Build history through educational competences in the degree of primary education

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Abstract

This work collects the results obtained from the teaching innovation project called: 'Building History through educational competences in the Degree of Primary Education', carried out in the course 2017/2018. Different educational competences present in the curricular projects related to the area of Social Sciences were worked during its development. During the proposal, several practical activities will be carried out, such as small research works during the visit to the Archaeological Museum of Cordoba and the realisation of historical models related to the chosen theme in the didactic itinerary that will be included in a group classroom blog. The interaction of two different branches of knowledge (Social Sciences and Humanities) allowed us to work in an interdisciplinary way to concretise in practice the different activities. In fact, the purpose of this didactic experience is the application of these activities by the students to take them to a real classroom context.

Keywords: Primary education degree, educational competencies, methodology, historical heritage, cooperative work.

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1. Introduction

The development of the project 'Building History through Educational Competencies in the Degree of Primary Education' was born naturally without forcing the motivation and interest that the subject could arouse. To do this, and from the first moment, students were familiarised with the lifestyle that developed in a Roman city, in order to promote an approach to the environment and the historical heritage. Likewise, from the point of view of heritage education, it should be pointed out that the definition of cultural heritage has changed considerably in recent years, remaining linked to the concepts of culture and society (Hernandez & Guillen, 2017, p. 47).

The didactic experience was developed through a methodology by projects that fostered cooperative learning and the elaboration in the classroom of different practical activities, which were completed with an itinerary made by the students and with a visit to the Archaeological Museum of Cordoba. For the different phases of the project and the sequence of activities, the students decided the most appropriate way to elaborate a proposal that would serve, on the one hand, to complete the knowledge already acquired through their personal experiences and, on the other hand, to improve your professional learning. In this context, Kolmos (2004, p. 85) states that: 'Project work is characterised by being a work that is the result of group development'. It is, here, where scientific literature gives us other opinions about the learning of Social Sciences. Thus, as Garcia-Valcarcel and Basilotta (2017, p. 115) stated: 'It is necessary that the project be centred on the student, adapted to his needs and interests, awaken his curiosity and generate intrinsic motivation'. Moreover, it is the preferred interests of university students that promote the area of Social Sciences and its implementation in the classroom, as it is a subject that shares thematic lines with the study of geographical space and historical time.

In fact, cooperative learning and the development of educational competences have fostered the autonomy and personal initiative of the students of the Primary Education Degree. In the same way, the interest in experimentation and the subject matter 'The Roman Corduba' has generated a greater capacity to learn to learn. In short, the competency tasks were established both by the students and by the teachers so that as Cuenca, Estepa and Martin (2011, p. 46) tell us: 'Heritage education is not an end in itself but must be integrated in the educational process, within the great goals established for regulated education, particularly in the formation of citizenship'. This is how we were able to approach and involve the students with the historical events of the past and the knowledge that happens inside and outside the university.

2. Objectives

The objectives that were raised and fulfilled during the project can be divided into two dimensions, having as recipients to:

On the one hand, the students:

- Become aware of the importance of heritage conservation.
- Develop favourable attitudes towards collaborative work.
- Design different types of activities depending on the content to be treated.
- Know and apply ICT in classrooms.

And on the other to the faculty:

- Encourage the student's interest in cultural heritage, especially in our city.
- Implement a new investigative methodology in the classroom and outside of it.
- Reflect on classroom practices to innovate and improve teaching.
- Achieve greater coordination among the multidisciplinary teams involved in the project.

3. Methodology

Through project-based learning, we were able to enter the Roman Corduba, learn about its customs, get a glimpse of the city's daily life and provide students with an active role in the teaching and learning process. For this, the subject worked was addressed in an innovative way by combining a series of didactic workshops and ICTs, specifically a classroom blog, in a simultaneous and interdisciplinary way. The results obtained from the project have shown that the students through cooperative work and meaningful learning autonomously build their own knowledge, and also allowed them to be aware that the teaching of Roman cultural heritage is an essential part of our culture. In this sense, to achieve the above objectives, the master classes were eliminated, opting for a research methodology and constructivist character, so that they can contribute their knowledge and acquire new skills to undertake a meaningful learning. For this, we have had two groups of students, each of approximately 60 students.

During the process that has been carried out in the course 2017/2018, the faculty specialised in the Ancient Age and Archeology helped the teachers dedicated to the Didactic part and complemented the didactic resources with the appropriate explanations on historical and archaeological contents of the city in Antiquity. In this sense, the initial planning was configured around the previous knowledge and the historical contextualisation of the students. For this, they were motivated to express what they knew how to do and what they wanted to learn. Thus, we scheduled a tour of six themes that were worked out through an itinerary and within the classroom: (1) economic activities, (2) religious beliefs, (3) the urban space of the colony, (4) the city and the walls, (5) funeral cults and finally (6) entertainment buildings.

Figure 1. Subjects worked in the teaching workshops

In order to elaborate this resource, we planned a didactic itinerary in Google Maps and also on a current street map of our city. From this resource, which was not a simple guided tour but designed and prepared by the students, we were able to work on the six themes mentioned and also expose what they had prepared in the corresponding stops. Divided into small research teams (4–5 students), each one of them was in charge of collecting all the information about the different stops they made and that they will explain to their classmates as experts in the subjects studied.
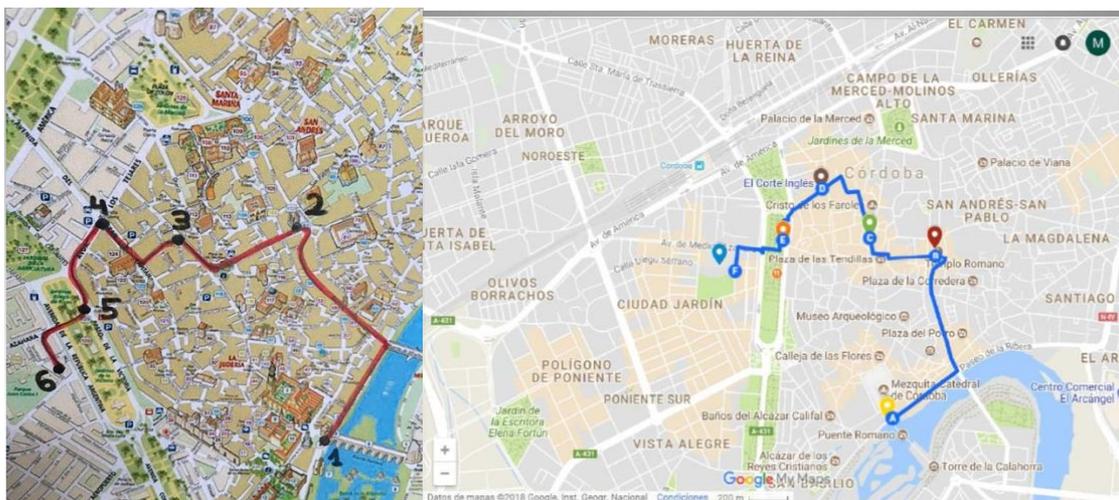
**Figure 2. Didactic tours designed by the students with Google Maps
and a current street map of Cordoba**

Around the investigation, three questions were raised by all the groups:

- What function did this place have in Roman times?
- Why was this space chosen for its construction?
- How could you explain (with a didactic resource) your stop to a group of Primary Education students?

With regard to the stops, the itinerary followed the order that is collected:

1) Bridge door (Roman port, economy and commerce)
2) Temple of Claudio Marcelo Street (Religion and cults)
3) Square of Tendillas (Roman forum and municipal administration)
4) Cajasur in the centre (Wall and domestic architecture)
5) Mausoleums of Puerta Gallegos (The Funeral World)
6) Rectorate of the UCO (Amphitheater, Roman ludi)

In this way, the previous research that we organised before the departure and that gave meaning to the explanations in those stops, turned into a classroom blog that they used to share and update the activities they put into practice in the exhibitions. In order to give shape to what was learned and explained in class, the students were asked to reflect on the didactic approach they would give to the questions asked and elaborate their own proposal. The materials used in class and the bibliography on the subject were posted in Moodle so that they could have these resources on the Roman Corduba (interactive maps, webquest, bilingual didactic videos such as the Crash Course World History and virtual puzzles of concepts).
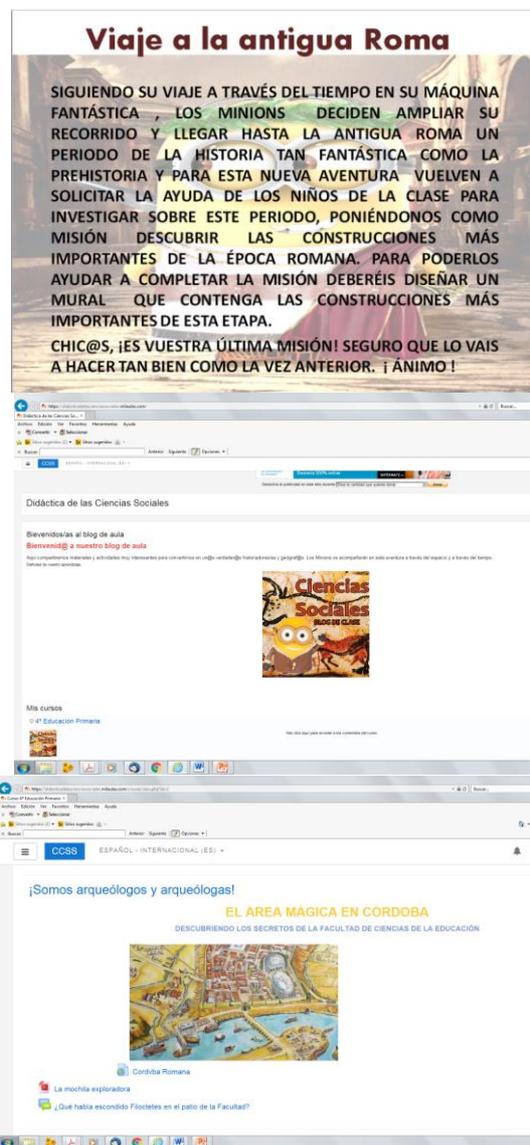
Figure 3. Blog screenshots: https://didacticadelascienciassociales.milaulas.com/

Figure 4. Prezi on Roman Corduba: https://prezi.com/view/OJQjdDQuufRGJI10zR0y/

At our first stop, the small groups produced a puppet and a model of the port. The investigation gave way to an outflow around the Guadalquivir river and a visit to the area where the *Corduba* port was established, so that they know its strategic situation and the commercial relations it had with other provinces of the Roman Empire. In order to previously document the students, we present a

text that narrates the importance that this colony had for its exports of wine, oil, wheat, lead and silver, and so that they can also know the monetary system of the Romans. Afterwards, we started a brief debate to see the location of the Claudio Marcelo street in Cordoba, to reflect why this building was destined for the imperial cult and differentiate the parts that make up its internal and external distribution. For the elaboration of this sacred space they investigated through various web links and discovered how it was decorated, what gods were venerated and what religious symbols appeared inside. The development of a puzzle made it possible for students to come to conclusions in a group manner through this research, in order to channel their responses and translate them into the classroom blog in which they collected the buildings in which they worshiped.

To lean into everyday life, we dedicate our first workshop to the public services that took place in the city. We were visited by a specialist (an archaeologist) who explained how people lived in the society of that time, what customs they had, how beliefs were in the public sphere and how the forum was decorated with statues. During the explanation of this stop, the students traced on the ground two axes that were cut to locate the thistle and decumano and be able to locate the Roman forum. In the same way, they narrated with a staging how the most outstanding citizens and citizens were represented in the main square of a Roman colony.

With regard to the funeral rites, the religious character of these ceremonies materialised with the representation of a ritual. We took advantage of the Mausoleums of Puerta Gallegos and its location outside the wall to know the steps of this liturgy and the funeral procession, the characters that were part of it and the dimensions of the monuments where the deceased were buried. Also, we take advantage of the archaeological remains of the Roman amphitheater that are located *in situ*, forming part of the urban space occupied by the Rectorate of the University of Cordoba. Although the building of shows is not visible due to its deterioration, the students were able to recreate a gladiatorial battle in a park attached to the site. We take advantage of the proximity of this park to delimit in the pavement the parts of the amphitheater, its grandstand and the place that each social ladder occupies: from magistrates of the colony to women and slaves.

As for the visit to the Archaeological Museum of Cordoba, here, the different groups worked on the same topics as on the exit to complement the knowledge they had acquired with the previous research. These investigations and the contact with the material culture of the museum served to prepare a didactic notebook with activities adapted to the students of the second and third cycle of Primary Education. The activities that had several phases were elaborated prior to the visit to the museum, during the whole visit and in a final session to show how it was lived in the time of the Romans.

4. Results obtained and discussion

The results of this study confirm that the heritage education is a growing discipline that, however, is not sufficiently integrated into educational life. Through cooperative learning, and from a social vision of heritage, it has been possible to create identity links with the community to which the students belong. The proposed activities were designed to achieve the objectives set, and thus allow children to participate in creating their own knowledge, promote a socio-critical vision and from heritage to learn-to-learn.

Therefore, the final product has been favourable given that the central axis is the game and the activities were motivating for the students to agree on the moment in which they will be carried out. Little by little, memorisation was giving way to meaningful learning. The socially productive knowledge is constituted through group knowledge and work that builds identities. This is how social subjects achieve certain educational goals that are based on competency education. In fact, work by competencies is a key element in the teaching–learning process in the school, and its implementation combines experiential and meaningful learning in teaching innovation.

For their academic and personal education, this way of working cooperatively has been significant since we have been able to reinforce the research, the written and oral presentation, the selection of contents and their subsequent analysis, the individual and group work, the strategies to prepare reports and the use of information technologies. All this educational process is included in the evaluation indicators of the mentioned areas. The project itself promotes a new way of evaluating, beyond traditional teaching methods, with the aim of students developing a project by solving a series of tasks focused on the knowledge of our city in Roman times. In the same way, the evaluation was quantified with a rubric on various issues that made the students reflect on what they had learned and what they had learned to do. In general, the results showed a student interested in historical research and group work, and especially his involvement with a way of learning that does not resemble traditional methods.

5. Conclusion

Throughout this didactic trajectory, we have been able to identify strengths and difficulties of working for projects to work on the Roman Corduba. On the one hand, the strengths allowed maintaining a motivated student body and adequate levels of competence, with which the group designed and planned their learning, and at the same time improved their interaction among peers and the promotion of inclusion. However, the limitations were mainly focused on the group's distrust of the methodology used, which causes the lack of motivation of the students to undertake a project of which they do not know the subject and the phases of an essentially investigative work that they are not used to other subjects of the degree. Also, I must point out that the methodological proposal put into practice in these lines has been an alternative to traditional teaching methods. In fact, this educational experience shows a significant improvement in the learning of historical knowledge, interest in research and group work and, above all, the involvement of students of the Primary Education Degree to know and recognise the traces of the Roman past that still survive in Cordoba.

In this sense, several have been the benefits of the project that have been able to undertake all the planned objectives. Among those that emphasise the design of interdisciplinary activities to achieve meaningful learning, the implementation of a new research methodology in the classroom and beyond, the improvement of coordination among the multidisciplinary teams involved in the project, the renewal of the practices of classroom to innovate and improve teaching, the unification of cooperative work in the subject of Social Sciences and and finally, the encouragement to research and group work as a methodological option in primary education. In this sense, a playful and productive project does not only depend on an appropriate theme or an enriching final product. The coordination or significant management of resources, among other issues, maintain an adequate project over time.

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