

# The subjects of creativity and strategy in degrees in Communication in Spain

Las asignaturas de creatividad y estrategia en los Grados en Comunicación en España

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## ABSTRACT

Training in competency-based learning model that the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) established is focused on university education to adapt to the needs of the occupational market. This article examines the creative and strategic skills between competencies and profiles proposed by ANECA (2005) for Degrees in Communication in Spain. In a second phase, a review of the subjects related to the creative strategy within curricula of degrees in Communication is made, from a sample of 125 degrees and 202 subjects. The results demonstrate the limited presence of the creative strategy in the curricula in Communication, being the Degrees in Advertising and Public Relations where it more frequently appears, as well as the lack of consensus in the appellation of the subjects.

**KEYWORDS:** communication; advertising and public relations; creativity; strategy; creative strategy.

## RESUMEN

El modelo de enseñanza basado en la formación en competencias que instauró el Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior (EEES) está enfocado a adecuar la formación universitaria a las necesidades del mercado laboral. El presente artículo analiza las competencias creativa y estratégica entre las competencias y los perfiles propuestos por ANECA (2005) para los Grados en Comunicación en España. En una segunda fase, se realiza una revisión de las asignaturas relacionadas con la estrategia creativa dentro los planes de estudio de las titulaciones en Comunicación, a partir de una muestra de 125 titulaciones y 202 asignaturas. Los resultados demuestran la escasa presencia de la estrategia creativa en los planes de estudio en Comunicación, siendo los Grados en Publicidad y Relaciones Públicas las titulaciones en las que más aparece, así como la falta de consenso existente en las nomenclaturas de las asignaturas.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** comunicación; publicidad y relaciones públicas; creatividad; estrategia; estrategia creativa.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Competencies within the framework of the European Higher Education Area

The European convergence and harmonization process within the higher education systems that started with the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) entailed the introduction of great novelties in the approach of university education, with the objective of achieving a common ground which would favor social growth and cohesion based on the academic training of citizens. But, above all, it has led to a continuous “re-thinking” of universities (Marta-Lazo, 2009, p. 3), a reframing of the teaching methods from lecturers and a constant evaluation of the work done by students outside the classroom to adapt the subjects to a more interactive system, focused on the students’ prominence in the learning process and their utterly active participation.

The EHEA philosophy redefines the university institution task, in the context of a globalized, hypermediatized and super technified society. Quality teaching, that leaves aside the bank-like teaching [*“education bancaria”*] (Freire, 1995), to base on the “experiential learning” (Kolb, 1984) with professional orientation; digital tools integration, active learning pedagogic techniques focused on the student and the promotion of international mobility are its main features.

On the other hand, the approach of the EHEA is aimed to the employability of the student, reclaiming the eminently practical nature of studies, demanding a methodology based on learning how to learn whatever it takes to achieve professional performance, which has favored Higher Education to be nearer the corporate environment and it is inspired by Long Life Learning (LLL)<sup>1</sup>, learning to continue learning during our lifetime: “An approach requested due to the new necessities of the Knowledge Society, in which a continuous learning update that allows the adaptation to fast changes and transformations that are occurring is necessary” (Pérez, Vadillo and McMahon, 2011, pp. 68-69).

The new teaching models at the core of the EHEA are characterized by being focused on the autonomous learning of the student expressed in competencies for the corresponding professional profile and tutored by professors with a cooperative approach of the teaching-learning process (Fernández, 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> The Long Life Learning (LLL) concept was promoted by UNESCO after the 1996 report presentation by Delors “Learning: The treasure within”, in which educational reforms are urged and for the new pedagogical policies to be oriented in “education throughout life”, focused on four pillars: “learning how to know, learning how to do, learning how to live together” and “learning how to be”.

In current society the learning model, on which the academic system is based, bets on the acquisition of competencies for employability. The abilities and skills that foster competencies and the bet on ICTs in the teaching-learning process oblige the student to “learn by doing”, that is why traditional teaching methods must be substituted by the so-called active methodologies, in which the students take the active leading role in the knowledge acquisition.

University training approaches to the occupational market requirements are one of the objectives of the syllabi: to promote a more direct and effective relation between university education and professional activity. Training based on competencies, which aims to qualify the student to successfully practice the professional activity in accordance to the degree qualification, therefore, highlights “the close relation between university and corporate reality”, betting on “a more practical education and problem solving skills simulating a real life situation of the labor market” (Sierra and Cabezuelo, 2010, p. 32).

The Tuning pilot project (González and Wagenaar, 2003) was carried out in 2003 to establish a methodology that would allow the alignment of the European educational structures in specific disciplines -Mathematics, geology, corporate studies, history and education sciences-, in which 70 European universities participated. This project emphasizes the necessity of training in competencies and developing capacities and knowledge in students beyond what is purely technical, which led to the identification of 32 competencies, labeled cross-disciplinary or generic, that every majored must acquire in a higher or lower degree depending on their studies. Marta-Lazo (2012, p. 19) classifies cross-disciplinary or generic competencies, included in this project, in three categories: instrumental, interpersonal and systematic.

**Table 1.** *Classification of cross-disciplinary or generic competencies in the Tuning Project.*

Competencies Classification	
Instrumental	
1	Summary and analysis skills
2	Organization, planning and time management skill
3	Basic general knowledge
4	Further expansion of the professional basic knowledge
5	Oral and written communication in the mother tongue
6	Knowledge of one or more foreign languages
7	Computing basic skills
8	Computing knowledge related to the field of study
9	Information management skills
10	Problem solving
11	Decision making
Interpersonal	
1	Team work
2	Interdisciplinary team work
3	Skill to work in an international context
4	Skill to communicate with specialists of other fields
5	Interpersonal relations skills
6	Critical thinking
7	Ethical commitment
8	Critic and self-critic skills
9	Diversity and multiculturalism appreciation.
Systematic	
1	Skills to implement knowledge into practice
2	Learning skills (acquiring experience)
3	Autonomous learning
4	Adaptability to new situations
5	Leadership
6	Knowledge of other cultures and customs
7	Initiative and entrepreneur spirit
8	Quality driven
9	Sensitiveness towards environmental issues
10	Research skills
11	Skills to generate new ideas
12	Project management and design

**Source:** authors' own creation based on Marta-Lazo (2012, p. 19).

The 32 generic competencies proposed in the Tuning Project were used by ANECA to elaborate the White Papers of the different degrees. We have to add, to these competencies, the specific ones, particular of each one of the majors.

## 1.2. Creative and strategic competency in Communication studies

Even if the creative and strategic thinking is cross-disciplinary and can be extended to all the future knowledge of the professional in communication, among the listed competencies by ANECA (2005) for each degree in Communication, some allude directly to creativity and strategy. In the case of Audiovisual Communication, among the specific competencies there are (ANECA, 2005, pp. 229-270):

- Knowledge and implementation of the techniques and processes of audiovisual creation and dissemination during the different phases, for cinema as well as for television, video and multimedia from the perspective of the *mise en scène*, from the emerging idea to the final result.

- Knowledge, identification and implementation of resources, elements, methods and procedures of the construction processes and analysis for both linear and non-linear audiovisual stories, including design, setting up and strategies development, as well as the implementation of the persuasive communication policies in audiovisual markets.

Within the professional, academic and other competencies of Audiovisual Communication, some others linked to the subjects under analysis are also identified:

- Professional ones. Skills to design and conceive the esthetic presentation and mise en scène technique through the natural acoustic and light sources taking into account the creative and expressive features that the director of the audiovisual project proposes.
- Academic ones. Skills to determine innovative personal creation and research topics that can contribute to knowledge or audiovisual languages development or their interpretation.
- Other ones. Creativity: The skills to take expressive and thematic risks within the framework of the accessibility and deadlines of the audiovisual production, implementing solutions and personal points of view in the development of the projects.
- Other ones. Decision making: the skill to successfully guess when choosing under uncertainty, bearing responsibilities.

Among the specific competencies of Journalism studies proposed by ANECA (2005, pp. 192-225) we find two related to these subjects:

- Knowledge of advertising theories, public relations and corporative communication, based on the implementation of creative thinking and through its different manifestations and activities.
- Knowledge of the main debates and media occurrences derived from the current juncture and how they emerge and disseminate according to the communicative strategies and all kinds of interests.

Among the professional competencies for this degree, the skill at experiencing and innovating through knowledge and the use of techniques and methods implemented to the processes of quality and self-evaluation enhancement is also identified, as well as the abilities for autonomous learning, the adaptability to changes and daily improvement through creativity.

Focusing on the degree in Advertising and Public Relations, creativity appears in four competencies, as shown in table 2.

**Table 2.** *Competencies related to creativity in Advertising and Public Relations degree.*

<b>Specific</b>	9. Knowledge of the creative thinking methods and their implementation in the process of advertising communication: schools, methods and techniques.
<b>Professional</b>	8. The skill and ability to convey the message creatively. His/her main functions encompass the elaboration of basic advertising pieces and the supervision of their final production.
<b>Academic</b>	4. The skill for creativity and innovation: skill to evolve towards the unknown, on the basis of a solid knowledge of what is new and current.
<b>Other specific ones</b>	3. The perspicacity, cunning and creativity skill that would allow him/her to find effective solutions to unprecedented problems. Preparation to assume risk, developing the skill from the decision making stage.

**Source:** authors' own creation based on ANECA (2005, pp. 273-296).

There is an aspect worth noticing here: even if in the 4<sup>th</sup> academic competency no specific ambit is determined, it *is* in the 9<sup>th</sup> specific knowledge and in the 8<sup>th</sup> professional knowledge, which have an impact in the sense that the implementation of the creative thinking must be executed in “the process of advertising communication: schools, methods and techniques” and are linked to the advertising profession -“Their main functions comprise the elaboration of basic advertising pieces and the supervision of their final production”-. That way, it is necessary to disinherit creativity as an exclusive aptitude of the creative phase of the message in the advertising process and highlight it as an indispensable cornerstone in the design of not only the advertising strategies, but also in the public relations ones, particularly, and communication ones in general.

These guidelines have caused creativity to be still closely related to the advertising field within the syllabi, despite the subject Creativity and Innovation in communication, especially in advertising and public relations, proposed by ANECA, mentioning these two fields. As highlighted by Estanyol (2012, p. 16), a majority of the subjects regarding creativity that are offered in the degrees in Advertising and Public Relations indicate in their descriptions to be focused on advertising (46.67%) and only a minority (1.66%) are specifically focused on their implementation in public relations.

Simultaneously, we also find knowledge directly related to strategy between the competencies of the studies in Advertising and Public Relations, as seen in table 3. In this case, with the exception of the 12<sup>th</sup> specific competency -in which advertising messages are alluded-, the field of activity is not specified in the rest. We could not find academic competencies directly related to the strategic approach.

**Table 3.** *Competencies related to strategy in the Advertising and Public Relations degree.*

<b>Specific</b>	6. He/she develops the conceptual foundations over the strategic direction implemented to communication by objectives so, from a methodological approach, he/she assists the operators who have to make decisions aiming for communicative effectiveness.
<b>Professional</b>	12. Study of the strategies and processes aiming at creating and elaborating advertising messages in different platforms and mediums.  22. Knowledge of design and strategies development and implementation of persuasive communication policies, studying the methodology necessary to analyze the corporate state, to evaluate it through auditing and design a specific strategy.
<b>Academic</b>	3. Skill and ability to establish a communication plan: to set the communication objectives, to determine the target audience, to plan strategies and control the communication budget.
<b>Other specific ones</b>	-  4 Analysis, summary and critical thinking skills. To know how to turn tasks into objectives and to match causes and effects. To know how to manage time, with the ability to organize and time the tasks.

**Source:** authors' own creation based on ANECA (2005, pp. 273-296).

Along with the competencies for each degree, the White Paper of the degrees in Communication elaborated by ANECA (2005) incorporated the minimum formative contents for the degrees in Audiovisual Communication, Journalism and Advertising, and Public Relations, organized by subjects from which abilities and skills derive. Based on this systematization of the competencies for

future professionals of communication, ANECA (2005) also proposes a set of basic professional profiles for each degree.

If we examine the presence of creativity and strategy among the basic subjects in the Degrees in Communication, we find that in the degree in Audiovisual Communication there is a subject related, in the degree in Journalism appears none and in Advertising and Public Relations studies two subjects are indicated. Regarding the professional profiles, we find two profiles related to the degree in Advertising and Public Relations.

As for the case of the degree in Audiovisual Communication, among the basic subjects the following is indicated: Techniques and creative processes of production and postproduction. The minimum formative contents for this subject are:

- Audiovisual direction: cinema, television, video.
- Basic creative implementations about scenography, lighting, cinematography, direction of actors.
- Creation, register and broadcasting processes for the production of radio, recording and other sound products.
- Design of multimedia products and interactive computing environments.
- Sound, audiovisual and multimedia edition and postproduction.

This subject has an estimated total amount of 750-900 student working hours, being practical (40%) and personal work (40%) the most important activities. The skills, abilities and competencies to acquire based on this knowledge are:

- Skill and ability to manage the direction-execution processes of the varied audiovisual mediums (2).
- Ability for the management of techniques and procedures for photographic, cinematographic, television and hypermedia creation (1).

Within the design of the syllabus for Advertising and Public Relations proposed by ANECA (2005), we find a subject related to creativity and another one to strategy: Creativity and Innovation in communication, especially advertising and the ones of public relations, and Foundations and techniques of strategy in communication (especially advertising and public relations), respectively. For the first case, the minimum formative contents in the subject established by ANECA (2005: 337-338) for the Degrees in Advertising and Public Relations, with 650-780 estimated working hours and a total personal work of 40%, are the following:

- Practical-theoretical knowledge of the elements, forms and processes of advertising speeches and other forms of communication and its evolution.
- Knowledge of the creative thinking methods and its implementation in the communicative process, especially in advertising and public relations: schools, methods and techniques.
- Knowledge of the elaboration processes and analysis of the advertising messages and their codes.
- Study of the strategies and processes aimed to the creation, production and execution of advertising messages in different platforms and mediums.
- Knowledge of the work system of the creative departments: editing, art direction and production.
- Study of written, audiovisual and digital information as a reference framework.

Based on these objectives, ANECA (2005, pp. 337-338) identifies the following skills, abilities and competencies to acquire (level and profundity):

**Table 4.** *Skills, abilities and competencies to acquire (level and profundity).*

The capacity for creativity and innovation: capacity to evolve towards the unknown, starting from a solid knowledge of the project and the strategy to follow (3).
Development of the capacity for perspicacity, cunning and creativity to find effective solutions to unprecedented problems (2).
Capacity and ability to mold the message creatively (2).
Capacity and ability for the creation, design and development of graphic elements, images, symbols and texts (3).
Abilities for innovation and development of new media and platforms (1).
Ability to understand and explain the evolution of the concept of advertising and public relations and its relation to some determined speech models, as well as the influence of these transformations on its current features (1).
Skills to select and implement the most suitable analysis model for each subject under study (2).
Skill at using editorial, stylistic, narrative and rhetorical resources: written and visual ones (2).
Capacity to communicate fluently and richness in the professional context (in verbal and written form) (2).
Foundations of analog and digital communication for advertising and public relations (1).
Ability to use the hypermedia language (1).

**Source:** authors' own creation based on ANECA (2005, pp. 337-338).

In the subject Foundations and techniques of strategy in communication (especially advertising and public relations), with 375-450 estimated working hours and 40% of personal work, the following knowledge is described in detail:

- Development of conceptual foundations of strategic direction implemented to a communication set by objectives to make decisions aiming for communicative effectiveness from a methodological approach.
- Knowledge of design and strategies development and the implementation of persuasive communication policies in organizations, evaluating the methodology necessary for the study and research of the corporate state. To examine it with auditing processes and design a specific strategy.
- Knowledge and study of the communication processes and their specific techniques: positioning, segmentation, analysis procedures and measurement of efficiency, etc.

The skills, abilities and competencies derived from this knowledge are:

- Capacity to make strategic decisions. (2)
- Capacity for objective analysis of reality and the collection of valid considerations. (2)
- Ability to detect market opportunities. (1)
- Skill to establish a relation of trust, understanding, credibility and effective communication with the advertiser. (1)
- Capacity of setting concrete actions of communication, especially in advertising and public relations, as well as the measurement of results (even feedback mechanisms). (3)
- Time management ability, with the capacity to organize and time tasks. (1)
- Analysis, summary and critical thinking capacity that helps him/her conceptualize advertising messages as well as to objectify tasks and match causes and effects. (2)
- Skills at different market research and customers tools (pre-tests and post-tests) with the purpose of obtaining an in-depth knowledge of customers and their behavior, in addition to trends, habits and life styles. (2)

### 1.3. Creativity and strategy in professional profiles of Communication studies

The professional profiles established by ANECA (2005, pp. 227-228) for the degree of Audiovisual Communication are: 1. Director, scriptwriter and audiovisual filmmaker; 2. Producer and audiovisual operator; 3. Design production and sound and visual postproduction and; 4. Lecturer researcher and expert in visual studies. Therefore, none of these profiles are directly linked to creativity and strategy.

The same thing happens with the professional profiles established by ANECA (2005, pp. 191-192) for Journalism studies, since no professional profile is directly linked to creativity and strategy: 1. Journalistic information editor in any type of medium; 2. Editor or press responsible or institutional communication; 3. Lecturer researcher or communication consultant and; 4. Web portal manager and contents editor.

Due to the existent variety of specializations in the professional and occupational marketing, communication and advertising market world, the degree in Advertising and Public Relations is characterized for having the most differentiated professional profiles with each other (ANECA, 2005, pp. 271-272): 1. Communication director, researcher and advertising and public relations strategic consultant; 2. Researchers, planners and media buyers; 3. Copywriter and designer and; 4. Corporate communication manager.

Therefore, we find two profiles connected to the subjects of creativity and strategy. The researchers and strategic consultants identify the specific role that communication has to play within each organization and in the marketing actions. In both cases, they define the communicative strategies in accordance to the objectives of the advertisers. They plan both the necessary *ad hoc* researches so that they can define the fundamental pillars of the campaigns and the development and implementation of the very campaigns they supervise, execute and control. For that, they rely on their market knowledge and the communication, monitoring and control tools (ANECA, 2005, pp. 271-272).

In the case of the copywriter and designer, he/she is the specialized professional in advertising creativity in all kinds of platforms, from the conceptualization and visualization of the advertising idea to its adaptation and integration to the different mediums. These specializations can be identified as: copywriter, art director, editor and webmaster -creativity in web structure-. The task of executing even the final art and controlling the physical production of the platforms is responsibility of the production and traffic experts (ANECA, 2005, pp. 272).

The competencies of the professional in advertising and public relations described by ANECA (2005, pp. 229-298) have been examined in order to analyze which are the most closely related ones to each of these two profiles. They are shown in table 5:

**Table 5.** *Competencies of the strategic consultant and copywriter.*

COMPETENCIES		Strategic consultant and researcher	Copywriter
SPECIFIC	Knowledge of the creative thinking methods.	X	X
	Knowledge of the processes of creation of the advertising messages.		X
	Theoretical-practical knowledge of the elements, forms and processes of the advertising languages.		X
	Study of the strategies and processes aimed to the creation and execution of advertising messages.		X
	Knowledge and analysis of the basic psychological processes.	X	X
	Theoretical and practical knowledge of advertising and public relations.	X	
	Knowledge of research and analysis techniques of the nature and interrelations between the advertising communication subjects.	X	
	Study of the research processes and interrelations between the subjects of advertising activities.	X	
	Knowledge and study of the psychosocial, cognitive and emotional processes of communication.	X	
	Knowledge of design and development of strategies and implementation of persuasive communication policies in the institutions and public and private companies.	X	
PROFESSIONAL	Capacity and ability to shape the message creatively		X
	Capacity and ability to create and develop graphic elements		X
	Capacity and ability to use communicative technologies and techniques		X
	Capacity and ability to establish a communication plan	X	
	Rational and enquiry capacity to establish a fluid and competent interaction between the advertiser and the agenda.	X	
ACADEMIC	Fundamental knowledge of communication	X	X
	Capacity to assume leadership	X	X
	Capacity to understand and interpret the environment and adapt to changes	X	X
	Knowledge of the economic, psychosocial, cultural and demographic environments	X	X
	Capacity for creativity and innovation	X	X
	Capacity for adaptability to organizational objectives	X	
OTHER	Capacity to interact with people and the environment without losing his/her autonomy	X	X
	Teamwork capacity	X	X
	Perspicacity, cunning and creativity capacity	X	X
	Preparation to take risks, developing the capacity from the moment of making a choice.	X	X
	Analysis, summary and critical thinking capacity	X	X
	Knowing how to manage time, with the ability for organizing and timing tasks	X	X
	Capacity to act freely and responsibly, assuming ethical references, values and consistent principles	X	X
	Capacity for economic and budget management within their operating field	X	X
	Capacity for the objective analysis of reality and the collection of valid considerations	X	X

**Source:** authors' own creation based on ANECA (2005, pp. 229-298).

Among the specific competencies we considered that the knowledge of the creative thinking methods and the knowledge and analysis of the basic psychological processes are common competencies in both profiles. As for the academic competencies, the consultant and strategic researcher figure would have all the ones proposed by ANECA (2005). In the section “other”, both profiles would share all the competencies.

Within the creative professional profiles, it is important to indicate the existence of more concrete different profiles, for instance: creative director, copy and art director. Tur-Viñes (2008) claims a copywriter in communication definition that leaves aside the restriction of what is inherently from the advertising realm in order to act upon the reality of his/her functions. Based on the fact that ANECA (2005) associates the copywriter profile to the one of the designer, as the author states:

As for sharing the profile name with the one of the designer, we feel that it fosters some sort of confusion, since the designer is currently equated to a degree of Professional Training/Fine Arts. We do not want to say that it is not necessary for a copywriter to have knowledge of graphic computing design programs and web design, rather than knowing them is necessary but not enough in order to be creative. We have to take into account that labeling this profile in such manner leaves without content the namesake medium-level certification. (p. 156).

Based on these considerations, Tur-Viñes (2008) suggests the following definition for communication copywriter:

A specialized professional in the generation of ideas, specifically in the conceptualization – iconic and verbal expression- and visualization –composition- of them. He/she is in charge of the expression of the communication strategy conceiving a message adapted to a target audience and executable in a specific medium or a combined group of mediums. He/she supervises all the production and execution process of the creative idea. Due to their knowledge of generation techniques, copywriters are ideal as boosters of any leading innovation process for creating new products, services or content concepts. (p. 15)

#### **1.4. Creativity and advertising strategy teaching**

We reviewed the contributions made by several authors about teaching the creativity and advertising strategies subjects. Muela (2012) highlights the importance of the study of the creative process implemented in advertising strategy in the lecturing of this subject:

Teaching advertising strategy has prioritized the study of creative techniques, the problem solving models, psychological or intellectual characteristics of the person, stages of the process or analysis of the creative product. However, in addition to the theories especially

developed from the psychological field, implementing these concepts to the realm of communication in general and advertising in particular has been sought; this way, the advertising strategy is explained and practiced from the moment a briefing is delivered until the evaluation of the creative idea in a role-playing exercise. (p. 34)

The cross-disciplinary nature of creativity has been proven when examining the competencies of the Degree in Advertising and Public Relations defined by ANECA (2005, pp. 237-296). Alegre and Roca (2012) reflect on the holistic nature of creativity, as a teaching style that can be implemented in any subject:

Creativity is not a subject separated from Advertising studies. If you will, it does not even have to be (only) one subject. It is an approach, a lecturing style, a way of understanding the profession that, if implemented in a holistic and in an in-depth manner in the development of any teaching activity, it will certainly have a positive impact in the formative experience of all the parties involved. This entails a challenge, rather an obligation, to all the university teaching personnel. (p. 18)

Martín (1989) also analyzes the legislation regarding university lecturing to highlight the role creativity has in higher-level education:

Creativity is not an explicit objective of universities, but just a few number of people will discuss that it should be one. Furthermore, it is implicit in all the subjects.

The 1983 University Reform establishes as functions of the university in article 1.2:

- a) The creation, development, transmission and the criticism of science, technique and culture.
- b) The preparation for professional activities performance that demand the implementation of knowledge and scientific methods or for artistic creation.

Even objectives that haven't been formulated that clearly and that are intrinsic to university, presuppose it (...) the development and acute transmission of science poses a challenge that needs to be solved with creative audacity (...) all the functions of a university are, somehow, and ought to be even more, paths leading to creativity, but especially to research and learning by discovering. (pp. 35-36)

Another perspective about the current stage of creativity in advertising teaching is presented by De la Torre and Violant (2003, p. 22) who, instead of focusing on students, study the professor. These authors analyze the didactic strategies of university teaching staff with the purpose of describing the impact and level of satisfaction of students in the face of the implementation of creative and varied strategies and capable of “inspiring students to learn”.

For her part, Tur-Viñes (2008,) describes the qualitative leap that the adaptation of the subject creativity in the Degree in Advertising and Public Relations entailed to the EHEA.

Creativity would still remain a core subject but it would be now implemented to the creation process of commercial messages, not only the advertising and public relations ones taking the media into account. There would be greater emphasis on disciplinary knowledge and, on the capacities level, the ability for analysis would be observed -since it is from the first cycle- so there would be an impact on the capacity of generating, presenting and defending, in a coherent and appropriate way, strategies of commercial communication. (pp. 158-159)

We find examples of the implementation of cooperative learning and of new teaching techniques in subjects related to the subject of advertising creativity, as in the case of Creative Strategies in Advertising in the Degree in Advertising and Public Relations of Juan Carlos University (Muela, 2012) or Creative Thinking in the degree in Communication of Open University of Catalonia (Sivera-Bello, 2016). In the first case, the innovation teaching project proved that cooperative work based on the puzzle technique helps facilitate learning and increases knowledge of professional reality, its stakeholders and participants regarding advertising creativity (Muela, 2012).

When examining the teaching of strategy in this Degree, we noticed this strategy is limited to Advertising and Public Relations studies. We did not find in the White Paper by ANECA (2005) of the other two degrees in Communication any allusions to training in this field, which translates into a clear absence of subjects with these contents (Torres, 2010).

Despite the saturation offer of communication studies in our country, the contents or subjects related to the strategic discipline turn out to be scarce. The tendency to replicate the previous models has led the process of adaptation not to solve this situation. What is clear is that the competencies and capacities of the communication student regarding strategic matters are highly valued in all the new syllabi. This translates into an increase in the use of the strategy term and, more specifically, when relating to the advertising area. (p. 307)

This reality can be justified with the objective importance that the strategic training in the studies to which we are concretely referring to have, from two points of view: the one of strategic planning and the one of strategic creation, precisely the two basic pillars for the

development of advertising and public relations activity, although it is true that this statement depends on the stance we take when speaking of this strategy (p. 312).

From this point of view, the degrees in the communication ambit in Spain are characterized by the implementation disparity of the studies of strategy (Torres, 2010, p. 311). The strategy term is implemented by different authors, researchers and professionals in advertising in almost all the activities that can be performed in this field. That way, we are talking about “advertising general strategy”, “media strategy”, “creative strategy”, “message strategy”, “copy strategy”, etc. This entails, if we are referring to strategy in the advertising ambit, some confusion about what elements are included in it. Therefore, we find that, in addition to the increased use of the term, it is in advertising where it is used in a more subjective manner (Pérez-González, 1989).

While an important number of authors claim that advertising strategy would be the creation stage of the “what” or content of the message of advertising communication, in accordance to the objectives assigned, for another group of authors in advertising strategy the creation of the “what” should be at the creative strategy (Davara, 1994, p. 189), which is why the phrase “advertising strategy” would be reserved to define the choosing of work methods; that is, a previous step to action (García-Uceda, 2001).

From this knowledge several basic concepts of strategic theory were gathered: decision making, messages creation strategies and design of specific strategies. Additionally, these are the elements in which the strategic theory has exhibited a greater development. First, the relation between making the decisions and foresight; secondly, the strategic models of the advertising ambit that evolved from the strategies based on the product -Unique Selling Proposition by Reeves-, to the current ones of positioning and brand image (Kapferer, 1997); last, we are in the process of strategic advertising planning as a way of creating the communicative plans of institutions (Pérez-González, 1989).

Torres (2010, p. 315) concluded that the wide formative offer in communication does not meet, however, the training necessities in the strategic discipline ambit. Nevertheless, what is clear is the professional-oriented direction of teaching communication strategies.

### **1.5. Research on the teaching of advertising creativity**

Finally, we point out the research on teaching creativity at universities carried out by Alegre and Roca (2012) due to the extensive bibliographic examination they did, dividing the studies into two big groups: analysis and methodology. Within the analysis group they included all the articles that studied the state of creativity teaching, normally using the quantitative methodology through questionnaires administered to professors. The methodology group contains all those articles that describe the development of the advertising creativity subject, normally based on the description of the very own teaching experience of the author. With this examination, the authors came to the following conclusions (Alegre and Roca, 2012, p. 75) about teaching advertising creativity at universities:

- Creativity teaching is holistic. The professor who intends to teach advertising creativity must bear in mind that he/she will influence many aspects of the development of the student, not only intellectually or professionally, but also personally. The final objective of teaching is not to transmit knowledge, but to form an attitude.
- Teaching creativity requires involvement. When teaching advertising creativity, both professor and student share much more than just the space in the classroom. The teacher is responsible for his/her students to promote themselves as creating and creative people. This is accomplished maintaining, to the extent possible, a close relation with students and generating an environment of confidence and mutual trust inside the classroom.

- Teaching creativity requires creativity. Even if it sounds like tautology, it would be inconceivable that a creativity subject can be carried out successfully if the person who teaches it is not willing to use his/her imagination and his/her own resources to prepare it
- Teaching creativity is real. The question is not whether creativity can be taught or not. Advertising creativity is being successfully taught every day around the world. The point is to keep improving the models, attitudes, spaces and techniques to teach it.

The work by Alegre and Roca (2012) is an adaptation for the Spanish territory from the research by Stuhlfaut and Berman (2009) in The United States. In their research, Stuhlfaut and Berman selected a sample of 44 universities out of 145 -that is, 30%- of the existing ones in The United States in which programs of advertising and public relations are taught. These were selected from three lists that appeared in *A Century of Advertising Education* (Ross and Richards, 2008). They examined the web pages of the universities to spot the creative strategy subjects, also including the ones of advertising art, copywriting, and leaving aside subjects for campaigns elaboration, general creativity and book -portfolio development-. The authors understood that advertising art direction and copywriting are branches of creative strategy.

Alegre and Roca (2012) identified 286 subjects for advertising creativity in the Advertising and Public Relations Degrees in Spain. Based on the contents and objectives observed in the subjects analyzed, they established a set of common descriptors (Alegre and Roca, 2012, p. 90)<sup>2</sup>, identifying segments that are faithful to the idiosyncrasy of the creative department in the advertising agency:

- Creative Strategy. In this group there are the subjects in which students put into practice their copywriting knowledge to develop advertising comprehensive campaigns. The objectives tend to include the development of strategic thinking and a global understanding of the advertising creative process: from the briefing to the implementation in all media. These subjects offer a global vision of advertising creativity, so in order to develop a communication campaign -that are usually required as an evaluation method- students must understand the brand, the target, the market, etc. in depth.
- Copywriting. These are subjects by which students develop essential abilities and criteria to draft in the advertising environment in a creative manner. It is common that these subjects structure their syllabus according to the different types of mediums with which a copywriter must cope and their characteristics. Although, to a lesser extent, to develop the creative abilities to a global level tends to be one of the common objectives of these subjects.
- Advertising Art. Subjects meant for the study and visual language comprehension and their use in advertising are part of this group. Although training in image editing computing programs can be included, these subjects are more oriented towards the knowledge of the formal elements of communication through image.
- Advertising Creativity. These general creativity subjects are focused on three main aspects: a) the development of creative abilities -that include learning creative techniques-. B) Theoretical comprehension of the Creativity phenomenon -creative process, creative person, etc.- in general and its implementation in communication and advertising. C) The development of a creative attitude beyond the advertising profession.

One of the conclusions these authors came to was that there was a great diversity in the names of the subjects, with 17 names for the writing subjects, 21 for the ones of art and 37 for those of creative strategy.

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that in the research project by Alegre and Roca (2012) graphic design subjects are not included. Despite these being gathered during the sample collection, with aims of delimiting the study, the authors opted for analyzing only the subjects of art direction. Even if it is undeniable that creativity is a crucial factor in the development of a design, there is an open debate about the exact role it plays (Dineen and Collins, 2004: 1). Avoiding taking part in the debate, the authors decided to stick to the four subjects described. However, it is necessary to point out that art direction, graphic design and similar subjects have a great relevance in the syllabi.

## 1.6. The subject Creative Strategy and Conceptualization in the Degree of Advertising and Public Relations from the University of Alicante

In this section, we are going to use the subject Creative Strategy and Conceptualization in the Degree of Advertising and Public Relations of the University of Alicante, as an example subject for the field of study under analysis and from which we are presenting the research thereupon described. This subject, mandatory in the third course, belongs to the module titled Creativity in advertising communication and public relations. The descriptor of the module indicates that<sup>3</sup>:

First, it covers the knowledge of the concept of creativity, the existing explanatory theories as well as the type of thinking that favors creative productions; secondly, the analysis of advertising as a form of informative-persuasive communication and its implications in the language field; third, according to its position in the syllabus, the knowledge of the strategic process that determines creative decisions is addressed, as well as the main genres and resources that lead to a conceptualization, understood as the expression of the message, and the adaptation of the concepts to different media. As for the optional subjects, they delve into the knowledge and development of necessary abilities to make communication more effective through its proper writing, visualization and composition, as well as the synergistic use of the emergent forms of non-conventional communication.

In addition to Creative Strategy and Conceptualization, the subjects incorporated in this module, with each having 6 ECTS-credits, are:

- Foundations of creativity (mandatory in second course).
- Advertising language (mandatory in second course).
- Advertising texts creation (mandatory in third course).
- Art Advertising (optional in fourth course).
- New advertising forms (optional in fourth course).
- Advertising poster (optional in fourth course).

These subjects within the syllabus are organized in a way that allows the student to immerse in the creative process from a macro level -studying the creativity concept and the creation mechanisms- to a micro level -in subjects like Advertising Language, Advertising Texts Creation and Advertising Art. Creativity is implemented to the verbal and visual expression of the persuasive message-, ranging over the Creative Strategy and Conceptualization subject, which is the nexus between both levels when delving into the creativity conceptualization in the process of strategy in persuasive communication. This strategic process that determines creative decisions is previous to the creation of the iconic and verbal part of the message.

The optional subjects New Advertising Forms and Advertising Poster introduce the implementation of creativity to the use of the emerging forms of non-conventional communication and delve into the

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<sup>3</sup> Drawn from the Degree syllabus: <http://bit.ly/grado-publicidad-ua>

visual component of the message, respectively. The subject that has a closer linkage with Creative Strategy and Conceptualization is Foundations of Creativity.

The inherent and specific nature of the subject Creative Strategy and Conceptualization in relation to the scientific field, to which it belongs, is the combination of creativity with strategy, which makes it unique within the syllabus in the Degree in Advertising and Public Relations of the University of Alicante. The study of creativity from a strategic approach -persuasive communication works on the basis of a set of objectives intended to be met providing the most convenient solution to a communication problem- and the study of strategy from a creative approach -if one of the premises of any strategy is the fact of having a set of resources available, sometimes limited, then it is precisely for this reason why sharpening the cunning and the innovation capacity is necessary- is what makes Creative Strategy and Conceptualization an essential subject in the training of future professionals in Advertising and Public Relations.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Methodological strategies**

The main objective of this study is to analyze the presence of subjects for creativity and strategy in the degrees of Communication in Spain. This research is based on the inputs analyzed in the bibliographic examination aforementioned, especially the one of Alegre and Roca (2012), and the following specific objectives are proposed:

- To identify subjects similar to Creative Strategy and Conceptualization in the Degrees in Communication in Spain.
- To examine the nomenclatures of the subjects for strategy and creativity in the Degrees in Communication in Spain.
- To study the distribution of subjects for strategy and creativity in the Degrees in Communication in Spain among the three specific degrees: Audiovisual Communication, Journalism and Advertising, and Public Relations.

The main hypothesis highlights the scarce variety of existing subjects in the Degrees in Communication that combine the study of creativity and strategy. For their part, the subjects for creativity are more popular than the strategy ones and it is in the degrees in Advertising and Public Relation in which both have a greater prominence and presence. Additionally, the subjects for creativity and/or strategy in the Degrees in Communication are characterized by nomenclature diversity.

### **2.2. Population and sample**

To achieve our objectives and test the validity of the hypothesis, the study was based on the course offering for Communication in Spain, with an analysis based on the syllabi of 125 degrees from 61 study centers. These 125 degrees represent 13.5% if we compare them with the total number of degrees offered in Spain in Social and Legal Sciences, 927 (Education, Culture and Sports Ministry, 2016: 7). Out of the 125 degrees analyzed, 62 are from public universities and 63 from private institutions. In total, the degrees sample comes from 32 public universities and 29 private centers.

The 61 universities for the sample can be seen in table 6, the autonomous community to which they pertain, the type of education center, the faculty in which the degrees in Communication are taught and the number of degrees offered.

**Table 6.** *Communication Degrees in Spanish University Centers.*

	Autonomous Community	University	Type	Faculty/Center	Number of Degrees
1	Madrid Community	Madrid Autonomous University	Public	Modern languages, Culture and Communication Fac.	1
2	Madrid Community	University Carlos III	Public	Modern languages, Culture and Communication Fac.	2
3	Castilla La Mancha	Castilla La Mancha University	Public	Journalism Faculty	1
4	Madrid Community	Complutense University of Madrid	Public	Information Sciences Faculty	3
5	Madrid Community	University of Alcalá	Public	Philosophy and Literature Faculty	1
6	Madrid Community	University of Alicante	Public	Economic and Corporate Sciences Faculty	1
7	Andalusia	University of Cádiz	Public	Social and Communication Sciences Faculty	1
8	Extremadura	University of Extremadura	Public	Recording and Communication Sciences Faculty	1
9	Andalucía	University of Granada	Public	Communication and Recording Faculty	1
10	Canary Islands	University of La Laguna	Public	Political, Social and Communications Sciences Faculty	1
11	Andalucía	University of Malaga	Public	Communications Sciences Faculty	3
12	Region of Murcia	University of Murcia	Public	Communication and Recording Faculty	3
13	Castile and León	University of Salamanca	Public	Social Sciences Faculty	1
14	Andalucía	University of Sevilla	Public	Communication Faculty	3
15	Castile and León	University of Valladolid	Public	Social, Legal and Communication Sciences Faculty	2
16	Galicia	University of Vigo	Public	Social and Communication Sciences Faculty	2
17	Aragón	University of Zaragoza	Public	Philosophy and Literature Faculty	1
18	Basque Country	University of The Basque Country	Public	Social and Communication Sciences Faculty	3
19	Valencian Community	Miguel Hernández University	Public	Social and Legal Sciences Faculty	2
20	Madrid Community	Rey Juan Carlos University	Public	Communication Sciences Faculty	4
21	Galicia	University of Coruña	Public	Communication Sciences Faculty	1
22	Galicia	University of Santiago de Compostela	Public	Communication Sciences Faculty	2
23	Catalonia	Autonomous University of Barcelona	Public	Communication Sciences Faculty	2
24	Catalonia	University of Barcelona	Public	Library Science and Recording Faculty	3
25	Catalonia	University of Girona	Public	Tourism Faculty	2
26	Baleares Islands	University of Balears Islands	Public	Higher Education Center Alberta Giménez	2
27	Catalonia	University of Lleida	Public	Literature Faculty	1
28	Valencian Community	University of Valencia	Public	Philology, Translation and Communication Faculty	2
29	Valencian Community	University Jaume I	Public	Humanity and Social Sciences Faculty	3
30	Valencian Community	Polytechnic University of Valencia	Public	Higher Polytechnic School of Gandia	1
31	Catalonia	Pompeu Fabra University (PFU)	Public	Communication Faculty	3
32	Catalonia	Rovira I Virgili University	Public	Literature Faculty	3
33	Catalonia	Bau Design University Center of Barcelona	Private	-	1
34	Madrid Community	Higher Studies Center Felipe II	Private	-	1
35	Cantabria	CESINE	Private	Business and Communication School	1
36	Valencian Community	Mediterranean Institute of Protocol Studies	Private	-	1
37	Catalonia	University School Formatic Barcelona	Private	-	1
38	Madrid Community	ESIC, BUSINESS&MARKETING SCHOOL (Madrid)	Private	-	1
39	Valencian Community	ESIC, BUSINESS&MARKETING SCHOOL (Valencia)	Private	-	1
40	Catalonia	EUN CET Business School - UPC	Private	-	1
41	Catalonia	L'Idem Barcelona	Private	-	1
42	Basque Country	Mondragon Unibertsitatea	Private	-	1
43	Madrid Community	UDIMA- E-learning University of Madrid	Private	Social and Humanities Sciences Faculty	2
44	La Rioja	UNIR International University La Rioja	Private	Legal, Social and Humanities Sciences Faculty	1
45	Madrid Community	Camilo José Cela University	Private	Communication Faculty	2
46	Valencian Community	Cardenal Herrera-CEU University	Private	Humanity and Communication Sciences Faculty	3
47	Region of Murcia	Catholic University San Antonio	Private	Social and Communications Sciences	4
48	Madrid Community	CEU San Pablo University	Private	Humanities and Communication Sciences	4
49	Basque Country	University of Deusto	Private	Social and Human Sciences Faculty	1
50	Navarra	University of Navarra	Private	Communication Faculty	3
51	Canary Islands	European University of the Canary Islands	Private	Social Sciences Faculty	1
52	Castile and León	Miguel de Cervantes European University	Private	Social Sciences Faculty	2
53	Madrid Community	Francisco de Vitoria University	Private	Communication Sciences Faculty	3
54	Catalonia	International University of Catalonia	Private	Communication Sciences Faculty	3
55	Madrid Community	Nebrija University	Private	Communication Sciences Faculty	4
56	Castile and León	Pontifical University of Salamanca	Private	Communication Faculty	4
57	Aragón	San Jorge University	Private	Communication and Social Sciences Faculty	4
58	Catalonia	Abat Oliba CEU University	Private	Social Sciences Faculty	2
59	Catalonia	University of Vic	Private	Business and Communication Faculty	4
60	Catalonia	Open University of Catalonia	Private	Information and Communication Sciences Studies	1
61	Catalonia	Ramon Llull University	Private	Communication and International Relations Blanquerna Fac.	5
					125

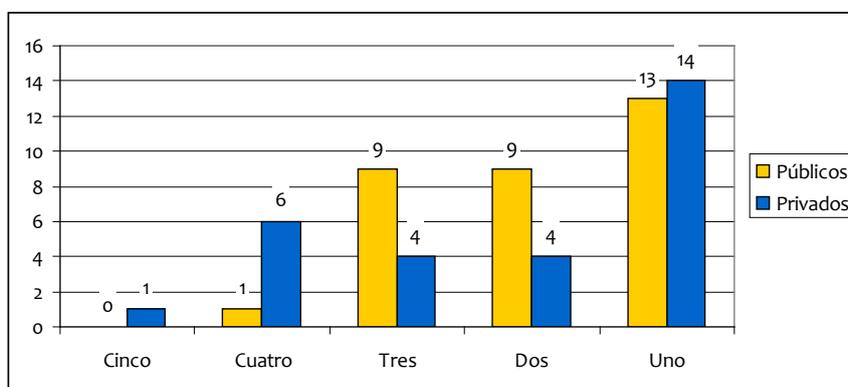
**Source:** authors' own creation based on the data of the web pages of the universities.

According to the number of degrees in Communication, there is only one center that offers 5 degrees in this field: the private Ramon Llull University. There are 7 centers that offer 4 degrees –six of them are private-, 13 universities have 3 and 2 degrees and there are 27 (44.3%) centers that offer only one degree in communication. Therefore, the median of degrees by center is 2, although the mode is just one degree. The detail is in table 7 and in graphic 1.

**Table 7.** Number of degrees by University.

Number of Degrees	Centers		Total Centers	Total Degrees
	Public	Private		
Five	0	1	1	5
Four	1	6	7	28
Three	9	4	13	39
Two	9	4	13	26
One	13	14	27	27
			<b>61</b>	<b>125</b>

**Source:** authors' own creation based on the data on the web pages of the universities.



**Graphic 1:** number of centers in relation to the number of degrees in communication.

**Source:** authors' own creation based on the data on the web pages of the universities.

The degrees identified are organized by categories, based on the three degrees in Communication described by ANECA (2005): Audiovisual Communication, Journalism and Advertising, and Public Relations. Furthermore, two additional categories are added, to cover the Degrees in Communication as well as other related degrees.

By category, as seen in table 8, out of the 125 degrees in Communication identified in the 61 centers, 14 correspond to Communication (11.2%), 37 to Audiovisual Communication (29.6%), 33 to Journalism (26.4%), 32 are for Advertising and Public Relations (25.6%) and 9 for other related degrees (7.2%) -related to protocol, design, events organization, digital communication and/or cinema-. That way, the three branches within the Communication Sciences identified in Spain since 1991 are the ones that represent the biggest offer for study opportunities in Communication.

Based on this breakdown, an analysis of the subjects included in the syllabi related to the Creative Strategy and Conceptualization subject was carried out. The analysis was based on the nomenclature of the subjects, establishing three levels of correspondence:

- Level 1. Similar subjects to Creative Strategy and Conceptualization. They were identified by the presence of two coinciding terms in the nomenclature related to strategy, creativity and/or conceptualization.

- Level 2. Subjects whose titles include nouns such as strategy, creativity or conceptualization. Subjects whose titles refer to innovation, ideation, creation and/or ideas generation were also incorporated. It is important to note that some subjects whose name included “strategy” related to other areas were excluded –such as pricing strategies or programing strategy-. In any case, the total number of these excluded subjects was lower than ten.
- Level 3. Subjects whose names include an adjective related to creative strategy and conceptualization: strategic, creative, conceptual.

In total, 202 subjects were identified: 9 subjects in level 1, 123 subjects in level 2 and 70 subjects in level 3.

### 2.3. Data collection tools and procedure

The data was collected between May and July of 2017 through the web pages of the universities, getting access to the syllabi of the degrees of the sample to identify the subjects related based on the levels previously mentioned. Therefore, the collection of data was carried out through Internet access and from the analysis of the nomenclature of the subjects included in the 125 degrees.

### 3. Results

The 202 subjects identified come from the 79 degrees -that is, 63.2% of the degrees analyzed, with a median of 2.6 subjects per degree-, while there are 46 Degrees which do not have subjects with names related to Creative Strategy and Conceptualization, offered by 34 different centers. None of these 46 degrees without a linkage to creative strategy and conceptualization correspond to the category for advertising and public relations: 16 are from audiovisual communication, 21 form journalism, 4 from communication and 5 from others, as shown in table 8.

**Table 8.** Degrees without related subjects.

Category	Number of degrees
Audiovisual Communication	16
Journalism	21
Communication	4
Others	5
	<b>46</b>

**Source:** authors’ own creation based on the data of the web pages of the universities.

On the contrary, the breakdown for the 79 degrees with subjects related to creative strategy and conceptualization is shown in table 9.

**Table 9.** Degrees with subjects related to creative strategy and conceptualization.

Category of degrees	Number of Degrees	Subjects							
		Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Total levels	
Audiovisual Communication	21	0	0.0%	30	22.9%	3	4.8%	33	16.3%
Journalism	12	0	0.0%	9	6.9%	4	6.5%	13	6.4%
Advertising and Public Relations	32	9	100.0%	74	56.5%	44	71.0%	127	62.9%
Communication	10	0	0.0%	15	11.5%	10	16.1%	25	12.4%
Others	4	0	0.0%	3	2.3%	1	1.6%	4	2.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>62</b>		<b>202</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** authors’ own creation based on the data from the web pages of the universities.

In total, 62.9% of the identified subjects are found in the degrees in Advertising and Public Relations. The 32 degrees sample in Advertising and Relations have subjects related in some of the three levels identified, which implies a median of 4 subjects per degree. Additionally, the 9 level 1 subjects come from the Degrees in Advertising and Public Relations. 60.2% of the level 2 subjects and 62.9% of the level 3 subjects are in this category of degrees. From tables 10 to 14, the breakdown of subjects related to creative strategy and conceptualization is shown for each degree category.

**Table 10.** Degrees in Audiovisual Communication whose syllabi include related subjects.

	University	Category: Audiovisual Communication	Related Subjects			Total
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	
1	Higher Studies Center Felipe II	Audiovisual Communication	0	1	0	1
2	University Carlos III	Audiovisual Communication	0	1	0	1
3	Catholic University San Antonio	Audiovisual Communication	0	1	0	1
4	University of Alcalá	Audiovisual Communication	0	0	1	1
5	University of Extremadura	Audiovisual Communication	0	1	0	1
6	University of Málaga	Audiovisual Communication	0	1	0	1
7	University of Murcia	Audiovisual Communication	0	1	0	1
8	University of Sevilla	Audiovisual Communication	0	0	1	1
9	University of Vigo	Audiovisual Communication	0	1	0	1
10	University of the Basque Country	Audiovisual Communication	0	3	0	3
11	Francisco de Vitoria University	Audiovisual Communication	0	1	0	1
12	Nebrija University	Audiovisual Communication	0	1	0	1
13	Rey Juan Carlos University	Audiovisual Communication	0	2	0	2
14	University of Coruña	Audiovisual Communication	0	1	0	1
15	Santiago de Compostela University	Audiovisual Communication	0	1	0	1
16	University of Vic	Audiovisual Communication	0	1	0	1
17	University Jaume I	Audiovisual Communication	0	1	0	1
18	Polytechnic University of Valencia	Audiovisual Communication	0	3	0	3
19	Pompeu Fabra University (PFU)	Audiovisual Communication	0	5	0	5
20	Rovira I Virgili University	Audiovisual Communication	0	0	1	1
21	University of Lleida	Audiovisual Journalism and Communication	0	4	0	4
			<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>33</b>

**Source:** authors' own creation based on the data from the web pages of the universities.

**Table 11.** Degrees in Journalism whose syllabi include related subjects.

	University	Category: Journalism	Related Subjects			Total
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	
1	University Carlos III	Journalism	0	1	0	1
2	Catholic University San Antonio	Journalism	0	1	0	1
3	University of Málaga	Journalism	0	1	0	1
4	University of Sevilla	Journalism	0	0	1	1
5	University of The Basque Country	Journalism	0	1	0	1
6	Francisco de Vitoria University	Journalism	0	2	0	2
7	Nebrija University	Journalism	0	0	1	1
8	San Jorge University	Journalism	0	0	1	1
9	Santiago de Compostela University	Journalism	0	1	0	1
10	International University of Catalonia	Journalism	0	1	0	1
11	University Jaume I	Journalism	0	1	0	1
12	Rovira I Virgili University	Journalism	0	0	1	1
			<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>

**Source:** authors' own creation based on the data from the web pages of the universities.

**Table 12.** Degrees in Advertising and Public Relations whose syllabi include related subjects.

University	Category: Advertising and Public Relations	Related Subjects			
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
1 Francisco de Vitoria University	Advertising	1	5	4	10
2 ESIC, BUSSINES&MARKETING SCHOOL (Madrid)	Advertising and Public Relations	1	1	2	4
3 UDIMA-E-learning University of Madrid	Advertising and Public Relations	0	3	1	4
4 Cardenal Herrera-CEU University	Advertising and Public Relations	0	1	2	3
5 Catholic University San Antonio	Advertising and Public Relations	0	2	1	3
6 CEU University San Pablo	Advertising and Public Relations	0	0	2	2
7 Complutense University of Madrid	Advertising and Public Relations	0	1	2	3
8 University of Alicante	Advertising and Public Relations	1	2	0	3
9 University of Cádiz	Advertising and Public Relations	0	1	1	2
10 University of Málaga	Advertising and Public Relations	0	1	2	3
11 University of Murcia	Advertising and Public Relations	0	2	0	2
12 University of Navarra	Advertising and Public Relations	0	4	1	5
13 University of Sevilla	Advertising and Public Relations	0	3	0	3
14 University of Valladolid	Advertising and Public Relations	1	1	2	4
15 University of Vigo	Advertising and Public Relations	0	2	1	3
16 University of the Basque Country	Advertising and Public Relations	0	5	2	7
17 Miguel de Cervantes European University	Advertising and Public Relations	0	3	0	3
18 Nebrija University	Advertising and Public Relations	0	1	0	1
19 Pontifical University of Salamanca	Advertising and Public Relations	1	2	1	4
20 Rey Juan Carlos University	Advertising and Public Relations	1	1	2	4
21 San Jorge University	Advertising and Public Relations	0	1	0	1
22 Abat Oliba CEU University	Advertising and Public Relations	0	1	2	3
23 University of Barcelona	Advertising and Public Relations	0	1	0	1
24 University of Girona	Advertising and Public Relations	1	4	4	9
25 University of Vic	Advertising and Public Relations	0	4	0	4
26 International University of Catalonia	Advertising and Public Relations	0	0	1	1
27 University Jaume I	Advertising and Public Relations	0	4	0	4
28 Pompeu Fabra University (PFU)	Advertising and Public Relations	1	6	3	10
29 Rovira I Virgili University	Advertising and Public Relations	0	1	1	2
30 CESINE	Advertising, Public Relations and Marketing	0	2	2	4
31 Ramon Llull University	Advertising, Public Relations and Marketing	0	4	3	7
32 European University of the Canary Islands	Advertising Communication	1	5	2	8
		<b>9</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>127</b>

**Source:** authors' own creation based on the data from the web pages of the universities.

**Table 13.** Degrees in Communication whose syllabi include related subjects.

University	Category: Communication	Related Subjects			
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
1 Camilo José Cela University	Communication	0	1	1	2
2 Catholic University San Antonio	Communication	0	2	0	2
3 Open University of Catalonia	Communication	0	2	2	4
4 UNIR International University of Rioja	Communication	0	2	0	2
5 CEU San Pablo University	Digital Communication	0	0	1	1
6 San Jorge University	Digital Communication	0	1	1	2
7 ESIC, BUSINESS&MARKETING SCHOOL (Valencia)	Communication and Public Relations	0	4	0	4
8 Pontifical University of Salamanca	Marketing and Communication	0	0	3	3
9 University of Vic	Marketing and Business Communication	0	2	2	4
10 Ramon Llull University	Journalism and Corporate Communication	0	1	0	1
		<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>

**Source:** authors' own creation based on the data from the web pages of the universities.

**Table 14.** Degrees in the category “other” whose syllabi include related subjects.

	University	Category: Other	Related Subjects			
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
1	University School Formatic Barcelona	Public Relations and Marketing Direction	0	1	0	1
2	Bau University Center of Design of Barcelona	Design	0	1	0	1
3	Autonomous University of Madrid	Modern Languages, Culture and Communication	0	0	1	1
4	EUNCET Business School - UPC	Marketing and Digital Communication	0	1	0	1
			<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>

**Source:** authors’ own creation based on the data of the web pages of the universities.

As seen in table 15, there are 32 Degrees in Communication that have three or more subjects related to Creative Strategy and Conceptualization. These 32 degrees make up 145 subjects related -72% of the sample-. Only 8 out of the 32 degrees are not part of the advertising and public relations category -four from the communication category and a few others from audiovisual communication, highlighted in blue in the next table-.

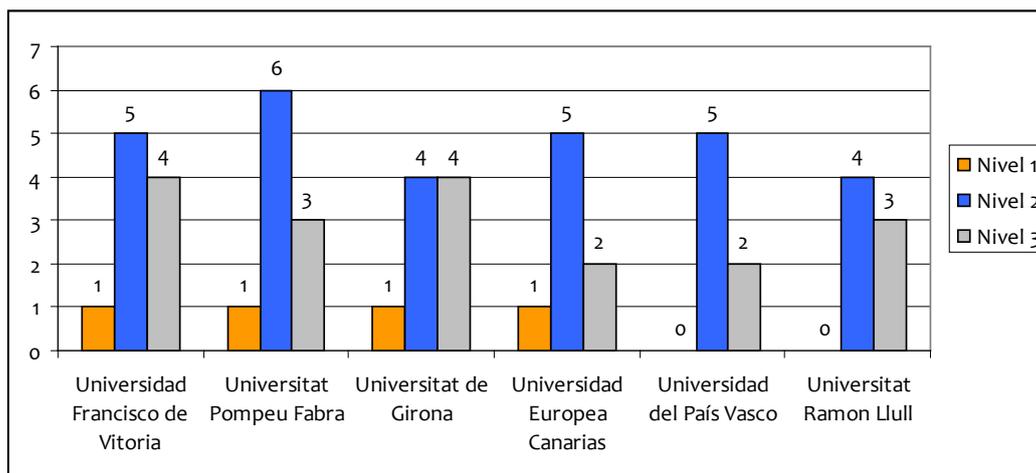
**Table 15.** Degrees whose syllabi include a higher number of subjects related to strategy and/or creativity.

	University	Degree	Subjects Related			
			Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
1	Francisco de Vitoria University	Advertising	1	5	4	10
2	Pompeu Fabra University (PFU)	Advertising and Public Relations	1	6	3	10
3	University of Girona	Advertising and Public Relations	1	4	4	9
4	European University of the Canary Islands	Advertising Communication	1	5	2	8
5	University of the Basque Country	Advertising and Public Relations	0	5	2	7
6	Ramon Llull University	Advertising, Public Relations and Marketing	0	4	3	7
7	Pompeu Fabra University (PFU)	Audiovisual Communication	0	5	0	5
8	University of Navarra	Advertising and Public Relations	0	4	1	5
9	University of Lleida	Communication and Audiovisual Journalism	0	4	0	4
10	ESIC, BUSINESS&MARKETING SCHOOL (Madrid)	Advertising and Public Relations	1	1	2	4
11	UDIMA-E-learning University of Madrid	Advertising and Public Relations	0	3	1	4
12	University of Valladolid	Advertising and Public Relations	1	1	2	4
13	Pontifical University of Salamanca	Advertising and Public Relations	1	2	1	4
14	Rey Juan Carlos University	Advertising and Public Relations	1	1	2	4
15	University of Vic	Advertising and Public Relations	0	4	0	4
16	University Jaume I	Advertising and Public Relations	0	4	0	4
17	CESINE	Advertising, Public Relations and Marketing	0	2	2	4
18	Open University of Catalonia	Communication	0	2	2	4
19	ESIC, BUSINESS&MARKETING SCHOOL (Valencia)	Communication and Public Relations	0	4	0	4
20	University of Vic	Marketing and Business Communication	0	2	2	4
21	University of the Basque Country	Audiovisual Communication	0	3	0	3
22	Polytechnic University of Valencia	Audiovisual Communication	0	3	0	3
23	Cardenal Herrera – CEU University	Advertising and Public Relations	0	1	2	3
24	Catholic University San Antonio	Advertising and Public Relations	0	2	1	3
25	Complutense University of Madrid	Advertising and Public Relations	0	1	2	3
26	University of Alicante	Advertising and Public Relations	1	2	0	3

27	University of Málaga	Advertising and Public Relations	0	1	2	3
28	University of Sevilla	Advertising and Public Relations	0	3	0	3
29	University of Vigo	Advertising and Public Relations	0	2	1	3
30	Miguel de Cervantes European University	Advertising and Public Relations	0	3	0	3
31	Abat Oliba CEU University	Advertising and Public Relations	0	1	2	3
32	Pontifical University of Salamanca	Marketing and Communication	0	0	3	3

**Source:** authors' own creation based on the data from the web pages of the universities.

In graphic 2, the six universities whose offered Degrees in Advertising and Public Relations include a greater number of subjects related to Creative Strategy and Conceptualization.



**Graphic 2:** main universities with subjects related to strategy and/or creativity in their syllabi for the Degrees in Advertising and Public Relations.

**Source:** authors' own creation based on the data of the web pages of the universities.

The Degrees in Advertising and Advertising and Public relations from the Francisco de Vitoria University and Pompeu Fabra University, respectively, are the ones having more coinciding subjects, with 10 each. Next, there are the Degree in Advertising and Public Relations from University of Girona and the Degree in Advertising Communication from European University of the Canary Islands, with 9 and 8 subjects respectively.

Analyzing the “level 1” subjects, we can affirm that there is no consensus regarding the nomenclatures of the subjects; out of the 9 identified only two have the same name -Creative Strategies in Advertising-. What does coincide is the Degree coming from both of them, from the advertising and public relations category. The names of the subjects are as follows<sup>4</sup>:

- Advertising Creative Strategy
- Creative Strategy and Conceptualization
- Strategy and Creativity
- Creative Strategies in Advertising
- Brand and Campaign Creation Strategies
- Innovative Strategies
- Ideation and Campaigns Strategy.
- Ideas, Methods and Creative Strategies: creative plan or project.

<sup>4</sup> The teaching guides of the first level subjects for the 2016-2017 academic course can be looked up on this link: <http://bit.ly/guias-docentes-nivel1>.

In table 6 the data of the “level 1” subjects identified is presented:

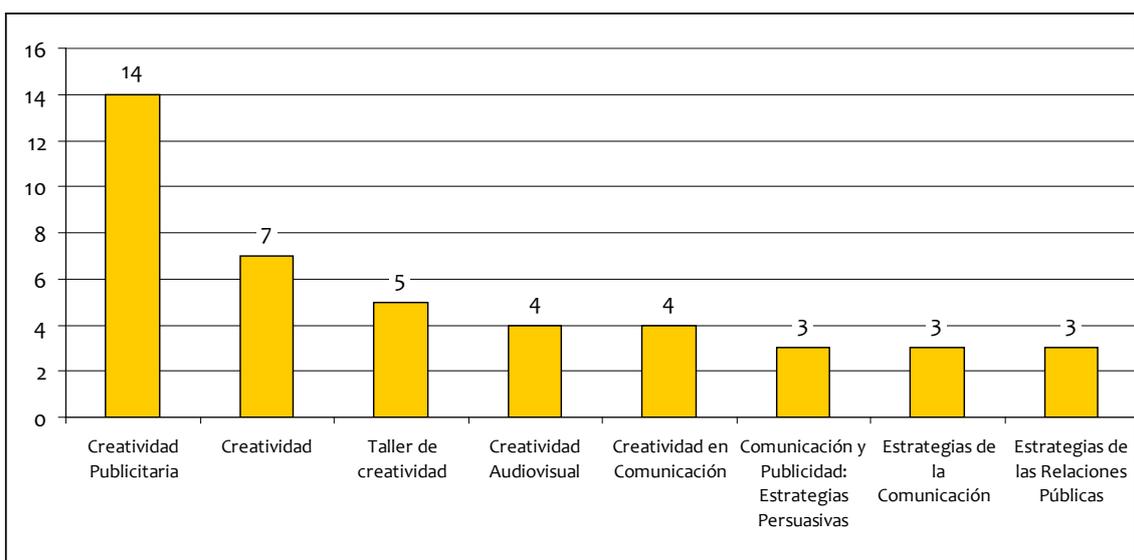
**Table 16.** Information about the “level 1” subjects related to strategy and/or creativity.

	University	Degree	Course	ECTS	Type	Subject
1	Pontifical University of Salamanca	Advertising and Public Relations	3	6	Mandatory	Advertising Creative Strategy
2	University of Alicante	Advertising and Public Relations	3	6	Mandatory	Creative Strategy and Conceptualization
3	Pompeu Fabra University	Advertising and Public Relations	3-4	4	Optional	Strategy and Creativity
4	ESIC (Madrid)	Advertising and Public Relations	2	6	Mandatory	Creative Strategies in Advertising
5	Rey Juan Carlos University	Advertising and Public Relations	2	6	Mandatory	Creative Strategies in Advertising
6	University of Girona	Advertising and Public Relations	4	6	Mandatory	Brand and Campaign Creation Strategies
7	European University of the Canary Islands	Advertising Communication	3	6	Optional	Innovative Strategies
8	Francisco De Vitoria University	Advertising	3	12	Mandatory	Ideation and Campaign Strategies
9	University of Valladolid	Advertising and Public Relations	3	6	Mandatory	Ideas, Methods and Creative Strategies: creative plan or project

**Source:** authors’ own creation based on the data of the web pages of the universities.

As we can see, 7 of the 9 subjects are mandatory and 2 are optional. In addition, there are 7 of the 9 subjects that are in third and fourth level course and a few others correspond to 6 ECTS-Credits -As for the Francisco de Vitoria University case, the subject Ideation and Campaign Strategy has 12 credits for being yearly and the optional subject from Pompeu Fabra University equates to 4 ECTS-credits-.

Moving to “level 2” of subjects related<sup>5</sup>, there is no consensus regarding the nomenclature of the subjects, which is why the 131 subjects in this level present 90 different names. The most popular nomenclatures can be seen in graphic 3.



**Graphic 3:** “Level 2” subjects with higher prominence in syllabi.

**Source:** authors’ own creation based on the data from the web pages of the universities.

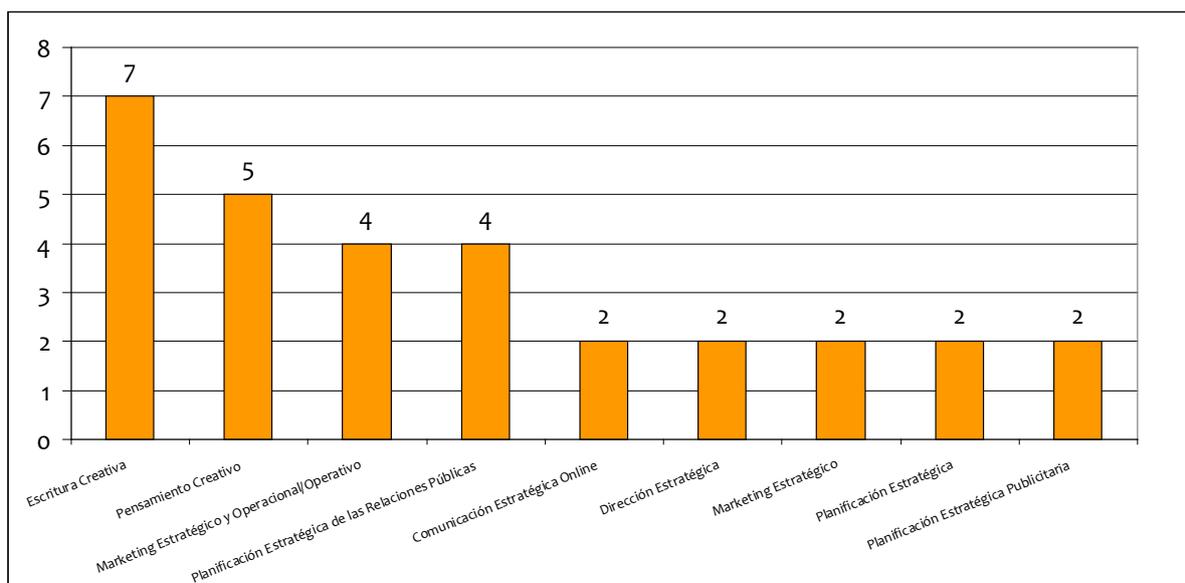
<sup>5</sup> The lists of level 2 and 3 subjects can be checked on this link: <http://bit.ly/assignaturas-niveles2y3>

Creativity and strategy have a similar presence in the syllabi in the Degrees in Communication, at least when considering the inclusion of these words in the subject nomenclature, although there is more consensus when determining the subjects related to creativity, as shown in the previous graphic -the five subjects whose name has more consensus are the ones for creativity-.

The word creativity appears in 52 nomenclatures and the word strategy in 51. The word creation appears in 21 cases; although it is necessary to clarify it does from an approach more focused on techniques and tools: multimedia creation, radio creation, creation models, creation and design, etc. The word ideation appears in five occasions, while advertising innovation has a subject in the Degree in Advertising and Public Relations from the University of Girona.

Finally, the word conceptualization only appears once, in the subject Conceptualization in Advertising and Public Relations in the Degree in Advertising, Public Relations and Marketing from Ramon Llull University.

As for “level 3”, as seen in graphic 4, Creative Writing and Creative Thinking are the most repeated subjects -in 7 and 5 occasions, respectively-. However, despite these two first places, it seems that in this level there is a greater agreement when naming the subjects related to strategic matters: among the 11 subjects that repeated twice or three times, 9 correspond to the strategy ambit.



**Graphic 4:** “Level 3” subjects with greater presence in the syllabi.

**Source:** authors’ own creation based on the data from the web pages of the universities.

The adjective “creative” appears in 21 occasions, while the adjective “strategic” is included in 42 subject names. In total, we find the two adjectives in 63 cases, being 62 the total amount of subjects related in this level, since in one of the courses the name of one of the subjects includes both adjectives: Strategic and Creative Planning, in the Degree in Communication from the Open University of Catalonia. This is why we have also incorporated this subject in the analysis of the syllabus of the most related subjects -in level 1- that we present hereunder.

Focusing on the subjects directly related to creative strategy and conceptualization, there are 9 subjects identified, as shown in table 16. In addition to these identified subjects in level 1 of relation, we are also going to incorporate two level 3 subjects in this analysis, due to the close relation they

have to creative strategy and conceptualization: Advertising and Public Relations Strategic Planning: the planner and Creative and Strategic Planning.

These 11 subjects come, in large part, from Degrees in Advertising and Public Relations –only the subject Strategic and Creative planning comes from the Degree in Communication-. If the total sample of Degrees in Advertising and Public Relations was 32, only in 9 cases did we find subjects directly related to creative strategy and conceptualization, which is in 31.3% of the sample. In six cases the subjects are taught in private institutions and in five cases in public universities.

Regarding the teaching guides for the 2016-2017 academic course of these subjects, only the ones available on the web pages of the universities were analyzed. We have included the links to the online teaching guides of the subjects from the 9 degrees in table 17 –as for the cases of the optional subject in Pompeu Fabre university and the mandatory subject in ESIC Madrid, detailed information of the subjects was not included on the webpage of the degree-.

**Table 17.** *Links to the teaching guides of the “level 1” related subjects.*

University	Type	Degree	Course	ECTS	Type	Subject	Link
Pontifical University Salamanca	Private	Advertising and Public Relations	3	6	Mandatory	Advertising Creative Strategy	<a href="http://bit.ly/upsa-ecc">http://bit.ly/upsa-ecc</a>
University of Alicante	Public	Advertising and Public Relations	3	6	Mandatory	Creative Strategy and Conceptualization	<a href="http://bit.ly/ua-ecc">http://bit.ly/ua-ecc</a>
Pompeu Fabre University	Public	Advertising and Public Relations	3-4	4	Optional	Strategy and Creativity	-
ESIC (Madrid)	Private	Advertising and Public Relations	2	6	Mandatory	Creative Strategies in Advertising	-
Rey Juan Carlos University	Public	Advertising and Public Relations	2	6	Mandatory	Creative Strategies in Advertising	Downloadable on <a href="http://bit.ly/urjc-ecc">http://bit.ly/urjc-ecc</a>
University of Girona	Public	Advertising and Public Relations	4	6	Mandatory	Brand and Campaign Creation Strategies	<a href="http://bit.ly/udg-ecc">http://bit.ly/udg-ecc</a>
European University of the Canary Islands	Private	Advertising Communication	3	6	Optional	Innovative Strategies	<a href="http://bit.ly/ue-ecc">http://bit.ly/ue-ecc</a>
Francisco de Vitoria University	Private	Advertising	3	12	Mandatory	Ideation and Campaign Strategies	<a href="http://bit.ly/ufv-ecc">http://bit.ly/ufv-ecc</a>
University of Valladolid	Public	Advertising and Public Relations	3	6	Mandatory	Ideas, Methods and Creative Strategies: plan or creative project	<a href="http://bit.ly/uva-ecc">http://bit.ly/uva-ecc</a>
Ramon Llull University	Private	Advertising and Public Relations	3	3	Mandatory	Advertising and Public Relations Strategic Planning: the planner	<a href="http://bit.ly/blanguerna-ecc">http://bit.ly/blanguerna-ecc</a>
Open University of Catalonia	Private	Communication	3-4	3	Optional	Strategic and Creative planning	<a href="http://bit.ly/uoc-ecc">http://bit.ly/uoc-ecc</a>

**Source:** author’s own creation based on the data of the webpages of the universities.

#### 4. Discussion

Strategy and creativity are fundamental subjects in the Degree in Advertising and Public Relations, as it has been proven in the analysis of competencies, skills, abilities and professional profiles proposed by ANECA (2005) as well as in the results of the study carried out on the subjects in the Degrees in Communication: all the Degrees in the “advertising and public relations” category have subjects related in different levels.

However, even if all the identified similar subjects to Creative Strategy and Conceptualization belong to Advertising and Public Relations studies, these are scarce, since only 28% of the Degrees in “Advertising and Public Relations” category have subjects related to creative strategy and conceptualization.

For their part, neither strategy nor creativity nor the combinations of both have prominent presence in the syllabi in Degrees in Audiovisual Communication and Journalism: 63% of the identified subjects are in the “advertising and public relations” category degrees. Therefore, we can claim that the main hypothesis is verified since the existing subjects in the Degrees in Communication that combine the study of creativity and strategy are scarce.

Another aspect we have considered convenient to highlight is the necessity of an examination of the creativity subjects nomenclature, following the proposals of Stuhlfaut and Berman (2009) and Alegre and Roca (2012), corroborated with the study we have carried out on the subjects of creativity and advertising strategy, classified in different levels. This work of coordination will facilitate the performance of students in a national ambit and will contribute to the delimitation of the contents for each subject, since they occasionally overlap, especially when the subjects are part of the very own field of study.

Apart from the Brand and Campaign Creation Strategies subject, in the Degree in Advertising and Public Relations from University of Girona, that partially analyzes brand creation and management, the rest of subjects whose syllabi have been examined are focused on the creative process from the setting of advertising objectives to the evaluation of the results of the designed advertising actions, focusing mainly on two professional figures: the copywriter and planner.

Additionally, the contents of these subjects prove that advertising creativity today cannot be limited to the activity of copywriters and art directors at the creative departments of agencies, but it is understood as a general quality of any advertising communication professional, which is why universities seek to teach this holistic vision integrating the creative approach in the advertising systems and processes and highlighting the applicability of creativity in all and each one of the stages.

Regarding the competencies, we highlight the following generic and specific ones, since they are the most prominent in the teaching guides of the subjects of creativity and conceptualization:

1. General: teamwork.
2. General: Oral and written expression ability, in a right, rich and fluid manner.
3. General: management of ICTs as typical and basic work tools and taking advantage of their potentiality in the professional ambit.
4. General: capacity for ideation, creativity and innovation.
5. Specific: strategic attitude and conceptualization capacity.
6. Specific: advertising strategies planning and design based on a set of objectives.
7. Specific: knowledge of the functions of the professional figures (copywriter and planner) and the latest advertising creativity trends.
8. Specific: Customer research and comprehension.

In the 2016-2017 course all the examined subjects were based on participative methodologies that involved students, with a significant importance on practical activities in a continuous evaluation process. However, the master class based on an interactive presentation is still the most common practice when addressing the theoretical contents, which is why we can assert in these cases, that the conversion towards a cooperative learning integral model is at an intermediate phase.

## 5. Conclusions

If the creation of the EHEA was driven by the necessity of the Academy for a greater connection with professional reality, this searching of synergies with the industry has to be the foundation guiding any teaching methodology, and from our perspective, more bridges that allow and motivate professionals to get closer to students –and vice versa- must be built from universities, since students are keen to interact with professional reality. In this sense, as pointed out by Muela (2012), the advertising creativity subject:

Even though it has to develop a theoretical part about the basic concepts of this activity as a fundamental part of a process aimed to solve problems to obtain original products, it must also eliminate the myths associated to the figure of the copywriter as a genius or enlightened. Therefore, it is a subject focused on the profession, but also an essential requirement in any stage of the strategic process of a campaign that is, especially, associated to a department and a group of professionals who work in creative teams. (p. 34)

As the White Paper of the degrees in communication (ANECA, 2005, p. 337) states, the professor of advertising creativity has to provoke a “proximity to the professional reality and the communicative endeavor, from reflection and study understood as the set of different actions, especially advertising ones” from students.

The communication strategic planner has been holding a key spot within the structure of agencies and it is even more and more common for him/her to be part of the marketing and communication departments of the advertiser (Castelló-Martínez, 2019; Sebastián-Morillas, Martín-Soladana and Clemente-Mediavilla, 2020). As stated by Gem Romero -Head of Strategy in LOLA MullenLowe Barcelona-, “strategic thinking is equally necessary in advertising as it is creativity [...] we should all be strategists or copywriters in the different stages of the advertising process” (Álvarez-Ruíz, 2012, p. 13). Strategic planning has been consolidating as a high level of professionalization in Spain; therefore, the syllabi of Communication must provide immediate answers to these new market needs, focusing on the planner figure.

Since the economic recession period that began in 2008, advertisers have reduced their advertising investment -the 5.951,8 million euros invested in advertising in controlled media in 2009 are closer to the 5.110 million euros of 1999 than to the 7.986 million euros of 2007 (InfoAdex, 2020)-, but they invest more intelligently, demanding integrated communicative solutions that assure the measurement of effectiveness and profitability, allow the personalization of the message, incorporate the participation of the audience and its interaction with the message and for the consumer to be the main figure.

The importance that the communication context acquires for those brands that crave reaching the level of useful brands, providing a frank and lasting answer in persuasive communication to the social concerns and tensions of the milieu, highlights the figure of the planner, whose main task is knowing and understanding the customer of the target audience to the point of empathizing with him/her. The strategic planner is responsible that creative executions have a solid foundation thanks to choosing a differentiating crux of communication and to the identification of a creative concept,

transforming it into an empathic, stimulating, surprising and memorable message for the target audience.

The crux of communication is the pillar on which any strategy of integrated persuasive communication is based (Zomeño, 2014: 211-212; Castelló-Martínez and Del Pino-Romero, 2019). To conceptualize it creatively, based on the in-depth knowledge of the audience, you can draw on the insights of the customer, putting them at the service of the message of the brand. Based on the documentary research about the brand and the product, the competitors, the market and the target audience, the strategic planner is responsible of these two first phases of the creative process in any advertising strategy. As stated by Hernández and Pinar (2012):

Creativity requires strategic planning to assure the effectiveness of its messages, since it is in the strategic phase where you decide what to say about brands and products, to whom you are going to say it and through what mediums. (p. 379)

This new paradigm of integrated persuasive communication justifies the need for the strategy to be creative and for creativity to be strategic, the importance of the planner figure and the urgency when training professionals in communication with this profile, adapting the syllabi to the always changing reality.

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