

Report on the “II Conference on Researchers, Research Groups and Research Projects. 17th and 18th September 2014”¹

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The Research Group on Education and Cultural Studies (GIEEC) in association with The Center for Multidisciplinary Research on Education (CIMED), both from the School of Humanities, State University of Mar del Plata, Argentina, have organized the “II Conference on Researchers, Groups and Research Projects”. They took place at the facilities of ADUM and UNMDP, in Mar del Plata, Argentina on September, 17th and 18th coordinated by Dr. Luis Porta. Educators, specialists and researchers from our country, Colombia as well as from the University of Extremadura, Spain, were part of the event.

The Conference opened on Wednesday, September 17th with a panel composed by Dr. Luis Porta, head of The Research Group on Education and Cultural Studies (GIEEC) and Dr. Luis María Sánchez from the University of Extremadura in Spain. Dr. Sánchez lectured on “What if the relationship, if there is just one, among narrative, hermeneutics and education?” He argued for the need to accept that research is narrative construction of reality and that the starting point of the analysis of teaching practices is always the interpretation, always subjective of an author or social scientist. Next, he made an outline on the principles of Narrative Inquiry as methodology in the field of Education. He highlighted that the hermeneutical reading of these narratives should achieve its communicability feature through

strong argumentation, though consensus within the scientific community, through teaching practice and through the actual improvement in those practices. Finally, Dr. Sánchez invited the audience to inquire on the weaknesses of the method in order to find new potential within it.

The panel continued with Dr. Porta's dissertation. He divided his exposition in two parts. First, he dealt with the biographical approach of Narrative Inquiry, not just as methodology but as *narrative in action*, that is as a way of combining theory and practice through the negotiation of meanings. During the second part Dr Porta shared fragments of an in depth interview with a memorable teacher from UNMDP, in order to deal with "Passion in Teaching". The interview illuminated the question about the place of passion in teaching and life. Passion, said the teacher, is what makes life worth living. She evidenced the idea that passion for the chosen field of studies, for teaching and for students, constitutes passion for life itself. Ensuing both expositions, an interesting debate among the audience followed. It was highlighted the relevance of recovering the selfhood in pedagogical subjects within the field of the inquiry on education.

After that, a panel of Research Groups and Projects presented their plans. The panel was composed by Paula Meschini, Cristina Martinez and Zelmira Álvarez, who told the experiences of their research teams related to their current investigations. Lic. Meschili explained how The Group on Socio-cultural Affairs that she leads emerged in 1990 as a way of exploring new perspectives on the social problems arising at the time. With that objective they reviewed gender issues, revisiting the School of Frankfurt tenants, to conclude at present in the study of the Decolonial Paradigm as frame for their future research. Specialist Zelmira Álvarez, co-director of GIEEC, reflected on the different trends present within the Sixth Research Project of her team which is in progress at the moment. She remarked that after ten years of inquiring on Good Teaching Practices and

Memorable Teachers in the framework of Narrative Inquiry, other trends found their way into the project, such as focus on students narratives, institutional biographies and the analysis of narratives from a decolonial point of view. The panel was closed by Magister Ma. Cristina Martinez, who described how part of GIEEC members started a research at the Architecture, Urbanism and Design School, also part of UNMDP. Their aim is to look for the traces of memorable teachers in students and colleagues through the identity engraved in the Faculty Chairs they used to lead, even though presently they are not active members of the above mentioned school.

During that afternoon, two sessions where several papers were presented took place. Session number one was coordinated by Specialist Marcela Calvete. The works presented revealed the many possibilities narrative inquiry entails, not only for educational research but also for teaching practice in the course of an interesting debate around research experiences from early childhood to university level education. In session number two, coordinated by Specialist Verónica Ojeda, discussions around the methodological turn from positivist to narrative views in educational research, the theoretical background of curriculum design in teacher education programs, the impact on tutoring of information technologies and the analysis of wartime emergency educational issues developed.

On November 18th, and during the morning, three sessions took place. The first one was composed by students teaching assistants and interns. They explained their projects which had different level of development. Their expositions, even though significantly marked by educational questions, were also highly diverse in the disciplines the dealt with, giving the expositions a special dynamics.

Two simultaneous sessions followed, coordinated by specialists Gabriela Cadaveira and Graciela Flores. In session number two, papers were presented in three sections. To begin with, works on graduate and post graduate level highlighted the stress sophomore

students feel with the possibility of adding a teaching training course of studies to the field of studies they have already chosen. The following segment revolved around inclusion and didactics related to new technologies and trends in educational management. Last, the discussion developed around fractures in teaching narrative, the need of inclusion of cultural citizenship in curriculum design and evaluation practices. Finally, session number three focus on narrative inquiry in the educational field addressing all educational levels. Expositors dealt with rising paradigms in post graduate education, graduate students narratives and institutional biographies through historical actors. By the end of the expositions, a heated debate took place regarding the possibilities the different methodological strategies provide for validation and communication of the results of the investigations in progress.

After a lunch break, Specialist Maria Marta Yedaide presented the first volume of the collection *Pasiones; entrecruces entre Vida, Pasión y Enseñanza* entitled *Pasiones; Roberto Kuri*. She described how the authors, Luis Porta and Ma. Cristina Martinez had organized the text based on the interviews held with one of the memorable teachers of UNMDP, which are the object of GIEEC's research. In this way, good teaching practices of those who dwelled in UNMDP classrooms are recovered and shared.

The conference was closed by a dissertation in charge of Dr. Viviana Mancovsky about the formative relationship between a doctoral student and its thesis director. She explored the possibility of a pedagogy for the doctoral level of education, a difficult task given the particular autonomy of this intellectual activity. Dr Mancovsky examined the assumptions underlying the writing of a thesis, highlighting the institutional and subjective dimensions present when deciding the path for a PhD program. She also gave relevance to knowledge: which knowledge is at stake, which relationship is established between old and new knowledge, and the unavoidable revision of knowledge

that takes place in the process of elaborating a thesis dissertation. Her exposition revealed the impact the thesis director style could have in the PhD candidate if we take into account the tension implied in a relationship embedded in a combine of autonomy and authority as it is usually given. The dissertation opened a profound debate and gave place to the exchange of experiences among the audience.

The “II Conference on Researchers, Groups and Research Projects” was formally closed by Jonathan Aguirre and Claudia De Laurentis, both members of GIEEC, with a very brief report summarizing the event. In addition, they emphasized the contributions of a delegation of researchers from University Santo Tomas de Aquino, in Bogotá, Colombia who, by means of their presentations and participations in the debates enriched the discussions and open new perspectives to all those who participated. Moreover, the basis for future exchange of experiences among the participants was firmly established as a corollary for the joint work during the conference.

Notes

¹ Original work in Spanish by the authors. Translated into English by Claudia De Laurentis.

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