
University education: boredom in the classrooms

La enseñanza universitaria: el aburrimiento en las aulas

大学教育: 课堂上的无聊

Преподавание в университете: утомление в аудитории

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Abstract

In Spain, since the introduction of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), in the 2010-2011 academic year, it was marked a clear objective: the teaching evaluation, among many others. Generally, the evaluation format selected by educational institutions focuses on teacher evaluation. However, the approach presented here aims to go further and consider the teacher-student interaction, seeking to contrast the opinions of both groups and taking them as active agents and responsible of their university education. For this, there have been selected two groups: one of teachers of the Psychology's Faculty of the Complutense University of Madrid -UCM- (N = 88) and another of students of the same Faculty (N = 369). Objective: to capture the differences and similarities in the university teaching/learning process. Two *ad hoc* valuation tools have been designed for this purpose. The main results reflected levels of proactivity, motivation and attention less than desired, high levels of boredom, widespread discontent with the classical model of teaching (master class) and the type of evaluation (exams), in addition to considering the teaching approach not very practical at all. The main objective of the students was to pass tests vs. learn ($M > 6$ in all groups, being the range 1-7). In addition, it has been observed that the problem lies in how it is taught and learned, instead of what you learn (curriculum or knowledge), and it may indicate the need for a change in teaching methodology (how), rather than a review of the contents.

Key words: university; evaluation; teacher; student; psychology.

Resumen

En España, desde la implantación del Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior (EEES) en el curso 2010-2011 se marcó, entre otros muchos, un claro objetivo: la evaluación de la enseñanza. En términos generales, la forma de valoración seleccionada por las instituciones educativas se concentra en la evaluación docente (en el profesorado). Sin embargo, el enfoque aquí expuesto pretende ir más allá y considerar la interacción profesorado-estudiante, buscando contrastar las opiniones de ambos grupos, tomándolos como agentes activos y responsables de la enseñanza universitaria. Para ello, se han seleccionado 2 grupos: uno, de profesorado de la Facultad de Psicología de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid -UCM- (N = 88) y, otro, de estudiantado de la misma Facultad (N = 369). Objetivo: captar las diferencias y semejanzas del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje universitario. Con este fin se han elaborado dos instrumentos de valoración *ad hoc*. Los resultados mostraron unos niveles de proactividad, de motivación y de atención inferiores a los esperados, niveles de aburrimiento altos, un descontento generalizado con el modelo clásico de enseñanza (*clase magistral*) y del tipo de evaluación (*exámenes*), además de considerar el enfoque docente como poco práctico. El objetivo prioritario del alumnado: aprobar más que aprender ($M > 6$ en todos los grupos, siendo el rango de la escala valorativa de 1-7). Asimismo, se ha podido observar que el problema se encuentra en el *cómo* se enseña y se aprende, más que en el *qué* (currículo o conocimiento del profesorado), indicando la necesidad de un cambio en la metodología docente (*cómo*), antes que una revisión de los contenidos.

Palabras clave: universidad; evaluación; profesor; estudiante; psicología.

概要

自2010-2011学年建立欧洲高等教育区(EHEA)以来,西班牙对大学教育设定了一个明确的目标:教学评估。一般而言,教育机构选择的评估形式侧重于教师评估(在教师中)。但是,这里提出的方法考虑得更为长远,将教师视为对大学教育积极负责任的推动者,将师

生互动考虑在内, 寻求对比师生间不同的观点。研究选择了2个小组: 一个是马德里康普顿斯大学 (UCM) 心理学系的老师 (N = 88), 另一个是同一系的学生 (N = 369)。研究目的: 了解大学教学过程的异同。为此, 我们开发了两种临时评估工具。结果显示, 除了认为教学方式过于理论之外, 学生的积极性, 动机和注意力水平低于预期, 对传统教学模式 (权威式授课) 和评估类型 (考试) 普遍感到十分无聊和不满。学生的主要目标在于通过考试而不是学习 (评估量表的范围是1-7所有组中平均值大于 6)。同样, 研究还观察到, 该问题的关键在于教学的方式, 而不是教学的内容 (教学大纲或老师的知识水平)。这表明需要改变教学方法 (方式), 而不是对教学内容进行审查。

关键词: 大学; 评估; 老师; 学生; 心理学。

Аннотация

В Испании с момента создания Европейского пространства высшего образования в 2010-2011 учебном году была поставлена, в частности, четкая цель: оценка преподавания. В целом, форма оценки, выбранная учебными заведениями, ориентирована на оценку преподавания (на преподавательский состав). Однако представленный здесь подход направлен на то, чтобы пойти дальше и рассмотреть взаимодействие между преподавателем и студентом, стремясь противопоставить мнения обеих групп, воспринимая их как активных агентов, ответственных за преподавание в университете. Для этой цели были выбраны две группы: одна из преподавателей факультета психологии Мадридского университета Комплутенсе -UCM- (N = 88) и другая из студентов того же факультета (N = 369). Цель: зафиксировать различия и сходства в процессе преподавания и обучения в университете. С этой целью были разработаны два специальных инструмента оценки. Результаты показали более низкий, чем ожидалось, уровень инициативности, мотивации и внимания, высокий уровень утомления, общее недовольство классической моделью преподавания (мастер-класс) и видом оценивания (экзамены), а также рассмотрение подхода к преподаванию как непрактичного. Приоритетная цель учеников: сдавать, а не учиться (M > 6 во всех группах, с диапазоном рейтинговой шкалы от 1 до 7). Аналогичным образом, было отмечено, что проблема заключается в том, как происходит преподавание и обучение, а не в том, что преподается (программа или знания преподавателя), что указывает на необходимость изменения методологии преподавания ("как"), а не пересмотра содержания ("что").

Ключевые слова: университет; оценка; преподаватель; студент; психология; оценка.

Introduction

In spite of frequent criticism, the old "master class" model of teaching continues to be a familiar fixture of most university faculties, favouring the intellectual passivity of the student and reducing university education to mere note-taking, later to be regurgitated in exams. This approach clearly renders the role of the instructor highly reductive (Sánchez, 2011). It is precisely this model that the EHEA (European Higher Education Area, 2019) seeks to modify, albeit with rather limited success to date (Botella Domínguez, 2014; González-Serrano, 2011).

Nonetheless, it is undeniable that universities are increasingly offering services and amenities focused on improving the experience of their students, such as guidance services (Fraile & Ivento, 2013), various scholarships (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2019), European and international exchange programs (López

& Martos, 2014; Pozo Vicente & Aguaded Gómez, 2012), and many more. The Complutense University of Madrid, for instance, offers students a library, language courses, sports, internships, a diverse student body and faculty, student associations, and a wide range of courses (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2019). So why the discontent with the current model? Could it be that institutions are too preoccupied with these secondary concerns? What do instructors and students think about the situation?

Obviously, attempting to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the university system as a whole is well beyond the scope of a single paper. As such, the focus of this study will be on one of the oldest aspects of a university education and the one most closely identified with post-secondary institutions, namely teaching.

It should also be noted that this study is part of a wider body of research on the quality of teaching in Spanish universities (Fernández, 2008). The latest findings of this research have already been submitted as a Degree Thesis in Psychology at the Complutense University of Madrid and a symposium which will be presented at the 10th International Congress of Psychology and Education.

Theoretical Framework

Laying out the theoretical framework for this study requires answering two initial questions: What is higher education? And, what is assessment?

The first of these questions can quickly become philosophical in nature. For some of the best-known classical thinkers, such as Confucius or Plato, the objective of higher education was to cultivate the individual for the greater good of society, an idea that has persisted throughout history (Alemu, 2018). From this starting point, however, many different definitions emerge.

Some authors consider university education to be the organization of studies for imparting the knowledge and skills necessary to develop the activities of daily life (Jarvis, 1995); cultivating people capable of learning and understanding, fostering critical thought (Alemu, 2018); and creating people focused on real, practical, and highly specific knowledge (Kerr, 2001). Some authors distinguish the concept of university education from that of research (Newman, 1996), stating that these activities should be performed by different institutions.

Considering now the concept of assessment, an informal definition would suggest that to evaluate is the intrinsic, automatic, and non-voluntary capacity of any human being to estimate, appreciate, or calculate the value of something. If this understanding of assessment is transferred to the academic world, the definition that best fits the approach taken here is that of Fernandez (2008), who understands it as the “systematic collection of information, with its corresponding interpretation, around a propositional act” (p. 31).

With these two concepts outlined in general terms, they can now be applied to the assessment of teaching in the Faculty of Psychology at the Complutense University of Madrid. Usually, the approach taken toward the assessment of university teaching focuses on the teaching staff (Fernández & Mateo, 1994; Fernández, Mateo, & Muñiz, 1998); however, for the theoretical framework assumed here, this is insufficient. While traditional interpretations have placed the responsibility for every positive and negative aspect of university teaching solely at the feet of the teaching staff, a more mod-

ern and rigorous approach must account for the perspective of a forgotten group, namely the students themselves.

Therefore, this study takes a bidirectional approach that accounts for the *students' opinions of the instructors* (classical approach) and *the rest of the students* (new) on the one hand and *the instructors' opinions of their colleagues* (classical approach) and *their students* (new) on the other (Fernández, 1997). In other words, this study understands the student as an active agent in the quality of instruction and assumes that there are both good and bad students, as with instructors, thereby shifting the responsibility for the quality of education from the instructor alone to the classroom system as a whole (instructors and students).

Firstly, this approach allows us to observe the situation from a perspective that is as complete and enriching as it is simple since it corresponds to a 2x2 model in which there are good instructors and bad instructors, along with good students and bad students, making for a quadruple typology (Fernández, 2011).

This approach, while seemingly so intuitive, has scarcely been analyzed in the current scientific literature. Undoubtedly, this a line of research that will continue to be worked on in the coming years within the conceptual framework alluded to above: the fourfold typology of the university teaching-learning process. This approach begs two basic questions, however: What is a good teacher? And what is a good student?

According to the instructors themselves and the students, a good university instructor is responsible, empathetic, knowledgeable in his or her area, committed, up-to-date, studious, ethical, skilled, honest, respectful, motivating, intelligent, and proactive (Cabalín & Navarro, 2008; Cabalín, Navarro-Hernández, Zamora Silva, & San Marín González, 2010; Cruz, 2008). The great importance that both professors and students give to "human" aspects, in conjunction with academics, is of particular note.

Traditionally, the instructor has been considered an expert capable of bringing together a large amount of knowledge within a given field. Now, however, as multiple studies seem to suggest, the instructor is perceived as a person who represents learning in its double aspect, emotional and cognitive, with a broad psychoeducational training, and who emphasizes both the *how* and *what* of knowledge transmission, without this in any way implying that other essential factors are neglected, such as the need to constantly update one's subject knowledge or to possess a strong command of the topic at hand (Bugdud, Mendoza, & Aguilar, 2007; Cataldi & Lage, 2004; Guerra, 1990; Manso, 2005; Nowakowski, 2007).

As far as the student body is concerned, finding the qualities that make a good university student has not been so straightforward. Indeed, there is a clear dearth of scientific works on the subject, thus confirming what was previously observed: that the student body has been quite ignored as active agents in their own university learning. Hence the importance of continuing with a line of research that develops this model of the fourfold typology of the teaching-learning process.

It must be recognized, however, that there are some authors who identify the characteristics of a good student within the Spanish university system. For example, De la Cruz (2003) indicates that a student should be actively involved in his or her learning and should cultivate autonomy when searching for information and creating new knowledge. Such characteristics might be referred to as "proactivity."

It should be emphasized, as Tapia (2001) points out, that although a potential student goal could be to obtain good grades, a good student will additionally prioritize

his or her competence development, the search for practical utility, the generation of positive feelings towards studying, as well as an understanding of the subject and an interest in his or her professional future.

Nonetheless, many companies are quick to point out the many deficits of recent graduates in relation to integration capacity, adaptability, involvement, commitment, instrumental skills (e.g. computing), interpersonal skills (e.g. oral communication or teamwork), and cognitive skills (e.g. critical thinking or creativity), thereby suggesting that these are the primary attributes that businesses consider crucial in a student (Agencia para la Calidad del Sistema Universitario de Cataluña, 2003; Martínez, 2002).

Such a definition of a good student focuses on optimizing personal development, the teaching-learning process, and the student's professional future. And yet, paradoxically, an involved and proactive student can actually be a nuisance in the current university system. Very often, in practice, a good student is seen as someone who quietly attends classes and finishes his or her university studies with a medium-high grade, most likely limiting their professional future (Agencia para la Calidad del Sistema Universitario de Cataluña, 2003; Martínez, 2002).

From the approach presented here, with which we intend to consider instructor-student interaction, the main objective is to be able to conduct a descriptive analysis of the opinions of both groups in order to understand if there are differences in their perspectives that could be limiting the actions and interventions needed to improve university teaching as well as to understand the relevant factors behind boredom in the classroom.

Method

Participants

The participants of this study represent the two aforementioned groups: professors from the Faculty of Psychology at the Complutense University of Madrid (Group 1) and students from the same faculty (Group 2).

As far as members of the faculty are concerned, the participants of this study were selected through the voluntary participation of all the professors of the Faculty of Psychology during the academic year 2018-2019. Regarding the student body, a direct, voluntary, and anonymous request was made through institutional email, social networks, and the delegates of each class and course.

Group 1: made up of 88 professors (47.06% of the total number of professors) from the Faculty of Psychology; 24 professors aged 39 or under, 49 between ages 40 and 59; 15 aged 60 or older; full professors 30, permanent faculty 17, assistant professors 5, associate professors 29, others (e.g., visiting professors) 7.

Group 2: made up of 369 students from the same faculty, drawn from the two current degree programs offered by the faculty (Psychology and Speech-language Therapy). In both cases, between 15% and 16% of the total number of currently students were currently enrolled, 300 in Psychology (15.23% of the total) and 69 in Speech Therapy (15.83%). Regarding their age, 287 of the students were between 18 and 22 years old, 68 students were between 23 and 29 years old, and 14 were 30 years old or more. Regarding time, 179 participated in the morning, 143 in the afternoon, and 47 did both.

Assessment instruments

Two *ad hoc* assessment instruments were developed, one for each group. Both instruments are similar (except for some specific items), with the intention of observing whether there is congruence or not between the perceptions of instructors and students (see Table 1). The design intention is that each item possesses an interpretive value independent of its possible relationship to other values. Hence, we do not speak of questionnaires, but rather of assessment instruments, because of the interpretative richness of each one of their items.

It should also be noted that, as both assessment instruments were designed and conducted in Spanish, there is no guarantee that the same results would be replicated in English.

Procedure

The two groups followed the same procedure, differing only in how the instruments were distributed. Firstly, the two instruments referred to above were created. Then, the items were entered into the Google Forms platform. The main objective of this online platform was to allow the rapid and economical dissemination of the instrument as well as anonymity. Then, a meticulous diffusion plan was designed. For the teaching staff, an index of emails was set up based on the official department lists. For the student body, the dissemination was accomplished through an email to all students as well as through various social networks with the collaboration of the delegates.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analyses and comparisons of means were carried out using the Student *t*. SPSS v.25.0.0.1.

Results

The most relevant results obtained from instructors, students, and the interaction of both groups are presented in Table 1 and Figure 1. Next, the main causes of boredom in the university classroom are presented for both groups in Figure 2.

In Table 1, alongside the items completed, the existence (or absence) of statistically significant differences between the assessments of the teaching staff and the students is shown. Items 14 and 19 have been excluded, because they were only presented to the student group, although the results are shown later.

First, it should be noted that, of the 21 items contained in Table 1, no statistically significant differences were found in item 1 ("To what extent do you think the students are proactive?"), item 9 ("Do you think the number of students per class is appropriate?"), and item 10 ("To what extent is it important that a good instructor be a good researcher?").

Secondly, statistically significant differences with a median effect size (d of Cohen $> .50$ and $< .80$) were found in items 2, 3, 7, 11, 15, 18, 21, and 23.

Likewise, the remaining items reflect differences with a large effect size ($d > .80$) between both groups: items 4, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 16, 17, 20 and 22. The following items were of particular note: item 16 (“Do you think that university education is moving away from real practice (future career)?”, $d = 1.510$), item 17 (“Do you think that the teaching staff is working to avoid the boredom of the students?”, $d = 1.649$), and item 20 (“Do you think that the teaching staff is really modifying its teaching method according to the results of the teaching quality assessments?”, $d = 2.473$).

Item 14 was omitted from Table 1 because it was presented only to the students and was one of the data points with the greatest tendency to extremes (it asked students the main reason for undertaking their studies), with 1 being learning and 7 being passing. The mean was 6.14 ($SD = .959$; Fashion = 7), which meant that most of the students were more focused on passing than on learning.

Furthermore, with respect to item 19 (“Do you think that instructor quality assessments serve a purpose?”), which does not appear in Table 1 either, the students scored below 3 ($M = 2.55$, $SD = 1.611$).

Figure 1 shows the empirical averages of the items assessed by instructors and students, according to a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 7, with the theoretical midpoint of the scale being 4.

In the case of items 8, 9, 12, and 21, both groups show a clear disagreement (both groups $M < 4$) with the item.

With respect to items 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 15, 16, and 18, both groups show agreement (both groups $M > 4$).

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, statistical differences, and effect size of the two groups

Complete Items	Professors	Students	t	p	d
1. To what extent do you think the students are proactive?	4.21 (1.349)	3.99 (1.230)	1.430	= .153	.213
2. How motivated do you think the students are?	4.69 (1.263)	4.10 (1.242)	4.012	< .001	.593*
3. Do you think the students listen to the explanations in class?	4.92 (1.271)	4.26 (1.214)	4.562	< .001	.663*
4. How often do you think students get bored in class?	3.92 (1.206)	5.15 (1.200)	8.659	< .001	1.234**
5. Do you think it is necessary to attend the theoretical classes?	4.65 (1.971)	3.30 (1.816)	6.148	< .001	1.347**
6. Do you think it is necessary to attend the practical classes?	5.84 (1.611)	4.88 (1.792)	4.927	< .001	.963**
7. What percentage of students regularly attend classes? (>75%)	5.36 (.912)	4.59 (1.001)	6.613	< .001	.773*
8. How often do students attend tutorials?	3.40 (1.616)	2.57 (1.386)	4.452	< .001	.831**

Complete Items	Professors	Students	t	p	d
9. Do you think the number of students per class is appropriate?	3.94 (1.684)	4.00 (1.782)	.0272	= .786	.057
10. To what extent is it important that a good instructor is a good researcher?	5.13 (1.582)	4.43 (1.733)	1.430	= .153	.149
11. How much do you think instructors enjoy teaching?	4.43 (1.276)	3.80 (1.386)	3.887	< .001	.623*
12. Do you think that the usual way of teaching promotes learning?	3.78 (1.351)	2.93 (1.445)	5.046	< .001	.855**
13. Do you think that the usual knowledge assessment systems (e.g., tests) reflect what you have learned?	4.11 (1.188)	2.68 (1.305)	9.448	< .001	1.439**
15. To what extent do you think that there is an overlap (superposition) of contents in the subjects?	4.38 (1.244)	4.98 (1.309)	3.938	< .001	.606*
16. Do you think that university education is moving away from real practice (future career)?	4.17 (1.375)	5.68 (1.262)	9.908	< .001	1.510**
17. Do you think that the teaching staff is working to avoid the boredom of the students?	4.97 (1.402)	3.32 (1.379)	10.05	< .001	1.649**
18. Do you think instructors are accessible to students?	5.50 (1.287)	4.89 (1.202)	4.208	< .001	.608*
20. Do you think that the teaching staff is really modifying its teaching method according to the results of the teaching quality assessments?	4.50 (1.688)	2.03 (1.179)	13.04	< .001	2.473**
21. Do you think that the Faculty invests enough resources in the improvement of teaching quality?	3.19 (1.413)	2.40 (1.273)	5.168	< .001	.798*
22. Do you think instructors would attend a course to improve the quality of teaching?	4.65 (1.447)	3.29 (1.506)	7.642	< .001	1.355**
23. What would you think of a separation of the instructor-researcher figure? One staff dedicated exclusively to teaching and another to research.	3.81 (2.067)	4.48 (1.843)	2.992	= .003	.670*

* = medium size; ** = large size

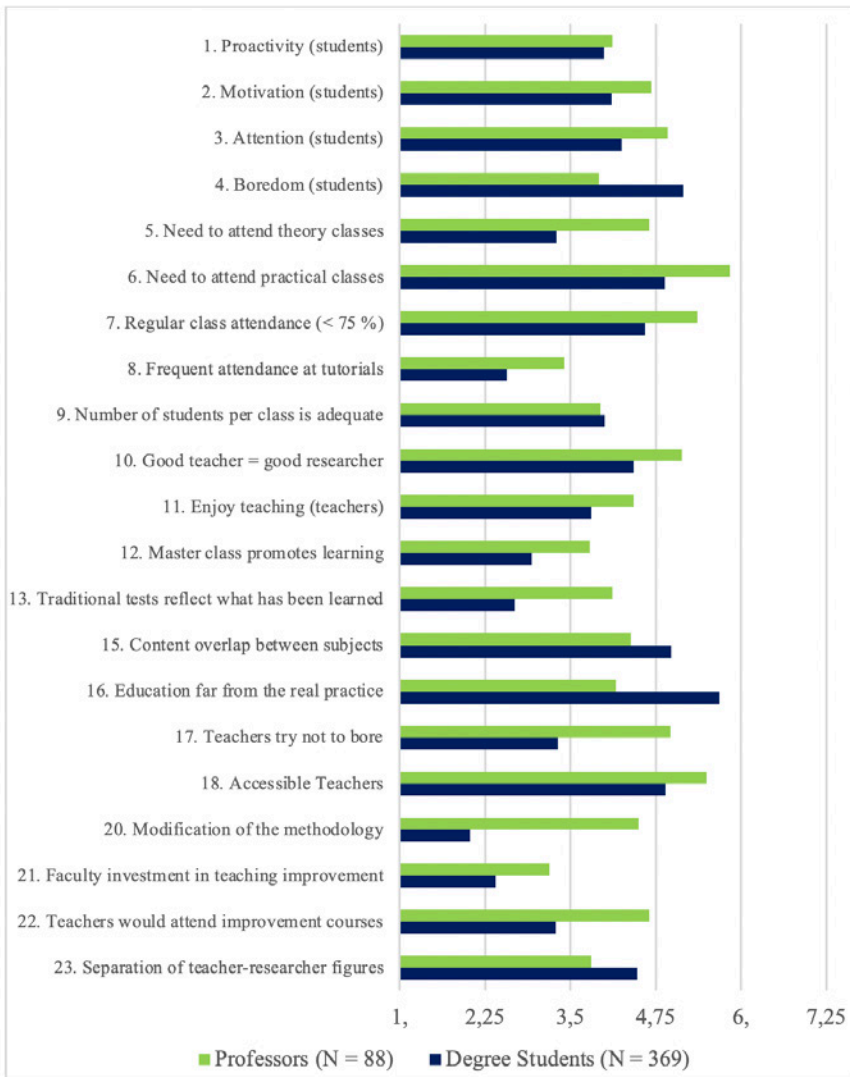


Figure 1. Responses from teachers and students, according to a Likert rating scale (1-7)

The remaining items show discrepancies in the trends of both groups. In items 4 and 23 students show a positive trend ($M > 4$), while teachers show a negative trend ($M < 4$). By contrast, in items 1, 5, 11, 13, 17, 20, and 22 the opposite trend is found: $M_{\text{Students}} < 4$ and $M_{\text{Professors}} > 4$.

Finally, in the items that were only applied to students, item 14 shows a positive trend ($M = 6.14$) and item 19 shows a negative trend ($M = 2.55$).

In line with one of the main objectives of this study (evaluating classroom boredom), a more complete analysis of item 4 was carried out, asking both groups about the pos-

sible main causes of boredom in the university teaching-learning process (see Figure 2). Unlike the previous figures, the data here represent the total number of students and instructors (given as a percentage) who point to these factors as the main causes of classroom boredom.

Firstly, it should be noted that the main factors behind student boredom, according to this same group, are (1) “the instructor does not present the subject in an appealing way” (74.4%), (2) “the instructor only reads the slides” (70.6%), and (3) “the instructor does not communicate effectively” (44.72%), followed closely by “I do not find what I have learned useful in practice” (42.82%). Conversely, the instructor also indicated that “the instructor does not present the subject in an appealing way” (43.18%) and that the students “do not find what they have learned useful” (37.5%). However, the third factor is “general fatigue” (32.9%).

It should be noted that the factors behind boredom, from the students’ point of view, are notably centred on the *how* (not presenting the subject attractively, reading slides, and not communicating effectively) rather than the *what* (I do not consider the subject interesting), suggesting the existence of a felt and expressed need related mostly to how it is exposed in front of the academic curriculum itself.

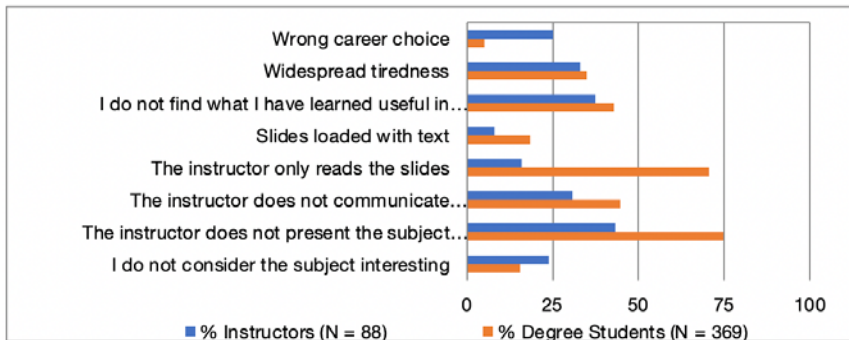


Figure 2. Main factors of boredom, according to the 2 groups of participants

Discussion

First of all, it should be noted that these results reflect levels far below what is necessary for a good university teaching-learning system by both groups: low levels of proactivity, attention, and motivation; high levels of student boredom; low perception of the usefulness of theoretical classes; lack of attendance in tutorials; dissatisfaction with the classic teaching model (master class and exams); overlapping subjects; low perception of the usefulness of instructor assessments by students; lack of investment in teaching quality, etc.

Secondly, these data reflect many discrepancies between the groups, raising the question: How will one group adapt to the other or seek ways to improve if the focuses and important factors are so different? For example, why would instructors try not to bore students when they do not really perceive the latter’s boredom? Or, why would the students try to address their own boredom when traditional assessments have exclusively blamed the instructors for this boredom? Perhaps the problem is not a lack

of motivation to change but a lack of knowledge of how the other group perceives the situation and its possible solutions.

However, these discrepancies, beyond showing the typical tendencies of each group, do not allow us to affirm the real cause behind them. For example, the students scored below 3 ($M = 2.55$, $SD = 1.65$) for the usefulness of the instructor assessments (item 19), while the instructors show a positive trend (> 4), affirming that they do modify their methodology as a function of these assessments (item 20), therefore creating a very high discrepancy between both groups in this last item ($t_{(455)} = 13.040$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.473$). Evidently, there is a discrepancy between the groups, but why?

The discrepancies found in the items could be due to (1) the social desirability of answering the instrument, (2) false beliefs on the part of one or both groups, (3) real intentions not being perceived by the other group, (4) real intentions being perceived but with a result that continues to dissatisfy the group in question, and so on. Thus, instructors could be accepting of the assessments and modifying their methodologies accordingly but in a way that is wrong or not even perceived, which is what is reflected in the students' assessment of them. It could even be that the social desirability of answering the items in a certain way influences the professors' responses. That is why, in future research, it would be useful to try to find out what is causing these discrepancies between groups beyond merely confirming their existence.

Likewise, these results empirically support the usefulness of the fourfold typology and the need to understand university education as a system rather than seeing instructors as the only ones responsible for university quality, and suggest the wisdom in adopting a circular assessment model (Fernández, 1997, 2008, 2011; Fernández & Mateo, 1994). Currently, university instructors are required to be the agents of change, but, for example, these results indicate that the student body is not as proactive as it ought to be and that students seek to pass rather than learn, exactly the opposite of what would typically be defined as a good student (Agencia para la Calidad del Sistema Universitario de Cataluña, 2003; De la Cruz, 2003; Martínez, 2002; Tapia, 2001). Thus it is possible to imagine a scenario in which groups of bad students interact with good instructors and end up "burning them out", thereby perpetuating a vicious circle of quality in university education (bad student + good instructor, who, after being burned out, results in a situation of bad student + bad teacher). The opposite could also happen where bad instructors who do not employ a double cognitive and human model (empathic, close,...) — which requires extensive psychoeducational training and good communication and motivation skills (Bugdud et al., 2007; Kabbalin et al, 2010; Cruz, 2008; Cataldi & Lage, 2004; Guerra, 1990; Manso, 2005; Nowakowski, 2007) — and who use a methodology (master class and exam) widely rejected by good students, end up demotivating students, leading once again to a vicious circle in the university teaching-learning process.

Despite this grim picture of a university system locked in a vicious circle, there is also the possibility that good instructors could motivate bad students or, conversely, that good students return the desire to teach and learn to bad instructors, thereby developing a virtuous circle in the university teaching-learning process. This should be one of the university's main objectives, along with understanding that both groups are directly responsible for the quality of the education and, therefore, that it is necessary to take into account the opinions of both groups about themselves and about each other. Concretely, this requires identifying factors to work on with the students (e.g. proactivity, attendance to tutorials,...) and with the instructors (e.g. teaching methodology, content assessment systems, overlaps,...), and at the same time avoiding focusing on

factors that are not necessary due to false perceptions about the other group (e.g., discrepancies in the causes of boredom between teachers and students).

Beyond these concerns, it seems possible that there is also a selection bias that is difficult to avoid. It is very likely that most of the instructors who answered the assessment have specific characteristics that are not completely representative of the teaching staff as a whole (e.g. greater proximity to the students). This may also be the case with the students. Thus, further assessment with a more systematic selection of participants is required.

Finally, it should be noted that when the data are broken down by psychology and speech therapy students separately, the speech therapy group is much closer than the psychology group to the teaching staff (albeit, without statistically significant differences in many cases), in various items such as 10, 11, 12, 18, 21, and 22. This indicates that the results obtained could differ somewhat depending on the grades of the students and faculties in which the study is carried out.

Conclusions

In general terms, it has been possible to observe that, even though in some cases the opinions of professors and students coincide, the norm within this study is discrepancy. Therefore, considering the perspectives of both groups, as well as their interactions, would paint a fuller picture of the university teaching-learning process, allowing us to work with a more complete approach, adjusted to the complex university reality.

The results do not describe an ideal context for the teaching-learning processes. They show the existence of a tendency toward boredom in university classrooms as indicated by the students. A key finding emphasized in this work in this regard is that how learning is transmitted, as opposed to what is transmitted, is of central importance. In other words, the teaching staff are, for the most part, well-trained instructors with more than enough knowledge for their students, but who, due to an unfortunate lack of social-emotional skills and communication tools (which in general have not been provided), are unable to adequately convey their message. This should encourage a deep reflection on what is really happening in the university world today.

In addition, based on the results obtained, it seems important to continue researching the efficacy of quadruple typology model: good instructors and good students, poor instructors and poor students, good instructors and poor students, and poor instructors and good students.

Therefore, these results suggest the need to introduce modifications in the assessment systems, with new methodologies for university teaching that seek to introduce changes not only in the teaching staff but also in the student body.

There is no doubt that the world is changing and the way in which university education is conceived of must be transformed or it will be in serious danger of becoming obsolete for present needs. The university should be forward-looking rather than clinging to the past. This work is only the first step of an ambitious intervention that hopes to empirically answer the question: Is change within the university possible?

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