

Participatory learning contexts in secondary school: from presential education to virtuality

Contextos de aprendizaje participativos en secundaria: de la presencialidad a la virtualidad

Contextos de aprendizagem participativa no ensino médio: do presencial ao virtual



ARTICLE



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Abstract

The article aims to conceptualize the participation of secondary school students and to highlight which elements may condition such participation and how they should be reconsidered in a non-attendance learning model. This article is part of a Doctoral Thesis that analyses, from a collaborative approach, the participation of young people for the purpose of implementing more democratic, inclusive and participatory educational practices. The results confirm the benefits of placing students as co-responsible agents in participatory learning contexts and

the challenges that the centre must face to promote the active participation of secondary school students.

KEY WORDS

School participation, Democracy, Students' voices, Inclusive education, Virtual education.

Resumen:

El artículo pretende conceptualizar la participación del alumnado de secundaria y poner de manifiesto qué elementos pueden condicionar dicha participación y como se deberían recon-

siderar en un modelo de aprendizaje no presencial. Este artículo se enmarca en una tesis doctoral que analiza, desde una aproximación colaborativa, la capacidad de participación de los jóvenes con el objetivo de implementar acciones educativas más democráticas, inclusivas y participativas. Los resultados constatan los beneficios de situar a los estudiantes como agentes corresponsables en los contextos de aprendizaje participativos y los desafíos que debe afrontar el centro para promover la participación activa del alumnado de secundaria.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Participación escolar, Democracia, Voces del alumnado, Educación inclusiva, Educación virtual.

Resumo

O artigo tem como objetivo conceituar a participação de alunos do ensino médio e mos-

trar quais elementos podem condicionar sua participação e como devem ser reconsiderados em um modelo de aprendizado não presencial. Este artigo está enquadrado em uma Tese de Doutorado que analisa, a partir de uma abordagem colaborativa, a capacidade de participação dos jovens com o objetivo de implementar ações educativas mais democráticas, inclusivas e participativas. Os resultados confirmam os benefícios de colocar os alunos como agentes co-rresponsáveis em contextos participativos de aprendizagem e os desafios que a instituição deve enfrentar para promover a participação ativa dos alunos do ensino médio.

Palavras-chave

Participação escolar, Democracia, Vozes dos estudantes, Educação inclusiva, Educação virtual.

1. INTRODUCTION

The results presented are based on an ongoing doctoral thesis: *"The recognition of the voices of students for reflection on teaching practice."* A case study carried out in a secondary school with the aim of recognizing the voices of the students to understand their participation in classroom contexts and reflect on the teaching and learning processes.

The article highlights several elements that are key to promoting the active participation of students in presential learning contexts in order to offer new lines of thought around the challenges that the current educational system must face. The purpose is to reflect on the importance of promoting the involvement, commitment and co-responsibility of secondary school students in educational action and guarantee

the participation of students in virtual learning environments.

2. THE DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS

We are currently in a complex and changing society, which has led to the need to jointly build new spaces for citizenship. One of the main challenges of 21st century societies, as well as of current educational systems, is to facilitate the presence of students in the life of the centers and advance in equal rights and opportunities, favoring the commitment to educational activities and the development of habits of democratic coexistence.

Democratization and the participatory capacity of students are not a debate outside the cu-

urrent educational system, and like most pedagogical discussions, they are conditioned by the existing political and social situation. Since “we tend to focus on teachers’ working conditions, cultures and contexts, but we tend to forget that school is also the workplace for students” (Stoll & Fink, 1999, p. 220), in this process is essential to reconsider more than ever the voices of students in order to achieve teaching and learning contexts where they can assume roles of greater commitment and co-responsibility with educational action.

Different authors have reflected on processes, conditions and proposals to improve the democratic quality of educational centers, involving all community agents (Apple & Beane; 1997; Feito, 2009; Feu et al., 2016). Democratic centers become spaces for the preparation of critical and autonomous citizens so that they can live in a democracy, and the best way to do this is by guaranteeing their capacity for participation (Lawy & Biesta, 2006). In this way, children will be able to feel as an active part of a community where new ways of living and learning are developed and will allow them to strengthen relationships of solidarity, collaboration and cooperation (Fielding, 2012). This, in turn, will favor the development of an active and critical citizenship (Gur-Ze’ev, 2007; Trilla & Novella, 2011).

However, this is not an easy task since children and young people are not considered as active citizens in today’s society (Bolívar, 2007; Edelstein, 2011) but as future citizens. Since the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), their ability to participate as social actors has been recognized so that they can become involved in matters that correspond to them in the society where they live (Bolívar, 2007; Hart, 1992). Thus, the research conceives young

people as citizens of the present, that is, subjects with full rights who, in collaboration with other people, can assume a critical and reflective role to face the new economic, educational, social and technological challenges imposed by the spirit of capitalism (Gur-Ze’ev, 2007).

The purpose of the school is not only to transmit and achieve curricular content, but it also becomes a socializing and transforming institution of society (Mannion, 2007). For this reason, educational centers are responsible for promoting experiences that facilitate participation and the experience of democracy for all members of the community and in all possible spaces (Edelstein, 2011). Students must have opportunities to live their first participatory experiences in school and develop the attitudes and skills necessary to successfully join today’s society (Rudduck & Flutter, 2007).

In this context, the participation of students in schools means recognizing boys and girls as subjects with full rights to be consulted and make decisions about the teaching and learning processes (Mannion, 2007; Novella & Trilla, 2014). Therefore, such participation should not be reduced only to more or less formalized institutional channels or to delegated participation through representatives, but the purpose is that young people can become active agents in the processes of knowledge construction and co-responsible for educational action together with teachers.

2.1 PARTICIPATORY LEARNING CONTEXTS

The educational system is immersed in a society in constant change and transformation that pressures it to adapt to new realities and demands, so the school cannot be far from what

is happening around it (Stoll & Fink, 1999). This idea is especially relevant in an uncertain and doubtful school context due to the current health, social and economic reality, given that the school, more than ever, must provide pedagogical and emotional support to the children and young people who have seen how this reality has changed their everyday life.

In this context, it is not only essential to guarantee access to inclusive and quality education for all, how learning is accessed is also of vital importance. Thus, schools face the challenge of moving towards participatory learning contexts where students can be involved in decision-making, exercise their responsibility and assume the consequences derived from these decisions. The school must ensure that there are adequate channels and spaces, based on formulas for active participation, where different opinions are respected and common and shared objectives are formulated (Jurado, 2009).

In these participatory contexts, the role assumed by students and teachers allows modeling new ways of working together and collaboratively. As for students, they have the opportunity to participate more actively in making decisions about elements that affect their learning (Susinos & Rodríguez-Hoyos, 2011), so they can develop a sense of responsibility, commitment and empowerment. It is essential to provide them with a pedagogical voice so that they can dialogue about different moments of educational action (Baroutsis et al., 2016; Susinos & Ceballos, 2012). In this way, students have the possibility to question curricular aspects such as what, when and how to learn and assume a proactive and transformative attitude towards their learning (Bragg & Fielding, 2005; Sandoval, 2011).

Committing to this change in the role of students also entails rethinking the role of teachers and reflecting on their educational practice. This means that the teaching task no longer only falls on the idea of teaching and transmitting content, adults become facilitators of learning and provide strategies that adapt to the rhythm of each one. That is why, in the face of participatory classroom contexts, it is necessary to reformulate what it means to be a student and what it means to be a teacher in order to move towards more collaborative and egalitarian relationships, rethinking the existing hierarchy towards an authentic participation of the students in the life of the center (Fielding, 2012; Messiou, 2013; Nieto & Portela, 2008; Rudduck & Flutter, 2007). This requires betting on a pedagogy and a curriculum that is built as a facilitator of learning and student progress (Rudduck & Flutter, 2007). The school must promote classroom

management that does not pose barriers, with the use of organizational methodologies and strategies that facilitate participation and learning where adults and young people assume the commitment to rebuild knowledge together (Fielding, 2012).

However, the debate on creating opportunities for students to actively participate in their learning is even more pressing in today's digital society or network society (García-Gutiérrez & Ruiz-Corbella, 2020), since it presents new challenges beyond the use of technology (Boada & Rómulo, 2019; Guilherme et al., 2018; Sotelo et al., 2017). As Castells (2011) argues, the term network not only refers to technology, but also refers to the means of interaction and communication that configures the organization of our

societies. Therefore, technology cannot be understood without also talking about the human being, since it has transformed our way of thinking, acting and seeing the world (García-Gutiérrez & Ruiz-Corbella, 2020).

This reality has also generated important changes in the educational world, while the use of new technologies in virtual learning environments has provided a different approach to the ways of working, relating and accessing education (Sotelo et al., 2017):

[...] since it is not a matter of agreeing which new subjects and/or contents should be taught in schools [...], but rather of proposing a new way of achieving it, by addressing both radically different needs and learning processes. (García-Gutiérrez & Ruiz-Corbella, 2020, p. 35)

Virtual learning environments enable relationships beyond time and space, since they provide access to information from other parameters and facilitate interconnection between various people (Guilherme et al., 2018; Ruiz-Bolívar & Dávila, 2016). Thus, virtual resources not only promote the transmission of information, but also allow it to be transformed into knowledge (García-Peñalvo, 2020).

In the same way that occurs in the face-to-face modality, the role occupied by teachers and students in the virtual modality is also repositioned, while “[...] control also slides towards the apprentice, since it is he who accesses the information, selects it and requests the one that interests him the most [...]” (García-Gutiérrez & Ruiz-Corbella, 2020, p. 34). This enables students to be actively involved in the processes of knowledge construction. Likewise, teachers

face the challenge of developing new competencies and skills not only in the management of technological tools, but also in the planning of sessions and activities, that is, the design of the learning process (González, Costanza & Mortigo, 2017). For this reason, it is important that the teacher in the virtual modality be a motivating agent that promotes communication and facilitates activities that arouse the active involvement of students.

Taking into account that the basic principles of participation are student-student interaction and interaction with the teacher, they can also be achieved in virtual learning environments through synchronous and asynchronous communication formulas based on oral and written language (Boada & Rómulo, 2019), since they allow the exchange of information and group interaction through different tools such as videoconferences, discussion forums or email. The teachers, therefore, are in charge of facilitating educational practices that allow greater individual participation of the students and greater interaction and collaboration between equals to achieve the learning objectives (García-Peñalvo, 2020; Ruiz-Bolívar & Dávila, 2016). Therefore, “[...] it would be expected that the pedagogical and technological domains would be present in the profile of the teacher in the virtual modality” (Sotelo et al., 2017, p. 82).

To face the challenges of this digital society or network society, the centers are responsible for rethinking the learning conditions, that is, the structures and organizational relationships of the school in order to start the process of transformation of the school grammar (Tyack & Tobin, 1994), as Guilherme et al. (2018, p. 46) argue “digital culture [...] implies readjustments in the basic principles on which traditional for-

mal education is based [...]". Rethinking school practices for a virtual environment not only means including new resources, but also transforming and redesigning learning processes according to this new virtual reality. Therefore, the didactic use of new technologies changes, that is, the pedagogical approach that guides the training process is fundamental (García-Peñalvo, 2020; González et al., 2017).

3. METHODOLOGY: COLLABORATIVE INVESTIGATION

The thesis starts from a collaborative methodological approach (Christianakis, 2010; Meyer, 2001) with the aim of guaranteeing the participation of the different agents involved in the study. This approach has been built around the idea that both teachers and students are in a unique position to reflect on their own practice and, in this way, implement changes that allow reinventing and improving teaching and learning processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Collaborative research has facilitated the creation of more horizontal and democratic relationships as well as the interpretation and understanding of an educational reality through the meanings constructed by the participating subjects (Devís-Devís, 2006; Gergen & Gergen, 2000).

Although the thesis aims to address three specific objectives in order to respond to the purpose of this article, it has focused on the analysis of the participatory processes that are carried out in learning activities to identify elements that can facilitate or limit the active participation of students in presential classroom contexts.

The total number of participants in the research was 80 students divided into four class groups, three groups from 2nd year of Compulsory

Table 1

List of the curricular subject, the researched course and the teachers participating in the research

CURRICULAR SUBJECT	CLASS	TEACHERS
Spanish Language	2nd CSE (Group A)	Teacher 1
Spanish Language	4th CSE (Group B)	Teacher 2
Elective 1	2nd CSE (Group C)	Teacher 3
Elective 2	2nd CSE (Group D)	Teacher 4

Secondary Education (CSE) and one from 4th year of CSE, to analyze the curricular subjects of Spanish Language and Electives. It sought to compare and see similarities and differences in student participation in both contexts and between both educational stages (Table 1).

The research was carried out during a school year, specifically, during the 2016-2017 academic year with the development of four phases:

- a) Observations in the four groups to collect information on the possibilities and limitations of student participation.
- b) Collection of the voices of the students linked to the concepts of participation and learning.
- c) Analysis of the voices of the students to identify possible educational actions that increase their active participation.
- d) Implementation of educational actions in each subject in order to place students as co-responsible agents of educational action.

Throughout these four phases, different data collection instruments were used, such as document analysis and interviews with teachers and students to collect their voices around the teaching and learning processes. Observations were used to understand and analyze classroom contexts and three participatory dynamics were used to collect the voices of the students.

Regarding the analysis, a classification of eight categories was developed to interpret the evidence obtained and look for similarities, differences, and/or complementarities between each group. Specifically, the ATLAS.ti computer program was used to reorganize the information and search for relationships and interpretations to respond to the research objectives. However, for this article the results have been structured around the information collected in the *Participation* category.

The method used has been the case study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Stake, 1998), so the thesis has analyzed the participation of students in a public Catalan secondary school, which welcomes more than 300 CSE students from several nearby municipalities. It is located in a population of about 2,600 inhabitants and can be considered a center with an innovative pedagogical trajectory. Its main objective is to achieve, on the one hand, the improvement of the academic results of the students and, on the other, a high degree of social cohesion in contexts of equity. For this reason, it has articulated its educational project with the aim of promoting the democratic participation of students in the teaching and learning processes. Thus, it promotes channels of student participation through various educational experiences such as group and individual tutoring, Com-

munity Service through the Service-Learning methodology, Teacher Support Teams, Class Assemblies or Cooperative Work as the main focus in all curricular subjects.

4. THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM: ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Despite the fact that the center tries to guarantee the participation of the students, the research has revealed different elements that can become challenges to promote the active participation of students in presential learning contexts.

4.1. WORK IN COOPERATIVE GROUPS

A first element that favors the active participation of students is the work in cooperative groups and, by extension, the debate and exchange that arises as a result of this approach. In fact, cooperative work groups are the main methodological strategy of the center. Adults are in charge of training them following the criteria of heterogeneity, but always taking into account the affinities, capacities and abilities of the students.

Most students recognize the benefits of working in cooperative groups to achieve the learning objectives, such as a particular case that believes that “in a group we finish the assignments earlier and they come out better” (Student group A). There are also students who claim that through cooperative groups mutual help is favored and higher levels of participation are achieved, since they can resolve doubts and

reach more shared and consensual solutions among all members. According to them, the group becomes on a basic support to lean on: "if you are not good at something, with the cooperative group you are more welcomed, and if you are alone you get more nervous" (Student group C).

However, they also recognize that there is always someone who does not work and takes advantage of the effort that their colleagues do. Even so, they prioritize this approach over individual tasks since they affirm that "if it is your turn with a person who does nothing, there will always be someone in the group who will also get to work" (Student group B).

The teachers state that the richness of working in cooperative groups lies in the debate, the exchange of opinions and the shared agreements among their members (Bragg & Fielding, 2005; Jurado, 2009). They also recognize that not all groups work cooperatively, that is, debating each idea among their members and reaching shared and consensual agreements, but there are groups that work collaboratively. Consequently, these groups, instead of constructing a common content, divide the tasks among the various members so that the richness of the debate and dialogue is not produced or very little is produced. As one teacher points out, "the fact that they are in groups of four does not assure you anything. They can sit like this and be completely independent of each other" (Teacher 1).

In addition, the internal organization of each group can also consolidate roles and/or leadership. In other words, the groups that distribute the tasks do not do it without any criteria, but in most cases they are based on the strengths or weaknesses of each member. This leads to

the emergence of leadership or roles that can condition participation under equal conditions. Teachers share the idea that the most important thing is to be aware of the existence of these leaderships in order to group students according to their abilities, since "leadership is good if you combine it with students who can fight against this leadership. If the leadership is positive, that is fantastic, but if a leadership is negative or destructive, you cannot assign it according to the student" (Teacher 2).

The research has also shown the existence of different work rhythms; this is an aspect that conditions the active participation of its members. The real processes of debate and decision-making do not usually appear since there are students who are in a position of inferiority where they simply copy the responses of their classmates due to the fact that they go at a slower pace.

4.2. TYPOLOGY OF EDUCATIONAL PROPOSALS

The students of the four groups believe that the debates and oral presentations help them to participate actively, and they affirm that through this exchange they can learn about the tasks that the rest of the groups are developing, an aspect that favors their learning. In addition, they demand dynamic, practical and interactive activities to increase their attention and motivation, since as one boy affirms "it is necessary that they motivate us because we are a group of unmotivated" (Student group D). Teachers also share this same idea and argue that "they have built-in laziness" (Teacher 4), a useful strategy is to implement activities based on the surprise factor, such as leaving the classroom and looking for other educational spaces or suggest interactive software.

The students consider that it is the teacher's task to look for educational proposals that capture their attention and challenge them to assume increasingly active roles through practical and fun activities, which would increase their motivation and involvement. In addition, they claim that the activities become individual and collective challenges to put into practice the concepts acquired, as articulated by a student when he says "I think that the teachers should propose classes that pose some kind of challenge, to make them more attractive and competitive" (Student group B). However, and although most of the contributions of the students share this approach, cases have also been collected that give value to learning based on more traditional methodologies, which shows that depending on how each individual is, they demand different learning scenarios and others.

The teachers are aware of the importance of looking for varied strategies and techniques throughout the courses that increase the motivation and attention of the students. Some of the proposals that have been developed have used computer resources or self-evaluations and peer evaluations. On the one hand, having access to the web gives them the possibility to search for the answers directly without having to depend on the adult, so they have more autonomy in the execution of learning activities. On the other hand, and in terms of evaluation processes, students can assume a more critical and reflective role not only with the work they are developing at an individual level (self-evaluation), but also towards the work that their colleagues are doing (co-evaluation). Thus, teachers seek to find learning activities that facilitate learning for all students (Rudduck & Flutter, 2007), taking into account individual and group interests, needs and abilities (Fielding, 2012).

4.3. RETHINKING THE ROLE OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

At the beginning of any session, teachers take an active role in which they contextualize the objectives, activities and resources that students must use. At this time, they address the group in one direction and the students simply keep waiting to receive the instructions in order to carry them out. However, their role changes when they get to work in cooperative groups, while teachers become facilitators of learning and only go through the groups to solve problems, help those cases that need it most or redirect scattered students. Thus, teachers become guides who ask questions about the decisions that students make in order for them to assume a critical, active and reflective role (Mannion, 2007; Rudduck & Flutter, 2007; Susinos & Ceballos, 2012).

The change in the role of these agents also means rethinking pre-existing power relations with the purpose of moving from verticality to more horizontal and egalitarian relations. The teacher is no longer the person in charge of transmitting knowledge, but his main task is to promote the autonomy and participation of the students (Novella & Trilla, 2014; Susinos & Rodríguez-Hoyos, 2011). This paradigm shift towards competency learning is not possible without weaving a relationship based on dialogue and mutual trust, as one teacher argues:

You have to trust them because they notice it, if you trust them when you ask them for something they will answer you, [...] it is the 'quid pro quo'. [...] You should always keep a little distance between teacher and student, but I understand that it is a relationship of people and that they are people. (Teacher 3)

In these participatory learning contexts, students progressively assume roles of greater involvement, attention and commitment (Bragg & Fielding, 2005; Messiou, 2013), thus providing them with a pedagogical voice so that they can dialogue about their learning processes (Baroutsis et al. al., 2016; Nieto & Portela, 2008; Sandoval, 2011). Therefore, teachers are responsible for promoting the active involvement of students through activities, methodological strategies and concrete actions.

4.4. CLIMATE AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

In general, students value the importance of a good work environment to be able to participate actively, since they consider that the noise in the classroom makes it difficult for them to share individual opinions with others, as one student affirms: “ I would like to be able to participate more, but my class is too noisy and I can’t ”(Student group A). Thus, they emphasize the value of order to build a calm and positive climate. According to a teacher:

The students who have undergone noisy classes complain about this work environment because [...] they realize that it is not good for them. At first it is a lot of fun, but when it lasts over time they demand a change. (Teacher 2)

Although most teachers share the idea that classes should have a lot of control, they also recognize that maintaining order in the classroom not only facilitates group management, but also favors the subsequent implementation of activities that promote debate, dialogue and the exchange of opinions among students. In this sense, they try to use a calm, serene and close tone of voice. As one teacher affirms, “I

don’t like being yelled at, therefore I will not do it as long as I can avoid it” (Teacher 3).

Research has shown that a calm and well-being work environment naturally facilitates dialogue between students and towards the teacher and creates a scenario in which everyone feels more secure, confident and not pressured to participate. In fact, a cause-effect relationship has been evidenced between students’ tone of voice and the possibility of actively participating in learning activities. When the tone of voice is calm and pleasant, debate and exchange situations occur, while when there is shouting in the classroom, some students move to a secondary plane and find it more difficult to participate. Therefore, the climate and the work environment are two key elements when: a) promoting contexts of tranquility, security and trust; and b) ensure that everyone can express their opinions and points of view without external pressure or interference (Bragg & Fielding, 2005; Jurado, 2009).

4.5. THE RIGHT TO NON-PARTICIPATION

Finally, the research has also shown that participation is an individual option, so it is very important to guarantee spaces and moments that promote participation in equal conditions, respecting the cases that decide not to participate voluntarily.

A first factor related to the decision not to participate, as some students have stated, is because of embarrassment or shyness: “I find it difficult to explain things in front of the class because I get nervous and I go blank” (Student group A). These students are aware that these emotions often relegate them to the back-

ground. However, they also recognize that it is important to learn to combat them in order to minimize the effects they may cause and gain more confidence and security.

There are also cases that show that insecurity and nervousness due to the fear of making mistakes condition their ability to participate actively. Thus, it is they who demand scenarios of greater respect and fellowship. Linked to this, and according to a teacher:

[To participate] you have to be comfortable. If you go to a place where you are not comfortable you will not do anything, but if you are comfortable you may even participate. Sometimes the fact that a person participates three times can be a total and absolute success. (Teacher 4)

Teachers recognize that to minimize the effects that embarrassment and shyness or fear of error can cause, a possible strategy is to promote successful situations for all (Nieto & Portela, 2008; Rudduck & Flutter, 2007; Susinos & Rodríguez-Hoyos, 2011). That is, to know the strengths of each one in order to offer them opportunities where they can be successful when responding positively to a task, question or activity: "I ask a student when I know that he will give me a positive answer, I do not want to put him in a commitment "(Teacher 1). They also admit that participation is an individual option that entails, on the one hand, that all students have the freedom to decide whether to participate or not and, on the other, that these decisions are recognized and respected.

5. CONCLUSIONS: FROM PRESENTIAL TO VIRTUAL LEARNING

As has been argued throughout the article, and although the center is considered democratic and participatory, it still presents challenges to guarantee the active participation of the students. These elements can not only condition the classroom presential contexts, but also virtual learning environments. Reconsidering the learning conditions both in the presential and virtual modalities to achieve greater co-responsibility of the students affects not only the processes of knowledge construction, but also the construction of active, responsible and critical citizenship (Guilherme et al., 2018; Gur-Ze'ev, 2007; Lawy & Biesta, 2006). Therefore, is it possible to maintain the active participation of secondary school students in virtual learning contexts?

The analysis has shown the benefits of working in cooperative groups in terms of the students' ability to debate, dialogue and decision-making (Jurado, 2009). The fact of not having shared physical spaces can influence this capacity for interaction, so it is important to find new participatory channels where students can share the teaching and learning processes. According to Boada and Rómulo (2019, p. 418), "the interaction generated with the participation in forums and debates through digital platforms constitutes an ideal means for the conceptual construction of knowledge". The use of these virtual resources can stimulate collaboration, promote debates and promote shared learning contexts (García-Peñalvo, 2020; Ruiz-Bolívar & Dávila, 2016).

A second factor that affects student participation refers to the typology of educational proposals, so it is important to reconsider what activities are proposed in virtual models that act as facilitators of student learning (Rudduck & Flutter, 2007; González et al., 2017). In this sense, the adaptation of virtual tools to the objectives set to enhance the synchronous and asynchronous interaction of students, among themselves and with the teacher, is essential (Boada & Rómulo, 2019; Guilherme et al., 2018). In addition, the interest and desire that an activity arouses determines the subsequent involvement and participation of the students, so the teachers are in charge of promoting not only didactic but also motivating materials in virtual learning contexts (Sotelo et al., 2017). Either in presential or virtual models, the activities should facilitate the exchange and constant interaction of the students to favor contexts of greater commitment and collaboration in the knowledge construction processes (Susinos & Rodríguez Hoyos, 2011; González et al., 2017).

Given that participatory classroom contexts alter the traditional duties of students and teachers, the roles that each one plays are more accentuated in virtual contexts. Therefore, it should be based on a more horizontal and egalitarian relationship between adults and young people (Bragg & Fielding, 2005; Messiou, 2013; Nieto & Portela, 2008), since the teacher is no longer responsible for transmitting the curricular content. According to Boada and Rómulo (2019, p. 424), "keeping the virtual student active and interested in the novel aspects of the nucleus is one of the fundamental variables of achievement in virtual education". Therefore, the individual commitment of the students, the acceptance of their responsibilities and the leadership with their own learning is essential in learning in a virtual modality (García-Gutiérrez & Ruiz-Corbella, 2020).

Teachers are responsible for ensuring different virtual resources so that students can share the responsibility of educational action with the teacher, thus rethinking the pre-existing power relations and giving them a pedagogical voice (Baroutsis et al., 2016; Susinos & Ceballos, 2012; Sandoval, 2011). In addition, it is also their task to develop personalized materials to be able to attend, from a distance, to the individualities and needs of each student. However, this process will not be possible without generating pleasant and respectful spaces for interaction that promote the well-being of all students and avoid possible misinterpretations of the different contributions (Ruiz-Bolívar & Dávila, 2016). In this sense, the virtual world opens up new spaces for opinion, dialogue and negotiation, so the school and, specifically, teachers are responsible for guaranteeing these spaces from a critical and reflective perspective (Gur-Ze'ev, 2007) that enable the active participation of all students. Finally, "education in the virtual modality maintains the same guiding principles as in the presential modality: instruct, train and educate individuals in order to contribute to society" (Boada & Rómulo, 2019, p. 419). What determines the active participation of students in classroom contexts is not the modality itself, but precisely the presence of a solid pedagogical model (García-Gutiérrez & Ruiz-Corbella, 2020; García-Peñalvo, 2020) that guarantees the use of educational techniques, resources and proposals that ensure quality and place students at the center of their learning as long as they are allowed to be co-responsible of educational action.

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