

LEARNING EXPERIENCES OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM: ANALYSIS OF FIELD TRIPS TO INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS

José-Luis Parejo*

María de la O Cortón-Heras

Universidad de Valladolid, Spain

* Corresponding author. E-mail: joseluis.parejo@uva.es



INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (ILE) transformed Spanish education in the 19th century, promoting observation, experimentation and experiences outside the classroom, overcoming the classic dichotomy between theory and practice.

BENEFITS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiences outside the university classroom improve students' social skills, personal identity and emotional well-being, as well as enhancing academic performance and engagement in their studies.



CURRENT REFERENCES

In the "MentorACTÚA" and "Observa_Acción" programmes, in-service teachers observe and apply innovative methodologies, fostering professional development through joint reflection.

CHALLENGES OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

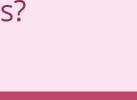
Although experiences outside the university classroom are valuable, their implementation faces logistical difficulties and a lack of studies in the Spanish context that address their impact on initial teacher education.

OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS



MAIN OBJECTIVE

- To analyse the results of an experience of education outside the university classroom in initial teacher training in the subject of General Didactics of Early Childhood Education.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

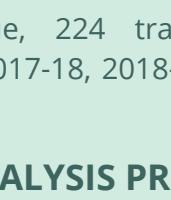
- How can experience outside the university classroom, through visits to innovative schools, contribute to improving students' personal and social development?
- How can this experience improve the academic and professional development of students who are training as future Early Childhood Education teachers?

METHOD

FINDINGS

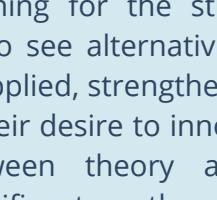
CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

The "Pedagogical Outings" project consists of visits to innovative schools. It is part of the subject of General Didactics in Early Childhood Education. The average number of participating students per group was 25, most of them women, and participation was voluntary and in the majority. An average of four trips were made each year. The experiences are recorded for four academic years, from 2017-18 to 2022-23, except for the two years of the pandemic.



PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The "Pedagogical Outings" project consists of visits to innovative schools. It is part of the subject of General Didactics in Early Childhood Education. The average number of participating students per group was 25, most of them women, and participation was voluntary and in the majority. An average of four trips were made each year. The experiences are recorded for four academic years, from 2017-18 to 2022-23, except for the two years of the pandemic.



OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM LEARNING

The results of this category reveal that the "Pedagogical Outings" promoted practical and motivating training for the students. They also allowed them to see alternative teaching models and methods applied, strengthening their teaching vocation and their desire to innovate in education. The link between theory and practice was particularly significant, as they observed how the pedagogical principles learned in class were implemented in real schools. Finally, the students valued the closeness with the students, as well as the guidance of the teachers in the schools visited.



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS



This research highlights that educational activities outside the classroom have a significant impact on initial teacher training, fostering a more effective relationship between theory and practice. These experiences provide prospective teachers with a unique opportunity to engage first-hand with innovative pedagogical models, enriching their academic and personal development. Simultaneously, they strengthen their vocational commitment by exposing them to diverse school environments and enabling them to observe effective and alternative educational practices. Direct interaction with students and practising teachers allowed participants to explore various teaching approaches and methods while identifying professional role models who contribute to shaping their identity as future educators. However, participation in these activities, though voluntary, relies on and demands the commitment and organisational efforts of university lecturers.



Parejo, J.-L., Cortón-Heras, M.-O. (2025). Learning experiences outside the university classroom: an analysis of field trips to innovative schools. *Educación XX1*, 28(1), 213-234.

<https://doi.org/10.5944/eduXX1.38276>