

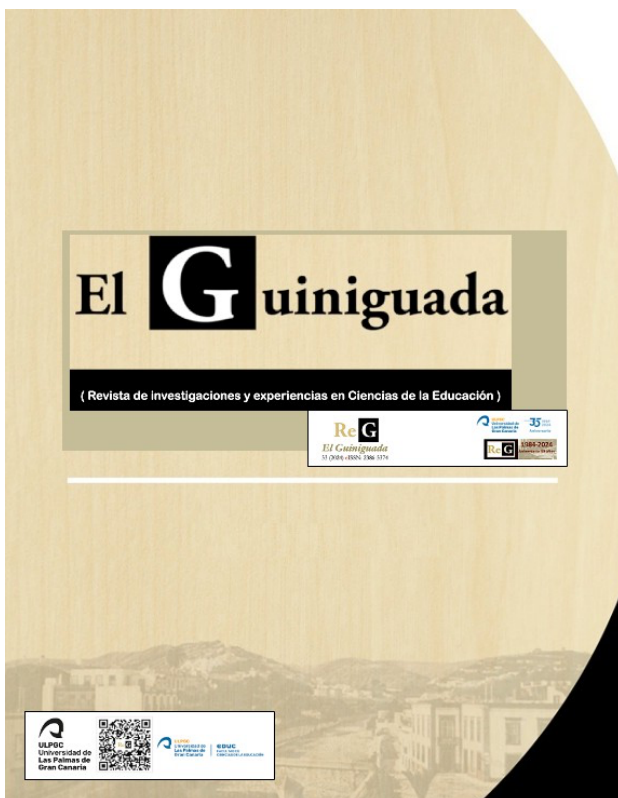
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Innovating and researching in language: transformations in initial teacher training Innovar e investigar en Lengua: transformaciones en la formación inicial docente

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**Innovating and researching in language:
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Innovar e investigar en Lengua:
transformaciones en la formación inicial docente

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ABSTRACT

The article presents a review of the concepts of "research" and "innovation" in the training plans and curricular designs referred to the initial training of secondary school teachers in the area related to the Didactics of Language. It involves a review of current practices and emphasizes the lack of connection between theory and practice, and research and innovation. Specifically, it is committed to a training model that combines reflection and educational practice in a bidirectional way.

KEYWORDS

INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING, DIDACTICS OF LANGUAGE, INNOVATION, RESEARCH

RESUMEN

El artículo presenta una revisión de los conceptos de “investigación” e “innovación” en los planes de formación y diseños curriculares referidos a la formación inicial del profesorado de Secundaria en el área relacionada con la Didáctica de la Lengua. Supone una revisión de la normativa legal en la que se enmarcan las prácticas formativas que se realizan y enfatiza la falta de conexión entre teoría y práctica, e investigación e innovación. Concretamente, se apuesta por un modelo formativo que combine de manera bidireccional la reflexión y la práctica educativa.

PALABRAS CLAVE

FORMACIÓN INICIAL DEL PROFESORADO, DIDÁCTICA DE LA LENGUA, INNOVACIÓN, INVESTIGACIÓN

INTRODUCTION

The teacher training model preceding the new Organic Law 6/2001 of 21 December 2001 on universities, which is expected to come into force in the second half of 2024, highlights the implicit and explicit conceptions of the relationship between theory and practice that make up professional training for teaching. Regarding theory, the model reinforces the knowledge of the bachelor's or bachelor's Degree of reference and provides didactic and pedagogical knowledge. Regarding practice, it is especially specific in the subjects with an applied orientation, such as the Practicum. The master's degree in Teacher Training for Secondary Education, Vocational Training and Language Teaching (MFPS), whose syllabus was verified by ANECA in June 2009, was introduced at the Complutense University in the academic year 2009-2010. This degree aims to provide initial teacher training that guarantees 'adequate training to meet the challenges of the education system and adapt teaching to new training needs' (LOE, 2006: 63). For this reason, it is the official qualification that accredits the pedagogical and didactic training required by law to teach in the courses of this section of the education system.

The Ministerial Order ECI/3858/2007 of 27 December 2007, which develops the corresponding degree, establishes the following modules in this degree: Generic Module, Specific Module, Practicum Module, and master's Thesis Module (TFM). This research is limited to the Specific Module, and more specifically, it is conducted in the subject related to innovation and research in Spanish Language and Literature.

The Specific Module, in the MFPS structure, consists of 30 ECTS credits (European Credit Transfer System, hereinafter, credits only) organised into two blocks: the first block corresponds to a 15-credit subject in complementary disciplinary training, which includes three subjects dedicated to deepening knowledge of the discipline: Spanish Language in ESO, Baccalaureate and Vocational Training, Spanish Literature in ESO, Baccalaureate and Vocational Training, and Communication Strategies and Creation of Texts: Literary and Non-Literary Texts. And the second block, with another subject of 15 credits aimed, on the one hand, at the teaching and learning processes of the disciplines of the speciality, with two subjects: Didactics of language and Didactics of literature; and, on the other hand, at teaching innovation and research, with the subject: Innovation and research in Spanish Language and Literature (LCL), in accordance with general competence number 3 and specific competences 24, 26 and 27 of the aforementioned degree. They are formulated as follows:

- CG.3. Searching for, obtaining, processing, and communicating information (oral, printed, audiovisual, digital, or multimedia), transforming it into knowledge and applying it in teaching and learning processes in the subjects of the specialisation studied.
- CE.24. Knowing and applying innovative teaching proposals in the field of specialisation.
- CE.26. Identifying problems related to the teaching and learning of the subjects of the specialisation and propose alternatives and solutions.
- CE.27. Knowing and applying basic methodologies and techniques of educational research and evaluation and be able to design and develop research, innovation, and evaluation projects.

Both the Practicum Module (12 credits) and the TFM (6 credits) are closely related to the Specific Module of the degree, as they provide the opportunity to conduct classroom experiences supervised by the centre's mentor and the university tutor. This is the academic scenario in which the innovation and research experience that aims to contribute to the initial training of secondary school teachers takes place.

CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE INITIAL TRAINING OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN SPAIN

In this section, the aim is to provide an overview of the regulations governing the initial training of secondary school teachers, from the creation of the Institutes of Education Sciences (ICE) to the current MFPS, and including the Certificate of Teaching Competence (CAP), issued at the ICE. The purpose of this itinerary is to analyse, in each curricular proposal, two fundamental aspects: firstly, the inclusion of theoretical and practical credits; secondly, the presence, whether implicit or explicit, of the central contents addressed in this work: research and educational innovation. The beginning of the accreditation system for secondary teacher training began with the creation of the ICEs in all Spanish universities (Decree 1678/1969 on the creation of the Institutes of Education Sciences). Consequently, Article 102 of the General Education Act 14/1970 states that the ICEs will be responsible for developing this training. Thus, among the requirements that must be met in order to teach, in addition to the Licenciado, Ingeniero or Arquitecto degree, it specifies the obligation to have adequate pedagogical training, which will consist of intensive courses - given in the Institutes of Education Sciences - and internships, which will be carried out at those levels and in those disciplines related to the speciality in which they are to teach. Subsequently, by means of the Order of 8 July 1971, it was enacted how this theoretical-practical training would be developed, in the so-called Pedagogical Aptitude Course (Curso de Aptitud Pedagógica, CAP):

-The first cycle will be of a theoretical nature and will consist of the study of the foundations and general principles of education necessary for teaching. Each ECI will programme this cycle within the area corresponding to the following themes:

- 1) Principles; objectives and problems of education in its psychological, sociological, and historical aspects.
- 2) Technology and systems of educational innovation.
- 3) Special didactics.

A balance shall be sought between general pedagogical training and the didactics of the disciplines concerned. This first cycle will have a minimum duration of 150 hours, the modalities of implementation being left to the discretion of each ICE.

-The second cycle of a practical nature, will consist of the candidates' teaching practice in the centres determined by each ICE, under the responsibility of the designated tutor teachers. Each student must conduct the teaching practice with two or three different tutors from the corresponding teaching area. The minimum time for this second cycle will also be one hundred and fifty hours. Each ECI shall designate the Tutors it deems appropriate and shall determine the systems of connection, control and coordination with the Educational Centres (p. 13170).

Each ICE shall designate the Tutor Teachers it deems appropriate and shall determine the systems of connection, control, and coordination with the Teaching Centres (p. 13170).

In this first specific legislation, educational innovation is contemplated in the first theoretical cycle, although in its concept restricted to technology, while the concept of research does not appear in the regulations. Later, by Royal Decree 1457/1991, the first Faculty of Education was created, with its State Teacher Training Centre, through the merger of three institutions:

- The Pedagogy Section of the Faculty of Philosophy and Educational Sciences or former School of Higher Teacher Training.
- The Pedagogy Section of the Faculty of Philosophy and Educational Sciences or former Escuela de Estudios Superiores del Magisterio.
- The University Schools of Teacher Training (E. U. Pablo Montesino or former Escuela Normal Central¹; E. U. María Díaz Jiménez or former Escuela Normal Central de Maestras).
- the Institute of Education Sciences (created in 1969).

Thus, the intention was to grant optional status to studies aimed at the initial training of teachers. However, these studies continued to lack the appropriate resources to give them the status of university training and, for their part, pedagogical studies continued to be taught, with the same separation, in initial teacher training (González Gallego, 2009).

It was not until Organic Law 1/1990, of 3 October, on the General Organization of the Education System (LOGSE), that the requirement to hold a professional degree in teaching specialization in order to teach was established, with the consequent regulation of the studies leading to the award of this degree (Royal Decree 1692/1995, of 20 October, which regulates the professional degree in teaching specialization). This Royal Decree specifies the creation of the Título Profesional de Especialización Didáctica (TED), as a requirement for teaching in Secondary Education. To obtain this qualification, it was necessary to obtain the equivalent CAP, now called Curso de Cualificación Pedagógica (CCP); however, the law did not specify that the course should be of university responsibility. Despite this, the need was introduced to link the teaching of the CCP to the University in order to 'ensure the permanent contact of initial teacher training with progress in the different fields and areas of scientific and technical knowledge, and guarantee its necessary articulation with the advances in psycho-pedagogical and didactic research' (p. 32569).

In Annex III of Royal Decree 1692/1995, the teaching load foreseen for these theoretical-practical courses can be analysed:

A. General compulsory subjects.

1. Design and development of the curriculum. School organization. 4 credits.
 - a) Curriculum development processes. Teaching methods, strategies and means. Strategies of curricular adaptation to different social and personal situations. Strategies in didactic innovation.
 - b) Structure and functions of educational organizations. The organization of centres within the framework of educational systems.
2. Developmental and educational psychology. 4 credits.

¹ The former Escuela Normal Central (Central Normal School) was created by Pablo Montesino in Madrid in 1839, and was modelled on the École Normale created in Paris in 1794

Contexts, mechanisms, aspects, and stages of development. Development of the different psychological processes. School learning and instruction. Contents and variables of school learning. The educational relationship.

3. Sociology of education. Theory and contemporary institutions of education. 4 credits.
 - a) Sociological analysis of the educational system. Sociology of educational organizations.
 - b) Explanation and understanding of the educational phenomenon. Theory of educational action. Theory of educational processes. Formal, non-formal and informal education systems.
4. Attention to diversity. Students with special educational needs. Tutoring and educational guidance. 4 credits.
 - a) Attention to diversity and curricular diversification. Attention to diversity in the configuration and specification of the curriculum. Diversity care pathways and measures.
 - b) Special educational needs and learning difficulties. Educational response to special educational needs.
 - c) Guidance in the educational system. The tutorial function as an element of the teaching function. Guidance and educational intervention. Guidance departments.

B. Specific compulsory subjects.

Didactics of the curricular area and, where appropriate, of the disciplines, subjects or modules corresponding to the speciality. 10 credits (p. 32574).

Once again, the concept of innovation only appears restricted to educational technology, this time in the theoretical subjects of school organization; while the concept of research was only shown in the need to grant an optional entity to studies that would guarantee up-to-date training, as mentioned above. As for the following laws, the LOCE (2002) established once again that, in order to teach Secondary Education, Baccalaureate, Vocational Training and special regime studies, it was compulsory to hold the TED, this time with the requirement that the Universities were the institutions responsible for teaching these courses. Later on, the LOE (2006) responded to the requirements of the European Higher Education Area that Spain, together with the rest of the EU countries, agreed to implement after the Bologna Declaration of 1999, with the enactment of a master's degree in Secondary Education Teaching.

This was specified in Royal Decree 1393/2007, Chapter IV of which established the development of official university Master's Degrees; so that, as stated at the beginning, it is Order ECI/3858/2007 which dictates the curriculum that is developed to obtain the official university degree to become a teacher of Compulsory Secondary Education and Baccalaureate, Vocational Training and Language Teaching. As can be seen in this curriculum, the presence of innovation - this time conceived in a broad sense - and research materialized within the Specific Module, in the complements for disciplinary training, in the subject of Teaching Innovation and Initiation to Educational Research, as well as in the Practicum. It is in the context of this subject that the experience of the present work takes place.

METHODOLOGY

Context

The subjects participating in the study are graduates in Philology, Communication and related degrees enrolled in the MFPS with the aim of training to become Secondary Education teachers. There are 40 students, 13 male and 37 female.

The predominant orientation in the degrees of origin provided by the candidates is language and literature studies with a descriptive and historicist approach. Therefore, the objective of the Master's Degree, based on the studies undertaken in the Bachelor's Degree, aims to train in the didactic aspects that seek to intervene in teaching and learning to improve classroom practices corresponding to linguistic and literary skills with the projection of training adolescents, in accordance with the blocks of content of the official curricula corresponding to the stages of Compulsory Secondary Education, Baccalaureate and Vocational Training. This implies starting from the sciences of language and communication, as a theoretical frame of reference, until reaching the classroom, where sufficient training must be achieved in order to attain the objectives of future students speaking more and better, reading with pleasure and writing appropriately and correctly texts which are informatively rich and textually interrelated. To this end, the concept of didactic transposition will be of significant help, as far as it proposes the transition that knowledge has to undergo from the theoretical world to become knowledge to be taught (Chevallard, 1997).

Objectives

This research pursues the following objectives:

1. To verify the acceptance of innovation and research in the initial training of Secondary School teachers belonging to the area of Spanish Language and Literature of the MFPS.
2. To reinforce and complete the professional training pathway of this degree, in which the Specific Practicum Module and the TFM are integrated with the training corresponding to the Degree or bachelor's degree.
3. To propose educational research, particularly the paradigm of action-research, as a resource for initial professional training.
4. To learn to design, in initial training, innovation and action-research projects.
5. To promote the dissemination and exchange of the results obtained from the projects developed.

Phases of the classroom intervention

This study was conducted with MFPS students in the speciality of Spanish Language and Literature, in the subject Innovation and Research in Spanish Language and Literature. This is an academic task of the subject, which has been set since the beginning of the academic year. This demand consisted of the evaluation of an innovation-research project by means of the survey Design of an innovation/research project around LCL for Secondary Education, Baccalaureate, or Vocational Training (Annex 1). The project was organized as follows:

- Submission of a foreseeable problems list related to language and literature teaching.
- Formation of small groups to execute the work (maximum of four students per group).
- Choice of topic of study. It was possible to include other topics not contained in the proposed list.
- Delivery of bibliography for the study of each topic, as well as bibliography related to research methodology.
- Establishment of deadlines for the presentation in class and delivery to the teacher of

products related to the progress of the study; namely:

- Pre-project of the chosen topic, consisting of a presentation of the title, justification, methodological option, expected results, and bibliographical references. Class discussion of each proposal.
 - Advance of the proposal. Oral presentation of the final project. Observations and conceptual, methodological, and didactic projection criticisms in Secondary classrooms.
 - Time to make the appropriate modifications, before submitting the work to the teacher for assessment.
 - Self-assessment of the work and the dynamics of the class and of the development of the work, including the contributions of personal and professional benefit that the work conducted entailed for them.
- The work was conducted during class time, as this was the best opportunity for the members of the group to meet each other. When necessary, they went to the libraries to look for documentation.
 - Between each presentation by the students, the teacher took the opportunity to clarify, insist and pass on information that he deemed necessary for the work to progress and be better founded.
 - Students were encouraged to disseminate the experiences they had worked on in the course through magazines of all kinds.

RESULTS

The results obtained in the survey are shown in Figure 1; they are ordered from the lowest to the highest score received. The names of the questions can be seen in Annex 1.

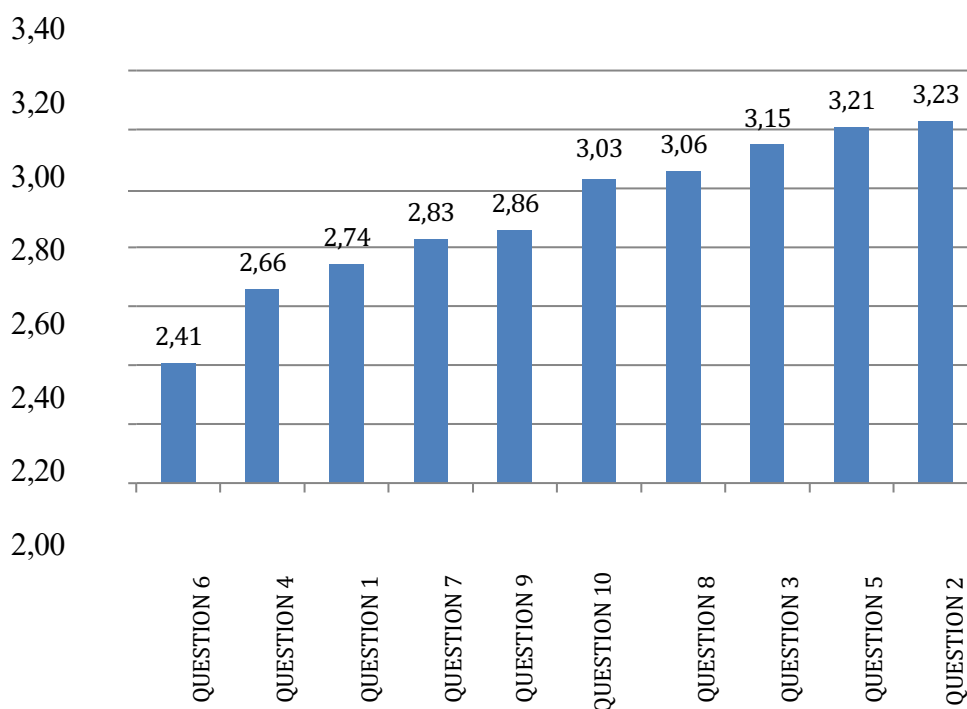


Figure 1. Students' ratings of the questions

As can be seen in Figure 1, question 6 was the lowest rated question, while question 2 was the highest rated. Questions 2, 5, 3 and 8 are above average with 11% of the total score.

Regarding question 2 on the importance of innovation in teacher training, there are students with different opinions:

- positive aspects: it is important for improving the teaching and learning process, social changes are rapid, and the methodology must adapt; it is also necessary for detecting and correcting deficiencies; and it is practical for preparing the end-of-Master's research project.
- negative aspects: in the training period one is not trained to innovate, innovation should be conducted in all subjects and the subject does not provide guidelines for innovation.

Question 3, on the other hand, questions the relationship between research and teacher education. The students made the following qualitative assessments:

- positive: it is important to discover problems and correct mistakes, also to improve teaching; it is relevant to put into practice the innovation project conducted, very necessary to never stop being 'updated' and to be original to capture the students' attention.
- negative: this master's degree is not for research, the subject does not teach research, the teachers use the research of others, but they are not dedicated to research and the project should have been done from the beginning of the course.

The questions obtaining 10% of the average are 10, 9 and 7. The questions scoring one point below the average were 1 and 4. Comments on question 1 on Designing a project were:

- positive: it is seen as an activity to learn the necessary procedures for conducting research, it serves as a guide for the TFM and it serves as a guide for planning research as future teachers.
- negative: they do not consider that research should be carried out in teaching and do not consider it useful to carry out a research project without being able to carry it out; lack of guidance from the teaching staff; lack of clarity in what was required of the project; it is a waste of time having to carry out the TFM afterwards; the formation of groups should be based on the interests of the chosen topic; it is difficult to coordinate with colleagues; and lack of time to carry it out.

Regarding question 4, which goes on to ask about their opinion of the Project Design, the students made the following evaluations:

- positive: it helps to become familiar with the research process; it is the first time that research has been carried out in this way; it is important to simulate the research design because the theoretical explanation alone would be insufficient; the parts of the work approach have been specified very clearly; the resulting draft of the research design is valued positively; the different phases of the project help to carry out the work; it is a good introduction to research; the phases for carrying out research are learnt and it also serves as an introduction to group work.
- negative: lack of freedom in the structure of the work; it should have been possible to carry out the complete research; lack of time to carry out the work properly, which should start from the beginning of the course; more sessions should be devoted to carrying out the work; lack of explanations on how to do it; the confusion on some points may be due to the change of teacher; it requires too much work for a subject of only 6 credits; it is too long and not very practical; the experimentation part and the carrying out of the two phases

would be necessary, as it is difficult and complicated.
Finally, the lowest rated question, although with 8%, is question 6.

DISCUSSION

The inclusion of a subject on innovation and research around Spanish Language and Literature, belonging to the Specific Module of the MFPS professional degree, offers expectations and reticence that are not inconsiderable, given the consideration of what teaching and learning represent in our context.

Expectations have to do with ‘new’ forms, supports and resources (innovation), as well as with the creation of evidence that can sustain such reformulations and changes in the treatment of learning and teaching (research). This is reflected in questions 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10, as far as they value interest, importance, viability in the Practicum and in subsequent teaching practice, as well as dissemination, design, results, and assessment.

The reluctance to professional training shown by students at the beginning of the course is based on the conceptual and methodological ‘clash’ they experience with the approaches of the training received in the bachelor’s degree. This clash is due to the transition from learning based on the description of the functioning of the language system or historicist analyses of language and literature to an approach which emphasises the application of this knowledge in professional contexts. This is justified by the fact that didactic approaches have as their object of study the learning and teaching of the knowledge that university students have acquired in the bachelor’s degree and which they have to transmit to adolescents in a way that favours their learning. This process mediates in the classroom by creating scaffolding that simplifies and makes learning more effective. These aspects are reflected in questions 11, 4 and 6, as they ask about the activity developed and the execution planned in the subject.

These interferences between reticence and expectations generally involve a path of conversion towards didactic approaches that require making explicit the complex phenomena that occur in the education of disciplines (e.g. the writing of texts) and internalizing the conviction that the contents acquired in the training of the corresponding degree have to be transposed didactically to a reality other than education (Chevallard, 1980).

It can be affirmed that, in general, a change of professional perspective is achieved in that teachers admit that they are not training philologists but individuals who must be able to speak more and better in public, read and write texts of different subjects competently, and know and enjoy literary texts. And all this, despite the circumstances of time and the fragmentation of subjects in the syllabus, which are not particularly favourable.

CONCLUSIONS

The results obtained confirm, despite initial resistance, the need for innovation and research in Spanish Language and Literature. This implies the convenience of favouring the detection of problems related to the teaching and learning of concepts, procedures, and assessment in the area, to seek solutions through innovation and research.

The need to design the initial training pathway (bachelor’s degree, Specific Module, Practicum, TFM) would give the MFPS degree a greater degree of coherence and professional acceptance.

In this training itinerary, the Practicum in secondary schools is of particular relevance. To this end, it would be desirable for the Administration (the main employer of teachers) to make a firm commitment to the loyalty of work experience centres, which would mean a closer and more productive relationship between university training centres and schools. This would undoubtedly lead to better initial and continuing teacher training.

Authors' contribution:

Conceptualization	Teodoro Álvarez Angulo
Formal analysis	M. Teresa Mateo-Girona
Methodology	M. Teresa Mateo-Girona
Supervision	Teodoro Álvarez Angulo
Drafting	Teodoro Álvarez Angulo, M. Teresa Mateo-Girona

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Annex

Survey on the Design of an innovation/research project around LCL for Secondary Education, Baccalaureate, or Vocational Training Innovation and Research in Spanish Language and Literature
Master's Degree in Secondary Teacher Education

1. What value do give to the Designing an innovation/research project activity in secondary teacher education?

A LOT QUITE A LOT A LITTLE NOT AT ALL
(Underline as appropriate). Please justify your answer

2. How much interest do you give to innovation in teacher education?

A LOT QUITE A LOT A LITTLE NOT AT ALL
(Underline as appropriate). Please justify your answer

3. What is your interest in educational research in teacher training?

A LOT QUITE A LOT A LITTLE NOT AT ALL
(Underline as appropriate). Please justify your answer

4. Do you consider the approach followed in the Design of a project to be adequate, in general terms, as a work to get you started in innovation and research?

A LOT QUITE A LOT A LITTLE NOT AT ALL
(Underline as appropriate). Please justify your answer

5. How important is team work to you?

A LOT QUITE A LOT A LITTLE NOT AT ALL
(Underline as appropriate). Please justify your answer

6. Do you consider the proposed timetable for each task in the development of the Project Design to be adequate?

A LOT QUITE A LOT A LITTLE NOT AT ALL
(Underline as appropriate). Please justify your answer

7. Do you consider that this activity, at the design stage, could be developed experimentally during the teaching practice?

A LOT QUITE A LOT A LITTLE NOT AT ALL
(Underline as appropriate). Please justify your answer

8. Do you consider it feasible that the design of the project could be the subject of the dis (whether it is the topic on which you will be working or not)?

A LOT QUITE A LOT A LITTLE NOT AT ALL
(Underline as appropriate). Please justify your answer

9. Do you think that the development of the design of this project could lead to further work (articles, DEA, etc.)?

A LOT QUITE A LOT A LITTLE NOT AT ALL
(Underline as appropriate). Please justify your answer

10. Do you think it would be of interest to the research and educational community to be able to disseminate the design and subsequent experimentation of the topic you are working on?

A LOT QUITE A LOT A LITTLE NOT AT ALL
(Underline as appropriate). Please justify your answer