

Changing university teacher's identity: Training based on dramatized incidents¹²

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Abstract:

The main objective of this research consists in analysing the impact on a set of dimensions of university teacher's identity of a training course based on dramatized critical incidents (CI). Additionally, we want to demonstrate the transference and persistence of the promoted changes. The research was carried out at a public university of Barcelona (Spain), with 7 voluntary teachers from several departments and Faculties. An initial open questionnaire about personal experiences related with critical incidents was administered. Then we passed a tracing questionnaire about self-perception of changes on their own identity, and six months later a second open-ended interview was applied to explore the impact of the teaching course. Results showed that in all cases there were changes in some dimensions of teacher's identity, which were more evident regarding strategies and feelings than teaching conceptions. These changes were maintained one semester later.

Keywords: Teachers' Identity, Critical Incidents, teachers' training, Higher Education, Permanence of change.

Introduction

Several transnational initiatives, like the Bologna plan, have been implemented to face the new challenges that the society of knowledge poses. This initiative has among its priority objectives to change teaching practices of university teachers, thus emphasizing the need to learn competences that will allow students to face real life problems, rather than the acquisition of purely academic contents purely (EHEA, 2012). Nevertheless, as research has demonstrated, changing these practices means overcoming a lot of different kinds of obstacles.

On the one side, different studies have stressed the difficulty of modifying the epistemological and instructional conceptions that university teachers hold (De la Cruz, Pozo, Huarte y Scheuer, 2006), while other studies have emphasised the emotional cost that this change entails since it exposes teachers to situations of vulnerability, insecurity and/or conflict with their colleagues (Darby, 2008; Lansky, 2005). The third group of works have denounced the lack of mechanisms of professional promotion and

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socialization in the institutions (Kelchtermans, 2005; Van Veen, 2008). Finally, more recent research has stressed the teaching competences that university teachers should possess (Torra et al., 2012) and their shortages, even of those teachers well-known by their university (Monereo & Domínguez, in press). Specifically the first of the studies conducted a survey with over two thousand teachers (the survey was first designed through eight discussion groups, one for each of the participating universities, each comprised of eight experts). This study identifies the following teaching competences as the most important ones: communicative, interpersonal, methodological, teaching planning and management, innovative and team work competences. Nevertheless, the second study referenced shows that these six perceived competences are interpreted in a biased way when they refer to students' coparticipation in their own learning or the bidirectional educational conversation (participative exposition is more likely to be encouraged) or the consideration of teaching as team work (actually research and management are indeed associated to team work, but teaching is not so, as it is considered a job that must be done alone).

In order to overcome these obstacles, resistances and shortages, a lot of European universities, driven by the process of European convergence (see the introductory text of this monograph), have created specific requests for initial and lifelong training, but results are quite disappointing. Most of the training modalities are based on the acquisition of psychoeducational concepts and/or supervised internships (Sutherland, Howard & Markauskaite, 2010) that are not contextualised and do not focused on the management of the contingencies that take place in the classroom, when this is precisely the thing that worries teachers the most (Sutherland, Scanlon & Sperring, 2005). In Spain, for instance, according to a research conducted in 2006 in 57 universities (González Sanmamed, 2006), trainings have mostly aimed at teaching teachers to fulfil bureaucratic demands of the process of European convergence, that is syllabus, while education itself has remained in the background and dealt with through traditional modalities (conferences, courses and workshops taught by experts).

This scarce preoccupation to promote the teaching competences of university teachers contrasts with the growing importance of their research productivity, which may be the cause of teaching being seen as a subsidiary activity (Cano & Revuelta, 1999; Portilla, 2002).

In response to this anomalous situation, some voices have defended that university teachers training should be more structural and comprehensive in order to produce deeper and more sustainable changes; a training that makes an impact on teacher identity of university teachers (McAlpine y Akerlind, 2010; Settlage, Sutherland, Smith y Ceglie, 2009). Following this line of research, in this study our aim is twofold: first, we aimed at offering arguments to sustain that, in order for training to be effective, transferable and sustainable it should have an impact on teacher identity. Second, our purpose is to show that a training based on the use of contingencies that take place in teaching practices has the conditions to promote changes in some essential components of teacher identity, which in turn may have a significant impact on these practices.

Facing the contingencies that take place in university classrooms

As it is synthesised in Table I, in the everyday life university teachers face different kinds of contingencies that can be classified and described attending to two general criteria: first, the expectancy of this situation, that is the degree in which, according to the teacher's perception, it responds to a pattern of students' normal behaviour or, on the contrary, a rare one. Second, attending to the degree in which this contingency causes emotional distress to the teacher, taking place under his/her control or, on the contrary, eluding this control and promoting reactive behaviours.

(Table I)

By routines we mean common situations to which teachers respond using a set of pre-planned responses (Roberts, 2007) that give them a great sense of control and security. On the other hand, events are situations that surprise teachers to some degree (for instance a bad student that asks an interesting question), but that do not cause any emotional unbalance and that teachers can handle without any problem. On the other hand, conflicts despite being continuous and, therefore, expected, are experienced in a negative way and they lead to a resignation attitude due to the lack of resources to face them (for instance, a teacher requests a task for the next lesson, but he/she foresees that very few students will do it).

Finally, incidents are episodes that combine an unexpected situation and a lack of emotional control. When the emotional impact reaches such intensity that makes the teacher feel blocked or react in an untimely and inadequate way (denial, avoidance, violence, etc.), it is called 'critical incident'.

In the specialized literature critical incidents (from now on CI) are described as unexpected and time bound (Everly & Mitchell, 1999), as leading the 'victim' to crisis, revealing their implicit structures (Burgum & Bridge, 1997; Tripp, 1993; Woolsey, 1986) and exceeding their defence and self-control mechanisms (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson & Maglio, 2005); and as offering a chance for a deep change in one or more components of teacher identity, since they are made explicit and turned into objects of conscious analysis (Martín & Cervi, 2006; Monereo, Badia, Bilbao, Cerrato & Weise, 2009).

CI are never so *a priori*, they require a subjective interpretation. Authors like Wheatley (2002) have referred to, for instance, a novice teachers' "blindness", whose lack of security and, in turns, fake optimism, explains that they omit some CIs. In any case, the appearance of a CI can be beneficial for a teacher if it is well managed, since it is a chance to change and learn new teaching competencies.

Even though CI that can take place in a university classroom are often very different in nature and intensity, thanks to some pioneer international initiatives, like *Learning & Teaching Centre* of the University of Victoria (2012) and some of our previous works (Contreras, Monereo & Badia, 2010; Monereo & Domínguez, in press), we can appreciate similarities in the most frequent CI in the university educational practices: management of students' complaints, especially in relation to assessment and to course's meaning and usefulness; management of teaching quality and its impact on learning; management of students' motivation; management of students' participation and engagement methods; management of conduct codes and rules; and management of teaching resources and technologies.

Different training methods have been developed to provide teachers with strategies to face these CI. Some of them are based on individual questionnaires that stimulate group discussion (Gilstrap & Dupree, 2008) or on guidelines for the analysis of incidents through case studies (Monereo, 2010; Nail, Gajardo & Muñoz, 2012). Other methods are based on the creation of graphics that allow talking about certain events of the professional biography (Burnard, 2005) or diagramming different alternative actions that teachers can carry out to solve an incident (Kennedy, 1999). A third group proposes the use of evidence compilation systems, like teaching portfolios, aiming at identifying and analysing critical moments during the development of a certain project or a training process (Sockman & Sharma, 2008). Finally, some systems are built upon the exchange between teachers and the possibility to share interpretations and help each other with CI, experienced in the first person (Adger, Hoyle & Dickinson, 2004; Harrison & Lee, 2011).

Nevertheless, most of these methods opted for a distant and *a posteriori* analysis of CI, omitting the possible interest of experimenting them in the “own flesh” and analyse them *in situ*, so that training is as contextualised, authentic and embodied as possible. Recently other alternatives are being considered based on dramatization methods (Toivanen, Komulainen & Ruismäki, 2011) and on the use of videorecordings of CI (Johannes & Seidel, 2012) that try to make the best of these first-person experiences. In the empirical study we present afterwards, we used some dramatization situations to achieve our formative goals.

Changing teacher identity

As we tried to contend in the previous pages, in order for training to produce deep, meaningful and sustainable changes, it should impact on teacher identity of the university teachers, being CIs the ideal means for this.

The conceptualization of teacher identity has changed a lot over the last decade. From the classical vision of a unique, continuous and individual identity, scholars have started to see it as multiple, discontinuous and social (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000).

Currently the teacher identity construct fluctuates between more cognitive-constructivists visions, that define it as a set of self-referential representations about different aspects of teaching job, and more relativist-dialogical positions, that consider it a dynamic construction of the continuous interaction between the intrapsychological dialogue, in the subject’s mind, and the interpsychological dialogue with the others (Monereo & Pozo, 2011).

At present substantial efforts are being done to conciliate both perspectives in the field of Educational Psychology (Badie & Monereo, *in press*; Ligorio, 2012), based on the concept of *I-position* put forward by Hubert Hermans and his colleagues (Hermans & Giese, 2012) in the core of the *Dialogical Self Theory*. Basically these authors conceive identity as a small society of mind where different self-positions have their own voice and generate narratives that compete against each other, thus making that one of them prevail or, on the contrary, producing changes that would allow for creation of new positions.

In any case, there is broad consensus (Lansky, 2005; Sutherland, Howard & Markauskaite, 2010) in considering three dimensions that would produce a change in those different positions that constitute the so called teacher identity, in a specific moment and context:

a) Changes in the professional role and conceptions about teaching, learning and assessing instructional process: this dimension gathers beliefs, conceptions and theories, explicit and implicit, that the teacher has about his professional role and what, how and when he has to teach and assess certain contents and, more specifically the contents of his discipline.

Regarding the role, training should ideally boost the teaching role instead of the rest of roles assigned to the university teacher (specialist, teacher, tutor, researched, professional, manager), being the researcher role the one that traditionally has prevailed over the teaching role (De la Cruz, Pozo, Huarte & Scheuer, 2006). Regarding the conceptions, training should be based on a student-centred/learning-oriented pedagogy rather than on content and its transmission (Kember, 1997).

b) Changes in teaching, assessment and CI management strategies: this section comprises the different teaching and assessment modalities centred on learning contents, as well as the contingencies management methods, especially those related to CI, that have also an impact on the extension and quality of students' learning. Regarding the first group, teaching and assessment methodologies may vary according to whether students' are given an active or passive role, they are process- or product-centred, or they are oriented towards academic matters or towards functional and authentic problems. With respect to contingencies management, authors like Martín, Jiménez and Fernández-Abascal (2000), refer to different types of strategies: avoiding (denial of problems, considering it transitory or just unsolvable), reactive (aggressive, ironic, escaping), and reflexive, which imply an intentional decision based on a thorough analysis of the situation.

c) Changes in emotions and their interpretation through teaching-related feelings: Broadly speaking, teachers can experience their teaching task as pleasing and positive or, on the contrary, as unpleasant and negative. These affective tendencies act as lenses, in the words of Schutz, Aultman & Williams-Johnson (2009), through which teachers interpret their emotional experiences when they carry out their teaching tasks.

We think that changes in these dimensions constitute genuine indicators of changes in teacher identity, that is, of the construction of new I-position, and therefore in our research we used these categories to assess the impact of the teacher training system we designed. We have also added a second group of categories to detect the scope of this change, adapted from Weise (2011), a research about identity change in contexts of high sociocultural diversity.

Specifically our research objectives were:

- 1) To assess the impact of training based on dramatized CI on the different teacher identity dimensions of the participant teachers.
- 2) To describe the extension, transference and persistence of changes promoted in participants' professional practice.

Method

We used a qualitative case study approach, consisting of a register and examination of changes occurred for each participant teacher during the different phases of the training, explained below.

Participants

Research took place in a public university of Barcelona (Spain) in the context of a continuous training workshop offered to teachers on a semester basis. That is, it was an institutionalised training program, instead of an *ad hoc* designed proposal. Its duration was of 30 hours, three hours a day, from Monday to Friday, for two weeks. 7 teachers voluntarily enrolled in this workshop, entitled “Management of critical incidents at university”. They differed in teaching experience and they belonged to different departments and faculties (Computer science, Engineering, Journalism, Mathematics, Nursing, Pedagogy and Sociology). Training was conducted by two members of the research group, one specifically focused on the trainer role and the other on data collection.

Procedure

One week before the workshop, an initial questionnaire was sent to the participants, asking them about the most disturbing incidents they faced in their teaching practice. The five lessons of the first week of training were dedicated to discuss about the concept of teacher identity and their own identity as university teachers, in relation to their conceptions, strategies and feelings related to their professional practice. They were also introduced to the Guide for the Analysis of Critical Incidents –PANIC- (Monereo & Monte, 2011), made up of two blocks. In the first block, participants have to explain individually the most relevant precedents of the CI, then describe with detail the CI and finally explain the conceptions, strategies and feelings related to the CI of the actors involved. In the second block they have to propose an intervention and follow-up plan, describing the dimensions of intervention, how to do it and what change indicators they should pay attention to in order to control the evolution of the intervention. PANIC was applied to: a theoretical case, presented by trainers; some cases explained by participants, and finally an individual case presented by each participant. At the end of each session the group assessed the coping strategies proposed and together reached some conclusions.

Each session was video recorded by one trainer and participants’ relevant comments for the analysis of the dimensions (in relation to the role and/or the conceptions, strategies and/or feelings) were registered in an observation grid. At the end of the first week the first monitoring questionnaire was administrated to all participants.

The second week activities were based on dramatizations (two for session) during which one of the participants played the role of the teacher and the others acted as his/her hypothetical students. For this, each participant prepared and presented a 15 minutes “lesson” to the group about a topic of their own specialization that they taught at university. During this lesson some of the student-participants intentionally caused some CI that had previously been distributed and prepared. These CI were situations particularly unsettling for that teacher and were designed according to the information

gathered on the initial questionnaire. The teacher giving the lesson knew that something was going to happen, but he/she did not know what and when. At the end of each dramatization CI were analysed with the PANIC guide and answers to it were discussed until participants reached a consensus. At the end of the second week of training, participants were administered the monitoring questionnaire once again. One semester after the training, individual in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain information about change permanence in the three dimensions of participants' teacher identity.

Data collection and analysis

We now go on to describe the instruments used in the research:

- Initial questionnaire: it was administered before starting the workshop, sent by e-mail to the enrolled teachers. They were asked to describe one to five situations that had happened to them in their teaching practice and that had emotionally unsettled them. They were also requested to assess from one to five the degree in which this situation would upset them if it happened again. This gave us the chance to know in advanced what CI worried each teacher and the group the most, and what we had to treat more intensely.

- Video recordings of the sessions and observation grid: as we mentioned earlier, all sessions were recorded. Thanks to the comments on the observation grid, were significant comments were written down along with author's name and time, we could then go back to these moments in the recordings, transcribe the whole exchange and analyse it.

- Monitoring questionnaires: they were administered at the end of each week. They were identical and consisted in eleven open-ended questions relative to the self-perceived changes in their own identity (concerning their role and conceptions, strategies and feelings about their own teaching activity) and in relation to their expertise to face contingencies that could take place in their classrooms in the future (how they would interpret and face them).

- Delayed semi-structured interview: a semester after the workshop we met participants for an individual interview. Interviews were also recorded on video. Guiding questions examined the impact and usefulness of the workshop, changes occurred in the way of being, acting and feeling as a teacher and the situations in which they had applied what they learned in the training. At the end, interviewers quoted some of the interviewee's literal phrases said during the training (whether in the recorded discussions or in the monitoring questionnaires) that showed changes in their conceptions, strategies and ideas since the beginning of the training, and they were asked if they agreed with them.

In order to analyse data gathered with each instrument, we combined two sets of categories. One group refers to the nature or content of changes according to the three dimensions mentioned above: a) conceptions about the teaching role and the instructional process; b) CI management strategies; and c) feelings related to practice. The other group, aimed at identifying the scope of this change, comprises four categories (Weise, 2011): 1) recognition of the need to change one or more of the three identity dimensions; 2) re-interpretation of the practice through appropriation and use of concepts learned in the training; 3) projection and/or application of learning to their own practice; and 4) changes permanence in the medium term. Table II presents the definition of categories of analysis along with some examples.

(Table II)

Data coding was based on the meaningful statements of each participant. Observation instruments and the two monitoring questionnaires brought useful quotes for the three first categories: recognition of the need for change, interpretation through new concepts learned in the training and projection of changes into practice; while the delayed semi-structured interview provided information about the category of change permanence.

The two trainers-researchers first identified, categorised and codified quotes using content analysis software Atlas TI (version 5). Fragments are shown in the normal format of this software. That is, in the example: [3:12,60]; first number refers to the primary document, corresponding to the transcription of all data of each teacher (number 3 in this case). The next number refers to the quote on that document (12) and the last one shows the paragraph where the quote is located (60).

Afterwards, four experts on university teachers' training, acting as independent judges, revised and verified the correspondence of the chosen category and the codified fragments of 50% of data (half of the quotes of each case, randomly chosen). Given that at least three out of four judges agreed on the quotes sample, categories were accepted.

Next we describe the main findings.

Results

In this section we present traces of teacher identity changes promoted by the training. We do so using the defined categories of analysis. Given that this process cannot be linear and uniform, nor cannot it have the same impact on all the participants of the training, we now go on to analyse and show the main changes observed in each case individually.

Aiming at illustrating the evolution of changes experienced by participants in the training, for each case we have selected some relevant statements that said during the first week, in their presentation session in the second week and finally in the delayed final interview. Data from initial questionnaires were only used for the first training session since they informed us about the group's profile and also during the second week, to decide what CI would be presented and dramatized by each participant teacher. Finally we present a global synthesis of these changes in Table III.

Case 1

The first participant was a teacher teaching in a technical degree. During the first week she showed a distrusting attitude about what the workshop could provide her with. She hardly participated during sessions and manifested that her main concern was whether she had to lower the level of difficulty of her lessons:

"I teach a course and before starting they do not want to do it already, and I try to make them see it is not as difficult as they think. We must be more severe than in other courses (...) when I foresee that my students will have problems, I see if I really, lower the level or what I might do" (1:6,24)

Already in the second week of training, in the session when she gave her lesson, she surprised everybody with a clear and effective application of the coping strategies that we had examined through the dramatized incidents of her partners during the initial week.

“Now we have more ways of acting in response to an incident and what it is more important, we have analysed possible consequences” (1:9,29)

Even more interesting is the awareness she showed of the changes occurred in the strategic and emotional dimensions of her teacher identity in the delayed interview:

“I will try to make a more objective interpretation, looking at the conflict from the outside. Taking a colder attitude, analysing all the possible ways to face the incident before deciding what to do”. “I am less defensive, I can more easily take the position of the other side, maybe there is more empathy now” “It was gone well to me, I feel better and I think that so do students” (1:17,38)

Case 2

The second participant was a sociology teacher. At the beginning, she integrated the management of the CI with the teachers’ tutorial role. Afterwards she explained further this conceptualization reflecting the necessary integration of tutoring and teaching and the need to balance this role with the other roles:

“On one side the teacher has to understand the tutor’s roles also at university. On the other, it is necessary to balance, according to the subject and degree, the teaching, professional and research roles, taking into account no so much the contents but the students’ motivations” (2:5,18)

In relation to the use of coping strategies, since the moment PANIC was presented, she stated her intention to use the guide:

“I have another tool to add to what I employ and it can give me information. (...) I will make use of the strategies to achieve an alternative thinking” (2:18,32)

In the final interview she fully recognised changes in her ways of doing, interpreting and feeling her practice:

“Yes, I see that I have employed, that there have been changes in the discourse, but especially in the attitude. I have put these reflections into practice quite a lot. Now I do it more consciously” (2:22,37)

It is the only case that also expressed having socialized what she had learnt with other department colleagues:

“Now I take more into account the emotional part. I have also employed the PANIC guide with others, I think that this is interesting, to fill it out with others (referring to department colleagues), to see more objectively what happens to other people and to work on it from the awareness of the emotions” (2:20,35)

Case 3

Like the first participant, she was teaching in a technical degree and her participation during the first week was also rare. At some point she mentioned that in her classes she did not know what her students understood or even what they did, because most of them used their own computer.

“in any case they are adults and it is their problem if they do not follow the lesson like they should” “sometimes, when it is clear that someone is not paying attention, I tell him/her off so he/she does not think I am not aware” (3:2,5)

Nevertheless, she was the only teacher that, at the beginning of the first week of training, said she had spontaneously employed a coping strategy to face a real conflict:

“Yesterday I started to use some things. There were a lot of students in the classroom, a lot of noise, and there was a student with a computer, he/she was laughing and when I approach him/her from behind he/she was playing a game and then he/she was playing with his/her cell phone. I took him out of the classroom and I told him not to come to class if he was to be playing” (3:3,6)

Even though this is a simple strategy, in her case it was an evident improvement given that, on one hand, she worried about the activity of one student in her class and she faced him instead of avoiding him. On the other hand, she did not reprimand him in public but in private.

Later on, during the second week, she also explained a real situation she faced that same afternoon. Two students had done an identical exam and she had called them to confront them and decide how to deal with a more than probable cheating problem. She asked advice to the group and they spontaneously help her to develop a PANIC to face the problem.

In the final interview she stated:

“In general it seems that calm and good mood are good ways to face conflicts, instead of getting angry or being defensive” (3:12,29)

Case 4

In the first week, this pedagogy teacher expressed feelings of insecurity related to teaching and feelings of being a victim that came along with continuous attempts to excuse herself, which complicated her possibilities to change. In relation to conceptions and strategies, she did not seem to have any conflicts: she developed the scheduled contents and she used a lecture method.

After her presentation and the appearance of the dramatized CI (for instance, a student told her that this lesson had been very boring and not very practical, and that the most part of what she was teaching they had already worked on in previous course), the teacher took the blame and attribute the problem to her “way of being” and not to the methods employed:

“Yes, this is a problem for me, that is why I often stop. I get bored with the cadence of my voice. I always preferred listening that just talking and giving everything. This terrifies me, that they get bored in class and that is why I prepare lesson a lot” (4:6,12)

At the end, in the delayed interview, she showed again signs of rigidity and resistance to change, always excusing herself. First she considered that what she had learnt in the workshop was a tutor’s task, not the teacher’s, a role that she doubted was necessary at university:

“I might have left aside the students’ tutor role. I still have doubts about this role since it comes into play the vision that university students have, they are more autonomous, they have to take responsibilities of the teaching and learning process, they have to show a certain attitude” (4:20,39)

In relation to what she had learnt and its usefulness, her comments showed that, rather than changing her approach or position, training helped her feeling less guilty and

accept what she was doing and attributing her problems to an excess of energy and self-demand. It was always a self-centred analysis:

“Sharing experiences, seeing other teachers’ incidents, etc. allows you to give feeling less importance. In fact, structuring the problems you always face allows you to analyse them in a more coherent way and to take the emotional burden out” (4:22,43) “In my case, I am very demanding when it comes to interpreting conflicts and very often I end up “blaming myself”; I know it is a very categorical and exaggerated term but right now it is the most accurate for what I want to express” (4:10,15)

She admitted that, in any case, she did not think about changing her teaching methods and that she did not feel prepared to face CI in her practice, but she showed signs of change when she implied that lectures might be part of the problem:

“I still have to suffer a lot (...); facing the incidents also involves rethinking the procedures. Despite that, I have really thought about this possibility. I say this especially because of the incident that appears very often in these sessions, the students’ talk, lack of silence, that might be due to all the “trust” put in the lecture method”. (4:25,46)

Case 5

From the beginning, during the first week of training, this journalism teacher showed a constant fight between his improvisation tendency and his wish of systematization. Between controlling students and giving them freedom. He admitted that students moved him but he thought he had to be more demanding in order to achieve the learning objectives. He considered that content (elaboration of film scripts) defined methodology. The ‘what’ and ‘how’ were the same thing and he did not specifically reflect on what teaching strategies to employ.

“I reached a balance but I am afraid that unexpected things will happen and I will have these traumas again. I am not excessively structured, planning everything overwhelms me, it bores me” (5:3,9)

When he suffered the CI planned by his colleagues, during his presentation, his problems to impose himself, to maintain his position, were clear. For instance, during the dramatization, a hypothetical foreign student holding a scholarship demanded him, with very bad manners, a greater concreteness of what she had to do to pass the course because her scholarship depended on that. At the end, this teacher virtually told her not to be worried, that she would pass the course, and he did it publically, in front of the rest of the group.

In the delayed interview changes related to his conceptions about his role and the need to modify his “laissez faire” style were clear, and he expressed and admitted them:

“(…) I do have a better perspective of my role. However much we try to move the attention to the student, the teacher always has to have the control of the boat... with all this Bologna plan... it makes you doubt” (5:12,20)

This change also affected the very conceptualization of the teaching profession. There it is the interesting distinction he made between “being a teaching” and “teach classes”:

“These days I reflected about the teaching profession and I reached the conclusion that being a teacher is different than teaching classes, you do not improvise and it implies a whole series of mental and physical efforts. Unfortunately in the collective imagination our role is looked down on because of the relativism of those who just “teach classes” (5:14,25)

Changes also referred to the way of teaching; now there was a clear explanation about how to face classroom situations:

“Basically I have learnt that the most important thing is the attitude towards anything that can happen. Even the most unpleasant one. In that situation, you have to divide the problem in two phases, the immediate one to deactivate the tension and the second to solve the impasse, that is, to change the sign of incident and turn it into a useful experience for all the students” (5:18,30)

Finally, in relation to feelings he also showed a greater awareness of the need to control them:

“If one wants to be a good teacher... I mean, to find a gratification in the perception of his/her job its emotional implication is very high. Thus one has to know how to control it to not succumb” (5:20,33)

Case 6

This teacher commented some confusing conceptions during the first sessions. It seemed that there was an overlapping between her professional work (nursing) and her teaching work (university teacher). She understood both as a service that should not be patronizing but that should look after the subjects’ –patients and students- spirituality, term that she employed to talk about feelings.

“We are caregivers, we look after different aspects... the spiritual part is the most neglected” (6:11,25)

She stressed the need to contextualize teaching, to connect with students (and patients) and thus she considered that the re-questioning strategy when a student asked in class was suitable. Feelings related to teaching were correctness and respect for her students, but without improvising. Security, pragmatism and rigidity in her approaches characterized her interventions:

“one doubts whether it is too flexible or not. And I think I am a bit more demanding than my colleagues and that causes problems. Sometimes I do not know if I am the right person, but that is what it is” (6:13,30)

At the end of the first week of training she went back to ideas linked to the contextualization and we observed a lower rigidity in her statements:

“I liked the concept of identity in action. How nurses’ identity in action is defined. It provides food for thought” (6:18,37)

However, like in case 4, she attributed the CI management to the tutorial role rather than the teacher’s:

“Role of tutor, to accompany, to help to solve learning or study problems. Model at the same time as to know how to handle conflicts or critical incidents” (6:7,14)

Regarding strategies, even though she tried to stress the need for flexibility, she tended to consider that all CI required a quite standard response:

“Conflicts are normal, they take place in most of the classrooms and there are different stereotypes to face them” (6:8,16)

She also offered suggestions about emotional regulation:

“Not all incidents are critical, just those that “stir”. Then you have to always act calmly and being aware of your emotions, especially those more “negative”: anger, frustration...” (6:21,29)

In any case, an evolution towards the raising of awareness and the integration of cognitive, procedural and emotional elements can be appreciated:

“(I should) to assess my response to their respective determinants and go more deeply into the other’s context in order to understand his/her action. Take a deep breath, try to read and interpret the other’s activity and reasons related to the incident, instead of taking it as a personal issue. Always negotiating, conciliatory attitude, not to deride to other” (6:23,32)

Case 7

Since the beginning, this teacher made explicit a conception of teaching focused on the content (mathematics), with a consistent didactic methodology. For her, a class consisted in developing a precise mathematic argumentation, in which one could not lose the thread. Therefore, she saw students’ interventions as distractors, if not disruptors. In her opinion, what she taught could be misunderstood and could require further explanation (actually a more detailed repetition) but it was never open to opinions. She showed a great security and assertiveness in her statements and she considered other subjects as more speculative and, thus less objective and scientific:

“I am strict. In compliance, schedules, very organized. That there are no surprises. My lessons are teacher-centred; he is the one radiating knowledge. Because of the course content” (7:1,3)

At the end of first week, she started to value workshop’s usefulness:

“I basically had two attitudes: avoidance and reaction (sometimes aggressive, sometimes ironic). I think that some strategies recommended in the course are much better, like decision and evaluation” (7:18,24)

After her presentation, and after trying to manage the induced CI (for instance, a student asked a question that showed that he had not understand anything), she started to modify her initial position. She started to consider disruptions as opportunities to improve her teaching. This statement reflects this change:

“What is the attitude that a teacher should have to face a CI? On one hand he has to solve it, but the CI is an opportunity that you have for analysing your role as a teacher, if you are coherent with what you think you do and what you should do and keep improving these roles that you have (...) not to see it (meaning the CI) like something bad but like a learning opportunity” (7:20,34)

Finally, during the delayed interview, a student-centred approach, in Kember’s (1997) sense, was clear:

“Probably over the years I became too much a professional and I grew apart from the students” (7:28,41)

“I especially learnt to reflect before acting, to take the different options of a reaction that emerge into account and to take students a bit more into account” (7:30,44)

Change in strategies to face conflicts was also clear:

“I will try to pay more attention to what the antecedents can be and how the conflict was caused. I will also try to interpret the attitudes and feelings of all the actors better” (7:37,51)

“If possible, I will delay the solution in order to be able to think calmly about the CI. If not, I will try to solve it but always in the less aggressive way possible, I will try not to get upset” (7:38,54)

Something similar happened with the feelings she now expressed:

“I guess that if I handle this well I will be satisfied. If not, I think I will feel worse because now I have tools to manage the conflict. I will remember the course!” (7:40,57)

Distribution of change evidences

We registered a total of 235 quotes distributed among the three change dimensions of teacher identity in this way: 63 quotes about conceptions, 99 quotes about strategies and 73 quotes about feelings. Given that our interest was to contrast changes in the dimensions analysed, we consider that just one quote was enough evidence of change. Each one of these quotes was a possible evidence of change for us. In Table III we can appreciate a summary of the changes detected in each of the seven cases.

(Table III here)

As it can be appreciated in table III, training had a greater impact on the strategies dimensions (22 evidence of change), with three or more levels of extension in all cases. The dimension related to feelings is close (21 evidences of change) and it affects all the extension categories in four of the cases. In just one case we did not identify the presence of this dimension (case 3). Finally, the impact of the conceptions was lower (15 evidence of change) and more polarised. While three cases manifested a change in conceptions in all the levels of extensions and another one in three of the levels, the other three cases do not showed changes in this dimension.

In the last section we will discuss these results and try to reach some conclusions related to the aims of this study.

Discussion and conclusions

Regarding the objectives we aimed at achieving with this research, in relation to the first one, the impact of the training based on dramatized CIs on the identity dimensions, we can conclude that all participants change one or more dimensions of their identity, at different levels of extension. This fact reveals that the teaching method used, as opposed to most of the methods used in university training (Sutherland, Howard & Markauskaite, 2010), impacts on the three dimensions at the same time, especially pointing at a change in the usual practices and the way they feel while

teaching. We think that, indeed, like Darby (2008) states, a change can only be deeply assimilated and consolidated if it comes with a new way of feeling as a teacher.

Focusing on the analysis of the identity dimensions that have change during the training, we can group the seven cases in three casuistries.

In case 3, change seems to affect just the strategic dimension. We can attribute this result to her technical education (Engineering) and to her clearly pragmatic approach in the resolution of the incidents she faces every day. However, the workshop could not challenge her conception of teaching as a unidirectional transmission and her perception of the teaching role. In a previous study (Badia & Monereo, 2004), we already found that training aimed at teachers that have a strongly positivist epistemological orientation should initially promote conflicts from the inside of the discipline in order to then move forward to more psychopedagogical aspects.

In cases 1 and 4, changes are centred on the strategic dimension, but also in the emotional one. Nevertheless, conceptions about what it means to be a university teacher and what are his roles remained quite intact, at least during the lapse of time we studied. We consider that in case 1 the reason can be similar to what we commented in case 3; this teacher teaches in computers science and her role and functions seemed to be solid. However, changes manifested in the feelings dimension indicate a greater penetration of the training into her identity and, as a hypothesis, we dare to venture that an extra time in the workshop would have also had an impact on her conceptions. Regarding case 4, the pedagogy teacher, her conceptions seemed very deep rooted and she did not accept that tutorial role (to which she attributes the management of CIs) had to exist at university, or at least, that teachers had to do this task. In spite of confessing her teaching problems and the need to change her attitude and strategies, she kept that conviction until the end. This, in turn, impeded a change in her conceptions that would have opened the possibility for a deeper change in her identity.

For the other cases we can state that changes had a comprehensive nature regarding the three dimensions studied. In case 6, we did not obtain evidence related to conceptions and strategies for the category of projection. However, in the delayed interview a change in these dimensions was clear in her comments. Once again, the difficulty of integrating the teaching and tutorial roles to her profile may explain that the evolution towards a new I-position was not so complete.

In relation to participants 2, 5 and 6, changes were global and large. For the first two cases, evolution was continuous and steady. For the last one, the maths teacher, even though she initially did not recognise the need to modify her strategies and feelings, changes in some of her conceptions about teaching role seem to have triggered a change in the other dimensions.

Adopting the *Dialogical Self Theory* proposed by Hermans (Hermans & Gieser, 2012), we consider that in these cases we can indeed talk about a new I-position. In case 2 this new position is an integration of teaching and tutorial roles and the counselling to her department colleagues. According to the analysis of questionnaires and interviews, case 5 would turn into a teacher-regulator, a teacher that now tries to supervise and have a greater influence on what students think, say and do. Case 7 would evolve into a more perspectivist teacher that would try to put herself in students' position and would consider conflict and error as learning opportunities, both for students and her.

However, from our point of view, maybe the most encouraging and positive result of the study is the confirmation of the fact that most of the occurred changes have

remained in time, thus answering positively to the second objective of our study. It is certainly not a very long period, six months. Nevertheless, it was enough to prove that part of what they learnt was transferred to classroom interventions in the shape of different interpretations and more detailed analysis of contingencies, and more sustained decisions and actions. We think that this has even more value if we take into account the fact that training was short and intensive (due to the institution's formats). In this sense, a longer training would possibly contribute to increase change consistency and permanence.

However, a clear limitation of our study is the focus on personal and subjective change. Transformations occurred in the training system and their professional practice (in their relations with their students and their department colleagues) are just based on participants' reports. In future research we think that, in order to protect the dynamic nature of identity change that we noted in the introduction, it would be more explanatory to collect data about changes in the training system and the professional practice (Engeström & Sannino's 2010; 2011 perspective of activity system, expansive learning and contradictions between systems could be useful for us), along with changes in the "identity system" and its different conflicting I-positions (from the already mentioned perspective of Hermans & Gieser, 2012, and the dimensions employed in this study).

Lastly we think that our research opens new conjectures. In the first place, it seems clear that the strategic and emotional dimensions of identity can change regardless of changes in conceptions and roles. However, when conceptions change, the other two dimensions seem to change too, thus producing a transformation of the I-position. On the other hand, we should focus more on the fake dichotomy teaching vs. tutoring. Every teacher has also a tutorial role because the consecution of meaningful and deep learning is incompatible with the presence of conflicts that generate CI.

We need to carry out new research based on CIs in order to verify the emergent hypothesis mentioned and, besides, to confirm that our training method is an educational alternative with great potential for the meaningful change of teacher identity of university teachers, also with other samples and in different university contexts.

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Tables and figures

Table I. Typology of contingencies in the classroom according to the level of emotional control and expectations about educational situation.

	Emotional control	Lack of emotional control
Expected situation	Routines	Conflicts
Unexpected situation	Events	Incidents

Table II. Definition of categories of analysis for the identification of changes in the teacher identity.

Recognition of the need for change	<p>A participant expresses that one or more dimensions of his teacher identity (role and conceptions in use, usual strategies and/or related feelings) need changes.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> “now I realise that need to interpret this or to think that in another way” (conceptions); “I have to do things in another way” (strategies); “I must feel more confident ...” (feelings).</p>
Interpretation of his/her experience with the use of the learnt notions	<p>A participant expresses modifications in the interpretation of his professional practice. He reconceptualises it through the appropriation of concepts and notions presented during the training.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> “Well what happened to me, I mean a critical incident...”; “Yes, like you said, I have always focused more on students than on the content or on the program”; “It is true, if you listen to the students, with empathy, they respond better”</p>
Projection of changes in the teaching practice	<p>A participant proves that he has learnt or acquired new competences for his teaching practice; he explains what he will do in order to change, using examples and concrete ways of acting referred to his conceptions, strategies and/or feelings.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> “I am thinking that I will change the program of my course and try to turn what I teach into something for useful” (conception); “I decided to use PANIC with a problem I have every year with students that have taken the course of...” (strategy); “in order to show more proximity, I am going to be more emphatic and I will ask the course delegates to tell me every two weeks how things are going and if there is any problem with the group” (feeling)</p>
Permanence of change	<p>A participant brings evidence of the permanence of changes or even of its re-elaboration in time in relation to one or more of the dimensions of his teacher identity.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> “now I have more tools; when I face an incident I am not so impulsive”</p>

Table III. Synthesis of the presence of changes observed in the dimensions of the teacher identity of the university teachers' that took part of the training (C: Conceptions, S: Strategies, F: Feelings) according to the levels of extension.

	1. Recognition			2. Interpretation			3. Projection			4. Permanence		
	C	S	F	C	S	F	C	S	F	C	S	F
Case 1					X			X	X		X	X
Case 2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Case 3					X			X			X	
Case 4		X	X		X	X		X	X			X
Case 5	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Case 6	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Case 7	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X