

REFLECTION ARTICLE

Appropriation of Research Competencies in Nursing and Social Work Students.

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ABSTRACT

The current challenges facing universities in terms of academic literacy and research skills are a great challenge for the entire university community. Different works state that both the appropriation of capacity for research and the work of academic literacy in university education must be incorporated into teaching and learning.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the appropriation of the pedagogical proposal focused on strengthening students' research skills, coordinating transversal contents and specific contents in two undergraduate subjects, Epistemology of Social Sciences and Philosophy II. Both degrees of the Universidad Nacional de San Juan have in common that they focus the profile of their graduates in the professional practice of social and health intervention.

The methodological design begins with a first phase of background research and analysis of weaknesses in the students' research competencies based on theoretical and empirical studies. The second phase focuses on the justification of the implementation of pedagogical practices, student orientation, use of techniques and strategies related to research and the integration of research and literacy competencies. In the last phase, an evaluation of the students' perception of the appropriation of these tools is carried out. For this purpose, a mixed qualitative-quantitative questionnaire on research skills was implemented, consisting of 33 closed items and 2 open-ended questions to which 52 students who participated in the study voluntarily responded.

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Conflict of interest:

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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In conclusion, we seek to reflect in the conclusions the forms assumed by the students' self-perception in relation to the appropriation of specific university literacy competencies and research competencies for the handling of sources. The challenge that arises from these issues shows the need to advance in the construction of tools that cooperate in the strengthening of the research profiles of graduates.

RESUMEN

Los desafíos actuales en torno a la alfabetización académica universitaria y capacidades para la investigación que enfrentan las universidades son un gran reto para toda la comunidad universitaria. Distintos trabajos exponen que tanto la apropiación de capacidad para la investigación como el trabajo de alfabetización académica en la educación universitaria deben ser incorporados en la enseñanza y aprendizajes.

El objetivo de este trabajo es analizar la apropiación de la propuesta pedagógica centrada en fortalecer las competencias en investigación del estudiantado, coordinando contenidos transversales y contenidos específicos en dos asignaturas de grado, Epistemología de las Ciencias Sociales y Filosofía II. Ambas titulaciones de la Universidad Nacional de San Juan tienen en común que focalizan el perfil de sus egresados y egresadas en el ejercicio profesional en la intervención tanto en lo social como en el ámbito de la salud.

El diseño metodológico comienza con una primera fase de búsqueda de antecedentes y análisis de debilidades de competencias de investigación del estudiantado con base en estudios teóricos y empíricos. La segunda fase se centra en la justificación de la implementación de las prácticas pedagógicas, orientación del estudiantado, uso de técnicas y estrategias vinculadas con la investigación e integración de las competencias de investigación y alfabetización. En la última fase se realiza una evaluación sobre la percepción del estudiantado en relación a la apropiación de dichas herramientas. Para ello, se ha implementado un cuestionario mixto cualitativo-cuantitativo sobre competencias de investigación, constituido por 33 ítems cerrados y 2 preguntas abiertas al que respondieron voluntariamente 52 estudiantes que participaron en el estudio.

RESUMO

Os desafios actuais em matéria de literacia académica universitária e de competências de investigação que as universidades enfrentam constituem um grande desafio para toda a comunidade universitária. Diferentes trabalhos explicam que tanto a apropriação de capacidade para a pesquisa como o trabalho de alfabetização académica na educação universitária devem ser incorporados no ensino e aprendizagens. O objectivo deste trabalho é analisar a apropriação da proposta pedagógica centrada no reforço das competências em investigação do estudante, coordenando conteúdos transversais e conteúdos específicos em duas disciplinas de grau, Epistemologia das Ciências Sociais e Filosofia II. Ambas as qualificações da Universidade Nacional de San Juan têm em comum que focalizam o perfil de seus graduados/as no exercício profissional na intervenção tanto no âmbito social como no da saúde.

O desenho metodológico começa com uma primeira fase de pesquisa de antecedentes, análise de debilidades das competências de investigação dos estudantes com base em estudos teóricos e empíricos. A segunda fase centra-se na justificação da implementação das práticas pedagógicas, na orientação dos estudantes na utilização de técnicas e estratégias relacionadas com a investigação e integração das competências da investigação e literacia. Na última fase, a avaliação da percepção dos estudantes é

realizada sobre a apropriação das ferramentas. Para o efeito, foi implementado um questionário misto qualitativo-quantitativo sobre habilidades de pesquisa constituído por 33 itens fechados e 2 perguntas abertas, ao qual responderam voluntariamente 52 estudantes que participaram do estudo.

As conclusões apresentam as formas de apropriação dos estudantes em relação às competências de alfabetização específica universitária e competências investigativas para o manejo de fontes. O desafio que surge diante destas temáticas mostra a necessidade de avançar na construção de ferramentas que cooperem no fortalecimento dos perfis investigativos de egressos/as.

Introduction

Numerous studies show the concern about the way in which university students relate to the instances of written production and search for academic sources. From the academic literacy approach, significant contributions have been made both to offer programmatic actions as well as to survey the difficulties related to the topics in university classrooms. Studies conducted by Carlino (2003, 2005, 2013) have been pioneers in exposing the importance of writing with regard to the epistemic production of writing instances in the university. Other recent studies (Núñez and Errázuriz, 2020; Rojas and Méndez, 2017) start from highlighting the difficulties observed in students to read and write in Higher Education. Unlike the instances of academic literacy during primary and secondary school, university implies a new way of both reading and writing texts whose specific content density and formal requirements are not usually made explicit in the classroom. The result of the work done by students is expected to be of high quality without contemplating the previous training that this requires. It has been considered that these skills are already part of the know-how of the student population and that at university these aspects do not require specific learning (García, Conde, Iniciarte, Sánchez, Marín, & García-Martín, 2019; Natale & Stagnaro, 2018; Hernández, 2005).

However, Carlino (2013) states that academic literacies are the responsibility of all teachers throughout the university; it is a teaching process that may (or may not) be implemented to favor students' access to the different written cultures of the disciplines. Academic literacy is about helping to engage in contextualized discursive practices. It is the strenuous attempt to include them in their literate practices, the actions to be carried out by teachers, with institutional support. It is about university students learning to expose, argue, summarize, search for information, hierarchize it, put it in relation, evaluate reasoning and debate, according to the typical ways of doing it in each subject. The methodological approach is linked to the program implemented by (Gavilán and Martínez, 2020) that seeks to develop open thinking skills in university students. This study has been replicated in the subjects mentioned in this study (Cermeño, Morales and Benavidez, 2020).

In summary, the development of writing and oral expression in the academic environment constitutes an integral practice that entails a sense of belonging and appropriation in each of the disciplines in which it is worked. It is learned continuously and requires specific support, both by teachers and by educational institutions in general terms (Carlino, 2013). It is for this reason that we propose to analyze the ways in which these research and literacy skills are expressed in the framework of two subjects at the Universidad Nacional de San Juan, in order to strengthen the development of these expressions and reflect on possible tools that favor belonging in the academic disciplines.

Research Problem

Research skills are closely linked to academic literacy as they are mutually implied. Pedagogical approaches assume students with skills to research specific contents in the subjects, on which they must then produce written works based on their reading and interpretation. These strategies of appropriation and production of contents imply complex, gradual and highly demanding learning. However, it is remarkable the lack of attention that these aspects receive in higher education, with the demands falling on the development that individual students can carry out (Carlino, 2005; Natale, and Stagnaro, 2018). The process of university education involves the appropriation of multiple contents, in addition to disciplinary learning. Reading and writing in academic environments entails, for students, a complex commitment to their self-training since the university system does not always provide specific learning instances of research tools in relation to the reading and writing of academic texts (Carlino, 2013; Cortés and Errázuriz, 2020).

The strategies applied by the students to search for academic information, both for the realization of works required in the subjects, and to go deeper into the topics, are not always focused on the identification of adequate sources. This shows the lack of training that these groups have to access academic quality information, linked to the lack of promotion of research skills in undergraduate courses. However, it is likely that they will encounter these demands and indications, although scarce, during the completion of dissertations or final projects in the last stage of university degrees. These new challenges, focused on the appropriation of tools for research, result in the strengthening of their critical capacities and independence in the autonomous construction of knowledge (Barrera, De la Rosa and Chang, 2017; Roig, 2019).

Reading and writing imply a form of belonging and participation in the academic environment, from which one's own knowledge is elaborated. The acquisition of these skills must be accompanied in a conscious and planned way so that people can become involved in certain specialized circuits, share their meanings and participate in their discussions. In this sense, "learning to read and write for specific purposes is not to incorporate techniques or to practice discursive analysis, but to engage in a process of enculturation, which includes acquiring tools to manage in a social activity while participating in it" (Carlino, 2013: 361).

In the Argentine university context, for some years now, there has been progress in the work that offers tools for both teachers and students related to academic literacy. Some studies (Cortés and Errázuriz, 2020; Vargas, 2020) show part of the problem and the possible solutions that have been offered. The possibility of access to the different instances that academic literacy implies is strongly linked to the democratization of access to knowledge. Obstacles to the appropriation of content are clearly visible in the ability to produce texts that account for specific knowledge. Thus, the epistemic dimension of writing exposed by Carlino (2013) is evidence of the problems that can be identified in university classrooms. The possible answers to these emergencies are not being given in a structural way in Higher Education but from particular initiatives of faculties, projects or specific spaces for teaching reading and writing at the university. These contributions are noteworthy, although insufficient for the approach. Some of the works presented as manuals may be the case of Deguer and Llull, (2017); Klein (2007); Navarro, Aparicio, Montolío, Eiras, Galván, Moragas, and Rusell, (2018) Natale, and Stagnaro, (2017).

Undoubtedly, the acquisition and continuous learning of these competencies are related to a quality education that guarantees the full intellectual, critical and professional development of students. Higher education in Argentina, as in the rest of Latin America, faces the challenge of discussing and implementing practical tools to strengthen access to knowledge and permanence in scientific circuits (Cortés and Errázuriz, 2020; Garbanzo, 2007).

During the first semester of 2020, we worked on these topics together with the disciplinary contents in the subjects Philosophy II and Epistemology of Social Sciences for the Nursing and Social Work degrees, respectively, at the National University of San Juan. Epistemology of Social Sciences is a subject that provides conceptual tools necessary for the definition of the object of knowledge and intervention of Social Work and allows thinking about the coherence between theories, methods and professional objectives of students. It is taught in the second year of the Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, it is a semester course, with an annual workload of 68 total hours in a 13-week deployment. Among the topics addressed are knowledge and disciplinary field of Social Work, Epistemological keys of social sciences, Scientific-technological research, Social Work as a process of situated scientific production, Contextual keys, The intervention report, writing, approach in its epistemological production, Context of contextual knowledge production in Social Work, Epistemology and Social Work, Theoretical approaches in relation to autonomy and heteronomy in Social Work, Critical conceptualization of Human Rights and its current state of debate, Epistemic writing exercises on Human Rights, Reconceptualization of the notion of right(s) in Social Work, Epistemology of Social Sciences and critical epistemologies, and Particularities of the processes around knowledge centered on the geopolitical reference of Latin America.

The Philosophy II course is oriented to complement from the humanistic area to the specific technical training received by the students. It is taught in the fourth year of the Bachelor's Degree in Nursing, with an hourly load of 84 lectures, divided into theoretical and practical, it is deployed every semester for 13 weeks. The thematic axes are the hospital and its context of emergence. Latin America and the field of public health in relation to biopolitics. Modernity, reason, and social classes. Provincial context of hospital creation. Pandemics and inequalities. Capitalist model and covid-19. Colonialism, patriarchy, and cruel pedagogies. The role of the State in the context of pandemics. Public health and states of emergency. Likewise, in both subjects, the guidelines of UNESCO 2030 in its objectives for education and gender are proposed as a working framework. Due to these approaches, the objective of this research is to describe and analyze the acquisition of research competencies.

Method

General Description of Studies

The objective of this research focuses on analyzing the integration of research and academic literacy competencies in two undergraduate subjects, Epistemology of Social Sciences and Philosophy II. The context of the Covid-19 pandemic determined the virtual dictation of the subjects in which these strategies were implemented. In turn, the development of this study is linked to the methodology used in the research skills integration program (Gavilán and Martínez, 2020). With the purpose of assessing open active thinking, 11 items adapted from the scales: the Active Open Active Thinking Scale for Adolescents (AAOT Scale) by Metz (2017) and the *Flexible Thinking Scale* by Stanovich and West (1997) have been integrated. The questionnaire items have been rated with a Likert Scale ranging from 1=Never to 5=Always. The results have been analyzed with SPSS Software v. 25. This questionnaire contains 4 items that focus on beliefs, preferences, and norms of thinking: 1) I like conversations with people of different beliefs about the way the world works. 2) I would like to talk to people from other countries to find out what life is like in those places. 3) When someone disagrees with me, I feel less respect for that person. 4) Not changing my mind is a sign of strength (Stanovich and West, 1997; Stanovich and West, 2000). The objective of this scale, adapted to the characteristics of the participating students and the purposes of the program, is to analyze flexible thinking, as opposed to dogmatic thinking. The original scale, designed based on Baron (1985, 1993), consisted of 41 AOT items, which correlate with each other. Its internal reliability coefficient is 0.70 to 0.88.

Description of the Context and Participants

For this work we have taken the items corresponding to the quantitative phase in which 52 participants took part., of which 88.5% are female, 9.6% are male and 1.9% are identified as other.

The teaching of virtual classes was deployed in the first semester of 2020; the change from face-to-face classes to interaction with the contents through the virtual platform meant an abrupt change for both the teaching team and the students. 55.8% are taking the subject Philosophy II and 44.2% the subject Epistemology of Social Sciences. 21.2% are between 15 and 20 years old, 30.8% are between 20 and 25 years old, 28.8% are between 20 and 25 years old, 28.8% are between 15 and 20 years old and 28.8% are between 20 and 25 years old. The percentage between 25 and 35 years of age, 15.4% between 30 and 35 years of age, and 3.8% over 35 years of age.

The implementation phases of the program were: *First phase*: 1) search for background or previous studies in the Ibero-American context of experiences related to the development of research skills and academic literacy; 2) analysis of the deficiencies and/or weaknesses of research skills of students based on theoretical and empirical studies (Carlino, 2013; Merma and Gavilán, 2018). *Second phase*: 3) justification of the implementation of the experience in the subject Philosophy II and Epistemology of Social Sciences, (Aquín, 1996; Durán, 2018; Grassi, 2011; Ramírez, Quintana, Sanhueza & Valenzuela, 2013). 4) Systematic orientation of students in the use of techniques and strategies related to research (e.g., bibliographic search, information processing, use of APA norms, university academic reading and writing). Among the teaching-learning strategies foreseen for the teaching of the subjects, lectures, group readings, socialization of readings and discussion of the same are foreseen. Also, the realization of textual production practices through group seminars from which revisions of research and writing practices are carried out. In addition, partial evaluations are processual and are designed to accompany both the appropriation of contents and the acquisition of valuable criteria to analyze professional development. Both the reading guides and the group work assignments for each unit are designed in such a way that students can identify different aspects that contribute to the formation and acquisition of research and literacy competencies. In this sense, the integration of specific competencies is oriented towards the search for an explanation of arguments, elaboration of general conclusions, identification of the structure of texts and unknown words. Seminars are an instance where these dimensions are put into practice through the reelaboration of contents. Through them, the aim is to encourage the practice of debate and the elaboration of personal opinions based on texts and articles worked on in class. 5) integration of research and university academic literacy skills in teamwork activities. *Third phase*: at the end of the implementation stage, learning was evaluated by the students. The instrument used for this purpose was a questionnaire consisting of 33 closed items and 2 open questions to which 52 students who participated in the work proposal voluntarily responded. Thus, the work methodology implied a gradual accompaniment of identification and incorporation of academic research and literacy competencies throughout the semester, culminating in an evaluation process based on the students' self-perception of the experience. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methodological strategies made it possible to approach this complex of relationships and competencies, taking as a general framework the empirical experience developed in the classroom.

Instruments

In the subjects involved, a mixed qualitative-quantitative questionnaire has been implemented, on research competencies with 33 closed questions and two open questions, although in this study only the quantitative analysis is performed, based on the Open Active Thinking Scale for Adolescents (AAOT Scale) by Metz (2017) and the *Flexible Thinking Scale* by Stanovich and West (1997). Among them, 22 items inquire about research competencies and were designed *ad hoc* based on previous literature and studies (Guajardo, Guillén, & Rocha, 2011; Merma- & Gavilán, 2018). The student assessment instrument was focused on obtaining information on: a) the degree of acquisition of research competencies, b) how research competencies contribute to the learning of the subjects involved and, c) needs and improvement proposals for their implementation in other subjects and in other academic years.

Results

Gender and Distribution by Discipline

This dimension presents the distribution of the student body by gender of the survey respondents in relation to the careers they study.

Table 1. Studies attended according to gender.

			Género			Total
			Mujer	Varón	Otro	
Estudios que cursa	Trabajo Social	Recuento	21	2	0	23
		Porcentaje	91,30%	8,70%	0,00%	100%
	Enfermería	Recuento	25	3	1	29
		Porcentaje	86,20%	10,30%	3,40%	100%
Total		Recuento	46	5	1	52
		Porcentaje	88,50%	9,60%	1,90%	100%

Source: own elaboration.

From these data, it can be seen that almost all the respondents to the survey are women. In the case of Nursing, female students represent more than 86%, while in Social Work they represent more than 91%. In the first case, one person stated that she did not feel represented by these binary categories. Consequently, the number of male respondents in Nursing and Social Work represented 10.3% and 8.7% respectively. It is evident the feminization of the student body in both degrees with the historical conditions that determine them (Aspiazu, 2017; Nebra, 2018).

Development of Reading Comprehension Skills

This section presents results related to the group's perception of the learning of content comprehension competencies through reading. They allow us to appreciate the gradual formation of reflective tools of the students in relation to the critical development of academic information sources.

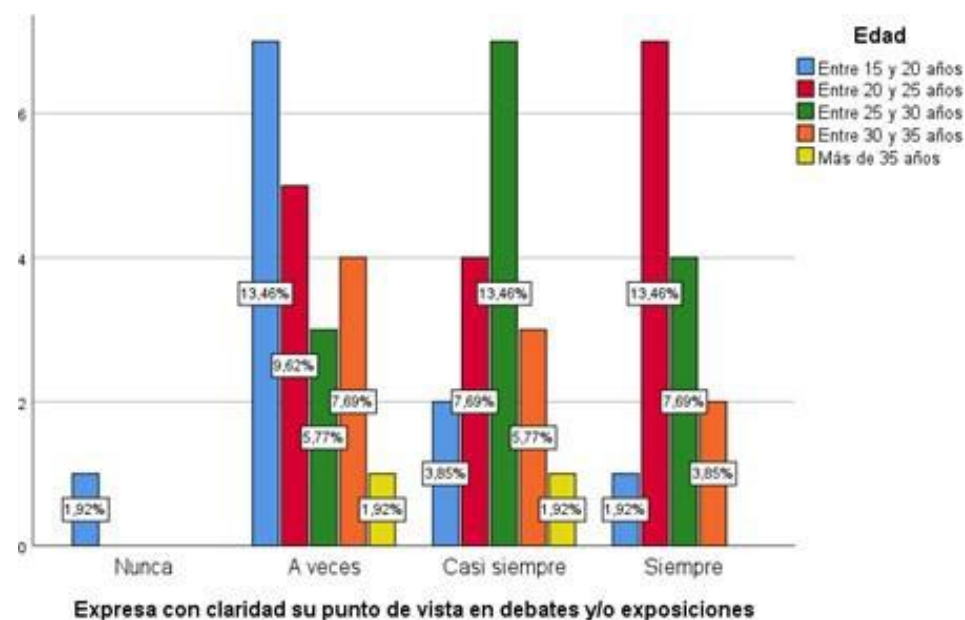
In order to learn about research and literacy skills for the management of specific sources and techniques, the following items were investigated. In item 1, to the question, "*When you read something that interests you, do you look for information to broaden your knowledge?*" 42.3% of the students answered that they almost always look for information, 32.7% sometimes, 19.2% always, 5.7% almost never and never. In relation to the previous question in item 2, it was asked if when they read a text they do not understand they stop reading it and do not look for more information. The group answered: 44.2% never stop reading the text, 28.8% almost never, 19.2% sometimes, 3.8% almost always and 3.8% always. In item 3, *When I read a text, I clearly identify the relevant information.* 57.7% of students almost always clearly identify the relevant information, 26.9% sometimes, 13.5% always and 1.9% almost never. Regarding whether students know how to draw fundamental conclusions from the texts they read, in item 4 they answered that 44.2% almost always know how to draw conclusions, 23.1% sometimes, 23.1% always, 7.7% almost never and only 1.9% never. In response to the question of item 5: *When reading a text, do you know if the author is trying to give an opinion, explain a problem and its solutions, or explain facts?* Half of the sample, i.e., 50% of the students, answered almost always. 32.7% sometimes, 13.5% always and 3.8% almost never. Linked to the previous question, item 6 asked, *when they read an opinion, they do not take sides with it until they have sufficient evidence or reason to justify it.* 34.6% of students answered almost always, 32.7% always, 19.2% sometimes, 9.6% almost never and 3.8% never. In item 7, *When I write the conclusions of a paper, I clearly justify each one of them,* it is analyzed that 48.1% of the group almost always clearly justify each one of them, 25% sometimes and 23.1% always clearly justify their conclusions and only 3.8% almost never and never do so. In item 8, the majority of students refer that when looking for information to write a paper they judge whether the sources are reliable, 63.5% always, 23.1% almost always, 9.6% sometimes and only 3.8% almost never or never. Regarding item 9, regarding inquiring and searching for information on the contents and activities of the subjects outside the classroom: 40.4% of students sometimes do it, 34.6% almost always, 15.4% always, 5.8% never and 3.8% almost never.

Acquisition of Oral and Written Presentation Skills.

Among the dimensions analyzed is the appropriation of competencies in the development of academic practices. Thus, the ability to point out sources, express ideas clearly, value and respect the opinions of others is analyzed.

Item 10. When referring to the sources used to express someone else's idea, 50% said that they always refer to them, 23.1% sometimes, and 19.2% almost always. Only 1.9% responded that they never mention them, followed by 5.8% who responded almost never. Item 11, when writing papers, in addition to the main idea of the topic, 48.1% stated that sometimes they would present alternative opinions of other authors and sources. Another 30.8% said they almost always do so, while 11.5% said they never or almost never use this tool. Item 12. In debates and/or presentations, 38.5% consider that they sometimes manage to express their point of view clearly. 32.7% stated that they almost always manage to do so, while 26.9% always do. Only 1.9% responded that they never achieve this objective. Next, the students' ability to express their point of view is related to the variable age (Figure 1) and their studies (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Age and expression of point of view.

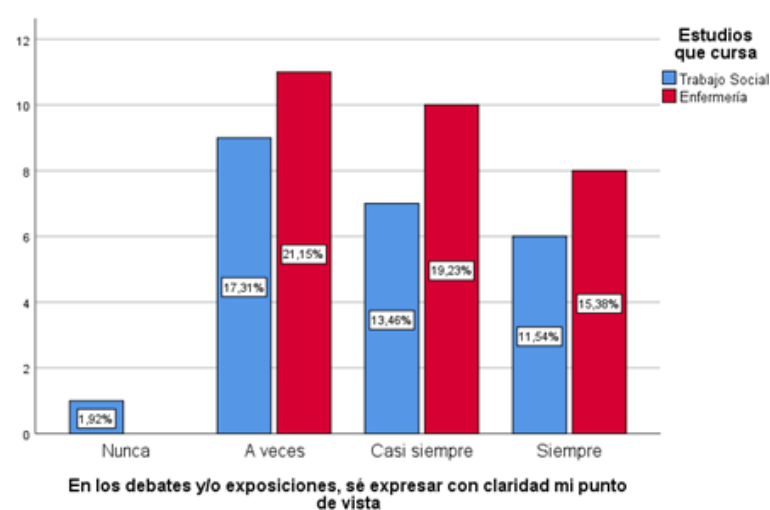


Source: own elaboration.

From the graph, it is possible to analyze that people between 20 and 30 years of age feel more confident when expressing their point of view in the different academic activities they carry out. 13.46% of those between 20 and 25 consider that they always express themselves clearly, while 13.46% of those between 25 and 20 responded almost always.

People between 30 and 35 years of age responded mostly sometimes, as did people between 15 and 20 years of age. Only 1.9% of those between 15 and 20 years of age mentioned never clearly expressing their point of view in the debates and presentations in which they participate.

Figure 2. Relationship between studies and clarity in expressing a point of view.



Source: own elaboration.

People who are currently studying to become nurses are the ones who presented the most optimistic results. 19.23% consider that they almost always express their opinions clearly, while 15.38% always do so. In this career, no one responded that they never express their views clearly.

In the case of Social Work, 17.31% of the student body considers that they sometimes manage to express their points of view clearly, followed by 13.46% who almost always do so.

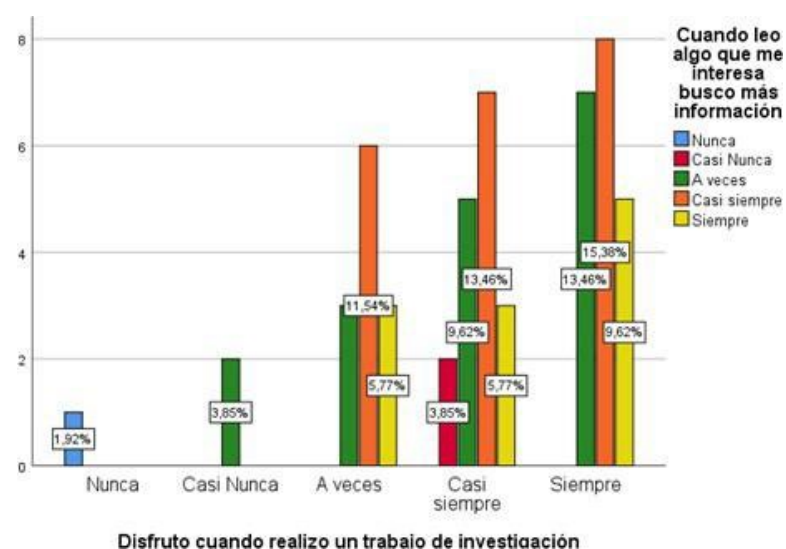
When asked if the students mention ideas different from those that have already been expressed, 48.1% mentioned doing so sometimes, followed by 26.9% who responded almost always, and 11.5% who always do so. 13.4% commented that they never or almost never incorporate other points of view into discussion situations. In Item 14, 73.1% responded that they always value the opinions of others in discussion situations, while 23.1% almost always and 3.8% sometimes do so. At this point, no one stated that they did not value the opinions of others. Another objective was to find out whether the students express these oral and written competencies in the research process. Item 15. The results showed that 65.4% always or almost always identify and pose the problem or working question(s) at the beginning of the research. 26.9% answered sometimes, 5.8% almost never identify the problem statement at the beginning and 1.9% never.

Autonomy and Socialization in Knowledge Construction.

This dimension presents the results on subjective capacities that the students consider relevant in relation to the creation and recreation of knowledge linked to research. The perceptions that the group has about the degree of difficulty that research tasks represent and the support they perceive to carry out the tasks assigned to them are presented.

Item 16. At the same time, when asked if the students set an objective or objectives to guide their studies, 42.3% responded sometimes, 30.8% almost always, and 19.2% always. As in the previous question, 7.7% responded that they never or almost never set such study objectives. Item 17. *I plan the deadlines and the time to complete the work and assignments for each subject.* 7.7% recognize that they never plan their homework and 3.8% almost never do so, 19.2% sometimes plan their homework, 30.8% almost always, while 38.5% always organize their time in relation to the deadlines foreseen by the subjects. Regarding item 18, *I enjoy doing research work.* 1.9% never enjoy doing research work, 3.8% almost never do it. 23.1% only sometimes enjoy doing research work, while 32.7% almost always and 38.5% always find research-related tasks satisfying. In Figure 3, there is a relationship between the expressions on whether the students enjoy doing research work and the search for more information when they approach a reading that interests them.

Figure 3. Students who enjoy doing a research paper and seek more information when they read something that interests them.



Source: own elaboration.

The results indicate the interest of the students and the need to deepen their knowledge of the contents. A total of 15.38% (15.38%) of the students always enjoy doing research work and almost always look for additional information on topics of interest to them, while 13.46 % sometimes do so as well.

13.46% responded that they almost always enjoy doing research work and look for additional information, followed by 9.62% who responded that they always do so in both categories. Even 11.54% answered that they sometimes enjoy such work, but almost always look for more information, followed by 5.77% who always go deeper when reading something that interests them.

Regarding item 19. *The research work done in the subjects is difficult.* 5.8% responded that they almost never find research tasks difficult, 5.8% always find them difficult. It is noteworthy that 69.2% of students sometimes find research-related tasks difficult and 19.2% almost always find them difficult.

For item 20, *teachers give us guidance on how to conduct research work.* 40.4% consider that they always receive guidance, 25% almost always, while 30.8% only sometimes consider that they receive guidance and 1.9% almost never and 1.9% never. Item 21. *I adequately use citations and references according to APA norms* 5.8% never, while 23.1% said they do it sometimes. 42.3% almost always consider that they use APA norms adequately, and 19.2% consider that they always use this form of referencing correctly. Item 22. *In the internships and work done in the different subjects, I contribute with new knowledge.* The group considers that they contribute with new knowledge in the following way: Never 1.9%, almost never 13.5%, sometimes 44.2% almost always 32.7% and always 7.7%.

Discussion

The results obtained allow us to analyze different dimensions related to the competencies investigated. Among the elements referring to the gender distribution of the student body, it is striking that most of the respondents are women, and that these are therefore feminized careers. In the case of Nursing "in recent decades, changes have been observed in the distribution by sex within the entire sector, a sustained trend but which has not yet reversed the fact that it is a highly feminized activity" (Aspiazu, 2017: 19). For its part, in Social Work the "double movement towards the recognition of the feminization of the profession and towards the naturalization-invisibilization of its implications" (Nebra, 2018: 280) is expressed.

The first questions of the questionnaire were oriented to know the reading comprehension skills of the students. On the question of whether when they read something that interests them, they look for information to broaden their knowledge, the answers are encouraging if we take into account the interest that the students show must always be present to motivate and initiate a teaching-learning process. In the same line, in the next item, the majority answered that they do not stop reading a text when they do not understand it, that is to say that in the face of the lack of knowledge, the interest to continue investigating the text also persists. In view of these results, mention is made of what Roig-Vila (2019) stated, indicating that each student becomes a very important part of his or her own learning. In parallel, the teacher is more of a guide or a facilitator of learning, acquiring special relevance the paradigm focused on the role to be played by the student who learns linked to the role of the teacher who teaches, "The challenge is based on the recognition of the role of the University in a globalized society in which it is necessary to reformulate the role of the teacher as a researcher and at the same time develop competencies in students", which strengthen their professional profiles (Barrera, De la Rosa and Chang, 2017: 400).

Regarding research tools in relation to reading, it is analyzed that most students perceive that they can identify relevant information and consider that they can almost always draw fundamental conclusions from the texts they read. In the same way, most of them state that they know if in a text the author wants to give an opinion, expose a problem and its solutions, and explain some facts. Most students indicate that they take these opinions only when they have sufficient evidence to justify them.

In relation to writing and its practices, many students indicate that they clearly justify the conclusions in their papers. At the same time, they state that they seek information always judging the reliability of the sources available to them, "The above is especially relevant when considering that higher education in Ibero-America -in the last decade- has experienced a remarkable growth, due to its policies, policies and practices of equity and democratization, enabling

the entry of 'first generation' students" (Cortés and Errázuriz, 2020: 2).

Through the written and oral evaluations carried out during the semester, it is possible to recognize the appropriation and integration of research skills as significant improvements are observed in terms of written expression and the use of sources. Likewise, a broad use of tools that validate the opinions and contributions of the students is reflected. Half of the people surveyed mentioned that they always refer to the sources used, and only 7.7% responded that they never or almost never include it in their academic practices. This aspect is often a complex exercise to incorporate throughout the academic learning process. It implies in turn the recognition and search for opinions that support or express alternative positions of the work they do, "Open-minded thinking is closely related to epistemic empathy, which consists of showing a willingness to understand and listen to the arguments of the other party" (Gavilán and Martínez, 2020: 1046). More than 48% mentioned sometimes incorporating ideas different from those already expressed, while 30.8% always do so. Although more than 13% never or almost never include these elements in their practices, a considerable part of the student body seeks to strengthen their arguments and sustain a broad perspective in their academic activities. From these results it can be considered that collaborative work is valuable for the construction of knowledge.

On the other hand, the responses show greater optimism when it comes to valuing the opinions of others with respect to expressing one's own ideas. Being able to share, generate and develop their opinions clearly implies higher levels of difficulty for the students, since 38.5% consider that they can only sometimes do so. On the other hand, more than 73% acknowledged finding in their classmates elements that contribute to the discussions raised. The results referred to the research processes and the development of competencies around it are also extremely optimistic. It is necessary to consider that this is an activity that implies a profound degree of reading, comprehension and information search skills in comparison with the educational instances previously experienced. In this sense, the students have a series of guiding tools that allow them to easily identify the objectives, questions and problems at the time of engaging in these processes. More than 65.5% always or almost always identify and pose the work problem. It is more complex to set work objectives, since 19.2% always incorporate it in their practices, while most of them do it only sometimes.

In general terms, the surveys indicate that there is a wide use of writing, reading and oral expression tools, although it is still necessary to consolidate these skills in the framework of academic practices "there is a need to have guidelines on academic literacy of institutional order, not only at the university level, but also at the level of each faculty" (Cortés and Errázuriz, 2020: 4-5) This implies making their use even more daily, since most of the students responded that they sometimes use the different resources and practices that were mentioned throughout the questionnaire.

The challenges posed by higher education for students make up a complex web that, despite not always having access to training instances linked to research capabilities, must be solved. Time management tends to be a conflict factor in achieving the results expected by both the university and the students. It is in this sense that the results of this research are encouraging since almost 70% consider that they can plan their tasks according to the deadlines established by the subjects. However, it is significant that 30.7% do not take deadlines into account, since this refers to a lack of appropriation of the dynamics of higher education. It is possible to think that these marked contrasts between groups are related to the possibilities of enjoying the learning process. In this sense, 28.8% do not perceive research work as tasks that can be enjoyed, while 71.2% enjoy the assigned tasks.

Do the students' answers about the planning of their time, the difficulties they encounter in the subjects to carry out research work condition the possibilities of enjoying new knowledge? The perceptions that the group surveyed has about the difficulties involved in learning to do research are significant. Only 5.8% do not consider research work as difficult. On the other hand, for a large part of the group it is a greater challenge since 69.2% usually find obstacles to carry out the instructions of the subjects related to research. The type of guidance provided by the teaching staff is perceived by 65% of the group of students as accompaniment, although the rest can only sometimes take advantage of such guidance.

The link between research and Higher Education is not always evident to students. In the cases of the subjects Epistemology of Social Sciences and Philosophy II, in the careers of Social Work and Nursing, in which the surveys have been answered, these structural conditions are even more evident than in other areas of knowledge given their disciplinary history. Only recently has research become a more specific objective for these areas where professional development and community intervention have marked their disciplinary histories (Durán, 2018; Grassi, 2011). It is likely that, in addition to the lack of systematic training in Argentine national public universities on the topics we investigate, it is also relevant to consider the results obtained in relation to the academic/research culture of the mentioned careers since "the present controversy points to the heart of the teaching task, to the 'hard core' that structures not only the training to write and read but the customary bases of how it is taught and how it is learned in the set of subjects" (Carlino, 2013: 370).

Learning the proper use of citations of cited authors as well as the reference to them under the APA norms is one of the aspects that most link the production of texts with their circulation and publication. It is encouraging that 61.5% consider that they always or almost always use the APA norms correctly. However, 38.5% consider that they sometimes or never resolve these rules in an adequate manner. In the same line, the possibilities that the group of students finds to contribute creatively to the subjects show that 44.2% sometimes achieve these objectives. The production of academic texts, which also involves the use of research tools such as reference systems, involves the creation and recreation of new knowledge (Carlino, 2020). This perception of the creative capacities that are favored by education on specific contents is remarkable, since, while 15.4% of students never or almost never think that they contribute new knowledge, 40.4% always or almost always perceive their university work as contributions. These rates are significant in that they cooperate with the cognitive independence of the group.

Conclusions

Knowing and analyzing the students' aptitudes is the starting point to strengthen and increase their research and literacy skills. Consequently, this would allow them to improve their academic performance, which implies an appropriation of the discipline in which they work. The implementation of the questionnaire motivated the students to adopt an active role in their own learning process. It not only favored reflection and analysis of the skills and strategies they develop to incorporate, generate and share knowledge, but also allowed them to enrich their academic performance.

The results in terms of oral and written expression reflect a broad appropriation and implementation of tools that facilitate the construction of their own knowledge, from which different opinions are discussed. Consequently, strategies are generated that allow a better insertion and belonging in the academic environment. In short, access to these capabilities implies a greater democratization of the field of study and knowledge in general.

The steps that must be taken to advance in the learning of research tools begin at the undergraduate level, where students have the autonomy to face the obstacles that arise. It is encouraging if we consider that support initiatives are usually isolated, and the scarce resources that students have to adapt to this process. The challenges that emerge for Higher Education motivate the continuous integration of tools for university literacy. In relation to concrete practices, it is necessary to expand access to those who mentioned that they do not have the tools that allow them to develop in the academic environment. These objectives will only be fully achieved through the generation of institutional policies that seek to detect and accompany their appropriation processes.

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