TEACHING PRACTICES FOR PASSIVE AND ACTIVE LEARNING IN RURAL AND URBAN ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to characterize, through a questionnaire, the degree of use of teaching practices related with passive and active learning in rural and urban elementary Portuguese teachers. Psychometric analysis of the questionnaire was conducted with a sample of 400 elementary teachers. For studying the degree of teachers' use of teaching practices related with passive and active learning the questionnaire was applied to a second sample of 140 elementary teachers from urban and rural schools. Use of teaching practices was compared between these two groups through a t-test (independent samples). Main results suggest the existence of a differentiation between a «participatory» and a «non-participatory» form of teaching in the inquired teachers; an higher general use of the former compared with the use of the later; and an higher use of «participatory» teaching in rural teachers than in urban teachers.

KEY WORDS

Active-passive learning; Approaches to learning; Rural education; Urban education.

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A recurrent perspective in Educational Psychology focuses on the fact that scholastic learning occurs by levels, more as a passive or an active process. One of the views that precisely emphasize this distinction is SAL (*Students' Approaches to Learning*) theory, which conceptualizes learning as the combination of students' motivation to study and learning strategies (Entwistle, Tait, & McCune, 2000). Previous researches within this framework consistently identified two major types of approaches students use: surface (passive) and deep (active) (Entwistle *et al*., 2000). A surface approach to learning comprises an instrumental motivation to learning (learning to avoid failure) and a surface learning strategy (rote memorization). On the other hand, a deep approach to learning involves an intrinsic motivation to learn (learning for its pleasure) and a deep learning strategy (comprehension, interrelation of information, critical analysis and creativity). Research had shown that approaches to learning significantly influence school achievement, with the surface approach linking with poorer results and the deep approach with richer ones (Cano, 2005; Diseth, 2007, 2013; Watkins, 2001). Studies also indicate that approaches to learning act both as relatively stable ways of coping with study

1 This paper results from research conducted in the context of the project ***La eficacia y la calidad en la adquisición de competencias caracterizan a la escuela rural: ¿es un modelo transferible a otra tipología de escuela?*** [Ref. EDU2009-13460], of University of Barcelona, sponsored by Ministry of Science and Innovation of Spain. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to António M. Duarte, Faculty of Psychology, University of Lisbon, Alameda da Universidade, 1649-013, Lisbon, Portugal.

tasks, on the basis of individual characteristics, and as variable responses, on the basis of specific contextual demands, like the teaching practices to which students are exposed to (Biggs, Kember, & Leung, 2001; Entwistle, 1987). Besides, there is evidence that the general learning environment, from which those teaching practices are a component, might differ according to the territorial context and especially as a function of its nature as urban or rural (Boix, Champollion, & Duarte, 2015).

THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT OF PASSIVE AND ACTIVE LEARNING

Scholastic learning in general and students' approaches to learning in particular (i.e. surface and deep approach to learning—see previous section), are significantly related with the learning environment (Honkimäki, Tynjälä, & Valkonen, 2004; Richardson, 2011; Sadlo & Richardson, 2003). Effectively, approaches to learning are so sensible to the learning context that they actually «(...) give the barometer readings that tell how the general system is working.» (Biggs, 2001, p. 99).

Several studies revealed that students' approaches to learning are predicted by students' perception of their learning environment. These studies have shown that the deep approach to learning is positively predicted by a perception of the learning environment as characterized by good teaching, clear goals and standards, appropriate workload and appropriate assessment, while surface approach to learning is negatively predicted by such a perception (Diseth, 2007, 2013; Diseth, Pallesen, Brunborg, & Larsen, 2010; Lawless & Richardson, 2002; Lizzio, Wilson, & Simons, 2002; Richardson & Price, 2003; Sabzevari, Abbaszade & Borhani, 2013).

In general terms, surface approach to learning relates to a «transmissive» learning environment, where students are expected to receive information unidirectional transmitted to them (Burnett & Proctor, 2002), while deep approach to learning relates to a «constructivist» learning environment, where students are prompted to actively construct knowledge.

Specifically, previous research showed how different approaches to leaning differently relate with, or might be influenced by, specific teaching practices.

Surface (passive) approach to learning tends to relate with a learning environment mostly characterized by the use of what can be called «non-partic-

ipatory teaching»: A teacher's centred and depersonalized form of teaching (Biggs & Moore, 1993), in which the educator, taken has the epistemological authority, basically «transmits» facts (Gibbs, 1992), which «receptive» students are oriented to memorize (Biggs & Kirby, 1983) and then reproduce in single final tests (Biggs, 1990; Donnison & Pen-Edwards, 2012).

Oppositely, the deep (active) approach to learning is connected to «participatory teaching»: A student's centred and personalized form of teaching (Biggs & Moore, 1993), in which the educator, considered more as a kind of «guide», gives added freedom of choice to the students (Ramsden, 1988) and focuses in practices like: enthusiastically explaining (Ramsden, 1988); using students' language, questioning and discussing (Biggs & Moore, 1993; Chen & Dillon, 2012); addressing interesting knowledge structures contextualized on the exterior world and in relation with students' knowledge (Balasooriya, Hughes, & Toohey, 2009; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Ramsden, 1988); helping students in becoming aware of their conceptions (Svensson & Hogfors, 1988); teaching students learning strategies (Biggs, 1987); communicating trust on students' capacities (Dart & Clarcke, 1991); involving students in situations prone to provoke curiosity (Biggs & Kirby, 1983) and comprehension (Schmeck, 1988), like those of «independent learning», «collaborative learning» (Gibbs, 1992), «reciprocal teaching» (Biggs, 1990) and «problem based learning» (Ali & El Sebai, 2010; Sadlo & Richardson, 2003); continuously reacting to students (Ramsden, 1988) and evaluating them for correction (Gibbs, 1992); and encouraging students to apply what they have learned (Gibbs, 1992).

THE VARIATION OF EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT IN URBAN *VERSUS* RURAL TERRITORY

As mentioned above, students' approaches to learning (surface-passive or deep-active) are partly a result of the educational context (Biggs, Kember, & Leung, 2001; Entwistle, 1987). Moreover, the educational context can differ according to the territory, which is mostly differentiated in terms of urban *versus* rural (Boix, Champollion, & Duarte 2015; Hobin et al., 2012). In the next two sub-sections we present a characterization of the educational context in urban and rural territory.

THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT IN URBAN TERRITORY

In general terms and when contrasted with rural education, the urban educational context is characterized as more resourceful in terms of a variety of aspects like accessibility, budget, technology, courses, special programmes, extra-curricular activities and specialized staff, like school psychologists (Clopton & Knesting, 2006; Khattri, Riley, & Kane, 1997).

Nevertheless, despite these apparent advantages, the urban educational context has been characterized as using an 'industrial model of education', more conductive to de-contextualized learning and disconnection from the local environment (Emmett & McGee, 2013; Pelavin Research Institute, 1996).

In particular, urban schools have a higher probability of being overcrowded, a fact that probably alienates more a close teacher-student relationship, since this is less typical in larger schools (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Enriquez, 2013; Hardré, 2007).

THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT IN RURAL TERRITORY

In contrast with urban education, the rural educational context is generally characterized as more problematical, since rural schools have an higher probability of being isolated, having minor budgets, being less technology equipped, having less experienced, trained, specialized staff, and offering less courses, special programmes and extra-curricular activities (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Clopton & Knesting, 2006; Hedges, Laine, & Greenwald, 1994; Howley & Howley, 1995; Khattri *et al.*, 1997; Schafft & Jackson, 2011; Sipple & Brent, 2008; Williams, 2010). Additionally, in rural schools, there is a higher probability that teachers develop cultural conflicts with the local community's values (Hamon & Weeks, 2002), which might lead to a form of education not sensitive to the local culture and that eventually might promote values in rural students that are opposed to the local ones (Corbett, 2007).

It has been suggested that the lack of resources of the rural schools might lead, specifically in the third world, to a mechanization of teaching and a correlative emphasis on rote learning (Hamon & Weeks, 2002). Nevertheless, despite their limitations, rural schools seem also to offer specific potential conditions to learning.

Rural schools are normally less crowded, a circumstance that a number of studies have pointed as advantageous (Howley, 1994) since it facilitates

teachers' acquaintance of their pupils and a nearer liaison with them (Hamon & Weeks, 2002). As a matter of fact, rural educational contexts tends to involve a particular teacher-student connection (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Hardré, 2007), which seems to be a key factor for motivating students to learn (Hardré, Sullivan, & Crowson, 2009).

Moreover, due to the specific requirements of the rural context, rural education originated several «best practices» (Hamon & Weeks, 2002), like cooperative learning, peer tutoring, interdisciplinary studies and multigrade teaching. Furthermore, in rural schools there is an higher tendency to promote learning outside the classroom (Khattri *et al.*, 1997) and to exploit the social environment as a curricular resource, due to a greater closeness with it (Avery, 2013; Stern, 1994, as cited in Khattri *et al.*, 1997; Theobald & Nachtigal, 1995; Shamah & MacTavish, 2009), a fact that probably also explains the important role of rural schools in the consolidation of local cultures (Avery, 2013; Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010).

The first goal of the study here presented was to characterize the degree of use of teaching practices related with passive and active learning (as defined in the above section «The Educational Context of Passive and Active Learning») in elementary Portuguese teachers. The second goal was to compare the degree of use of the same teaching practices in rural and urban elementary Portuguese teachers.

METHOD

To achieve the intended goals of this study a questionnaire was developed in order to measure the degree of use of teaching practices related with passive and active learning.

PARTICIPANTS

For the questionnaire development a first sample of 400 elementary teachers was used (11% males; 69.8% females; 19.3% missing cases regarding sex)—half from rural schools and the other half from urban schools.

For the study of the degree of teachers' use of teaching practices related with passive and active learning, both in general and accordingly to the territorial context, a second sample of 140 elementary teachers was used (13.6%

males and 86.4% females)—also one half from rural schools and the other half from urban schools. The average age of these teachers was of 41.4 years old, ranging between 28 and 58 years and their average number of years of teaching experience was of 17.7 years, ranging between 2 and 33 years.

MEASURING INSTRUMENT

Data were collected through a questionnaire constructed for this purpose—the «Questionnaire on Learning Context (1st cycle)—QCA 1st c.». The items of the QCA 1st c. are descriptive statements about teaching practices that research has found to be associated with students' surface (passive) and deep (active) approaches to learning. These items are based on a literature review on the topic of the relationship of the learning context with students' approaches to learning (see the above section named «The Educational Context of Passive and Active Learning»).

Considering what was to be measured, six types of items were defined, considering the areas of Educational Objectives, Curriculum Content, Teaching Methods, Educational Measurement, Educational Materials and Resources and Teacher-Student Interaction. Each item consists of a descriptive statement of the learning context provided by the teacher, seeking to ascertain the degree to which each respondent's recognizes it as characterizing his or her own teaching practice. Items are expressive of two kinds of learning environment: «non participatory» or «transmissive» (where students are expected to receive information transmitted in a unidirectional way to them—related with surface/passive learning); and «participatory» or «constructivist» (where students are prompted to actively construct knowledge—related with deep/active learning).

The group of items concerning *Educational Objectives* includes sentences that characterize the structure and content of educational objectives (the learning goals), as defined by the teacher. The *Curriculum Content* group gathers statements that refer to the quantity, relevance, interest and kind of curricular content which is taught. Concerning the *Teaching Methods* group, it gathers a set of items that expresses a series of educational methods or pedagogical procedures. On the other hand, the *Educational Assessment* items comprehend statements on the format, timing and function of the evaluation performed by the teacher (how student's learning is evaluated). The *Materials and Educational Resources* group includes items that seek to characterize the diversity and the

type of material used by the teacher, as well as the management of time and space in which learning takes place. Finally, the set of items *Teacher-Student Interaction* includes statements that characterize the interpersonal relationship of teacher and student in the classroom.

The final structure of the questionnaire comprises 54 items (the sequence of the items involved an alternation between all dimensions to study) in addition to demographic characterization questions (i.e. age, sex, years of teaching and location of teaching).

Each item is of a five-level Likert type, where 1 corresponds to «Never» and 5 to «Always», and expresses the identification degree of the respondent with the statement, in terms of its own teaching way. Each answer was recorded on a sheet, which contains the five-point scale. It was stressed for the teachers that the responses should be given «Based on what happens on a personal level—and not based on what one thinks that should come, or that the teacher would like to happen».

In order to pre-test the first version of these items, they have been submitted to the consideration of four teachers of first cycle, using individual interviews. Interviews were conducted in the teachers' workplace and lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. Teachers were read the entire content of the questionnaire and for each item they were asked: What they understood of it; its clarity, length, fluency and the degree to which it measures what it intends to measure. This analysis was accompanied by suggestions for changes. A second improved version of items was then drafted.

DATA COLLECTION

After pre-test, the questionnaire was applied by presenting it as «A tool to collect useful information for a research project on teaching and learning in the 1st cycle». Teachers were also informed about its goal: to characterise teacher's educational practices with no intention to assess it.

It has been stressed the confidentiality of responses and their restricted purpose to the investigation. Thereafter, participants were introduced to the response format. The questionnaire was administered during the school year in elementary first cycle schools across the country.

DATA ANALYSIS

For the psychometric analysis of the questionnaire the first sample's responses were subject to a distribution analysis (by calculating the frequency and the variance of each item's response), an exploratory factor analysis, of first and second order, and a reliability analysis for establishment of subscales of first and second order (to check what the questionnaire actually measures). Internal consistency of each group of items was studied by calculating its Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (in general and with withdrawal of each item) and the correlation of each item with the total of the group to which it belongs.

After the questionnaire psychometric analysis, means and standard deviations were calculated for each subscale of first and second order, considering the second sample's responses. A t-test (independent samples) was then performed, to compare the means of rural teachers with the means of urban teachers in each scale (first and second order).

RESULTS

PSYCHOMETRIC ANALYSIS RESULTS

The analysis of each item response's distribution has kept all items initially considered.

The exploratory factor analysis of the items (through *principal axis factoring* method) has shown (according to the *scree plot* criteria) the existence of five main factors, with an explained total variance of 34.14%. Factors rotation (through *varimax* method with *Kaiser normalization*) identified the items that comprise the extracted factors (with a correlation superior to .40) as it can be consulted in Table 1.

The results of each group of items (factor) internal consistency can be found in Table 2 (see next page).

From internal consistency analysis the following subscales have been built.

Subscale 1 «Participatory Teaching – Mixed Practices» (group: 1 – alpha = 0.897).
This subscale comprises a variety of teacher centred practices and attitudes that characterize a kind of environment related with deep/active learning (see the similarity with the subscale 3 but, alternatively, the pointing out student-centred kind of teaching). This scale comprises the following items:

Itens	Factors				
	1	2	3	4	5
1	.453				
2					
3	.507				
4					
5					
6	.476				
7	.589				
8					
9	.676				
10					
11					
12					
13	.686				
14	.628				
15	.645				
16					.471
17					
18	.465				
19					.551
20					.513
21	.455				
22					
23					.538
24			.468		
25					.444
26					
27					
28					
29	.488				
30	.590				
31	.627				
32	.615				
33					
34					
35					
36	.410				
37		.534			
38					
39		.414			
40	.575				
41		.526			
42		.628			
43					
44				.441	
45					
46					
47			.501		
48			.406		
49			.453		
50		.428	.442		
51			.464		
52				.463	
53			.409		
54					

TABLE I — ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX (1ST ORDER)

Group of items (factors)	Item	Item-total correlation	Alfa with item withdrawal
1 (alfa = .897)	1	.394	.896
	3	.470	.894
	6	.493	.893
	7	.553	.891
	9	.661	.887
	13	.656	.887
	14	.640	.887
	15	.630	.888
	18	.463	.894
	21	.471	.894
	29	.534	.891
	30	.628	.888
	31	.657	.887
	32	.645	.887
	36	.486	.893
	40	.582	.890
2 (alfa = .730)	37	.547	.654
	39	.521	.669
	41	.500	.682
	42	.512	.674
3 (alfa = .755)	24	.342	.753
	47	.558	.707
	48	.496	.721
	49	.477	.725
	50	.574	.703
	51	.451	.730
	53	.412	.739
4 (alfa = .658)	44	.490	-
	52	.490	-
5 (alfa = .658)	16	.326	.644
	19	.442	.592
	20	.464	.581
	23	.497	.565
	25	.331	.642
	8	.225	-

TABLE 2 — INTERNAL CONSISTENCY (IST ORDER)

(1) «I try to explain the objectives of the learning tasks to students.»; (3) «I express enthusiasm for the subjects when I teach»; (6) «In class I use different curriculum materials.»; (7) «I have a close relationship with my students.»; (9) «I try to make interesting tasks for students.»; (13) «I encourage my students to try to understand the contents.»; (14) «I use learning tasks that promote curiosity»; (15) «I encourage my students to apply the acquired knowledge.»; (18) «I try to relate with my students.»; (21) «I express confidence in learning skills of my students»; (29) «I continuously assess my students.»; (30) «I teach learning strategies to students.»; (31) «I clearly organize the subjects I teach.»; (32) «I try that students become aware of their knowledge / ideas.»; (36) «I relate subjects to students' knowledge»; (40) «I react positively to students' positive actions (for example: by praising)».

Subscale 2 «Participatory Teaching – Understanding and Autonomy» (group: 2 – alpha 0.730).
This subscale consists of items that also express elements of an open education, specifically actions to stimulate the understanding (reflexivity, inter-relating information, discussion) and the autonomy of students. The scale comprises the following items: (37) «I propose questions for reflection in the classroom.»; (39) «I relate the contents to the outside world.»; (41) «I promote the discussion in the classroom.»; (42) «I foster students' choice of work procedures.»

Subscale 3 «Participatory Teaching – Differentiation» (Group: alpha = 3, 755).
This subscale comprises also items expressive of an open teaching, specifically practices or actions that reveal a concern to focus the teaching on the student and to differentiate it taking into account the student's specific profile. Note that while subscale 1 seem to reveal a context of open learning but whose main agent is the teacher, the items on this subscale express a context of the same type but having now the student as the main agent. This subscale comprises the following items: (24) «I use materials of the local context of the school (specimens, objects).»; (47) «I allow students the choice of learning activities.»; (48) «I provide opportunities for students to teach each other.»; (49) «In my classes there are different environments or spaces (corners, thematic sections)». (50) «I allow students to learn in small groups.»; (51) «I differentiate the attention span depending on the type of student.»; (53) «I negotiate with students the content to be learned.».

Subscale 4 «Participatory Teaching – Students Specificity» (Group: – alpha = 0.658).
This subscale consists of items that also feature an open education, involving practices that focus teaching on students and their characteristics, including their own language and their possible special needs. This subscale comprises the following items: (44) «I try to use the language of the students.»; (52) «I believe that pupils with special needs should have a specific answer.».

(heading 5) Subscale 5 «Non-Participatory Teaching» (Group: – alpha = 0.658).
In contrast to the previous subscales this subscale consists on items expressing pedagogical practices that appear to be tied to a more closed / traditional teaching view, focused on the contents and aiming the student to memorize and to have success in summative tests. This scale comprises the following items: (16) «In assessing students I give more importance to closed tasks (tests).»; (19) «I encourage students to try to literally remember what they

learn.»; (20) «In the curriculum, I give more importance to the facts than to what is behind these facts.»; (23) «I evaluate students only on the basis of tests and final papers.»; (25) «I worry more on teaching than in establishing a relationship with the students.»

As mentioned in Method, after building subscales it was carried out a new factor analysis, in order to check how subscales relate to each other and possibly obtain a more simplified image on how learning contexts differentiate. The intention was to verify the possibility of creating second-order scales expressive of «Types of learning contexts».

With the objective of a second order factors extraction, the means of items that compose subscales 1 to 5 were calculated. The second order exploratory factor analysis of these subscales shown (through *varimax* method with *Kaiser normalization*) the existence of two factors that explain 72.93% of the variance. The rotation of these factors (using the *Varimax method* with *Kaiser normalization*) allowed to identify subscales that comprise the extracted factors, as can be seen in Table 3.

Subscales	Factors	
	1	2
Subscale 1 – «Participatory Teaching – Mixed Practices»	.784	-.058
Subscale 2 – «Participatory Teaching – Understanding & Autonomy»	.843	.001
Subscale 3 – «Participatory Teaching – Differentiation»	.760	.166
Subscale 5 – «Non-Participatory Teaching»	-.082	.988

TABLE 3 — ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX (2ND ORDER)

After having identified the factors that aggregate the questionnaire's subscales it has been studied the internal consistency of the items that compose them, in order to build a scale (scale 1) that reflects «Participatory» teaching and another scale (scale 2) that reflects «Non-Participatory» teaching. In Table 4 it is possible to consult the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of these two scales, along with the correlation of each item with the total of its group and the alphas with removal of each item.

Groups of items (factors)	Item	Item-total correlation	Alfa with item withdrawal
1 (subscales 1.2.3 alfa= .896)	1	.339	.895
	3	.418	. 894
	6	.518	.891
	7	.480	.893
	9	.592	.890
	13	.522	.892
	14	.625	.890
	15	.507	.892
	18	.416	.894
	21	.466	.893
	29	.486	.892
	30	.630	.889
	31	.576	.890
	32	.583	.890
	36	.506	.892
	40	.538	.891
	37	.473	.892
	39	.575	.890
	41	.474	.892
	42	.433	.893
	24	.306	.896
	47	.383	.894
	48	.480	.892
	49	**.376**	**.897**
	50	.536	.891
	51	.453	.893
	53	**.262**	**.899**
2 (subscale 5 alfa = .655)	16	.326	.638
	19	.429	.593
	20	.468	.581
	23	.502	.555
	25	.334	.640

TABLE 4 — INTERNAL CONSISTENCY (2ND ORDER)

As can be observed, the values of alpha coefficient are high for both groups of items (0.896 and 0.655). On the other hand, the value of alpha increases in group 1 with removal of the items 49 and 53. Every item has acceptable correlations (above 0.22) with the total of its group.

Thus, the factor analysis of 2nd order allows us to understand the existence of a type of education characterised for being a «more participatory teaching.» The items that express this teaching emphasise understanding, establishment of an teacher-student relationship, ongoing evaluation and use of teaching methods that promote inquiry and reflection. Regarding the second type of education found—«non-participatory teaching»—the items point to tasks of literal memorization, summative evaluation, emphasis on facts and concern on lecturing and transmitting information, at the expense of building a relationship.

USE OF TEACHING PRACTICES

As it has been already mentioned in the Method, after the psychometric analysis of the questionnaire, means (and respective standard deviations), for each scale of first and second order, were calculated, considering the second sample of teachers already characterized.

In Table 5 it is possible to consult the results (means and standard deviations) of the second sample of teachers in each scale of first and second order.

	Urban & Rural		Rural		Urban		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	t-test
Participatory Teaching – Mixed Practices (1st order)	4.45	0.62	4.54	0.55	4.36	0.65	2.86*
Participatory Teaching – Understanding & Autonomy (1st order)	4.08	0.65	4.10	0.65	4.05	2.11	0.56
Participatory Teaching – Differentiation (1st order)	3.52	0.80	3.58	0.79	3.46	0.79	1.41
Participatory Teaching – Students Specificity (1st order)	3.95	0.88	4.09	0.85	3.82	0.89	2.30
Non-Participatory Teaching (1st order)	2.43	0.87	2.36	0.81	2.51	0.92	-1.62
Participatory Teaching (2nd order)	4.15	0.67	4.23	0.63	4.08	0.91	2.48**
Non-Participatory Teaching (2nd order)	2.43	0.87	2.36	0.81	2.51	0.92	-1.62**

*p < .01 **p < .05

Note: t-test refers to comparison Rural-Urban

TABLE 5 — USE OF TEACHING PRACTICES – RESULTS OF THE QCA 1ST C

The analysis of Table 5 allows us to verify that for all subscales (1st order) teachers (urban and rural) have higher values in the practices that characterize a «participatory teaching» than in the practices that characterize a «non-participatory teaching». From the practices of «participatory teaching» both groups of teachers present higher values in «mixed practices».

It may also be noted that rural teachers show higher values in all subscales of «participatory teaching» than urban teachers and compared to these, lower values on the subscales of «non-participatory teaching.» These differences between urban and rural teachers are statistically significant (t-test for independent samples) for the 1st order subscale 1 (t (127) = 2.86, p = 0.005) and subscale 4 (t (138) = 2, 30, p = 0.023). For the remaining subscales 1st-order differences are not statistically significant.

Finally, considering the results of 2nd order scales, the difference between the scale of «participatory education» and the scale of «non-participatory

teaching» (in favour of the 1st for both rural and urban teachers) is higher for rural teachers (1.87) than for urban teachers (1.57). These differences between rural and urban teachers are statistically significant both for the scale of 2nd order 1 ($t(138) = 2.48$, $p = 0.014$) and for the scale of 2nd order 2 ($t(136) = -1.62$, $p = 0.014$).

DISCUSSION

Results of the questionnaire's psychometric analysis (specifically the 2nd order scales) suggest that it is possible to discriminate two kinds of teaching in the elementary teachers of the first inquired sample (urban and rural). The first kind of teaching corresponds to a «participatory» teaching, characterized for an emphasis on understanding, on teacher-student relationship, on ongoing evaluation and on teaching that promotes questioning and reflection. We know that this kind of teaching is more related to the use of students' deep/active learning. In contrast, the second kind of discriminated teaching—«non-participatory»—characterizes by an emphasis on rote memorization, on summative evaluation and on the transmission of information, at the expense of building a personal relationship with the students. This second type of teaching is usually related with the use of student's surface/passive learning. This dichotomy might reflect both a possible differentiation in teachers' conceptions of learning/ teaching (quantitative *versus* qualitative) and on schools cultures (traditional *versus* modern).

Furthermore, attending to the 1st order subscales, results suggest that while «non-participatory» teaching presents itself as unified, «participatory» teaching differentiates in a constellation of practices that include teacher centred mixed practices, comprehension and autonomy stimulating practices and differentiated student-centred teaching practices. This might be interpreted as a sign that while there is a variety of ways to use «participatory» (more flexible) teaching, the choice is more restricted concerning «no-participatory» teaching.

Besides, the second sample's results suggest that despite the fact that both urban and rural teachers use more «participatory» teaching than «non-participatory» teaching (which might be attributed to the fact this is the main trend in present education), that is more pronounced on rural than on urban teachers. This might be interpreted in the light of the differences between the

urban school (normally with bigger number of students and bigger distance to the community) and the rural school (normally smaller, with multigrade groups and more integrated in the community), a fact that might lead rural teachers to a more personalised relationship with their pupils and to the use of more «participatory» teaching practices. Particularly, the last result endorses a view that values and supports rural education, for its beneficial potential in the learning process (and in sustainability of the rural world), considering that certain features of rural schools can help with the critical analysis and improvement of education practices in other contexts, particularly the urban one.

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