

SPECIAL SECTION: UNIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Inclusion and access democratization of the university: an analysis of student experience¹

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ABSTRACT

This article asks about the ways of experiencing, meaning and valuing the university entrance qualification and first year studies that students build in the framework of their training experiences in recently created universities concerned with inclusion and academic democratization. In particular, it analyzes the experiences of students in the initial stage of their career at the Universidad Nacional Arturo Jauretche in Argentina in the period between 2016 and 2018. This research is part of a deeper investigation and was conducted from a qualitative, descriptive and analytical methodological design, with a level of microsocial anchoring. Research findings allow us to observe the impact of the policies and devices aimed at the democratization of access to the university in the training experiences of the students from knowing the meanings, evaluations and daily practices that they display in them.

Keywords: student experience; university admission; inclusion; permanence.

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Inclusión y democratización de la universidad: una mirada a través de la experiencia estudiantil

RESUMEN

Este artículo indaga en los modos de vivenciar, valorar y significar el tránsito inicial de los estudios que construyen los/as estudiantes en el marco de sus experiencias de formación, en universidades de reciente creación, preocupadas por la inclusión y democratización académica. Particularmente aquí se analiza las experiencias de estudiantes en el tramo inicial de su carrera, en la Universidad Nacional Arturo Jauretche, en Argentina, en el periodo de 2016 hasta 2018. La investigación forma parte de una investigación más profunda y se desplegó a partir de un diseño metodológico cualitativo, con un nivel de anclaje microsocioal. Los resultados permiten observar el impacto de las políticas y dispositivos orientados a la democratización del acceso a la universidad en las experiencias de formación de los/as estudiantes a partir de conocer los sentidos, valoraciones y prácticas cotidianas que despliegan en las mismas.

Palabras clave: experiencia estudiantil; universidad; ingreso y primer año; inclusión; permanencia.

Inclusão e democratização da universidade: um olhar através da experiência estudiantil

RESUMO

Este artigo indaga os modos de vivenciar, valorizar e significar o trânsito inicial dos estudos que os/as estudantes constroem no marco de suas experiências de formação, em universidades recém-criadas, preocupadas com a inclusão e a democratização acadêmica. Em particular, analisa as experiências de estudantes em fase inicial de carreira, na Universidad Nacional Arturo Jauretche, na Argentina, no período de 2016 a 2018. A pesquisa faz parte de uma investigação mais profunda e foi desenvolvida a partir de um desenho metodológico qualitativo, com seu nível de ancoragem microsocioal. Os resultados permitem observar o impacto das políticas e dispositivos voltados à democratização do acesso à universidade nas experiências formativas dos/das estudantes a partir do conhecimento dos significados, avaliações e práticas cotidianas que nelas apresentam.

Palavras-chave: experiências estudiantis; universidade; ingresso e primeiro ano; inclusão; permanência.

INTRODUCTION

This article delves into the ways students experience, convey meanings and value the initial stage of university studies in the framework of their training experiences in recently created universities, which are concerned about inclusion and academic democratization. The findings of this study are part of a completed research (Alcoba, 2021) and are under analysis pursuant to a new project. These studies consider that analyzing student experiences and generating knowledge that focuses on them constitute a relevant contribution for discussing and, eventually, changing teaching practices. It is important to argue that teaching is a vital facet in university educational experiences and university inclusion; however, in this article, that is not a subject of analysis, but it is considered part of the conditions that foster certain training experiences.

As an institution, we recognize that there exist institutional cultures within the university, which make it possible to consider this place as a life institution, where the individual builds their experiential culture pierced by meanings and institutional culture (Remedi, 2013). Within this framework, it is observed that recovering student experiences allows to gain a new perspective in relation to the development of the institution that enables us to generate knowledge about its policies and teaching practices, considering that values evolve daily. Even though we assume that the teacher's perspective is relevant for the understanding of the pedagogical dimension, it is not the focus of analysis of this article, but rather we pursue to analyze the students' perspective as it has been studied to a lesser degree in our university (Carli, 2012).

Essentially, this article inquires about student experiences in the initial stage of the⁴ Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Sciences of the National University Arturo Jauretche (UNAJ) from 2016 to 2018. UNAJ has been chosen as it is a university that was recently created. It was established in 2009 in Florencio Varela, Province of Buenos Aires. The establishment of this university is part of the set of implemented policies during *kircherista* governments⁵ that exhibit certain interest in solving the issue of access to education (Miras *et al.*, 2017; Suasnabar & Rovelli, 2016; Chiroleu *et al.*, 2012) as well as the enhancement of student experiences. The analysis of documents and round of interviews puts forward the concept of a new student, who is no longer an *inheritor* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2009) and emerges with a strong basis to justify its existence. In this discourse, it can be noticed that the premises of this university are important. Also, there exists a concern about creating an admission system that can be recognized as part of the academic, social and cultural process (Villanueva, 2015). Therefore, this university created an Institute of Initial Studies (*Instituto de Estudios Iniciales*) which focuses on the teaching, research and outreach tasks linked to a specific moment of the

⁴ When talking about the initial stage of a university career, we refer to the admission and first year.

⁵ It refers to the presidency of Nestor Kirchner (2003-2007) and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-2011 and 2011-2015).

student experience and no longer to a specific discipline.⁶ Since 2012, the admission policy of students of this university has been in charge of this Institute that offers a Course of Introduction to University Study (*Curso de Preparación Universitaria*, CPU) which is compulsory, but not disqualifying, made up of three subjects which last three weeks – including maths, language and a workshop about university life –; and an Introductory Training Course (*Ciclo Inicial*, CI) which is shared by all the careers and it is made up of four subjects which last a term – including maths, a workshop about reading and writing, cultural practices and issues about Argentinian history – both courses must be taken along with the specific disciplinary subjects of each career simultaneously⁷ during the first year of study. These policies oriented to the admission are added up to the pedagogic decision that classes of all the subjects could not have more than 30 students (UNAJ, 2016).

The decision of paying close attention to the admission and first year of the career is due to the complexities that a group of researchers observe in relation to this period as a critical moment for the academic integration, for the complexities associated to the process of creating the role of student, among other factors (Araujo, 2017; Zandomeni *et al.*, 2016; Roldán, 2014; Gluz, 2011). Besides, the bibliography stands out the role of institutional devices in the sustenance of entrants in the initial stage of a university career (Espinosa-Castro *et al.*, 2020; Nicastro, 2018; Ezcurra, 2013; Panaia, 2013).

In the following sections, firstly, the methodological aspects of research are presented. Secondly, some specific aspects of the foundation of UNAJ are explained and a description of the devices that are part of the initial stage of the Bachelor's Degree in Agricultural Sciences is presented. Thirdly, it follows a presentation of research that make up the theory from where the student experiences are analyzed. Then, some outstanding aspects of the analysis of student experiences are explained. Finally, a discussion and conclusion section is introduced where some salient aspects of analysis are explained, taking into consideration some recent research of the field.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research has been conducted following a theoretical and methodological framework known as interpretive (Marradi *et al.*, 2007). This study has been carried out within a qualitative, descriptive, and analytical methodological design with a level of microsocial anchoring (Sautu, 2005). The time period of this study is 2016-2018. It is proposed to investigate student experiences during the initial stage of their careers in a period

⁶ This structural change differentiates this university from others established before. To obtain more information, see Alcoba (2021). To know more about a systematic study of the history of Argentinian universities, see Buchbinder (2005).

⁷ Regarding Agricultural Sciences: Intensive Vegetable Production System I, Botany, Applied General Chemistry, ICT Workshop in the first term; Vegetable Physiology, Physics, Soil and Substrate in the second term.

characterized by changes in law which forbade the existence of qualifying admission systems⁸ in universities.

The research design intermingled a variety of methodological strategies with a focus on qualitative approaches. On the one hand, sources and techniques of primary data collection were semi-structured qualitative interviews targeted to students and informants, who are key actors in this university, and classroom observations. On the other hand, secondary data collection methods used were analysis of documents - bylaws, rules, programs, provisions and reports of the institution. Besides, we have reviewed specialized literature.

In the first stage, an analysis of documents was conducted with the aim of obtaining information from documents of bodies of the national government, documents of the university and institutional reports⁹. The before mentioned documents were analysis using a content analysis technique (Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2006), drafting analysis charts according to some categories: academic policies, admission policies, study plans, university students. Thereafter, the obtained information from these documents was cross-referenced with the data collected from the interviews to members of the university board¹⁰.

In the second stage, an analysis of career enrollment was conducted so as to establish bonds among students. For this purpose, classroom observations as a non-participant were made during a term in different subjects of the first year of the career, allowing us to establish interview protocols, create bonds with students and obtain institutional references.

Regarding student interviews, the strategy of theoretical sampling was followed to have a sample population (Taylor & Bogan, 1987, p. 108). The development of interviews was ordered by a technique known as snowball. Pursuant to data analysis, the number of interviews done was limited by a theoretical saturation (Glaser & Straus, 1967). Interviews were carried out during 2018 to students that would have entered the institution in that year or two years before. Ten in-depth interviews were conducted in this university to students that in 2018 were attending first-year subjects and had enrolled in 2016, 2017 or 2018.

To conduct a data analysis of primary sources, we have worked with interview transcriptions thanks to the contributions of the analysis method of the grounded theory (Glaser & Straus, 1967). It was possible to generate knowledge and to conceptualize collected data, spotting similarities and differences according to the inductive analysis of the content of empirical evidence.

⁸ Law no. 27.204 from 2015.

⁹ Analysis of Law no 26.576, several stenographic versions of hearings of the House of Deputies and the Senate, speeches of the President of the Nation, institutional self-assessments of UNAJ and its by-law.

¹⁰ Interviews to the coordinator of the area of Teacher Education and Assessment and the coordinator of the CPU.

THINKING ABOUT EDUCATION EXPERIENCES IN THE UNIVERSITY

This research was enriched by an heterodox framework which included canon American and European references (Scott 2001; Dubet, 1994; De Laurentis, 1992) and relevant works in the local sphere (Carli, 2012; Pierella, 2014) that allowed to understand the student education experience as a linguistic, social, cultural and subjective event, shedding light on the relationships with the resulting subjectivity and acknowledging social and personal elements that coexist among social and subjective representations. Understanding the experiences from those perspectives gives the opportunity to appreciate them in an interplay between the social reality and the individual, putting emphasis on its agency from a view that exceeds the pragmatics of the action and is interested in the reflection and subjective recreation of its functioning. Moreover, the theoretical perspectives that have enriched this study helped to assign value to the institution in which experiences are deployed and to recognize the educational ability of subjectivities that universities bear. In order to delve into experiences, we build upon the concept of *academic practices* (Rocha Pinto, 1999) with the aim of exploring the schedule and practices in which students are involved within the educational framework. This accounts for the

[...] system of social relationships that allows the functioning and interaction between agents, together with the institutional events and myriad bodies of knowledge and their sources, in an academic context (Rocha Pinto, 1999, p. 42).

Furthermore, we recognize several research as valuable background knowledge (Espinosa-Castro *et al.*, 2020; Vercellino *et al.*, 2020; Guzman, 2017; Ortega, 2011, 2016; Pierella, 2014, 2016; Carli, 2012). These works allowed us to be aware of many difficulties students may encounter in the initial stage of their career, the importance of making knowledge connections gained in these periods, the significance that authorities hold in relation to care, support and recognition at the beginning of university careers. It is of special interest to examine the contributions proposed by Colabella and Vargas (2014) at UNAJ that allows to understand some features of the experience in this university linked to the premises, the social background of students, reasons for choosing a career, experiences in previous levels of education, among others.

This theoretical background has granted us the chance of limiting some dimensions for the study of experiences, including the student's attribution of meanings and values, the impact of previous learning experiences, student's academic practices, social places students visit, the creation of social relationships and knowledge connections they establish, etc. In other words, we are eager to explore modes of subjectivation of training experiences, recognizing previous university steps as well as the timetable proposed by the admission system and the first year of studies. Furthermore, we highlight existing networks of personal and academic background within the social sphere that students take part in.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN THE INITIAL STAGE OF THE AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES CAREER AT UNAJ

In this section, some findings related to the analysis of student experiences are unfolded. It is worth clarifying that a common element that permeates all the analyzed stories makes reference to the significance of previous university experiences to redefine the current one. Most interviewees mentioned having previous educational experiences in higher education (incomplete or, to a lesser extent, complete), a testimony that is repeated in their stories. Moreover, the majority of students declared having a paid work or unpaid caring work at home on a daily basis. This is crucial because previous works (Guzmán, 2004) have demonstrated that the working timetable is a significant element that makes up a student experience. We clarify these features as they will be further developed in this article.

Arrival to University

Based on the analysis of some stories, we could identify that student's decision to enroll in UNAJ is associated to its location. The site where the university is located allows students to commute from and to different places of their everyday life, particularly their workplace. Besides, we notice that, in many cases, this convenient location is compared to the premises where students had previously attended, resulting in incomplete university experiences because distances, economic difficulties and issues related to their working timetable led them to drop out of university.

Taking into consideration the training experience of students, they attribute different meanings to the career admission which is positively valued by them. Some students reckon that this value is linked to the contributions that they consider the CPU offered in the acquisition of practices and content that, according to them, were not taught in their secondary schools, but are key for university life. On the other hand, some students believe this value does not stem from a personal level, but it stems from processes they observed that some classmates went through, highlighting different levels of knowledge. Even though it is not the case of these students, they still recognize that the CPU has been an important device for those who did not have any previous university experience or have graduated from a secondary school with a lack of learning practices.

Additionally, the analysis of these stories makes it noticeable that in student training experience, the CPU is lived as a continuity and a complementary proposal to secondary school education. It is remarkable that students acknowledge this continuity when comparing the CPU to their previous experiences in other admission systems. According to their stories, they were confronted with a certain sense of disconnection with their previous educational level. Words from this student illustrate this:

“I have undergone three admission processes... This university admission is the one which is tailored to the secondary level; that is to say, after graduating from secondary school, this is the best one. The admission system of UBA [making reference to the National University of Buenos Aires] is tough. There were some topics that you have never studied before, and they were taught on the first day. However, this one has been good. I mean, this admission is complementary” (Student 1,¹¹, 2018).

Furthermore, we have observed that students assign a leveling sense to the CPU, different from other university admission systems that are qualifying:

“I have noticed that this admission system adopts a leveling sense. Students who had failed it must take it on the next term. Therefore, you don’t lose a year as it is there [making reference to the admission system in the National University of La Plata]. You can be calm since the beginning. When they tell you this, you face it differently, you can breathe” (Student 2, 2018).

Consequently, we can identify that, in general, the experience of being freshmen is considered to be different from previous experiences, highlighting many ways in which this policy contributes to their education, levels students and how well it caters for the heterogeneity of students.

First year, Knowledge Experiences and Pedagogical Relations

Specific characteristics of knowledge experiences were observed during the training process in the first year of the career. When analyzing stories, we noticed that despite all the meanings assigned to CI subjects are different, in general, learners appreciate that subjects offer the possibility of “leveling” them. Some students stated that these subjects were key to build and acquire tools and contents; other students consider these subjects were redundant, due to their previous education, but they recognize the leveling factor. In relation to this, a student mentioned:

“In the first year, you have got four compulsory subjects... Nothing difficult. Anyway, they were very good for many people that came from there [making reference to the National University of La Plata], but for me, they were dull. I already had all that previous university experience, but well, it was very good. [...] knowledge is something that must be spread and the only way to advance together is going slowly. Otherwise, some people stay half-way (Student 3, 2018).

On the other hand, we observe that students differentiate their experiences in many subjects according to how difficult the content is. Particularly, Chemistry and Math are considered to be “tough”, mainly for those students who lack previous university experiences in related careers or for those who finished secondary school a long time ago. Students consider that

¹¹ Interviews are numbered to keep identities anonymous.

these are barriers owing to their previous studies and the lack of personal feasibility of maintaining concrete learning techniques and learner autonomy. Words from this student illustrate this:

“Yes, it’s hard [making reference to Math]. But I must practice... I must sit down, study and practice. Math is easy. Once you understand it, you just need to practice, practice so that it gets stored in your mind. Otherwise, you don’t pass it. Besides, studying for me is somehow difficult. I mean, it is hard for me to study, imagine that. In the secondary school, I had to practice because I was forced to go. But university is totally different. [...] Now, it depends on me, and I think I’m not quite good at it” (Student 4, 2018).

Educational experiences in the first year of university studies are also characterized by the relationship between students and professors. Based on the comparison of student experience at UNAJ with other levels of education or incomplete training experiences in higher education, students understand the concept of professor according to two factors: their teaching practices and their “kindness” to students. In relation to teaching practices, students appreciate the ability that some professors demonstrate when sharing knowledge. One student argued:

“Yes, I was also dependent on professors. One professor from a core subject was terrible. Maybe this professor knows a lot, but there was a lack of resources to share knowledge. [...] A power point was read and that was it” (Student 5, 2018).

When talking about “kindness”, we refer to three facets. Firstly, the possibility of forging relationships between students and professors due to the existence of small classes. Secondly, the approach that professors adopt towards students’ living conditions while studying. That has been of paramount importance in the current training experience and can be compared to past experiences in other universities. Finally, the third facet that we could identify is associated with the commitment that some professors displayed to develop content even in complex contexts and the coherence they had in relation to the content taught and assessed. Two testimonies account for what has been described:

“Well, there is a strong relationship between professors and students here. They don’t consider students as a group, but it is noticeable that some professors know some student names. And well, that makes a difference. It isn’t the same to teach a lesson for 20 students than 150” (Student 6, 2018).

“We have taken term tests where some mums brought their children to classes and they’re welcome. Nobody complains. I think they understand the fact that some students work; they understand that there isn’t other way to do it and they don’t complain about it. This couldn’t happen before [making reference to the experience in the University of Buenos Aires]. Most probably if you brought your child, bye, you would have been blatantly scold. Nobody dared to do it” (Student 1, 2018).

It can be noticed that the value assigned to professors is not triggered by worship or how expert they are, but because of the way they share knowledge and, mainly, because of their respect and kindness towards students.

On the other hand, assessments are deemed as pedagogic devices that allow students to observe and be aware of their own experience. In the stories, it is remarkable that the concept of assessments is not considered as a qualifying or disciplining device. Students clearly link assessment to the inclusive imprint that they perceive of the institution.

Additionally, we notice that in knowledge experiences, group work in the classroom is positively valued and frequent. Outside the classroom, group work is not frequent and not required by the institution. This is not an issue for students as they understand that this dynamic does not require extra work apart from the timetable of the course. Two learners state:

“I noticed that they try to make you work together [making reference to professors] ... In Cultural Practices, we worked in groups all the time. We completed activities in the classroom... All the groups that he formed were only created for the class” (Student 7, 2018)

“Generally, we don’t meet to study because we are scattered and that’s it. In general, most of us, the common denominator was that we worked, and we arrived here on time. [...] I’m not saying that there isn’t a good relationship or fellowship. We know that our classmate cannot meet because we cannot” (Student 8, 2018)

Considering students’ busy timetable on a daily basis, students value that the university does not require constant group work, avoiding any difficulty for them as some students, based on their previous experiences, reckon that group work can be detrimental. Based on what has been discussed, academic practices out of the course timetable are, generally, individual.

Individuals at University

Another salient finding related to student educational experience is the heterogeneity of students in the university, which is characteristic and distinctive of their experiences, enriching their own education. This heterogeneity is expressed in different ways: different age groups, different relationships to the agricultural world and the existence of student profiles that challenge the traditional student profile, that is to say, students work or raise their children in their everyday lives; thus, they are not considered as full-time students. The opinion of this student exemplifies the perception of many interviewed learners:

“There are a lot of types in this career. Some students are entrants, some students, as it is my case, have studied something similar before. There are people who are probably two decades older than us and have come to further study as they already are university graduates. There is a variety. I believe

that this makes a difference because when we give our opinion, when we ask questions, it is more interesting to listen to them as we know different things” (Student 9, 2018)

In relation to the last point mentioned before, it is crucial to highlight the existence of students who work as a significant reality that characterizes their training experiences. It does not seem to be only due to the presence of working students, but also due to a certain type of university arrangement that allows them to be a student and worker at the same time. This value of the institutional practices emerges and is rendered, sometimes, thanks to a comparison with other university experiences where students do not feel part of the institution if they work. One student stated:

“I know that many of our classmates work. In the CPU, many of them worked. And now, in the evening, I know that they work and some of them come to classes wearing a working uniform. Yes... The university helps, let’s say, it’s not a barrier. It educates you and helps you with your work and those things... It is noticeable. I think that it was mentioned once, I don’t remember in which subject, that this university gives students the possibility to work and study. Most of the students work and we know it” (Student 6, 2018)

Stories make it clear that students appraise the institution because it “fosters” student heterogeneity. In particular, the presence of working students constitutes an essential part of their experiences in different institutions. Besides, the university offers support on the part of professors, myriad ways of working outside the classroom, timetables, admission strategies, meanings assigned to assessments, among other factors.

Furthermore, socialization practices and the value that students assign to them, due to their experiences are linked to the strong presence of workers. The analysis of stories demonstrates that the main socialization practices that learners follow daily take place outside the university and is not connected with it. This is positively appreciated by students who consider that the institutional proposal is significant because it allows to maintain an educational experience that coexists with some socialization practices prior to their admission:

“This is what happens here. I live 20 minutes away [making reference to their home] and my peer group and the people with whom I share all my life live there. It may sound rude, but I don’t come here to make friends, I come here to study. Sometimes I meet good people and I make friends... But, on Sundays I meet my people at my place. The rest of the week I’m busy working... However, I feel that whenever we come across each other, everything is OK, but I don’t think that somebody feels like or spends time making friends, we’re older people, we’ve got family, we’ve got friends... We can split things and that’s fine, nobody asks you not to do so” (Student 4, 2018)

For those students who had previous university experiences, this takes on more relevancy owing to the perception of implicit demands for creating constant socialization spaces with their classmates if they wanted to be considered “true” students. Therefore, the educational

experience at UNAJ seems to coexist without any major problem in relation to the external socialization experiences which students prioritize and need to maintain. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile mentioning that a minority of students positively ponder the fact that the university does not require a socialization that demands additional time, yet it makes it difficult for them to form peer groups, an expectation they had when enrolling in the career.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This article delves into the ways students experience, convey meanings and value the initial stage of university studies based on their motivation so as to know the effects of inclusive policies and myriad university programs, noting that it redefines the experience and the tradition of the university under the framework of universities that are characterized by the inclusion as a foundational basis (Alcoba, 2021).

Findings allow us to validate the initial assumption that assumes the nonexistence of a unique student condition, but rather the existence of a multiplicity of experiences, knowledge, meanings, and practices. Similarly, they confirm previous research results that emphasize on the student experience in the university admission according to its heterogeneity and complexity, distancing from the traditional concept of a student (Gómez, 2017; Carli, 2012; Dubet, 2004; Bourdieu & Passeron, 2009).

It is of special interest to highlight that the findings related to the peculiarities of student experience at UNAJ allow us to recognize that there is a consistency principle between the institution, its foundational basis and student's daily life. During student experiences, they discover and perceive that the setting of this university project enables them to study, work and be the breadwinner simultaneously. Furthermore, these findings follow the line of inquiry of previous studies that stand out the importance of the institution for building permanence experiences in the university (Espinosa-Castro *et al.*, 2020; Nicastro, 2018; Ezcurra, 2013; Panaia, 2013; Gluz, 2011). Additionally, these results allow to observe the impact of deployed inclusive policies as background studies have described and analyzed it (Suasnábar & Rovelli, 2016; Chiroleu *et al.*, 2012) during *kirchnerista* governments.

We notice that the establishment of this university gains relevancy as a facilitator of new educational experiences. This finding is congruent with the results obtained by Colabella and Vargas (2014) and other research that redefines the premises to explain the phenomenon of university inclusion (Miras *et al.*, 2017).

Moreover, students recognize that university admission constitutes a teaching proposal that identifies the existence of different levels of past academic performance and caters for a continuity of the previous level of education, leading them to successfully adapt and deal with any difficulties they may encounter on their university admission. Students believe that there is a continuity of topics in the initial stage of their careers which they recognize as critical for

their performance (Araujo, 2017; Zandomeni *et al.*, 2016; Roldán, 2014; Gluz, 2011; Villanueva, 2015).

The finding related to the significance that professors have and the relationship between them and students stands out because it helps to understand student experience in their initial stage of the career. It is congruent with contributions made by Pierella (2014), who establishes that learners perceive that great numbers of students in the university are impersonal and under a process of desubjetivation, and encourage the recognition of professors who are supportive.

It is of special interest to notice the significance of incomplete university experiences for creating, signifying, and valuing new training experiences in the university. Thanks to this finding, we can conclude that for a great number of students, their path in the initial stage of their careers is built upon not only how new the level is for them but also upon the culture and institutional ways that are proposed as new or diverse training experiences. This finding allows to think about ways of perceiving the path that some authors have proposed (Arango, 2006), noticing how important educational paths in the post-secondary level are to understand them.

Besides, regarding student experience in the initial stage of their careers, learners are challenged to resort to many study practices which, at that moment, are new for them. This can be explained by theoretical studies of background research that indicate that, when enrolling in university, there is a break from study practices that students have acquired in previous levels of education (Ortega, 2011, 2016; Vercellino, *et al.*, 2020).

Regarding assessments, they are taken as pedagogic devices which allow students to revise their own educational path. It is coincident with what Pierella (2016) wrote about the tensions between understanding assessments in the first year as selective mechanisms.

Additionally, it is significant to mention the importance of group work while studying. We notice that, in this case, inside the classroom, students work together whereas outside the university, whatever they do becomes part of their own individual space. This division works perfectly well for students and allows them to maintain those practices without compromising responsibilities linked to their lives.

The socialization process takes place outside the institution and it is positively appreciated by students. Colabella and Vargas (2015) have also reached to results pertaining to how students cope with their adult life, especially in relation to institutions whose attendants deviate from the tradition. Nevertheless, these results can be compared to traditional studies (Dubet, 2000) which assign great value to young people to identify different ways of being a student today, focusing on the fact that the current role of being a student entails the presence of adults who have responsibilities, work and do daily activities.

We consider that the findings of this research allow us to understand some aspects of relevant student experiences and generate knowledge that enables to deepen background knowledge about teaching policies and practices in the framework of newly created universities oriented to new student profiles from a register that redefines student daily life.

Furthermore, these findings shed light on the importance of the microsocial perspective (Sautu, 2005) for the analysis of student experience which enables us to rebuild the concept of the object of study and to compare it to other studies which examined the topic under the framework of other universities.

We consider that these results are of great importance for understanding what actually happens in universities in critical periods like the initial stage of careers. These findings contribute to the creation and transformation of teaching practices from an inclusive and permanence point of view.

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INTERVIEWS

Student 1, Florencio Varela, 1st July, 2018.

Student 2, Florencio Varela, 22nd June, 2018.

Student 3, Florencio Varela, 22nd June, 2018.

Student 4, Florencio Varela, 1st July, 2018.

Student 5, Florencio Varela, 8th June, 2018.

Student 6, Florencio Varela, 18th June, 2018.

Student 7 Florencio Varela, 1st July, 2018.

Student 8, Florencio Varela, 2nd May, 2018.

Student 9, Florencio Varela, 1st July, 2018.

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