at the beginning of classes, in this sense, a dynamic called "earthquake" was made and others using resources such as balloons, in other sessions dynamics were implemented with the variant that it would not be the teacher who would perform it, but that someone from the group was designated for its realization in order to activate the senses of the participants and thus generate a pleasant, active and participatory learning environment. The students valued these strategies positively, one of them expressed the following: *"The strategies were innovative, creative and participatory, every day we had new expectations at the time of starting teaching*" (Cruz, 2020).

# • Reading of Decalogue of participatory methodologies

The reading of Decalogue of participatory methodologies and teaching innovation was developed at the end of two class sessions taking as a bibliographic source the contributions of López Noguero (2007, p.149). This strategy was used in order to generate a space for reflection on teaching practice, and was used through a commented reading in which each student read a subsection of the text and at the same time gave his opinion on the same or the same. Finally, the teacher provided his comments with a contextualizing

SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES

ducation

and problematizing approach with the aim of raising unknowns that lead the student body towards self-reflection on the importance of teaching innovation in the classroom.

## • Reflection of a heading

The analysis of sentences is a strategy that contributes a lot to the reflection and participation of the student body, especially when it is significant, curious and contextual for them. This strategy was used at the end of a didactic session and students were asked to analyze the following phrase taken from the web: "I think a great teacher is a great artist and there are as few as there are great artists. Teaching may be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit." Based on this analysis, the professor posed questions that generate discussion and debate with a contextualizing, problematizing and self-reflective approach.

#### • Analysis of interviews

Interviews, in addition to being a research technique and a strategy for evaluating learning, is an optimal didactic tool in the learning process. The application of this strategy consisted in that the teacher visited a public school of the city to interview students of Primary Education, this with the purpose of knowing the didactic methodologies with which the teachers develop the classes of Social Studies, the professor reproduced the interviews in the class of Didactics of the Social Sciences, and later a space of educational reflection was opened about the challenges of the teacher's staff in the current education. This strategy allowed a self-reflection of how the learning processes are being developed in Primary Education, and generated greater commitment to educational innovation in teaching practice.

## 2.2.2. Innovative teaching strategies

Teaching strategies are actions that teachers propose for What the student body achieves a quality learning in the most way Significant, respect to a this, Murillo, Martínez and Hernández (2011) recommend various activities involving participation Active of students. The authors cited also they agree by arguing that "when the teacher uses different activities the contents are perceived as more interesting and stimulating, provoking their natural curiosity. It also allows students to connect what they have learned with other everyday topics and situations" (p.13).

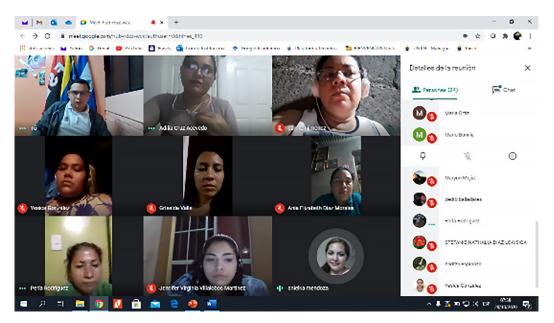


Figure 2.

Students participating in webinar on How to start and end a Social Studies class?

As a counterpart to this argument, in classrooms we often encounter enormous barriers that prevent teachers from developing various activities, including teaching traditionalism, lack of motivation to innovate, lack of time for class planning, lack of research and teaching innovation, that is, we usually find a segment of teachers stationed in traditional teaching methodologies, most of them, with great emphasis on the master conference where only the teacher is an active agent in the learning processes. As a counter proposal to this problem, in the didactic experience that was carried out, various activities were developed with a participatory approach:

#### • Elaboration of schematics

In three didactic sessions the students were directed to make silent readings of the content and identify main ideas, then the teacher moderated a conversation and with the contributions of the students made novel schemes on the board, among them, the sun-type scheme, tree-like scheme and an induction matrix were made (Pimienta 2007; Pepper, 2012),which they did not master. Once the schematics were designed, a reflection of the content and a didactic reflection were carried out with the aim of motivating future teachers to synthesize and consolidate the learning contents through these schemes. Afterwards, the teacher guided another reading and asked the students to carry out the novel schemes that the students preferred.

#### • Analysis of documentary sources

The analysis of documentary sources is an innovative process strategy in teacher training. From the point of view of research, this consists of the analysis of the information provided by printed materials (Bernal, 2010), in the case of didactics, this was used as a documentary analysis strategy in which students analyzed written exams that primary education teachers had applied to their students, and from this analysis the traditional and innovative elements present in them were identified. Once the documentary analysis was carried out, a conversation was held in order to reflect on the challenges that teachers have for the design of innovative written activities.

One of the students of the subject positively valued these strategies by stating the following: "I took away from this course the motivation with the teacher taught us the class. I always wore something different related to school. That invites me to be a motivating teacher with my students" (Duarte, 2020).

## • Development and presentation of teaching resources

One of the didactic sessions was developed with the workshop modality, which is a group work strategy that consists of the application of the knowledge acquired in a specific task (Pimienta, 2012). In this class it was proposed to the students to theorize about the didactic resources and their benefits in the classes of Social Studies, then, based on this discussion, groups were organized with the purpose of designing a didactic resource that would allow them to develop contents of Social Studies in an innovative way, this based mainly on the benefits that the didactic resources provide to the learning process as held in Murillo, Martínez and Hernández (2011, p.17):

Teachers who get their students to learn more and better support their teaching work with the use of varied teaching resources. In this way, the use of technological resources, manipulative materials and textbooks and support facilitates the learning of students (Murillo, Martínez and Hernández, 2011, p.17).

As a result of this learning activity, the students elaborated puzzles, crossword puzzles, roulette wheel, surprise boxes and models, they also selected objects such as hats, hammocks and handmade baskets in order to use them in the learning processes and carry out innovative experiences that facilitate meaningful learning in the student body.

## • Webinar participation

The realization of virtual activities "implies the formation of small learning groups that meet periodically with the teacher /tutor to work on different aspects related to the learning process they develop" (Imbernon and Medina, 2008, p.14). In the present case, the call for participation in Webinar was made with the title "How to start and end an

innovative class of Social Studies in Primary Education?" which was taught by a teacher who is pursuing a master's degree in Teacher Training. This activity had an active and numerous participation, and was valued very positively in terms of the contextual, innovative and emerging particularity of the theme. In addition, this strategy allowed students to appropriate new didactic references to start and successfully complete a Social Studies class.

# 2.2.3. Socialization, participation and collective construction of learning

Following what was stated by Murillo, Martínez and Hernández (2011), the activities that most motivate significant learning in students are those that involve the movement, the rehearsal, the socialization of the student and the activation of their senses on the action, this because it is maintained that the greater the degree of involvement that we reach to awaken in the student, the greater the degree of attention and motivation that this will show in the course of the activity.



**Figure 3.** Students socializing their knowledge

That said, it is well known that participatory methodologies through the implementation of group techniques greatly favor learning, among them for the following reasons: (1) the student focuses his attention on the resolution of an activity, (2) the student is taken into account within a collective, (3) ideas are socialized, (4) small group discussions are developed that involve the raising of arguments, counter-arguments, realization of

consensus and discrepancies, (5) knowledge is collectively constructed. Below are some of the activities developed in the subject Didactics of the Social Sciences:

#### Ambassadors

In the words of López Noguero (2007), this is a propitious activity to socialize knowledge through the interaction of a whole group, for this, teachers must give precise guidelines such as the following: (1) Form work teams, (2) raise a topic of discussion, (3) request each group to choose a spokesperson to make the conclusions of each subgroup, (4) request that each spokesperson rotate for each of the groups for a certain time, (5) request that each group that takes note of the contributions that each spokesperson gives them, (6) at the end of the exchange of ideas with the spokesmen, the group be to weigh the ideas offered by each spokesperson, and finally (7) moderate the general discussion on the topic discussed in subgroups.

In the didactic intervention this activity was developed with the content of *the teaching and learning strategies in the didactic planning*, which had the objective of proposing innovative didactic strategies in the development of the contents of Social Studies in Primary Education, and the students were guided to plan five innovative strategies, then select the one they considered most innovative and select a spokesperson (ambassador) to be for each group presenting their didactic innovation. This experience was valued positively because the students actively participated and were motivated by presenting their pedagogical innovation to the class group.

#### • PRE-RE-SIN technique

The group technique PRE-RE-SIN (Ask, collect, synthesize) is proposed by López Noguero (2007) in order to relate, contrast and agree on the opinions expressed by students in the classroom. *Asking* is the first stage and consists of the teacher asking questions to the group, proposing reflective situations or placing the group before a problem that they must solve together through the exchange of opinions. Then, *Collect* consists of the teacher favoring the reflection and production of ideas of the student regarding the given question by using different resources such as blackboard, stationery or written notes where he collects the opinions. Once the different *assessments* on the topics have been obtained, the teaching staff that is, associates, consolidates, classifies, groups or differentiates the different perceptions on the subject, this in order to present the great approaches in which the collected opinions are located.

This technique was used in the second class session where students were asked to propose innovative strategies for the teaching of social studies in Primary Education. The synthesis phase showed that most of the students proposed strategies associated with the following categories: (1) playful strategies, (2) strategies with didactic resources, (3) strategies aided in ICT, and (4) strategies with a community focus.

#### • Forum

The forum is a participatory strategy that deals with a discussion in which all the students of the group participate, favors the free expression of ideas and the possibility of holding a dialogue with the public (Imbernon and Medina, 2008). This strategy was applied through the following methodology: Subgroups of work were formed, the same topic of discussion was distributed to each subgroup, each subgroup had to select a spokesperson, who had to take note of the discussion developed in their respective subgroup, finally each team spokesperson represented his subgroup in the group forum developed with the following theme: "The challenges of teachers in traditional education".

#### • Snowball

The snowball group technique is proposed by López Noguero (2007) and consists of students being grouped in pairs, which will later be folded into groups of four people and, later, will again be doubled into groups of eight people, who inform each other and /or discuss each other. This technique was used to discuss issues of innovation and traditionalism in the teaching of Social Studies in Primary Education, and allowed students to socialize, discuss and exchange assessments and assessments regarding the object of study, that is, it favored the development of positions and critical thinking among the student body.

## 2.2.4. The classroom epicenter of innovation

The essence of the didactic subject of the Social Sciences was the didactic intervention that the students made. This consisted in the elaboration of a class plan that contained as elementary requirements the following: initiation strategy, integration dynamics, development strategy, didactic resource, completion strategy and evaluation instrument, all this from an innovative approach; once this was accomplished, the teacher authorized for each work team to went to a school in your community and proceed to carry out their didactic intervention.



Figure 4.

Students performing their didactic intervention in Primary Education

Thus it was that eight groups carried out their respective didactic intervention using innovative methodologies such as: motivating integration dynamics based on kinesthetic movements and songs, and didactic strategies based on drawing and ICT, learning activities with a vision of literal, inferential and critical understanding, didactic resources such as roulette, map, puzzle, plates, models and objects such as hammock and hats, and also, it was observed that the students applied group techniques such as seminars and debates in the development of their classes.

Regarding the didactic intervention carried out, a student who led one of the work teams said the following: "I liked having shared with the children at school during the didactic intervention. Now I realize that as a teacher I can make the change in the classroom, enriching my knowledge and leaving traditionalism, educating with love, joy, and creativity and innovating strategies. Personally, I think it's time to make a change, break with the routine and the traditionalist" (Medina, 2020).

## **3. CONCLUSIONS**

In principle, the emerging challenges that teachers have in the face of pedagogical innovation are inescapable, but as an elementary starting point we must bear in mind that "it will be easier to motivate students if the teacher himself enjoys teaching and its subject as to transmit with enthusiasm (Murillo, Martínez y Hernández, 2011, p.9), that is, the successful results of a didactic experience begin when there is a teacher motivated and

Education SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES committed to new pedagogical practices, on the contrary, a teacher devoid of these qualities What methodological novelty will it give to the student in the next class session?

The pedagogical innovation seen from the approach of participatory methodologies entails certain implications, among them: greater time for its planning, require greater knowledge of the group, have empathy, motivation, interaction and research, but, above all, demand from the teaching staff an outstanding disposition towards innovation and towards the renewal of our didactic methodologies, therefore, today it becomes essential that teachers in initial and continuous training appropriate this new teaching practice.

The learning obtained in this didactic experience turned out to be very significant or, the students applied innovative methodologies that evidenced the conceptual, procedural and attitudinal learning developed in the subject, and at the same time, the implementation of knowledge, skills and abilities of this area of didactics was expressed. And as a sample of this successful experience of educational innovation, it is appropriate to quote the testimony of one of the students: *The participatory methodologies she used in the class have helped me a lot. I had never participated in class, and in this class Yes, and I have been removing the fear because the teaching methodology makes us exchange opinions with our peers (Arauz, 2020).* 

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