The Spanish perspective on ECTS and music education

OBJECTIVE
The creation of the EEES/EHEA marked the beginning of a search for strategic objectives before 2010 that will lead, in turn, to a comparable and understandable degree system for initial (undergraduate) and postgraduate degrees at bachelor, masters and doctoral levels. The aim is to harmonize all the university systems of the member states.

The main objective of this research is to provide an estimate of the time-effort relationship invested by students, in order to reach agreement on the number of ECTS required for Music.

METHOD
Participants. 270 students of the Primary Teacher with Music Education Specialism, undertaking their first, second or third year degree at Alicante University, and 67 third year students from Madrid Autonomous University during the academic year 2005-2006.

Test and Instruments. The qualitative questionnaire:
1. The difficulties found in the subject and their cause.
2. Reasons for satisfaction with the learning achieved, together with comments on positive or negative experiences during or after the teaching and learning process.
3. Attainment, with comparison between the subject studied and the mark obtained, the relationship between time and effort, and whether students’ previous knowledge has an influence on all of the aforementioned areas.
4. Possibility of establishing additional courses at introductory or in-depth levels, given the importance of the subject.

Procedure. The students were summoned to the Education Faculty computer room on the days indicated. There, they were told how to access their own individually designed questionnaires by means of the Virtual Campus. Once completed, the students themselves sent their answers to a central computer – that of their teacher – where the completed data was stored.

Design and data analysis. The computer program that was used for the research was Günter Huber’s qualitative analysis AQUAD6.

RESULTS
Relationship between different variables with respect to students’ previous knowledge.

Frequency of answers with respect to the existence of knowledge gaps according to the level of previous knowledge, and continuing gaps in their knowledge.

CONCLUSIONS
Three groups of students are identified:
1. Those with a good previous musical background: the conservatorio group;
2. Those with some musical knowledge, although very elementary: students from music schools/bands.
3. Those who lack any type of musical background: ‘another type of formation’.

All the students express, with only small variations, that the time allocated to the subject a four month period is insufficient given the importance of the subject and the need to acquire sufficient musical competence in order to qualify them to deliver music education confidently in Primary and Lower Secondary Schools.

The teaching of music is highly criticized, not because of the course content or preparation of the teaching staff, but because of the impossibility for students to dedicate sufficient time to realise course objectives and achieve the required learning outcomes. Understandably, students perceive that the ratio of 90 students per 1 teacher is the fault of the university administration for not supplying a higher number of teachers for this important educational task.