Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice in a B.A. Program in EFL

Llenando el vacío entre la teoría y la práctica en la investigación educativa[*]

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This article describes the theoretical principles underlying the research component of the Bachelor's program of Basic Education with an Emphasis in English at a public university in Bogotá (Colombia), and an exercise of syllabus revision that served to link theory and practice through the research component of the program. The aim of the exercise was to reflect upon the syllabus and discuss how, from the different components of the program, student-teachers can understand research as the bridge to link what they learn in class and their practice in school contexts. A group of teachers revised the theoretical foundations as well as their practice in each cycle of the program, using the main tenets of critical pedagogy, teacher research, reflective teaching, and case study.

Key words: Case study, critical pedagogy, reflective teaching, research component, teacher research

Este artículo describe los principios teóricos del campo investigativo de la Licenciatura en Educación Básica con Énfasis en Inglés de una universidad pública en Bogotá (Colombia), y un ejercicio de revisión del plan de estudios que sirvió para articular la teoría y la práctica mediante el componente investigativo. El propósito del ejercicio fue reflexionar sobre el syllabus y dialogar sobre cómo, desde los diferentes campos del programa, los estudiantes pueden entender que la investigación es el puente que une lo que ellos aprenden en clase y su práctica en los contextos escolares. Un equipo de profesores revisó los componentes teórico-prácticos, teniendo en cuenta los principios de la pedagogía crítica, la investigación docente, la enseñanza reflexiva y el estudio de caso.

Palabras clave: componente investigativo, enseñanza reflexiva, estudio de caso, pedagogía crítica, profesor investigador

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Introduction

The purpose of this article is to describe how the research component of our program is organized, what its theoretical foundations are, and to share the experience of a work completed jointly by teachers who aimed to revise this component of LEBEI (the Bachelor's program of Basic Education with an Emphasis in English for its acronym in Spanish: *Licenciatura en Educación Básica con Énfasis en Inglés*) at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas (Colombia), in order to create stronger links between theory and practice.

Even though this component already existed, teachers at LEBEI were concerned about the gaps found in the research component and the articulation it must have with the curriculum in order to strengthen links between theory studied in class and practice. Thus, we may develop students' awareness concerning the process of teaching and learning a foreign language beyond the implementation of certain techniques and methods. We wanted to take our students on a journey of reflection and development of research skills so that their professional development became an ongoing process even when they would be teaching. On pursuing this goal, we basically wanted to bridge the gap between theory and practice through the research component of our program in order to link the theoretical principles students learn in the research seminars and the realities they face in educational contexts.

Having this goal in mind, the coordinators of every component of the program and some full time teachers had an intensive week of reflection on and revision of the syllabus. That is, together we carried out a project in which every teacher provided her/his argument to be discussed and then, included. This effort involved not only analyzing the core concepts and the contents of the research component, but also each single subject of the whole program. We did so since we wanted the research component to become cross-curricular and the tool to make connections between the theory learnt in class and practice in real schools. Furthermore, we were interested in recognizing how our student-teachers develop their critical and research skills when doing small-scale projects in the different subjects, regardless of the component they belong to. Thus, it would be understood that theory is the received knowledge and practice is the experiential knowledge, as stated by Wallace (1991).

The revision process ended up with concrete products and activities for each research seminar as well as connections among the subjects that comprise the five components of the syllabus: Disciplinary, Communicative and Esthetic, Ethics and Politics, Pedagogical, and Research. Hence, the gap that students find between what they learn in class and what really happens in their own educational context can be filled.

During this joint effort by the teachers, we revised the theoretical principles underlying the research component. Those principles are going to be explained in the first section of this article e.g. readings and items used by colleagues in their classes, suggestions about the

research process, and contents. Here, we teachers involved in this joint task realized that the objectives and contents of the different subjects and research seminars had to be constructed according to the students' needs, cross-curricular issues, and the demands of the context. This agrees with Nunan's (1988) suggestion that besides the nature of language, language learning, and education, syllabus designers should take into account learners' needs and interests.

Core Concepts

In order to understand the research component of LEBEI, it is necessary to define some key terms in education and educational research associated with our program. These terms are Critical Pedagogy, Reflective Teaching, Teacher Research, and Case Study.

Critical Pedagogy

McLaren (as cited in Wink, 2000) defines critical pedagogy as "a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relationships of the wider community, society, and nation state" (p. 30). Therefore, these activities are achievable if students are free to challenge existing knowledge in the social and cultural realities they are immersed in.

It is important to look separately at the meaning of the two words that make up the concept of *critical pedagogy* to understand how it was one of the principles underlying our research component. According to Wink (2000), the word *critical* means "seeing beyond" (p. 29), and *pedagogy* "the interaction between teaching and learning" (p. 30). In this sense critical pedagogy has to do with developing a wide and deep view of what is going on in the classroom, including taking into account that the actions carried out in a classroom are embedded in a system. By adopting such a view we can be more conscious of our context and our pupils and, of course, we become more critical about education and how it has to be conducted.

Critical pedagogy "encourages each of us to reconstruct the words and thoughts of the others so that they become meaningful to our own life" (Wink, 2000, p. 26). This reconstruction has to do with learning, relearning, and unlearning. That is, learning how to teach, relearning through our own experiences and reflection, and unlearning so that we can get rid of our old assumptions about teaching and learning, about what others have told us to do, and thus become producers of our own learning.

At LEBEI, students learn different methods and approaches to teach English and to do research in the context of Basic Education; they receive theories and knowledge of how to do it. However, during their practicum at schools, they start mixing up those theories and

approaches and do not find the link between what they learnt in class and the reality they are facing. Consequently, in the revision process we conducted, we agreed that through observation in school contexts coupled with constant reflection upon theories and discussions in classes, students could go beyond learning about how to teach. Thus, they could become acquainted with the practical aspects of teaching and learning as a way to grow as critical pedagogues and find the link between theory and practice.

Reflective Teaching

In order to define reflective teaching, the LEBEI adheres to the concepts of Richards and Lockhart (1995) as well as to the reflective model by Wallace (1991). According to Richards and Lockhart (1995), reflective teaching is an approach in "which teachers and student-teachers collect data about teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching" (p. 1).

This definition is complemented by Bartlett (1990) and Wallace (as cited in Richards & Lockhart, 1995) when they state that critical reflection involves "examining teaching experiences as a basis for evaluation and decision making and a source for change" (p. 4). It also implies asking questions about "how and why things are the way they are, what value systems they represent, what alternatives might be available, and what limitations are of doing things one way opposes to another" (Richards & Lockhart, 1995, p. 4). These questions frame the inquiry process student-teachers have to address in order to find connections between theory and practice through constant reflection.

By carrying out such critical reflection teachers are able to assess if what they teach is what their students learn. Constant reflection also turns the classroom into a laboratory where the teacher and the students can develop the ability to observe systematically. As such, the process of reflection and observation of their classroom empowers teachers as they do not depend any more on experts. Teachers become the experts, the producers of knowledge of their own context and they become responsible for making informed decisions about teaching and learning.

Reflection connected to experiences brings about professional competence that is the main tenet of the reflective model developed by Wallace (1991) in which professional development is a never-ending process. Thus, the reflective model is a structured professional development model that acknowledges teaching as a profession in the sense that to become a teacher, we have to master some knowledge that other professions do not have. This model is based on the three main stages described as follows:

Stage 1: Pre-training. The reflective model emphasizes the fact that people seldom enter into professional training situations "with blank minds and/or neutral attitudes" (Wallace, 1991, p. 50). Student-teachers bring with them concepts, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes that

shape their behavior in various ways. So, their reactions to any problem in the classroom are determined by the mental constructs they already have about that specific situation; for example, what they think about discipline. That reaction can also be determined by the way they are feeling at the moment (tired, excited, etc.). Some sources of these schemata are personal, social, and cultural factors.

Stage 2: Professional education/development. In this stage, two key elements are highlighted: *received knowledge* and *experiential knowledge*. The former refers to the facts, data, theories, research methods and approaches students learn in their program. It is what must be learnt in their syllabus and is related to what students are expected to learn by tradition or conviction. The latter is derived from "knowing in action" and "reflection" (Schön, 1983), in which the first one refers to the immediate decisions and judgments teachers make as well as the skills they display in the classroom based on tacit recognition, that is, feelings. The second one has to do with the conscious reflection on the feelings or intentions, leading to the development of insights into knowing-in-action.

Therefore, to find the essence of our student-teachers' professional development, it is necessary to find a way to connect received knowledge and experiential knowledge to bridge the gap between theory and practice. In the joint work done by teachers during the revision process of the syllabus, it was agreed that one way to link both is by carrying out discussions about the applicability of the teaching methods to the particular contexts where students do their practicum. These discussions must be part of the classes of the pedagogical component and the research seminars as well.

Stage 3: Professional competence. According to Wallace (1991), professional certification is not a terminal point, but a point of departure. It is "a moving target or horizon, towards which professionals travel all their professional life but which is never finally attained" (p. 58). In this stage, the concept has a stronger force of *expertise* in which a special skill or knowledge is acquired by training, studying, or practicing.

The students in the LEBEI program are encouraged to become reflective teachers as they go through the three stages of the reflective model (see Figure 1) described by Wallace (1991). They carry out discussions over microteaching, share their experiences in the different subjects and seminars of the program and do it all in their practicum. Further on, we will describe how the program is designed to offer the students the opportunity to develop their reflective skills as one of the abilities to become a teacher researcher and enhance their professional development.

Teacher Research

Teacher research is an interesting and novel concept that implies two words that did not seem to fit together a few decades ago. They did not fit because the teacher was

traditionally considered as someone whose function was to transmit knowledge rather than to produce it (Freeman, 1998). Research was a word associated with science and scientists were people who worked in a laboratory or with patients and not in a classroom. However, things have changed and at the moment teacher research is a two word concept associated with teachers' professional development and empowerment (Brindley as cited in Bailey, 2001).
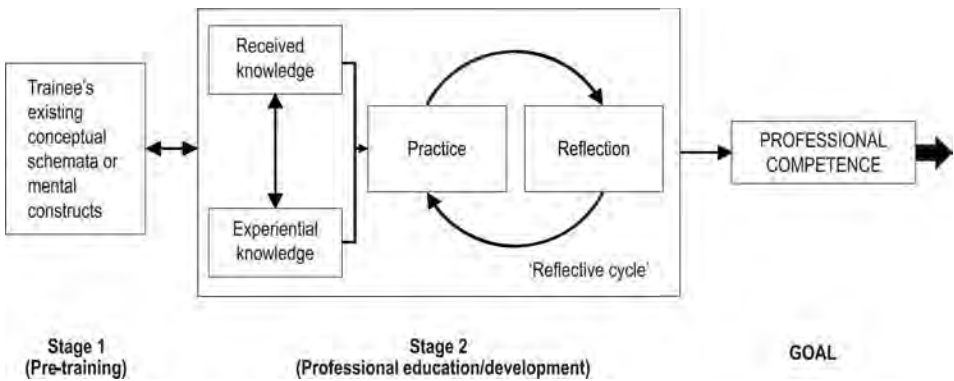

Figure 1. Reflective Cycle (Wallace, 1991, p. 15)

This professional development has to do with the fact that teachers make informed decisions and produce more specialized knowledge as educators and, at the same time, gain recognition as they make the results of their studies public. Simultaneously, when teachers do this, which gives them a sense of empowerment, they start resisting "the current trends towards domination of curriculum and pedagogy by technical standards based on expert research and imposed in a top-down manner by educational administrators and policy makers" (Kincheloe as cited in Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 5). This empowerment also comes from the fact that they are the ones who research their own classrooms in which they are immersed.

Bailey (2001) defines teacher research as the "research conducted by teachers" (p. 490), which is a key concept for LEBEI, since one of the purposes of the research component of the program is to "develop the pre-service teachers' research skill, so that they are able to contribute to their school community and the general educational field" (Proyecto Educativo del Programa, n.d., p. 35).

Case Study

According to Johnson and Christensen (2004), a case study is a qualitative type of research that "provides a detailed account and analysis of one or more cases;" and a case is "an object or entity with a clear identity" (p. 376). Hence, a case could be a group, a person, or an organization. In her discussion regarding the aspects of case study, Merriam (1998) maintained that the "single most defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the object of study: the case" (p. 27). The case is a unit, entity, or phenomenon with defined boundaries that the researcher can demarcate or "fence in" (p. 27), and therefore, can also determine what will not be studied. It may be the limit on the number of people to be interviewed, a finite time frame for observations, or the instance of some issue, concern, or hypothesis. The researcher is challenged to fully understand and articulate the unit under study.

Merriam (1998) describes three characteristics inherent to a case study; according to her, a case study is particularistic because it focuses on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon. Moreover, according to Geertz (1973), it is descriptive because its final product is a "thick" description of the phenomenon under study, and finally, it is heuristic as it can bring about new understandings, extend the reader's experience, or confirm what is known.

Types of case study. Merriam (1998) describes three types of case studies according to their function; that is, whether they intend to describe, interpret, or build theory. According to these criteria, case studies can be descriptive, interpretive, or evaluative.

Descriptive case study. "A descriptive case study is one that presents a detailed account of the phenomenon under study" (Merriam, 1998, p. 38). Examples of a descriptive case study are studying ESL (English as a second language) teachers' beliefs about computer-assisted writing instruction, or examining the outcomes of aural authentic texts on the listening comprehension ability of adult ESL students enrolled in an advanced ESL listening course. According to Merriam (1998), descriptive case studies are useful when presenting basic information about components of education where little research has been conducted, and to report innovative programs and practices.

Interpretive case study. Interpretive case studies are used "to develop conceptual categories or to illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to gathering data" (Merriam, 1998, p. 38). An example of this can be the study of students' and teachers' cognition and actions, comparing similarities and differences, or the study of an experienced English Language teacher.

Evaluative case study. This type of study involves "description, explanation, and judgment" (Merriam, 1998, p. 39). Evaluative case study is useful to understand the development of a particular program and to give a rich account of it. An example of this could

be to determine whether team teaching is an effective model for EFL (English as a foreign language) in primary schools, or the effects of a new type of methodology implemented to improve a given skill.

Case study is the most common method used by the student-teachers at LEBEI, and these studies are particularly connected to the pedagogical component of the program. In sixth semester, the students start their pedagogical practicum that allows them to get to know and understand the different educational institutions. They become familiar with classroom language and management at the primary and secondary levels. They make sense of the different methodologies learnt in the subject *Foreign Language and Pedagogy*, and they are able to understand the contexts by having a general view of the Colombian educational perspectives. Finally, they start their work by implementing a needs analysis according to what they learned in *Course Design and Methodology*. In sum, the research component lets the students understand and apply all they have learnt during their studies, and develop their competence as teacher-researchers. It is also a chance for students to develop their innovative and writing skills.

After having reviewed the core concepts that support the research component at LEBEI, we are now going to describe how these principles are incorporated in this component, how it is organized and how the reflection process done by teachers and coordinators of the different components served to cement the link between theory and practice in our program.

The Research Component of LEBEI

The Bachelor's program of Basic Education with an Emphasis in English (LEBEI) at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas has obtained the approval and certification of quality granted by the National Accreditation Council (CAN, for its acronym in Spanish *Consejo Nacional de Acreditación*), according to Resolution 10742 on September 6th, 2012. This program has a strong research component that we will describe in the following sections.

The Research Field Foundations

The LEBEI program at Universidad Distrital is organized in cycles and components. There are three cross-curricular cycles called *Fundamentación* (Theoretical Foundations), *Profundización* (In-depth), and *Innovación y Creación* (Innovation and Creation). In the first cycle (1st to 4th semesters), the students receive the theoretical foundations related to language teaching and learning. In the second cycle (5th to 7th semesters), they start to join theory and practice through their pedagogical practicum. In the third cycle (8th to 10th semesters), they develop and finish their research project as well as improve their competence in English. The students graduate when they have finished ten semesters of courses and have written and defended their research project.

There are five components which constitute the syllabus: Disciplinary, Communicative and Esthetic, Ethics and Politics, Pedagogical, and Research. For the purpose of this article, we will describe the latter one, which is particularly relevant because it is an important part of the mission and vision of the program as well as of the graduate profile. Furthermore, research is the way to prove how theory serves to frame and understand practice.

The research component of LEBEI is based on three main pillars: Reflective Teaching, Critical Pedagogy and, obviously, Teacher Research. Bartlett (1990) points out that becoming a reflective teacher involves moving beyond a primary concern about instructional techniques and "how to" questions and asking "what" and "why" questions that regard instructions and managerial techniques not as ends in themselves, but as parts of broader educational purposes. Peer observation, self-reports, and journals are strategies employed in the research component of our program to make our students reflective pre-service teachers.

Research is also an ongoing process that starts from first semester. In the research component of the Bachelor's program, it is considered that teacher education should go beyond training since teaching is considered a profession which is more concerned about reality in the educational context.

Teacher education in LEBEI is regarded as a reflective process in which the teacher's role is that of an agent of change. For this reason, the research component gives the future teachers the opportunity to evaluate their beliefs about teaching and learning. They become observers and therefore researchers who contribute to the improvement of the contexts in which they work.

Likewise we conceive of critical pedagogy from a professional perspective that has to do with "what and how our students learn and what and how we teach from a social perspective" (Proyecto Educativo del Programa, p. 36). For this reason, the pedagogical practicum in LEBEI has to be based on observation and identification of educational, social, and cultural phenomena plus reflection and action upon them.

Finally, we aim to generate innovative teachers who want to learn about their students and build up proposals that overcome prejudice and stereotypes, leaving behind recipes and prescriptions about how to teach. That is, the students who graduate from LEBEI should be innovative teachers who explore different possibilities in their classrooms, taking professional and personal risks.

The Research Seminars

The students at LEBEI take ten research seminars, each of which has a specific objective that seeks to link theory and practice. In Seminar I, they write a reflection about their experience as language learners as one of the strategies to become reflective pre-service

teachers. In Seminar II, their reflection is concerned with learning in different contexts. In Seminar III, they learn to carry out observations and do a written report about these observations. They usually observe classes in different public schools. In Seminar IV, they implement a case study regarding their classmates' beliefs about learning a foreign language. These four semesters are part of the cycle entitled *Fundamentación* (Theoretical Foundations). In this cycle, the students are provided with the theoretical basis of research, as well as some practice on observation and the development of case studies.

From the fifth to the seventh semester, the teacher-students are immersed in the cycle of *Profundización* (In-depth cycle). During this cycle they explore theory and practice and start their practicum in different state schools. Their teaching practicum is focused on primary education for two semesters (sixth and seventh). Therefore, they also start their inquiry during this process. In fifth semester, they continue using an observation method and learn how to write an annotated bibliography, which is their final product for the end of the term. In sixth semester, they go through a seminar called Research Paradigms and Methods. In this seminar, they explore the different approaches and research methods and work on their problem statement, research question, objectives, and literature review. In seventh semester, the seminar Educational Research Project prepares them to make a preliminary data analysis.

In the final cycle called *Innovación y Creación* (Innovation and Creation), students complete their research project. In eighth semester, students start their practicum in secondary education and conduct a preliminary data analysis. In ninth semester, they make a final analysis of the data and build up the categories. Finally, in tenth semester, the student-teachers write their final report by working on it in three seminars. Additionally, a panel discussion, which is a space for their research socialization, is organized in the three seminars in order to share their experience as teacher-researchers with teachers and partners.

Teachers' roles in the research seminars. To carry out the work described in the ten research seminars of LEBEI, it is necessary for teachers to assume different roles along the process. These roles have to do with education, advice, and counseling and demand a high level of competence and commitment from the teachers in charge of the seminars. These roles are supervisors, counselors, project advisors, monograph directors, and jurors, as described below.

Supervisors are responsible for guiding and supporting students in their teaching practicum and instructional design. *Counselors* are the teachers in charge of the different seminars. *Project advisors* are teachers in charge of the tenth semester panel. This group, made up of three teachers, is responsible for providing feedback to the student or group of students who are doing their research project. *Monograph director* is the teacher in charge of giving advice to the student or group of students about the fulfillment of their degree work during a year. The monograph director is appointed by the Curriculum Council of the program. *Juror* is a teacher

appointed by the Curriculum Council of the program to evaluate the final research report. Generally, the jury is made up of two jurors before whom the student or group of students must defend their thesis.

Improving the Articulation of the Research Component and the Curriculum at LEBEI

As stated in the introduction of this article, teachers at LEBEI were concerned about the gaps found in the research component and the articulation it must have with the curriculum to strengthen links between theory studied in class and practice. Therefore, we participated in a joint project to analyze every single subject of the curriculum. Each teacher contributed from their component of expertise to make a cross-curricular syllabus where theory and practice could interact. This joint effort allowed teachers from other components to be involved in what the research component implies, then, understand how we, from our specific subjects, can contribute to fill the gap between theory and practice through research. Having the chance to hear different opinions and contributions was a great opportunity to learn from each other and find converging points for the construction of the different subjects' objectives. Here, we realized that there were some overlapping contents in the different subjects due to the lack of communication among teachers from different components. Although teacher reflection was present, it was often done individually.

Table 1 shows how the research component is present from the first to the last semester of the student-teachers' studies and how, as a result of the revision work, the objectives of the seminars evidence the attempt to bridge theory and practice. This presence boosts the development of investigative skills such as inquiry, observation, reflection, and writing.

Table 1. The Research Seminars at LEBEI

Cycle	Semester	Research Component Seminars	Objective
Theoretical Foundations	1	Interdisciplinary Seminar I	To characterize the epistemological dimension of the human being within the cognitive and social domains.
	2	Interdisciplinary Seminar II	To characterize the epistemological dimension of the teachers' being in the contexts of language teaching and learning.
	3	Interdisciplinary Seminar III	To build an ontological, epistemological and socio-critical perspective to understand the beliefs of language teachers through the observation of teaching practices.
	4	Interdisciplinary Seminar IV	To interpret the beliefs concerning English of a group of Basic Education students.
In-depth Cycle	5	Interdisciplinary Seminar V	To define a topic of teaching and research interest and document it theoretically.
	6	Research Paradigms and Methods	To understand paradigms and research methods to identify educational research problems, especially in the context of primary education.
	7	Educational Research Project	To design and implement an educational research proposal to address the needs of educational contexts found in elementary schools in order to understand the social and cultural realities of these educational contexts.

Cycle	Semester	Research Component Seminars	Objective
Innovation and Creation	8	Research Project in L2 Education	To design and implement a consistent teaching and research proposal with the characteristics and problems of a middle-school educational context in order to transform the social and cultural realities of these educational contexts.
	9	Final Research Project I	To describe and explain the methodology for the management and analysis of the data gathered up to this semester, supported by a balance between theory and practice.
	10	Final Research Project II	To reconstruct and share meaningful experiences that contribute to the development and completion of projects with projection of future professional performance of English language teaching in a learning community.
		Support Seminar for the Final Research Project	To apply academic writing strategies in order to finish the written version of the graduation project.
		Interdisciplinary Seminar X	To reflect on the role of teaching, research and innovation in the community of teaching English as well as the active role of the future teacher in the development of these three activities.

Dubin and Olshtain (1986) affirm that "a curriculum is often reflective of national and political trends, and contains a broad description of general goals by indicating an overall educational-cultural philosophy. This applies across subjects together with a theoretical orientation to language learning with respect to the subject matter at hand" (p. 2). In the program of LEBEI, the curriculum has critical pedagogy, reflective teaching, and teacher research as underlying philosophical principles, which must be used to revise the basis for syllabus design and activities oriented to articulate theory and practice.

Syllabus has been referred to as "a more detailed and operational statement of teaching and learning elements which translates the philosophy of the curriculum into a series of planned steps leading towards more narrowly defined objectives at each level" (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986, p. 35). The research component, for example, has been planned to be present in every subject during the ten semesters. That is, it was thought to be cross-curricular through the development of research seminars, as previously explained. Thus, the research seminar in each semester was conceived as the space where all the subjects from the different components can interact to find links among them.

The team in charge of the research component knew that we were forming students who could have all the theoretical tools needed to develop their pedagogical, critical, and research skill. Nevertheless, we also knew that there were some gaps between what our students learned in class and their practicum. So, we worked in the revision of the academic process carried out in the different subjects to incorporate constant inquiry and development of small-scale projects to make sense out of theory. Developing these projects through the different subjects lets students and teachers realize that research is everywhere and that inquiry is the way to critical thinking and action. Only through systematic reflection and research can our student-teachers become agents of change and producers of knowledge in order to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Conclusions

After doing the revision exercise of the syllabus and taking into account the way we were addressing our subjects, we conclude that constant group reflection is necessary to evaluate academic processes inside our program to avoid gaps and overlapping contents.

Overall, the exercise of syllabus revision enabled teachers at LEBEI to become more aware of the importance of the research component in the program. We realized that through this component we could link theory and practice by making students understand research as the bridge to link what they learn in class and their practice in school contexts. In order to achieve that purpose we introduced some changes related to content and methodology, and the role of research itself.

Finally, by revising and taking into account the theoretical foundations of the research component aimed at forming innovative teachers, we started to introduce problematic questions in our subjects to involve students in the exploration of different possibilities in their classrooms i.e. taking professional and personal risks. In this way, the role of research goes beyond learning about the theory of research but making it feasible and an on-going process that student teachers will take as part of their professional competence.

The process of revision and work together that we carried out in the research component of LEBEI should contribute to defining some future directions related to this revision itself and the changes introduced in the research component as well as in the program derived from it. We need to start a systematic analysis of the outcomes of the revision of working jointly. For this reason, it is necessary to form a group of teachers who is in charge of collecting and analyzing data concerning the perceptions of the students and the teachers in charge of the research seminars. Furthermore, it is important to start writing a state of the art of the research carried out as well as to document the most recent tendencies, since the revision of the syllabus is to make the research component cross-curricular and to link theory and practice through research projects.

This is the beginning of a process that resembles teacher development in the sense that it is ongoing and never-ending. We could say that it is a first step for the teachers and students and a great advance for LEBEI. We still need to walk a long road ahead to continue discussing and growing as an academic community, and to bridge the gap between what is learnt in the different subjects and the phenomena observed in school contexts.

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