

## **Creativity in spanish universities.**

**A critical analysis of curricula, lecturing activity, and professional sector needs in audiovisual communication, advertising, and public relations bachelor degrees**

### ***La creatividad en la universidad española.***

*Un análisis crítico de los planes de estudio, la actividad docente y las necesidades del sector profesional en los grados de comunicación audiovisual, publicidad y relaciones públicas*

### ***A criatividade nas universidades espanholas.***

*Uma análise crítica dos currículos, da actividade docente e das necessidades do sector profissional nas licenciaturas de comunicação audiovisual, publicidade e relações públicas*

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## Abstract

*Since the entry into force of the European Higher Education Area, creativity has been considered a transversal competence in most university degrees, especially in Communication. The aim of this article is identifying the approach to creativity in all the subjects taught in the Audiovisual Communication and Advertising and Public Relations degrees in Spanish public universities. Thus, have been carried out a contents analysis focused on teaching guides of the curricula, a questionnaire to teachers of these degrees and an experts panel from the professional sector, who have reflected on the training and creative skills of the new graduates.*

*The outcomes indicate that, despite being considered a transversal and necessary quality for new professionals, creativity is not treated as such in the teaching guides. Although some of them contain terms related to this ability, in the rest of the programmes it is hardly present. This corroborates the gap between the needs of the professional sector and undergraduate university training, as young graduates show significant deficiencies in terms of creative capacity.*

**Keywords:** *Creativity; Audiovisual communication; Advertising; Public relations; Teaching; University*

## Resumen

*Desde la entrada en vigor del Espacio Europeo de Enseñanza Superior, la creatividad ha sido considerada como una competencia transversal en la mayoría de los estudios universitarios, especialmente en los de Comunicación. El objetivo de este artículo es identificar el abordaje que se hace de la creatividad en todas las asignaturas impartidas en los grados de Comunicación Audiovisual y de Publicidad y Relaciones Públicas en las universidades públicas españolas. De este modo, se ha realizado un análisis de contenidos de las guías docentes de los planes de estudio, un cuestionario a profesorado de estos grados y un panel de expertos del sector profesional, quienes han reflexionado sobre la formación y las destrezas creativas de los nuevos titulados.*

*Los resultados indican que, a pesar de considerarse una cualidad transversal y necesaria para los nuevos profesionales, la creatividad no es tratada como tal en las guías docentes. Si bien en algunas de ellas aparecen recogidos términos relaciona-*

*dos con esta capacidad, en el resto de las programaciones apenas está presente. Se corrobora así la distancia existente entre las necesidades del sector profesional y la formación universitaria de grado, ya que los jóvenes egresados demuestran importantes carencias en cuanto a capacidad creativa.*

**Palabras clave:** *Creatividad; Comunicación audiovisual; Publicidad; Relaciones públicas; Docencia; Universidad*

## **Resumo**

*Desde a entrada em vigor do Espaço Europeu do Ensino Superior, A criatividade tem sido considerada uma competência transversal na maioria dos diplomas universitários, especialmente em Comunicação. O objectivo deste artigo é identificar a abordagem à criatividade em todas as disciplinas leccionadas nas licenciaturas de Comunicação Audiovisual e Publicidade e Relações Públicas nas universidades públicas espanholas. Assim, foi realizada uma análise dos conteúdos dos guias de ensino dos currículos, um questionário aos professores destes graus e um painel de peritos do sector profissional, que refletiram sobre a formação e as competências criativas dos novos licenciados.*

*Os resultados indicam que, apesar de ser considerada uma qualidade transversal e necessária para os novos profissionais, a criatividade não é tratada como tal nos guias de ensino. Embora alguns deles incluam termos relacionados com esta capacidade, no resto dos programas ela dificilmente está presente. Isto corrobora o fosso entre as necessidades do sector profissional e a formação universitária de graduação, uma vez que os jovens diplomados apresentam deficiências significativas em termos de capacidade criativa.*

**Palavras chave:** *Criatividade; Comunicação audiovisual; Publicidade; Relações públicas; Ensino; Universidade*

Translation by **Sophie Philips**

# 1. Introduction

The Bologna declaration in 1999 led to the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), whose convergence process was completed in 2010; it consisted in adopting a university education system that emphasized learning competencies focused on labor market demands (Armendáriz, 2015; Besalú-Casademont, Schena, Sánchez-Sánchez, 2017; Castelló-Martínez, 2020). Among those were creativity, relevant in Communication studies, particularly Audiovisual Communication (hereinafter, AV) and Advertising and Public Relations (PR).

In the advertising and audiovisual sector creativity is an added value, a differentiating competitive advantage (Rodríguez del Pino, Miranda Villalón, Olmos Hurtado and Ordozgoiti de la Rica, 2020). Therefore future professionals need to acquire and develop specific creative skills that can influence their professional career and level of employability.

Creativity is one of the human skills that has aroused the most interest in society as a whole. It is a highly regarded trait in all fields despite the difficulty in defining this quality (Csikszentmihalyi, 1998; Morales, 2017).

This work focuses on the approach to creativity in the AV and Advertising and Public Relations degrees in Spanish public universities. Creativity is a transversal element in future graduate training, required for professional development as it is in demand in the labor market.

## 1.1. Theoretical framework

Creativity is an area of interest both for the Academy and the professional market, despite the difficulty in defining it (Roca and Mensa, 2009; Guilford, 1950; Taylor, 1959; Estanyol i Casals, 2012), since the mid 20th century Taylor (1959) had already gathered more than 100 definitions for it. There are many approaches to creativity from psychology, art, business, pedagogy, medicine, or Communication since it is linked to social progress (Arroyo, 2005; Fernández, Llamas and Gutiérrez, 2019). Thus, for authors like De La Torre, Sanz de Acedo, Sanz de Acedo

and Ardáiz, Izquierdo and López or Garín, López and Llamas among others (in Fernández, Llamas and Gutiérrez, 2019), it is implicit in all facets of human beings as a holistic capacity; Esquivias (2004, p. 3) acknowledges it “as a multidimensional factor that implies the interaction or concatenation between multiple dimensions”. Within this consideration, “it is the result of the interaction of a system composed of three elements. A culture that contains symbolic rules, a person who bring novelty to the symbolic field and a field of experts who recognize and validate innovation” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1998, p. 78). García interprets it as “the ability to associate, combine and/or restructure real or imaginary elements, in a new meaningful order within a given cultural context, and/or to elaborate original, valuable and innovative ideas or products for the society or the individual” (García García, 1991, in García García and Morales, 2011, p. 72). Moreover, the creativity-communication link has been reinforced in the last decade due to technological advances that have converted the public into creative audiences (Castells, 2010, in García López, 2016).

The importance of creativity has been studied in all phases of learning in pedagogy (Estanyol i Casals, 2012). Most authors agree that it is an acquired skill and point out the importance of a context for developing it (Fernández, Llamas and Gutiérrez, 2019; Rajadell, 2019; Guilera, 2020). Ballester (2002, p. 72) indicates that students’ creative side can be fostered in the classroom “from personal experiences and emotions” and using divergent thinking. Thus, creativity is “an opportunity to train people to adapt to change and come up with solutions and challenges” (Castillo, Ezquerro, Llamas and López, 2016, p. 9), and specific competencies related to it to improve learning (Long, Ibrahim, and Kowang, 2014; Hurtado, García, Rivera and Forgiony, 2018).

In the higher education area, investigations focused on its assessment have been conducted (Daly, Mosyjowski and Seifert, 2014), the importance of cultivating it in the student body (Cropley and Cropley, 2000) or in the creative teacher and his/her methodology (De la Torre, 2009). Although there are several studies related to learning creativity in the university context (Court, 1998; Livingston, 2010; Long, Ibrahim, and Kowang, 2014; Daly, Mosyjowski and Seifert, 2014; Vallejo, Daher and Rincón, 2020), it is necessary to go in-depth into how it is used in the field of Communication.

### ***1.1.1. Creativity, a transversal competence in the Audiovisual Communication and Advertising and Public Relations degrees***

Creativity is one of the transversal competencies included in the curricula of these degrees in the White Paper (ANECA, 2005), especially in Advertising (Roca, 2004; Roca and Mensa, 2009; Alegre, 2012; Castelló-Martínez and Tur-Viñes, 2017) but also AV (Besalú-Casademont, Schen and Sánchez-Sánchez, 2017) and Public Relations (Estanyol i Casals, 2012; Castelló-Martínez, 2020).

The creation of the EHEA brought about the introduction of the term competency, defined as “a range of knowledge, abilities, and skills needed to perform a given task” (Alegre, 2012, p. 76). They are broken down into disciplinary, academic, professional, and other specific competencies (ANECA, 2005). Within the Communication degrees, Castelló-Martínez (2020) concluded that creativity- or some of its variants- appear in all the White Paper’s competencies on Communication Degrees including: academic, professional, disciplinary, and other specific competencies in both degrees.

The relationship between creativity and competencies has been analyzed in several Spanish investigations. Alegre (2012) studied the advertising creativity subjects in Spain, analyzing the content and objectives in 286 subjects, grouped them into four descriptors, and identified the wide variety of names to refer to them. In addition, after an extensive document review, it was concluded that the teaching of creativity at university is holistic, requires involvement, creativity, and is real. Regarding the competencies in the Communication Degree’s White Paper (ANECA, 2005), Entanyol i Casals (2012) focused on analyzing creativity in Advertising and Public Relations curricula, and Castelló-Martínez and Tur-Viñes (2019) carried out a document review on teachers’ and students’ creative competencies, its primary focus was Advertising. Recently, Castelló-Martínez (2020) conducted a content analysis on the nomenclature of the subjects in the Communication degrees to link them to creativity and strategy.

In all these analyses, one constant is the nexus between the terms creativity and Advertising, but there is a decrease in the link between creativity and PR and AV. That is why this research aims to contribute to the existing literature and delve into previous studies on creativity as a transversal competence in AV and Advertis-

ing and Public Relations degrees. The interest of this work lies in the need to know how creativity is addressed within both formal and informal university teaching of these branches and whether the contents and skills are adapted to professional market needs.

## 2. Materials and methods

After reviewing the literature, several research questions have arisen: How has the Spanish public university adapted to the need to provide creative and innovative communication professionals in demand in the labor market? Is creativity a transversal competency in the subjects of both degrees?

The objective was to identify the approach to creativity in subjects in the AV and Advertising and Public Relations degrees in the Spanish public universities. The secondary objectives are as follows:

To study the subject teaching guides for the degrees and identify how creativity is incorporated into a meaningful learning approach based on the competencies set out in the White Paper.

To determine whether the teachers develop methodologies and activities that foster and develop students' creativity.

To know the creative competencies required by the labor market, which future graduates need, and to compare them with the proposals made by Spanish universities.

Thus, a descriptive investigation has been conducted (Hernández, Fernández, and Baptista, 1998), combining quantitative and qualitative techniques (Danhke, 1989). The study is only centered on AV and Advertising and Public Relations degrees- due to the weight that creativity carries in them (Castelló-Martínez 2020)- out of the 27 Spanish public universities offering these degrees (Ministry of Universities, 2020) since they concentrate 87.2% of the undergraduate student body and provide more than 79% of the degrees in the Spanish university system (Algaba Garrido, 2015).

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University	Degrees taught
Carlos III	AV
Castilla La Mancha	AV
Complutense de Madrid	AV
	Advertising-Public Relations
Alcalá	AV
Alicante	Advertising-Public Relations
Cádiz	Advertising-Public Relations
Extremadura	AV
Granada	AV
	AV
Málaga	AV
	Advertising-Public Relations
Murcia	AV
	Advertising-Public Relations
Salamanca	AV
Sevilla	AV
Sevilla	Advertising - Public Relations
Valladolid	Advertising - Public Relations
Vigo	AV
	Advertising - Public Relations
País Vasco	AV
	Advertising - Public Relations
Miguel Hernández	AV
Rey Juan Carlos	AV
	Advertising - Public Relations
Coruña	AV
Santiago de Compostela	AV
Autònoma de Barcelona	AV
	Advertising - Public Relations
Barcelona	AV
Girona	AV
	Advertising - Public Relations
Lleida	AV
València	AV

University	Degrees taught
Jaume I	AV
	Advertising - Public Relations
Politécnica de València	AV
Pompeu Fabra (UPF)	AV
	Advertising - Public Relations
Rovira i Virgili	AV
	Advertising - Public Relations

**Table 1:** Universities and degrees that make up our sample.  
Source: Authors

The research techniques are document review, the content analysis of degree teaching guides, a questionnaire of semi-structured answers to university communication professors, and a panel of professional experts.

## 2.1. Content analysis

The study has focused on the subject teaching guides of the AV and Advertising and Public Relations degrees taught in Spanish public universities in the academic year 2019/2020 or 2020/2021, extracted from institutional websites. The occurrence of the following terms (and their variants) in the guides have been investigated:

- Creativity
- Creation
- Creative
- Conceptualization
- Innovation

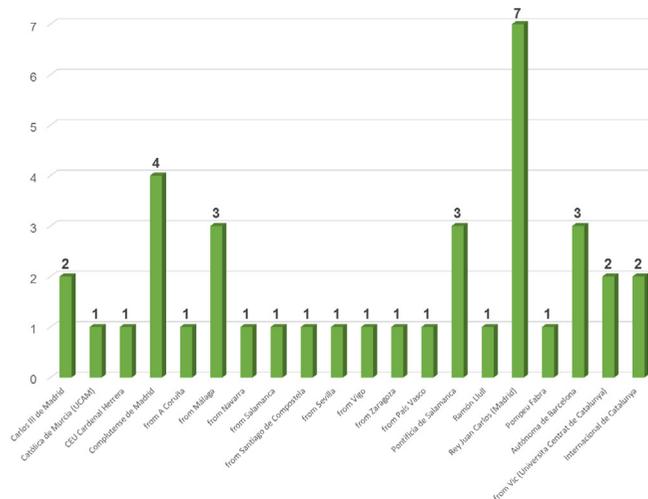
Previous studies have analyzed the presence of these terms in the nomenclature of the subjects (Castelló-Martínez, 2020; Estanyol i Casals, 2012), although, in this research, the fields of analysis have been extended to include: name, degree, university, course, objectives, contents, competencies, and evaluation. 1, 978 subjects were identified, and after excluding unavailable ones, the study corpus consisted of 1,925 documents. The data was processed based on a descriptive statistic and frequency study using SPSS software.

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## 2.2. Teacher questionnaire

A mixed questionnaire with 44 questions was designed to determine the faculty's view (Meneses and Rodríguez, 2011); it included teaching methodology and evaluation of this skill (Gervilla, 1980), tools for teaching, or the creative students' characteristics, among others.

Of the total questionnaires sent (COMUNICACIÓN database of Red Iris, the list of distribution services from the Spanish Scientific Community, 1,790 subscribers), 44 answers were obtained from teachers from 20 institutions (graph 1), slightly more than 2.45% of the sample. 52.3% are men, and 38.6% are over 54; most have PhDs(95.3%), while the rest have obtained a Master's degree. Almost all of them are part of a branch of Communication (mainly Journalism and Advertising and Public Relations), although there are also Sociology or Psychology graduates.



**Graph 1:** Universities of faculty affiliation.

Source: authors

43.2% teach in Advertising and PR, 36.4% in AV, and over 13% teach in both, covering various subjects.

## 2.3. Expert panel

An expert panel composed of five managers in several Communications and advertising agencies was created for industry professionals. These companies usually hire graduates from both degrees:

- Francisco Rodríguez, Founding Partner and CEO of El Ruso de Rocky.
- Mauricio Leirado, Creative Director of Ymedia.
- David Vijil, Creative Director of Proximity.
- Gonzalo Urriza, Creative Director of Contrapunto BBDO.
- Guillermo Santaisabel, Executive Creative Director MRM Spain.

The panel took place during November and December 2020, and it was based on interviews to learn about the creative competencies in demand in the labor market and new professionals' profiles.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Teaching guides

The AV degree is concentrated in 60.9% of the teaching guides (ni=1172) compared with 39.1% for Advertising (ni=753) (table 2). The terms studied are found more (56.1%) in the third and fourth years (ni=1080). It is also noted that they do not appear in 1.9% of the cases.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
Valid	Audiovisual Communication	1172	60.9	60.9	60.9
	Advertising	753	39.1	39.1	100.0
	Total	1925	100.0	100.0	

**Table 2:** Teaching guides by degree.

Source: authors/SPSS

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The University of Girona's (7.1%) and the Complutense University of Madrid's (6.1%) teaching guides use the terminology analyzed the most. In contrast, the University of Castilla La Mancha is the one that does so the least (2.1%).

Regarding the terms analyzed, 2.07% of the programs include "creation" in their degrees, the term "creativity" occupies 1.25% of the documents, 0.78% of the guides deal with the term "creative(s)," "innovation" (0.15%) and "conceptualization" (0.052%). In the course objectives, no terms were found in 54.2% of the cases. When they do appear, they refer to "conceptualization" (28.7%)- meaning creation and/or analysis of theoretical concepts- and "creation" (7.5%)- with two variants, one consisting of the analysis of artistic, aesthetic, or Communication creations, and another focused on the action of carrying out a project or task-. The term "creativity" appears anecdotally in this section (1.1%), applied as theoretical training to recognize creativity or as the acquisition of this practical skill.

The words studied are not detected in subject contents in 71.5% of the guides. However, mention is made to the concept "creation" (11.4%), which generally refers to carrying out an activity and not to the creative process- and "creative" (4.9%)- as an adjective in a heading, theoretical in any case-, or both (2.1%) or "conceptualization" (3.1%)- as a theoretical heading referring to the analysis of concepts and not to the action of conceptualizing-.

Regarding competencies (See Table 3), the terms analyzed appear in 49.9% of the documents. They include the terms "creativity" (8.2%)- as the "ability to take expressive and thematic risks within the framework of audiovisual production availability and deadlines, applying personal solutions and points of view to develop projects" as stated in the White Paper on Communication Degrees (ANECA, 2005, p. 264), in the case of AV; or as an "ability to evolve towards the unknown, based on a solid knowledge of the present" (ANECA, 2005, p. 291), in the case of Advertising and PR- "creation" (8.2%)- is defined as the ability to do something following a process- or both (5.8%); and "creative" (6.3%)- to qualify the process of doing projects or to add adjectives to a task or process-.

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
<b>Valid</b>	6	.3	.3	.3
<b>Does not appear</b>	965	50.1	50.1	50.4
<b>Creativity</b>	158	8.2	8.2	58.6
<b>Creative and conceptualization</b>	2	.1	.1	58.8
<b>Creation</b>	158	8.2	8.2	67.0
<b>Creation and creativity</b>	111	5.8	5.8	72.7
<b>Creation and creative</b>	73	3.8	3.8	76.5
<b>Creation and innovation</b>	58	3.0	3.0	79.5
<b>Creation and conceptualization</b>	1	.1	.1	79.6
<b>Creativity. Innovation. Creation. Creative.</b>	3	.2	.2	79.7
<b>Creativity. Innovation. Creation</b>	2	.1	.1	79.8
<b>Creative</b>	122	6.3	6.3	86.4
<b>Creative. Innovation. Creation.</b>	4	.2	.2	86.4
<b>Innovation</b>	42	2.2	2.2	88.6
<b>Conceptualization</b>	44	2.3	2.3	90.9
<b>Creativity and innovation</b>	56	2.9	2.9	93.8
<b>Creativity and creative</b>	82	4.3	4.3	98.0
<b>Creativity and conceptualization</b>	1	.1	.1	98.1
<b>Creative and innovation</b>	37	1.9	1.9	100.0
<b>Total</b>	1925	100.0	100.0	

**Table 3:** Main terms that appear in the competencies.

Source: authors/SPSS

Creativity is not evaluated in 87.3% of the guides analyzed (ni=1681); "creation" (3.5%), "creativity," "creative" (2.2%), and "conceptualization" (2.1%) are

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the most recurring terms. In most cases, they are used as synonyms for an activity (creation) or the approach to a project (conceptualization). Few guides include creativity, the creative process, innovation, or conceptualization as specific evaluation criteria that can be assessed through a point system, rubrics, or any other grading tool.

A two-dimensional cross table shows the relationship between the contents identified both in the objectives and evaluation. Thus, no terms related to creativity were detected in the indicated sections (50.7%), even if “conceptualization” (21.7%) and “creation” (6.65%) are words included in the objectives- there is no record of these in the evaluation-. Something similar is true for “creative”, which is present only in objectives (3.38%).

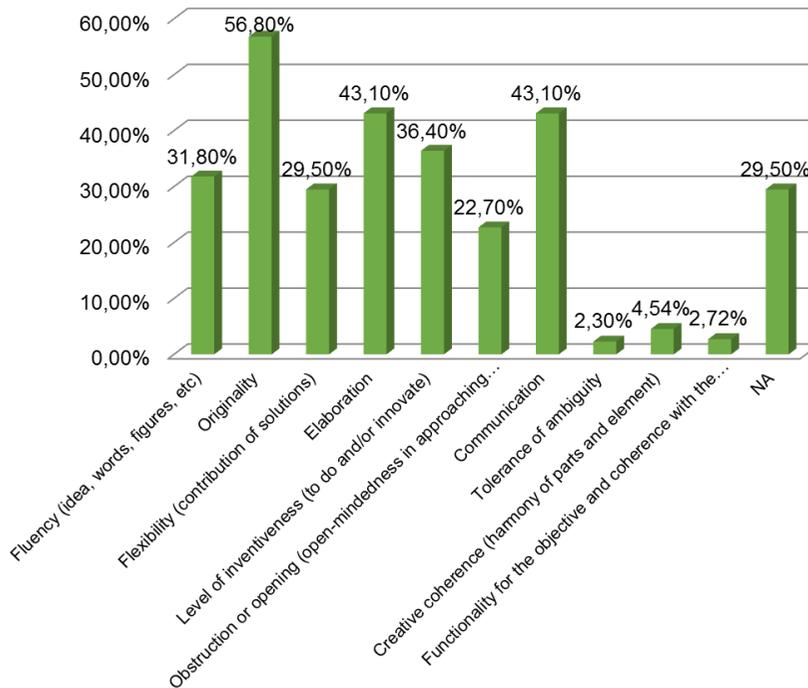
Regarding contents and competencies, there is no relationship in 40.37% of the cases. It is important to note that when the competencies deal with “creation” (6.02%), the content does not deal with “creativity” (4.88%), which is also the case with the term “creative” (4.05%). But when “conceptualization” is mentioned in the competencies (1.82%), it is part of the subject contents. At the same time, when the words “creation” (1.09%), “creativity” (1.14%), and “creative” (1.03%) appear in the competencies, the word “creation” is found in the content, and when “creativity” is mentioned in the competencies (0.56%), the term “creative” appears in the content.

Finally, the contingency table of the variables competencies-content and evaluation reveals that the term “creativity” is not found in competencies, content, or evaluation in 82 guides (4.25%). Nor is it included in evaluation when “creativity” appears in competencies and “creation” in content (0.88%). When referring to the term “creative” in competencies, it is not recorded in content or evaluation in 3.53% of the cases, nor is it included in the last section when the guide deals with the “creative” competence and content related to “creation” (0.83%).

### 3.2. Teacher questionnaire

Although 75% of the respondents indicate that their subjects are not related to the development of creativity, 65.9% include it among their teaching objectives,

61.4% consider it as a competency, 72.7% incorporate it in the contents along with the creative process, and 68.2% consider creativity as an evaluation criterion (graph 2).



**Graph 2:** Criteria for evaluating creativity.  
Source: authors

58.8% use rubrics in each assignment to evaluate creativity, and 38.2% stipulate that it is a percentage of the final grade in order to grade it.

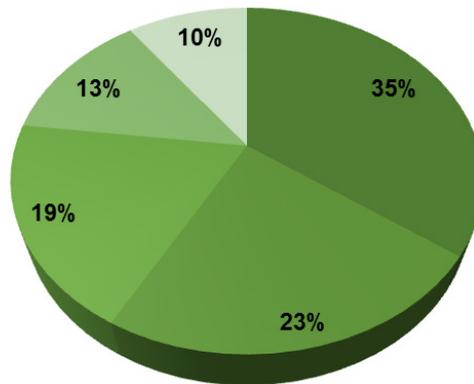
Regarding creativity as a competence for graduates, 88.6% consider it transversal in the AV and 100% in Advertising and PR. 90.9% implement innovative teaching methodologies, even if their subjects are not directly related to creativity; project-based (77.5%), problem-based (50%), and collaborative learning (47.5%) were the most prominent. 88.6% use training techniques to foster creativity, especially brainstorming (61.5%) and a digital portfolio (43.6%).

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70.5% affirm that they dedicate time and/or specific sessions to planning subjects that foster creativity (graph 3), although only 35.5% confirm allocating at least one hour a week to it.

### Hours dedicated to teaching creativity

- More than an hour a week
- Between two and four hours a month
- Some sessions, but without planning
- One hour a week
- One hour a month
- A few sporadic sessions per month



**Graph 3:** Hours dedicated to teaching creativity.  
Source: authors

On the other hand, when asked about the promotion of creativity in Spanish universities-1 for not at all and 5 for very much- no respondent gave the highest ratings (4 or 5), most gave a 3 (59.1%) rating.

Concerning the problems that professors encounter when teaching creativity, the following are highlighted (Table 4):

	Students	Academic System	Teaching creativity	Faculty
<b>Result %</b>	79.5%	65.9%	29.5%	15.9%
<b>Problems</b>	Lack of interest and involvement Used to a quantitative rating Perception of subjectivity in the evaluations Lack of knowledge Mental rigidity	Lack of time and resources Very large groups System rigidity New contents Lack of recognition	Difficulty in evaluating it Need for more time Problems for its insertion as a competency in unrelated subjects	Lack of training Lack of knowledge

**Table 4:** Main problems for teaching creativity according to teachers.

Source: authors

On the other hand, 52.3% use social networks in their teaching, YouTube and Instagram were preferred, and 50% work with software and applications, Adobe Photoshop (or a similar open-source) and Google tools were used the most, 34.8% for each, followed by Adobe Indesign or similar tools, with 30.4%.

Concerning creativity as a skill, 88.6% consider that it can be learned, while only 8.1% believe that it is innate, pointing out the creative student's following characteristics (table 5):

<b>Adaptation to change</b>	13.64%
<b>Curiosity</b>	34.09%
<b>Dedication</b>	22.73%
<b>Courage to express ideas</b>	15.91%
<b>Analytical skills</b>	11.36%

**Table 5:** The characteristics of creative students according to teachers.

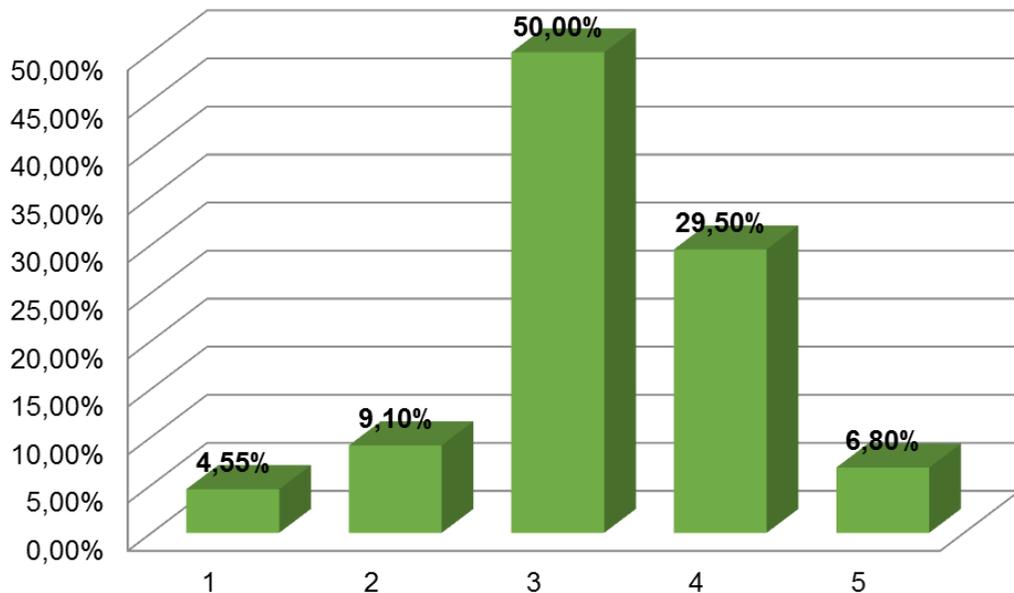
Source: authors

Teachers stimulate participation in the learning process to foster creativity a lot (54.5%) quite a lot (31.8%) a little (11.4%) or not at all (2.27%); through exercises for developing thinking and cognitive skills (a lot 36.3% and 45.4%

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quite a lot, a little 1.4% and not at all 6.8%); and by stimulating innovation as a challenge a lot (47.7%) or quite a lot (31.8%) while 15.9% do it a little and 4.5% not at all.

Finally, most teachers (52.3%) acknowledge that the development of digital environments has improved students' creativity and their creativity abilities (graph 4) are now average (50%).



**Graph 4:** Rating (from 1 to 5) of students' creative abilities.  
Source: authors

### 3.3. Expert panel

Experts maintain that creativity is an innate skill, which some people have a knack for, but it can be enhanced and exercised:

I think that part of it is an innate talent, personality, being creative in your way of thinking. I am not speaking from an advertising point of view but a purely creative one, to give everything a twist, no matter how insignificant it may seem.

[...] But without training and learning, you can fall into monotony and stop being creative ". (Santaisabel, Personal Communication, December 18, 2020).

However, "there is a bias because many people believe that they are not creative, and not everyone can be an Advertising Creative Director, but everyone can be creative to some extent" (Urriza, Personal Communication, December 10, 2020).

For experts, creativity must be in the education system across the board and be incorporated into all areas, since nowadays "it seems to be quite geared towards killing creativity, divergence is frowned upon and exploring new avenues seems to be a nuisance" (Rodríguez, Personal Communication, November 27, 2020). They agree that it is necessary to give it value and incorporate it into the curriculum in a global way, since "creativity is solving problems or resolving challenges in new ways, through different avenues, it is something that would be useful in almost any branch." (Leirado, Personal Communication, December 2, 2020). However, they do not believe that creativity is a concept that is taken into account when developing curricula:

I have the impression that more is said about creativity than is invested in it, which is inconsistent. There is still a long way to go in this regard. Creativity must be transversal; it is a philosophy. The basis is to educate on self-esteem, that one's particular vision is good, diversity, what is different is good, it is not strange [...] The ego must be strengthened because it is good to believe that we have good ideas, but not that we always have the best ideas. (Urriza, Personal Communication, December 10, 2020).

Regarding higher education, creativity is associated with Advertising and PR, and AV and is highlighted. However, it is present in many professions, according to the Creative Director of BBDO since, for example, "you have to be very creative to find a vaccine" (Urriza, Personal Communication, December 10, 2020). At a professional level, the ideal environment for developing creative thinking is "an agency with real challenges and working as a team with planners, production, accounts, etc." (Rodríguez, Personal Communication, November 27, 2020).

After examining the degrees' teaching programs in this study, the experts agree that theoretical contents are still overly weighted: "Too much theory and too little

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practice; I am not speaking about real professional experience, but projects that make them put what they have learned into practice” (Rodríguez, Personal Communication, November 27, 2020). At the same time, they believe that mnemonics are still prioritized over encouraging other facets of the student body: “Our educational level is poor compared to previous generations, even more so. Evaluation in our country consists of repeating a syllabus, not how it is assimilated and how it is reinterpreted. Memory is valued, not creativity “. (Vijil, Personal Communication, December 3, 2020). And this in contrast to the creative explosion that is taking place in specific fields outside the university, such as social media and Communication (Santaisabel, Personal Communication, December 18, 2020).

For Gonzalo Urriza, creativity is a transversal and positive asset for human beings in all aspects: “It is a differentiating quality, it helps you to stand out, to get out of trouble, to be efficient and to move up. It is basic in any profession, and although it is exploited less in some rather than others, creativity is useful in all of them” (Urriza, Personal Communication, December 10, 2020).

These experts state that among the requirements to be met by junior Advertising and AV professionals (table 6) is the handling of specific computer tools: “We are aware of what can be asked of an intern or junior professional, but they have to handle the programs because it is like someone who wants to enter a Formula 1 team but does not even have a driver’s license (Urriza, Personal Communication, December 10, 2020). Likewise, graduates also lack better preparation for facing difficulties that lie ahead in the professional field:

Students do not adapt to the market, and this must be criticized so that public education improves. Theoretical knowledge of semiotics, history of Communication, or art history is very good; this basic training must be solid, but it must be accompanied by theoretical and technical knowledge of processes, which students are often unaware of, and through practical experience. In the private Masters, they teach how to channel knowledge into an idea that can be done within the public university because it does not make sense that you have to do a private Master’s degree that simulates agency work after completing a degree. That should be done within the public university degrees (Urriza, Personal Communication, December 10, 2020).

Necessary qualities	Skills required	Weaknesses
Attitude: willingness to work and learn, curiosity, ambition, and effort without being exploited or stepping on others' toes.	Own criteria and aesthetic taste.	Lack of technical and software training.
Creative spirit: Search for original concepts and ways of doing them.	Strategic and analytical skills. Excellent command of design and editing software.	Confusing basic concepts They are not used to applying theoretical knowledge.
Basic knowledge about processes.	Knowledge of the medium, communication needs, and processes, and the audience.	Lack of a quality portfolio.
Solid cultural references.	Being aware of the purpose and timing of the Communication to offer appropriate solutions.	Lack of proactivity and fear of voicing opinions and being a nuisance. Commitment to the profession.

**Table 6:** *Junior Communication professional in Spain.*  
Source: authors, based on an expert panel

When it comes to activities that can enhance new workers' creativity, Leirado still believes in the benefits of a traditional technique: "What works for me is to discuss ideas in a group. Brainstorming is the easiest way to come up with good ideas. And then take those budding ideas, shape them and see if they work. Then with those more developed ideas to go back and discuss them in groups" (Leirado, Personal Communication, December 2, 2020). They also highlight other routines and practices with which creativity can be exercised (Table 7).

Practices and exercises for fostering creative thinking
Exercising self-esteem
Seeking to be different and not being afraid of being different.
Broadening cultural references (watching movies, TV, listening to music, reading, going to exhibitions, etc.)
Facing real briefings
Brainstorming (working) ideas with experienced creatives
Putting yourself in the other person's shoes to connect with their needs and interests

**Table 7:** *Recommendations for enhancing creativity.*  
Source: authors, based on an expert panel

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Regarding the profiles of professors in these disciplines, the interviewees agree that it is fundamental to have knowledge and experience regarding professional practice: “With these case studies, teachers who work in the industry. Challenging the student to think, not to learn. [...] And not grading, but guiding and explaining other available avenues to reach an idea.” (Vijil, Personal Communication, December 3, 2020). However, to complete this idea, they suggest others such as better remuneration and teacher training: “Teachers should be valued, well paid so that they are really good and have a pedagogical profile. They do not all have to come from the advertising world. Still, they should be good at what they do, whether journalists, writers, etc.” (Urriza, Personal Communication, December 10, 2020).

Regarding young professionals’ shortcomings (Table 6), difficulties in applying theoretical knowledge to real needs and the lack of the capacity for strategic analysis and making proposals are highlighted: “we need people with opinions, more used to analyzing situation and problems, with the ability to arrive at their own conclusions, more self-confident and not afraid of taking a stand or expressing well-argued opinions” (Leirado, Personal Communication, December 2, 2020).

From the perspective of professional practice, the interviewees point out aspects that could be implemented in university programs to facilitate graduate employability, such as enhancing practice, real work dynamics, and the use of computer programs, as well as the acquisition of broader visual and cultural references (table 8).

<b>Aspects to be improved in communication studies</b>
To implement creativity in a real and transversal way, not only as a theoretical aspect.
To promote the implementation of theoretical knowledge
To include simple and straightforward guidelines on the actual industry work process
To work on assimilation and reinterpretation instead of rote learning.
To promote self-esteem and the students’ own ideas.
To perform real internships and quality work within the university.
To simulate an agency’s work system to learn the dynamics of the profession.

<b>Aspects to be improved in communication studies</b>
To reinforce the use of design and editing programs.
To Promote the acquisition of cultural and visual references.
To develop a creative portfolio

**Table 8:** Proposal of aspects to be improved in communication studies according to professionals in the sector. Source: authors, based on the expert panel.

## 4. Discussion and conclusions

Creativity (Taylor, 1959) and its teaching-learning (García and Morales, 2011; De la Torre, 2009) have been studied since the mid-twentieth century; however, its implementation in the education and higher education systems continue to be debated (Csikszentmihalyi, 1998; Marina, 2013; Vallejo, Daher, and Rincón, 2020). Within the Spanish context, this investigation has sought to expand on previous works focused on curricula, either linked to Advertising and PR (Alonso, 2004; Alegre, 2012; Armendáriz, 2014) subject nomenclatures (Estanyol i Casals, 2012; Castelló-Martínez, 2020) or AV and the promotion of creativity through the use of different methodologies (Marfil-Carmona and Sedeño-Valdellós, 2012; Castro-Martínez and Diaz-Morilla, 2019).

After analyzing the results, we can conclude that although creativity is one of the competencies and skills included in the curricula and declared by teachers as an essential part of the learning process, graduate students have many deficiencies from a professional perspective. In agreement with Alonso, Fernández, and Nissen (2009), it has been found that there is a gap between the training on creativity in undergraduate university education and labor market needs. The labor market demands innovative and creative professionals to respond quickly and apply theoretical and technical knowledge to real problems.

From the agencies' perspectives, the graduates often do not have the profile required of junior professionals. This may be because no formal standardized system seems to have been developed to enable the teaching, acquisition, and evaluation of creativity, neither transversally nor in subjects linked to it. In this sense,

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although this quality is taken into account in the competencies or objectives of some subjects, it is anecdotal in the evaluation, both in tests or activities and the grading criteria. Likewise, teachers acknowledge the difficulties in working on students' learning and the system itself (time, space, number of students, etc.). However, very few teachers admit to their own problems, such as their lack of preparation, knowledge, etc. It is also worth noting that most of them claim that they implement methodologies that facilitate learning the creative process or apply clear criteria for its evaluation. Still, this information is found in less than 5% of the teaching guides.

Regarding creative students- and coinciding with previous literature (Guilford, 1950; Torrance 1962; Sternberg and Lubart, 1995; Amabile, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 1998; López Martínez, Navarro, 2010)-, the characteristics that stand out in academic and professional circles are curiosity, dedication, and the self-confidence to express their own ideas.

This work has achieved its objectives by identifying how creativity is addressed in the AV, Advertising, and PR degrees, broadening the scope of previous studies by focusing on aspects such as competencies, objectives, content, and evaluation. In addition, it delves into the teaching-learning process and how it is implemented in professional training.

Its limitations lie in teachers' unwillingness to explain how they incorporate creativity into their classes. It would also be interesting to broaden professionals' views on how creativity is addressed in degrees. In this sense, the researchers plan to develop a new study focused on the teaching practices of Communication Sciences university professors and the tools they use for evaluation, and the professional profiles in demand in the market.

Given the relevance that creativity should have in the education system in general and in Communication Degrees, there are numerous future lines of study, such as the in-depth analysis of key subjects for each professional profile, the student's perception of their creative training, or the revision of the contents taught.

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