“Case-study research as a model for teacher training”

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1. Language and literature teaching and teacher training
2. Teacher training between theory and practice
3. A DS on writing and literary education in secondary school
4. The case-study
5. Final idea
1. Language and literature teaching and teacher training

1.1. Language and literature teaching…

… has sought to define its own specific nature and to constitute a science:

(a) joins linguistics, psychology, education & sociology

(b) has different sources of knowledge according to its own aims

(c) seeks to work with data arising from teaching and learning situations

(d) aims to understand the processes inherent in these situations

(e) provides answers to the challenges that these processes represent

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1. Language and literature teaching and teacher training

1.2. Language and literature teaching...

... has four axes:

(I) the language teaching and learning content

(II) the aims that society pursues by this type of teaching

(III) the methodological system

(IV) initial and in-service teacher training
1. Language and literature teaching and teacher training

1.2. Language and literature teaching...

... has four axes:

(I) the language teaching and learning content

(II) the aims that society pursues by this type of teaching

(III) the methodological system

(IV) initial (and in-service) teacher training
1. Language and literature teaching and teacher training

1.3. The methodological system:

1. “Thinking about” practice requires overcome the dichotomy of qualitative-quantitative studies…

2. …to respond more accurately to the complexity of the teaching and learning processes

3. Variables [+structuration] [+control]:
   - [+structuration, +control]: experimental research
   - [-structuration, -control]: case-study research

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1. Language and literature teaching and teacher training

1.4. Initial teacher training:

It has two closely related objectives:

(1) Training reflexive teachers

(2) Promoting knowledge about teaching which links theory and practice
1. Language and literature teaching and teacher training

1.5. Starting idea:

It is necessary to make the trainees aware that knowing how to teach is not independent of studying and interpreting the phenomena which arise in teaching and learning situations.
2. Teacher training between theory and practice

2.1. Some of the students’ prior ideas we find in teacher training:

“Language didactics should prepare us theoretically, should make us see the different points of view of the different educators by means of dialogue between students... but it cannot give us a recipe, because in practice each situation is different, and we have to learn from experience” (student at the Education Degree in Pedagogy at the UAB).

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2. Teacher training between theory and practice

2.1. Some of the students’ prior ideas we find in teacher training:

• “Theory” = everything that takes place in the training room
  “Practice” = what actually takes place in the classroom

• Teacher training = a process only approachable from an experiential, individual, intuitive point of view, linked to self-training (“we have to learn from experience”)

• Initial training reflecting on the practice of others…
  - ends up being identified as theory
  - often takes the form of passive observation and only generates the reflections “which are expected of us”
2. Teacher training between theory and practice

2.1. Some of the students’ prior ideas we find in teacher training:

**Consubstantial paradox of initial training level:**

The difficulty of establishing shared knowledge on educational practice due to a lack of practical references (which do exist in in-service teacher training as a type of background “in absentia”).
2. Teacher training between theory and practice

2.2. We want to develop the following argument:

among the “recipes for intervention”… there is an intermediate point where we situate language didactics and specifically reflective practice … and self-training and non-transferable classroom experience

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Initial training based on reflective practice may find ways of progressively modulating representations through:

– *case-study*

– emphasis on *discourse community*
2. Teacher training between theory and practice

We believe that it may help future teachers’ reflection to present the training process…

• not as accessing to “finished” and completely theoretical or practical knowledge,

• but rather as a set of procedures for collective reflection for constructing, enriching and making didactic knowledge more complex
### 3. A DS on writing and literary education in secondary school

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<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Final stage</th>
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<td>- Collective reading</td>
<td>Four aspects of each tale to explore:</td>
<td>- Wiki on the Internet</td>
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<td>- Sharing of interpretation</td>
<td>1. Creation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reading and seeking for information</td>
<td>2. Inside</td>
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<td>- Project: to create a wiki</td>
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<td>Cooperative work</td>
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4. Case-study

Language teacher training would require us to take into account the following four points:

(a) preparing material which allows case-study to take place
(b) verbalizing contents and procedures
(c) generalizing
(d) contrasting aims and real action
4. Case-study

(a) Preparing material which allows case-study to take place

<table>
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</table>
| Dialogue in a large group | **Material:** wiki & guide  
**Points for observation:**  
(1st) final product: description  
(2nd) process: observation of the students’ and teacher’s diaries | **Material:** article  
**Points for observation:**  
(3rd) interaction: observation of the interaction described  
(4th) reference theories | Group reflection and written conclusions |

**Point for reflection:** “Methodology cannot and should not provide given recipes for intervention in the classroom”

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4. Case-study

(b) Verbalizing contents and procedures

Student A:

“How do we transfer knowledge?”
There are teachers who know how to and there are those who do not, because “maybe that [being a teacher] is something that cannot be taught”.
4. Case-study

(b) Verbalizing contents and procedures

Student B:

“Is this [socio-constructivism] just a fad?”.

“I think –she goes on- that sometimes there are fads in theory and that irrespective of the model there is a way of teaching, that cannot be known, that allows one teacher to reach out to you and another not”.

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4. Case-study

(b) Verbalizing contents and procedures

• Students tend to “think aloud” and generate questions taking into account their own memories or experience as students rather than the theory.

• But it is a step towards a space for the essential common reflection which may allow to learn by contrasting one’s own points of view.
4. Case-study

(c) Exploring knowledge as a path to generalize

We have tried to establish a whole itinerary of group analysis and reflection on a DS from the various entries (final product, process, interaction and theory) rather than start from the theory that inspired the teacher and argue it through.
4. Case-study

(c) Exploring knowledge as a path to generalize

We have noticed:

- the poor quality of the descriptions
- that they do not manage to relate (a) the aims that the teacher in charge of the DS determines in his diary, with (b) the follow up of activities and (c) the final result:
  - some students think that the aim is to work with new technologies
  - others think that the wiki was published in Internet from the very beginning

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4. Case-study

(c) Exploring knowledge as a path to generalize

Most of the students state that the reading clarified to a greater extent what the DS consisted of and what its aim was:

- reflection-action on the part of the teacher
- meta-cognition for the student
- cooperative work for the group
- the significant dimension of the material
(d) **Contrasting aims and real action**

There is a very reductionist interpretation on the part of some students on the value of the diary:

- Some comment on the poor expressive quality of some students, in spite of noting their progressive involvement and the improvement of their writing skills
- Some do not understand the role of the teacher’s diary, which was not available at first to the pupils: “it has not helped because the pupils could not read it” they say.

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4. Case-study

(d) Contrasting aims and real action

• Some do see the teacher’s diary as a self-regulating tool for the teacher herself, which has an indirect impact on the students.
• Student B: “I think the teacher is trying to dosify the content which has to be worked on and designing how to do it as questions arise”,
• Student C: “The teacher is trying to avoid giving an answer before the student asks the question”.
Joint reflection on real classroom cases is essential in initial teacher training so that, as stereotypes and beliefs emerge, these ideas can be contrasted and modulated by theory.