

Assessing aids for the elaboration of argumentative synthesis in the University: Guide or Rubric?

Cuevas, I. *, Martín, E. *, Granado-Peinado, M. **, Casado, L. *, Luna, M. ***, Villalón, R. ****, Nuñez, J.A. *, Martínez-Alvarez, I. ***, de la Peña, A. ***** & Mateos, M. *

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*

Universidad Francisco de Vitoria**

Universidad a Distancia de Madrid***

Universidad de Cantabria****

Universidad de Nebrija*****

Although most of the interventions to foster the integration of multiple pieces of information has focused on teaching “how” to integrate (Barzilai *et al.*, 2018) providing different kinds of instruction on the processes implied, instruction focusing on the criteria to evaluate integration are scarce and mainly centered on integrating complementary, but not contradictory, sources.

In this work we designed and contrasted the effectiveness of two aids to improve the quality of the syntheses written by undergraduates from texts that defended opposing views on a topic: a Guide to the process of preparing a synthesis vs a Rubric with the evaluation criteria of written products. The number of arguments and the degree of integration were examined. Also, the students' perception was assessed regarding the usefulness of the aids to plan, to write and to review their synthesis.

Seen that we found that offering a guide accompanied by explicit instruction is more effective than providing it without explicit instruction Mateos *et al.* (2018), the two aids were offered here under two conditions: Explicit Instruction vs. Traditional Instruction. Thus, we carried out an experimental study with 122 Psychology students, distributed randomly into four intervention programs. In the first and fourth session they performed a synthesis task without support. In the second session, after receiving the instruction (explicit vs. traditional), each student made a new synthesis using the specific aid provided (practice 1, with Guide/Rubric). In the third session the participants carried out another synthesis under analogous conditions (practice 2, with aids).

Our results pointed out that, regardless the instruction, both aids (Guide and Rubric) improved the degree of integration of the students' syntheses. However, the guide contributed better to improve the selection of arguments. Students who received Explicit Instruction found both aids to be equally useful for planning and writing their syntheses. In contrast, after Traditional Instruction the Guide was perceived as more useful for planning and writing syntheses. The Guide was more useful for reviewing their texts. We will discuss the implications of these findings for synthesis writing training and conclude with recommendations and suggestions for future studies.

Key Words: Argumentative Synthesis, Guide, Rubric, Integration Processes, University Students