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**TITLE: Virtual activities in groups applied to Theory of
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Abstract

This work is in a Project of Innovation in Education in the University of Cádiz, linked to the ETCS experiences. We are planning different activities in the subject's programs of Spanish Language and Theory of Literature and Comparative Literature. We are after pupils learn doing since the first day of lessons. Pupils will have to work alone and into the groups. During the academic year pupils are being after the general objectives of their subjects. All the activities mean a high level of contribution for the pupil. In this way, the teacher won't only be an oral exposition in lecture room (a "Magistral" lecture), but he will plan presential and no presential lectures. Also we have a virtual space as a tool of work for the pupil (Model system). We have between our activities: Individual work, Work in groups (puzzle), Conferences, Courses, Conventions, Forum (virtual space) and Chats (virtual space). Many of our subjects take part in the ETCS experiences, and the others are in a methodology adapted to that kind of learning.

TITLE: Virtual activities in groups applied to Theory of Literature

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This year I'm teaching Theory of Literature in English Philology that is involved in a pilot experience of European convergence, so I have adapted the educational methodology to the European space of higher education. I use the new technologies, having a support in a virtual classroom that helps the pupil to learn to work and to communicate with his companions. We think that the justification of using new Technologies are: to diversify the supports across which the pupil accedes to the information; to foment the critical capacity of different types of speech and different supports of expression and presentation, to make the pupil learn by himself, to foment the communication and the cooperative work between the pupils.

This year I have programmed different activities in individual work and in work into the groups. Theory of Literature has 9 credits, it is a troncal subject that the pupil must make along the year. We have 2 hours to week in presencial classroom. And we have some activities in semi presencial and no presencial classroom. One of them is based in a Virtual space, with the Moodle System.

We use this space in different ways. We can see the construction of it. The course is structured according to the number of items to be taught during the course. Each item explains the methodology to be followed and the tasks to be undertaken by students. They have support materials, according to the theory explained in classroom as well as the texts they work with. They also indicate the bibliography for the study of the topic.

One of the tools that I have launched in previous courses has been the forum for discussion. This tool allows me to make students work individually or in groups.

Discussion forum (through the Virtual classroom).

On the different topics that develop in the subject, the students will take part in forums of discussion in the space of a Virtual classroom. This activity must be orientated by the teacher, who will direct the forum to the questions that he considers they have to appear. The accessibility through Internet allows to pupil to access a space and more flexible time for him, beside stimulating his attention on having been already accustomed to this tool in his daily life. This activity favours the communicability among the pupils and between teacher and pupil. This activity foments besides the critical attitude and the pupil's initiative to generating ideas and questions, and to looking for information to be able to solve the doubts that appear.

Activities:

First activity: reading and commentary of an essay. (Made with students of French Philology and English Philology-2 grade).

The starting point is the reading of a common text for all students. It has chosen a text of a Spanish poet, belongs to the Generation of 27 Pedro Salinas, which reflects on the value of poetry and reading. After reading the student has to write down the relevant ideas of the text. Subsequently, he has to comment any of these ideas in relation to the subject studied. Both the initial response as the second undertaken by each student can be seen by other classmates.

The selected text is as follows:

Palabras previas a una lectura de su poesía

(Wellesley College, Mass., 1937)

Voy a decir unas palabras sobre el posible valor de la poesía para los seres humanos. Lo que quiero decir se podría resumir en estas palabras: un poema no es nada. Pero puede serlo todo. Una vez una niña estaba dibujando la calle de una ciudad por la que se paseaba una multitud de personas; y a éstas las representaba por medio de una serie de palotes, de manera que la humanidad quedaba reducida, en el dibujo de la niña, a una serie de números unos. Mirando aquel ingenuo dibujo me di cuenta de la grandeza del hombre, que es también su gran tragedia: consiste en ser un número uno. Es decir, tiene que vivir consigo y para sí. Sin duda, un limpiabotas de Nueva York es un ser muy limitado. Tampoco podemos poner en duda que Napoleón fuera un ser muy limitado: porque no podía ser más que Napoleón. Mas por muy fuerte que sea una personalidad siempre tiene deseos de salir de sí, de enajenarse, de extrañarse. El místico, el bailarín, el poeta, el borracho salen de sí. También el contemplar un cuadro o escuchar una sinfonía es una manera de apartarnos de nuestro propio ser.

Pero a ese impulso de salirnos de nuestro propio ser, de vivir algo que no sea propiamente lo nuestro, de perdernos en lo ajeno, lo acompaña otro impulso no menos fuerte: el de no dejar de ser uno mismo, no perder conciencia de la propia personalidad.

Al que se sale de sí hasta el punto de perder conciencia de sí mismo se le llama "loco". Pues bien, nada es tan enteramente análogo a la poesía como esos dos impulsos contradictorios y complementarios. Si leemos una novela o vemos un drama, nos salimos de nuestro ser, para vivir el papel de un personaje, para substituir nuestra personalidad por la suya y vivir su vida ficticia, durante un corto plazo de tiempo. Mientras que la lectura de un poema nos saca de nosotros mismos, de nuestra realidad, nos hace perder el sentido de ser uno. Pero, simultáneamente, nos hace volver hacia el interior de nuestro ser: porque los protagonistas del poema leído somos nosotros mismos. Oímos el mismo canto del ruiseñor y sufrimos la misma pena del poeta: lo que a él le ocurrió, nos ocurre también a nosotros, aunque sea en menor escala. Es decir, la lectura del poema nos saca de nuestro limitado yo, para, inmediatamente, volvernos a él. En cierta ocasión el escritor inglés Chesterton estaba haciendo las maletas en su casa de Chelsea. Llegó un amigo y le preguntó: "¿adónde te vas?". "A Chelsea", replicó Chesterton. "Pero, cómo, ¡si estás en Chelsea!" "Es que contestó Chesterton- voy a Chelsea pasando por París, Berlín, Viena y Constantinopla". Quería decir Chesterton, por supuesto, que cuando se sale de viaje es para regresar al punto de partida.

Así la lectura de un poema nos saca de nuestro ser, nos separa de nuestro yo superficial, pero sólo para llevarnos a nuestro yo más profundo, para devolvernos a nuestro verdadero ser. Se trata de un viaje de ida y vuelta. Porque cuando leemos un poema que nos conmueve, el poeta se convierte en parte de nuestro ser y, al mismo tiempo, nuestras emociones se identifican con las suyas: lo que fue del poeta se hace nuestro. Y así cuando Miss Equis lee un poema de Shelley ya no es Miss Equis: es Miss Equis más ese poema de Shelley. Y a su vez, el poema es algo más que el poema: es el poema más la personalidad y la emoción de Miss Equis. Esto quiere decir que el poeta, al hacer vivir a otros lo que ha vivido él, multiplica la capacidad vital del poeta y se multiplica a sí mismo.

Para expresar gráficamente lo que quiero decir, podríamos enunciarlo así: a) el yo del lector es 1; b) el mundo es un todo, la suma, la totalidad; c) el poema no leído, en el libro cerrado, no es nada, equivale a cero. Y si colocamos el poema a la derecha del lector, del número uno, el resultado será 10. El cero ha multiplicado (digamos) al uno y lo ha hecho (contrariamente a la regla matemática) diez veces más, lo ha hecho 10. Y el número uno, a su vez, ha dado valor al cero. En suma, se ha verificado la mágica operación de la poesía, la multiplicación de la capacidad de sen-

...tir, de entender, de vivir un momento dado. ¡Cuántos ceros se pueden poner a la derecha del número uno, esto es, cuántos poemas pueden multiplicar el espíritu de cada lector! Algo así como un trillón, un número casi infinito. Y así llegamos a un resultado mágico de una aritmética fantástica en la que el ser humano, que era uno en el poema (que era cero, como apunté), alcanza el valor del infinito, es decir, el valor poético puro.

Una de las estudiantes que me escuchan podría objetar: "Sí, eso es cierto, pero, ¿qué sucede si se ponen los ceros a la izquierda del uno? Entonces el uno no cambiaría de valor". Y, en efecto, así sería. Pero respondería también que los poemas, es decir, los ceros, hay que ponerlos siempre a la derecha del uno, porque así estará en el lugar del corazón. Y ahora sólo me resta pedirle perdón al Departamento de Matemáticas por mi fantasía numérica, al de Inglés por mi mala construcción de las frases y al de Dicción por mi execrable pronunciación. Y también al de Biología por mi alusión final al corazón. [A continuación, Pedro Salinas leyó los poemas, 13, 27, 36 y 46 de *Razón de amor* y el 54 de *La voz a ti debida*.]

In the first question, students answered satisfactorily, then presented schematic form the ideas they saw in the text, trying, as they were called, did not draw verbatim phrases from the text. With this first exercise we can see the degree of understanding that students have of the text. The text does not offer great difficulty and scoring reveal that all students agree on similar ideas. The second question requires them to work assimilation of ideas and thinking about them. They had to choose between the ideas of the text one that called him the most attention and comment. Curiously, all of them have attracted more attention the same image that appears in the text set forth in the following way:

“Así la lectura de un poema nos saca de nuestro ser, nos separa de nuestro yo superficial, pero sólo para llevarnos a nuestro yo más profundo, para devolvernos a nuestro verdadero ser. Se trata de un viaje de ida y vuelta”.

We translate the phrase:

"Just reading a poem put us out of our being, I separates us from our superficial, but only to lead us to our deepest I to return to our true self. It is a round trip."

All students spoke of the escape we seek in the literature, that occurs before reading a novel or a poem, and also spoke of the identification that occurs with the feelings of the poet. And all of them liked very much the metaphor used by the Salinas round trip. Beyond what they are asked, students looking at the comments of his colleagues were encouraged to show their opinion. This will rise to a debate in which students, from the reading of a text, were reflecting on the value of poetry.

With this exercise we have achieved that the student understands one of the key ideas explored in this issue from a theoretical point of view. We see how he assimilates this idea and explained from his own experience as a reader. In this way we have ensured

that students participate actively in their own learning. While the professor continues to play an important role in this teaching, goes beyond its role as a source of information. Following the theoretical explanation given to the students, they have worked individually on this theory, resulting in a group activity where they continue to learn through dialogue with the other comrades. They exchange their views and opinions with respect to each other. In this way, they learn to appreciate the contributions of their peers, because they understand that through this intercommunication have learned much more than if they had done the exercise in isolation.

Second activitie: reading and commentary of a hyperfictional text. (Made with students of Classical Philology, French Philology and English Philology-2 grade).

Again in the Virtual Classroom space, it provides a link to the website where students can access the reading of literary hyperfictional texts:

<http://www.unav.es/digilab/ric/textos/ficcion.html>

I ask them to freely choose a text on which to make a single reading. After reading that the task they have to send is to make a brief comment on the reading of the text, taking into account that it is constructed in a different way through hypertext. I leave some questions to guide comment of what they have found:

Did you like interesting, attractive? Why?

Is it built okay?

were you surprised at some point?

As a reader, do you find collaborative work enjoyable that the text require?

With this exercise we want that the student knows a new form of literary creation and value it on the basis of their knowledge of the literature. Mainly, because we are in the initial topics of the course, asked to comment only very general aspects on

external form of the text. In addition, he shares the new work that literature requires the reader, their participation and their cooperation in reading. The reader in the new contemporary literature is no longer a passive recipient to become an active receiver.

Such stories are literature consisting of a set of snippets (some call 'lexías') interconnected by links. They are characterized by not having a single path established by the author, but leave the reader with the ability to choose their path among several potential ones. Sometimes they do not even have an established principle. Rarely is it final. The most extreme version enable the reader to modify the work, either directly or working with the original author. They have their background in nonlinear published works on paper, especially during the second half of the twentieth century *Diccionario Jázaro*, *Rayuela*, "El jardín de los senderos que se bifurcan", *Si una noche de invierno un viajero*, *Cent mille milliards de poèmes* (<http://www.culturaysolidaridad.deusto.es/literatura/hiperliteratura/>)¹. (See an example).

Results: With this exercise we achieve primarily to motivate students and make them feel involved in the subject. It is a goal that the teacher should aim at the beginning of the course, because in this way the students feel interest in participating actively in the activities that you are proposing along the course. The work done is a simple task and does not pose difficulties for the student. As a result, the student can feel frustrated by being unable to resolve the puzzle of the exercise. The content of the student's responses is not relevant at this time. They often give very simple answers and

¹ There may be studies on this kind of literature: [Revista Hipertulia](#); Teresa Gómez Trueba, [Creación literaria en la Red: de la narrativa posmoderna a la hiperficción](#), Universidad de Valladolid. Carolina Franco Espinosa y José Jesús García Rueda: [Narrativa hipermediática: los nuevos contenidos para el ciber mundo](#). There are also directories on the Web: [http://mccd.udc.es/orihuela/hyperfiction_\(en_castellano\)](http://mccd.udc.es/orihuela/hyperfiction_(en_castellano)), <http://www.eliterature.org/dir/general>.

almost no critical foundation. But we guide them in a kind of exercise to be undertaken successfully by the end of the course. Gradually, the questions will be more complicated, as the students advance in knowledge of the area studied. It is a continuous learning in which the student is aware of the need for acquiring the knowledge required of him to be able to perform the exercises.

Then we can raise more complex issues to assess this type of texts:

From the viewpoint of the reader: Can the reader choose? Can he create? Can he modify the text?

From the viewpoint of the author: Is there an individual author or collective author? Is the auctorial Presence strong or weak?

From the viewpoint of the text itself: Will it take advantage of the possibilities of hypertext link or is a simple linear word collage? Can you follow linearly or not? Is there a map?

From the point of view of the means employed: Is it just the text? Does it include multimedia? Are there really well capitalized visual media?

Overall rating: Can it get the desired effect? Is it interesting, chaotic, boring, suggestive...? Is it good style? Is the presentation good?

Third activity: reading of a literary hyper fiction and commentary implementing practical approach of a theoretical concept explained in the classroom and on which the students have expanded their knowledge with the reading of specific literature.

(Made with students of Classical Philology, French Philology and English Philology-2 grade).

In this case part of the reading of a literary hyperfiction common: "Puntos de vista" by Libe Otegui and Andres Salaberri.

<http://www.unav.es/digilab/proyectosenl/2002/puntosdevista/>

The concept on which the students have to work is that of mimesis: This is one of the criteria that define and explain the literature. They should be able to see the character Mimetic text, and determine to what degree is in the text, that is, they observe in what sense they can keep a more or less close to extra-literary reality, discussing the plot and the characters that appear.

After the explanation given in theoretical classroom training, we see how the student has to consider now how to use this concept as a practical approach to analysis. The students worked on the text distinguishing the situation in the plot, the relationship of space and mood with the reality that surrounds us in the world today, how the characters reflect human reality. They appear in the text about many different characters that the students see as vulgar people who form part of slums, people who rarely exists and we can see the reality: a transvestite former lawyer, a drunk, a petty drug dealer, a thief, a boy, a neighbour of the bar top, frustrated for not having done anything meaningful in life, the waiter, and so on.

Some students observe how the leitmotif of the plot poses a psychological problem that we find in the human mind: we see in the text the problem of a boy who is frustrated by not satisfying the aspirations of his mother with regard to him. Her obsession reaches the point that he decides to do something big, so his mother could be proud. The problem is that the "heroic deed" is alleged to have "courage" to raise a gun and kill someone, a stranger, without any reason.

Some students observe how even the way to describe, to narrate, it is also very realistic. The narrator introduces each of the characters making us look through their eyes. An omniscient narrator makes us share their emotions, their desires, their frustrations, their lives. They also see how the issues raised coexist with us, are part of

the problem in our society: drug trafficking and weapons, theft, lack of money, alcohol, homicide.

The completion of this exercise through a discussion forum in the Virtual Classroom allowed everyone to share their responses. Each student made his exercise of an individual -reading and commentary on the text. There is a risk that a student when he sees the responses of his fellow, copy their ideas. In this case, we can identify which students lack interest and we will give solution to this problem since the beginning of the course. Most of the students performed the task on their own, without copying ideas from their peers. The possibility of seeing responses from all allowed them to compare their comments to those of others. In this way, they also exercise auto-correction. They themselves can appreciate the wisdom in their response and think how they can improve it.

Later this exercise is corrected in the class attendance with the teacher. Professor returns to retake the explained theoretical concept. And he quotes taking the text of the exercise carried out by the students. While the professor explains how Mimetic shows the character in the text at various levels, says rightly or misdeed of responses from students. This class takes place on a witness so that the student can intervene by expressing his doubts about the exercise carried out either by giving their opinions. If we raised the correction of a virtual, the explanation of the teacher had not occurred to interactively with the students. They had read the correction and then had made any comments in writing or perhaps none. The correction carried out in presence allowed students may be involved and participate actively in class. Overall, the full exercise, which is composed of lecture classes, and no presence, has served to bring about understanding and assimilation of a theoretical concept, encouraging the involvement of students in the course who actively participates.

Conclusions

The various tasks carried out using the tool of the Forum discussion in the Virtual Classroom have served to achieve the objectives set out in the course:

- We intend that the student is not merely a passive receiver of knowledge to be transmitted.

- We aim to motivate students, so that he will always feel the need to learn.

- We intend to train the student's attitude, so that he becomes capable of learning and of valuing teamwork.

- We intend to change the process of the class dynamics, so that students do not encourage competitiveness among them, but to assist each other, obtaining benefits of their interpersonal relationships.

- We intend to produce a good interaction between teacher and students.

The communication, the dialogue in both directions pupil-teacher and pupil-pupil is a very positive motivator for learning.

The teacher is no longer the only source of knowledge who participate in the process of learning and teaching of students, as a facilitator of information sources. And students, rather than taxpayers for information, participate in a responsible and active in their own learning.

The student is interested in learning various strategies and not only to adopt an examination. They learn also to evaluate teamwork, helping their peers when they are responsible for a task. We note that there is a higher performance in these students than in those who remain subject to traditional classes' scheme (where the teacher is the only source of information). We see how the students feel more motivated when studying the subject. There has been very active participation of the student.