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Editors

**Context-Bound Materials
to Enhance the Learning
and Teaching of English**

Universidad Externado de Colombia
School of Education
Master's Programme in Education with Emphasis
on English Didactics

**Professional Development Seminars to
Sensitise Teachers towards Classroom
Practices centred on Child Rights**

**Seminarios de desarrollo profesional para
sensibilizar a los maestros sobre las prácticas
de aula centradas en los derechos de los niños**

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Abstract

This qualitative case study explores the contribution of teacher professional development seminars to sensitise teachers towards child rights' classroom practices in private and state-funded schools in the city of Bogotá, Colombia. We conducted the study with some teachers of various subject matters from state-funded and private schools in the city of Bogotá, and gathered the data through a survey and teachers' artefacts. The findings suggest that teachers valued attending seminars that foster professional development since they allow educators to know about change agent projects to exercise child rights. This reflection and

socialization space of school projects and teaching strategies gave teachers insights about methodological activities implemented by others to solve situations where child rights are vulnerable or violated. Teachers also evidenced nascent progress in teacher professional development as they regarded reflection as a source of transformation, and as a way to nurture their knowledge, innovation and research. This experience expanded their understanding of the principles that underlie the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), to integrate them to their classroom practices as a means to legitimate the rights of the child in the educational setting.

Keywords: Convention of the rights of the child, teacher professional development seminars, classroom practices

Resumen

Este estudio de caso cualitativo explora la contribución de los seminarios de desarrollo profesional a la sensibilización de los maestros en relación con las prácticas pedagógicas centradas en los derechos de los niños en escuelas públicas y privadas de Bogotá, Colombia. La investigación se realizó con algunos maestros de colegios públicos y privados de diversas áreas del conocimiento. La información recolectada a través de una encuesta y artefactos de los maestros reveló que éstos estimaron pertinente participar en los seminarios de desarrollo profesional. Los hallazgos sugieren que los maestros consideraron relevante hacerlo dado que promueve su desarrollo profesional y les permite conocer proyectos de cambio para el ejercicio de los derechos de los niños. Este espacio de reflexión, la socialización de los proyectos escolares y las estrategias de enseñanza proporcionaron a los maestros ejemplos de

estrategias metodológicas, implementadas por otros, para resolver situaciones en las que los derechos de los niños eran vulnerables o quebrantados. Los maestros también evidenciaron un progreso naciente en su desarrollo profesional puesto que conciben la reflexión como una fuente de transformación y de fomento al conocimiento, la innovación y la investigación. Asimismo, ampliaron la comprensión de los principios que subyacen a la Convención de los Derechos del Niño para integrarlos a sus prácticas de aula como un medio de legitimación de estos derechos al contexto educativo.

Palabras clave: convención de los derechos del niño, seminarios de desarrollo profesional, prácticas en el aula

Introduction

As Colombian change agents, we are committed to generate projects that promote school applications of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). It is an agreement that states the rights of the child in civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural terms. It defines a child as any human being under the age of 18, who needs special care, assistance, and legal protection to reach full physical, mental, and emotional development. In light of this contract, and as a result of our training in the International Program on Child Rights Classroom and School Management, – sponsored by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and delivered by the Lund University to batches of three Colombian participants once a year, we were expected to conduct a research study that generated a change, which

we conceived and named Professional Development CRC Seminars in 2011.

These professional development seminars have been offered during eight continuous years as follows:

1. *Generate a child rights classroom culture through cross-curricular materials that foster critical thinking-2011*
2. *Make a change by promoting children rights-2012*
3. *The rights of the child: Opportunities and challenges -2013*
4. *The rights of the child: A learning experience-2014*
5. *The rights of the child: Educational materials for strengthening a child rights classroom culture-2015*
6. *Teachers' professional development: Six years of shared experiences-2016*
7. *VII annual seminar on the rights of the child-2017*
8. *VIII annual seminar on the rights of the child-2018.*

The first three seminars were offered to English teachers working for both private and state-funded schools, and aimed at strengthening their capabilities to act as agents of change that foster the exercise of the rights of the child in their classrooms and school contexts. From the fourth seminar onwards, our mentor from the Lund University recommended us to widen the scope of the seminars by offering them to teachers of all subject matters, not English teachers exclusively, who could benefit from this professional development opportunity, and contribute to school applications of the CRC, which can be approached and promoted within any field of study.

There was also an impact and dissemination seminar held at Bangkok, Thailand-2013 and sponsored by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) whose purposes were to further enhance our role of

teachers as change agents, to share the results and impact of the training programme at national level with change agents of the CRC global programme, and to learn about other countries' experiences to improve and ensure the sustainability of our projects. In this event, the change project corresponding to these seminars was selected as *the good practice* of the seven participant Colombian batches. The reasons behind the quality of this change project are four-folded. It is unique in its nature as it has brought together current and potential change agents, pre-service, novice and in-service teachers of all fields of study; it has been institutionalised as a yearly seminar that raises teachers' awareness of CRC issues and fosters reflection on pedagogical practices that promote the exercise of the rights of the child within their teaching contexts; it has taken the first steps in creating the Colombian network of change agents; and it is sustainable as CRC agents from almost all batches have been empowered to take the project forward.

Statement of the Problem

To identify our research concern, we began by conducting an on-line survey with the participants who had the intention of attending the first seminar. It revealed that there was absence of opportunities for teachers to reflect on and become updated in the rights of the child and how these can be evidenced, in their daily practice, in some state-funded and private classroom settings in the city of Bogotá. The results made evident the need to make teachers sensitive and responsive to fostering child rights in the educational context. Moreover, we applied an evaluation form to further identify the need to continue offering this reflective space to promote the CRC principles in the school context. Therefore, we posed the following

research question: How do professional development seminars contribute to sensitise teachers towards child rights classroom practices in private and state-funded schools in Bogotá (Colombia)? We also stated as the research objective to describe the contribution of professional development seminars to sensitising teachers towards classroom practices centred on child rights in private and state-funded schools in Bogotá.

Ideally, the academic community should become sensitive and responsive towards fostering child rights in the educational context.

Literature Review

Convention on the Right of the Child

The United General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in November 1989 and it came into force on September 2, 1990, after being ratified by the required number of nations. This document includes civil, economic, political and social rights which centre on human dignity and a healthy and harmonious development for every child.

The CRC has been ratified by every member of the United Nations except the countries of Somalia, the United States and South Sudan. Every nation is then compelled to follow the CRC policies which ensure the best interests of the child. The CRC is composed of 54 articles and two Optional Protocols which focus on four main principles: Non-discrimination; the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child (Leo, Alfredsson, Andersson, Flinck, Rasmusson & Wickenberg, 2014). The rights that have been addressed by the change agent projects and have been

socialised in the seven annual seminars are mainly the following: Article 2 (Non-discrimination), Article 3 (Best interest of the child), Article 12 (Participation to assure that children are capable of stating their own views) and Article 28 (Right to education).

Teacher Professional Development

It entails a transformative journey that teachers undertake from different fields of study to guide and enhance students' learning process within the institutions they are working in. This voyage is founded by the inner and outer determination of accompanying students to learn effectively and become autonomous individuals in society. For Evans (2002), it embraces three aspects: teachers' "personal, professional and social" (p. 127) concerns which influence teachers' decision-making as regards their pedagogical practice. For the District Secretary of Education (Red Académica Bogotá – Educación Bogotá Secretaría de Educación del Distrito, n. d.) in Colombia, teacher development is supported by three interrelated aspects evidenced in the Programas de Formación Permanente de Docente (PFPDs): Updating, innovating, and researching that teacher education programmes ought to address. Teacher development entails a long-lasting personal, professional, and social process that enhances teachers to be updated, to innovate, and to do research to improve teaching and learning scenarios.

It is then crucial to highlight Mann's (2005) insights on innovation and change when he quotes several authors who attest that they are "a necessary part of teacher development (Bailey, 1992; Willis & Willis, 1996). Likewise, Haskins (2002) considered "the new and the 'fresh' as helping to maintain interest in classroom teaching" (p. 109). We agree with

the authors when they stress the need to include the new (being updated), innovation and change as key components of teachers' growth, which may lead to researching to transform teachers' practices. Allwright (as cited in Mann, 2005) highlighted that "the classroom is a site that provides opportunities for experimentation, exploration and change for both teachers and learners" (p. 109). Looking for new, innovative and researchable undertakings within the classroom might foster students' learning and eventually, teacher professional development which in Mann's (2005) words, is: "[The] process of articulating an inner world of conscious choices made in response to the outer world of the teaching context" (p. 105). Thus, the seminars' purpose centred on providing teachers with pedagogical strategies. These strategies entailed building up values and fostering a respectful atmosphere in the EFL classroom and raising teachers' awareness of leadership and gender issues in the classroom. In addition, they included strategies to resolve conflict in and outside the classroom to put into practice the rights of the child within the school, exercising the rights of the child in the school and their influence on teachers' professional development, working seriously to make Colombian children go first, and implementing critical pedagogy as a path for understanding and exercising the rights of the child. They also provided the space to ponder their teaching practice as promoters of such rights.

Reflection is a vital feature of teacher professional development and both aspects are intertwined. As respects the latter, Diaz-Maggioli (2003) affirmed that it is "an evolving process of professional self-disclosure, reflection, and growth that yields the best results when sustained over time in communities of practice and when focused on job-embedded responsibilities" (para. 1). The author further attested that this learning process entails voluntarily

engagement that leads to adjustments in teaching practice. Hence, reflection avoids stagnation and repetition of pedagogical exercises since it privileges the search of new ways to design lessons that address students' needs. This might foster better learning settings that enhance interaction, promote values, sensitise learners towards diversity, and eventually develop critical thinking skills.

Unlike teacher training, teacher professional development privileges reflection on aspects related to teaching and learning which places the educators as critical thinkers (Richards, 1998), subaltern intellectuals (Kumaravadivelu, 2014, p. 76), public intellectuals (Giroux, 2012), social and historical thinkers and creators that transform (Freire, 1998), and "agents of permanent change" (Núñez & Téllez, 2009, p. 184). In this line of thought, Cruickshank (1987), Grimmett and Erickson (1988), Pollard and Tann (1987), Russell and Munby (1992) coincided that educating, gaining knowledge and reflection are vital aspects in teacher professional development. However, these features should be prompted in seminars and academic events to sharpen teachers' insights and promote professional and personal growth.

Classroom Practices

Teaching practice is defined as a compilation of actions which includes multiple thoughtful stages that combine theory and practice as a vehicle to achieve students' learning in educational settings. It implies a theoretical background on pedagogy and the results of the application of theories in the classroom. According to Quiceno (2010):

The teacher is a subject of knowledge, ...a subject who not only transmits content and theoretical forms and is

framed within a discipline, art or science called pedagogy but also a subject that performs, produces, affects, and acts; the teacher also depends on the practical instances of pedagogy besides the theoretical ones (p. 169, *Trans*).

Educators combine the theory they hold of the subject matter and their teaching experience to guide the students' learning processes, and to create a classroom environment to accomplish a set of objectives that marks the students learning process.

Teachers develop practices that involve planning contemplating students' needs and interests. Within this preparation, they select the most convenient learning strategies and procedures that guide students to achieve a successful academic life. The overall aim of the teaching practice is to lead students towards knowledge and learning which entails constant reflection.

Reflection is a pillar to sustain actions in classroom practices and in any academic context. It allows teachers to make possible transformations. Indeed, Galea (2012) propounded that "reflective teaching is perceived as an effective tool in democratizing teaching and learning processes" (p. 245). As a classroom is a democratic space to share knowledge, interact with others, communicate ideas freely, play, enjoy, laugh, and learn, among others, students should benefit from these actions. Reflection cannot be underestimated by teachers when thinking about their students' learning achievements, but rather be considered a source of constant and critical assessment of their behaviour and performance.

We define teaching practice as individual and collective processes that engage two reflexive actors: the teacher and the student; both with different experiences and interests whose purpose is to learn from each other

through a socialisation process. Teaching practices involve a combination of theory and actions resulting in social experiences that constantly transform and evolve.

Methodology

This section describes the research design intended to explore the contribution of professional development seminars to sensitising teachers towards child rights classroom practices in private and state-funded schools in Bogotá.

Research Design

It encompasses the research approach and type of study, the participants of the study and the instruments for data collection.

Research approach. The qualitative, interpretative, and descriptive case study approach underpins our study. It suits our research inquiry in the recognition of an unresolved situation in a social context aiming at solving and improving it (Sandin, 2003; Burns, 2009). It also supports the outcomes within a natural context and favours interaction with the partakers (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Likewise, Yin (1984) defined a case study as "an empirical inquiry within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (p. 23). Similarly, Marín (2012) argued that this type of design allows an individual researcher or a group of researchers to inquire about a single case or multiple cases. Under this methodological perspective, one can study from a single institution to a community that presents similar characteristics such as

practices, values, and beliefs, among others. This research design suits our study since we used two data collection instruments, selected a community of teachers as our case, and inquire about their practices.

Type of study. In relation to characteristics of a case study, Muñoz, Quintero and Munévar (2001) identified, among others, that it allows a deep understanding of the complexity implied in the research concern and the findings cannot be generalised since these are valid only for a specific population. Hence, the results of our study give account of the contribution of teacher professional development seminars to sensitise the selected community of teachers towards child rights classroom practices.

Context and participants. We conducted the study with 158 teachers of all subject matters from state-funded and private schools in the city of Bogotá who have attended the CRC professional development seminars. They are aged between 17 and 70 years old. There were 69 participants aged between 30 to 40 years old; 45 attendees between 40 to 50 years old, and 14 attendees between 50 to 70 years old. Among the participants, 52 were early childhood teachers, 47 were primary teachers, and 26 were pre-school teachers. Regarding their academic formation, 30 held a master's degree; 36 held a specialisation degree; 35 held a Bachelor of Arts degree and 57 were pre-service teachers who signed the Informed Consent Letter (See Appendix C) that guaranteed that their identity would remain private.

Additionally, three teacher-researchers performed the role of participant observers during the development of the study. All of them shared the common background of being scholarship holders of the International Program on Child Rights Classroom and School Management. The

successful completion of the former programme gives us the condition of teachers as change agents who have the long-lasting duty of envisioning and implementing projects for change that seek the execution of the rights of the child in our teaching contexts.

Data collection instruments. A survey and teacher's artefacts were the sources of information of this study which will be described below.

Surveys. For Groves et al. (2009) a survey is "a systematic method for gathering information from (a sample of) entities for the purpose of constructing quantitative descriptors of the attributes of the larger population of which the entities are members" (p. 2). This instrument allowed us to collect data related to participants' opinions and perceptions in reference to school curriculum and methodologies that foment the rights of the child, the creation of spaces for reflection on those rights, and the theories that support the exercise of their classroom practices (See Appendix A).

Teacher's artefacts. They are, according to LeCompte and Preissle (1994), "Products people use, objects people make, and records of what they do, say, produce, or write" (p. 1). For Given (2008), they are materials used as evidence to document and record personal information of the society, people or a culture. Similarly, in Lankshear and Knobel's (2004) view, they are "physical 'props' people use to get things done" (p. 235). Finally, for Burns (1999) they are "a source of documents readily available to all teachers" (p. 140). Thus, for our study, this instrument includes samples of the learning activities developed by several groups of teachers as well as the strategies used in their classroom settings, which were written in Spanish and translated into

English by the researchers due to the fact that participants were not all English teachers.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

We employed the grounded approach to analyse the information gathered, which based on Corbin and Strauss (2015), "Allows for identification of general concepts, the development of theoretical explanations that reach beyond the known and offers new insights into a variety of experiences and phenomena" (p. 6). Furthermore, Lichtman (2006) argued that in this approach "the codes emerge from the data via a process of reading and thinking about the text material" (p. 164). While Glaser described the code as "the essential relationship between data and theory" (as cited in Walker & Myrick, 2006, p. 55), Stottok, Bergaus and Gorra (2011) referred to it as "keywords or short sentences, concepts being interrelationships of codes, and categories being interrelationships of concepts" (p. 1). Hence, in our study, we recognised concepts, interpreted, and supported them with theory.

To identify commonalities and differences as well as to establish relationships among the data, we used the colour-coding technique, which provides "a way of moving quickly from open coding to the next step of focused coding" (Bergaus, 2015, p. 119). Coding is then "a process of attempting to reduce the large amount of data that may be collected to more manageable categories of concepts, themes or types" (Burns, 1999, p. 157), which "gets the analyst off the empirical level by fracturing the data, then conceptually grouping it into codes that then become the theory" (as cited in Walker & Myrick, 2006, p. 55). This process allowed us to come with relevant and

recurrent issues that became the subcategories supporting the main category.

Results

After carefully analysing the data gathered, one main category and three subcategories emerged, as seen in the table 1 below and explained underneath it.

Table 1
Research Category

How do professional development seminars contribute to sensitise teachers towards child rights classroom practices in private and state-funded schools in Bogotá (Colombia)?	Nascent Progress in Teacher Professional Development	Knowing about change projects to exercise child's rights
		Transforming through reflection
		Nurturing teacher knowledge, innovating and researching

Nascent progress in teacher development. This main category entails three subcategories: *Knowing about change projects to exercise children's rights*, *Transforming through reflection* and *Nurturing teacher knowledge, innovating and researching*. Teacher development embraces innovation, research and reflection to transform teachers' professional and personal endeavours. Being involved in activities that challenge teachers to ponder their practice, will eventually foster their knowledge of their field of study and their actions within their institutions, benefitting thereby students' learning. In this regard, Jenkins (2015) argued that "conferences are rejuvenating. Spending time with other enthusiastic professionals can leave you feeling inspired"

(p. 159). Accordingly, Durkheim (as cited in Jenkins, 2015) argued that “collective consciousness is what holds society together, and the mechanism of ritual creates collective consciousness” (p. 159). The sharing that takes place in professional conferences and seminars of this type, allow participants to discuss topics of common interest and this exchange can be seen as a ritual since it coincides with Durkheim’s view.

The result of an academic event such as this seminar may lead to envisage transformation in the educational context. The participants mentioned that the seminar not only gave them the possibility to be updated in terms of Child Rights, to know about research studies dealing with this issue, but also became an opportunity to reflect on their practices, share with colleagues and allow them to make progress in teacher development. Likewise, Jenkins (2015) asserted that “attending a conference is one way to meet areas of development in your skills gap. This is essential in a world of fast-paced changes in technology” (p. 157), as well as knowing more about key issues in Education.

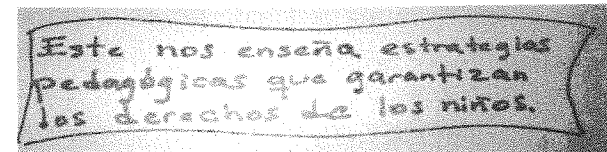
So, seminars of this nature can, according to Jenkins (2015), “Afford exposure to the wider information landscape, but also offer opportunities for practical ideas and initiatives” (p. 158). Thus, this new knowledge may empower teachers to look for different ways to approach Child Rights in the institutions where they work.

Knowing about change projects to exercise child rights. This first subcategory addresses the aspects that the participants considered relevant about the change projects they were exposed to and how these contributed to sensitise teachers towards practices centred on child rights. In this regard, some teachers expressed that the seminars

provided opportunities for learning and relearning about experiences carried out by other colleagues that enriched their teaching practice. As Wink (2005) stated, “Learning can be very challenging, but the problem is that it always leads to relearning which is more challenging” (p. 18). She asserted that relearning involves a shift in methodology because we cannot teach students in the same and exact way; we need to take into consideration their needs and expectations.

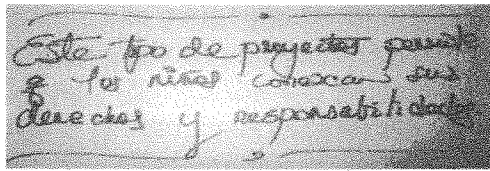
In her words, “Relearning takes place when students teach us all those things we didn’t learn in teacher education” (p. 18).

Knowing about change projects expands the participants’ understanding on the matter and gives them insights about the type of activities that can be implemented in their educational contexts.



“It teaches us strategies that guarantee the rights of the children”
(Artefacts)

Besides, they stated that it provided other viewpoints, which enriched their pedagogical practice since they can learn about methodological activities implemented by others to solve situations where child rights are vulnerable or violated.



"These types of projects allow children to know about their rights as well as their duties"
(Artefacts)

Thus, this subcategory is related to both knowing and interpreting the CRC and identifying its major problems. Accordingly, Birman, Desimone, Porter and Garet (2000), "Collective participation also may contribute to a shared professional culture where teachers who teach the same subject develop a common understanding of instructional goals, methods, problems and solutions" (p. 30). Thus, it entails interacting with other educators, namely pre-service, novice and in-service teachers throughout the seminars as well as listening to the children in the classroom settings to know how they feel about their rights.

Regarding how educators change when being exposed to their colleagues' pedagogical experiences, Joyce and Showers (as cited in Harwell, 2003) affirmed that "changes in teachers' beliefs are more likely to occur in settings in which teachers consider learning a communal activity" (p. 4). This collective action allows teachers to learn from their field, from others, discuss about their concerns, be heard and supported by others, which in turn, enriches their perspectives and enhances students' learning processes. As one teacher quoted, "It's important for our pedagogical practice to enrich ourselves with positive experiences, tools and elements that we can implement in our classrooms" (Survey). Another teacher manifested "Because in my role as teacher it is of vital importance to

know, to investigate and put into practice strategies that enhance our daily practice and allow for the respect of these rights" (Survey). Educators can motivate others to replicate or adapt pedagogical strategies and/or projects in their different teaching contexts promoting children's learning opportunities, the exercise of their rights, and improving their teaching practice.

This socialisation of projects "allows us as teachers to empower ourselves and the educational community" (Survey). Showers, Joyce and Bennett (as cited in Harwell, 2003) claimed that "a sense of community, and the 'supportive coaching' that it provides, is necessary not only to bring about changes in beliefs but to help teachers develop and maintain a sense of efficacy regarding new teaching strategies" (p. 4). Teachers may be transformed by both their formal education which entails their university studies as well as the conferences, workshops, and seminars, among others, that they attend, and by interacting informally with colleagues, students, parents and the educational community. As one teacher states, "These significant experiences allow to save resources, qualify working and learning environments and make everyday life a chance to live well" (Survey). As new methodologies are being implemented, which tend to focus more on the needs and interests of the students, "new knowledge is generated and a recognition of (students) as subjects of rights" (Survey). These change projects allow for a new conceptualisation of the role played by the student in the educational context.

Teachers highlighted that these seminars provided them with opportunities to learn about experiences carried out by other colleagues that can enrich their teaching practice. In this regard, McLennan, McIlveen, and Perera (as cited in Macias, 2017) acknowledged that "when teachers engage in such efficacy building activities, it may strengthen

their optimism and adaptability, which can positively impact their overall school culture and student outcomes" (p. 87). Thus, teachers can also reflect upon, replicate or adapt pedagogical strategies and/or projects in their different teaching contexts that foster children's learning opportunities which exercise their rights.

Transforming through reflection. Teachers' reflection on their daily practices allows them to look for new ways to develop their lessons and address their students' needs. As claimed by Núñez and Téllez (2015):

Reflection might shape MD (Materials Development) and teachers' personal and professional growth. The former benefits from reflection as the core concern of teachers ... to fulfill the learners' needs and interests and the latter capitalizes on teachers' awareness of how their reflective practice works and its incidence in their personal and professional development. (p. 56)

This routine might foster varied changes within the classroom in an on-going way by, for example, enhancing a positive class environment, humanising the classroom, fostering critical thinking and dialogue, as well as enhancing citizenship values. Núñez and Téllez (2009, 2015) attested that caring for students' needs contributes to the creation of effective learning environments. Kerr (2007) affirmed that "The term humanistic describes learning approaches that assert the central role of the 'whole person' in the learning process" (par. 13). Similarly, Pineda (2003) sustained that critical thinking entails a process that lasts the whole life and is refined through learning experiences. The report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship (1998) argued that "citizenship education is education for citizenship, behaving

and acting as a citizen, therefore it is not just knowledge of citizenship and civic society; it also implies developing values, skills and understanding" (p. 13). This entails that humanising and generating friendly classroom atmospheres, and privileging critical thinking and citizenship values are key issues to be fostered.

Incorporating our experience in our endeavours and thinking reflectively about it might encompass better research practices that may lead to transformation. In Chalikandy's (2014) words: "Teachers who view experience as a growing experience reflect on their own teaching in some way, which ranges from anecdotal variety to classroom data analysis" (p. 118). Likewise, Jenkins (2015) argued that:

the deep thought associated with reflection affords us greater understanding of an experience. Experience is the basis for learning, and reflection is an important part of the learning process in which we actively attempt to make sense and find meaning in it. (p. 156)

Therefore, reflection and experience go hand-in-hand since they generally allow teachers to transform their practice. Hence, teachers evidenced that through the CRC seminar they could reflect on their practices to replicate what they had learned in favour of their students.

They also deem the seminar as an opportunity to speak to others about child rights. In this sense, Jenkins (2015) asserted that "attendees develop professional expertise through learning about current and best practice in the sessions" (p. 157). This is shown as follows: "I consider it is important to participate in these scenarios, because only from our reflection as teachers we will begin a replica to transform such practices in favor of ourselves and our children" (*Survey*). The abovementioned, evidences that

teachers considered relevant to participate in seminars that favour opportunities to reflect on their students, theoretical issues, and share with others. "It [CRC seminar] sets concern that lead to the evaluation and reflection of the practical and theoretical foundations from which educational processes are generated" (*Survey*). Having a space to reflect, learn, relearn, discuss and share with others their experiences regarding child rights is crucial to transform their practices.

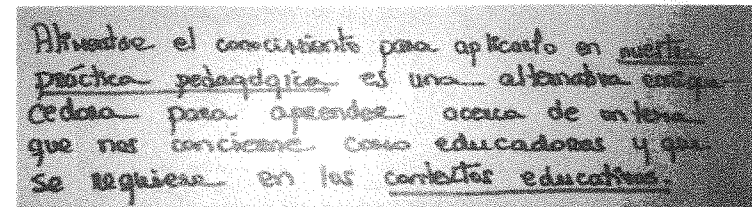
Other teachers mentioned the importance of reflection as an internalised process that results in transformation for children, the educational institutions and education in general: "To confront ... my pre-knowledge regarding the rights and duties of children and see the child as an active political subject in society" (*Survey*). Fatemi, Shirvan and Rezvani (2011) highlighted that "Reflective practice ... is based on understandings of self, society and moral purposes and involves stopping, noticing, evaluating and inquiring about problems encountered in different situations" (p. 178). These situations might be discussed in academic scenarios such as the CRC seminar, which promotes the space to learn and participate to reflect and transform. Jenkins (2015) attested that "reflection is key to really getting the most from attending continuing professional development...; reflecting on what was learnt, the impact it has had on you and your work, and ways in which it will impact in the future" (p. 156). In sum, reflection of our practices might eventually foster teacher knowledge, empower synergy and transformation in the long term.

Nurturing teacher knowledge, innovating and research.

Acknowledging teachers' interests in academic spaces that deal with updated issues offers ongoing learning opportunities to envision innovation and research within their contexts. Jensen; McCulla (as cited in Burrige &

Carpenter, 2013), considered that "the ongoing learning should promote reflection and evaluation of teaching practices" (p. 11) and Postholm (as cited in Burrige & Carpenter, 2013) corroborated this idea affirming that "this can include formal learning from seminars, conferences and formal meetings to discuss teaching practices, and informal learning through personal reflection of his or her teaching practice" (p. 11). Therefore, the CRC seminar stimulates learning and research.

Participants highlighted the importance of attending and learning from seminars with a clear goal in social transformation. "It seems important to keep up to date significant issues within the educational community to contribute to personal and social transformation" (*Survey*). They refer to the meaningfulness of nourishing their personal and professional development to transform their teaching knowledge and practices by saying that:

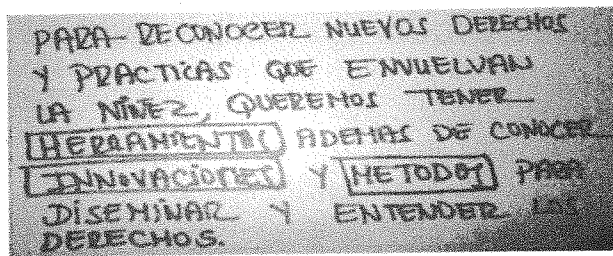


Aunque el conocimiento para aplicarlo en nuestra práctica pedagógica es una alternativa enriquecedora para aprender acerca de nosotros que nos concierne como educadores y que se requiere en los contextos educativos.

"Nurturing knowledge to apply it in our teaching practice, is an enriching alternative to learn about this theme that concerns our teaching and is required in educational contexts"
(*Artefacts*)

They also attested that knowing about children is fundamental to legitimate their rights: "The teacher must be constantly updated about projects that legitimize the treatment and the importance of the child" (*Survey*).

Regarding the importance of innovation in participants' teaching practices, Smith (2009) argued that innovation entails "sustaining a culture of performance ..., one that is based on the kind of continuous improvement that we believe is necessary to bring about faster and better problem solving" (p. 1). We emphasise on two fundamental aspects: continuous improvement and better solutions to enhance students' outcomes. It also involves reflection directed towards transformation. This transformation might be the result of constant pondering teaching practices and an ongoing teacher development, which is also closely related to research. It implies being opened to learn and innovate as it is seen in the following excerpts: "I want to open my mind and learn different strategies, to provide better support for children, teachers and family" (Survey).



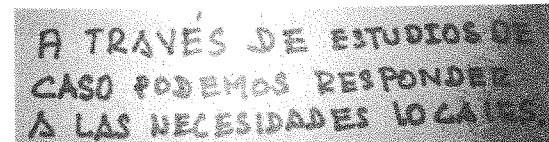
PARA RECONOCER NUEVOS DERECHOS Y PRÁCTICAS QUE ENVUELVAN LA NIÑEZ, QUEREMOS TENER [HERRAMIENTAS] ADENAS DE CONOCER [INNOVACIONES] Y [METODOS] PARA DISEÑAR Y ENTENDER LOS DERECHOS.

"To recognize new rights and practices involving children, we want to have tools to continue this exercise, besides knowing about innovations in methods to disseminate and understand rights"

(Artefacts)

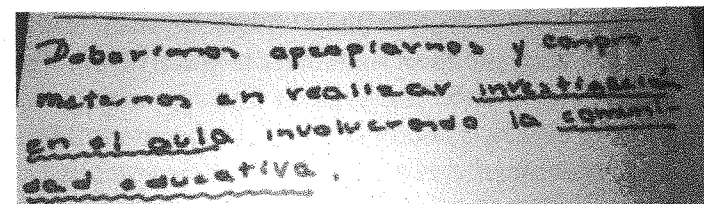
The teachers also manifested that through the seminar they were aware of the importance of knowing more and conducting research about child rights that can be implemented in the classroom to innovate and be updated.

Regarding the role of research in teacher development, Smith (2009) mentioned that "innovation and research investments should be designed to change incentives to support continuous learning cycles that build a robust and improving knowledge base that is widely accessible, actually useful to practitioners, and sustained and improved over time" (p. 7). Smith suggests that research as well as innovation imply constant learning, which is also highlighted by the teachers as follows: "Because I direct research and interventions to guide many of my proposals to develop in the near future, I'd like to do a research study"; "The issue is of vital importance and despite being in higher education, it is a situation that concerns all society; it interests me to begin promoting research spaces for children" (Survey). Some teachers were aware of the crucial need to undertake research within the classroom to benefit students and their institutions and to meet their needs:



A TRAVÉS DE ESTUDIOS DE CASO PODEMOS RESPONDER A LAS NECESIDADES LOCALES.

"Through case studies we can meet local needs" (Artefacts).



Deberíamos apropiarnos y comprometernos en realizar investigaciones en el aula involucrando la comunidad educativa.

"We should gain ownership and commitment in doing classroom research involving the educational community" (Artefacts)

These three aforementioned roles validate the relevance of nurturing teacher knowledge, innovating, and researching on child rights to continue making progress in teacher development. It was an opportunity for teachers to learn about issues that concern their teaching context. Galluzzo, Isenberg, White, and Fox (2012) declared that "the emerging image of the professional teacher is one who thinks systematically about her practice in the context of educational research and the experience of others, and will work creatively and collaboratively as a member of a learning community" (p. 24). These words summarise what we found in the data analysis in relation to enhance teacher development through our CRC seminar.

Conclusions

The contribution of the professional development seminars to sensitizing teachers towards child rights classroom practices was evidenced in the results obtained. The change projects participants were exposed to sensitised teachers towards practices focused on child's rights which expanded their understanding of CRC and the activities that can be implemented in their educational settings. It enhanced teachers' pedagogical practices as they learned about methodological activities implemented by others to solve situations where children's rights are vulnerable or violated. This action allows teachers to learn from others, discuss about their concerns, be heard and supported, which in turn, enriches their perspectives and enhances students' learning processes. Teachers may be transformed by both their formal education as well as by interacting informally with colleagues, students, parents and the educational community at large.

Regarding to the nascent progress in teacher development, it embraces transforming through reflection and nurturing teacher knowledge, innovating and researching, which are central to teacher development. Reflection on teachers' daily practices allows them to search for alternative ways to plan their lessons addressing their students' needs, which results in a better classroom atmosphere, humanising the classroom, fostering critical thinking and dialogue, and boosting citizenship values, among others. Teachers acknowledged that academic scenarios such as the professional development CRC seminars allowed them to be informed, talk about CRC, ponder their practices and be part of this transformation as some wanted to replicate what they had learned in their teaching contexts. Reflection has the potential to transform teaching practices giving teachers the opportunity to integrate their experience to their undertakings and research endeavours.

With reference to nurturing teacher knowledge, innovating and researching, academic learning spaces that address teachers' expectations and interests in educational issues fosters permanent and formal learning. Teachers remarked on the significance of attending and learning from seminars that foster their personal and professional development and to social transformation of the school. They stressed the meaningfulness of nourishing knowledge to integrate it to their teaching practices, and to legitimate the rights of the children. Teachers highlighted innovation in participants' teaching practices since it brings about permanent improvement that results in better students' outcomes. The integration of constant reflection, enhancement of teaching practices and ongoing teacher development capitalizes on research, which entails to be willing to learn about methods, approaches and strategies

that help to recognize, understand and disseminate the rights of the children in their classroom practices.

As there is always room for improvement, we openly admit that the major weakness of our study was the fact that as researchers we were not able to visit the state-funded and private institutions to directly observe teachers' practices *in situ* to evidence the implementation of activities and tasks centred on the Rights of the Child that teachers socialized in the seminars.

Pedagogical Orientations

Teachers play a key role in promoting the Convention since they are the ones who are called upon to do so in the school context. Zerbini (as cited in Seda, 2013) acknowledged that the presence of human rights is rare outside the school setting. He highlighted that educators should "make available to the students the experience of humanity in the field of human rights" (p. 12). He further mentioned that this maybe one of the few occasions in the lives of the students that this occurs. This author's view reinforces the responsibility that teachers hold on the matter. Teachers should design pedagogical tasks that allow learners to understand and make sense of their rights. In this sense, Eroles (as cited in Seda, 2013) asserted that "the only real possibility of human rights education is from an experiential perspective" (p. 8). This means that knowledge about rights must be closely related to the children's and adolescent's lives.

Concerning the impact of teachers' pedagogical practice on the onset of a child rights classroom culture, several teachers mentioned that allowing children to know about their rights, to understand what they entail and

to be able to exercise them both at school and at home, empowers children. This may lead to an improvement of the classroom and school atmosphere and children can replicate these harmonious encounters with their families as well as establish friendly relations with their neighbours. It is precisely during childhood that social and cultural transformations can be achieved. If children are empowered, they will most likely grow into autonomous individuals able to make their own decisions in life and become leaders with social awareness.

Favouring and portraying the rights of the child in the curriculum, is evidenced in the school's educational project (Proyecto Educativo Institucional – PEI). The CRC has permeated different teaching scenarios and provided a better understanding about the implementation of these rights via a bottom-up approach that benefits the quality of teachers' practices. This highlights the key role that teachers play in leading CRC pedagogical practices allowing them to make sense of and exercise their rights. These practices constitute the basis of changing the norms towards the future in a communal effort that includes the State, the family, and the school in assuming the responsibility of empowering children as autonomous individuals capable of exercising their rights.

Having described the findings of our study, drawn its conclusions, and stated some pedagogical orientations, a concern emerged, which can be object of a further research proposal: What do professional development seminars on critical pedagogy unveil about the rights of the child from the voices of teachers from in private and state-funded schools in Bogotá (Colombia)? This research inquires intends to make a better sense of the CRC convention and its realisation within teacher's pedagogical settings.

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