Developing Generic Competences in the European Higher Education Area: a proposal for teaching the principles of economics

Manuel Salas Velasco, María Teresa Sánchez Martínez & Noelina Rodríguez Ferrero

Introduction: what, how and who?\(^1\)

According to Paul Samuelson, economics is the study of how societies use scarce resources to produce and distribute valuable goods. In this discipline, lecturers currently encounter three basic problems: what to teach, i.e. the contents that should make up a course on economics; how to teach it (methodology, resources, and materials); and who we are teaching, i.e. what is the students’ profile? In this article, we focus on answering the second question.

The problem of how to teach is of key importance since the changes in methodology proposed by the convergence towards the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) have led to an intense debate among university lecturers. Until recently, the modes of teaching in Spanish universities placed most emphasis on the learning, knowledge, and understanding of the subject. Hence, the contents were of the utmost importance and the concept of good teacher was based on indicators such as ‘they explain clearly’ or ‘it is easy to understand them’ (Figure 1).\(^2\)

---

**Figure 1.** Modes of teaching and learning at Spanish universities

*Source: Authors’ calculations.*
Spanish universities saw a profound reform of the structure and organisation of teaching in 2010–2011. One of the main challenges was to transform their current pedagogical practices into competence-based teaching as a response to labour market needs. Surveys point out mismatches between university qualifications and the skills required for jobs (García-Aracil & van der Velden, 2008).

In the new university scenario, students will play a central role. We are heading towards a teaching model based on students’ learning process and the development of competences. Competence-based teaching, which seeks to develop abilities, skills, and values by integrating contents in a process of personal and autonomous learning, requires a different methodology. This is a major challenge for lecturers who must acquire the skills to adapt to this new approach. This does not mean total rejection of traditional models, not even the traditional lecture format which will remain, but it does mean that there is a need to reflect on the ways in which to improve teaching practice. Changes in teaching methods require new methods of assessment, since it will be necessary to examine not only students’ knowledge, but also their competences. Examining competences means examining students’ levels of effort in terms of applying their knowledge to specific situations and demonstrating the attitudes and values acquired in an integrated way. In sum, the role of university lecturers is key to the success of European convergence. It requires new habits and, above all, a change in the perception of academics and their role.

Strategies to Teach Economics and Develop Competences in Students

The scenario derived from the Bologna Process requires deep changes in the teaching and learning process in economics. Allowing students to think as economists not only includes teaching economic theory or the abilities to solve microeconomic and macroeconomic problems, but also competences or skills that employers demand, such as using time efficiently, working productively with others, making meaning clear to others, and the ability to rapidly acquire new knowledge, coordinate activities, and use computers and the Internet (Salas Velasco, 2010). One way of developing these competences is to provide students with opportunities to be more ‘hooked’ on the application of economics. Traditional lectures, together with problem-solving activities in small groups, writing essays on current economic problems, debates or practical computer classes are the main techniques to teach economics. If students are to think as economists, alternative methods of teaching and examining must be considered.

Lectures

Without doubt, the change from an approach based on teaching to one based on learning is difficult for many teachers for whom the traditional lecture has been the only way of teaching. In economics, it is the most widely used methodology in most Spanish universities. Although it is necessary to explain the fundamental concepts of microeconomics and macroeconomics, this should be complemented by other teaching methods in order to obtain optimal results in the acquisition of knowledge and to develop competences. Lectures are still necessary, mainly in the case of theoretical and abstract contents, or when dealing with introductions or overviews which need a clear structure and frame of reference. This strategy is recommended to work on concepts and theoretical principles, combining classic presentation with audiovisual support. For example, graphs are one of the main tools for economic...
analysis. It is common practice to use a graph to show changing situations and this sometimes leads to a blackboard full of complex drawings which students may find hard to follow. Therefore, the use of animations can offer a clear and enjoyable presentation of the concepts taught in economics courses. The use of PowerPoint, Flashplayer, animated gifs and other resources makes graphs more visually enjoyable and helps to understand analyses (Figure 2).

Economics teaching still needs to develop methods, resources, and materials that can improve the work of lecturers and help students to understand this discipline. One of the main difficulties for students is understanding graphs. Among these graphs, we can highlight the model of supply and demand. Applying this concept to real situations is relatively easy by using press cuttings.

In Figure 3, we observe how a decrease in supply, when demand conditions do not change, leads to a new market balance where the price is higher and the equilibrium quantity is lesser. If this graphic analysis is supported by the teacher with real news stories, students can better understand theoretical questions and see the usefulness of the model they are studying. In Figure 3, the graphic analysis explains the rise in the price of lettuces in the context of a decrease in supply.

Although the main argument in favour of traditional lectures is the ‘scientific authority of the lecturer’ who can explain the contents of the subject in an organised fashion, the use of this method should be complemented by more creative and stimulating strategies such as ‘the prisoner’s dilemma’, perhaps the best known and most widely studied example of game theory which poses the problem of two criminals, A and B, who are arrested and kept in separate cells and given no chance to communicate. The police makes the following offer: if they both confess, each will be sentenced to 10 years in prison; if neither of them confesses, each one will be sentenced to one year in prison; if one of them confesses and the other does not, the one who confesses will go free and the other one will be
In sum, lectures should give a general view of each topic, highlighting new or especially complex aspects. The problem with this kind of teaching is not its use, but the abuse which tends to occur in introductory courses on economics. Three requirements must be fulfilled to use this teaching method effectively:

1. Start with a clear, organised structure and ensure well planned classes.
2. Take into account the knowledge and competences that students already possess.
3. Promote positive motivation and a favourable attitude among students.

Figure 3. The press as a teaching resource

Producers and exporters of lettuce in Murcia (Spain) decided this week to destroy 40% of their existing produce in order to attempt to raise the price of this product in the United Kingdom and Germany.

Ten million lettuces (some 4,000 tonnes) were destroyed in around 1,400 hectares in Murcia and Almeria (Spain) and these crops would have represented around 300 million pesetas [1.8 million euros] in the market place.

The fall in the price of lettuce in the European market has meant losses of between 200 and 300 million pesetas [1.2 million – 1.8 million euros] over the last two weeks as the price of a box of ten lettuces in the German market has dropped from 7-8 [3.58 – 4.09 euros] to 3-4 deutschmarks [1.53–2.05 euros].

The reason for this drop is market saturation. At the end of last year, prices were on the rise and, consequently, producers decided to increase their output for the following season which explains the current surplus of lettuces.

Figure 4. Cinema icons in the teaching of economics

Instructors could show their creativity by identifying prisoners A and B with Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy as in Figure 4.
Competences that are developed:
- Understanding the theoretical and epistemological basis of the discipline.
- Knowledge of the research methods in the field.
- Ability to analyse and interpret information.
- Willingness to learn.

Seminars
The seminar is a traditional teaching method in Spanish universities, although it is not much used in the teaching of economics. It is normally aimed at small groups to acquire complete and specific knowledge of a subject. Its use is recommended either to deal with controversial questions or to pay special attention to a particular question which is of current importance. Thus, we could offer a three-hour seminar on models of economic growth and the role currently played by human capital and labour/work productivity in economic growth. As a didactic procedure, it has the following advantages:

- It allows for the updating, improvement, and extension of information about a subject.
- It is useful to search for information and conduct group discussions.
- It allows for in-depth data analysis and comparison of differing opinions.
- It ensures higher quality learning.

Although seminars may often seem quite similar to lectures, there are key differences. Regarding the number of attendees, the ideal figure would be around 15. Moreover, in terms of the teacher-student relationship, students participate more in discussion and exchange of ideas. Unlike in lectures, they are ready to ask questions. This increases the effort made by teachers in terms of material preparation. However, in order to be effective, it also requires a great deal of student involvement, as they must commit themselves to prepare set texts and may sometimes have to provide extra material by searching the Internet or using the library. It is essential for teachers to encourage group dynamics to meet the objectives of the seminar and help students to analyse critically and constructively.

Practical Classes in Small Groups
The theoretical presentation of the subject (lectures and/or seminars) should be complemented by other teaching methods, such as practical classes which encourage students to participate and maintain their levels of concentration. Practical classes in economics are indispensable if students are to apply theoretical concepts to real situations. We would recommend that they solve previously set problems and exercises in small groups (cooperative work). There are different ways of
organising cooperative work, mainly by creating formal and informal groups. Informal cooperative learning usually serves to work on a particular task in class. It is recommended for this type of activities.

**Exercises and Problem Solving**

In order for practical sessions to assist learning, they must be well planned and theoretically structured and students must have received some previous information on the subject. The preparation of practical classes involves: (i) establishing objectives; (ii) choosing activities; (iii) preparing materials; and (iv) designing the working procedure. In order to prepare these classes, instructors must think about what students need to participate effectively, what skills need to be used, what resources are necessary and what assessment criteria should be used. Furthermore, students must see these classes as relevant and significant if their level of motivation is to be maintained. If these practical classes are to promote effective learning they must be assessed *in situ*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competences that are developed:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to analyse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to solve problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to apply knowledge to practical situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity for intellectual work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Case Studies**

Case studies involve students in real problems and scenarios in which they must decide on a strategy, create a plan or take a decision to solve the problem. Case study methodology, as an active learning method, starts with a description of the real situation which is normally linked to a decision, a challenge, an opportunity, a problem or some other question which must be dealt with either individually or by a group of students in the classroom or another learning environment at a given moment. In the teaching of economics, for this method to be effective, it must be a description of a real event and allow students to observe, interpret, form different hypotheses, and make a diagnosis to find a solution or alternative procedures to solve the problem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It allows us to develop the following competences:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence and self-expression.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teaching Economics in the Computer Lab**

Computer labs are designed as a support and training tool. Data analysis with computers, mainly using software such as SPSS (Figure 5) and Microsoft Excel (Figure 6), allows students to understand and interpret economic reality. *Econometrics*, the integration of economic theory, mathematics, and statistical techniques, helps to test hypotheses about certain economic phenomena in addition to
developing students’ analytical capacity to interpret quantitative relations between economic variables. Nowadays, the widespread availability of statistical software means that *econometrics* and other statistical techniques are accessible for students and give them a chance to practise relevant approaches, methods and tools in economic analysis.

**Figure 5.** Computers as teaching tools: calculation of demand elasticity using SPSS

**Figure 6.** Calculation of net present value and the internal rate of return with Microsoft Office Excel

\[
Q_X = f(P_X, I, P_Y)
\]

The linear model

\[
Q_X = \alpha_1 + \alpha_2 P_X + \alpha_3 I + \alpha_4 P_Y + u
\]

Constant elasticity demand function, or constant-elasticity model

\[
\ln Q_X = \beta_1 + \beta_2 \ln P_X + \beta_3 \ln I + \beta_4 \ln P_Y + u
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>6.298</td>
<td>4.875</td>
<td>1.203</td>
<td>0.221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LN_Y2</td>
<td>-1.956</td>
<td>0.344</td>
<td>-1.039</td>
<td>0.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LN_Y3</td>
<td>1.495</td>
<td>0.572</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>2.540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LN_Y4</td>
<td>0.594</td>
<td>0.501</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>0.607</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Y = quantity of roses sold, dozens
X_2 = average wholesale price of roses, $/dozen
X_3 = average wholesale price of carnations, $/dozen
X_4 = average weekly family disposable income, $/week

Price elasticity of demand
Income elasticity
Cross-price elasticity

Competences that are developed:

- Computer use.
- Capacity to apply knowledge to practical situations.
- Ability to analyse and search for information from different sources.

Debates

Debates allow lecturers to introduce students to a dialectical process through the choice of an appropriate subject which must provoke some debate and be sufficiently well-known to avoid improvisations. This requires the previous distribution of specialised material about the subject to be debated (and/or previous information searching by students). It is advisable to work with small groups and the maximum length should be around 60 minutes. The instructor acts as the moderator of the debate and therefore should be able to use certain techniques for group discussions: controlling spontaneous and unpredictable participation, allocating a time limit for each speaker, ensuring that participants do not digress from the subject, etc. Above all, a debate should aim at developing logical thought and intellectual rigour in argumentation and not merely be a situation in which participants stick to their thesis or antithesis. It is not a question of expressing personal opinions and values, but rather of constructing logical reasoning and coherent arguments. In the case of economics, a debate could be proposed about the funding of university education in the EHEA. Among the questions that could be posed are the following: (i) how far is public funding of university education justified?; (ii) what more rational formulae should the public sector use to optimise the resources invested in universities?; (iii) as there are currently no Spanish universities among the 50 best European universities, could funding be part of the solution to this problem? Students should prepare the debate in advance, think about these questions and search for any necessary bibliography.

Competences that are developed:

- Oral communication.
- Capacity to criticise and self-criticise.
- Recognition of and respect for diversity.
- Interpersonal abilities.
- Leadership.

Workshops

Workshops, which are very common in the educational systems of the English-speaking world, mainly aim to develop abilities to speak in public and the capacity for negotiation, management, leadership qualities, etc. Unlike seminars, they tend to be practical. Instructors combine different methodologies, such as debates, role-playing, brainstorming, or simulations. For example, in a workshop to develop the ability to speak in public, certain activities — story-telling, autobiography, etc. — are recorded with a video camera and then analysed by the teacher and the students in a group session. Another example could be a workshop to develop the capacity for negotiation through role-playing in which the teacher and the students play different roles (e.g. buyer/seller or interviewer/
interviewee). In order for these workshops to be effective, they must be carried out in small groups.

**Competences that are developed:**
- Interpersonal abilities.
- Oral communication.
- Decision-making.
- Public-speaking.
- Capacity for negotiation.

**New Technologies in the Teaching-Learning Process**

New information and communication technology has had a major impact on modern society. It permits the progressive disappearance of space and time restrictions in teaching and favours the adoption of a more student-centred approach. We have at our disposal some very powerful communication tools: Internet, e-mail, virtual learning platforms, etc., which allow learning processes to be much more personalised and flexible. At the same time, new technology can train university teachers to be multimedia users. The introduction of new technology does not mean the disappearance of lecturers, but one must redefine their functions. In this context, teachers must seek to substitute their role as sources of information by the role of a tutor who facilitates the learning process. This role has been lost in our overcrowded classrooms. This will not make teachers’ jobs easier. On the contrary, it will demand a greater degree of pedagogical competence and motivation.

**Competences that are developed:**
- Autonomous learning.
- Use of new technology.
- Capacity for work.

Economics teaching should encourage the use of new information and communication technology through virtual platforms. A platform such as SWAD (Web System for Teaching Support, SWAD in the original Spanish; Figure 7), which is used at the University of Granada, or any similar web system facilitate:

- Greater interaction between students and instructors through forums, e-mail tutorials, etc.
- More intense communication among students through work and discussion groups.
- Support for teachers who can post material on the platform, access student files and see how much time each student spends working on the platform, etc.
- Relations in real time between teachers and students without any restrictions imposed by physical distance.
- Information about results (tests, practical classes, essays, etc.) in an individualised format.
- Working in a friendly environment which is easy to use and well structured.

**Learning Assessment**

Assessment is essential to achieve effective learning. Depending on how it is designed, we will have different types of learning. Assessment requires the use of
diverse instruments as there are multiple objectives to be fulfilled. In economics teaching, we propose four individual procedures and one group technique to assess this subject.

**Individual Assessment: Encouraging Autonomous Work**

**Objective test**

This kind of test consists in asking students questions (multiple choice and/or short essay and/or problems) related to certain aspects of the subject. The levels to be assessed are: information, understanding, application, capacity for analysis and synthesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competences that are developed by preparing students for this kind of test:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>— Autonomous learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Working under pressure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Time management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Capacity to make sacrifices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Learning ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— Planning, coordination, organization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Essays**

Essays assess students’ capacity to organise and structure information related to a complex problem and search for solutions. They reward a critical and independent approach. Some examples of essays on *economics* include: a) «What economic policy can help us to overcome the current economic crisis?»; or b) «Should university students pay for the total cost of their studies?». A problem is posed in the form of a question or disjunctive. Students are expected to adopt a position
which involves developing a line of argument to deal with a problem. Furthermore, an academic essay should be supported by proof that supports the author’s position which may be theoretical, empirical or a combination of both.

**Competences that are developed:**
- Capacity for written communication.
- Organisation.
- Independent thinking.
- Self-improvement.
- Information management.
- Ethics.

Concept Maps

This is a graphic procedure whereby students can communicate their ideas on concepts (theories, intellectual trends, etc.) and the relationships between these. Through this instrument, in economics we can assess introductory subjects related to the history of economic thought (Figure 8), macroeconomic questions related to models of economic growth, etc.

**Competences that are developed:**
- Understanding concepts.
- Developing the capacity to synthesize information.
- Structuring ideas in a logical order.

Practice with Computers

The practical sessions in the computer labs should be assessed through a test with the computer using the software seen in class. This assessment may be carried out in the classroom and in the presence of the instructor or students can prepare independently and hand it in to the teacher. The data used can be provided by the teacher or students can access the information on the Internet at websites such as the Bank of Spain or the National Statistics Institute, depending on the type of analysis they have to carry out.

**Competences that are developed:**
- Ability to search for and analyse information.
- Time management.
- Use of analysis techniques in applied economics.
- Intellectual skills related to the generation of scientific knowledge.
- Use of different resources and technological applications.

*Group Assessment: encouraging cooperative work*

Formal cooperative learning forms more lasting group structures for specific tasks which can continue working for a few weeks or for the entire academic year. In a formal group, students work together to achieve common objectives, trying to maximise their own learning and that of their classmates. The number of members is quite small, some 4 or 5 students organised by the instructor, and through these groups students are expected to interact with their classmates,
sharing concepts and strategies and assuming mutual responsibility for the task in hand. Students are responsible for their own learning and that of their classmates, which leads to joint responsibility in solving academic tasks. The objectives of the participants are closely linked, since they can only succeed if they all do so together.

© 2012 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
In economics, working in groups (or teams) is also indispensable. Group work is mainly carried out autonomously, although with the supervision and guidance of the teacher. It seeks to achieve the following objectives:

— Introducing students to research techniques in applied economics.
— Facilitating students’ autonomous learning skills.
— Developing the ability to search for and analyze information.
— Encouraging the critical capacity of students.

Examples of this type of work include: a) «The current situation of the Spanish labor market»; or b) «The funding of Spanish autonomous regional governments». We assess the structure of the work, the quality of the arguments proposed, the suitability of the sources used, writing style and the use of graphs and tables. All the work conducted in groups should be presented to the rest of the class with a time limit of around 15 minutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competences that are developed:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Capacity to coordinate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Ability to search for and analyze information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Time management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Oral and written communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Leadership.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher Adaptation to the European Higher Education Area**

The challenge posed by European convergence means that university lecturers in Spain must undertake a series of measures that involve dynamic adaptation. The Bologna Process requires that teachers programme the entire subject, prepare teaching materials in advance and act as tutors.

**Planning Activities**

The effective use of teaching time requires teachers to plan in detail how to make best use of the time available for each group and subject. This can avoid one of the most common failings of the Spanish university system: teachers frequently create programmes which are too ‘ambitious’ and impossible to complete in the time available. The contents of the programmes and each learning activity should be assigned a certain duration. Moreover, teachers should reflect in their programme a time scale for contents and activities in terms of dates.

**Creation of Teaching Material**

It is important to decide in advance what material is the most appropriate for each subject (and for each sub-section of the subject). This stimulates students to work harder, although it should not become the centre of the learning process. The material must be varied: books with exercises, manuals for lectures, CDs with the slides used in lectures, audiovisual material (DVDs about economics), etc.

**Tutorial Work in the Classroom and in a Virtual Format**

In order for the teaching-learning process to be effective, students need the support and guidance of the teacher and this is one of the main roles of an instructor. This guidance can be aimed at all the group in class time or may be more individualised outside class time (office hours, via e-mail, etc.).
Unlike lectures, in classroom tutorials we are not transmitting theoretical knowledge to students but are offering them guidance about how to use a particular computer software, search for bibliographies on the Internet, structure research, etc. Furthermore, tutorial work conducted outside class time is usually personalised or aimed at a small number of students working in a group; the teacher must adopt the role of facilitator, offer support, check progress and give guidance, whilst students must accept responsibility in the process of autonomous learning.

**Conclusion**

Economics provides students with the basis with which to construct scientific knowledge linked to reality and has a major impact on their cognitive structure as it incorporates all the information they receive daily about economic problems and allows them to offer a critical and constructive vision of this reality. Nevertheless, the current model of economics teaching at Spanish universities is mainly centred on the teacher — the student is seen as the passive receiver of the teaching, encourages the acquisition of knowledge through memorising information, and relies on traditional presentations of economic concepts. However, as from 2010, in the context of the European Higher Education Area, we will move to a learning-centred approach which is based on the students — they are responsible for their learning — and promotes student involvement and active participation. In this new teaching-learning process, we must not only define the objectives of learning, but also develop fundamental abilities, attitudes, and competences which will be needed by students in their future professions. The teacher’s job does not only consist in the transmission of knowledge, but is also aimed at promoting learning skills, offering guidance and acting as a tutor. Work guided by the teacher is essentially designed to develop competences and through this type of work the teacher can check the progress of students whilst offering them support and feedback about their work. The role of personal tutoring and orientation is one of the keys to successful academic activity in the EHEA.

European convergence means rethinking the teaching modes and assessment systems used until now in the teaching of economics. Lectures must be complemented by seminars, practical classes, case studies, debates, and use of the computer labs. There is no single, ideal teaching strategy and, consequently, in each different situation the methodology that best meets student needs must be used. Therefore, we must be methodologically eclectic and use different teaching strategies and diverse ways of organising and presenting the subject. Regarding assessment, we must examine not only the level of knowledge but also the acquisition of abilities, skills, and attitudes. The instruments used to assess students must also be diversified and combine traditional exams with concept maps, essays, practical sessions with computers, and group work.

*Manuel Salas Vélasco, Department of Applied Economics, University of Granada, Campus Cartuja, 18071 Granada, Spain, msalas@ugr.es, www.ugr.es/~msalas/

*María Teresa Sánchez Martínez, Department of Applied Economics, University of Granada, Campus Cartuja, 18071 Granada, Spain, tsanchez@ugr.es

*Noelina Rodríguez Ferrero, Department of Applied Economics, University of Granada, Campus Cartuja, 18071 Granada, Spain, nrferrer@ugr.es

© 2012 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
NOTES

1. This article reflects ideas put into practice in a project entitled Competence Based Teaching coordinated by the two first authors in the academic year 2008–2009 at the University of Granada (Spain). The project was an attempt to respond to the limitations of traditional teaching.

2. This figure summarises the mean values of the answers given by 3,896 Spanish university graduates who participated in the Reflex survey in 2005 to the question: ‘To what extent were the following modes of teaching and learning emphasized in your study programme? [1 (not at all) to 5 (to a very high extent)]’.

3. Blackboard and chalk are gradually disappearing from economics teaching. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is becoming a vital teaching resource, particularly in the case of a computer with an LCD projector and, the latest innovation, interactive digital boards (smart boards), which allow teachers to underline, draw, cross out or move elements around.

4. Unlike the short essay format in a traditional economics exam in which students who can remember more can therefore write more and obtain a higher mark, the full essay format allows students to reflect on a subject and write without the pressure of a time limit.

5. In the activities planned for students both inside and outside the classroom, we take into account the objectives and contents that we wish to develop in each subject, as well as the characteristics of the students with whom we are working, the size of the group and the infrastructure and resources at our disposal.

REFERENCES
