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EDITED BY

Delfin Ortega-Sánchez,
University of Burgos, Spain

REVIEWED BY

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The University of Melbourne, Australia

*CORRESPONDENCE

Pedro Miralles-Sánchez
✉ pedrmir98@gmail.com

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Design and validation of two tools to observe and analyze history lessons in secondary education

Pedro Miralles-Sánchez^{1*}, Cosme J. Gómez-Carrasco¹ and Jairo Rodríguez-Medina²

¹Department of Didactics of Mathematics and Social Sciences, Faculty of Education, University of Murcia, Murcia, Spain, ²Department of Pedagogy, Faculty of Education, University of Valladolid, Valladolid, Spain

This article focuses on the validation of two data collection instruments, one is the *History Class Observation Tool* (HCOT) and the other is focus groups with students, trainee teachers and tutors from secondary school classrooms. The main objective of the study is to obtain evidence of validity of the two instruments to be used in research on the design, validation, implementation, and evaluation of training units. All this in order to improve the teaching-learning process of historical thinking skills in high school students with the aim of forming critical citizens. The initial set of 32 observable behaviours was reviewed by 9 judges, who rated each on a scale of 0 (strongly disagree) to 3 (strongly agree) in terms of appropriateness, importance, clarity of wording, and observability. As can be seen from the results, both instruments according to the agreement indices suggest that the items, overall, can be considered suitable and important, and observable in the case of the observation instrument, as well as having clarity of wording appropriate to the objectives of both, with high confidence on the part of the experts. If we compare it with similar studies that we have discussed previously, we can see how this validation process has been quite rigorous and novel following some guidelines set previously in certain studies.

KEYWORDS

history, secondary education, baccalaureate, validation, systematic observation, historical thinking, training units

Introduction

This article is part of the research “The teaching and learning of historical competences in baccalaureate: a challenge to achieve a critical and democratic citizenship” based on the design, validation, implementation, and evaluation of training units to improve the teaching-learning process of historical thinking skills in baccalaureate students aimed at the formation of critical citizens. The aim of this article is therefore to obtain evidence of the content validity of two data collection instruments, namely, the *History Class Observation Tool* (HCOT) and the focus groups with students, trainee teachers, and tutors in secondary school classrooms.

The development and implementation of observation instruments can be very useful to effectively design training programmes and evaluate classroom interventions. However, most of these instruments focus on teachers’ generic competences rather than subject-specific competences. Therefore, some researchers have highlighted the importance of designing specific observation instruments in research on teacher education and competences (Desimone, 2009; Schoenfeld, 2013). However, to date, there are no validated and reliable observation instruments for analyzing teaching-learning processes in history. This is unfortunate, especially because, as Sáiz Serrano and Gómez Carrasco (2016) and Van Boxtel et al. (2020) warn, current teacher education programmes may not meet the needs of history teachers to achieve the objectives set out in the curricula. Observational instruments that assess the teaching strategies of history teachers could allow the identification of specific

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