



Negotiating Course Design in the Mexican Educational System Using Complex Thought: A Case Study in Central Mexico

Troy Crawford, Isaac Frausto Hernández & Irasema Mora-Pablo
University of Guanajuato, Guanajuato, MEXICO
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Language Department

Michael Witten
Meritorious Autonomous University of Puebla, Puebla, MEXICO
Faculty of Languages, Language Department

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Abstract

The University of Guanajuato joined in a national research project that aims to redesign the type of classroom guides teachers use to plan their coursework. The project places its theoretical framework on the philosophical position of Edgar Morin's complex thought. Through redesign of the classroom guide for a course of curriculum design in an MA in Applied Linguistics at the University of Guanajuato a collaborative ethnography was developed to look at how the interwoven steps of complex thought could be inserted into the course framework in order to see if there was an impact from the student's perspective of their learning.

Keywords: Bloom's Taxonomy, complex thought, case study, course design.

1. Introduction

This collaborative case study was carried out as the result of participation in a weeklong workshop in Puebla, in conjunction with a larger network of researchers under the direction of the *Normal School* (teacher education school) system. The workshop consisted in the construction of a course plan designed implementing Edgar Morin's philosophical ideology of complex thought and Bloom's Taxonomy in the sense of building into the course a series of steps that combine the concept of moving from recognition to application, using the course evaluation as evidence.

2. The RECREA research project

The University of Guanajuato began this research by considering the renovation of teaching practices that link meaningful learning processes to significant scenarios where their graduates fulfill the educational and social demands of Mexico, linked to a national project under the direction the *normal* (teacher education) school system. The aim of the current project is to incorporate research groups composed of university and *normal* school members in order to link classroom research with improvements in the learning processes of the students and to gain a

better understanding of teachers' work in the classroom. In this sense, an emergent problem could be conceptualized as the development of teaching practices, which focuses on practical and theoretical problem-solving activities within the classroom environment.

- Conceptualizing the students within the framework of complex thinking will provide them with the opportunity to approach and solve problems within their educational reality from an integral and holistic perspective.
- Regarding classroom practices, it seems possible that taking the small incremental steps articulated in terms of durability, public awareness and training, post classroom success may be more viable.
- The participant acknowledges having a sense of understanding of what the different elements to consider for teaching are.
- This participant notes how having a perspective on the view of the world seems to be the initial point of departure to promote change.

Based on the above, some Higher Education Institutions have generated projects for the Network of Communities for the Renewal of Teaching-Learning in Higher Education (*Red de Comunidades para la Renovación de la Enseñanza-Aprendizaje en Educación Superior*, RECREA) which emerged in 2017, as an initiative of the Department of Higher Education at the Secretary of Public Education, coordinated by the Department of Higher Education for Professionals of Education and the General Office of Higher University Education (Jiménez Lomeli, 2018). To this end, the Universities of Guanajuato and Puebla have joined in the effort by carrying out a small research project that looks at the interaction of the students and teachers in a curriculum design course, employing the underlying theory of Edgar Morin on complex thought into the course plan of action in the terms that have been laid out by the RECREA project, where we have inserted a series of classroom steps that focus on taking the student from the stage of recognition to application through guided discussion and focused evaluation tasks.

3. Complex thought

The idea of complex thought, coined by Edgar Morin (2011), is considered as a strong component of the theoretical basis for the project as well as classroom action research that leads to a plan for monitoring and evaluating the teaching-learning process and the results. This approach allowed the researchers to analyze the learning process by combining Bloom's Taxonomy with the ideological focus of complex thought. In this case, the student is conceptualized as an integral human being and the course syllabus is built around the student in the form of incremental learning steps. The idea being that both teacher and students deconstruct the learning concepts and practices and then rebuild them together; thus, allowing the student to gain agency in the learning process. Furthermore, it also allows the students to personalize the classroom processes. In turn, the student has a higher probability of applying the conceptual information acquired into actual personal, professional practice.

Conceptualizing the students within the framework of complex thinking will provide them with the opportunity to approach and solve problems within their educational reality from an integral and holistic perspective. In this sense, it is fundamental to define the concept of complex thinking, which is seen as complexity in terms of the relationship with the whole, in contrast to the paradigm of simplicity in relation to the obedience of the natural order and the relation of complex thought with interdisciplinarity in opposition to an objective world reality (Morin 1995). Therefore, when talking about complex thinking, it is important to differentiate between "complex" and "complicated", which are often taken as synonyms. But complexity is not a complication, since the second concept is considered as a simple dimension while complexity

implies a number of elements, which as Morin, Roger and Domingo (2002) mention is “a framework of events, actions, interactions, feedback, determinations, hazards, which constitute our phenomenal world” (p. 37). Therefore, when complexity is retaken, it would have to refer to a series of conceptions, relationships and interdependencies obtained from a series of knowledge. Regarding classroom practices, it seems possible that taking the small incremental steps articulated in terms of durability, public awareness and training, post classroom success may be more viable. For the RECREA project, complex thought takes up knowledge as something tangled, in disorder, and ambiguous. In the classroom, the teacher is not the one who delivers knowledge as something already finished, fragmented and simplified, but the student is the one who, starting from uncertainty and imprecision, articulates, understands and develops his own critique through a strategic interaction. This is to be combined with Bloom’s Taxonomy.

This particular Taxonomy is founded on principles that are broken into a set of three hierarchical models used to classify educational learning objectives into levels of complexity and specificity. The three lists cover the learning objectives in cognitive, affective and sensory domains. As Krathwohl (2002) states:

Bloom saw the original Taxonomy as more than a measurement tool. He believed it could serve as

- a common language about learning goals to facilitate communication across persons, subject matter, and grade levels;
- a basis for determining for a particular course or curriculum the specific the meaning of broad educational goals, such as those found in the currently prevalent national, state, and local standards in Mexico;
- a means for determining the congruence of educational objectives, activities and assessments in a unit, course, or curriculum; and
- a panorama of the range of educational possibilities against which the limited breadth and depth of any particular educational course or curriculum could be contrasted (p. 212).

In the case of this project, we have used his verb sets as reference points in the sense that we are employing the four dimensions of knowledge that is referred to in his Taxonomy table (Krathwohl, 2002). However, even though we use this framework to illustrate how the student is to be guided through each phase of the class in the course design, the underlying ideology that is being inserted is in relation to the concept of complex thought in that we are taking the learner from a simple recognition stage to a complex stage of application in the real world. In this specific class (explained in further detail below), we are establishing the ability to analyze and construct curriculum of a program.

4. The research site

The research site is a class in the MA program in Applied Linguistics in English Language Teaching in the University of Guanajuato, which is taught on Fridays and Saturdays in the Language Department. The course selected for the case study was *Diseño de Programas de Segunda Lengua* (Second Language Course Design) as it was thought to be a suitable selection for piloting the course design proposed by the RECREA Project.

5. Data collection and analysis issues

Since the purpose of this investigation is to examine the perceptions of the students in depth, case study was deemed to be an appropriate methodological choice because they tend to be intensive in the process of collecting the research data via a number of sources (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Creswell, 2005). In case studies, the research data can be collected by using different data

collection techniques such as documents, archival data, interviews, direct observation, participant observation and artifacts (Stake, 2000; Yin, 1998). Furthermore, Yin (1998) mentions that when the research scope focuses on answering how and why questions, a case study approach should be considered, and this study looks for possible answers to these types of questions in the form of a qualitative instrumental case study. An instrumental case study is defined as a case that often is interested in context and activities. Stake (1995) defines a case study as instrumental “if a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else” (p. 136). In this case study our focus is on the course syllabus more than the students. The research data for the case was collected through a weekly journal where the nine participants kept a log of their perceptions of what they had learned after each three-hour class over a period of 12 weeks. Simultaneously, the two teacher/researchers maintained a field journal with ethnographic notes of the course, following the suggestions outlined by Deggs and Hernandez (2018) to serve as a basis for comparing student and teacher perceptions as well as and to provide additional data on the case in under investigation. Pseudonyms were used to protect identity. Finally, the complete data set was analyzed by all four researchers.

6. Data discussion

6.1 *Fostering reflection*

The class initially aimed to bring about reflection amongst the participants with the purpose of having them restructure their beliefs about their past teaching experiences, consider a present perspective about how they go about in their current practices, and reconsider this constructed perspective for future teaching practices.

A question arose among a number of participants as they noticed the vast amount of reflection that the class entailed. This is summarized by the following student:

This class provides a lot of reflection but confusion as well. I don't know what to believe anymore! Was my teaching practice wrong all this time? (Kari 8)

The participant indicates the importance of reflection throughout the class. Yet, she is aware of the possible issues that this may entail. Similarly, a participant found herself in an “eye-opening” situation in regard to change and how to go about it, if possible. She recalls:

In this session it was analyzed to what extent we possess “freedom to change the system”. The teacher asked us a question that was eye-opening to me: “Do you want to be part of the problem?” Certainly, this question made me feel uncomfortable with the way I have been teaching. Although, I'm still struggling to understand what the teacher means by challenging the system since my context doesn't allow people to come up with new ideas or teachers are restricted to follow what it is written on the syllabus. Still, I want to explore in which ways I could contribute to become a teacher that understands and analyzes the content that authorities want us to teach. Probably, by understanding it I may implement some changes. (Lulu 2)

This participant found herself in a situation of discomfort concerning her past teaching experiences. She may have been focused on past experiences that were not as fruitful in which she felt constrained due to impositions from stakeholders. Nonetheless, she aims to better learn about alternatives to implement changes in her teaching practices. A similar case is as follows. The participant analyzes the following:

It was addressed about the elements that are involved inside the classroom such as: the task, unit, book, course, syllabus and curriculum. These factors are familiar for me; however, in my professional and personal life, I did not reflect on what was

their real meaning... I just considered the lesson plan, and that was everything, and the main reason was because the school provided me the curriculum, the syllabus and the book. Thus, I just accomplished my activities but I did not reflect on the relation among these factors. I feel confused because I wonder about the next question: What did I do in my first years as teacher? (Debbie 10)

The participant acknowledges having a sense of understanding of what the different elements to consider for teaching are. Nonetheless, she seems to not have reflected on any possible connections between one or another as it was all provided for her. This leads to questioning what she was doing in her past experiences.

The previous participants acknowledged the role of reflection and the constant recall of their past teaching experiences to better grasp the content being presented in class. This led the participants to begin questioning their previous teaching performance to notice any positive and negative experiences with the aim to begin noticing any challenges that drove to inconsistencies throughout their teaching practice.

6.2 Presenting an array of teaching options

The content of the class shifted towards presenting a number of options for the students to cope with according to their beliefs and practices as English teachers. A number of points of view allowed for the participants to better view their own practices concerning their educational philosophies. A participant presents the following:

I think it is good for us to know about different philosophies in order to compare them, and to see what we can take from them to improve our classes. This class helped me a lot to see that even for the simplest topic, I struggle with according to the way I had to teach it when I am not involved in a certain type of philosophy. Moreover, by the end of the class I understood how I could teach different topics by using other philosophies, or to implement some strategies of those philosophies into my lesson plan. (Vicky 3)

The participant recalls the value of being aware of the different educational philosophies. She noticed the struggle of teaching a grammatical point under a given philosophy, and the array of possibilities that emerge according to the rest of the options that the other philosophies have to offer. Similarly, another participant was also able to grasp the importance of considering the educational philosophies for distinct teaching practices. She mentions the following:

The review of philosophies made me reflect on the test we took last week. According to my results, I considered the best ideology for me... However, I need to rethink if I was consistent with my beliefs and the practice... I used to teach by observing my students and reflect on their needs. In conclusion, this class made me consider aspects in my teaching practice that I had not reflected on before. I particularly enjoyed the link we have made with history because it helps explain the origin and change of concepts. (Vanessa 3)

The participant acknowledges how her beliefs on the more suitable educational philosophy do not coincide with that of the last place where she worked. She is now more aware of how her past teaching practices inclined towards a particular philosophy. Becoming aware of the history of these philosophies and where they originate from helps her find a connection between her practice and what the alternative philosophies have to offer. Likewise, another participant recalled the value of being presented with the alternative perspectives concerning the various philosophy types. She highlights the following:

... I believe it is important to have established our personal philosophy because this facilitates our teaching practice. I consider it takes time to develop our teaching

practice, as well as our thoughts and beliefs on education. Our personal philosophy helps us to develop our role as teacher but also to set our goals and objectives. Having established our personal philosophy, it is easier to develop our role but also to know the limit of the institutions' role. Sometimes as teachers we must follow the rules of the school or headmaster, even when we do not agree. So what happens when we are forced to do something that we do not like? (Debbie 3)

This participant recalls how arriving to a constructed philosophy may take time and how this determines how one goes about developing as a teacher. This, in turn, allows for one to know what can be done and improved as a teacher, while at the same time knowing how much control the institution may have over its teachers. An interesting question arises concerning what can be done when forced to cope with norms that go against an established philosophy. This, in turn, linked to the concept of freedom that the teachers have and where the source of change may lay within. A student discusses the following:

...the analyzed philosophies made me think about the changes in the society, and how it is necessary to have a perspective that allows to explain the world. We also discussed that it is possible to make small changes in our context, but also how every decision we make has responsibilities. Regarding the philosophy and the approach, we follow to teach, there is not a wrong or adequate way to do it, but to be consistent and coherent on what we do is necessary. (Vanessa 2)

This participant notes how having a perspective on the view of the world seems to be the initial point of departure to promote change. She acknowledges that there may not be a right or wrong way to do it, as long as this perspective is coherent with what is being done. She further argues for going beyond what is expected by taking additional action. She notes:

I consider that we are not limited, if we "think outside the box". Small changes can be done. However, the most important step is to take the responsibility of those changes. Everything that is modified produces certain nuisance. It seems that not many people like changes because they are uncomfortable. In conclusion, there is always a possibility of doing "something more". (Vanessa 3)

Once aware of the need to take action and be coherent with one's own teaching beliefs and the actual practice, the participant argues for change. Though change might not lead to a positive outcome all the time, she calls for action in going beyond what is expected as teachers. Change may be seen as vital, yet some participants were not fully aware of their hidden plans within the classroom. The following section discusses how becoming cognizant of their hidden aims for class interferes in how the participants may seem to go about in their teaching practice.

6.3 Uncovering the unseen aims

Detecting the implicit aims that the participants may have had concerning their teaching practice was of crucial importance for them to be more knowledgeable of what and why they do when developing as English teachers. This seems to be of interest for the participants once they became aware of their hidden curriculum and what this may entail. Initial questions arose concerning the impact of having a sense of their hidden curriculum. A participant mentions the following:

An important point to consider is if my hidden curriculum is useful or not to my students or their needs. Also, these questions arise: How do I know if my hidden curriculum is good or bad for my teaching practice? How did my hidden curriculum change over the time? (Debbie 4)

Raising awareness of the hidden curriculum, the prior example denotes how participants began to reflect on their past experiences and how their unseen plan may have had an impact on their teaching. A participant further elaborates on the role of the hidden curriculum:

... previous experiences as students shape your teaching practice as teacher. This means that as a teacher, I do not want to repeat the things I consider were not useful in my learning process... I realize that these issues are part of me, of my personality, of my way of thinking. Even when I had been teaching for a couple of years, I have not noticed how these aspects affect positively or negatively on my teaching practice. In others words, I was not completely aware of my hidden curriculum. (Debbie 4)

The participants were aware of the issues faced when developing as English teachers though they may not have been aware of what this referred to. Another participant also became cognizant of the importance of being aware of her hidden intentions throughout her teaching. She follows:

A concept that was not new for me but did not understand was the hidden curriculum. In this class, I discovered that I follow and implement, either consciously or unconsciously, certain patterns with my students. The reason behind this is that I probably think that these will help them to become better students or somehow will contribute to accomplish their objectives. However, how do I know what they need? Or why am I assuming that they need guidance specifically from me? Probably I am also assuming that since I'm the teacher I know best; therefore, I should provide everything. (Linda 5)

The participant became acquainted with the unseen aims presented along her teaching practice. In her case, these hidden aims are with the purpose to help her students improve. However, she questions how she may better grasp a sense of what her students need and to what degree they might need guidance from her. As the teacher, she assumes her students expect her to provide the majority of the input and guidance. A participant also related to the previous by highlighting the importance of her hidden curriculum. She comments on the following:

It was also very interesting to find out that we all implement a hidden curriculum either conscious or unconsciously. I had not realized that I include some organizational skills within the language content I teach, perhaps because I consider it is something they lack and would be a useful tool for their learning process. But now I think that this practice is based on my assumption of how they learn just because it is the way I learned. Maybe my students don't even need it, and I am including it within the curriculum of my class. This, once again, reinforces the role of a teacher in a learner's learning process as well as how influential we could be in it. (Penelope 5)

Like the afore-mentioned participant, this previous participant also recognizes the relevance of her hidden curriculum. She acknowledges having not being aware of it, yet she aimed to incorporate elements according to the possible needs of the students based on her assumptions of what she can do to reinforce their learning process.

Further elaborating on the role of the hidden curriculum, another participant became aware of the effects that bringing in additional and hidden elements into the class may have. He notes the following:

... I could go in-depth to what I represent as a teacher and to consider how I can reflect my personal interests to my students. Depicting these characteristics is not wrong, but it is essential to be accurate or aware of when this happens (Sandy 5)

The participant acknowledges that this notion of a hidden curriculum is not necessarily a negative one. Furthermore, this participant highlights the significance of how accurate this unseen plan is for the students when it is applied at the correct time. Another participant was also able to relate her hidden curriculum with the authority that she may hold in class. This tendency may lead to a more democratic class in which her students are more active participants. She holds:

In this session I learned that there is not a complete authoritarian, nor a democratic class and democracy should be conceived as negotiation rather than pleasing everybody. To me, it would be ideal to perform democratic lessons, but I question myself how to achieve this without being afraid of losing control of my own class. Without a doubt, performing a democratic class involves changing my own beliefs as well as noticing when I am implementing elements from my hidden curriculum (Linda 11)

The participant is aware of the challenge of modifying her hidden curriculum. She inclines toward a position in which her students become active participants in making the decisions in class. However, this may be a restrictive stance as she may lose authority and face in the process.

The participants became intrigued by the notion of the hidden curriculum and how their unseen objectives for their students play a significant role in how they go about in their teaching. This impacts them as teachers in the sense that they may or may not be aware of these ulterior motives that they do not make visible for their students, though they may become prominent at some point further on in their education.

6.4 *The role and degree of power*

A topic of interest for the participants to restructure their thinking processes relates to hegemony and the distribution of power that may be given at a certain school or institute. The concept was first introduced concerning other elements and how power imposition from various sources is present to varying degrees. A participant recalled the issue of broader social control over English teachers and how we may be excepting of being given attention. She expresses the following:

When we were talking about the authority inside classroom and democracy the professor made us realize that English teachers are conditioned to do what they are asked to do, so we are always working as other people ask us to do even if we are not happy with that. The professor made us realize that when this happens, again we can see hegemony controlling us again, in every step that we teachers make. I was reflecting on this and the only thing that came up to my mind is that teachers are the only ones who know what happens inside the classrooms, so our voices should be listened to in order to have better job environments and proper designed classes for our students. The concern here is that we are so used to not to being heard that even when something happens inside the classroom that is not appropriate, we tend to be silent and not do anything because we are used to not being heard. (Richelle 10)

The participant initially notices hegemony over English teachers in terms of the oppression that we may have within our field. She notices what position we have in the classroom as understanding what happens within the four walls, yet there are external sources that determine how the class goes about. However, hegemony was also viewed from the perspective of the teacher inside the classroom and how varying degrees of control may be fruitful to exploit. A participant mentions the following:

In this class, the teachers gave us the elements from which we can analyze a curriculum as well as a syllabus such as the role of students, metalinguistic elements or material design... these elements shed light on what we can approach to become critical teachers and try to explore areas from which we can adjust our practice and identify areas where we may be perpetuating hegemony. (Linda 4)

The participant became acquainted with different elements to consider when aiming to explore perspectives from which a teaching perspective may be modified. It is important to

highlight how these elements relate to a given power that becomes present and how this power may lead to broader control. Similarly, a participant further expressed how understanding himself as a teacher led to reconsidering his teaching practice in terms of how social power depicts the decisions to be taken. He expresses the following:

... I could analyze and try to understand how true I am as a teacher and how this is reflected in my teaching practice. Being aware of knowledge is relevant for us to improve our practices and consider what to do or not based on what is said by superiors for us to do. So, hegemony depicts substantial influence in our construction in social life, but also to raise awareness in the decisions we take and be responsible with them will allow us to avoid mistakes we might later do. (Sandy 4)

The participant was able to be cognizant of what having social control implies. This relates to not only having a sense of who he is as a teacher, but also how his conception of such is brought into his teaching practice to promote what he believes beyond what is imposed by higher stakeholders. This, in turn, is reflected on how the person wishes to mold his teaching practice.

Likewise, this understanding of hegemony was able to perpetuate within another participant in terms of having a deeper understanding of who she is as a teacher and once aware of the degree of control to be exploited within the classroom, use this in favor for a more positive experience when developing as a teacher. She mentions:

The concept of hegemony was mentioned. I believe that we are part of this system. Thus, it is important to know what we like, what we want, what we would change as teachers, and what kind of teachers we want to be. Once you identify the aspects mentioned before, you could be able to use hegemony positively in your classroom. (Debbie 8)

The participant acknowledges how social control is prominent in our society. Moreover, she believes that being more aware of who we are as teachers gives us broader advantages when aiming to promote control within our classrooms. The participant further elaborates on her perspective:

...as teachers we have certain power that could be used in a positive way; we can help and guide our students to be more critical about the things established in our society. If we as teachers start to do an internal change of our positions, who we are and the things we are able to do, the change in our society would be of real impact. (Debbie 7)

The participant once again calls for initial understanding of who we are as teachers to promote a social change within our teaching practices. These elements seem to go hand in hand, in which one may not perpetuate when lacking the other.

The participants were able to grasp the knowledge of having social control, its implications and how to go about using it to their advantage in the classroom. This linked to change and how they could be able to adjust their teaching based on firstly becoming more acquainted with who they are as teachers, to then have control of the varying degrees of power that they are able to use to their abilities based on what the institution may entail.

6.5 From thinking to action

There seems to be an overall positive effect in class in terms of complex thought and taking the students from more critical view of their teaching practice to proposed action based on the content covered throughout the course. A perspective from a participant consists of becoming aware of alternatives to view his teaching practice. Yet, he believes that there may be a possible existing gap between theory and practice. He considers the following:

We have lived diverse situations as English teachers, and now we are aware of the theory and ideologies of how the things are and how they “should be”. At this point, I would like to observe a kind of free experience for my classes. I see these new ideas and concepts in content classes where students are self-committed, but I would like to see them for language classes as well... I saw different critical functions of what we learned in theory, but there is still a wall to overcome that might take us to the praxis. (Guy 11)

The participant is mindful of the content covered in class, yet he views it as an “ideal” state. He seems to be open to trying out alternatives as a possible way to overcome that bridge between theory and practice. Another participant also acknowledged the importance of the content covered in class and expressed the following:

There’s a before and after of the way I understand and think about education, in general. I am aware of how the system works and mainly, my job and responsibilities in it. Yes, it will be hard to change it, but... I am in! (Penelope 12)

The participant recalled the importance of the content covered in class for her to be more conscious of how the education system functions and her role within it. She acknowledges the difficulty of promoting change when difficult situations arise or are imposed upon us, yet she is determined to do so. Similarly, a participant also became more cognizant of how she performs as a teacher. She mentions the following:

I think from now on, I have become more critical in terms of what I do in the class. Moreover, I have become more reflective regarding education in a generalized sense to my own universe, which is what happens in my classroom. (Vicky 11)

The participant also considered the importance of being aware of her own teaching practice. She admits to become keener to questioning what happens within her classroom as she develops as a teacher. Likewise, a participant also felt a positive sense towards better understanding herself as an English teacher and being true to her ideologies. She conveys the following:

I must say it was sort of liberating to admit and embrace the educational philosophy we follow. We are now capable of doing so. This, for me, means we can now differentiate among them and most of all that we are aware what each of them implies for our teaching and mainly for our students. What I recall is that there is no good or bad philosophy, what it is bad is for us not to be coherent and consistent in what we say or think we do and what we actually put into practice. (Penelope 9)

The participant seems better prepared to defend her position as an English practitioner. She became knowledgeable of the different options and grasped what seemed best for her. Nonetheless, she accepts the responsibility of performing as she thinks. A similar perspective was taken from a participant who views the relevance of the many aspects surrounding how he develops as a teacher. He considers the following:

After discussing how power is represented by different hidden features around the world, I realize that sometimes we as teachers are ghosts pretending to be doing something almost unreachable. In other cases, we are aware of this control or in the discrepancies that language entails, but we are not willing to do or foster for a change. We reproduce a series of systematic steps towards repetition, pretending we are doing something different. Therefore, the relevance of being congruent and consistent in our teaching practice is relevant. Moreover, understanding and trying to break these vicious circles where we are, should be our duty as part of the teaching society. I consider high relevance on how curricula are constructed and how we ignore some elements that are hidden in it. (Sandy 9)

The participant views teachers as invisible entities within the curriculum. He proposes his view on how English teachers argue for change when disguising teaching practices that may be

repetitive. The importance of breaking this cycle is presented to lead to positive change. Similarly, another participant acknowledges the significance of going a step further in one's teaching practice. She reflects on the following:

Today's question that I take for homework is: when are we going to create something new if we don't step outside the box? This is a triggering question that all teachers should be thinking about if we want to see an improvement in our students. Now I understand that when asked to challenge the system, it does not refer to doing whatever we think it is correct, but to understand educational philosophies, and question inconsistencies in educational policies or the syllabus we are following to be aware of what it is going on inside the institution and out of it.
(Linda 10)

The participant considers the cruciality of going beyond what is expected from the educational system we are in, and not only understanding what happens within our education setting, but outside of it as well in terms of educational beliefs and policies or norms we are to follow.

The participants seem to be more knowledgeable of different paths and the array of alternatives to develop as English teachers. Each alternative option entails a set of duties and responsibilities for the teacher and a way for the students to benefit from. This raises thought for action amongst the participants as they feel better equipped to promote changes within their teaching practices.

7. Conclusion

We can argue that knowledge was delivered as an array of options and the participants were able to grasp what seemed to fit according to their beliefs and ideologies and reconstruct the understandings that best suit each one of them. Gradually, uncertainty was set aside for the students to come to a more critical understanding of who they are as teachers and what they do and aim to do inside the classroom. Nevertheless, we cannot argue that this was the result of the curriculum design. It clearly played a role, but there are also other issues to consider like the teachers themselves and the students. In conclusion the implementation of complex thought in the course design was definitely an awareness raising activity for the teachers and it seems to have played a positive role in the development of the course. It would be appropriate to continue with the same process in more courses and continue tracking the process.

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