Adaptation process of Communication studies to EHEA. The case of Aragón, a pioneering region

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Abstract: The Autonomous Region of Aragón (Spain) is one of the pioneers in its full adaptation to the parameters and demands established by the European Higher Education Area [1]. The Aragonese universities with on-site classes began their study plans in their respective Communication degree programmes under the philosophy known as the "Bologna model" in the academic year of 2008-2009. The aim of this article is to analyze the initiation process these studies have gone through in both the public university (Universidad de Zaragoza, UNIZAR) as well as in the private university (Universidad San Jorge, USJ). The main objective of this work is to study how new Communication study plans created in the common European framework began to be implemented and to evaluate the new forms of learning that this model of university teaching has created. Therefore, we will conclude with the results that have been obtained to date with the application of active methods of learning aimed at acquiring professional skills based on concepts such as flexible and lifelong learning (LLL). To sum up, the aim is to identify the keys of paradigm change brought on by Bologna in Communication studies and how and with what concrete results the innovations that have been introduced in content and teaching methodology in degree programmes can be interpreted based on the experience in Aragón.

Keywords: EHEA; educational model; communication studies; undergraduate degree; programmes; Aragón.

Summary: 1. Introduction: Communication studies in Spain and in Aragón, a short path. 2. Communication Studies at Universidad San Jorge: three degree programmes. 3. The Journalism Degree Programme at the Universidad de Zaragoza (UNIZAR): 100% EHEA from day one. 4. Discussion and conclusions. 5. Bibliography. 6. Notes.

Translated by **Joseph McMahon**, translator and professor of the Press Writing. Universidad San Jorge

1. Introduction: Communication studies in Spain and in Aragón, a short path

The history of communication studies begins in our country in 1971 by means of the creation of two large schools in the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and in the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona. Although, previously [2], there were studies in the Escuelas del Debate (1926), Escuela Oficial de Periodismo de Madrid (1941), Escuela de Barcelona (1952), the Instituto de Periodismo del Estudio General de Navarra (1958), the Escuela de Periodismo de la Conferencia Episcopal de la Iglesia in Barcelona y Valencia (1960), Escuela de Periodismo de la Universidad de La Laguna [3] (1964), it was not until the seventies when the profession acquired a university dimension. Also in 1971 the Facultad de Ciencias de de la Información of the Universidad de Navarra was officially acknowledged.

From the beginning academic training of journalists generated a healthy debate. The "third way" for professionals that had not studied the degree and worked as journalists caused controversy in media outlets in the 80s and 90s. Nevertheless, having the degree is now seen as an identifying characteristic and is acknowledged by the Federación de Asociaciones de Periodistas de España.

Communication studies have gone through many stages according to the different conception considered in each one, thus affecting the respective curricula. In 1991, as a result of Public Acts 1386, 1427 and 1428, the old official joint title in Information Sciences was substituted by three different and autonomous degrees: Journalism, Advertising & Public Relations and Audiovisual Communication. From the beginning and individually, Communication studies have raised great interest, with a high demand among university students.

According to the information in the White Paper on Communication, in 2005, eleven autonomous regions offered communication studies, which were distributed: Catalonia (11), Madrid (8), Valencia (5), Castilla-León (5), Galicia (3), Andalucía (2), Murcia (2), Basque Country (1), Navarra (1), Extremadura (1) and Canary Islands (1).

Aragón, together with Asturias, Baleares, Cantabria, Castilla-La Mancha and La Rioja, were on the list of regions without a degree in communication. Nevertheless, the aforementioned document stated establishing regional television stations in said regions would mean the need for training professionals and, thus, the creation of communication studies.

In the specific case of the region we will refer to, Aragón, although they did not arise as a direct consequence of the start of broadcasting by Aragonese Radio and Television (Corporación Aragonesa de Radio y Televisión, CARTV), it is true that it practically coincided with the founding of Communication studies at the Universidad San Jorge, in September 2005 (the 2005-2006 academic year), with the first season of broadcasting by the regional TV and radio.

The *Aragonese university system* is part of the Spanish university system and is currently regulated by the Public Act 5/2005, of 14 June, Administration of the University System of Aragón, enacted by the Government of Aragón (BOA of 24 June, 2005).

This legal document establishes that the university system of Aragón is made up by the legally created or acknowledged universities. Public and private. It also states that centres associated to the National University of Distance Learning will be related to the university system of Aragón, by means of agreements or accords that are signed by the Administration of the Autonomous Region of Aragón with the University. Nevertheless, in this analysis we will only consider Universities that have on-site classes and are located in the specific framework of Aragón.

In regards to principles and objectives that characterize the university system in Aragón, the regulations include:

a) Respect for university autonomy, as a fundamental right of universities which is acknowledged in the Spanish Constitution.

b) Favouring compliance with citizens' right to university education. Based on that right and by means of appropriate assistance access will be made possible for all citizens who wish to access university education, provided they have appropriate professional and technical qualifications in accordance with current regulations.

c) Obtaining the principle of permanent education or learning all of one's life, thus encouraging universities to organize lifelong learning for all citizens who wish to study, within the framework of budget possibilities.

d) Considering universities as a fundamental element for the territory and the institutions in order to service society and improve cultural, social and economic conditions, taking into consideration the principle of sustainability.

e) The search for quality and excellence in teaching, in research and management, with the application of evaluation systems and methods as well as certification based on criteria and methodologies which are internationally comparable.

f) Promoting education for students, and, in general, for the university community in democratic values, thus encouraging principles of solidarity, respect for the environment and education for peace as an integral part of the global process of learning and training.

g) Inciting coordination activities and efforts with appropriate agencies and departments to obtain the European Higher Education Area and the appropriate presence in it of university education in Aragón.

h) Promoting scientific research, technological development and innovation.

i) Conception of the university as a space for social commitment and cooperation with socially developing countries.

As can be observed, the Public Act 5/2005 of Administration of the University System in Aragón is modern in its intentions and in some sections it directly integrates the parameters established in the Bologna Declaration (1999). After analyzing the objectives of the articles, we can highlight in section c), the aim of the "principle of permanent education or lifelong learning". In e), "the application of evaluation methods and systems as well as certification based on criteria and methods which are internationally comparable" is included. And in section g) interest is shown for "obtaining the European Higher Education Area…" In this way the aim of convergence and comparable quality methods whose purpose is to contribute to lifelong learning (LLL) [4] is expressly referred to.

The fact that Aragón is one of the last regions to include Communication degrees in its universities does not mean that it has been left behind, but rather the opposite. In the Universidad San Jorge, in the 2008-2009 academic year, the first group of Journalism and Advertising and Public Relations students graduated. And since that academic year it has completely adapted to the European Higher Education Area, although the assignment of roles of lecturers/students was already a reality since the beginning of this university. Besides the degree programmes of Journalism and Advertising & Public Relations, in September 2008 the degree programme of Audiovisual Communication began. To that effect, the private university currently offers three branches in Communication Science.

The Communication programme of the Universidad de Zaragoza, a public university, also began in 2008-2009, with the degree programme in Journalism. In this framework there had not been any precedents in Communication degree programmes. Therefore the initial model of the public university began with all of the dimensions of a curriculum in accordance with the EHEA. The curriculum did not have to be modified because it was fully integrated from day one.

The trajectory of Communication studies is already a reality in the Region of Aragón and is one of the few fully integrated in the Bologna model.

Meanwhile, most of the Spanish universities are, according to Sánchez Pozo (2008: 43), "below the European average, in the following aspects:

- Teaching based on projects, on problem solving.
- Learning periods abroad.
- Independent learning in order to stimulate the learning capacity.
- Emphasis on social skills in order to stimulate ability to work in teams.
- Directly gaining work experience. As before, this capacity requires a very personalized monitoring".

In reference to all of them, as we will see, the Communication degree programmes in Aragonese universities are perfectly integrated.

2. Communication studies in the Universidad SAN Jorge: three degree programmes
2.2.1. Journalism, Advertising & Public Relations and Audiovisual Communication Curricula at USJ

The Universidad San Jorge is the first private university in Aragón and was founded in 2005 [5], the same year the Government of Aragón approved its establishment. Its School of Communication started up in the 2005-2006 academic year with two degree programmes; Journalism and Advertising & Public Relations. Although they were not completely adapted to the study structure specified by the new European framework of Higher Education, they did share one of its basic principles: do a better job of preparing graduates for a competitive workplace without borders. Since the beginning USJ was committed to a new model of university teaching that adequately met the real needs of today's society, in which the lecturer/student roles have substantially changed as well as the learning methodology thus benefiting academic excellence and quality, pillars of the university system enacted by Bologna.

In 2008-2009, the current Journalism, Advertising & Public Relations and Audiovisual Communication course outlines were implanted and are totally adapted to the European Higher Education Area, which in the case of the Universidad San Jorge only impacted on study content.

Table 1: Journalism Degree Programme Curriculum Structure of the Universidad San Jorge (USJ)

Type of subject	No. of ECTS credits
Basic education	60
Core	138
Electives	24
Work experience	6
Final project	12
Total:	240

Source: Universidad San Jorge

Table 2: Audiovisual Communication and Advertising & Public Relations Degree Programme Curriculum Structure (USJ)

Type of subject	No. of ECTS credits
Basic education	60
Core	138
Electives	24
Work experience	9
Final project	9
Total:	240

Source: Universidad San Jorge

The premise established by the Bologna educational model, in which it is fundamental for students to learn by using tools that allow them to gain knowledge, has been followed to develop and design these new curricula. The aim is to make learning significant, in other words, to provide the student with professional skills and to teach them how to learn.

Two new concepts are incorporated in teaching professional skills in this new educational culture: flexible learning and lifelong learning (LLL). It is an approach demanded by the Knowledge Society, in which a continuous updating of learning is required to be able to adapt to rapid changes and transformations.

It is not only about teaching theoretical knowledge, but about students learning skills, competences and gaining knowledge required for permanent lifelong self-learning. Students must learn how to learn and how to deal with information (search, select, prepare and share in a useful way). They must also become familiar with other languages and new technologies, so these tools can help them solve problems at work as well as learning to work in teams, to

lead and to take on responsibility.

Professional orientation of university studies is one of the main advantages of the EHEA. As Aguilera Jiménez and Gómez del Castillo (2004) state: "that old dilemma in education about educating people vs. training technical professionals (heads full of information versus well-structured heads) is disappearing. As information gains importance in productive, recreational and citizen processes, the characteristics of educational systems must develop in students to optimize personal development which more and more coincides with required professional characteristics".

It is necessary to use active and varied teaching techniques to achieve significant learning. By applying learning methods such as workshops, practical seminars, case studies, role playing, cooperative learning or projects students learn how to learn. Moreover professional skills are obtained by using technologies in the development of the university educational project (the use of tablet PCs, wifi, Internet, digital learning platforms and other multimedia educational tools), which are characteristic strategic elements of the Universidad San Jorge in the European Market.

In 2005 San Jorge became the first European university with full integration of the digital blackboard in its classrooms. Aragón, pioneer in applying new technologies in primary and secondary classrooms, was also a reference at the university level.

The digital blackboard increases and diversifies methodological options. Tablet pcs allow for integrating different learning methods, make recreating professional settings more feasible and can create workshop simulations (newsrooms, advertising agencies or radio and TV production) in order to help develop work competences. Moreover, they help set up group work experiences and cooperative education with very positive results that also help encourage research methodologies.

Digital blackboards likewise make it possible to give presentations and to show work done by students or lecturers.

Permanent and simultaneous connection allow for accessing documentation centres, current events through news agency webs, online newspapers, radio stations and Internet TV. That is why tablet pcs are an important tool for lecturer teaching and student learning processes.

In this sense, Esteve (2009: 65) points out that: "the Spanish university, situated in a process of change with the adaptation of EHEA, must continue advancing in the renewal of its educational methodologies, and definitively in its process of change of the educational paradigm. The IT boom and the revolution of social tools, to some extent, are reconfiguring personal environments of learning of current students and generating new horizons for the development of new competences of the future graduates. These new technologies open the door to a new model of university; a new university that endorses participation, initiative, critical sprit and in short, learning 2.0.".

It is necessary to take into account three fundamental aspects of the didactic transformation: applied methodology, the tutorial activity and individual work by the student, because they are aimed at the students obtaining professional competences. "The student becomes the protagonist in this learning process connection, which is now almost a cliché, but without underestimating the work of the lecturer, who takes on more of a commitment as a guide who coordinates the process of obtaining knowledge, in generic terms, by the student" (Marta, Sierra and Cabezuelo, 2009).

Students must understand that university is not only hours of class but rather a place where one learns how to learn and that means more effort on their part: a proactive, participative attitude with constant work and lifelong learning,... The tutoring sessions play a new and important role. They are sessions for the lecturer to accompany the students, give them advice and offer them professional counselling during their educational experience, which requires greater coordination in the subjects and for the lecturers [6].

Each degree programme's curriculum was designed taking into consideration all of the details of each of the disciplines, which is why each one has its own structure. The common elements between them are the module of work experience and the final project. The rest of the modules vary in each degree programme. There are two or there names that coincide in each of the three degree programmes, those that make up the transversal competences in Communication, such as "Language and media", "Visual technology, design and culture" or "Ethics, law and responsibility", although they do not include the same subjects or approaches. Unlike Audiovisual Communication or Journalism which include three specialization options for students to choose from ("Expert in TV", "Radio", "Film" in Audiovisual Communication and profile in "Multimedia Journalism", in Institutional Communication, and in "Digital content management and editing", in Journalism), the Advertising & Public Relations degree programme has only two: the options of "Promotional strategies" or "Corporate and Institutional Communication". The number of modules in each one of the degree programmes also varies: 9 in Audiovisual Communication and 10 in Journalism and Advertising and Public Relations.

Subject	Class hours	Independent work hours	ECTS credits
First course			
Contemporary artistic expression: photography, film and fashion	36	39	3
Writing I	72	78	6
Universal history	72	78	6
Theory of communication and information	72	78	6
General English	72	78	6

Spanish language	144	156	12
Introduction to legal science	36	39	3
History of social communication	72	78	6
Radio theory and technique	72	78	6
History of Spain	72	78	6
			60
Second course			
Sociology	-	-	6
Applied graphic design I: development of theory and practice in the press	-	-	6
Oral expression techniques and interpersonal communication	-	-	6
Informative documentation	-	-	6
Press Writing and Communication I	-	-	6
Writing II	-	-	6
Introduction to economy	-	-	6
Literature and text analysis	-	-	6
Spanish political system	-	-	6
Television theory and technique	-	-	6
			60
Third course			
Applied graphic design II: project methodology in mass-media	-	-	6
Photographic technique and photojournalism	-	-	6
History of Spanish journalism	-	-	6
Communication business	-	-	6
Press Writing and Communication II	-	-	6
Optional itinerary	-	-	12
Information law	-	-	6
Cultural and social journalism	-	-	6
Economic journalism	-	-	6
			60
Fourth course			
Ethics and deontology in journalism	-	-	6
International relations: international law and diplomacy	-	-	6
Social research, techniques and methods	-	-	6
Civic Humanism	-	-	6
Optional itinerary	-	-	12
Political journalism	-	-	6
Work placement	-	-	6
Applied final project	-	-	12
			60
TOTAL			**240**

Table 4: The USJ Audiovisual Communication Degree Programme Curriculum

Subjects	Class hours	Independent work hours	ECTS credits
First course			
Theory and structure of communication and information	72	78	6
Modern Language I	72	78	6
Spanish Language	144	156	12
Fundamentals of written information and communication	72	78	6
Contemporary universal history	72	78	6
Audiovisual language	72	78	6
Digital editing	72	78	6
Introduction to legal science	72	78	6
History of audiovisual media	72	78	6
			60
Second course			
Modern language II	-	-	6
Journalistic genres	-	-	6
Applied graphic design	-	-	6
Introduction to economy	-	-	6

Fundamentals of marketing	-	-	6
Contemporary artistic expression I	-	-	6
Technology and audiovisual media	-	-	6
Sociology of communication	-	-	6
Oral expression techniques and Interpersonal communication	-	-	6
Introduction to advertising	-	-	6
			60
Third course			
Audiovisual information	-	-	6
Audiovisual production	-	-	6
Image ethics and deontology	-	-	6
Audiovisual production and financing	-	-	6
Management of audiovisual companies	-	-	6
Optional itinerary	-	-	24
			60
Fourth course			
Audiovisual documentation	-	-	6
Social research methods and techniques	-	-	6
Information and telecommunication law	-	-	6
In-company work placement	-	-	9
Applied final project or research	-	-	9
Literature and audiovisual media	-	-	6
Civic humanism	-	-	6
International relations, international law and diplomacy	-	-	6
Corporate image and identity	-	-	6
*The student chooses one of three modules			60
TOTAL			240

Table 5: The USJ Advertising Degree Programme Curriculum

Subjects	Class hours	Independent work hours	ECTS credits
First course			
Theory and structure of communication and information	72	78	6
Introduction to advertising	72	78	6
Fundamentals of written information and communication	72	78	6
Modern language	72	78	6
Spanish language	72	78	6
Advertising documentation	72	78	6
Introduction to legal science	72	78	6
Universal contemporary history	72	78	6
Audiovisual language	72	78	6
Fundamentals of Marketing	72	78	6
			60
Second course			
Modern language II	-	-	6
Introduction to economy	-	-	6
Writing	-	-	6
Applied graphic design	-	-	6
Public Relations theory and technique.	-	-	6
Contemporary artistic expressions	-	-	6
Planning and advertising media	-	-	6
Sociology of advertising and consumption	-	-	6
Operative and strategic marketing	-	-	6
Protocol	-	-	6
			60
Third course			
Ethics and deontology in	-	-	6

advertising and public relations			
Corporate image and identity	-	-	6
Creative advertising workshop	-	-	6
Management of a communications company.	-	-	6
Planning and management of a public relations company	-	-	6
Market research and statistics	-	-	6
Optional itinerary	-	-	24
			60
Fourth course			
Methods and techniques of social research	-		6
Advertising and Public Relations Law	-	-	6
Responsible management skills	-	-	6
In-company work placement	-	-	9
Final applied or research project	-	-	9
International relations, international law and diplomacy	-	-	6
Civic humanism	-	-	6
Applied creative strategies	-	-	6
Social and political marketing	-	-	3
Internet and guerrilla marketing	-	-	3
			60
TOTAL			**240**

2.2. Professional Profiles and competences
2.2.1. Journalism Degree

All Journalism students must choose the specialization profile that best matches their academic and professional interests. These profiles include three fields and meet the current needs of the information market:

· Multimedia journalist profile.
· Institutional communication profile.
· Digital Content editing and management profile.

The profile in multimedia journalism is in line with the White Paper (2005) recommendations for Communication degree programmes, to train journalists with a professional profile that "answers market demands better, as well as the needs and concerns of citizens".

That is the reason why this first itinerary focuses on training professionals with an informative profile, an informative journalist capable of adapting contents to any media format (press, radio, television, Internet and new media formats). It is a new profile in which the versatility of future journalists is the characteristic that allows them to reach new types of audiences via more appropriate information channels. In this way different media outlets' demand would be met for journalists with a traditional profile but distinct at the same time; reporters whose job it is to search for and write news in any type of format.

The profile in institutional communication prepares students to be capable of coordinating and doing information related jobs in any type of organization. This profile provides future journalists the skills they need to look for, select and prioritize any type of information that public or private organizations may need for their target audiences. They will also know how to process that information and get it to their destination via the most appropriate channels.

There are more and more companies and public or private institutions that value communication with their customers and the general public and therefore are starting to create press offices and communication departments. Thus the growing demand for qualified professionals who specialize in a type of work that is very different from traditional media and what is taught in journalism studies; a type of professional with an institutional communication profile.

The appearance, popular acceptance and consolidation of the digital media phenomena has generated new media outlets and ways to inform the general public and requires specific training, thus the third profile in digital content editing and management.

Management of journalistic contents for these new outlets, eminently digital, requires a balanced education in traditional journalistic tools such collecting information, managing it and writing (humanistic education, knowledge of the environment, using sources, command of one's own language and communication skills as well as written and oral expression), plus acquiring more technical skills which allow for adapting news content to different digital outlets.

Technology has become a determining factor in the design, structure and organization of information in new media and therefore the journalist with this profile must learn how to combine both capacities to create a new informative product. In this new product with specific characteristics, differentiated from the traditional information outlets, the quality of the content and technological possibilities must work tightly together without either one harming the other.

A series of disciplinary, professional and academic competences, together with the knowledge of ethics and professional deontology of journalism have specific weight in the course outline, which are of utmost importance for the education of all journalists, are transversal in the three profiles.

Firstly, command of the Spanish language is a basic tool, the main pillar and how journalists express themselves in all types of media, content distribution in any outlet or message sending for any public or private organization.

Secondly, the capacity and skill for journalists to express themselves fluently and efficiently, which builds on prior knowledge. With these two skills journalists are equipped with "anatomical" keys of linguistics, spelling and written and oral expression which are essential to preparing any type of news piece.

Thirdly, and based on the two prior skills, is transversal training for all profiles: the ability to write information in the different journalistic styles (news, features, reports, articles and opinion columns, interviews…) and the capacity to write about most important subject areas in journalism: politics, economy, society and culture.

In regards to the degree programme's objectives, the main challenge is to provide students with a high level of training in critical analysis of communication phenomena in society today, such as coming up with ideas, creation and production of journalistic products. Therefore journalism graduates must acquire a series of knowledge and:

· Be able to express themselves clearly and coherently, orally and in writing in Spanish and in English.
· Command techniques such as searching for, identifying, selecting and collecting information. They must also be familiar with methods to critically examine any kind of source, document or fact with the aim of properly handling them and transforming them into information of interest through specific informative-communicative language for each case.
· Have expressive capacity, language skills and communication processes for all communication and information outlets. Graduates will also possess technological (computer and informative) knowledge that allows them to produce journalistic products in any outlet or system.
· Be aware of professional ethics and civil commitment by means of rules and regulations that govern this field. Moreover successful graduates will know the limits of freedom of spech as well as the social responsibility that all information professionals must possess, thus promoting equality for people and respect for international human rights.
· Be proficient in business management, individual work, freelancing, organization and production of informative-communicative projects.
· Work with projects, professional experiments and innovation together with methodological introduction and applied analysis of initiation in research in the informative-communicative field.

2.2.2. Degree in Audiovisual Communication

Students in the Audiovisual Communication degree can study one of these three options:

- Radio profile
- TV profile
- Cinema profile

Audiovisual Communication studies and their profiles are directly related to the political and institutional efforts of the Autonomous Region of Aragón to implant regional television and radio, a reality which came true in 2005. On one hand the institutions want to support the growth and strength of regional audiovisual media and on the other hand, to cover educational needs that appear in the new audiovisual market.

In any case, TV and film production companies have increased in size and numbers and the film market has become one of the main international industries. It is one of the audiovisual sectors that is experience growing demand. Therefore it is necessary to design an educational profile in TV and film, but not only from a technical point of view, like that taught in Spanish and other European film schools, but rather intellectual education.

The world of TV and film needs professionals who ask why about what they are doing, who think about the final result of their products and in how the tell the best story with visual literacy and in how their decisions can affect viewers.

The aim of the Audiovisual Communication degree programme is to train professionals capable of working on the creation of formats and contents as well as directing and producing programs, postproduction, programming and audiovisual management for radio, TV and film.

Other objectives:

· To stimulate creativity in students to develop projects and/or solve professional problems in an original and innovative way.
· To educate students in ethical values and to be responsible in carrying out their profession.
· To train students in the processes and techniques of audiovisual communication.
· To include in their studies specific audiovisual communication knowledge: legal, economic, sociologic and humanistic

that provide the student with solid interdisciplinary training.
· To guarantee practical experience in workshops, seminars, laboratories, filming studies and professional markets.
· To encourage an inclination to innovate in different media formats and digital audiovisual productions.
· To favour the knowledge of other languages so they can develop international audiovisual projects.
· To develop knowledge and use of information technologies and communication.

2.2.3. Advertising & Public Relations degree programme

The Advertising & Public Relations degree programme has two course pathways:

-Promotional strategies
-Corporate and institutional communication.

The main challenge of the Advertising & Public Relations degree programme is to train professional capable of dealing with different facets of Advertising & Public Relations: advertising creation and production, research, planning, account management, corporate image and communication, advertising phenomena analysis. All of which is complemented with training that will allow students to interpret society and corporate norms, their social, political and economic setting and internal workings. Other objectives of the degree programme are:

· To stimulate creativity of students to develop projects and/or solve professional problems creatively and innovatively.
· To educate students in ethic values and to encourage them to be responsible in their profession.
· To train students in processes and techniques of Advertising & Public Relations
· To incorporate legal, economic, sociological and humanistic knowledge in their specific studies to provide the student with a strong interdisciplinary background.
· To provide students with a wide range of methodologies and technical skills that are required to solve problems in Advertising & Public Relations.

2.2.4. Research project: Evaluation results of learning methods

In the 2008-2009 academic year, we researched [7] students' evaluation of different learning methods with a survey of 120 third and fourth-year Journalism and Public Relations students.

In the analysis (see Table 6), we can see that tutoring is the most preferred method by the students with an 8.1 ranking. Directly behind are active techniques of learning such as: case studies (7.2) and problem solving (7.1).

The traditional methods of master class and written tests are the least preferred methods with rankings of 6.2 and 6.3, respectively.

Table 6: Evaluation of learning methods
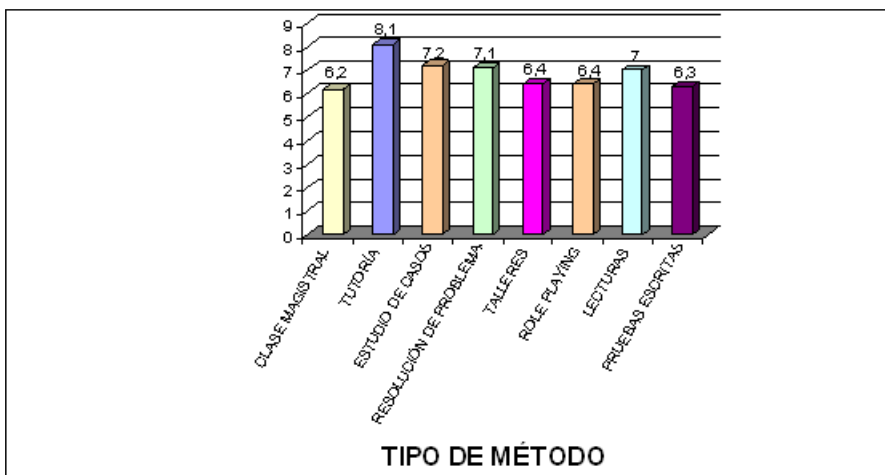
Source: self made

The average score was 6.8. As mentioned previously the active methods were ranked much higher and the classic techniques of teaching and evaluating, based more on the lecturer's role than the student's, scored much lower. Thus we can see how students have adapted well to the new forms of learning in which they are the central focus of the skill acquisition process.

In regards to the students' final project evaluations we can highlight that most of the professional tutors where the work experience took place (media outlets, advertising agencies, communication offices, consulting firms, etc.) were satisfied with students' performance. In some cases they ratify the interesting method used in preparing the students for their professions and they find them to be very well prepared to carry out different professional competences.

Tutors highlighted in the students' work experience reports their team work capacity, ability to plan and manage time and resources, contribution of innovative ideas and initiatives, being responsible and other skills. In most cases they assessed positively the correspondence between knowledge of the students doing work experience with how they carried out professional tasks.

The competences with the highest scores are based on learning methods in the collaborative learning that prepare students to work in teams; learning based on problem solving which is supported by knowing how to contribute ideas and take initiative; learning based on projects which can be seen in students' capacity to know how to plan and manage time and resources, as well as other practical professional aspects.

The importance of work experience is one of the strong points of the EHEA. This aspect is also sustained in other research. For example in one study carried out in the Universidad Miguel de Cervantes, relating to that university's internal image (Herranz, Tapia and Vicente, 2009), it has been demonstrated that work experience and reduced groups in the classroom and commitment to students, are the highest valued, by both lecturers and students.

3. The Journalism Degree Programme in the Universidad de Zaragoza (UNIZAR): 100% EHEA from day one3.1. UNIZAR Journalism Curriculum

The current journalism degree curriculum was approved by the Universidad de Zaragoza, on February 10, 2009 and published in the Official Bulletin of Aragón (BOA) on March 4, 2009. The degree programme, which belongs to the Legal and Social Science Department, is a degree that began in the 2008-2009 academic year and is fully adapted to the European Higher Education Area.

Table 7: UNIZAR Journalism Degree Programme Structure

Type of subject	No. of ECTS credits
Basic education	60
Core	150
Electives	24
Work experience	6
Final project	240

Source: UNIZAR (http://fyl.unizar.es/documents/gradoenperiodismocorregido_000.pdf)

The main criteria in planning the curriculum is supported by a learning methodology based on projects. This means that each semester has a central element that is a project or workshop in a specific outlet or area. These projects are the base for coordinating subjects aimed at learning and interpreting reality and professional context, with specialized tools and processes (Cabrera, Agustín and Ubieto, 2009).

Modules making up the curriculum are:

1. Analysis and interpretation of reality. Different interdisciplinary bases that allow for interpreting reality.

2. Concepts and conceptual bases of journalism. This module includes theoretical fundamentals and different contexts in which the future journalist will develop professionally.

3. Professional fundamentals and procedures in the press.

4. Professional fundamentals and procedures of TV.

5. Professional fundamentals and procedures of radio.

6. Professional fundamentals and procedures in digital journalism.

7. Professional fundamentals and procedures in corporate identity and communication.

8. Final project

Table 8: UNIZAR Journalism Degree Curriculum

Curso	Cuatrimestre	Código	ASIGNATURA	Carácter	ECTS	Curso	Cuatrimestre	Código	ASIGNATURA	Carácter	ECTS
1	1	25300	Lengua española	Fb	6	1	2	25305	Historia del mundo actual	Fb	6
1	1	25301	Documentación informativa	Ob	6	1	2	25306	Instituciones políticas y administrativas contemporáneas	Fb	6
1	1	25302	Sociología del mundo actual	Fb	6	1	2	25307	Relaciones internacionales	Fb	6
1	1	25303	Derecho y deontología de la información (parte I): Derecho	Ob	3	1	2	25308	Derecho y deontología de la información (parte I): Deontología	Ob	3
1	1	25304	Géneros y redacción periodística I	Ob	9	1	2	25309	Géneros y redacción periodística II	Ob	9
2	1	25357 25358 25359 25360	Lengua moderna I (a elegir entre): · Lengua moderna I (alemán) · Lengua moderna I (francés) · Lengua moderna I (inglés) · Lengua moderna I (italiano)	Fb	6	2	2	25315 25316 25317 25318 25319	Bases culturales de la comunicación: a elegir entre: · Corrientes artísticas contemporáneas · Corrientes literarias contemporáneas · Ciencia y tecnología actuales · Historia del cine y otros medios audiovisuales · Geografía y medio-ambiente	Ob	6
2	1	25311	Fundamentos de economía	Fb	6	2	2	25320	Pragmática y teoría de la argumentación	Fb	6
2	1	25312	Estructura de la comunicación	Fb	6	2	2	25321	La empresa de comunicación	Fb	6
2	1	25313	Géneros informativos en radio	Ob	6	2	2	25322	Géneros informativos en TV	Ob	6
2	1	25314	Producción de informativos en radio	Ob	6	2	2	25323	Producción de informativos en TV	Ob	6
3	1		Optativa		6	3	2		Optativa		6
3	1	25324	Técnicas de expresión oral y escrita (parte I): Expresión oral	Ob	3	3	2	25328	Técnicas de expresión oral y escrita (parte II): Expresión escrita	Ob	3
3	1	25325	Narrativa audiovisual: reportaje y documental	Ob	6	3	2	25329	Teoría de la información y documentación	Ob	6
3	1	25326	Realización audiovisual: reportaje y documental	Ob	6	3	2	25330	Diseño y edición de publicaciones impresas	Ob	6
3	1	25327	Proyecto de comunicación audiovisual	Ob	9	3	2	25331	Proyecto de comunicación en prensa	Ob	9
4	1		Optativa		6	4	2		Optativa		6
4	1	25332	Historia del periodismo	Ob	6	4	2	25335	Elementos de publicidad y relaciones públicas	Ob	6
4	1	25333	Comunicación e información digital	Ob	6	4	2	25336	Opinión pública	Ob	6
4	1	25334	Proyecto de comunicación digital	Ob	9	4	2	25337 25338 25339 25340	Proyectos de comunicación especializada. A elegir entre: · Magazine radiofónico · Comunicación corporativa · Suplemento/ revista especializada · Documental audiovisual (formato largo)	Ob	9
		25356	Trabajo Fin de Grado		6						

RELACIÓN DE ASIGNATURAS OPTATIVAS						
25341	Inglés para la comunicación	6	25349	Fotoperiodismo y técnica de la imagen	6
25342	Comunicación e identidad corporativa	6	25350	Teoría de la cultura de masas	6
25343	Periodismo económico	6	25351	Lengua moderna II	6
25344	Periodismo deportivo	6	25352	Practicum	6
25345	Periodismo científico	6	25353	Comentario de textos periodísticos en lengua inglesa	6
25346	Comunicación Política y electoral	6	25354	Diseño gráfico e infografía	6
25347	Periodismo de investigación y precisión	6	25355	Periodismo local	6
25348	Reporterismo radiofónico	6			

Source: UNIZAR

3.2. Professional profiles and competences

The proposed specific professional profiles are:

- News writer and communication editor for any kind of media outlet.
- Journalist, press director or corporate communication manager
- Communication consultant
- Portal manager and content editor

The course outline is structured around two main competences (see Table 9):

a) Competency in the investigation and analysis of current affairs in diverse areas (politics, jurisprudence, economics, the arts and culture, technology, and sports). Proficiency in interpreting current affairs is the core competency upon which of all information and communications professionals in any field base their work. It can be divided into two major subcomponents:

a.1) Knowledge of the state of the world, its recent historic development and of the basic parameters pertaining to diverse fields and sectors. This competency implies vast potential dimensions, but has a special relevance to the objectives of this degree programme. A journalist must be competent in contextualizing current affairs within appropriate frameworks and situations, for which he needs to have an adequate overall knowledge of the state of the world and the capability for interpreting documents and data from very diverse sources and analyzing them critically.
a.2) Capacity for information gathering and management. The capacity to gather, handle, analyze, synthesize, organize and manage necessary information, as well as the ability to utilize appropriate technologies and master the specific procedures for information gathering and analysis, are indispensable in the interpretation of current affairs.

b) Be competent in communicating in the distinct styles, idioms, media, and technologies that are found in the different contexts and professional environments in which journalistic activities are carried out. The diverse styles of journalism are taken into account, whether it is the press, radio, television, digital media, press offices or agencies and whether

the means of communication utilized for the job is oral, written, audiovisual, photographic, etc.

b.1) The capacity to express oneself correctly and effectively in various idioms and contexts. This is a basic competency for a communication professional and includes the correct use of one's own oral and written language, the capacity to express oneself through the language of images, and the mastery of journalistic language in its diverse genres.

b.2) The capacity to integrate oneself into and adapt to the organizations, teams, processes and, and working criteria of the contexts and environments of different styles of journalism. This is an overall competence that is requisite in three fundamental spheres:

b.2.1) Mastery of processes and techniques of news content production and communication.

b.2.2) Knowledge of the context and environment of journalistic activity. A professional must be capable of adequately integrating himself into, situating himself in, and adapting himself to his professional environment.

b.2.3) Capacity to work independently and collaboratively. As a professional, a journalist needs a fundamental capacity for teamwork in order to carry out his work properly.

Table 9: UNIZAR Professional Profiles with competences
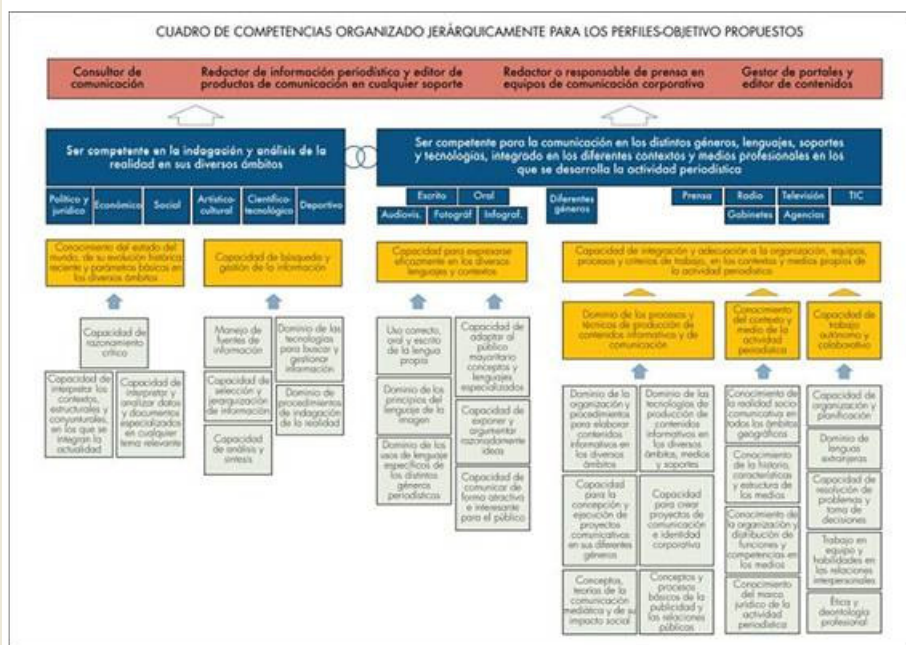
Source: UNIZAR (http://fyl.unizar.es/documents/gradoenperiodismocorregido_000.pdf)

The educational objectives of this degree programme spring from our philosophy of responding to the needs and demands of the labour market. In this manner, we undertake "the training of a general information and communications professional capable of carrying out his work in any field and media outlet without a specific specialization in any one of these areas. This profile corresponds to the verifiable reality of the labour market: journalists who work in the press, radio, television, or digital media at different stages of their career or simultaneously, or who work in differing contexts (media companies, press offices, corporate communication companies, etc.), and in different fields of current affairs (financial, social, political, or sports journalism, etc.)" http://fyl.unizar.es/documents/gradoenperiodismocorregido_000.pdf).

3.3. Teaching Innovation Projects

The implementation of a Journalism Degree has been furthered by the development of two educational research projects promoted within the Universidad de Zaragoza's Call for Teaching Innovation 2008-2009 respectively titled:

- Journalism Degree: Strategic studies aimed toward improvement in the quality of the degree program, and

- Journalism Degree: Curriculum coordination and design and editing of teaching guides.

The two projects share the idea that innovations implemented must be in line with the initial strategic planning for the degree programme and must be oriented toward effectively enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

The objectives, activities, and work methods of both projects that have been undertaken are complementary and interdependent, in order to actively promote the development of collaboration and coordination strategies between them.

Table 10: Innovation projects developed in the Journalism Degree Programme in 2008-2009
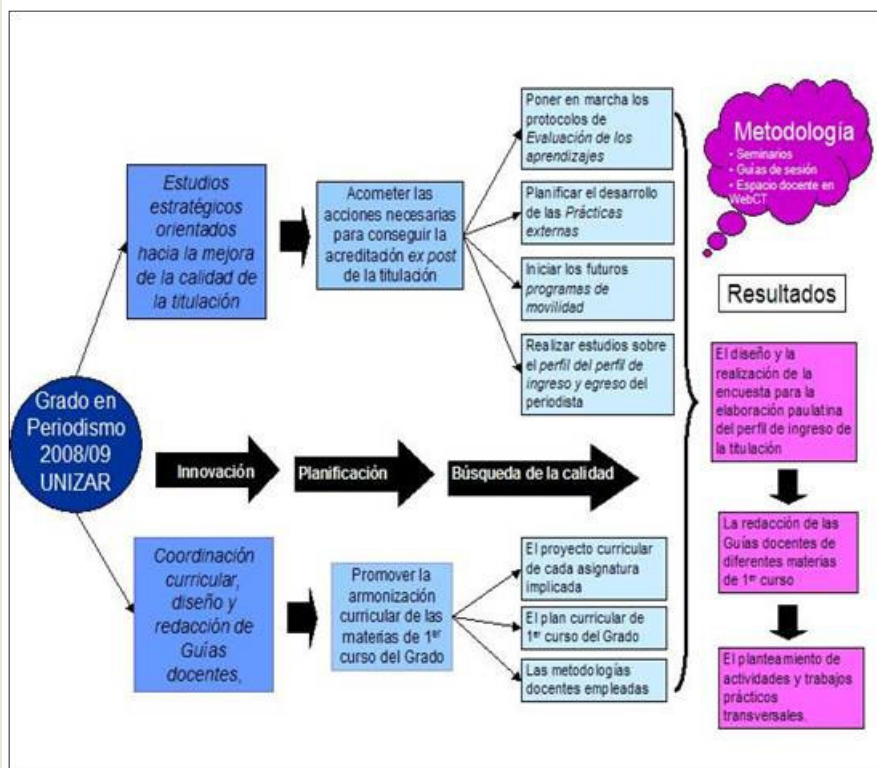
Source: Cabrera, Agustín and Ubieto (2009)

One of the striking conclusions taken from these projects is that "the majority of professors have begun a process of teamwork that allows us to harmonize criteria and detect overlapping and deficiencies in the curriculum, and therefore reorganize the work that is required of the students which concurrently affects the professors" (Cabrera, Augustín and Ubieto, 2009).

The central pillar of the quality of teaching in the Universidad de Zaragoza's Journalism Degree programme is the coordination of teaching activities of each basic subject, which is articulated by the realization of a distinct simulated journalistic project four times during the academic year that replicates the conditions of a commercial environment under which a real professional practices his profession. "It is hoped that when journalism students complete their academic careers they will have received a systematic training in diverse disciplines and will be capable of undertaking a real career in journalism" (Cabrera, Agustín and Ubieto, 2009).

The Universidad de Zaragoza has implemented learning based projects that simulate professional conditions, together with other methods and activities that include teamwork, seminaries, workshops, visits to communications companies, participation in congresses and professional and research conferences, academic sessions with guest experts, etc.; all key elements in bringing the student closer to the competences established for journalism and in line with the quality parameters required by EHEA.

4. Discussion and conclusion

 The establishment of degrees in the three branches of communications at the private Universidad San Jorge and a journalism degree in the public Universidad de Zaragoza beginning with the academic year 2008-2009, makes Aragon the first autonomous region in Spain to implement the EHEA standards in full-time degree programs. This is further evidence of an ongoing regional endorsement of the Bologna reforms begun by the Universidad San Jorge during the academic year 2005-2006 with the inauguration a Journalism, Advertising & Public Relations studies programme implementing methods, tutoring sessions, and evaluation methods in line with the Bologna model.

The curricula for the new communications degrees in the Region of Aragon reflect the parameters established in the White Paper (2005) in the sense that they comply with the profile of a well-rounded professional, academically well-prepared in the relevant subject matter, who knows how to adapt to the needs of the communication marketplace in any existing media outlet. The convergence of the media implies that new communications professionals must be familiar with the codes of all media, whether it is print, photographic, oral, visual, audiovisual, or digital. Training in both analysis and execution of content, regardless of the media, provides graduates with an integrated learning experience.

Students place a greater value on proactive learning methods, particularly the tutorial work of the professor. On the other hand, they show less interest in traditional teaching methods, such as lecture classes. From these observations it

is clear that students recognize the benefits of the new model that has given them a more active and independent role in acquiring established competencies. At the same time, they consider the professor's functions as guide and facilitator during tutorial sessions relevant.

The internship experience of the first students who have studied under EHEA methods and guidelines has been very positive. The work experience supervisors of participating companies have been satisfied with the level of professional preparation of the students they have accepted as interns and have valued the students' adaptation to the professional tasks assigned to them as well as their capacity for teamwork, their responsibility in carrying out tasks, planning, and managing resources, and assuming initiatives.

Collaborative learning methods based on problem-solving and projects are correlated to the competences shown by internship supervisors. From these observations, we deduce and wish to highlight the benefits of the mechanics of group work, case studies, workshops that simulate professional situations, and projects designed for specific subjects.

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6. Notas

[1] Since 1998 the European Union has promoted the acknowledgement of academic degrees that allow for developing a European Higher Education Area in order to promote mobility in the academic and labour market. The starting point was the signing of the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998 by four countries of the Union (France, Germany, United Kingdom and Italy) and in 1999, the Bologna Accords were validated by 29 countries. That is the reason the model was known for the place where said declaration was ratified. Subsequently common parameters are regularly articulated from different organized forums. Then in 2001, the Prague Conference was held; in 2003, the Berlin Conference, in 2005, the Bergen Conference; in 2007, the London conference; and in 2009, the one in Leuven.

[2] As appears in the White Paper of Communication Degree Programmes (2005: 99), there were some prior attempts,

but very isolated, like the case of the journalism course organized in 1887 by the chair and journalist Fernando Araujo y Gómez, in the Universidad de Salamanca. Another attempt was made in 1926 by Manuel Graña González who taught three months in El Debate. Later, in 1937, a nationalist-trade union seminar was created for Journalism studies in Guipúzcoa. And, in 1938, in Madrid, the Escuela de Periodismo "Mundo Obrero" and the Escuela de Periodismo de las Juventudes Socialistas appeared.

[3] Both the Escuela de Periodismo de La Laguna, and that of Barcelona were dependent from the Escuela Oficial de Periodismo de Madrid. La Escuela de Barcelona became independent in 1968.

[4] This concept was promoted by the UNESCO after the presentation in 1996 of the Delors report, 'Learning: The Tresaure Within', encouraging educational reform and new pedagogic policies aimed at lifelong learning focused on four pillars: "learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be". In order to fully obtain said learning, "the university would have four essential functions: 1. Preparation for research and for teaching; 2. Very specialized types of training and adapted to the needs of social and economic life; 3. Opening to all to give a reply to the multiple aspects of what we call permanent education in the broadest sense of the term; 4. International cooperation" (Delors, 1996: 38).

[5] Public Act 1/2005, of 24 February is what officially acknowledges the private university «San Jorge», published in the BOE on 24 March, 2005.

[6] USJ anticipated the indications of the audit conducted by ANECA regarding Journalism studies in Spain in 2007, published in a report of the Asociación de la Prensa of Madrid and started from the beginning, September 2005, the Tutorial Action Plan for personalized monitoring of students from day one to their last day of studies. This plan is sued to give students direction in their academic training as journalists, their future insertion in the journalist market and international exchange possibilities with universities that contribute to its growth and development as persons.

[7] This study was part of research carried out by the Research Group in Edu-communication (GIEC) acknowledged by the Science, Technology and University Department of the Government of Aragón with reference code S-82.