APPLICATION OF BLOGS TO HOME ECONOMICS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

Jaime de Pablo Valenciano, Juan Milán García, José Luis Ruiz Real

University of Almeria (SPAIN)

Abstract

The economic and financial crisis of 2007/2008 has revealed one of the most important weaknesses that has gone unnoticed throughout contemporary history: the knowledge held by the majority of Spaniards about the financial system and its products is below the average of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Lusardi, 2015). In fact, this situation is further aggravated if the gender perspective is taken into account, where women in rural regions are economically-financially dependent on their husbands, being unable to complete their empowerment with a solid base in financial knowledge and domestic economics.

The aim of this communication is to offer the results obtained from the application of blogs on home economics in the Master's Degree in Secondary Education Teaching at the University of Almeria, more specifically in the subject of Complements for Training in Economics, Business and Commerce in the academic year 2018/2019.

For this purpose, the Blackboard Learn virtual platform was used to provide students with a space in which to make blog entries and, in addition, to make comments on the contributions of other colleagues. Afterwards, the students had to present their personal and holistic vision of the blog contributions to the rest of their classmates in an organized and coherent way in the form of a mind map.

Results show, from the perspective of the blog, a very high interest and participation of students, providing the latest news and developments about the economy and supporting each other with comments that enriched the view of the issue. On the other hand, the exposition of the concept maps was the result of the consolidation of the results obtained in the blog, presenting some contents in a clear and transversal way with which all the students understood the concept of domestic economy and its importance in the education of the youngest.

The Master in Teaching in Secondary Education integrates students of various backgrounds: law, tourism, economics, business administration or marketing, among others. This means that, when using a blog to address home economics, students provide a multidisciplinary view of the issue.

Keywords: blog, home economics, education.

1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the Spanish educational system includes, in primary school, the contents of financial education in the subject of Social Sciences. This core subject is configured in 4 blocks of contents: 1) Common contents; 2) The world in which we live; 3) Living in society; and 4) The traces of time. The contents of financial education are integrated in block 3. In secondary education, the curriculum integrates most of the contents of financial education (contents on personal finance) in the subject of Economics in the 4th year of the E.S.O., considered as a "core of option", and which is not obligatory for all students (as opposed to the so-called "general core", which is obligatory in any case) in block 3 of Personal Economy.

The integration into the entire Spanish educational system of a subject in domestic economics is positioned as one of the most necessary modifications, especially in the global context in which we live today characterized by a growing degree of uncertainty with the passage of time. There are so many variables that influence the economic-financial world that it is essential that future generations require up-to-date basic training on the functioning of both personal and business finance.

The aim of this communication is to offer the results obtained from the application of the blog tool on home economics in the Master's Degree in Secondary Education Teaching at the University of Almeria, more specifically in the subject of Complements for Training in Economics, Business and Commerce in the academic year 2018/2019. All this within the framework of the European Higher
Education Area (EHEA), initiated on 25 May 1998 with the Bologna Declaration which was signed by the Ministers of Education of Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom.

From the Master in Teaching Staff in Secondary Education we wanted to provide the foundations of this new economic perspective of education, analysing, on the one hand, the suitability of a compulsory subject of home economics in all secondary and high school courses and, on the other, how to materialize this initiative in the reality of the teaching and learning processes that take place in the classroom.

In addition, the Master’s Degree in Secondary Education integrates students of various backgrounds: law, tourism, economics, business administration or marketing, among others. This means that, when using a blog to tackle home economics, students provide a multidisciplinary view of the issue.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In recent years, the importance of basic training has been studied by various bodies and institutions, driven by the serious economic and social causes and consequences of the 2007 economic-financial crisis (Klepper et al., 2015). International organisations such as the OECD, the IMF or the World Bank have shown special concern for the economic and financial training of citizens, particularly children and adolescents (González Medina, 2011).

For some years now, these and other institutions have been promoting programmes to promote economic-financial education. For example, since 2012 the OECD has included in its PISA reports Financial Competence, which is defined as “knowledge and understanding of financial concepts and risks, and the skills, motivation and confidence to apply this knowledge and understanding in order to make effective decisions in different financial contexts, to improve the financial well-being of individuals and society, and to enable their active participation in economic life” (BBVA, 2017). In 2015, the PISA report revealed that a quarter of young Spaniards barely pass in financial education, thus showing the need to act in the education system to include this branch of knowledge. The last PISA report to include this competition was presented in 2017 and the results were not very encouraging for Spain. Our country is below the OECD average and the data show that although students understand the objectives of economic and financial tools, they do not know, for example, how to explain the main financial products, how to differentiate between what they need and what they want, or how to make reasoned decisions about the money they have monthly (El Confidencial, 2017).

On the other hand, the article by Peña (2019) shows that the financial knowledge of primary school students is basic from a survey of basic financial concepts. The work of García-Gómez (2011) deserves special attention. Analyzing the financial disposition of children and young people, he found that the former knew what saving was, but did not know its importance and why. The young people, on the other hand, knew a little more about saving, but the vast majority of them do not save and those who do, only deposit the money at home without making use of financial institutions.

For this cause the Banco de España, together with the Comisión Nacional del Mercado de Valores (CMNV) initiated in 2008 the Financial Education Plan with the aim of contributing to the improvement of the financial culture of citizens, providing them with tools, skills and knowledge to make informed and appropriate financial decisions.

Among the different financial education measures or projects, the following can be highlighted:

- Financial Education Day, celebrated on the first Monday in October. It raises citizens' awareness of the importance of a minimum level of financial literacy to meet the challenges and difficulties throughout their lives.
- Finance for All Awards, which recognize institutions or organizations that carry out financial education projects.
- Financial Education School Program. In 2009, the Bank of Spain and the CMNV signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport to develop a financial education programme for students in the second cycle of secondary education and intermediate vocational training.
- Edufinet. Promoted by Unicaja Banco and the Unicaja Foundation, this project aims to serve as a tool for current and future users of financial services, providing a clear and precise guide to the most relevant aspects of the financial system and the different products and services offered in it in terms of savings, investment and financing. The essential aim is for citizens to be able to
acquire the knowledge that will allow them to adopt their basic decisions in the financial field based on the use of objective criteria, in a conscious and informed manner.

3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to address this subject in the master's degree in secondary education translates into two tools:

- Blog, as a catalyst for the different contributions of students on the issue. Not only did they have the possibility of including the latest news they could find in any information medium, but they could also comment on the contributions of their peers, offering their personal point of view as well as novelties that complement the blog.

- Mind map, as an element that integrates all the students' contributions. Gathered in groups of two or three people, each team had to integrate in a holistic, integrated, coherent and consistent way the ideas reflected in the blog entries of the colleagues. After that, the groups had to expose it to the rest of the classmates and explain which elements of home economics and financial education were the most important for the reality of the teaching and learning processes in the secondary classroom.

These two methodologies have been chosen for several reasons. In the first place, the virtual platform of the University of Almeria has served as a test field to carry out this experience. For this reason, its capacities have limited the way of approaching the issue. Secondly, we consider that the blog fulfills a double essential function when it comes to transmitting information. On the one hand, it allows each student to create their own page or entry regardless of what others write, focusing on the aspects they consider most convenient. After that, the student can consult the entries of other students to complete theirs with news or data that he knows and even complete his own contribution. Finally, the mind map of each one gives a biased view of the domestic economy as a consequence of the varied training of the students: economy, law, tourism, marketing...

4 RESULTS

The students' participation in the activity was extraordinary. From the first moment the platform was set up, the students have been progressively participating in the activity. The students have not only focused on completing their blog page, but have also commented on their colleagues' entries. In fact, the number of comments made on other people's posts is higher than the number of blog entries, showing the importance of horizontal critical co-evaluation.

After this first stage, the presentation of the home economics concept maps was a great success not only from the point of view of teachers but also of students. Starting from each group of the same content, the concept maps were quite different from each other, emphasizing different elements which, in the whole classroom, drew a complex reality (Figure 1).

5 CONCLUSIONS

In this communication, an experience of teaching innovation focused on laying the foundations of the importance of a subject in home economics at all educational levels of the Spanish educational system has been reported. Through the use of blog and mind map tools, students have analysed the state of the question and have proposed what measures should be taken to integrate home economics into classroom teaching and learning processes.

The results have been totally satisfactory, showing an unbeatable interest in the activity and going far beyond what was initially requested. For this reason, we consider that the blog is a teaching innovation tool totally suitable for the interaction of students once they have analysed the state of the matter in a reasoned and coherent way. The mind map, on the other hand, is a tool that integrates the different points of view of a given subject, effectively and efficiently closing the main elements of the same with the interconnection of these.

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REFERENCES


