

# Coordination Of Teachers In New Undergraduate Degrees Adapted To European Higher Education Area

Juan-Antonio Mondéjar-Jiménez, Ph.D., University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain  
María Cordente-Rodríguez, University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain  
María-Leticia Meseguer-Santamaría, University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain  
Manuel Vargas-Vargas, Ph.D., University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain  
José Mondéjar-Jiménez, Ph.D., University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain

## ABSTRACT

*The introduction of new undergraduate degrees adapted to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) requires a coordinated effort by teachers, because the different subjects are based on a new methodology of teaching and learning. The Social Sciences School of Cuenca offers degrees in Business Administration, Law and Labor Sciences. The progressive adaptation of the undergraduate degrees at the University of Castilla-La Mancha has culminated with the introduction, in the academic year 2009-2010, of the Business Administration Degree and, beginning in academic year 2010-2011, of the Degrees in Law and in Industrial Relations and Human Resource Development, once they have all been verified by the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA). This paper addresses opportunities for coordination among teachers that occur in the implementation of new degree of Law and Business Administration, through the joint work of teachers in different aspects of competency-based education. After the first course of the new degrees, it must articulate all coordination tools that allow teachers to conduct their work effectively and efficiently, with the aim of providing the best possible service to students. The synergies arising from this deployment will allow better planning tools in the implementation of the following degrees.*

**Keywords:** Coordination among teachers; competency-based education; new undergraduate degrees

## INTRODUCTION

The new undergraduate degrees adapted to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) requires a teachers coordination to articulate all tools that allows us to develop their labor effectively and efficiently, with the aim of providing the best possible service to students (Cañal, 2002; De Haro, 2009; Rodríguez, 2004; Vizcarro, 2009). According to the Educational Innovation Unit (2010): "The current structural reform of the University in the European Higher Education Area implies the assumption of new roles among teachers: for example the role of Coordinator of either the Degree, Course or, even, of subjects in some degrees".

Several authors have analyzed the effort that, in coordination, should make the teachers involved. In this way, Barriuso, Sanchez and Valor (2007) note that: "...the implementation of teaching plans adapted to EHEA requires an exercise in coordination by the teachers. In this way, it is intended that students work daily and that teachers make a continuous assessment. To achieve this goal in a rational way, teachers have to agree to develop a work schedule that encourages balance the load for the students face, avoiding the overlap of tasks of different subjects that require further work, as you can be the case for the tests to be carried along the course to enable the continuous assessment. Similarly, it must be coordinated for the preparation of schedules of seminars and tutorials, trying to avoid that it becomes necessary to resort to excessive periods of time not included in the official course schedule. "

The aim of this coordination are not small actions, but to seek a regular cooperation; specifically, according with Armengol *et al.* (2009):

- Coherent organization of learning content of each subject.
- Gradually adapt to the new approach to teaching / learning.
- Develop materials to assist a student-focused teaching and the achievement of the proposed competence.
- Establish opportunities for reflection and debate in relation to the subject content.

Assuming the need for teaching coordination represents a change in university culture (Pérez, 2005): replace a culture based on individualism to a culture based on the coordination of teaching as a shared responsibility. Changing an instruction focused on encyclopedic knowledge (the contents of "my" subject), to an education focused on learning and students skills development.

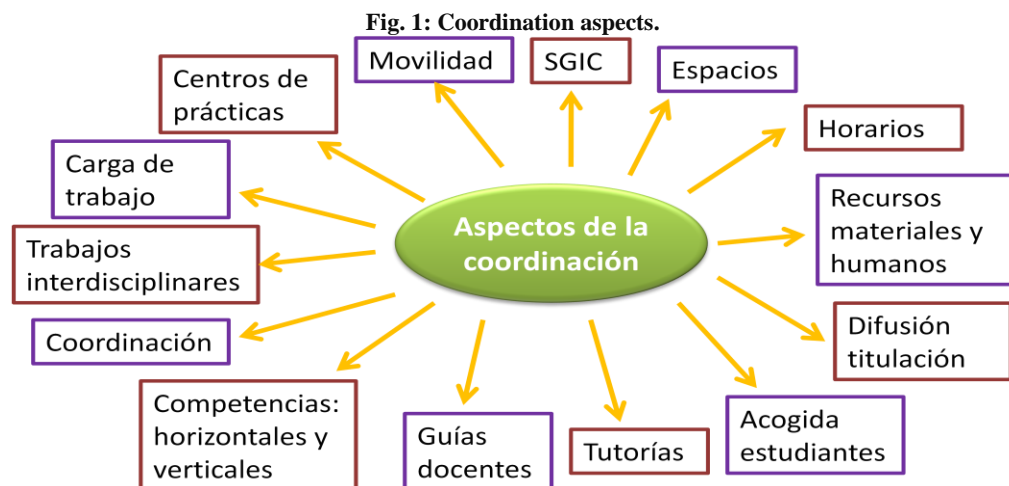
Thus, coordination developed by teachers due to a triple role (Armengol *et al.*, 2009):

- Ensure the implementation of the organizational objectives in the degree.
- Track the established coordination channels.
- Take all appropriate actions to achieve a more coherent learning process.

Therefore, the Social Sciences School of Cuenca has designated degree and course coordinators. They will be responsible for ensuring compliance with this approach (San Fabián, 2006).

## METHODOLOGY

Some basic aspects of the coordination process are show in figure 1:



Educational Innovation Unit of the U.C.L.M. has presented a framework for the teachers coordination meeting (Rincón, 2010):

- Exchange of experiences and analysis of real situation.
- Prioritization. Although many areas for improvement emerge, it is desirable to focus on one. On this issue, the teaching group visible and shares:
  - Successful performances: to maintain, optimize, and expand its.
  - Difficulties, poor results: reinterpretation, causes, conditions, reflection, explanation and systematization.

- Proposals. May arise as a working hypothesis: "if we introduce the modified x ....". We present courses of action, solutions and improvements to the problem. Anticipation of the expected effects. Consensus about proposals.
- Application. Including proposals to teaching, implementation of changes or innovations.
- Exchange, contrast and reanalysis of reality. What results we actually got? In what sense has improved practice? Hypothesis has been tested? New difficulties. It can incorporate ideas from experts or teachers who have experienced a good job on this issue.
- New proposals...

It is also necessary to consider the impact of new technologies of information and communication and Internet (Figure 2), which should be considered as generators of flexible and adaptable training spaces, develop new educational options that combine different teaching resources and that they should channel coordination tasks (Mondéjar, Mondéjar and Vargas, 2006; Mondéjar, Mondéjar and Vargas 2007).

Fig. 2: C@mpusVirtual Platform of the University of Castilla-La Mancha

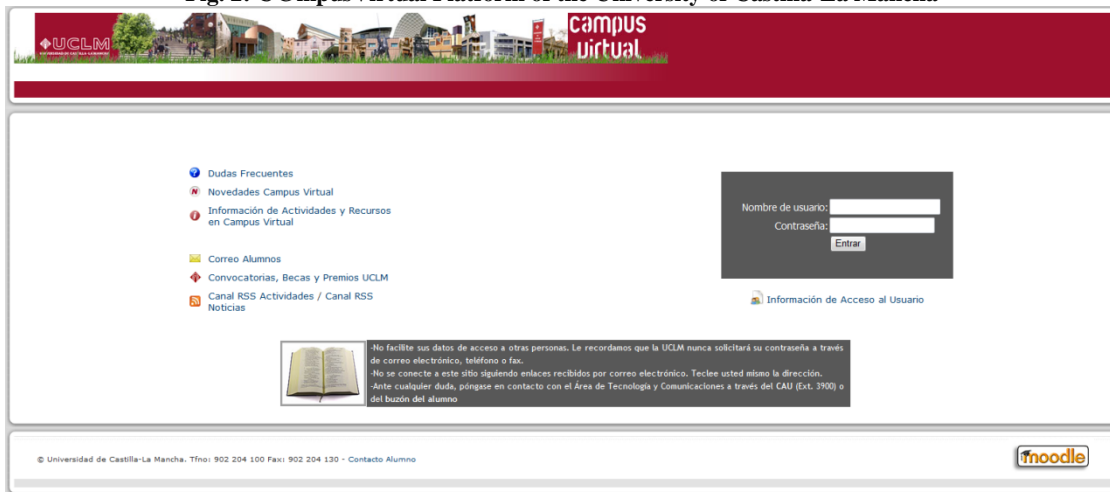
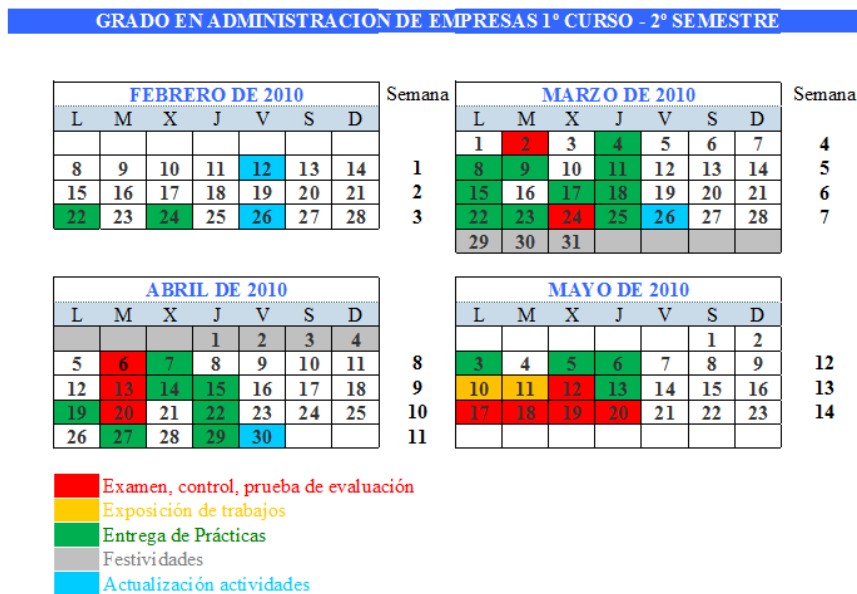


Fig. 3: Coordination Schedule



## RESULTS

In addition to the achievements of the UICE, the group of teachers in the first course of the new degree in Business Administration followed a method of timing coordination, ordering activities by level of difficulty and teaching weeks, so not saturate the students during the academic year.

Figure 3 shows the activities schedule for the second semester of the academic year 2009/2010.

## CONCLUSIONS

The teachers group of the new degrees has been found satisfactory and rewarding the experience. For the next academic year is planned to be addressed the activities coordination, not only temporarily but also transversely.

Therefore, it must be noted that the ultimate goal of all coordination is the student and, more specifically, activity that it develops throughout their learning process. In order to coordinate the entire teaching of each group, is of great interest to establish coordination mechanisms between the Dean of the School and all teachers who teach in the course and, where appropriate, to the degree where they can treat different issues of interest:

- Sharing of teaching approaches that are being developed within the classroom.
- Coordination and adjustment of activities to do the student outside the classroom.
- Analysis of the skills acquired by students: subject-management skills.

The main lines of future coordination work on the Social Sciences School include expanding the coordination to all courses of the new degrees. These lines of improvement are based on:

- Achieve the complete coordination of all teachers that participate in the new degree.
- Coordinate the activities developed by students.
- Check the skills-based learning of students.
- Monitor compliance with established coordination mechanisms to increase teacher training in terms of coordination.
- Disseminate the coordination experiences and shared it with other faculties and degrees.

## AUTHOR INFORMATION

**Juan-Antonio Mondéjar-Jiménez:** PhD and Degree in Business Administration by University of Castilla-La Mancha. Degree in Advanced Studies in Marketing at the same university. Associate Professor in Marketing at Business Department. Faculty of Social Sciences of Cuenca. University of Castilla-La Mancha (Spain). E-mail: [JuanAntonio.Mondejar@uclm.es](mailto:JuanAntonio.Mondejar@uclm.es)

Research Interest: Consumer behavior, price perception, e-learning and tourism marketing.

**María Cordente-Rodríguez:** Degree in Business Administration by University of Castilla-La Mancha. Lecturer in Marketing at Business Administration Department. Faculty of Social Sciences of Cuenca. University of Castilla-La Mancha (Spain). E-mail: [María.Cordente@uclm.es](mailto:María.Cordente@uclm.es)

Research Interest: Tourism marketing, consumer behavior and e-learning.

**María-Leticia Meseguer-Santamaría:** MBA in Economics Degree in Business Administration by University of Castilla-La Mancha. Assistant Professor in Statistics at Statistics Department. Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of Albacete. University of Castilla-La Mancha (Spain). E-mail: [MLeticia.Meseguer@uclm.es](mailto:MLeticia.Meseguer@uclm.es).

Research Interest: disability, women studies, educational and tourism.

**Manuel Vargas-Vargas:** PhD in Economics by University of Castilla-La Mancha and Degree in Mathematics by University of Granada. Associate Professor in Statistics at Statistics Department. Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of Albacete, University of Castilla-La Mancha (Spain). E-mail: [Manuel.Vargas@uclm.es](mailto:Manuel.Vargas@uclm.es).

Research Interest: disability, regional analysis, educational and tourism.

**José Mondéjar-Jiménez:** European PhD in Economics and Degree in Business Administration by University of Castilla-La Mancha. Associate Professor at Statistics Department. Faculty of Social Sciences of Cuenca. University of Castilla-La Mancha (Spain). E-mail: [Jose.Mondejar@uclm.es](mailto:Jose.Mondejar@uclm.es).

Research Interest: disability, regional analysis, educational and tourism.

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