Implications of dialogical pedagogical gatherings for sustainable quality higher education

Implicaciones de las tertulias pedagógicas dialógicas para una educación superior sostenible de calidad

对话式教学法对可持续优质高等教育的影响

Последствия диалоговых педагогических дискуссионных групп для устойчивого качества высшего образования

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze and understand university students' perceptions about the implementation of methodological strategy based on Dialogical Pedagogical Gatherings (DPG). This leads to an improvement in quality of Higher Education, consistent with goal 4 proposed in 2030 Agenda by the United Nations to achieve sustainable quality education. A qualitative methodology has been used, from a phenomenological perspective. Instrument used has been the focus groups, which is the most appropriate tool to deepen students´ views on this topic of study. After implementation of this methodological strategy in "General Didactics" subject of Early Childhood Education Degree, during the 2019-2020 academic year, 9 groups of 10 people each have been developed. Subsequently, a content analysis was carried out with information collected in each group, obtaining satisfactory results. Students' conversations show that this methodology favors involvement and interest in teaching-learning process, stimulating reading, communication, social development, etc. Likewise, students are highly predisposed to consider such an experience in their future professional activity, since it favors comprehensive training of students for Early Childhood Education stage.

Keywords: initial training, active methodology, dialogic learning, sustainable education.

Resumen

Esta investigación pretende analizar y comprender la percepción del estudiante universitario sobre la implementación de la estrategia metodológica basada en las Tertulias Pedagógicas Dialógicas. Ello conduce a una mejora de la calidad en Educación Superior, consecuente con el objetivo 4 propuesto en la agenda de 2030 por Naciones Unidas para conseguir una educación sostenible de calidad. Para ello se ha utilizado una metodología cualitativa, desde una perspectiva fenomenológica. El instrumento utilizado han sido los grupos de discusión, pues es la herramienta más adecuada para profundizar en las opiniones de los estudiantes en torno al tema de estudio. Tras la implementación de esta estrategia metodológica en la asignatura "Didáctica General" del Grado en Educación Infantil durante el curso académico 2019-2020, se han desarrollado 9 grupos de 10 personas cada uno. Posteriormente, se ha planteado análisis de contenido con la información recogida en cada uno de los grupos, obteniéndose resultados muy satisfactorios. Las conversaciones de los estudiantes demuestran que se trata de una metodología que favorece la implicación y el interés del estudiante ante el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, estimulando el desarrollo lector, de comunicación, sociales, etc. Asimismo, los estudiantes se muestran altamente predispuestos a plantear este tipo de experiencias en su futura actividad profesional, dado que favorece la formación integral del alumnado para la etapa de Educación Infantil.

Palabras clave: formación inicial, metodología activa, docente, educación sostenible.

概要

本研究旨在分析和了解大学生对实施基于对话式教学座谈会方法论的策略的看法。该方法提高了高等教育的质量,符合联合国在 2030 年议程中为实现可持续的优质教育提出的第四个目标。为此,我们从现象学出发,使用定性方法进行研究。研究使用的工具是讨论组,因为它是可以让学生深化学习主题观点的最合适的工具。我们在 2019-2020 学年幼儿教育本科学位的"一般教学法"课程中实施了该方法策略,发展了 9 个10人小组。随后,对各组收集的信息进行了内容分析,取得了非常满意的结果。学生的对话表明,它是一种有

利于学生参与教学过程并激发其学习兴趣,促进阅读、交流、社交发展等的方法。同样,学生也很容易在他们未来的职业活动中使用该经验,因为它有利于学生在幼儿教育阶段的综合培养。

关键词:初始培训,积极方法,教师,可持续教育。

Аннотация

Целью данного исследования является анализ и понимание восприятия студентом университета внедрения методологической стратегии, основанной на диалоговых педагогических собраниях. Это ведет к повышению качества высшего образования, что соответствует цели 4, предложенной в повестке дня 2030 года ООН для достижения устойчивого качества образования. Для этого была использована качественная методология, основанная на феноменологической перспективе. В качестве инструмента были использованы фокус-группы, поскольку это наиболее подходящий инструмент для углубленного изучения мнений студентов о предмете исследования. После реализации данной методологической стратегии в предмете «Общая дидактика» степени в области дошкольного образования в течение 2019-2020 учебного года было создано 9 групп по 10 человек в каждой. Впоследствии был предложен контент-анализ информации, собранной в каждой из групп, и получены весьма удовлетворительные результаты. Беседы студентов показывают, что эта методика способствует вовлечению и заинтересованности студента в процессе преподавания и обучения, стимулирует чтение, общение, социальное развитие и т.д. Кроме того, студенты очень предрасположены рассматривать этот вид опыта в своей будущей профессиональной деятельности, поскольку он способствует всесторонней подготовке студентов к этапу дошкольного образования.

Ключевые слова: начальное обучение, активная методология, учитель, устойчивое образование.

Introduction

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in September 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly, represents an ambitious and transformative plan of action; it aims to respond globally in favor of people, environment and well-being, eradicating poverty for the achievement of a sustainable world. Under the slogan "Transforming our world", Goal 4 of this Agenda is focused on the development of "Quality education for all". It aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for students. In this way, education is extended to different social spaces and times, within and outside the school system, throughout a person's life (Caride, 2017).

This proposal, which must be developed until 2030, establish as objectives the training of young and adults to access employment, the acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge for sustainable development education, human rights, gender equality, promotion of peace and non-violence culture, global citizenship, appreciation of cultural diversity and contribution of culture to sustainable development (Aznar & Ull, 2013). Finally, its goals include an increase in the offer for teacher qualification.

Therefore, all social actors are invited to work together to solve problems that threaten the sustainability of the planet. In this sense, higher education plays a fundamental role in addressing challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda; it is an institution responsible for training people in leadership and the creation of a culture based on social responsibility that contributes to transforming society (De la Rosa et al., 2019).

Furthermore, as Aguilera et al. (2010) point out, what is essential in the training of students is what they are capable of doing at the end of their studies, with the intention of training professionals to respond to social demands. In this sense, Higher Education institutions should facilitate the acquisition of skills and abilities that prepare students for their future professional activity and improve their employability (Martín et al., 2020).

Thus, Education undergraduate students require the development of a formative process, prior to their subsequent performance as teachers, with the intention of achieving full quality of education (Gento & González, 2014; González & Medina, 2017). The practice of different methodological strategies that facilitate the student's access to knowledge and its active assimilation should be implemented. In short, the aim is to favor a comprehensive training process in the future teacher that includes acquisition of knowledge, skills and values, teamwork capacity, interpersonal relationships, new tasks, motivations and desires (Almanza et al., 2019), as well as certain basic competencies (Santos & Sarceda, 2017).

Theoretical framework

In order to offer quality education to students and train professionals with sufficient skills to meet the requirements of our society, Higher Education is committed to a new pedagogical model. This should help students to question their preconceptions, motivating them towards learning in which they identify themselves as authors of answers and agents of responsibility for change (Esteves et al., 2020).

Thus, Higher Education must assume new socio-educational needs, with student playing an active, participatory and socially responsible role (Vallet-Bellmunt et al., 2017); levels of interaction between teacher-student, student-student and content are expanded, increasing dialogue and interaction, as well as the development of the didactic process (Mingorance et al., 2019; Soler et al., 2020). In addition, student autonomy should be encouraged, facilitating the development of the ability "to learn how to learn" and critical spirit in students (González-Sanmamed et al., 2018).

In this context, Dialogical Pedagogical Gatherings (DPG) are understood as one of the Successful Educational Actions developed in the European research project IN-CLUD-ED (Flecha, 2015). This didactic tool is based on a dialogic learning concept, in which interactions take place that increase instrumental learning in students, favor the creation of personal and social meaning, being equality and difference feasible and reciprocally enriching values for all (Aubert et al., 2008).

DPG, also known as "Seminars with a book in hand", are developed from reading, commentary and sharing of a paragraph that is of interest or arouses some reflection among participants, exposing their interpretations to deepen the text according to their life experiences (Racionero & Brown, 2012). For this, a series of fundamental principles should be established as a frame of reference, these being (Aubert et al., 2008; Flecha, 2014):

1. Equal dialogue for the construction of knowledge and learning among all.

2. Cultural intelligence, understood as the universal capacity for learning for all people.

3. Transformation of interactions among equals based on the creation of learning communities.

4. Instrumental dimension of education, which prioritizes the learning of areas whose mastery is transcendental for the teaching of new ones.

5. Solidarity, understood as a fundamental value based on mutual help to achieve learning for all.

6. Equal differences, supported by diversity and heterogeneity for the enrichment and expansion of learning.

7. Creation of meaning, as a way to awaken the interest and usefulness of knowledge.

In this way, DPG intends to establish a dialogue around shared reading, contributing to creative and critical reading comprehension with a greater degree of depth, given the plurality of interactions between its participants. (Aubert, 2011). Flecha (2014) points out that in this type of meeting, discussions are resolved on the basis of arguments, trying to reach a consensus among the members of the group. This leads to the transformation of the conception on which the teaching-learning process is based, as well as the role assigned to the main actors involved (Duran, 2017; Weyand et al., 2018).

According to Rekalde et al. (2014), Dialogic Gatherings aim to link academic and reality, creating different learning spaces. These didactic tools enable a more equitable teaching process, based on the principles of social justice and the elimination of hierarchies (Land, 2018). In addition, they favor student participation in the teaching-learning process, adopting new roles and establishing different relationships with the faculty involved (Jensen & Bennet, 2016). In turn, they allow the definition of new spaces for interaction, with a marked open character (Cohrssen et al., 2016; Marsh et al., 2016; Radesjo, 2018), as well as the development of an investigative attitude among students (Hosein & Rao, 2017). In short, it is a proposal that guarantees the improvement of academic results and equality for coexistence among its participants (Adams et al., 2014; Malagón & González, 2018).

For the Education student, DPG enhances a process of deep reflection on a comprehensive and critical vision of education (Fernández et al., 2012). In addition, it helps student to be educated in argumentation, that is, "in the idea that we must give reasons to justify a fact or a behavior and that these must have intersubjective validity or susceptible to criticism and, precisely through it, reach communicative agreements" (Torrego, 2013, p.121). In this way, and according to Aguilar (2017), future teachers must receive a democratic critical training, since the reading of the word allows analyzing the reality in which each person develops, questioning the knowledge received during their academic training process.

In Spain, some experiences stand out regarding the implementation of the Dialogical Pedagogical Gatherings as a strategy for initial teacher training. Chocarro (2013) presents an experience of teaching innovation developed around dialogic discussion groups; he proposes to eliminate barriers and strengthen links for the development

of experiences similar to those that teachers will develop in their professional future. On the other hand, Gabaldón et al. (2016) propose this methodology for undergraduate students of Early Childhood Education, Primary Education and Sociology at the University of Valencia. Results highlight the high satisfaction of students towards this type of experience that encourages reflection. For his part, Aguilar (2017) presents the development of DPG in the Practicum for initial teacher training. It is a successful educational action linked to dialogic learning, so that interactions that occur favor reflective learning from a critical analysis of reality.

Therefore, as postulated by Mingorance et al. (2019) indicate that examining variables that influence student performance in Higher Education, as well as personal, social and institutional conditions that have an impact on the teaching-learning process. In addition, it is necessary to inquire about the characteristics, as well as the procedures and possible effects of the dialogic methodological process in Higher Education (Laorden & Foncillas, 2019). In this way, teaching evaluation allows providing information to Higher Education to improve quality of education, while enabling faculty to improve their teaching (Baek & Cho, 2015).

Method

This project is qualitative, specifically, it is based on a phenomenological perspective. This method contributes to knowledge of school realities (Aguirre & Jaramillo, 2012) from the analysis of protagonists' points of view and the meanings they provide about their experience in the formative process.

Objectives

General objective of this study is to analyze and understand the undergraduate student's perception of methodological strategy based on Dialogical Pedagogical Gatherings. However, and in a more specific way, this work aims to respond to the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the student's contributions on the didactic implications of DPG in Higher Education.
2. To evaluate the proposals for improvement put forward by students on the implementation of DPG in Higher Education.
3. To know the predisposition of undergraduate students in Early Childhood Education to apply DPG in their future professional practice as a teacher.
4. To explore potentialities and limitations of DPG for initial teacher training.

Implementation of Pedagogical Dialogical Gatherings

The field work has been developed in "General Didactics in Early Childhood Education" subject; this is a compulsory subject of the first year included in the curriculum of Early Childhood Education Degree at the University of Jaen. For this experience, the teaching and research team has proposed the use of DPG methodological strategy for the

development of one of the practical activities. This activity aims to introduce students to the analysis of the role of teachers in the current education system.

Prior to the implementation of the experience, an introductory session has been developed to explain to students the origin and characteristics of this methodological strategy. In addition, and in order to facilitate the students' understanding, audiovisual materials were used with practical examples of the development of these strategies at different educational levels.

Subsequently, different texts that were to be worked on during the first four-month period (time during which this practice was carried out) were made available to students. These have been selected intentionally among all the students based on a proposal made by the teaching team. The aim is to initiate students in the reading of academic texts that deal with the analysis of the teacher in the current educational system.

For the development of discussions, a work schedule has been organized for all students, creating work groups between 20-30 people. Each of these groups has carried out a total of five work sessions, working each day on one of the selected texts according to the procedure proposed by CONFAPEA (2012) in the Manual on Pedagogical Dialogical Gatherings:

- Everyone reads at home the text to be worked on that day in class.
- They point out which paragraph or paragraphs they found most interesting.
- During the session, asking for a turn to speak, students read aloud the selected text, commenting and explaining to their classmates what it has suggested to them.
- Teacher opens a turn to speak so that everyone can critically comment on the paragraph(s) read by the student.
- When all the opinions on that paragraph are finished, the teacher gives the floor to another person and starts the cycle again.
- The procedure continues in this way until the text is finished.

Prior to the beginning of each session, the teaching team has tried to arrange the classroom in a semicircle form, since this is the most advisable way to carry them out, within the possibilities offered by the fixed furniture of the classroom.

Participants

First of all, the context of the research was determined, being the University of Jaen and, more specifically, first year of the Degree in Early Childhood Education. The subjects who have participated in the research correspond to students enrolled in "General Didactics in Early Childhood Education" subject, being a total of 230 students.

The choice of subjects for the research has been made on the basis of a purposive selection (Maxwell, 2019), with the aim of obtaining the maximum information about the subject of study and, thus, generating knowledge from an inductive perspective. It has been combined with the comprehensive sample, since we are interested in selecting those subjects that are more specific through the establishment of criteria (McMillan & Schumacher, 2012). The proposed criteria have been such as: student's motivation during the sessions in the dialogic discussion groups, willingness to participate

in the research, interest in the subject, student's oral communication skills, previous experience in conducting dialogic discussion groups and other higher studies related to Education area. Furthermore, in its design, heterogeneity of the groups has been taken into account, including, as far as possible, a balance in terms of gender, as well as students with special educational needs (dyslexia and visual impairment, mainly). Finally, the research team had 90 students to form discussion groups.

Data collection and analysis procedure

In order to obtain data, 9 focus groups were formed, each of them made up of 10 students. Research was carried out during the first four-month period of 2019-2020 academic year, and discussion groups were conducted at the end of the four-month period, once students had developed the experience.

In addition, a script has been designed to direct the groups´ discourse and to deepen the study´s fundamental themes. Thus, following open questions have been drafted, focused according to the research objectives: What do you think your participation in dialogic discussion groups has been useful for?; How have you felt in DPG?; Have you learned anything in DPG?; What advantages do discussion groups have for your learning?; Do you find any disadvantage to discussion groups for your learning?; Do you propose any improvements for the realization of this activity?; Would you use dialogic discussion groups in your professional practice as a future teacher?

Sessions lasted between 90-120 minutes, and they were recorded for data collection and subsequent transcription. Previously, participants were informed of the research objective, guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality of information collected.

Subsequently, data were analyzed by means of content analysis. This facilitates the quantification of information collected in categories and subcategories in a systematic and objective way, analyzing it to discover its meaning. (Hernández & Mendoza, 2018). To this end, the phases established by Krippendorff (2018) were followed:

- Data formulation. This first phase consists of the first reading of data. The aim is to get to know the material, reading it several times carefully and organizing it to determine the units of meaning and recording the information.

- Reduction of data. At this point, different categories and subcategories are established (see Table 1). Selecting the categorization process in a mixed way, that is, categories were created based on the script used for focus groups and on the research objectives. But categories were also established based on data collected.

- Inference and analysis. In this third phase, once the material to be worked on has been organized, we proceed to make inferences and analyze the most relevant and significant results. Nvivo 12 software was used for this purpose.

Table 1
List of categories and description

Categories	Description
Didactic implications	Competencies and skills acquired by the student from DPG
Improvements	Improvement proposals for the application of DPG in Higher Education
Professional practice	Possibilities for the implementation of DPG in future professional practice
Potentialities	Positive aspects of DPG in Initial Teacher Education
Limitations	Negative aspects of DPG in Initial Teacher Education

Results

Results are presented below, taking into consideration the objectives, categories and frequency data in each of them, according to the information obtained in focus groups (See Table 2).

Table 2
Presentation of results according to the established objectives and categories

Objectives	Categories	Frequencies
Examine student input on the didactic implications of DPG in Higher Education.	Didactic implications	166
Evaluate the improvement proposals made by the student on the implementation of DPG in Higher Education.	Improvements	42
To know the predisposition of students of Early Childhood Education Degree to apply DPG in their future professional practice as a teacher.	Professional practice	88
To explore potentials and limitations of DPG for initial teacher education	Potentialities	76
	Limitations	73

Didactic implications of DPG in Higher Education

"Didactic Implications" category is one of the most relevant in the study, as shown in Table 2 with a total of 166 frequencies. According to students participating in this experience with the implementation of DPG in "General Didactics in Early Childhood Education" subject, it has allowed them to learn first-hand about a successful educational performance that most of them did not know about. This methodological strategy allows creating a good working environment in classroom, favoring a more dynamic and attractive teaching-learning process, based on respect among equals and collaboration among all, as shown in the following references:

> I felt very good and confident as there was a very warm and welcoming atmosphere among all classmates and the teacher. (Ref. 28)

> It is a dynamic way of learning and more attractive, this way the classes are more enjoyable. (Ref. 16)

> Good, since I had not worked with this method before. I find it a very good way to deal with topics you know by listening to different versions of what you think and topics you do not know to learn new things and try to reflect. (Ref. 17)

Its implementation improves the student's involvement and interest in the teaching-learning process. In addition, reading and comprehension of the selected texts is promoted, expanding and enriching their vocabulary and also improving their reading comprehension level. In addition, the students' communication and oral expression skills are favored, so that everyone understands the text and can adequately express what they have understood and learned from it. This is shown in the following quotes:

> To improve communication skills, acquire vocabulary and improve reading comprehension. (Ref. 37)

> To better develop my oral expression, at the same time, I have learned many key words and vocabulary that have made me not to be so repetitive in my presentations. (Ref. 73)

> To express myself better and to learn how to speak in public. (Ref. 60)

In turn, they consider that DPG has been useful for them to acquire social skills and facilitate their integration into class groups, establishing relationships of companionship among peers. In addition, DPG are committed to the development of group feeling among students, as well as learning to respect opinions and contributions of all classmates, regardless of their personal and/or social characteristics, as reflected in these contributions:

> It has served me mainly to lose the embarrassment of speaking in public, since I have had the opportunity to be able to speak and give my opinion freely and learn about the opinions of others. (Ref. 19)

> I think it has helped me to be able to shed light on my views and to be able to share them with my classmates, finding some who have the same opinion and learning from other points of view. (Ref. 23)

> First, because by encouraging dialogue and listening on the topic to be discussed, it is a very good way of learning more practical about what is being exposed. Second,

because it helps communication with others, to give your point of view and to get out of your comfort zone facing a discussion group. (Ref. 52)

In addition, students consider that this methodology helps them to learn by themselves, but also to learn from others: "So that other people can listen to my opinion and thus learn as well as I learn from them" (Ref. 9). Therefore, it is a useful methodological strategy to keep students' attention due to the dynamics of participation and attention to the opinions of classmates: "It helps us not to be distracted in class because it is a very dynamic method" (Ref.2).

Improvement proposals for the implementation of DPG in Higher Education

However, students also suggest some proposals for improvement. This category is the least commented, with a total of 42 references, perhaps due to their lack of experience with the implementation of DPG, since for many of them it was the first time they participated in this type of active methodology. On the one hand, they suggest the possibility of extending the implementation of this successful educational action to other subjects of the degree course they are taking, due to all the potential that this methodology has for student learning:

Personally, I really liked this proposal of the 'gatherings'. There is always something to improve in everything and of this, it would be better to have more time and do it in other subjects of the second semester. (Ref. 31)

I propose to have more debates often and on current topics to make us more aware of what is happening in our daily lives. (Ref. 40)

Likewise, they propose to develop DPG based on texts with topics that are of interest to students, to favor their critical capacity on the educational fact, as shown in the following reference: "Activities in which we can talk about topics chosen by us to loosen up more" (Ref. 2).

On the other hand, they support the possibility of establishing intervention mechanisms to enhance the participation of students with difficulties in developing their social skills and speaking in front of an audience, as shown in the following reference:

I propose that more emphasis be placed on people who do not participate so that, in this way, they will open up and reach a point where they can express themselves without shyness. That is, to ask questions to these people so that they can participate. (Ref. 33)

Another suggestion for improvement is related to the classroom space organization, more specifically, with the arrangement of the furniture. When performing DPG, due to the fact that the tables in the university classrooms are fixed, it is complicated to arrange the student body in a semicircle, so they argue:

Let it be in a classroom where you can move chairs and thus be able to look at everyone and be able to hear it better. (Ref. 34)

Perhaps it would be convenient to carry them out in a classroom where we would be closer to each other, so that a more familiar atmosphere would be generated. (Ref. 39)

Finally, and to complete what was learned in DPG, students consider that it would be interesting to create a space that can be shared by all (portfolio, blog, etc.) where to collect in writing contributions and assessment of each student towards the experience developed. This is reflected in this reference: "Apart from debating, we can also write after each session what we thought of the discussion" (Ref. 35).

Implementation of DPG in future professional practice

Development of this didactic experience has allowed the students in Early Childhood Education Degree to verify the potential of this didactic strategy; "Professional Practice" category is one of the most commented with a total of 88 frequencies.

They are highly predisposed to apply DPG in the near future as teachers in the Early Childhood Education stage. This is shown in the following quotations:

> Yes, because it is an enriching method in many aspects, from the sharing of various points of view to respect and improved communication. (Ref. 44)

> Yes, because I think something positive for children and adults for everyone in general, so that we communicate, put our ideas in common, lose the fear or embarrassment of speaking in public and explain our ideas or opinions. (Ref. 52)

> As a future teacher, I know that I must always be training, learning and reinventing myself, even when you finish your degree and get a permanent job, so you are constantly wondering what are the best learning methods for children to learn and have fun at the same time. And I think that the 'gatherings' is a good way to achieve this, it has benefits beyond the reading itself. (Ref. 78)

Students reveal the importance of Early Childhood Education students acquiring knowledge, although they also show the relevance of achieving values and attitudes that contribute to their integral formation. For this, they believe that the creation of a good work climate is fundamental; DPG being an innovative didactic strategy that allows student to feel free to express their opinions and respect those of their peers, as shown in the following references:

> I have learned how important it is for children to develop in a welcoming climate and to express themselves openly and freely, not only for them to acquire knowledge, but also to learn to respect, to face speaking in front of others. These are very important qualities that they should learn from a young age so that they can be trained as adults tomorrow to function properly in society. (Ref. 1)

> Yes, I think this is very important to be done from an early age, in order to eliminate any stage fright that may develop in the child, as well as learning a good use of verbal structures, good intonation when speaking and the use of a more cultured vocabulary. (Ref. 75)

Potentialities and limitations of DPG for initial teacher training

The participation of students in this experience of implementing DPG during their initial training process, has allowed them to learn first-hand the procedure for its implementation in the classroom. For this reason, they have considered that this type of

methodology has certain potentialities to highlight as well as limitations, categories commented with a similar number of frequencies 76 and 73 respectively.

Among positive aspects, they highlight the capacity to facilitate the participation of all students, regardless of their characteristics, social or economic situation, educational level, etc., as shown in the following reference: "That you don't need to have great studies to participate in them" (Ref. 9).

In addition, students are aware of and value the importance of listening to and reflecting on the opinions and contributions of others:

> I have learned that there are diverse opinions regarding current issues in teaching, and that sometimes you can agree and sometimes you can disagree. In addition, it has made me see several things that I thought were not so due to lack of information and knowledge. (Ref. 71)

They even argue how from the DPG they have had the opportunity to clarify certain concepts, approach knowledge and deepen on different topics that affect the educational fact, helping them to understand abstract concepts and/or difficult to understand:

> Yes, from all of the discussions I have learned something I did not know or I have increased knowledge, also they have changed concepts that I thought they were one way and it did not turn out to be so. (Ref. 45)

> Many important aspects of Education that we did not take into account, and to know much more about roles of teacher and students. (Ref. 42)

> I have learned about various topics that I had little information about; I have been able to inform myself in more depth about them and I have been able to research apart from the pedagogical documents provided by the teacher. (Ref. 50)

Negative aspects, students think that it is a methodology little used by teachers, both in Higher Education and in previous educational levels, which makes it difficult to understand and put into practice. This is shown by one student: "At first it is strange because of lack of use in previous years" (Ref. 21).

Finally, they highlight another limitation referred to the time organization for the development and implementation of this methodological strategy. Students consider that the period of development of this practice should be extended, increasing the number of sessions established for the sharing of the texts read. This is reflected in the following statement:

> From my point of view, discussion groups have hardly any disadvantages. However, one aspect to highlight is that in one hour there is not always enough time to get the most out of ideas, or for everyone to participate. (Ref. 69)

Discussion and conclusions

This research has allowed the implementation of a successful educational action such as DPG in the teaching-learning process of undergraduate students in Early Childhood Education. It is an innovative experience raised from Higher Education, which contrib-

utes to developing a "Quality Education for All", one of the objectives of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It aims to facilitate the acquisition of skills and abilities linked to the improvement of the student's employability and future professional activity (Martín et al., 2020).

In this sense, participating in this experience consider that DPG have important possibilities in their teaching-learning process. Thus, they allow acquisition of communication and oral expression skills, improvement of reading skills, social skills and group integration, etc. In addition, they promote the development of critical capacity in students, avoiding rote learning, while favoring their investigative attitude towards teaching-learning process (Hosein & Rao, 2017). Likewise, it allows students to occupy an active and participatory role before the teaching-learning process, expanding their levels of interaction in the classroom between student and teacher (Jensen & Bennet, 2016; Soler et al., 2020).

Undoubtedly, this is an innovative methodological strategy, also implemented by other researchers (Aguilar, 2017; Aubert, 2011; Fernández et al., 2012; Laorden & Foncillas, 2019; Segovia & García, 2020) and at the European level by the INCLUD-ED project (Flecha, 2015), which offers a more equitable and egalitarian vision of education for all, regardless of personal characteristics of each student.

From discussions with students, it is clear that they are willing to put them into practice in Higher Education classrooms. Therefore, they put forward some proposals for improvement that allow the development of this type of didactic experiences, as well as the possibility of establishing mechanisms that favor the development of social skills in students, their participation through a restructuring of spatial organization of the classroom, among others.

In addition, students show a high predisposition to apply DPG in their future professional activity. They are convinced that this methodological strategy not only provides knowledge to the student, but also values and attitudes that contribute to development of their integral formation (Almanza et al., 2019; Santos & Sarceda, 2017). However, they criticize the fact that this type of actions are not very widespread in the educational area, being only isolated experiences that are developed in the context of very specific subjects.

Therefore, as future research lines, they propose the possibility of extending the development of didactic experiences based on the use of DPG during initial teacher training. In this way, students are extended the possibility of constructing knowledge from the reading of selected texts, as well as from the commentary and sharing of opinions and contributions of all (Aubert, 2011; Racionero & Brown, 2012). In this sense, an effort should be made to develop a sustainable quality Higher Education, which contributes to training of people in leadership and the creation of a culture based on social responsibility (De la Rosa et al., 2019), with capacity to respond to social demands (Aguilera et al., 2010).

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