Teacher professionalism from the point of view of good teacher's life histories

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Abstract

Researches on good teachers' life histories reveal the pedagogical value and the political and ethical choice that legitimise the personal, social and professional image of teachers. They are distinguished by the categories of Achievement Motivation, Self-confidence, Autonomy and Collaborative Work. These categories redefine the teacher work from the educational complexities in an attempt to overcome the difficulty that has led the educational system to an apparent dead-end.

Key words

Educational professionalism; engagement; political stance; life histories.

In different studies [2] on teacher's life histories [3] the great pedagogical value of the way "good teachers" [4] work has caught our attention. This concept, which is neither naive nor fallacious, clearly shows that they have chosen the ethical and political option because they do well what they are doing and because they have totally developed the whole pedagogical action with the purpose of updating their students' potentials. They have also chosen this option because they educate their students so that they can contribute significantly to the development and transformation of society.

Each life history allowed us to recreate personal testimonies with a view in which past comes alive through its projection into the future, where each teacher interviewed reinterpreted it and upgraded it over time from his or her current condition. In this context, the fluent dialogue in the interview surprised the teacher because of the memories and the original relationships, which were not even

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expected by them. These emotions let us see some human beings totally different from the ones that the stereotyped discourse about teachers characterises as monotonous and demotivated. When we researched on them, we wanted to show the other face of the teachers, the one that usually remains in the shadow, without idealisation and without taking away the limitations that characterise us as human beings.

“I try to do my job in the most appropriate and suitable way, by adjusting my behaviour, my attitude and my level of demand to the necessities of the moment; I cannot conceive otherwise than that. I try to do my best in my job and every year I try to adapt to the students’ challenges and demands, which may vary in some cases or may be regularly repeated in some other cases.”

(Alonso) [5].

In this process we assume that the good teacher, as any other social role played, implies the existence of paradoxical relations between the fact of being unique as a person and, at the same time, being common, as he or she shares some specific characteristic traits with other people. The typical character of each teacher provides feedback for the construction of his or her identity and personal and professional belonging, in a historical time that gives meaning to the teaching *ethos*. This is done through the relations between official formalities (link with the institution, monitoring and management) and the regular informal relationship with the others, which are the otherness. Thanks to this relation we recognised implicit and explicit behaviour patterns that were part of his or her complex personal, professional and social structure.

We got to know their autobiographies, their households structures, the groups and the social-cultural environment where they grew up, the institutions where they were trained, their likes, inclinations, doubts, uncertainties, school experiences, relationships, their life experiences, transitions and their turning points in life. We got to know them through dialogue, through their gestures and the professional and interpersonal relationship that allowed us to value them from a wider perspective or even a holistic one.

Very little is known about teachers’ life histories, even though we know teachers’ professional life through the training and the work done, and for this reason we may

take it for granted. Data show us who they are and how they are, for example, or how they prepare their lessons. However this knowledge it is not enough to learn about their upbringing, education, vocation, initial training, and family life, beliefs, personal values, dreams and fears that have led them to the teaching profession.

Besides, data does not allow us to clearly define how their initial training process, their further improvement or even their rest periods should be. This is so because there is a certain invisibility regarding these aspects coming from an institutional discourse that values the economic and pragmatic approach of education. In this approach classroom efficiency and management burden teachers with technical, instrumental and regulatory issues that have to be met at a particular place and time. Therefore, the teacher as a person is crushed. It can be said that they are invisible, even though they are present in the everyday life of each of us and in society. This is starkly shown in the decisions affecting the educational process.

This process leads many teachers to develop a practice based on competitiveness and artificiality rather than on fundamental problems, thus legitimising an instrumental conception of knowledge and deteriorating their personal, social and professional image. Due to this, research and reflection are underestimated and the teacher *habitus* that alienates teachers and students makes them become mere spectators of the routine in the educational process. This paves way to de-professionalization. We may wonder if this happens in other professions.

“… we, as teachers, feel the need to learn things. However, later, when we are told the different ways in which we can work with students, families and colleagues, when we realise the extra effort it entails to work with students and that instead of finishing our work at twelve we will have to finish at one every day, or that we may have to come once or twice a week in the evenings, when we realise that this may change our working pace, when we see that this may change the idea we have about being a civil servant, or even a clerk, then, we are afraid of it.”

(Alonso)

With this situation at school it is worth understanding the teacher condition from other perspectives. For example, we can recover teachers from their genuine subjectivity using an interpretative analysis rather than an empirical and analytical one. Life stories offer us an evolutive perspective in order to understand the cultural

pattern that has been gathered to build the teacher identity and professionalism. In this identity and professionalism we can find common elements, which are not cause and effect, which offer us several examples of events showing the different paths to the common place of good teaching.

After seeing the life stories we studied we cannot say that there is a teaching style that can be considered to be the best, but we can ensure that there are some common criteria characterised by pedagogical, social, political, cultural and emotional engagement. Those are cross-cutting principles in the development of the teachers' experience. This implies that above the school technocratic factors, there is a powerful link with students' everyday life, with their stories and emotions. All this acts as an engine for other educational initiatives and provides feedback for the security and the love for the teachers' work. It also encourages partisanship in common tasks and coordinated democratic management of school tasks.

Well-being at work implies having a good quality relationship with the students, not going to school and feeling, as some partners say, that "I am angry before coming into the class". It is terrible that one doesn't know how to establish the relationship with students in a creative and positive way. I like being in class and I like the relationship with students more.

(Jose) [6].

Teachers' political implication and political stance

The study of the teachers' life stories shows us that the political implication and the political stance are relevant parts in order to understand the teacher engagements, contradictions and complexities. Both are linked to the satisfaction for the work done and the intentional manifestation of the ideas in line with the teachers' discourse and action.

We understand that implication is the teacher's responsible involvement that feels as a social and political actor assuming the consequences of his or her own actions. That is why he or she goes beyond the technical aspects in his or her everyday routine. Generally this generates satisfaction, reinforces their motivation and provides a permanent source of self-fulfilment since the pedagogy implied is rooted in ethical principles and has a theoretical foundation. This allows them to act as

critical citizens that do not only say things with a passive attitude but they also assume the responsibility of actions as social actors who are concerned about what happens in the world.

“I like social contact with students… I would die working as a clerk, filling in forms, on my own. I need social work, being with people who make me get involved and who make me get them involved. I may like teaching because I like learning more. I like it, I love it, I am always trying to learn something.”

(Adriana) [7].

Teacher’s political stance is an intentional manifestation of coherent ideas in line with teachers’ discourse and action. Teachers can educate for citizenship since they have the capacity to reflect critically, debate and make informed judgements. In the school, the teachers who take political positions recognise, respect and defend the students as people entitled to learn and re-read their own culture, mainly in periods of accelerated change.

Teachers are always involved in political acts, even if they are conscious of it, even if they are not aware of it. As education will never be neutral and it will always express the ideas of society [8] what teachers do or do not do will be equally valid. What is really important is the awareness of teachers about the consequences of their actions.

“I like to make the students and my partners think, raise issues and make them reflect upon education in freedom. I am bothered about what concerns students in the assessment meetings. I have confronted the teaching team due to the negligence of a partner, because he didn’t care and he didn’t even know the name of a student and he gave grades at random. He has proved that he has no moral reserve. I say it responsibly from a professional point of view.”

(Adriana)

Considering education as something apart from the political field is to reduce it to mere technical work. The risk of this is to reproduce school inconsistencies and to reinforce the depoliticized behaviour generating a teaching practice that inhibits the

sense of its own culture. School education needs teacher's implication and political stance in order to ensure that "the political field becomes something more pedagogical, that is, to ensure that the critical action and reflection becomes a fundamental part of the social project…" (Giroux, 1990:15).

Characteristics of good teachers

The life stories allowed us to elicit four categories in order to describe good teachers: will to succeed, self-confidence, autonomy and teamwork (López de Maturana , 2010).

Will to succeed

This is the search of personal challenges, moments and spaces, self-perfection and self-improvement, cultural interest, willingness to learn, persistence and pedagogical evolution. The good teacher is characterised by his or her optimism towards life, his or her social engagement and the responsibility to act as a professional. One of the constants is the will to improve and the interest to learn more than what is enough to work and live peacefully.

"I like to teach at a high level. I try to know the latest trends in Literature and Spanish. I am never bored of learning and studying new concepts that come out. I work on different aspects, not only on books or notebooks. I want students to see, for example, that Benedetti and Góngora are not only on our textbooks, that is, they can be read and enjoyed by people. I get bored with the activities and I change them every year. I also do it for my own sake, because I need to change my proposals, to invent myself, to see another system for the students since I realised that they didn't get something. Then, I decide to think about it in a different way…"

(Adriana)

These teachers find it attractive to further their knowledge, the thinking, the dialogue and the critical analysis, and at the same time they adopt a proactive stance towards the world, which leads them to try to obtain the common truth by 'listening, asking, investigating'" (Freire , 1998 [1969] :85) and by asking themselves about their attitude towards knowledge.

The great majority of the teachers interviewed keep on doing their work when they

are out of school, either by thinking about the lesson or about new strategies or by looking for solutions for a problem that came out in the classroom taking into consideration that it does not mean an intensification [9] of work. When we asked Alonso how he conceives his work, he answered in the following way:

“I think that a teacher in secondary school should be go beyond what the Administration says: ‘this is your timetable and this are your duties’. I understand perfectly that a bus driver should start driving at nine and stop driving at ten, and then he should go home because his job is done. But I deal with people and I take home with me the problem I have had here; and if I am at home and I come out with a strategy that I can use to solve it tomorrow, I can’t say: ‘as I am at home and I am not in my working hours, I am not doing it’. It is the same for the lesson planning. My lessons don’t start at nine; it has started one week before, when I started thinking about the lesson for the next week. From my point of view, being a professional is this. Some people does not see in that way and they say: “The Administration pays me from nine to ten, I work from nine to ten and this is it’, ¡but, come on, we are working with people and we cannot reduce our work to the fifteen minutes of the lesson period!”

(Alonso)

We are talking about a socially engaged will to succeed, not about the mere fact of accumulating training, qualifications and certifications, but about the moral duty of keeping oneself updated and being trained, as Freire says, scientifically, physically, emotionally and affectively for the teaching work. We think that the teachers’ training and the interest shown to know more than they do is a force for change and also a way of eliminating alienation. When teachers discover that their teaching responsibility goes beyond the classroom frontiers, there is no turning back since the growth of awareness takes place.

Self-confidence

It is well known that there is a difference between those who trust in their knowledge and capacities and those who don’t feel confident to assume the responsibility that comes with teaching. The first ones are bold enough to shake the school system and make it more flexible. The second ones seek the safe shelter of accommodation. They are those who prefer to replicate what is already in place and

to believe in the certainty that deludes us with security rather than to take the risk of sharing the experiences that shows the uncertainty of a liberating educative and non-banking system.

Confidence results in the creation of an emotional contact which is needed to consolidate the rapprochement between the students and the learning process. The fact of recognising emotions leads to the well-being that serves as a stimulus to make the world a better place.

Besides, teachers' confidence in their own capacities allows them to face the learning process with security in order not to end up offering a mere technical training. At the same time it helps them to view the future with optimism, with faith in progress and to be able to intervene in the course of events in a meaningful way.

"The most rewarding moments in the last years of my working life have taken place when I have taught within the programmes to diversify the curriculum and the programmes to adapt the curriculum. They are programmes to help students. In the first case, the students are able to catch up with the rest of the students, but they have problems to do so. In the second case the curricular adaptations are made for students that are far behind the rest. Even though the percentage of those who succeed is not very high, a student told me recently: 'I have learned more this year than in all my school life.' This is rewarding"

(Jose)

The possibilities of good teaching are many times reduced because teachers do not dare to take decisions, innovate or make the curriculum more flexible, even if they are able to do so. They are tempted by prescriptions of textbooks, by what others say it must be done or by the lesson planning from previous years. The reasons may be the fear of making a mistake or not knowing the answer made by a student. All this generates a certain degree of cognitive deficiency that results in the deprivation of their own culture that reduce their knowledge to the stimuli of superficial reading, repeats foreign patterns, and inhibit the creation of new learning relationships.

These attitudes might result in the ethnocentrism that leads to the self-delusion of thinking that the ones that are wrong are the others. This is so, for example, when

teachers blame the failure of the teacher's methodology on the students.

Those who do not believe in their own capacities trust neutrality, and that's why they are prone to get preconfigured data packages tacitly and to try to "transport" them to their students' mind. There is neither reflection, nor thinking or decisions taking about the messages because insecurity contributes to the agreement on what they are told to do.

Autonomy

Autonomy is the teachers' emancipatory attitude. Due to their conviction, critical reflection and initiative they can propose teaching alternatives, take decisions and defend them, be faithful to the principles defended to change their environment.

Teachers should experience autonomy so that they can feel it is necessary. If they don't do so, they will always think that they are autonomous because others make them feel so, but it won't be true and they won't be sure of it. While there are people who are not aware and reproduce biased, de-contextualised foreign patterns, there are some others who are aware of it, but don't do anything to rebel against the imposed methods or to identify with the personal processes.

Autonomy needs teachers' critical thinking, but mere criticism is not useful if doesn't come along with a reflection on the causes and consequences of what is being criticised in order to propose an alternative way of acting. Being autonomous doesn't mean using disqualifying adjectives with the people one doesn't agree, but looking for ways to participate in common spaces, moments and purposes.

"Last school year we hold several teachers' meetings to see how we could organise the teachers' training and the students' discipline. Then, on my own account and risk I decided to prepare a plan that I gave to the staff responsible of the school administration. It was passed and this year it has become the training programme for this school. Almost half of the staff has registered for it and I think that it has been successful. People is rather happy and it has even been decided that next year we will continue with this programme on a different level."

(Alonso)

The teachers who think in a critical way are more open to observe the educational

system and not to criticise everything for the sake of it but to do constructive criticism, not destructive and paralysing one. They choose an education for men and women as subjects and not for men and women as objects. (Cfr . Freire , 1998[1969:26]).

If we don't look deeper into the ethical debate about the teacher's role, we will follow the administrative line to ensure the contractual compliance. Then, we could ask ourselves how the training of the ethical subject is done: to achieve submission or to achieve autonomy. If we do it to achieve submission, we think about him or her as a subject without knowledge and experience, and therefore, they would be easily controlled. If we do it to achieve autonomy, we recognise him or her from his or her capacity and experience and from the various possibilities coming from his or her propensity to learn. If it is so, our responsibility is to develop this propensity. (Cfr . Martínez Bonafé , 2006:4).

"When one has to use coercive power, in essence there is no respect. This is what I would point out regarding coexistence in the classroom. As to students, they are essential components in the teaching and learning process; they cannot be only passive elements. When they come into this relationship actively, then a tolerant a constructive atmosphere of respect and cooperation appears. I have seen many teachers who rely on coercive power to create their structure of coexistence in the classroom: "this is what the school rules say, and this is what you must do, and I able to do so and I make you do it." Authority does not necessarily needs these issues. Authority is a package of teachers' personality characteristics that does not need to impose over the other by using coercive methods. It is difficult to be defined because it is a package of various feelings, perceptions, ways to work and to get closer to students, that generates a relationship between teachers and students which allows to tackle and to work constructively the issues arising in a respectful atmosphere."

(Jose)

Collaborative work

Collaborative work is the search for new ways of participating, learning, working in groups, promoting dialogical relations and cooperative strategies to take decisions. Collaborative works generates meaningful and significant relationships and reduce

individualism and professional ostracism and its consequences affect everybody who is engaged in the local and global educative process. The key is to avoid the great teaching irony of being part of a common mission within common moments and spaces but at the same time being part of a self-imposed isolation, which is penalised in the professional field. (Lieberman y Miller ,1992:11).

“I don’t like the problems that I most of the time have to deal with the pedagogical relationship that should be built in my working centre. People talk about the weather, about the holiday’s plans, about the family, but I can’t find neither time, nor places or moments to talk about real pedagogical issues with my partners, such as how to improve the work we are doing. And it is not only that I can’t find the chance to do so, but also I am sometimes not interested enough to speak about it. But, I mean, it does not happen with all my partners.”

(Alonso)

Collaborative work is a motivation for being aware of the role of active subjects and of change promoters in their environment, which they help to build and give sense. Teachers and students are aware of the importance and transcendence of the pedagogical relationship, which is not limited to pass the course or learn a lesson, but it requires walking towards the materialization of ideas and practice into coherent actions.

When teachers and students work together they are better equipped to produce joint dialogue and thinking about contents, to debate about different points of view, build relations with everyday life and reflect on the consequences that contents have for society. When they don’t work together, this is not likely to happen.

“I try to introduce cooperative work in different moments of the didactic unit because I find it interesting from the structural point of view. At the beginning, students seem to be distant, but when we all establish organizative and operating class procedures, since I like being strict about it, they understand little by little how and when they can participate. I think that this rigour in the organisation make them have a constructive and participative attitude.”

(Jose)

Collaborative work favours harmonic relationships between teachers and students and it doesn't need punitive control of one of them among the others, but mutual agreement to participate in the educative process. It is "a crucial aspect in the democratic way of living" and it is not a mere strategy to improve school performance. (Apple y Beane , 1999:40).

Teachers and students are part of a democratic curriculum that makes the passive role of "knowledge consumer" become an active role of "meaning creator" (Apple y Beane , 1999:34). A collaborative and dialogical relationships is an evidence of a cognitive act, and when it is broken, the creation and re-creation is replaced by an "act of consumption", where there is only content transfer. (Freire ,1990:165). The one-way transmission of contents and the lack of dialogue make students disable as active subjects of their own learning process and moves them away from posing ethical questions due to the primacy of performance.

"In general, I see that I have to respect students that are not keen to study, that don't want to learn, that have experienced school failure before and they are fed up with people saying: "you are not making any progress… you have failed eight subjects… what are you going to do in the future?" I never say that to them, I don't give them advices at all, I try to avoid the subject, since they have already heard it before and that might have made them feel insecure. It is very important for me to work about concept learning with them and offer them peace of mind, serenity…"

(Adriana)

What has made them have confidence, will to succeed, and autonomy and work in a collaborative way?

Research done on teachers' [10] life histories allows us to state that there are some other categories behind each of the categories presented here, the importance and transcendence of which cannot be ignored. These categories are the following: family support, admiration for "someone" important in their lives, and a literacy-rich environment.

Family support has appeared in our research characterised by union, presence, warmth, well-being and strictness in the household, in spite of the dramatic events experienced in their childhood. This comes together with education in moral values, responsibility and engagement in what is autonomously undertaken.

The admiration for “someone” important in their lives is based on welcoming, supporting and warm figures highly socially engaged, responsible and always present in the important moments of their lives. These figures taught them responsibility and the engagement that was transformed into underlying values which seems to have an effect in personal and professional responsibility as well as in teamwork.

“In my school life I had a History teacher, Leonor Sanz , in Secondary Education and the GCE A-level studies, and it was probably because of her that I studied History. I also had a Spanish teacher, Vicente Salvador, who also taught me in the GCE A-level studies. Both had similar characteristics of personality. They were teachers who didn’t pay much attention to the official textbooks, they supplemented their work with their personal proposals, they oriented our readings beyond the didactic programming, they gave us workshops apart from the lessons, on methodological issues, study methods, reflections on the Spanish situation at that time, just after the death of Franco. I was shocked by all that.”

(Jose)

In their first years, the literary-rich environment arouse their curiosity and taste for reading, which affected how they encourage students to read and produce texts. Since they were children, they were curious and non-conformist, and they always found someone to meet their needs. It is important to point out that there were not necessarily books or textbooks but there were conversations, tales, anecdotes in which they participated actively.

“I was lucky because I have a mother who didn’t even finished primary studies but had a great ability for oral tales, popular tales and making up tales. In other words, my mother could make up a one-hour tale with just two characters. This marked me very much, my mum as a storyteller and then my grandfather who recommended me books and talked to me. With that great speaker that was my grandfather and

that storyteller that was my mother, then the little girl definitively acquired communication skills and then everything came, the reading and the love for listening to stories and the love for telling them."

(Adriana)

The meaning of reviewing one's story

Reviewing their own life evolution and their own pedagogical practice has allowed teachers to become aware of their mistakes and achievements. Besides, they teach us that it is possible to be optimistic in spite of difficulties, that if there aren't any resources one can always move forward and it is not worth it remaining standing still and accept that there will never be resources, which does not mean having an indifferent attitude and accept tacitly the lack of resources.

On the other hand, being close to students has a clearly political reward: the students' reciprocity with which they get involved in the learning process. They come happily to class, they are willing to learn and participate with enthusiasm, and they feel and show the meaning of school education for social life. That makes the difference in comparison with other teachers who crack down when they don't achieve it. They are optimistic.

"When it comes to contents I am demanding… I am not at all the typical teacher whose subject is easy to pass. They know they have to work very hard, but I teach them to be honest and I think I succeed, because I think they see me as an easy-going and similar to them. I never lie to them, I never show disrespect to them, I never shout at them, I talk on an equal footing, I give reasons to explain things. I say to them: 'I am free at that time, during the break, I can help you, […]'. I see they are very happy because they always come to me to tell me things and when the lesson is finished they stay a bit longer to tell me about the match on Sunday or what their mothers has told them…"

(Adriana)

The affectivity and scientific approach teacher's use in their pedagogical task are not mutually exclusive. In the same way, the affective relationship with the students reduces neither the level of requirements nor the rigour of the teaching practice,

nor the questioning and critical attitude or the political nature of the task. On the contrary this helps them to understand and respect the others and encourage them to go on. There is an implicit relation between self-demandingness in teaching and the students' learning process comprehension. This relation starts with a mutual engagement at the beginning of the academic year. This has allowed other teachers to review their own practices, improve school environment and discover the real value of teaching. At the same time this is the first step to start changing conditions of inequality.

The most relevant question that teachers make themselves is what the students are interested in learning. They are not concerned about the mere transmission of contents, but about the critical and ethical comprehension of contents, as well as about the role that each one plays in the world. Rather than asking themselves about how to do things, they first ask themselves what to do from what is desirable, possible, likely, probable and feasible, and why they want select specific teaching practice. (Gimeno , 1999:44).

"You never finish learning, you don't know everything you need to know about your job, every day you come into a class and deal with a group of students where each of them has his or her own characteristics of personality, problems, complexities, interests and likes. Every day you have to tackle a new problem that you probably never needed to solve in your professional life. Nobody taught you how to deal with them…"

(Alonso)

Teaching professionalism

Teaching professionalism is based in the good teacher awareness about the fact that they can go beyond the imposed limits and take on the responsibility of creating fair and well-informed citizens. Thus, they go beyond schools and, at the same time, they build a qualitative network that makes their job more socially valued.

Due to epistemological reasons we cannot conclude that good teachers meet all the requirements for quality practice, but we can state that they try hard with an explicit and meaningful intention, even though they often get tired or crack down.

However, they never lose the meaning and the value of the commitment made. They know that what really matters is the job done in the classroom from which their students, as learning subjects in a specific society, benefit. Therefore they don't need to use a progressive discourse to refer to their teaching practice.

It is clear that this is not enough to change reality, but it is an important step so that teaching professionalism could be openly recognised and some organization issues for change could be better understood. Besides, the unpredictable consequences of the dissemination can lead to a new innovation autonomous movement in education.

Suggestion for teacher' initial training

During the whole research process one outstanding point has been that good teachers don't have troubles tackling one of the main difficulties in the teaching process: the complexity of issue of study is the paradoxical expression of its simplicity; its development creates a permanent feedback loop that goes from one to another in a process of increasing complexity, except when some other factors make the process superficial and complex [11].

We should commit ourselves to re-signify what we know from hypothetical unprecedented relations that sheds light upon the educational process by overcoming complex and superficial temptations which have led the school system to an aporetic alley. After this simple and complex statement, we can ask ourselves: why don't we include these criteria in the initial teachers' training?

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  We interviewed more than one hundred teachers in the research done.

[3] Life histories gives floor to people so that they can tell their personal and professional life trajectories. It is a biographical and autobiographical story created through subsequent interviews and other resources showing one person’s subjective testimony about the events taken place in his or her own life as well as his or her own opinion about it. (Pujadas , 1992).

[4] In the research done on “good teachers” we intentionally chose those who were considered as such by their partners and students (Spain); those who showed pedagogical social, political and cultural engagement traits (Chile, Spain); and those who had been considered by the Minister of Education (Chile) as professionals of excellence. The research on their lives revealed several common traits that would become analysis categories later on in order to define good teachers.

[5] Alonso is one of the many teachers that opened up so that we could research on how he became a “good teacher”.

[6] Jose is one of the many teachers that opened up so that we could research on how he became a “good teacher”.

[7] Adriana is one of the many teachers that opened up so that we could research on how he became a “good teacher”.

[8] These ideas are developed by: Apple, 1986; Freire , 1990, 2001; Mac Laren, 1998 ; Popkewitz , 1990.

[9] We understand intensification as one of the phenomena from the proletarianization characterised by extended ruling, red-tape and tasks that go beyond the efforts that should be done by a teacher (Contreras, 1999: 18-19). This makes the teachers’ work a routine practice, an isolated and unqualified task that lacks reflexive thinking. Teacher, however, does not see other way out but this for

the demands put on them by their job. We understand proletarianization as the lack of autonomy and the ethical sense inherent within teaching as well as the deterioration in their working conditions.

[10] In particular: Project FONDECYT Nº 1050621/ 2005-2006. *La construcción sociocultural de la profesionalidad docente: compromiso social, político y pedagógico.* Universidad de La Serena, Universidad Central de Santiago.

[11] “Unfortunately the paradoxical relation simplicity/ complexity so radical in the educational processes is deeply altered in many school processes, where simplicity becomes superficiality and complexity becomes an indescribable complexity that nobody can understand. Knowledge and ignorance rather than a network of mysterious relations waiting to be understood become an indescribable and unmotivated tangle.” (Calvo, 2008).

Translation: Eva Bastidas García

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