The reflection on the educational practice from the collaborative inquiry

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Abstract

In this article the joint inquiry is shown as the tool to transform the professional culture of the teaching body into a new culture that allows the collective reflection, and a permanent discussion of the principles that guide the practice and possibility of sharing formative experiences with other colleagues. The developed methodology has allowed us to value the commitment, implication and responsibility in Educational Institutions. The investigation has been developed in a natural scenario and the data obtained in a descriptive way which reflects the increasing degree of satisfaction on the part of the teaching body when solving conflicting situations.

1. Introduction

The collaborative inquiry is a process of shared responsibility and commitment assumed by a group of professionals that it’s tackled from the assumption of a shared task in the educational field and developed to improve the quality of the processes of teaching and learning. It becomes a complex process that allows professionals to analyze their own daily practice and discover the most appropriate methodological procedures to improve the quality of educational processes.

This process requires the willingness and involvement of people who carry it out. The possibility to share activities, knowledge and experiences within the group depends on the willingness of each individual and collaborative attitude that everyone has, obviously, the group is the crux of the development of this socializing strategy that can be used both learner perspective (collaborative heterogeneous groups) and from the educational perspective.

Practical reflection is essential in teaching for this can be based on real interests and can establish significant changes in the studied situation (Dewey, 1916) (Lewin, 1946). It’s that why authors like Corey (1953) justified the concept of collaborative-inquiry-action-research as a method for improving their own and school practices. Among

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the authors who have developed a critical perspective of teachers, Woods (1993:18) considers modes-attitude toward self-learning, knowledge acquisition and development of skills from teachers’ critical thinking.

The collaborative inquiry is:
- A rigorous and complex activity, with a special involvement for the participants.
- A shared effort and a task that encourages the creation of teams of teachers in schools.
- The basis based for configuring systems of methodology and strategies of action for quality vocational training.
- A rigorous process of educational activity, linked to the professionalization of the trainer and source of theoretical and practical knowledge.

The collaborative inquiry is a style and singular form of knowledge production, which is identified by the following features:
- The importance and impact of the social climate type that set up the members of the group, and an aggressive competitive environment, will derive many of their forces to resolve conflicts, rather than advance the achievement of the objectives.
- The necessity of setting off substantive issues and rigorous styles of questioning requires a disciplined and interrogative style of dealing with the construction of knowledge.
- Finding the critical and innovative approach to knowledge and how they affect society.

The characteristics of collaborative inquiry (Tikunoff and Ward 1983):
- The potential consumers of the inquiry is implied in it, if its results are intended to impact on their practice.
- That the topics of inquiry focus on consumer concerns.
- That in all phases of the investigation there is consumer collaboration.
- Consider the inquiry process must also be designed according to their potential to develop professionally to all who participate in it, both consumers and inquirers.
- The concern about the inquiry itself and the potential application of the results to improve instruction have to attend in the search process.
- We must recognize that the classroom activity is complex, which must be considered in the inquiry process, while maintaining the integrity of the instructional process.

The inquiry and collaborative practice from the teacher training is intended mainly the school and the classroom, socially and culturally organized, and teachers, students and the community as an intrinsic part of the process.
2. Method

2.1. Sample

The research work presented is within the field of educational research, as ranked by Elliot (2000), the object of it is the processes that characterize the life of the school and classroom activities relating both to reflective and action as the interactions among teachers: all within the context that is created to establish a multicultural center, in the stage of Primary Education, a collaborative working method.

The implementation was conducted in three public schools in Primary Education. Its purpose is to understand the effects that the implementation of a method of collaborative work among teachers, to impress upon members that are part of the educational community of their centers, intercultural education to facilitate their peaceful and tolerant coexistence, on reflection, action and interaction of teachers. And that’s why three public schools with different characteristics in their environment, such as case studies have been selected.

2.2. Procedure and instruments

The research covers a wide range of tasks of different nature. Along the same both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used, considering that both are complementary and can benefit from each other (Cook and Reichardt, 1997). Thus, a qualitative approach has been taken in trying to understand the behavior of the teachers involved in the process as well as interactions between individuals and the meanings of the events they live. To do this, the observed facts have been described in order to interpret them and understand them in the global and complex context in which they occur. Since, according to Erickson (1977, 61) "What qualitative research makes better essentially is describing key incidents in descriptive terms and place them in a certain relation to the broader social context, using the key incident as a concrete example the running of abstract principles of social organization. A quantitative approach has been taken to assess the impact of the method used among teachers, analyzing the data collected through various tests by statistical procedures (interviewing teachers, questionnaire on teacher effectiveness and the team coordinator, observation and book field of collaborative work sessions).

The three groups of teachers who are part of the case studies are made by the entire staff of selected schools. They are in total seventy-three teachers. Its membership is diverse in gender, level and attitude toward the working method. The collaborative inquiry method by which opted accentuated the following aspects: equal opportunity, individual responsibility within the group and the contributions of each component to the group.

2.3. Results

We present the following outcomes:

- Teachers identify collaborative inquiry as a method of training that affect teachers increasing their participation and involvement in conflict resolution team.
- The collaborative inquiry improves knowledge of oneself in an open and committed way from reflective practice and improved knowledge of their environment, school and students.
- This method enriches and improves participation with others to improve the internal functioning of the institution and promotion of educational innovations in training processes.
- Among the most significant benefits the improved socialization enhances, and also the better organization, collective resolve questions and problems.
The usage of this method brings about greater commitment, involvement and rigor in the training process.
- The degree of satisfaction of teachers who have developed collaborative inquiry in the context of work is high.

3. Conclusions

The collaborative inquiry shows an increase in the participation and involvement of students in the dynamics of school, also, the increase in collaborative decision making in the Educational Community. Among the advantages of using this method over other more traditional are: higher communication and involvement in the reality of the school. In addition as a method of training, teachers increase their participation, their collective involvement to resolve conflicts, doubts, problems, etc., and their commitment to the decisions established.

References