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ARTICLES

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The use of the video format as a teaching guide in university studies

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Abstract: This article presents a pilot experiment on subjects from three Social Sciences degrees at two public Andalusian universities. The aim is to analyze the teaching guides and their presentation to students as a means of communicating with them, primarily through the video format instead of the conventional written format. To this end, attractive, clear and relatable video teaching guides have been developed to present to students, aware of the success of short videos dominating digital social networks, especially among younger age groups. A knowledge test was given to 99 students on the subject contents, as well as a satisfaction test; the following information was processed through the SPSS program. The main conclusion is that students have a high degree of satisfaction and a better knowledge of the new video guide format than the conventional written model.

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Keywords: Control group; experimental group; teaching guide; video; video guide.

I. Introduction

This paper presents a pilot experiment in the university environment through video guides to improve the communication of essential information to students about their respective subjects. Videos have become an important channel for disseminating and consuming all types of data; their potential is amplified by the ease which they can be shared on social networks. As Mayer (2001) points out, videos allow the user to take in content more efficiently by combining visual and auditory information (images, sound, and text, often through captions and annotations) in a single format (Nagy 2018). As Zhou et al. (2020, 584) state, "micro-video teaching is a new mode for a new generation of information education, which takes micro-video as an information medium to have a unique visual impact". Based on this reality, we argue the potential videos have to transmit basic information from university teaching guides within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). We will show that students generally lack knowledge about the contents of these guides, despite their importance.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the importance of audiovisual material in all its forms has become evident not only on television but on all digital platforms, especially on social networks. Mobile phones are the primary access device, whose numerous applications are primarily image-based. Such material, if professionally produced, has great potential to connect with students quickly, directly and even "emotionally" to convey information simply and originally (Navarro, Castro, and Monedero 2020). In 2021, the average user spent 7 hours a day connected to the Internet, mainly through their mobile phones. Of the 4.95 billion Internet users (62.5% of the world's population), 91.9% watch video content. YouTube, the leading platform used by users, had an average daily consumption of 47minutes by its 2.56 billion users (Hootsuite 2021).

The teaching guide adapted to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) arose from the need to obtain a standard credit system for student mobility and to adopt comprehensible systems to compare degrees in Europe. It is thus a valuable tool to "promote European cooperation in quality assurance through the development of comparable methodologies and criteria" (European Higher Education Area 1999). In reality, the so-called teaching guide, course description, and study guide is a detailed planning of any subject based on the principles guiding the Convergence process to

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create a European Higher Education Area. The focus is twofold, the content and the students' work based on that content while in other types of curricula or module planning the focus was on the content itself.

The main objective of the Manual for the Elaboration of Teaching Guides Adapted to the EHEA is the standardization of ECTS credits (European Credit Transfer System) to improve the understanding, mobility and academic recognition of the students' study process. The Teaching Guide helped universities organize and revise their curricula, resulting in a more attractive and transparent offer for the higher education system. It is the most significant contribution to the European Community (Quan 2014).

This public written document is the result of the commitment of the lecturer/teaching team and its department to the subject, and it is accredited and endorsed by the competent bodies who approve the University's teaching program (University of Malaga 2012). Although it is a document with key information for students, there is widespread ignorance of the subject teaching guides, "thus they lose their raison d'être due to the scarce monitoring and reading of these guides" (Monedero, Castro, and Navarro 2019, 490).

There are three types of teaching guides in the new Bachelor's and Master's Degrees framework: the degree guide, teaching guide and didactic guide. Good teaching planning integrates them into each other like Russian dolls to create the best tool for guiding teaching and foster learning (Sánchez, Ruiz, and Pascual 2011, 57). According to the same authors, the difference between these resources is the following: while the degree guide is an informative and organizational framework for the set of subjects that make up the degree; the teaching guides are didactic documents that fulfill a twofold function of informing and guiding students in their learning. This should not be confused with what is usually known as the course syllabus; finally, the teaching guides explain the entire course planning and are aimed at students. Therefore, they should detail all the learning that is expected to be achieved and the procedures and appropriate means to achieve them. Their specification must be detailed so that the students themselves can carry out the work independently (Sánchez, Ruiz, and Pascual 2011, 57-58).

All the recommendations highlight the need to reinforce planning and the development of the centre's educational offer of the degree programmes and their subjects. There must be a balance between the degree programme's demands, the academic year's organization, and the means available to students to meet these demands. Using the teaching guide is one of the best ways to carry out subject planning. It allows the subjects to be contextualized within the degree and improve their sought-after professional profile (Sánchez, Ruiz, and Pascual 2011, 54).

Students' ability to learn for themselves, i.e. learn to learn, is ensured only when students' work is the focus of teaching planning. However**,** for this to be possible, students and teachers must realize the need to renew usual methodologies and plan the teaching-learning process- taking the students' face-to-face and offsite work as a focal point. This planning does not only consist of telling them what they have to do or achieve, but also how they should do it, and the means and resources they can use to do so. It is not designed to tell them to change their work system but rather indicates how they must act to achieve the planned objectives and accompany them in this transition process (Sánchez, Ruiz, and Pascual 2011, 61).

Therefore, based on the above, a team of professors from the University of Malaga and the Pablo Olavide University (Seville) considered that, in addition to the contents of the subjects themselves, there was other academic information that could be adapted to the audiovisual format to make it more dynamic and attractive. This is the case with university course teaching guides.

Despite the importance of this essential document, there is a significant research deficit. Some works examine their form (in written format) and what elements they should not omit. This is the case of Altman's (1989), Birdsall's (1989) and Lowther's, Stark's, and Martens's studies (1989), who laid the foundation for the subsequent literature on teaching guides. Other more recent studies such as Sánchez's, Ruiz's and Pascual's (2011), highlight the need to reinforce the planning and development of the centre's educational offer for both the degrees themselves and their related subjects; there should be a balance between the degrees' demands and the organization of the academic year itself and the means available to students to respond to those demands. Diez et al. (2016) defend including the gender perspective in the teaching guides to make students better qualified and understand the importance of not contributing to maintaining gender inequalities. Lekue, Rodríguez, and Andrieu (2016) studied students' perception of the Bachelor's Degrees in Early Childhood Education and Primary Education of some subjects' teaching guides, concluding that these guides helped facilitate the monitoring of the subjects.

However, as mentioned above, no studies analyze the usefulness of other teaching guide formats or how to improve students' general lack of knowledge of them. Consequently, this perspective is often based on personal teaching experiences and anecdotal evidence.

Explanatory videos of the teaching guides for three subjects from Journalism, Audiovisual Communication, and Sociology degrees from the Malaga and Pablo de Olavide de Sevilla (Spain) were produced to encourage

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university students to find out basic information about subjects. This study aims to verify whether the level of knowledge about these guides improves after viewing the new video format compared to reading the conventional written format and to find out the students' degree of satisfaction with the video guide. For this purpose, an experiment was carried out in which the classes were divided into two groups, an experimental one that watched the video guide and another control group that read the conventional written teaching guide. The measurement instruments were the same knowledge questionnaire for both groups and a satisfaction questionnaire for the experimental group to evaluate their experience with the video guide.

This paper makes empirical and analytical contributions. It provides new information about a new video guide format for communicating the teaching guide's contents. The method used and the measurement instruments also allow them to be replicated in other contexts and branches of knowledge. The analytical contribution is to explore whether this format, compared to the traditional written format, improves students' level of knowledge. Based on these analyses, it is possible to discuss more precisely the communication dynamics in universities, teaching guides' strengths and weaknesses, and obtain recommendations to improve and optimize the information flow between university-teacher-student.

The article is divided into four sections. The first and second sections set out a theoretical framework to examine the key concepts related to the teaching guides and the debate surrounding teaching planning and how it is communicated to university students. The third section describes the methodology used and the measurement instruments for the exploratory and descriptive experiment, together with the procedure for developing the video guides. The fourth section includes the analysis of the results, and the fifth discusses them and draws a series of conclusions intending to extrapolate them to other contexts.

II. Teaching planning and its communication with university students

The reality of university teaching is marked, on the one hand, by the standardization, homogenization, and verification of most academic procedures resulting from the European Higher Education Area's (EHEA) harmonization process. On the other hand, it is marked by the unstoppable digitalization process of the productive, educational and social fabric. Moreover, the pandemic that emerged in March 2020 has accelerated the implementation of telematic procedures in both teaching and university management.

In this context, strategies must be redefined and adapted to achieve learning objectives, planning, selecting didactic tools and resources, using or implementing them in the classroom, and evaluating them.

Regarding the first phase, teaching planning is specified and detailed in the teaching program, summarized and synthesized in the teaching guide, a document that serves as a contract between the parties involved in the educational process of a subject.

Although there is no single model or a common name, the teaching guides follow the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation's (ANECA 2012) indications. They must at least include information on educational objectives, specified in the general, specific, and transversal competences that students must acquire throughout the teaching-learning process, the subject's fundamental contents, teaching methods and resources, learning activities, information sources or bibliography, and the evaluation system, together with other useful information such as scheduling, class timetables, teaching staff or the tutorial system.

The teaching guide provides the students with all the information they need to follow the subjects. Thus, information transparency in teaching is fostered. However, it also enables the subject teaching staff to coordinate between them, and the degree's subjects also play a part in accrediting the degree (University of Malaga 2012).

Suppose the usefulness of the teaching guides has been demonstrated, we must question the effectiveness of their communication, that is to say, do students access these documents? We respond to this question in the research results section. However, it is necessary to focus on the universities' institutional communication and the new forms emerging due to digital technology, especially the Internet.

University communication is a product of the adaptation to society's new models and communicative practices (De Aguilera, Farias, and Baraybar 2010), and internal communication is one of its pillars. According to Simancas-Gonzáles and García-López (2017), this communication has certain shortcomings determined by the multiplicity of actors that comprise university institutions and the predominance of strategies focused on external communication in which top-down and unidirectional channels predominate.

These gaps in internal communication are amplified by the lack of use and optimization of available digital tools and resources (De Aguilera, Farias, and Baraybar 2010; Paniagua-Rojano and Gómez-Calderón 2012).

Among the different channels university institutions use for communicating with internal and external audiences, the web is the most important, followed by social networks and traditional media. Channels such

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as email, newsletters, or institutional means are the least used (magazines, university radios, and TV) (Simancas-Gonzáles and García-López 2017).

It is worth noting the format of the messages sent through these channels. Images and videos are increasingly used in messages on the Internet, as seen in online video consumption data accessed by over 90% of the world's population (Hootsuite 2021). This is the result of several factors; on the one hand, video production is easy and costs little, and can be freely distributed on different platforms. On the other hand, the images are more credible and connect emotionally with the viewers.

Audiovisual material has also been increasingly used in universities. Proof of this is the proliferation of audiovisual and multimedia resource centres in universities, whose objectives range from producing educational materials to teacher training and development (de Lima Lopes et al. 2019; Zaneldin and Ahmed 2018; Dong et al. 2015). Despite this, universities do not leverage the potential of image and sound to communicate with their target audiences, as shown in the study by Navarro, Castro and Monedero (2020).

Therefore, the University faces challenges in the prevailing institutional communication model and the format and resources used to communicate with students. As mentioned in the introduction, this study shows an innovative experience in academic communication between the University, teachers and students.

III. Methodology

This work is characterized by the transparency in creating the video guides, data collection and analysis. It provides keys to creating and designing video guides and details the experiment's phases with the students. As shown next, the research is based on a quantitative approach through two questionnaires and by describing and analyzing a case that is of interest for research in the field of Universities, such as teaching guides or any other document that contains the essential information for taking a subject (teaching staff, number of credits, teaching planning, syllabus, assessment system, bibliography, etc.).

III.1. Procedure for creating video guides

We must consider the uniformity of video guides when creating them and design a format that students can recognize. Initially, a group of students highlighted the key elements from the user's point of view during a group dynamic.

Secondly, a pilot guide was recorded and edited. For this purpose, the Adobe Premiere application was used to create a template, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, which would later be used by the rest of the teachers to self-edit their guides using the same structure and design format. A user's guide was written and designed as a help tool, which contained the necessary instructions for adapting it.

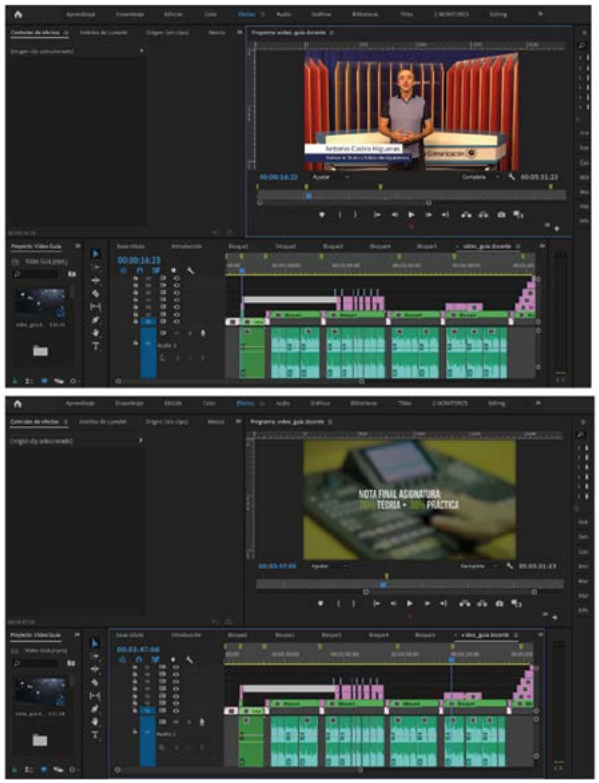

Figure 1-2

Video guide design template examples

Regarding the structure, the video guide follows the outline of the written teaching guide, i.e., there is a presentation preceded by an intro common to all the video guides and a section describing the subject's contents, objectives, and methodology. Next, the learning activities are listed, and finally, the evaluation process and criteria are defined. Each video

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guide ends with practical information about the teaching staff (contact, email, tutoring, schedule, etc.).

The design format is minimalist, as seen in the video guide that we use as a template (Castro-Higueras 2019) highlighting the key concepts from graphs and labels that result in the professor's narration or voice-over. These video and musical resources and careful editing make it more enjoyable to watch.

Once video guides were edited, a YouTube channel was set up that acted as a repository that included all the video guides. The insertion code is extracted from each video hosted on YouTube to allow it to be included in any content manager through an HTML editor, for example, on the university's virtual campus. In this way, students do not have to access the platform to see the video guide but can do so directly from the location chosen by the teaching staff.

III.2. Analysis strategy

This work uses a quantitative methodology to obtain and analyze primary data from an experiment to evaluate the video guides' impact as a new model for improving the usability of the teaching guides among the students. The method can be replicated in other contexts. Although the research design focuses on the case of two universities mentioned above from Journalism, Audiovisual Communication, and Sociology degrees, the empirical works can be contextualized in other universities and degrees. The analysis provides evidence for creating a new guide model that can grab the university students' attention.

The experiment has control and experimental groups among students with the same profile (same subject, course, degree, and university). In this way, we ensure that we can later compare the results as the characteristics of the two groups are similar, which could influence the results (Bailey, 2008). There is no intervention in the control group; it is compared to the group where there is an intervention, and the difference in the group outcomes are attributed to the effects of the intervention; using nonrandomized means in quasi-experimental designs such as the one used (Hinkelmann and Kempthorne 2008).

During the first day of class, the control group (99 subjects) read the conventional written teaching guide (48 students in Journalism, 29 in Audiovisual Communication and 22 in Sociology) while the control group watched the video guide (35 in Journalism, 33 in Audiovisual Communication and 23 in Sociology). The guide contents were the same in both cases. Next, the two groups filled out the same questionnaire on their knowledge of the guide. The experimental group filled out a satisfaction survey to evaluate their experience with the video guide.

The questionnaire about the knowledge of the guide was composed of four questions that included aspects of the subject's evaluation, thematic units, learning methodology, and practical activities; each was adapted to each degree. We have designed an index with the following options that summarize the students' degree of knowledge about the guide from the three degrees analyzed based on the responses obtained from these four questions: one correct answer out of four questions (1), two correct answers out of four questions (2) three correct answers out of four questions (3) and four correct answers out of four questions (4).

The questions for the experimental group that evaluated the experience included the degree of general satisfaction with the video guide for each subject and, in particular, the duration, quality of the images, sound, texts, written messages, and the ability, clarity, and way in which the lecturer presented the information, among other issues.

The data has been analyzed with the statistic program for Social Sciences SPSS. The results from different statistical tests are shown in the following sections through graphs and tables with data in percentage and descriptive statistics according to the measurement of the indicators. An annotation indicates whether the differences are statistically significant (with p-values of less than 0.05 and a confidence level of 95%). The chi-square test compares observed and expected frequencies to indicate whether the differences among groups are statistically significant. It gives us information to say when the contrast is non-significant (we do not reject HO) or essential (HO is rejected).

III.3. Ethical considerations

The questionnaire used in the research was reviewed by the team of the Practical Sociological Research Committee of the Spanish Federation of Sociology. The research was carried out within the framework of an Educational Innovation Project, promoted and financed by the University of Malaga, fulfilling all the requirements of the call and achieving a final assessment of Excellent. Regarding the BERA guidelines, we have the implicit consent of the students since the online questionnaire was voluntary, as expressed in the email that included the link. Likewise, all the questionnaires were anonymous. Regarding the protection of minors, it should be noted that only university students of legal age participated in the study. Regarding transparency, the completed questionnaires are available. This research respects the right to withdraw and did not use incentives to encourage participation.

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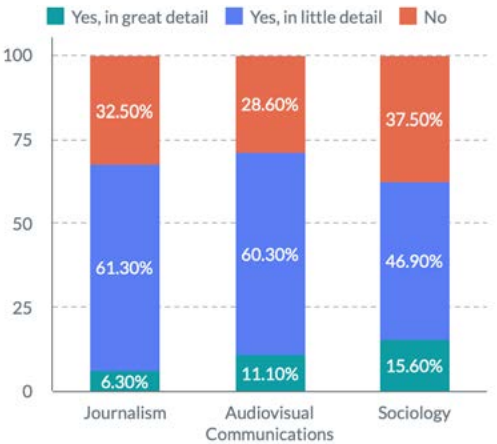
IV. Results

This work aims to analyze teaching guides and their presentation to students, especially the video format, as opposed to the conventional written format to communicate with students. In other words, the communication between the University and the student body. For this purpose, we carried out two types of analyses. The first (section IV.1.) is comparative to determine whether differences in the degree of knowledge of the teaching guide contents depend on the format (conventional written and video guide). The second analysis (section IV.2.) explores the experimental group students' evaluation of the video guide to detect the strengths and improvements to be made in the future.

IV.1. The conventional guide compared to the video guide

As shown in Figure 3, most of the students consulted in the three degrees analyzed tend to skim over the traditional teaching guide. A considerable percentage do not read it: 32.5% of Journalism students, 37.5% from Sociology, and 28.6% from communication. The rate of those who are in the habit of reading it in more depth ranges from 16% in Sociology to only 6% in Journalism. The conclusion is evident and confirms the initial hypothesis of this work: the conventional teaching guide is a document in disuse because very few students are in the habit of reading it in detail.

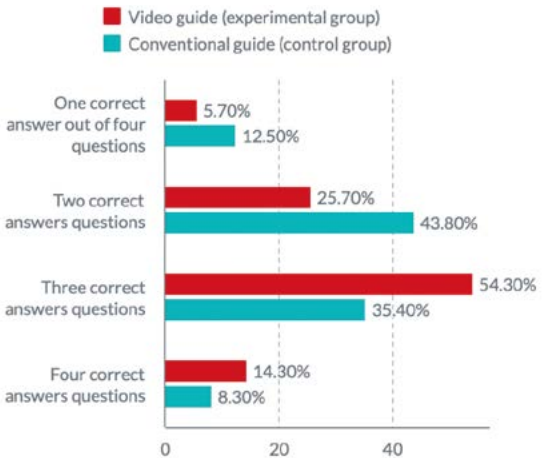


Source: Authors.

Figure 3

In general, are you in the habit of reading the subject's teaching guide?

The students gain more knowledge from the video guide as opposed to the conventional guide. When asked about different issues related to the content of the guides, the highest scores (four correct answers out of four questions presented) were obtained by students who viewed the video guide compared to the students who read the conventional guide. As shown in the following figures, 14.3% of Journalism students in the experimental group answered all four questions correctly, 33.3% of Audiovisual Communication students, and 39.1% of Sociology students (respectively, 6, 20, and 12 percentage points higher than students in the control group). The differences are statistically significant for some results. Previous studies in this field, such as Miller and Redman's (2010), conclude that the use of videos as a teaching guide increases students' understanding and knowledge of the syllabus.



Chi-square test: 0.067.

Source: Authors.

Figure 4

Percentage of questions answered correctly about the contents of the guide. (Journalism)

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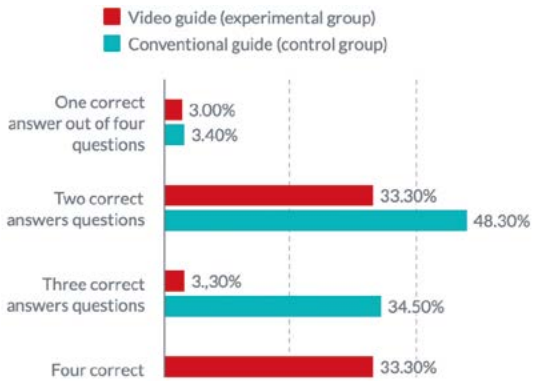
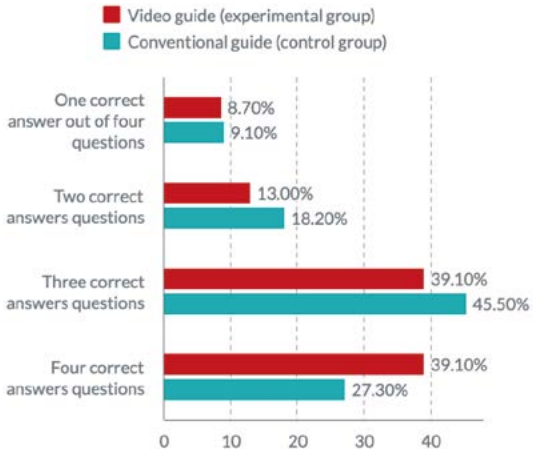


Chi-square test: 0.336.

Source: Authors.

Figure 5

Percentage of correct answers to questions about the contents of the guide (Audiovisual Communication)



Chi-square test: 0.918.

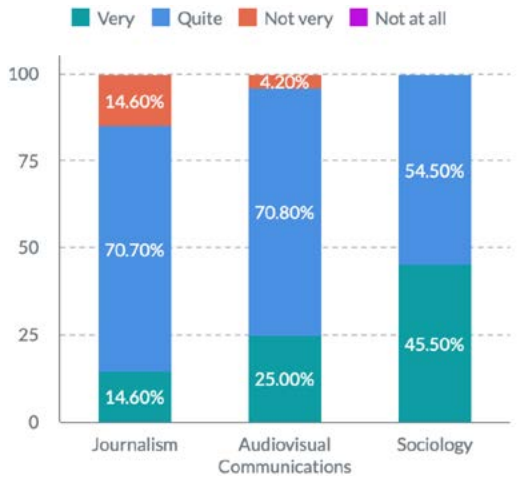
Source: Authors.

Figure 6

Percentage of correct answers to questions on the contents of the guide (Sociology)

IV.2. Towards a new teaching guide model. The experience with the video guide

The study's second objective is to analyze students' evaluation of the video guide, who are from the three degrees in the control group. It is essential to note the format's originality since practically all the students answered that they had "never" seen a video guide in other subjects before (90.2% in Journalism, 87.5% in Audiovisual Communication, and 100% in Sociology).



Source: Authors.

Figure 7

Degree of satisfaction with the video guide

As shown in Figure 7, the students rate their experience with the video guide highly in the three degrees analyzed: most students consulted from Journalism, Audiovisual Communication, and Sociology state that they are somewhat or very satisfied with this format for communicating essential information about the subject. The two recommendation indicators confirm the high rating: practically all students would recommend the video guide format for the rest of the subjects instead of the conventional guide (Figure 8) and suggest that other students view it (Figure 9).

These results are consistent with the study mentioned above by Miller and Redman (2010), which found higher satisfaction among students who participated in classes with teacher-created video content versus the traditional classroom. Others, such as Dennen (2011) and Cheung, Hew, and

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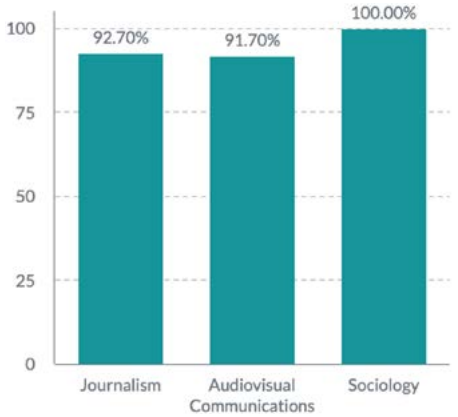
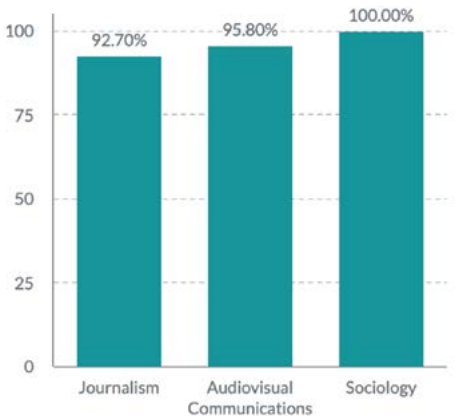
Ng (2008), determined that creating personalized videos fosters higher levels of university student participation and engagement, leading to more solid relationships between students and faculty to be established.



Source: Authors.

Figure 8

Recommendation to use this video guide format for the rest of the subjects instead of the conventional guide and recommendation to other students to watch it



Source: Authors.

Figure 9

Recommendation to other classmates to watch the video guides

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It is possible to extract general evidence about the three video guides' best and worst-rated aspects from the data in Table 1 using central tendency statistics; generally, the three video guides are rated very positively in all eight rating indicators. The mean value in all the cases is the same or higher than 3.5 on a scale from 0 (lowest rating) to 5 (highest rating). It is also worth noting that the most repeated value (the mode) in all the indicators in the three degrees is 3.

Most students rate the lecturer's presentation of the information positively (4.1 in Journalism, 4.3 in Audiovisual Communication, and 4.7 in Sociology) and the clarity, structure, and sections (4.1 in Journalism, 4.2 in Audiovisual Communication, and 4.7 in Sociology). The comprehension of the sociology video guide is rated positively (4.8), while it is somewhat lower in Audiovisual Communication (4.2) and especially in Journalism (3.9).

Table 1

Average rating of different aspects of the video guide by degree

	Journalism	Audiovisual Communication	Sociology
1. Image quality	3.6	4.0	3.8
2. Sound quality	3.5	3.8	4.1
3. Quality of text and written messages	3.6	3.7	4.5
4. Lecturer's capacity to convey information (if it motivates, or sparks interest)	3.9	3.8	4.5
5. The lecturer clearly presents information (yes it is well understood)	4.1	4.3	4.7
6. Duration	4.2	4.0	4.5
7. Understanding of the content in general	3.9	4.2	4.8
8. Structure and sections (whether they are clear and organized)	4.1	4.2	4.7

Source: Authors.

In general, as shown above, the indicators that received a somewhat lower score in the evaluation of the three video guides are related to the quality of the image, sound, text, and written messages. These indicators can be better contextualized due to a question in the survey allowing students to

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express (openly) the aspects they liked the least about the video guide. We present some of the students' literal responses below:

"Sometimes the images distracted from the audio," "Sometimes the images distracted you from what the video was saying," "sometimes the music did not match too well with the dynamism of the video," "on many occasions, the content and the visual aid were unrelated," "a bit more text on the screen while the lecturer is speaking," "some aspects were not written on the screen, I think that hearing and seeing it makes the concepts more understandable."

V. Conclusions

We analyzed students' opinions regarding the new teaching guide model in video format to communicate essential information about the subjects and measured their satisfaction with assessment indicators. Results are based on two unpublished questionnaires designed in 2020 and applied to three subjects from the Journalism, Audiovisual Communication, and Sociology degrees from the University of Malaga and Pablo de Olavide de Seville, Spain. Two groups in each of the three subjects were created: a treatment group (which viewed the video guide) and a control group (which did not view the video guide and read the conventional format of the guide) in order to implement the program, which was evaluated with an experimental methodology. The work provides evidence of the advantages towards using the teaching video guide instead of the conventional guide to improving communication between the University and students. Also, the advance is the methodological design and analysis strategy can be replicated in other degrees.

The starting hypothesis of this work has been broadly demonstrated in the three degrees analyzed. As we have shown, most students are not in the habit of reading the conventional teaching guide. Those who did read it tend to skim it. This is a significant issue as the teaching guide is a valuable academic document for the university, students, and teaching staff. It contains the subject's teaching planning and information necessary for following the subject in a given academic year.

The new video guide format can be considered an innovative proposal compared to the conventional one as it improves students' understanding of the contents and is rated highly. In other words, it has been shown that the students who viewed the video guide instead of reading it in the traditional format gained more knowledge about teaching guide's contents. On the other hand, there was a consensus among students as they positively evaluated this

new teaching video guide format for communicating essential information about their respective subjects. However, the data also highlights aspects to improve concerning the quality of the images, sound, texts, and written messages for future video guides.

As some works also point out (Cuéllar and Navarro 2019; Perona 2020), in an increasingly visual world where there is an increasing number of images sent and received, the potential for audiovisual products can be used to improve academic communication between the university, professors, and students. Images are a powerful resource for communicating as it appeals to the viewer's cognition, emotions, and subjective meanings, favoring the assimilation of the content. We are in one of the periods that Salvador Giner (2007) mentions as "great creativity", and universities should harness this.

We believe that the teaching guides are an essential tool for transparent teaching management since they must contain a description of the fundamental aspects of each subject, such as the credits for the course, competencies that will be acquired after passing the course, the methodology, and the assessment methods to be used. Each university's teaching guide has attempted to standardize the format. However, in practice, it has been observed that these design standards are not met, and we have even found notable deficiencies in the way the information is shown. This is why the pilot project provides a more attractive format for students and encourages the creation of a corporate design. The design could be coherent with the institution's, which lecturers could easily replicate so that institutional and academic communication reaches the end-user through more everyday digital consumption, but no less formal, and does not detract from the institution's corporate image. Public universities have been on the Internet and the leading social networks for years, but it is not enough to merely be present on them; they must also speak the same language as the users.

Finally, it should be noted that adopting the new proposed format does not mean that the written teaching guides must disappear, as we consider them more complete. In any case, this work is committed to the coexistence of both models. The video guide is more attractive and dynamic way for more students to access and understand the information. The conventional teaching guide is a reference document for those who wish to explore the subject's contents.

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