

## **Ethnography Inquiry and Teacher Education. The use of diaries for the comprehension of educational practice**

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We present in this communication a work of inquiry carried out using the diaries of students participating in an educational experience in a primary school. Along a semester, a group of 10 students was working with a community learning project. These students were engaged with a teacher training experience which is being developed in the Education College at the University of Málaga. In this experience some teacher students attended two subjects of his education as collaborators in this school. His experience was collected systematically in field diaries in which they reflected their everyday experience in the school, as well as his insights, assessments, feelings, etc. These diaries become into the working material to study the school functioning and their experience. For that, working meetings were held with teachers of their subjects at the university. Collaboratively, diaries were analyzed, categorized and interpreted in an attempt to understand the school practice, and thus, progress their training process.

Thus, two parallel processes is being developed: On the one hand, the research about a particular setting, and on the other hand, the education as primary school teachers.

Firstly, students involved in this experience become ethnographers of the school in which they are collaborating. Through their presence as participant observers in it, the students recorded systematically what they are seeing and experiencing. Therefore, they were playing the role of researchers trying to understand the setting in which they were collaborating. This task was carried out through the diaries and their participation in the work of school. As students they are, this task was constantly monitored by teachers of the university, maintaining a continuous relationship of teaching - learning.

Secondly, this activity intended that students made progress in their education process, through the work of analysis and interpretation of the records of the diaries. For this, they should access to relevant academic references to help them in their process of interpretation. Also, they have to process this information based on the dimensions that emerged from the research. They had to elaborate a report that reflects their learning in relation to the disciplines involved. This task is carried out in meetings with the faculty of the university in which the information is analyzed, problematic issues are selected and tutoring is offered in relation to the significant academic references for learning.

Thus student learning takes place from the research developed in the school and their participation in the different activities and task taking place in it. With this experience we are attempting to change the teacher education processes being carried out nowadays. We are trying to break with academicism, decontextualization, fragmentation and segmentation existing in the current model. From our point of view, relying on the proposals of Schön (1982), developed among others by Zeichner (2010) or Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2003), or the Holmes Group Report (1986), teacher training should be based in the relationship between school and university, based on research, education and educational innovation. Our proposal aims to take a step in this direction, in a system, the Spanish, with a strong academicism and historical separation between the two institutions.

### *Methodology, Methods, Research Instruments or Sources Used*

The research is conducted throughout one semester and in it, a group of 10 freshmen students of the degree of primary teachers education participates. In the school where they spend this time, each student is assigned to a teacher and a group with which he/she remains throughout the entire experience. Furthermore, we propose a work of inquiry (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2003), from an ethnographic perspective as a way of making sense of the practices they are developing. The inquiring point of view involves the work of teachers and students within a community to generate local knowledge, provide their practice and theorize about it, interpreting the findings and research of others (p.70). Both of this action engines -the collaborative reflection and inquiry- is what shapes and is shaping the knowledge they acquire. This experience is collected in diaries by each student, which they record both their everyday experience in the school, and their own personal experience as students. In any sense we can say that a work of self-ethnographic type (Tilley-Lubbs, 2014) is carried out, in which the subject is placed in the foreground, although the object of study is the institutional culture of the school where they are collaborating. Thus, issues which offer a view of the functioning of the school from the perspective of the experience and not from the topics set by the academic corpus arise. This has to do with a process, in the words of Morin (1995) of "inventiveness and creativity". And this is what is made possible from the practice as educators (so in the education as work phase). This experiential approach-somehow we can consider as narrative-, as we noted earlier, gives us the possibility of working issues and areas 'invisible' to the culture and the school established as hegemonic. This invisibility takes two sides, which is not seen and what you see but is reading or interpreting from a reduced glance or vision, circumscribed to a few concepts or models learned, both in their school life and in their first steps in education college (in the moment of experience they have completed only a semester)

### *Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings*

The results can be organized into three sections:

Firstly: the views, perceptions of students about the school, the functioning thereof, teachers, families. The greatest impact is located in the teacher who becomes almost solely responsible for everything that happens. That first focus gradually is being expanded to the context to the relation to the families, administration turns complex the gaze and creating other glasses to watch. A mostly shared comment is having realized they have not thought that the teaching task was so complex, diverse and dynamic and starting to look at teaching and learning processes in another way. Secondly, the teacher education process experienced by students since they arrive the first time at the school until they complete the experience, in relation to what they believe and feel that they have learned, is shown as a radical and in-depth change. This takes place from the everyday practice about the possibilities to do, decide, doubt, feel, share and understand what it means uncertainty in the teaching. An important learning is to trust in their own knowledge and to be open to everything that happens in the school.

Thirdly, the process experienced by the school and teachers (both, school and college teachers), has enable the creation of an ongoing dialogue between them. The points of view differ on how the teacher education is seeing and living in schools and how it is also seeing and living by college teachers. Also the confrontation of points of view has allowed us to review what we do and the way and we are educating the future teachers, understanding that is a dialogue and a confluence of meanings placed in a context, and not just a question of competence, teaching guidelines and assessment criteria.

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