

CLADEA
Guide to
Responsible
Business
Education in
Latin America

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1

The Teaching Learning Process Design (TLP) as a collective classroom agreement

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This paper is based on traditional role substitution, where students assume the position of teacher's assistant and work with their classmates. When teachers deal with problem situations, they tend to use a formative approach as opposed to a summative one; the latter is focused on the learning-teaching process (LTP) which values learning success according to cognitive levels. The didactic approach reinforces positive stimuli only, which is why it is progress, rather than negative results, that is registered within a school year. In this way, LTP is represented by a non-coplanar spiral that always looks for excluded thirds in the habitual concept of unidimensional learning; it is the first such test to be developed at the Accounting and Auditory department of the Salesian University of Cuenca.

Keywords: teaching, learning, evaluation, curriculum

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Introduction

The project is being developed at the Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador (UPS), an institute that was created on August 5, 1994. In its statute, the university declares itself to be of “Christian inspiration with a Catholic character, and a Salesian nature; which promotes the development of the individual and the cultural and educational heritage in society, through teaching, research, interaction with society, university administration... UPS chooses a liberal educational proposal focused on people and learning. This proposal is characterized by being understanding, constructive and dynamic, contextual and innovative, based on the analysis of the reality and the construction of knowledge to achieve the development of capacities, abilities, and skills” (UPS, 2011b). It is a private establishment, co-financed by the Ecuadorian state, whose resources are directed exclusively toward scholarships for students according to their economic situation.

The Superior Education Assessment and Accreditation Council of Ecuador has accredited UPS. Its headquarters are located in Cuenca, with branches in Quito and Guayaquil. It has approximately 24,000 students who are mainly found in the population quintiles 2 and 3, distributed in the 23 university programs according to the CINE 2011 level.

In spite of its polytechnic nature, it has an important number of students in the Administration and Accounting areas. Experience with the LTP as a collective classroom agreement is developed in semester 1 of the first year Accounting and Auditing course, specifically with the subject Applied Mathematics I. A concern that has become one of the principal institutional challenges is to reduce student dropout levels.

The problem and its challenges

Concern about the effective learning of science is not exclusive to further education. At all educational levels, there is a common interest in this issue. Therefore, it is related to another factor: “quality”; this is why “an educational system of quality” is the one that “achieves the highest possible proportion of recipients—defined in terms of age groups or others—access to school, students staying at the institute until the final year of their courses, and graduates obtaining their learning objectives”.

In this sense the present challenge is to tackle the high dropout and repetition rates that further education maintains in pursuit of better school-attendance indicators; Himmel (2002) explains that “on average, at least half of the students who enter postsecondary education drop out before achieving professional qualifications or academic degrees. The largest proportion of this number corresponds to the desertion that occurs during the first year.” This phenomenon is attributed to

several factors, including sociological and recorded (Spady, 1970) information that suggests desertion is the result of the lack of integration of the student within the educational context. Therefore, the social integration of the student needs to be supported within the classroom group in order to reverse the phenomenon.

The need for integration between the student's individual reality and the classroom context led to the subject of mathematics being chosen for this study, for the reasons proposed by Bunge (1959): "logic and mathematics establish contact with reality across the language bridge both in ordinary and scientific ways". In consonance, the value of the student's experience is summarized not only in terms of mathematical knowledge, but also in terms of their personal narrative. Curiously, integration is also the factor most prone to attrition within further education, especially in the subjects requiring mathematics as the basic science.

Description of the current situation

Rates of repetition and dropout across UPS are high as presented in Table 1, which shows the average percentages of the last five academic periods at all levels where the trend has continued.

HEADQUARTERS	CUENCA	QUITO	GUAYAQUIL	TOTAL UPS
REPETITION	21.60%	26.74%	27.38%	25.70%
DROPOUT	14.33%	12.16%	18.18%	14.46%

Table 1

Source: Technical Secretariat of Statistics UPS
Prepared by: the authors

However, the biggest problem is reflected at the first level, the data for which is presented below:

HEADQUARTERS	CUENCA	QUITO	GUAYAQUIL	TOTAL UPS
REPETITION	25.89%	32.07%	31.58%	30.37%
DROPOUT	28.88%	22.91%	31.94%	27.78%

Table 2

Source: Technical Secretariat of Statistics UPS
Prepared by: the authors

As we can see, the averages for students at the first level are more worrying than the totals collected regarding students from the first to last cycles³; the problem is intensified with the students that enter the institution for the first time, and more specifically within mathematics.

Facing this problem, studies that allowed us to ascertain the main causes of these high rates were carried out. Preliminary results indicated that students do not have the necessary skills due to inadequate training at secondary level. The evaluation system of our teachers understood this as follows: “Evaluation is a dynamic, permanent and systematic process that should enable a holistic assessment of the student. Its purposes are to check the skills acquired in an academic period, regulate the development of academic activities, reformulate objectives, overcome obstacles, and optimize positive elements, as necessary” (UPS, 2011a), and other purposes of an economic nature.

Lessons learned

In relation to the issue under discussion, the project was designed as a collective classroom agreement that breaks the one-dimensional teacher-student approach in the TLP; in this sense, it gives the student the role of learner, but also of teacher. An initial assessment allows teachers to identify the different levels of learning achievement and, based on these, choose the partner with the most appropriate knowledge and experience for the student to work with. Thus, the young person experiences a teaching-learning situation for consolidation purposes and their partner is rewarded with a new achievement.

Therefore, we no longer have a teacher with x students, but a teacher with x teaching assistants, where everyone has a commitment to the learning of the other, and to the achievement of superior levels of knowledge. The concept of approval discipline is warranted, since throughout their experience within the traditional education system, the student has been rewarded by acquired knowledge in the discipline. In our case, it is secured through teaching resources available for the institution, whether through libraries, virtual environments, or even the knowledge of professors and teaching assistants.

The professor promotes problematic situations that allow the knowledge learned by the student to be developed in terms of comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The classroom is arranged with spaces for students to locate basic knowledge and, through knowledge-sharing with peers, leads to innovative answers to the problem that has been set; this even allows the linearity of answering to be broken, as an ideal situation may be to ask students to deduct possible

3 According to the qualification and curriculum, courses have a duration of eight, nine and ten cycles each semester.

statements, methods and calculations. Excluded thirds—that is to say, the *sui generis* answers—are the most desired ones.

Table 3 shows the results of the pilot, which demonstrate the positive impact of the proposal.

Registered students	36	%
Approved	26	72%
Non-approved	5	14%
Retired	5	14%

Table 3

Source: Technical Secretariat of Statistics UPS
Prepared by: the authors

Future plans

It is expected this approach will support other departments in strengthening their evaluation logic and show a viable alternative to the traditional “knowledge for knowledge” approach to learning. The study shows that scientific truth is only consolidated to the extent that someone thinks, acts, and resolves in a different way. The concept of “error in the process” will no longer exist, but instead there will be “the logic of exclusion” that encourages argumentation and critical capacity, and leads to improved cognition.

In the future, the approach of the collective classroom agreement must also include the configuration of new teaching resources and educational innovation processes to overcome the concept of a detached teaching and certification process; in this case, the classroom agreement is in-group. Regarding students, educational promotion is awarded according the ability of the students to learn and teach, inseparable skills in workplaces where a collective scenario is used.

The collective classroom agreement also requires systematization of learning via narratives, through which the student can use reflection as a way of both understanding the importance of working with others, and realizing that although learning is an individual process, its development is collective; in this way the TLP becomes a group consolidation process, which prepares the learner for working in their professional field

Regarding teachers, the collective classroom agreement presented here as an effective assessment of learning, essentially adds to the TLP pedagogical training and methodological processes, incorporation of materials, information, and communication technologies; it also promotes the I+D processes as normal and regular

aspects of the TLP. Finally, the proposal made will support effective communication among actors who are committed to the approaches to educational innovation that are recommended by the UPS.

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