



HOW TO FLIP AN ADMINISTRATIVE LAW LECTURE

SOME STRATEGIES TO TACKLE WITH THE ONLINE AND HYBRID CONTEXTS

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1. RESUM:

This contribution is aimed at sharing some flipped learning strategies implemented by the professors of Administrative Law of the University of Lleida in the subjects of Administrative Law I and II of the degree in Law and the double degree in Law and Business Administration. The flipped learning strategies used are aimed at achieving the maximum significance of the precious time shared with our students. Two strategies will be presented: the "podcast" and the "advanced significant tasks".



MÉS ENLLÀ DE LES COMPETÈNCIES: NOUS REPTES EN LA SOCIETAT DIGITAL

2. ABSTRACT:

This contribution is aimed at sharing some flipped learning strategies implemented by the professors of Administrative Law of the University of Lleida in the subjects of Administrative Law I and II of the degree in Law and the double degree in Law and Business Administration. The flipped learning strategies used are aimed at achieving the maximum significance of the precious time shared with our students. Two strategies will be presented: the "podcast" and the "advanced significant tasks".

3. PARAULES CLAU: 4-6

Flipped learning, on-line and hybrid learning, significant learning, podcast

4. KEYWORDS: 4-6

Flipped learning, on-line and hybrid learning, significant learning, podcast



5. DESENVOLUPAMENT:

I. INTRODUCTION

This contribution is aimed at sharing some flipped learning strategies implemented by the professors in Administrative Law of the University of Lleida in the subjects of Administrative Law I (second year, annual) and II (third year, first semester) of the Degree in Law and the Double Degree in Law and Business Administration during the academic year 2020-2021. This communication and the experience shared are framed in an Innovation Project funded by the University of Lleida (Projectes d'innovació i millora de la docència a la UdL (2020/21) "*Com ensenyar Dret Administratiu en temps de COVID: Les classes invertides com a metodologia per treure el màxim rendiment de la docència presencial*", funded by the Vicerectorat de Qualitat i Innovació Docent).

The motivation to implement new teaching methodologies and strategies arose from the new teaching context in which we found ourselves as a result of COVID-19. The virus forced us to take social distancing measures, in addition to other preventive measures, which implied a radical transformation of the traditional onsite teaching context in which our lectures take place at the University of Lleida. The classroom was no longer a physical and material space, but a virtual space with a considerable (and sometimes total) reduction of face-to-face lectures. This new paradigm forced both lecturers and students to adapt. The estrangement from what is our natural habitat demanded, now more than ever, pedagogical strategies that would place the students at the center of the learning process. Simply transferring what we had been doing previously to the virtual environment was not an adequate way of operating. It was clear that it was necessary to rethink traditional methodologies and incorporate new techniques to adjust to the current context.

Given the circumstances and that the Administrative Law lectures combined virtual and some onsite lectures, one of the new techniques introduced in our courses is the inverted or flipped classroom. The **flipped learning methodology** used is aimed at achieving the **maximum significance** of the time shared with our students, on the basis of two strategies that will be presented here: the "**podcast**" and the "**advanced significant tasks**".

The implementation of the flipped methodology responds to the objective of redefining our face-to-face teaching to get the most out of it. Since face-to-face teaching hours have



been drastically reduced, the goal is to give the **greatest significance** to the few moments that students share in the classroom with the lecturer. Thus, the **face-to-face lecturing** time is dedicated to activities that are as **enriching and meaningful** as possible so that students better acquire the competences included in our study plans and syllabus.

II. THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM METHODOLOGY

Even though there is not a universal definition of “flipped classroom”, it is commonly accepted that this methodology is based on the inversion of the activities that the students undertake inside and outside the classroom (Lutz-Christian Wolff and Jenny Chan, 2016). The activities traditionally undertaken in the classroom —*id est*, listening to the presentation of contents given by the lecturer— are moved outside the classroom, meaning that the students read, listen to or watch materials by themselves to approach the same contents. This frees up time in the classroom so that it can be devoted to other activities —such as discussions, problem solving, application, analysis, and other active methods to apprehend the contents— that are more significant and relevant for the learning process as students are more involved and play a central role in their development (Brown, 2016).

[See Figure 1]

Thus, through the flipped classroom methodology, the **roles of the lecturer and the student are exchanged**, and there is an **inversion in the teaching and learning dynamics**. In this sense, the **students are at the center** of the teaching and learning process, and they become an **active character** in the construction of knowledge and its application, instead of being a mere passive receiver.

However, this does not happen spontaneously. From our perspective, for the students to be able to assume this role, two main conditions are necessary. On the one hand, students have to count with the **necessary instruments, tools or materials**, as well as **significant and useful assignments**. And, on the other hand, they have to be **sufficiently motivated**. At this point the role of the lecturer is crucial, because he or she is in charge of providing the required tools and assignments, and also fostering the student’s motivation.

Hereafter, we present the experience undertaken by a group of professors in Administrative Law at the University of Lleida. In particular, we elaborate on the two methods devised, the podcast and the advanced significant tasks, as well as the



motivation strategies implemented.

III. THE PODCAST AND THE ADVANCED SIGNIFICANT TASKS: TWO STRATEGIES TO FLIP AN ADMINISTRATIVE LAW LECTURE

As for the required **instruments, tools or materials** to which we referred, these are materials so that students gain sufficient knowledge and confidence to assume this central role in the classroom in face-to-face lectures. Beyond the recommended readings of textbooks, scientific papers and caselaw, the lecturers in Administrative Law at the University of Lleida have considered convenient to develop our own teaching materials, so that they would better fit the current virtual context and the needs and preferences of our students—all of them belonging to the so-called “postmillennial generation”.

Thus, on the one hand, we prepared a series of **short podcasts** (Sáiz García, 2013;), of no more than 30 minutes (mostly), in which experts are interviewed by us in relation to some of the key topics developed in our courses. It is about presenting the content of our syllabus in a different and casual way, and in first person by applicants of the Law (such as judges, public prosecutors, lawyers, civil servants, etc.) and other agents, whose personal experience is connected with the competences that our students must acquire and master. Students are instructed to listen to the podcasts as part of the preparation of the onsite lectures, where the topic will be further discussed and/or analyzed through other kind of activities, mostly practical.

When designing the podcasts, two requirements had to be fulfilled. On the one hand, the topics had to be strictly related to the syllabus of our courses (Administrative law I and II, with topics such as administrative organization, administrative procedure, administrative courts, public service, eminent domain, public contracts, sanctions, administrative liability, etc.). And, on the other hand, at the same time, the podcasts had to approach these topics in a way that would also be connected with well-known realities by our students and with current affairs. It must be said that the pandemic has given us the opportunity to prepare some of our podcasts about the role of the Public Administration in dealing with the COVID crisis, making thus the podcasts especially interesting and appealing to our students.

As an example, we provide one of our podcasts, where a member of the Public Ministry is interviewed about the measures adopted to tackle COVID-19 in the Province of Lleida last summer (see: <https://d3ctxlq1ktw2nl.cloudfront.net/staging/2020-10-16/129082407-44100-2-fa7a317f9c2ea.m4a>). This podcast can be used both in the course of



MÉS ENLLÀ DE LES COMPETÈNCIES: NOUS REPTES EN LA SOCIETAT DIGITAL

Administrative Law I and Administrative Law II, as it deals with topics included in the syllabus of both courses. The application we used to elaborate the podcasts is called “Anchor”, and it is available for free online.

Along with the podcast, another of the materials we have provided the students with are what we call “**advanced significant tasks**”. A pillar of the learning process of our students revolves around solving real or fictional cases. Traditionally, students would be first provided with the knowledge at one of the traditional lectures where the theoretical content is presented, after which they would be handed a case with assigned exercises and questions revolving around the aforementioned content. After, the so called “practical sessions” would then serve to put in common possible solutions.

With the flipped classroom methodology some of the cases are now designed in a way that students should be able to tackle with them without having previously attended any “theory lecture” going in depth into the topic. They build the knowledge by themselves — supporting materials are provided—, and later in the onsite “practical session” the knowledge is further developed and discussed, and doubts are dissipated. The “advanced significant tasks” follow the problem-based learning methodology.

For instance, one of the advanced significant tasks designed this year for the Administrative Law I course consists on a “traffic ticket case”. Students are provided with a real traffic ticket (anonymized) and some relatively easy questions they have to answer in relation to it. The very same ticket provides most of the information needed to answer the questions, and it even refers to the laws applicable. With that, students solve the questions posed (such as: When did the offence happen? What are the legal consequences foreseen for this offence? How long do you have to pay the fine? What happens if the fine is not paid? Can the ticket be challenged and what steps would you follow?). A deeper legal approach is brought into the analysis later when students and professors discuss possible solutions to the questions in the on-site lecture.

[See Figure 2]

IV. HOW TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS FOR A FLIPPED CLASSROOM

Appropriately motivating the students is key in order to introduce the flipped classroom methodology, as it requires the students to change their ways and abandon their traditionally passive role. Regarding motivation, the main strategies we employ relate, on the one hand, to *curiosity* and, on the other, to the *grading system*.



MÉS ENLLÀ DE LES COMPETÈNCIES: NOUS REPTES EN LA SOCIETAT DIGITAL

As to curiosity, we rely on the fact that the topics of the podcasts and the significant activities are *interesting*. “Interesting” means that the podcasts and the activities are connected not only with the contents of the syllabus but also with events happening in the present and relating to our students. Thus, listening to the podcast and solving the activities provides the students with significant knowledge, not only in relation to Administrative law and their formal education, but their most immediate environment. In other words, it helps them better understand realities that happen to them.

As to the grading system, one of the evaluative activities of the Administrative Law II course consists of the preparation of a podcast by the students themselves on a current topic related to the subjects' syllabus. Thus, the podcasts prepared by the professors serve as a model for the students. The podcasts that the students submit is a voluntary activity that contributes to improve their grades (up to 1.5 points to be added to the mark obtained with the compulsory assessment activities). At the same time, the activities assigned as “advanced significant tasks” are also a part of the assessment of the Administrative Law I course, amounting up to 20% of the final grade.

V. SOME CONCLUSIONS

The COVID pandemic has obliged us lecturers to rethink our teaching methodologies in order to adjust to a mostly virtual environment with very little onsite interaction with our students. Implementing the flipped classroom methodology has allowed us to devote more of the onsite shared time with our students to more significant activities. This, we believe, has contributed to overcome some of the difficulties of the learning process in the present times and enhance it.

If we look at the grades obtained by the students of the Administrative Law II course, taught during the first semester, a slight improvement is observed in terms that better grades were obtained. This improvement could be attributed to the new methodology implemented in some of the sessions; but at the same time a higher degree of abandonment has been observed. As to the opinion shown by the students in regards to the podcasts, those who listened to them gave a positive feedback. The feedback was also positive in relation to the podcast they had to elaborate as part of the grading system. The administrative Law I course is still ongoing when this communication is presented, and no results are available yet.

As to the difficulties faced, we identify two strains. On the one hand, when preparing the podcasts, it was difficult to engage professionals external to the University. This is due to the fact that, even though this experience is framed within a Teaching Innovation Project of the University of Lleida and it has been awarded some funding, the funding cannot be devoted to reimburse their collaboration. On the other hand, data show that this course



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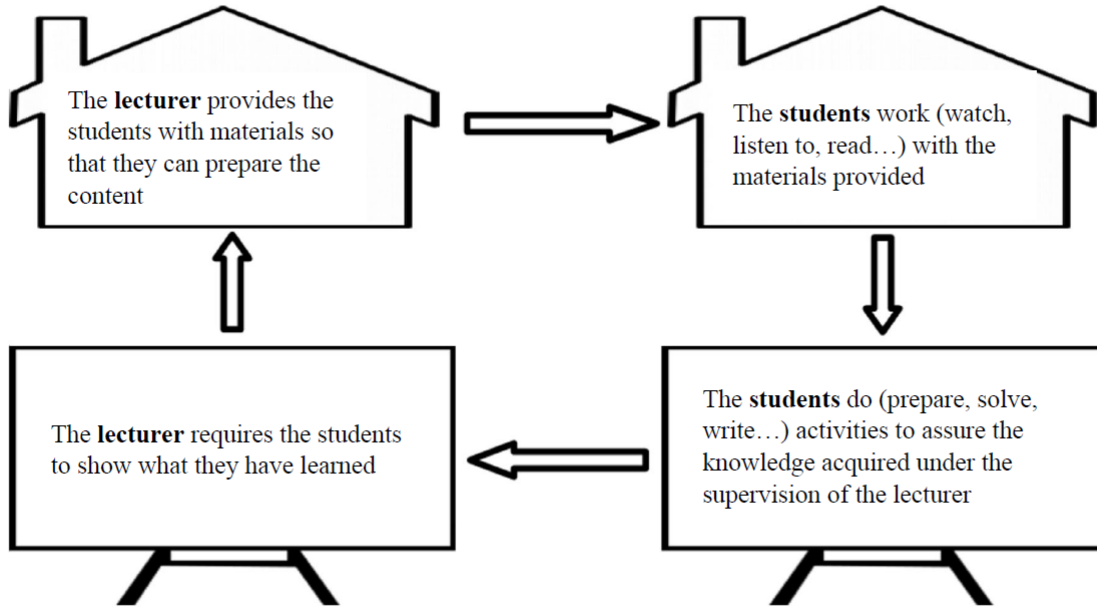
there has been a higher degree of student abandonment, probably due to the pandemic situation, but that our strategies have not been able to prevent. New mechanisms should be put in place to avoid this situation.

Although next year it seems lectures will be again onsite in full, we plan to continue implementing the flipped classroom strategies presented, as overall the experiences has been positive. Our intention is to produce new podcasts and new advanced significant tasks, and create a database available to all our present and future students.



MÉS ENLLÀ DE LES COMPETÈNCIES: NOUS REPTES EN LA SOCIETAT DIGITAL

5.1. FIGURA O IMATGE 1



José Sánchez Rodríguez, Julio Ruiz Palmero y Elena Sánchez Vega, *Flippedclassroom. Claves para su puesta en práctica*, en *edmetiC, Revista de Educación Mediática y TIC*, vol. 6, núm. 2, 2017.

5.2. FIGURA O IMATGE 2

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