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Innovation in Geography teaching



"Los profesores de Geografía, la innovación de la Enseñanza y su profesionalización: El lugar de los materiales curriculares", Viviana Zenobi's thesis, read at the Department of Language and Literature education, and Social Sciences education at the UAB, pretends a better understanding of the role of certain teaching materials used in geography in the development of innovative curricula in this area. In addition, this thesis also attempts to help management agencies in the decision making on the production of these materials, improving teacher's training and encouraging this innovation.

In the 90's decade, in Argentina, there were different changes and educative reforms in all the jurisdictions. These reforms had different characteristics. These curricular changes were supported by the editorials and the policy with educative materials production.

In Autonomous city of Buenos Aires (CABA), the members of the Curricula Direction in Geography team to Middle level created four different materials, which integrate the collection of

“Contributions to teaching. Middle level. Geography” between 2005 and 2008. These are: “Environmental problems in different scales”, “Relations between the States: the case of pulp mill in Fray Bentos”, “Old and new concepts in the study of rural spaces” and “Technological innovations in agricultural production”. These materials were produced from a professional development point of view because we wanted: (1) to have a good dialog with and between teachers about which is the meaning of teaching geography nowadays, in our schools and with real students, (2) to promote the collaborative work between the innovations process teachers do in their classes and the ones which have been designed by educational management scope.

This educational research had a interpretative and critical approach and it's based on the contributions done by the biographical-narrative approach. In this research, we had some questions but also some assumptions we wanted to assess. The main questions we had were:

- Which are the criteria Geography teachers use in order to select materials to plan and develop their classes?
- Which kinds of teaching practices do they do guided by these materials?
- Which are the changes that these educational materials produce in their mentality and their teaching practices?
- Can we consider that this process –collaborative work to develop educational materials- contribute to teachers education and professional development?

Educational materials by themselves are not enough in order to promote innovative geography teaching practices and so, a device was organized –an internal seminar- which was created as a socialization and reflection space with the purpose of improve professional development.

The research objectives are:

- Analyse the criteria teachers use when they choose educational materials which has been created outside the school.
- Know and interpret the kind of teaching practices done by teachers in order to put in practice the materials.
- Understand and analyse how the materials and the professional development device contribute to the didactic decisions teachers assume.
- Assess the professional development device and the meetings.
- Analyse and assess how these new materials and the teacher education device influence geography teachers professional development.

In summary, this research wants to contribute to deepen in the knowledge we have about the relationship between educational materials production and teachers professional development, the mechanisms that educational management organizations should take in order to create and spread educational materials, and the development of device in order to improve professional development.

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References

Doctoral Thesis: "Los profesores de Geografía, la innovación de la enseñanza y su profesionalización: el lugar de los materiales curriculares" Viviana Zenobi, supervised by Joan Pagès Blanch.

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