

## Research on Teaching

### La investigación de la docencia

**Jorge Rodríguez-Sosa**

Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola, Lima, Perú.

Research in any of its ways or approaches has been unsubstantially used (almost invisible) at school. It has been employed in an occasional and unsystematic manner in an external practice resulting from needs not linked to schools, without establishing bonds with teaching (Imbernón, 2007). Apparently, this situation would be due to three reasons: the first one is the less attractive teachers' work and practices in the classroom, which are subjects being addressed in the university and in the academic world in general. The second one is the low prestige, again between academics, of the research methodologies in which teachers and other educational actors participate, used in school research programs when available. And the third one is the limited value perceived of the results that can be obtained from these experiences, between academics and between teachers. The interaction of these reasons, apart from the supports that might have, would explain largely the separation between the teacher training system and the research system (Molinari & Ruiz, 2009).

For that reason, little research on school teachers was basically carried out by the "academics not linked to the school world" (psychologists, sociologists, economists, among others). They observed facts from their perspectives, in fact, very different perspectives from the teachers' ones. Based on approaches like them, diagnoses were performed and recommendation

that often did not take into account “what happened” in the everyday life of the classroom were proposed. It was tended to exclude the teacher’s perspective in the observation and evaluation of what they do, as well as their interests and motivations in the identification of the most important topics to be addressed, and at the same time, practices in the classroom were excluded and not reflected on. Stenhouse (1998) said that this way of understanding and of doing research separated teaching research from real teaching; also, it also separated it from the teaching knowledge building and the collective learning that should result from these processes.

Nowadays an important task is to build the necessary bridges between teaching, research and teacher training due to an school environment of inclusiveness and increasing diversity that has caused teaching to be a less predictable and complex activity (Perrenoud, 2004) that demands a reflexive and contextual practice from teachers (Chacón, Chacón & Alcedo, 2012). The “focus” must be on providing the teachers with the necessary tools to search new meanings and understanding of the teaching practice in the practice itself (Montecinos, Solis & Gabriele, 2001), increasing their abilities to measure the magnitude of changes (López, 2009), which would be also the necessary abilities to structure the answers that ensure a minimum adjustment between what can be offered from schools and local needs.

In which conditions could these changes, this encounter among a reflexive practice, a situated teaching and professional learning occur? What could facilitate or difficult the occurrence of these processes? Could they be achieved with current in-service training programs, as they are designed, or special organizational provisions would be required? These are important questions that are necessary to be answered. A documentary revision performed by Zeichner (2005) shows evidence that the use of action research, provided as part of comprehensive in-service teachers training programs generates improvements in practices in terms of a reflective teaching, that is what we are seeking.

However, the most successful learning from previous experiences in training in-service teachers indicates that action research itself is not enough. It is necessary to use it along with a group of organizational, educational and even psychological provisions, so training is carried out in a collaborative work environment that favors the reflection and questioning of knowledge and beliefs (Park Rogers et al., 2007). It is estimated that providing teachers with the opportunity to question their own practices and beliefs that support them favors reflective and open positions, necessary condition to produce the changes desired (Chamizo & García-Franco, 2013).

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**Corresponding author****Email:** [jrodriguez@usil.edu.pe](mailto:jrodriguez@usil.edu.pe)

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