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## Técnicas de meta-aprendizaje para el estudio independiente de los alumnos universitarios

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# Técnicas de meta-aprendizaje para el estudio independiente de los alumnos universitarios

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**Resumen:** A partir de una detallada revisión documental y la observación a actividades docentes y metodológicas, el presente trabajo aborda la problemática de lograr el estudio con autonomía y eficiencia por parte del alumno del modelo de formación semipresencial, de ahí el objetivo de mejorar el dominio de técnicas de estímulo al meta-aprendizaje para la calidad del estudio independiente de los alumnos universitarios con la guía formativa como herramienta didáctica y a través de la asignatura Comunicación y Lenguaje.

**Palabras clave:** Estudio independiente, Autonomía del aprendizaje, Meta-aprendizaje, Aprender a aprender.

**Abstract:** Based on a detailed documentary review and observation of teaching and methodological activities, this paper addresses the problem of achieving study autonomously and efficiently by the student blended learning model, hence the goal of improving the mastery of techniques of stimulation to the meta-learning for the quality of the independent study of the university students, with the formative guide as didactic tool and through the subject Communication and Language.

**Keywords:** Independent study, Autonomy of learning, meta-learning, learning to learn.

## Introducción

From the guiding functions of the teacher in the teaching-learning process, teaching to learn is a step forward that characterizes modern didactics as a complement to its traditional essence of learning to teach.

On the other hand, from the role of the student as an active subject in this transformative process, meta-learning is a process of reflection within learning, metacognitive in its essence, and with multiple views from various approaches in the contemporary pedagogical universe: learning significant, strategic, developer. The truth is that it becomes necessary in an increasingly well-founded training scenario that is the autonomy of learning in students, especially in higher education. Along this way, there are learning strategies that here –decanted by the cultural-historical approach– prefer to insist on its developer character, as is the case of learning to learn and one of its dimensions is learning to study.

Authors such as Cabrera (2009) and Macías and Valenzuela (2017) maintain that both strategic visions of learning - teaching to learn and learning to learn - are inextricably complemented to achieve in a coherent way the objectives of a qualitatively superior teaching-

educational transformation, oriented towards human development, in addition to allowing this own formative approach to be raised to other convergent or divergent ones within contemporary pedagogical trends.

According to Carlos Monereo (cited by Rivero and Bernal, 2014) learning strategies «are decision-making processes (conscious and intentional) in which the student chooses and recovers, in a coordinated manner, the knowledge he needs to fulfill a certain demand or objective, depending on the characteristics of the educational situation in which the action occurs »(p.17).

When learning strategies are oriented towards autonomy in learning, in order for the student to learn ways of learning for their professional training, they can be defined as didactic strategies for learning to learn. Through didactic strategies to learn to learn as a set of actions designed and executed by the teacher together with the students and contextualized in the traditional components of didactics, the following directions are established, which are not specific to a concrete moment but rather systemically they can act in any of them, as pointed out by Zilberstein (2007) and Cabrera (2009)

- Didactic strategy related to the approach and achievement of goals by the student.
- Use of didactic strategy for searching and processing information.
- Use of a strategy for expression and communication, emphasizing the interactive aspect of communication.
- Didactic strategy for approaching and solving problems through reflections on problem situations.
- Strategy for self-regulation of learning.

These strategies are reordered in the sphere of study and the teacher in the new pedagogical model, especially in the scenario of the universalization of higher education with study modalities not only face-to-face, has as a priority to teach study rather than offer a large amount of contents, and does not ignore this process that occurs outside its scope because it regulates it through the two fundamental didactic functions of the class-meeting (Res. 02/2018, art. 133): Verification and control and Orientation towards the objective.

In the first didactic function, through combined teaching methods, stimulation techniques can be introduced to meta-learning, where the teacher is interested not only in the acquisition of knowledge, but in the way in which it was acquired. It can lead the student to the self-evaluation of their study techniques, they can submit it to a joint evaluation and socialize it, and contribute with their experience other skills that teach them to study, starting with the rescue of the well-known OPLER method introduced by the Cuban researcher Gustavo Torroella (1984) and suggest other methods and techniques of proven metacognitive effectiveness.

In the semi-face-to-face modality, a flexible perspective that opts for the combination of organizational forms integrated into the didactic functional base of the class-meeting favors the confluence of various teaching methods where teacher and students interact jointly and

collaboratively and contribute to an optimization of learning autonomy with greater use of independent study.

The didactics of the class-meeting, both in its function of Verification and control and in the Orientation towards the objective, can favor the autonomy of learning if it is intended in the guide to go beyond a list of exercises and turn it into a tool didactics in itself with formative value and not exclusively instructive. Thus, the teacher will guide activities that are not only aimed at the search for knowledge but towards the way of acquiring it (condensation resources, elaboration of conceptual maps, the elaboration of definitions or paraphrases of the established ones, underline the essential, etc....).

However, due to ignorance, predisposition and even undervaluation of the potentialities, commitment and motivations of the students who are in our classrooms today, this guiding response from the teacher that concatenates the moment of the classroom with independent study is not achieved.

The teacher can establish reflection questions about learning and that favor the student's self-evaluation before, during and at the end of the study activity, which leads to a process of self-regulation: What previous knowledge do I start from? What new knowledge have I found? What knowledge do I need to expand? What new vision do I have of the subject studied?

The training guide is the quintessential instrument of independent study, and in turn the reflection of learning autonomy and therefore, self-management of knowledge. The teacher should always keep in mind that the activities promote skills for the development of the student's thinking, such as explaining, justifying (giving reasons), comparing, judging, exemplifying, applying and generalizing.

For a better illustration, and coherent with the cognitive, communicative and sociocultural approach in the didactics of language teaching, directed by Dr. Angelina Roméu, the subject Communication and Language is selected within the basic curriculum of careers of the early childhood education subsystem, because it favors this modality and provides space to promote meta-learning stimulation techniques.

Its contents not only favor the conjugation of thought with language and writing - a communicative-intellectual-productive reflection of the former - but it explicitly turns knowledge, skills and attitudes about textual understanding and production into the center of study strategic ways for their mastery in communicative situations, promoting for it essential macro-skills such as listening and reading.

The objective of this work is to improve the mastery of meta-learning stimulation techniques for the quality of independent study of university students, with the training guide as a didactic tool and through the subject Communication and Language.

## Develoment

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Studying is one of the strongest activities of thought (Bahamon, 2000) by combining the three levels of content assimilation: reproduction, application and creation. For its part, the basic training course Communication and Language guides its object of study to the communicative processes of comprehension and textual production with contents organized in two thematic units that provide the student with the theoretical-practical basis for carrying out the activity with strategic thinking of the study.

In the Communication and Language course, Theme II: The process of understanding and producing texts is proposed as the basis for analysis. Here, the development of linguistic macro-skills to speak, listen, read and write in students is approached in a theoretical-practical way and from text science, and more specifically in the general objective of forming adequate patterns of expression, both oral and written, which will be applied later in the performance of his professional work and in his personal life.

Many meta-learning techniques linked to the study activity are based on the ascending levels of content assimilation that start from the comprehension process as an intellectual activity expressed in the so-called condensation resources to create mental maps, networks of words, from of essential ideas (Fariñas, 2004). For its part, the chosen theme is worked from the text comprehension process and one of its reading comprehension strategies, which is the summary and determination of the central idea in the paragraphs.

The teacher can start by asking a specific student to tell him how he carried out his independent study for the subject and through the guide. In the service of this recapitulation, he can look for motivation to establish a sequence or inventory of facts on the board and will lead the student to compare them with the levels of understanding studied in the topic. The student's experience encourages the reflection and debate of others with similar or different experiences and also allows them to be compared with the levels of understanding studied.

At this initial moment –which in the class-meeting coincides with the introduction of the first moment and its didactic function Verification and control of independent study– the teacher usually makes a brief presentation of the objectives and previously oriented contents, which should be part of the guiding structure of the guide and this in turn must be the benchmark at all times. In this recapitulation, it can be used meta-learning stimulation techniques, combined with other productive methods: joint elaboration, concept maps or diagrams, among others known in the development didactics.

Already in the development of the first teaching function, the teacher evaluates the first learning activity that appears in the study guide, and aims to characterize the content through definitions, objectives or purposes, typologies. Here we show a design alternative where some stimulation techniques for meta-learning can be inserted:

- Theme: Reading in the text comprehension process.

Learning activities:

1- Study the subject referred to the reading that appears in the oriented bibliographic materials and make a content file with the main characteristics of this process. To do this, consider the following aspects:

a) Meaning of reading.

b) Motives or purposes of reading (You can also find them in the book *Renovating teaching - learning the Spanish language and literature*, by Juan Ramón Montaña).

c) Types of reading (must include the characteristics of digital reading, which appears in Chapter 4 of the book *Language and Communication*). You can also find out how these terms are handled in: dictionaries, university digital networks such as (Ecured - Internet, Wikipedia).

Evaluation criteria:

Objective: To characterize the reading process through different axes of analysis such as its meaning, purposes and typologies.

· You can use the content sheet to relate and synthesize the content studied.

· Correctly link the content studied with the analysis aspects proposed in the task.

· Synthesize correctly the information provided by bibliographic materials.

· Identify other sources of information.

· Characterize the reading process from the analysis of its meaning, purposes and typologies.

From this proposal, it is recommended that each orientation of the learning activities in the guide sets out the evaluation criteria of the skills that allow the student to assess the level of assimilation of the content, which goes from the level of familiarization-reproduction - and in the as much as possible - up to the transfer of content (creative level).

If they are not explicit in each learning activity of the study guide, the teacher can previously present the evaluation criteria, in person, specifying which ones would take him to the maximum appropriate level, moderately adequate and an inadequate level of achievement) and from hence carry out the control activity of the independent study.

The teacher can use other techniques to stimulate meta-learning in the joint solution of the teaching task of the guide for the face-to-face moment. In this case, a condensation resource such as the conceptual scheme, the synoptic table and even metacognitive questions would be effective if you see difficulties (habits, skills development, motivations ...) in the efficient use of the study activity.

• Theme: Levels and strategies for text comprehension.

Learning Activities:

2-The book entitled *Communication and text*, by the author Ileana Domínguez García refers to the process of understanding texts on pages 37 and 38. You can lean on this theory in other digital articles contained in the bibliography folder of the meeting. Considering the above, specify the answers to these questions:

a) What did you understand by understanding?

b) What is reading comprehension and text comprehension?

Establish similarities and differences between the previous concepts.

c) What do you understand by strategies? Help yourself from the dictionary.

d) What are the different comprehension strategies? Summarize them in a synoptic chart.

e) From another text studied in this or another subject, show evidence of how you apply these strategies for your understanding. We recommend that you make a sequence to match the evidence (examples) at every moment of the process.

f) How do you value your strategic mastery of the text comprehension process? Identify aspects that, in your opinion, justify this evaluative criterion.

Evaluation criteria:

Objective: Interprets textual comprehension as a process through its levels and strategies linked to reading.

- It states synthetically and precisely the essential aspects of the understanding process.

- Determine correctly the distinctive characteristics that delimit reading comprehension and text comprehension to establish their nexus of similarity.

- Interprets the guiding sense and decision-making that a strategy entails.

- Classify text comprehension strategies.

- Determine the essence of each strategy by relating them in a table.

- Transfers his interpretation of the process to other demands for understanding with a strategic sense.

Finally, we show the third learning activity, which in the transition from the general to the particular, allows the teacher to fulfill the training objective of the class.

- Theme: The summary strategy.

Learning Activities:

3-After studying the content on the summary as a strategy that favors the reading comprehension process, select a literary or scientific text that you have read and studied. Take it as a reference for the following indications:

a) Select the keywords and word networks that, due to their meaning, allow you a first level of understanding of the text.

b) Make a glossary of words that were unknown to you because of their meaning. You can use the dictionary.

c) Extract the essential ideas from the text and put them in order.

d) Make a summary using these textual condensation resources studied.

e) Comment on the importance you attach to the summary strategy when facing independent study in any subject.

f) What aspect is most difficult for you when summarizing a text?

Evaluation criteria:

Objective: Apply knowledge about the summary strategy for a better understanding of the text in the independent study activity.

- Determine the central idea in each paragraph of the text.

- Relate the ideas in the text in a hierarchical order.
- Apply the knowledge on the strategy of the summary from the domain of textual condensation resources.
- Apply with creative independence the ability to synthesize in rewriting the text through the summary.
- Metacognitively values their achievement levels in the domain of this reading comprehension strategy.

Note that this exercise seeks to evaluate the development of the strategic ability to summarize and encompasses the condensation resources that underlie the most creative assimilation of the subject.

The metacognitive moment present in the previous activity can serve as a conclusion of this first moment of control of the planned activities as well as their assimilation and application in other situations converted into demands for learning and problem solving.

The control of the fulfillment of the activities and the formative evaluation of the assimilation of the students with respect to the contents is subject to the creativity of the teacher based on the methodological guidelines of the program, taking into account the key contents for the student's self-learning and the way in which it can combine activities with traditional questions with those that stimulate meta-learning, that is to say, the conscious exercise, on the part of the student of knowing how to get to the knowledge and, above all, assessing whether this autonomous journey was carried out efficiently in the process. It is not ruled out that for this the teacher can use his didactic mastery, his creativity: he can make teams, propose a competition, use simulation techniques, among others.

The second moment of the class, guided by the didactic function of Orientation of the new contents and through study guide No. 10 (Functional styles of the text) follows this same intention to develop greater autonomy of student learning and make it aware of their responsibility and use of the thought process that concerns the activity of independent study. Here the role of the teacher is predominantly guiding because it places the student on the progressive path of the contents of the subject:

It guides the new study guide and makes clarifications regarding its access in the digital folder of the subject, the availability of the laboratory in the event that even all students do not have this bibliographic material in their possession.

It makes warnings regarding the content Functional styles of the text, and the way in which it was treated in the Guide, the derivation of the new content with respect to the one that already dominates, its relevance for the curricular outputs of the subject regarding the integrative discipline and the prospective sense within the path that has not yet traveled, always with the intention of provoking motivation for this new content, the possibility of using complementary bibliography.

At this time, the teacher uses the study's self-management (a metacognitive indicator of learning to study) and recommends from the action-orientation, habits and self-regulation a better use of the study.

Of the meta-learning techniques, metacognitive questions that can serve as a conclusion for the class-meeting are highly recommended.

You cannot see the use of meta-learning techniques as a unique methodological recipe to strengthen the link between face-to-face activity and independent study in this type of study that has its fundamental form in the class-meeting.

It is a didactic support and the teacher will always make use of it depending on their pedagogical mastery and their degree of commitment to this modality of semi-face-to-face study that presents us with the challenge of looking for new ways to be competent in our teaching and in diverse contexts.

## **Conclusions**

The autonomy of learning and its consequent self-management of knowledge by the student are consistent with the conception of developer learning. Within this, the stimulation of meta-learning contributes to the student being aware of the process and self-regulating.

The effectiveness of the interrelation of the training guide as a didactic instrument and the class-meeting as a form of teaching organization can be a fruitful way to achieve the objective of an efficient independent study.

The contents of the subject Communication and Language –and intentionally the subject referred to the Textual comprehension strategies with the summary as the most creative expression in its decision making for the study activity– can be worked methodologically in an integrated way with techniques of stimulation of meta-learning to optimize independent study.