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Emancipation or simulation? The pedagogy of ignorance and action research in PETE

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ABSTRACT

Background: Education is increasingly a bureaucratized, standardized and regulated service in which everything is decided by the ‘experts’. There is an abandonment of the concept of education centred on the subject, social progress and collective transformation. Thus, education in general and teacher-training in particular, need innovative approaches that question the role of schools with regard to the social reproduction and neoliberalism. Critical pedagogies must develop practical propositions for transformation beyond theoretical criticism. In this sense, one of these possibilities is the philosophy of emancipation, which demands that students participate in their own education to recognize themselves as active social agents in the process of transformation and as authors in the construction of their own world.

Purpose: This study is an outline and an evaluation of an experience that was based on the main objective of emancipating the students of a Master’s degree in Physical Education in Secondary Education Teaching in order to carry out their own Action Research (AR) projects.

Methods: The study was carried out through the planning of three cycles of AR, and a teaching role closely associated to the pedagogy of ignorance. Data from the study was collected through reflective journals from the teachers ($n=2$) and the participating students ($n=90$). Added to this were two discussion groups, developed for the purpose of giving the students a more active voice.

Findings: The results show, on the one hand, how the combination of the pedagogy of ignorance and the cycles of AR required students to act with autonomy and responsibility; however, although they valued this precept in the end, they asked for more intervention by teachers. Their overriding feeling of needing to ‘be taught’ made the study, unexpectedly, resemble a simulation. On the other hand, the methodology demanded that the authors of the study to not only maintain distance and not intervene but also to continually reconsider their role and authority in the classroom.

Conclusions: Based on this study, the conclusions are that the course was designed too extensively planning fewer cycles might have resolved the sensation of the emotional distance that was perceived by the students. Reflection on the dynamics of the course also bred a feeling that the objectives of the study could have been shared with the students sooner to have obtained more accurate results. Despite these complications, it was a process of intense reflection and pedagogical learning, and a valuable experience on many levels.

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Introduction

From a critical standpoint, Kirk (2020) states that education and schools have undergone and continue to undergo a major capitalist attack. The norms of the financial market have in the past, and are in the present, turning students into commodities and classifying them by hierarchies (Hill 2010). According to Tinning (1991), one of the consequences is the predominance of a performance pedagogy in Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) that produces teachers who conceive of teaching as essentially a technical matter rather than moral, social, or political.

This unchallenged capitalist hegemony leads many to think that, as McLaren (2005) points out, there are no options. The lack of alternatives to a technical-oriented education materializes in a relatively small contribution of what are otherwise valid pedagogies that have been proposed in the field of teaching practices (Grundy 1994), also in Physical Education (PE) (Fitzpatrick and Russell 2015). Despite the increase in publications in recent years, more and better research is needed (Pringle, Larsson, and Gerdin 2019).

The experience described here steps in this direction, since it aspires to promote the emancipation of future PE teachers with the intention that they be aware of their autonomy in their training and their capacities to transform the dominant order. To do this, we establish the following objectives: (A) describe a study that was designed to contribute to the emancipation of future PE teachers immersed in their initial training, (B) evaluate this experience from the perspective of the participating students, (C) extend a self-critical reflection on the actions taken in this regard by the teachers, and (D) discuss the viability and limitations of applying the pedagogy of ignorance in a formal context of PETE.

This paper joins other texts that intend to present a response to a technical-oriented education and the arguments for its circulation by pointing to the fact that the relationship between society and school is bi-directional, and so one must influence the other (Kemmis and Fitzclarence 1986). Under this premise, the schools would have the responsibility to use whatever means they have to help those students (who are obligated to attend every day) to transform.

In order to question stereotypes and to fight against the apparent injustices, the critical pedagogies and all the reflections, proposals and innovations that have been produced from this perspective in the last 40 years (Devis-Devis et al. 2006) could be highlighted. Understanding critical pedagogies as those that align with social justice and seek the empowerment of students (Kirk 2020), the intensity with which this perspective has been generating texts has increased in parallel with the formation of a critical consciousness about the effects that a technical orientation has had on education. Thus, from the context of PETE, an attempt has been made to correct the initial lack of proposals with a series of publications around the world, as Felis-Anaya, Martos-Garcia, and Devis-Devis (2018), Fitzpatrick (2019) or Ovens et al. (2018) has shown. In this sense, despite the conceptual diversity, there are some examples that give a good account of the practical possibilities of critical pedagogies in PETE. Thus, Curtner-Smith and Sofo (2004) and Curtner-Smith (2007) deployed several critical initiatives in teacher-training, such as AR. Their results, among others showed the difficulty for students to adopt a critical position on education. This same warning is shared by Hickey (2001) after reorienting the pedagogical training of future teachers in PE in a critical proposal, with moments of self-reflection, analysis of reality and the implementation of critical practical sessions. Like the experience that concerns us, many of the predecessor investigations were articulated by combining diverse strategies to bring reflection and praxis to all phases of teaching. Thus, Garrett and Wrench (2011) supplemented the praxis with critical storytelling which, according to their conclusions, produced encouraging results and led them to foster innovation in this field with new strategies. Macdonald and Brooker (1999), who made use of AR and negotiation among other elements, developed one of the experiences most closely related to this article years ago. The creation of an adequate space and processes managed to introduce a critical agenda among the students, who felt motivated to deepen this perspective. More recently, Shelley and McCuaig (2018) have added to the list of performances that they call 'pedagogy of discomfort',

thanks to which they have provoked and challenged their students through dances and videos about bullying.

To this argument, the authors add the philosophy of emancipation. Adorno (1998), for example, conditioned the existence of a true democracy on the fact that people were inherently enlightened. Freire himself (1979) repeatedly advocated the need for a liberating education – one that would provide students with the critical capacity to question and change the world. There are innumerable theoretical references for the need to develop a transformative education that include the explanation of specific ways to achieve it. Habermas furthers this idea by identifying ‘emancipation with autonomy and responsibility’ (Grundy 1994, 35).

One way to provide students with these two precepts is to invite them to be participants in their own education, to recognize them as active social agents in the process of transformation, and as authors in the construction of their own world (Ellsworth 1989; Enright et al. 2017; Oliver and Kirk 2016). In fact, Grundy (1994) explains that emancipation is the process by which a person discovers her or his own voice. In this light, Walton-Fisette and Sutherland (2018) recommend designing democratic educational environments that target student involvement. Furthermore, among other factors, Luguetti and Oliver (2020) refer to humility as a key element for teachers, while Fernández-Balboa (1998), explains that the authority of educators should rest on their experience and not on status. Perhaps the core of the practice should be, as Ellsworth herself points out (1989) to take each other’s opinions as partisan and subjective.

Critical pedagogies do not only find ways of impeding their own implementation but also their development is blocked by innumerable defenders of the technocratic rationality. One of these barriers is the methodology behind the training of educators according to Giroux (2019), who inculcates teachers with the importance of preserving the values of the State, and so legitimizing the preservation of the status quo. It is for this reason that the teaching staff – and specifically those dedicated to the training of future teachers – has been the focus of many of the analyses. As the OECD (2005) points out, there is significant evidence that teacher-training and the methodologies followed by the teaching staff, are the critical elements in learning.

By this the need that education be more than a process of reproduction, and given that teacher-training has a predominantly technical orientation (Tinning 1991), distinct from any development of student emancipation, this study is meant to promote the belief that the development of any educational innovations that attempt to incorporate diverse tenants to bear in the classroom are justified. To this end, Habermas’ words, as referenced as above, are appropriate, in that autonomy and responsibility need to come to the forefront. However, beyond the words and theory, the challenge lies in concrete and practical methods; educators need to implement these methodologies with caution, because though ‘not all methods of innovation are valid, it is desirable to be open to the diversity, combination and experimentation of various methodologies’ (Carbonell 2006, 71).

The following is a brief outline of the two pedagogical elements upon which this study is based.

The pedagogy of ignorance

The pedagogy of ignorance is inspired by the teaching philosophy of Joseph Jacotot who, instead of seeing education mono-directionally (from inequality to equality in relation to students) he recognized from the outset that ‘all people have equal intelligence’ (2008, 26). This premise questions the traditional approaches of emancipation and anti-oppressive education (Fletcher 2000; Kumashiro 2000), by refuting those who believe that there are oppressed groups who need liberating (Anwaruddin 2015). Jacotot warned about the drawbacks of such approaches; if one specific person is given the task of enlightening others, that person inherently becomes the holder of power, and, therefore emancipation for the students is unattainable (Rancière 1991).

For Rancière (1991), Jacotot’s pedagogy denounces the myth shared by other practices of educational emancipation; the principle of explanation. Explanation hinders and deters emancipation insofar as by explaining ‘something to someone is first of all to show him he cannot understand it by

himself (Rancière 1991, 6). The autocratic teacher internalizes and acts upon the belief that her explanations are necessary, thus, intimating to the students that they are not capable of understanding the material by themselves.

Using these arguments, Rancière (1991) also criticized the Socratic teacher model. This teacher pretends to be ignorant in order to trace an itinerary through questions to reach the pre-set goal. In this sense, he shares the assumption of inequality of the 'explaining teacher' when distinguishing between people who have access to knowledge and people who do not.

In contrast, the model proposed in Jacotot's emancipation of education is the ignorant teacher. This teacher is placed on the same plane of knowledge as the apprentice, to the extent that she has nothing to explain to the apprentice. Her only task is to mobilize her will towards something common and not towards her own needs (Rancière 1991). Nevertheless, the role of the ignorant teacher is to place herself in a state of dispossession with respect to the object of knowledge, and to direct the will of the students to follow a path that she has not yet travelled; it is never to address the students from a path of superiority. The pedagogy of ignorance can be summarized by the question: 'What do you think about it?' (Rancière 1991, 36).

Action research

AR is a process that aims to improve teaching practices (Elliot 1991) and reduce the gap that often exists between practice and theory, the goal being that 'practitioners become students of their own practice' (Grundy 1994, 214). AR is consistent with critical arguments promoting transformation, and so is a motivator for creating communities of teachers whose intentions are to effect such changes (Kemmis and Fitzclarence 1986). To this end, it is largely considered that AR is an ideal tool in teacher-training (Mills 2011; Perrett 2003).

The uniqueness of this study lies in the fact that the cycles of AR have not been used so much for the study of the subject as for its pedagogical development, this former being what occurred, as well as, in Hine's study (2013). In other words, AR has been the method chosen so that the students themselves could develop and improve their objectives in the class. For Hine (2013), this type of study is valid in empowering practitioners and improving their professional development.

Method

The study

The study took place in a Spanish university during the 2016–2017 academic year, specifically in a postgraduate course Master's degree course of Secondary Education Teaching, in the speciality of PE. This class is required to be able to teach in Secondary Education in Spain. The study involved 90 students who were divided into two groups. The subject in which it was applied was called Teaching Innovation and Initiation to Educational Research (TIIER), requiring a total of 48 h of student participation. One of the purposes of this class, as the teaching guide indicates, is to deepen the concept of innovation, its limitations, the main goals of PE, the research paradigms and their designs or the traditions of this subject.

The regular participation of students in the study was an essential factor in maintaining the rhythm of the material presented in the class, although, there were different curricular itineraries for those whose attendance was not regular. The use of the data for research depended on the voluntary participation of each student, though this did not in any way influence their final grade. Regarding participation in the discussion groups, an informed consent was acquired from each; later, the identity of the participants has been concealed by means of pseudonyms, and by not identifying them concretely by any geographic indicators.

The criteria of the study were largely determined by the authors of this article, although some changes were made during the course of the study. Table 1 shows the most relevant phases. The

Table 1. Planning of the cycles.

Lessons	Tasks
1	Formation of groups of 4–5 people by lottery Assignment, also by drawing of lots, of one PE content per group according to the regional syllabus Explanation of the study
2, 3, 4	1st cycle of AR. Includes planning, action and observation.
5, 6, 7, 8	Sessions given by the teaching staff on different contents related to innovation and research
9	Negotiation of assessment
10, 11, 12	2nd cycle of AR. Includes planning, action and observation.
13, 14	Negotiation of assessment
15, 16, 17	Sessions given by the teaching staff on different contents related to innovation and research
18	Negotiation of assessment
19, 20, 21	3rd cycle of AR. Includes planning, action and observation

bulk of the innovation lies in the fact that each group had to plan and carry out three cycles of AR based on active proposals in relation to the content of the Secondary curriculum that they had received randomly. The teachers made various bibliographical material available to the students in the virtual classroom which had a dual foci: (A) material related to PE and the different studies on PE innovation that exist and (B) texts describing how to develop AR, as for example, the guide by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), *The action research planner*. The groups were also encouraged to look for alternative information on their own. With regard to, observation and reflection, the groups were asked to collect data in at least two different manners: qualitative and quantitative data. Each group was given one hour of class time for each of the cycles in which to develop their activities.

As seen in Table 1, the sessions dedicated to AR cycles were interspersed with those given by the teaching staff.

The prevailing posture of the teachers during these sessions toward the students, especially in the AR cycles, and including during informal conversations, tutorials, etc., was in accordance with AR cycles – that of the ignorant teacher. No questions were answered, doubts were not clarified, nor were offers of help initiated by the teachers. The response, when the students asked for answers, was limited to no more than questions, such as: ‘What do you think about it?’. The students were thus encouraged to try to answer their own questions by themselves, using the texts in the virtual classroom or any other resource they could find.

Data collection and analysis

This section presents data collected with reference to the evaluation of the study. This data does not include the evaluation made by students to improve their AR cycles.

The qualitative data obtained from three different sources are:

- A reflective diary completed by the students. They were asked to keep a diary in which they included everything that they felt was most pertinent to their experience. As a model for this task, they were directed to Kemmis and McTaggart’s guide (1988).
- A reflective diary on the part of the teachers, in which, pertinent considerations of the process, concerns, and observations were included.
- Two discussion groups (DG) were held. In the first, two male students and one female student participated, and in the second, three males and a female shared their reflections. The conversations were recorded, and the manuscripts were presented to the students for verification. The questions referenced their participation in the TIIR course, their opinion about the Master’s degree, the teaching profession in general and the situation of the PE.

In accordance with the inductive procedure of qualitative research, the transcripts were read scrupulously, identifying the units of analysis and assigning codes. Once redundancies had been

eliminated and the correspondences were made, there was a natural progression to forming categories. The resulting matrix serves to decontextualize the units of analysis from their original marker place to be recontextualized in their corresponding categories. Although five categories were decided, this article deals only with two of them, mainly for reasons of space: ‘pedagogy of ignorance’ and ‘research planning’. The first category groups six codes of analysis: ‘ignorance’, ‘autonomy’, ‘giving a class without a lesson’, ‘benefits’, ‘disadvantages’ and ‘against autonomy’. The second one clusters 10 codes: ‘cycles’, ‘excesses’, ‘uncertainty’, ‘demotivators’, ‘lack of time’, ‘reflexive education’, ‘need for feedback’, ‘negative opinions’, ‘positives’ and ‘excess of information’.

After that, the data from the diaries were placed in this resulting grid.

Results

Pedagogy of ignorance and authority in the classroom

As noted above, the pedagogy of ignorance is based on the role of the ignorant teacher, for which teachers should practice the ‘art of distance’. This way of giving a class is summarized by Author #2, and were recorded in the diary of one of the students (Pedro). During the first session and after one of the group discussions the author told his students, ‘I am not going to teach you how to be a good PE teacher’. In saying this, he immediately established that the role of the traditional authority figure in the classroom was going to be diminished and weakened. This message was furthered when he explained:

The teacher cannot be a catalyst for transformation; the catalyst must come from someone other than the teacher. The teacher presents that catalyst; the educational environment is where it reacts. (Diary of Author #2)

The commencement of this study was marked by this critical moment, in which, the responsibility for the educational process was decentralized. Somehow, it was a challenge to participate in this type of contradiction, a study designed *a priori* – with the intention of feigning ignorance, yet being responsible for detailing the cycles AR, and at the same time giving importance to the students. Nevertheless, despite the paradoxes and difficulties, authors considered that it must be shared with those involved at various points during the course:

I need you to understand that the subject of the course is not important, it is the learning itself. (DG, Author #2).

You have learned one very important tool in this course, which is to be responsible for your own learning. (DG, Author #1)

The objective of these messages was not only to clarify the doubts the students had regarding the philosophy behind the study but also to remind the teachers themselves of their role. The practice of stepping aside and leaving the way open for autonomous learning by students is a commendable objective with many risks, but one that promotes a highly interesting reflective process. The diaries of the authors reflect this challenging prospect:

I am burdened with questions about my responsibility as a teacher. Will I be prepared? Will the students understand? I suppose that this uneasiness derives from my responsibility as an educator (Diary of Author #1)

Similarly, revisiting the concept of autonomy – one of the pillars of student emancipation as understood by Habermas – is that one needs to recognize that the figure of the ignorant teacher is significant for students in their process of autonomous learning. Thus, because this pedagogy implies a break with everything an educator has been taught about the methods that are consistent for an effective university teacher, this break can lead to profound reflection about the teacher’s authority in the classroom.

In this study, PETE students were taken by surprise by the profile of teacher embodied by the teachers. However, in the end, they showed their understanding behind the motivation of acting with ignorance:

You've done too well. You've been too ignorant. (Alba)

The autonomy that you have given us in these classes ... has been a very positive aspect of our learning in that it has helped us to learn to develop ourselves ... (Amelia)

The awareness that the students express regarding the importance and reasoning behind the intentional posture of the teachers, is validating as it gives educational justification for the large degree of ignorance that was demonstrated and allows room for the objectives of the study to be shared. However, this acceptance by the students of the advantages of this level of autonomy in their studies – resulting simultaneously with the liberation of much of the traditional role of the teacher – is in opposition to, and clashes with, the utilitarian concept that is normally associated with the short-term objectives of a Master's degree:

I believe that there is a disconnect from what we are going to find in the examinations (Alba).

I regret not having more of an orientation – not about the practice of teaching, but of the content we are going to find on the examinations. (Quique)

As would any responsible study, it is important to include evidence regarding the students' reflections on 'what' and 'how' they learned during this course, and their regret for not having been guided more intentionally by the teachers:

We could have made much more progress if we had had more guidance at key moments. (Alba)

Do you want me to be a good teacher? Then give me good advice. (Pedro)

These comments question the essence of the pedagogy of ignorance and show the conflict between the decisions made and enacted by the teachers, and what was perceived to be necessary by the students.

Action research: learning much or learning to learn

According to the pedagogy of ignorance, and its philosophy that students need to become aware that they can learn autonomously, any objective, even in its broadest sense, is useful in the educational process. Thus, the cycles of AR were chosen because they were an effective method for organizing learning. The general conclusions about the planning of the three AR cycles was that the process was too long. This was reflected in the interviews: '... the action research process, in my opinion ... the third action plan was too much' (DG, Alba).

This led the teachers to be self-critical of the study and, consequently, to question its scale:

It has become clear that somehow, we have not succeeded in getting you to understand what action research was and this affected the development of the project. (Diary of Author #2)

Is it worth planning such complex objectives based on AR when students are not able to appreciate its merits? (Diary of Author #1)

Probably, the process may have seemed longer to the students due to the initially unexplained limited interactions they had with the teachers. This again presents the consideration of a less ignorant figure in the classroom:

... I missed verbal challenges from you, feedback, assessments ... now that we are in the teaching-learning process, one of the most powerful things we have is feedback. I have missed it a lot. (DG, Javi)

In some cases, this lack of teacher guidance led them to feel demotivated and to experience a certain anxiety:

I think this experience could have been different. In the beginning, we didn't understand anything (about the non-teaching). We were like, 'what's going on here?'. (DG, Alba)

The notable dichotomy has been that, although on the one hand, the students recognized the value of the autonomy they were given, and saw it as positive, on the other hand, they complained that they learned little of what they truly expected to study in the course.

All this could be summarized by the following, written in the diary by one of the authors:

I think they are used to having the teachers give them the answers for everything, and that is what they are expecting in this case as well. (Diary of Author #1)

In our opinion, the conclusions cannot be to reject outright the use of AR in PETE as a core element in the development of a subject. However, it is important to point out that, in accordance with the comments expressed in the students' diaries, more consideration could be directed towards the approach taken in introducing the methodology. The following explanation, for instance, is what the teachers shared with the students at the end of the course, and could have been discussed much earlier:

How can you say that you have learned nothing? If you take the first cycle of action research – which in most cases were not that bad – and compare it with the last one, we realized that you created presentations that were incredibly engaging. (DG, Author #1)

This appreciative response of one of the students to the above comments supports their validity:

With your explanation, I now find the whole course much more meaningful. (Pedro)

It seems to be true that if the students do not understand the essence of the philosophical initiative from the beginning, they become anxious and frustrated.

Despite all of the uncertainty of the process, some of the participants interviewed left comments in favour of AR:

I really liked the research cycles because, although we thought that the first activity in the first cycle, was going to be perfect, that it was going to turn out really well ... later we realized that neither the second nor the third was perfect and that there is always room to improve. (Aran)

Discussion

Pedagogy of ignorance and authority in the classroom

The intention of the 'art of distance', according to the pedagogy of ignorance, is to encourage curiosity and diminish the dichotomy between 'who knows' and 'who doesn't' know – in this case, this latter would refer to the students (Anwaruddin 2015). However, as the data lays out, this proposal is not straightforward, especially as the conclusions of this experience involve relativizing the position of the teachers in the classroom, and this, as in the majority of the cases, requires a certain process of deconstruction. To diminish the presence of the teacher, even to the point of almost being invisible, is complicated and perhaps not possible. As Grundy (1994, 148) argues: 'the teacher cannot simply nullify her or his authority'. Moreover, the results presented have led the researchers to question the meaning of the proposal. To this, Gore (1996, 121) asks: 'To what extent does emancipatory or liberating authority constitute a different type of authority from the one generally exercised in pedagogical situations – that is, the authority of the teacher?'

Perhaps, one possible answer can be found in the conclusions of Freire's (1985), when he alludes to the need for the presence of an educator, but without this person being the essence of the educational act itself. In this way, it can be understood that the ideal situation is a judicial balance between the transference of certain responsibilities of the students while the teachers still maintain their presence.

It seems clear that augmenting the autonomy of the students brings benefits in relation to their learning process, taking into account that such autonomy, far from being a solely abstract concept, is a skill that is learned by exercising it (Freire 1999). Moreover, this transfer of power to the

students, caused by distance, leads to mutual learning, perhaps to an even greater extent by the teachers (Enright et al. 2017).

The benefits of this change in dynamics are reinforced by the students' comments, when they refer to the value of the transference of authority and the trust placed in them. However, it is important to clarify certain points. On the one hand, it is important that students who participate in innovations of this magnitude understand the purpose of the innovation and do not see them as random changes. Critical pedagogy must be understood in its totality - as a paradigm, as a philosophy that permeates everything (Fernández-Balboa 1995), which is why experiences of this type require many clarifications and a certain complicity between both parties. Emancipation must come with the students' consent and never without it (Fitzpatrick and Russell 2015).

It is true that, according to many studies, students tend to resist changes that include different pedagogical scenarios (Philpot, Gerdin, and Smith 2019), as has happened in this study. Thus, the second clarification that needs to be made is the importance of taking into account the interests of the students; in this case, this would have to do with their desire to 'be taught' and not be left to 'learn by themselves'.

As will be seen below, it is perhaps worthwhile not to propose such profound changes without the consent of the students, as, it can provoke strong reactions of rejection that prevent them from being satisfied with the processes of emancipation.

Action research: learning much or learning to learn

One of the main goals of the study was for the students to learn autonomously. For this reason, the use of AR in the development of the subject is considered to be suitable for this purpose. If our students could accomplish this, then once they are PE teachers themselves, they will be able to reenact the dynamic for their own students.

The methodology of the ignorant teacher seems to the authors to be a valid practice for the future, and certainly meritorious given some of the limitations that the Master's degree now proffers to its students - principally its brevity and traditional tone. Faced with the complaint that the training is of a markedly technical nature (Philpot, Gerdin, and Smith 2019), presented by technical teachers, the authors' intention here, is to contrast such a dynamic with learner autonomy. At least in the area of assessment, Lorente and Kirk (2013) argue that it is essential for students to experiment with democratic forms of evaluations so that later on, they can reenact this model with their own students.

However, participation in the AR cycles without an active teacher figure present, made the focus too fixed on the 'how' and neglected the 'what', as the students' diaries illustrate. The authors did not take into account the general perception behind the purpose of these studies that, amongst other things, the students needed to be more deliberately guided in learning the material necessary to pass their official exams. Although this cannot be taken lightly, the teachers had to propose the question: How can we equalize the training that we feel should be part of a Master's degree, alongside the information that students need to know to pass their examinations? One qualification that may satisfy the dilemma between what the students wanted and what the planners tried to include in the course, is from Apple and Weiss (2000). They explain that placing the emphasis on the 'how' minimizes other types of important questions such as the 'why' (and obviously the 'what'). In this way, it can be more understandable that students would feel overwhelmed and overcome by anxiety when participating in AR cycles in their purest form - that is, without feedback; they would be too distracted counting the days remaining before the examinations, knowing that they hadn't been learning anything in the class that would help them pass.

Therefore, as mentioned above, although the authors do not consider the use of AR cycles harmful, perhaps the teaching proposal could be reformulated. One idea would be to reduce the cycles to only two, even though this would conflict with Elliot's (1991) assertion that there must be at least three. Among other things, this would allow the researchers to devote more time to building a

caring climate, showing more sensitivity to the problems and needs of their students and recognizing their effort and ability to carry out the requested task (Jones 2017). Returning to the topic discussed in the previous section, in order to achieve this, it seems necessary to talk frequently with students (Gore and Zeichner 1991) and to share some of the philosophy with the students from the beginning, instead of waiting until the end.

Lugueti and Oliver (2020), document how students may take time to understand the meaning of the innovations. Therefore, the authors recommend that educators make an effort to pedagogically align their objectives with those of the students as much as possible, so that the participants understand from the beginning the magnitude and meaning of what they are doing (Martos-García, Usabiaga, and Valencia-Peris 2017).

Conclusions: pedagogical implications for the future

Even with the grey areas, the study has been well worth the time and effort in its realization. The students were an important part of the process in achieving their own learning. The idea of education as a process and not so much as a product, was reinforced, and showed the students a more democratic approach to their studies. From many angles, one could consider that this type of educational dynamic contributes to the emancipation of students, at least from a banking education (Freire 2000).

For the teachers, the challenge was formidable, mostly in the face of becoming *ignorant*, when, in actuality, they *already knew everything*.

Faced with unforeseen reactions and situations, and with less control over the material than was normal, the reflections on the process for the teachers were constant. Each different innovation that was introduced constituted a specific methodological change of some importance, but if all of them are taken in combination, they become very significant transformations. Therefore, the placing of teaching practices in a situation of uncertainty where many elements were new has led to a permanent sense of loss of control, a certain amount of anxiety, and a lot of work.

This could be corrected in the future by either testing innovative methodologies through a more contained scenario, or with the same complexity, but within a more limited scheduling period. This would allow the teachers to evaluate and improve each element more deliberately and thoughtfully, and, at the same time be able to attend more conscientiously to the process and the participants.

In our opinion, the pedagogy of ignorance would claim that future PE teachers interested in critical pedagogy cultivate the virtues of *phronesis* and caring (Jones 2017; Standal and Hemmestad 2011). In their decision-making, the practical wisdom (or *phronesis*) of the teacher should be guided not by technical knowledge (*techné*), but by an ethics of care that aspires to the emancipation of their students.

In this sense, one of the challenges of the PETE teachers from the pedagogy of ignorance lies in being able to participate with the students in their projects without explaining or providing their answers, while they express a concern (caring) towards them. As we have shown in our experience, these two tasks can be perceived as antagonistic by the students. The ostensible lack of empathy inherent in the *ignorant* teacher model may be something that needs to be addressed. In this sense, the authors believe it is convenient to give warning about the fact that the *ignorant* teacher does not develop empathetic ties to the students, or at least the students probably do not perceive the relationship as such, and this may hinder educational synergies. Following Gerdin, Philpot, and Smith (2018), the affective and emotional aspects of the experiences we provide to our students need to be considered.

The implementation of innovative methodologies of this magnitude, and its critical orientation, can be complicated, unclear and somewhat risky (Enright et al. 2017; Shelley and McCuaig 2018). Even so, much has been learned by the teachers throughout the entire process, which is surprising, as teaching is not usually seen as a learning opportunity for the teachers themselves.

Finally, this study highlights the limits that any initiative of emancipation might bring, especially in formal education environments (Macdonald and Brooker 1999). The conditioning factors of the context, to which has been noted, and which gives shape to that utilitarian culture of studies, or the permanent presence of the teaching staff who perhaps do not exercise but rather represent authority, lead the authors to be modest in their pretensions of emancipation. In this sense, Mezirow alludes to professional and institutional constraints and, despite these, encourages to foster critical self-reflection and helps learners plan to take necessary action (Mezirow 1990).

Nonetheless, it is worth continuing to look for teaching strategies that, like the pedagogy of ignorance, assume the consequences of accepting from the beginning the premise of equality of intelligences, but without forgetting to affectively involve students in their own process of intellectual emancipation.

Therefore, in the following investigations, it is intended to explore and classify them according to the different responses of students to an educational situation that forces them to be autonomous in their learning. It would also be essential to understand, also from the point of view of emotions, how PETE teachers respond when they are asked to demonstrate their ignorance in an educational context where they are used to showing their knowledge.

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