

Reflective and Collaborative Professional Development Program in Secondary Education to Improve Student's Oral Language

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Abstract : In secondary education, integrating linguistic content and reflection on it is a crucial challenge that should be included in course plans to enhance students' oral communication competence. In secondary education classrooms, a continuum can be identified in relation to teaching methodologies: 1) the traditional teacher-dominated transmission approach, which is described as that in which teachers transmit content to students unidirectionally; 2) dialogical, bidirectional teaching approach that encourages students to adopt a critical vision of the information provided by the teacher or that is generated through students' discussion. In this context, the EVALOE-DSS (Assessment Scale of Oral Language Teaching in the School Context-Decision Support System) digital instrument has emerged to help teachers in transforming their classes into spaces for communication, dialogue, reflection, evaluation of the learning process, teaching linguistic contents, and to develop curricular competencies. The tool includes various resources, such as a tutorial with the objectives and an initial screen for teachers to describe the class to be evaluated. One of the main resources of the digital instrument consists of 30 items-actions with three qualitative response options (green, orange, and red face emoji) grouped in five dimensions. In the context of the participation of secondary education teachers in a professional development program using EVALOE-DSS, a digital tool resource aimed to generate more participatory, interactive, dialogic classes, the objectives of the study were: 1) understanding the changes in classrooms' dynamics and in the teachers' strategies during their participation in the professional developmental program; 2) analyzing the impact of these changes in students' oral language development according to their teachers; 3) Deeping on the impact of these changes in the students' assessment of the classes and the self-assessment of oral competence; 4) knowing teachers' assessment and reflections about their participation in the professional developmental program. Participants were ten teachers of different subjects and 250 students of secondary education (16-18 years) schools in Spain. The principal instrument used was the digital tool EVALOE-DSS. For 6 months, teachers used the digital tool to reflect on their classes, assess them (their actions and their students' actions), make decisions, and introduce changes in their classes to be more participatory, interactive, and reflective about linguistic contents. Other collecting data instruments and techniques used during the study were: 1) a questionnaire to assess students' oral language competence before and at the end of the study, 2) a questionnaire for students' assessment of the characteristics of classes, 3) teachers' meetings during the professional developmental program to reflect collaboratively on their experience, 4) questionnaire to assess teacher's experience during their participation in the professional developmental program, 5) focus group meetings between the teachers and two researchers at the end of the study. The results showed relevant changes in teaching strategies, in the dynamics of the classes, which were more interactive, participative, dialogic and self-managed by the students. Both teachers and students agree about the progressive classes' transformation into spaces for communication, discussion, and reflection on the language, its development, and its use as an essential instrument to develop curricular competencies.

Keywords : digital tool, individual and collaborative reflection, oral language competence, professional development program, secondary education

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