Moral Responsibility and Confidence as Factors that Influence Teacher Involvement in Educational Change

Responsabilidad moral y confianza como factores que influyen en la participación del profesor en el cambio educativo

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Various factors that are not easily observed have a strong impact on educational change. In this paper, I examine some of the issues that emerged from the data collected while exploring my informants' perceptions and attitudes towards their changing roles when confronted with curriculum innovation. This research demonstrates that the experience teachers acquire during their career may often enable them to participate in the design of a new study plan. However, this experience does not always justify their role as curriculum-designers in either the eyes of their colleagues or in their own eyes, particularly when coerced into playing this or other roles. The results indicate that teachers, depending on their levels of moral responsibility and confidence, become involved in different roles during their teaching career.

Key words: Change, confidence, curriculum, innovation, moral responsibility

Existen diversos factores que tienen un fuerte impacto en el cambio educativo y que no se observan fácilmente. En este artículo examino algunos de los temas que emergieron de los datos recogidos mientras exploraba las opiniones y las actitudes de mis informantes hacia sus roles siempre cambiantes cuando se enfrentan a la innovación curricular. Esta investigación demuestra que los profesores, con la experiencia que adquieren durante su carrera, pueden permitirse a menudo participar en el diseño de un nuevo plan de estudios. Sin embargo, para sus colegas o para ellos mismos, esta experiencia no justifica siempre su papel como diseñadores de un plan de estudios particularmente cuando están obligados a jugar éste u otros roles. Los resultados indican que los profesores se involucran en diversos roles durante su carrera como profesores, dependiendo de sus niveles de responsabilidad moral y de confianza.

Palabras clave: cambio, confianza, currículo, innovación, responsabilidad moral

Introduction

The purpose of the present study is to determine teachers' moral responsibility and confidence as factors that influence their involvement in educational change. Previous studies have shown that there is little research on the exploration of teachers' opinion regarding new roles during innovation. Most of the studies conducted so far have been limited to demonstrating that teachers remain faithful to traditional roles and methodologies so as not to undermine their confidence. This struggle leads teachers to revise their commitment to the institution and their confidence. Case study methodology may bring to light that teachers do demonstrate a confident and responsible attitude towards other colleagues and a commitment towards their institution during innovation. The aim of this study is therefore to consider the fact that teachers, both consciously and efficiently and with responsibility and confidence, need to play different roles upon request during a time of change.

This paper is divided into four sections. The first section explains the research question, which is the point of departure for this work. It also deals with reforms in the Mexican educational context. There are three subsections here: first, I refer to the teachers as members of an institutional culture; then, I focus specifically on the encouragement of collaboration and leadership as an important element regarding responsibility and confidence.

The second section explains the methodology used to obtain data. In the third section, I interpret what teachers said. There are two subsections in this part: the first subsection has to do with the idea of teachers' moral responsibility, and in the following section I present my data that are related to the concept of confidence. Lastly, I present the findings of my research.

Educational Context in Mexico

In general, it can be said that there are three important issues to discuss when referring to the perceptions and attitudes teachers have of the roles they play when designing a curriculum. The first issue is whether teachers are aware of the roles they play in a curriculum change and if innovation management has an impact on these. Attitudes, perceptions and awareness are not interchangeable; however, they are intertwined. The second issue is that teachers have their own attitudes and these attitudes are reflected in their behaviours. For example, a positive attitude towards innovation may be reflected by cooperative behaviour while an ambivalent or negative attitude is likely to be reflected by non-cooperation or even resistance. The third issue is that teachers' perceptions are reflected in their attitudes. To be exact, one's attitudes towards an innovation are the result of the perceptions (and quite possibly misperceptions) that one has about it, e.g. one's perceptions about the way it might affect one's work patterns, status and identity. Therefore, an interesting point might be to identify the attitudes held by teachers towards the roles they will play. These attitudes and perceptions appear to be deeply connected with the professional development and identity of teachers (Calderhead, 1993, 1996; Castejón & Martínez, 2001; Cook-Sather, 2001; Hargreaves, 1992, 2000). In this paper, I focus specifically on teachers' opinions regarding their moral responsibility and commitment during educational change in Mexico.

The educational system in Mexico has gone through several curricular changes in the past two decades. These reforms started in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the universities of Guadalajara, Puebla, Tabasco, Sonora and Veracruz. Educational

reform during the 1980s included changing to the credit system. Although this system still lacked flexibility, it involved creating a common core of courses in the basic skills, upgrading existing academics and hiring academics with higher degrees. As a result, grants and full-time positions were offered. Furthermore, staff were trained, resource and computer centres were opened and a new budgeting system was adopted (Kent, 1998; García, Flores, & Gallegos, 2005).

Another reform adopted in the 1990s was a new approach to support research, which began with the introduction of an innovative programme designed to grant individual, productivity bonuses to teachers and researchers (Gago, 1992). Institutions were required to compete for these funds on the basis of project proposals, which were evaluated by committees of experts. Individual schools or departments were encouraged by the university authorities to expand their income, to include non-governmental sources by raising student fees, selling services and entering into contracts with local businesses (Arredondo, 1992a, 1992b, 2003). However, by the late 1990s, it is important to highlight that university authorities permitted the different schools to create their own procedures to increase their income, such as opening postgraduate programmes, language courses, and computer classes to anyone from inside or outside the university who could pay the corresponding fee. On the other hand, the resources obtained were taken over and administered by the university and not by the individual school that generated the income. This appears to have been carried out in order to help the weaker academic and administrative areas in accordance with managerial and economic perspectives. It may be useful to note that in an international context, such changes are common and often part of

"neoliberal" politics that exports economic crisis downward, making local authorities "responsible" for generating income and, at the same time, allowing a very small measure of autonomy.

Educational Reforms

In order to improve education during the period 1988-1994, there occurred a process of partial decentralisation (OCDE, 1994). The administration of schools was transferred to the corresponding heads of schools, but the salaries of teachers continued to be negotiated at the federal level along with the granting of full-time positions. Later on, financing by the federal government was condensed into one global budget destined for all institutions of higher education throughout the country (OCDE, 1994). Updated training programmes began to be offered in less known areas, including languages, and this became the responsibility of state universities. Furthermore, state universities today are also competing for funding, but they have to prove that they are involved in research. They are also obliged to make their programmes more flexible so that the mobility of academics and students can be ensured. All these issues may have had an impact on the perception of what was expected of teachers as members of an institutional culture.

Teachers as Members of an Institutional Culture

By institutional cultures, I refer to the set of objectives and rules that defines how members of a community interact with each other, their expectations of one another, themselves and the institution. Institutional cultures interrelate with all the members of a community and their responsibilities within the community and can

be understood to embrace the values, beliefs, rules and expectations projected in the institutional image. I relate this to what Hargreaves (1994) refers to as *cultures of teaching*:

> *Cultures of teaching* comprise beliefs, values, habits and assumed ways of doing things among communities of teachers who have had to deal with similar demands and constraints over the years… Cultures of teaching help give meaning, support and identity to teachers and their work. (p. 165)

This involves coming to an agreement on what is to be discussed at academic meetings, concurring in the characteristics of good teaching strategies and techniques and weighing up the interest staff members might show towards change, innovation and professional development (Peterson & Deal, 2002). Lambert (1998) and Fullan (2001) believe that the culture of an institution not only possesses a shared sense of purpose and values, but also follows the norms regarding continuous learning and improvement as well as commitment and responsibility in accomplishing duties through collaborative relationships. Kabanoff, Waldersee & Cohen (1995) mention that this type of institutional culture might be characterised by collegial values such as collaboration and commitment. Gunnar (2000) adds that an organisation, simply by going through a value-consolidation process, ensures its transformation into an institution. However, inside some organisational cultures there are power groups, which are evidence of a top-down hierarchical organisation (Darling-Hammond, 1988; White, 1988; Newman, 1998). Their presence may have an impact on the roles teachers play inside the educational setting. This is more evident when the institution becomes involved in educational change based on two stages in which several models of innovation seem to coincide: collaborative planning and leadership encouragement.

Collaborative Planning and Leadership Encouragement

López (2008) affirms that several models for the management of innovation coincide at different stages. For example, West's (2005) model starts with the identification of specific challenges and achievements. It is also connected to what Campbell, Kynakides, Muijs, & Robinson (2004) and Joyner (2005) propose. As stated by López (2008), *Collaborative planning* involves schools and individuals working together as members of the same institutional team. Bennett, Crawford, & Riches (1992) add that in the Collaborative School Management Cycle, those involved in the different levels of planning of a programme become part of a "programme team". Every member of the group participates in the design of the study plan. In addition, one of the members of this team will have to play a leading role to ensure a successful result.

Most members on any team of teachers are somehow waiting for the opportunity to show their potential in managerial, academic and professional terms. West (2005) affirms that *Leadership practices* are not exclusive to school principals. The managerial side of teachers' jobs responds to the new roles they play as 'middle' managers (Campbell et al. 2004, p. 94). West (2005) refers to them as 'transformational' approaches, which distribute and empower, in contrast to 'transactional' approaches, which sanction bureaucratic concepts of hierarchy and control (López, 2008). He also refers to the need to focus on the development of the staff as a whole. Every member is a partner in the progress of the institution.

Finally, it can be said that teachers, as members of a socially evolving group, play different roles in the same way as if they were actors or coaches (Wright, 1987; Miles, 2005; Hoogveld, Paas, &

Jochems, 2005, López, 2008). They work for social change and teach and train students to respond to the demands of a world in which new technology develops rapidly. They are coaches because they have the responsibility of leading the work team to achieve the goals stated in the plan to design and implement a new curriculum. This general description highlights the fact that, so far, teachers do not seem to have a clear description of a professional identity or confidence in their performance of the role or roles they are expected to play during innovation.

Relation between Institutional Culture, Collaboration and Leadership

In addition, teachers' attitudes play an important role in the design and implementation of a study plan. They may affect the teachers' level of confidence and commitment regarding the request to design a new curriculum (Bascia, 2005; Nias, 2005; Durrant & Holden, 2006), as well as their personal use and adoption of new roles, concepts and methodologies. When a teacher accepts a role, s/he accepts the positive and negative aspects involved in its description.

In the following section, I present my research methodology, which is based on a case study approach.

Methods to Explore Teachers' Opinions

I find that a case study is preferred for examining different phenomena when performances cannot be controlled, since it uses direct ob-servation and systematic interviewing to find out the informants' perceptions and judgements

(Simons, 1996; Yin, 2003). By these means, I hope to get an in-depth, holistic description and analysis of a single case, or a group of cases, a phenomenon (historical case study), or a social unit (Merriam, 1998; Simons, 1996; Cohen, McCue, Germain, & Woods, 1997; Yin, 2003).

My main source of information, as is typical in a case study, is the interview. This resource can take several forms, but, in this case, it was frequently of an open-ended nature, during which the interviewer was able to ask key informants for the facts of, or opinions about, different phenomena taking place in their institution. In some situations, the informant might have even been asked for personal insights into certain occurrences and I used this information as the basis to continue with the inquiry. This gave the informant different roles: that of a storyteller, a participant, or a partner, in addition to that of a respondent. I interviewed a total of seventeen informants who were all UV academics.

Analysing Important Teachers' Attributions

One of the main issues that emerged in answer to my research question regarding teachers' perceptions of their roles when confronted with a request to design a curriculum was that of the relationship between managers and teachers, stated in the first part of this paper. The fact that the answers given by the informants related to moral responsibility and confidence led me to organise what they said into these categories. The key aspects of these findings are divided into two categories: the first, "Teachers' Moral Responsibility", which relates to teachers assuming obligations; the second is "Levels of Confidence". This second category is divided into four subcategories, to wit:

lack of confidence in other people's ability, self-confidence, confidence as trust and factors which affect confidence. I decided to present my findings under these particular headings because teachers referred to these issues when talking about their involvement with both the institution and their students. They also mentioned them when referring to the roles they have played so far in addition to the new ones they have been obliged to play since the request to design a curriculum. Given their responses, these roles appear to be connected to an ideal conception of the way teachers should behave, especially in response to new demands such as curriculum change.

Moral Responsibility

Regarding moral responsibility, I am referring to when, for either external or internal reasons, a teacher feels obliged to perform certain tasks. For example, teachers who experience a change in roles and become co-ordinators, or agents-of-change, may feel obliged to commit themselves to carrying out the different tasks inherent in these roles. In addition, teachers may be persuaded to perform certain actions simply because they are responsible; in other words, moral responsibility might be understood as something personal, that is, a mutual or self-imposed obligation. Moreover, teachers may feel morally responsible to perform certain tasks for different reasons; for example, because they feel morally devoted to the institution. Here, in this investigation, the informants interviewed showed that they were dedicated to their work in the way they understood what it entailed.

> People in our group care about students and put in more time and effort. They treat their students as people and as learners, neither role more important than the other, but combined. They see their students outside the classroom. I see the students at home, socially, talk to them in the halls... keep in contact after they are no longer my students, things like that and I think that's important. (Margarita, INI, 05.10.03[1])

This informant implicitly divides teachers into two groups: those who do not care about students and those who, like herself, do. This informant might be including in her group teachers who are part of a task culture, an informal group, or a power group (White, 1988; Hargreaves, 1992). These teachers might be committed, participative and responsible. Their concern for their students goes beyond the time spent in the classroom. However, the force that makes this particular teacher take the decision to treat her students as human beings who can learn – and not computers that just capture information – may be her commitment to them and the institution. Margarita feels morally obliged and responsible for maintaining the appropriate learning conditions for her students. She sees her students as individuals and interacts with them even outside the school boundaries. Her comment highlights her ability to cope with her responsibilities and her students' expectations of her.

Hugo also makes reference to this group of morally responsible teachers who become involved in different academic activities that have an impact on the students.

> On November 25th 1998, Luis, in his role as Head-Teacher of the Language School, summoned all the members of his work team (academic secretary, head-teachers of both B.A. programmes run by the Language School and coordinators of the different areas) to an important meeting to inform them about the project the UV was generating to move into a new educational model… There were plenty of questions that were very difficult to answer. There was a lack of elements to carry out such a task. It was a complex enterprise and nobody had a clear idea on how to start the work. We decided to start working with the analysis of the Institutional Evaluation document carried out during the

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1 The reference involves: Name, (IN) Interview, (I) First Round, Date.

previous administration when another teacher was Head of the Language School. (Hugo, MEIF Log, 2003)

Hugo employs an inclusive *we*, although it can be observed at the beginning of this extract that not everybody is included. He is part of a team that has just taken the decision to start working on the analysis of the Institutional Evaluation Document relating to Plan 90. The team is supporting the new administration by revising a document from a previous administration, which is a task laden with political implications. By using an inclusive *we*, Hugo is showing that by making a decision as shown in extract 002, he believes that he belongs to a group with enough power to do so. However, his sense of commitment is not only to his colleagues and the institution, but also to his students. Hugo and Margarita, by all accounts, seem to be two concerned teachers, but they were not aware of what the other was doing and never once mentioned any of the other's projects. This might lead to the demand for the creation of a network – although this association would be for students, in this case, not for teachers – as Margarita suggests.

> I get to start opening up a sort of network of support [for students] – a kind of group where they communicate their fears, why they are uncomfortable, or what their impressions or desires are for the college – besides the teacher, or tutor, or adviser, or whatever... also to get to know some students more formally, more deeply… I am sure teachers need to be trained and it should be somebody who believes in the concept of autonomy and practises it… so that an autonomous person should be one who teaches others to be autonomous, not just one who likes it. (Margarita, INI, 05.10.03)

Margarita seems to be interested in helping students as she is investing time in keeping in touch with them. Furthermore, she is aware that she will have to play other roles –tutor, adviser and facilitator– that demand more time and training.

However, the university will not pay her for the extra hours to set up a network because these hours are already considered as 'office hours' in a teacher's contract; that is, in theory, a full-time teacher spends half her/his working hours in a classroom and the rest in her/his office.

An example of this committed and participative attitude is further expressed by Margarita in the following extract referring to teachers innovating to achieve more dynamic classes.

> If you want to show a movie you have to fight for the students' cubicle, or the movie room, because a lot of classes are held in these spaces. I would like to have more space, but I do not think there is much we can do about that. It would be nice to have more places where you can show movies or TV… But you can bring the tape-recorder, the CD player and stuff, which are now much better than they used to be. Sometimes there's no electricity in the room, but there are batteries for the CD player, which is a step up. (Margarita, INI, 05.10.03)

It is evident that Margarita is committed to the students' learning of the language: teachers should not be expected to fight, buy batteries or bring their own equipment to the classroom. Her comment gives the impression that if you do not take an aggressive attitude, your students will not benefit from the few available resources (These resources and spaces demand better organisation and more communication, a task that requires improved co-ordination amongst the head of school, planners and teachers). For example, teachers cannot offer students this resource, so the authorities cannot expect teachers to commit themselves if they do not provide the necessary conditions. New teachers also want to use up-to-date technology, however, at this point in time, the video room had been closed, which is a paradox between ideal situations and facts. For such commitment, the authorities or institution should be able to respond in a more organised fashion.

Teachers with more stable working conditions often witness the struggle new teachers experience in their desire to be updated in subject matter knowledge and technology. This struggle leads teachers to revise their commitment to the institution as expressed by the following informant:

> There are people committed to their jobs and to the improvement of the institution. They are part of a group of teachers who support and carry out the academic work of the Language School. They are eager to work. There's a new engine in the new teachers who want to participate and they're sessional [part-time] teachers, so their participative attitude is something to admire. These young people are eager to work, to keep up their training and surrender to projects. They're only paid for the hours they work in the classroom. I also have a lot of work and even though I have a full time position, I still struggle to survive. (Lucy, IN2, 18.11.03[2])

This teacher admires "sessional" [part-time] teachers who could lose their jobs when full-time teachers come back from their leaves of absence.

The view expressed in Extract 005 relates not only to new teachers, but to every single teacher who is committed, regardless of the number of years spent working for the institution. Full-time teachers might view their daily obligations in a less threatening way than sessional teachers, given that they have tenure, but that does not reduce their workload, or alleviate unfair working conditions. However, whether full-time or sessional, teachers do what they have to do and more. In addition, the full-time teachers' positive response to their obligations may inspire 'novice' teachers and other colleagues. When this happens, these teachers become a model for their students and colleagues, what Lucy (Extract 005) calls *a new engine*. However, new teachers also need to consider what is expected of them and what they can actually do, and

communicate in a sort of bottom-up process how they hope to be rewarded —not just by promises— during the change process. In the following extract Sandy highlights the fact that teachers not only need to communicate what they do and need, but that they also need to recognise the work carried out by colleagues.

> This type is somebody who if he has class at eight, he's on time and if he has class at four, he is there, because he's interested in his work. He gets upset with students who do not participate – as other students comment that there are those students who do not work, do not read, or do not respond in class as most of us do. That's also true… He is interested in change, in updating, in organising meetings with teachers and students to modify and update the study plan. He even worked on the study plan previous to the one called Plan 90. (Sandy, INI, 17.09.03)

Sandy views her colleague as a model of commitment. This type of teacher is usually involved in change and in giving her/his community an identity. In addition, these teachers give their time, ideas and effort to achieving academic projects and institutional goals. They do this in order to grow professionally and attain a professional identity. They do not necessarily expect any financial reward except, perhaps, a more solid working base. This type of teacher also works with colleagues and students and organises meetings that include a particular group of teachers. Administrators usually invite these teachers to join a team to accomplish institutional goals or complete projects and to establish communication with similar groups in other educational settings (networking). However, according to the data that emerged, managers need to reconcile the different personalities of their teachers, avoid giving false promises and assign attainable tasks. An example of this view is found in the following extract:

> One of the facilitators informed us that the university authorities had the intention of implementing this modality in September

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2   The reference involves: Name, (IN) Interview, (2) Second Round, Date.

1999 (I thought this was a *mad* idea). The work should be speeded up, so a series of proposals was added to the previous ones. A copy of the evaluation of the previous study plan was handed out to the different areas in order to get feedback – analysis, comments and proposals. The coordinators of the two BAS were responsible for coordinating this work. (Hugo, MEIF Log, 2003)

Hugo feels that designing a study plan based on a new educational model might not be achievable in the time set by the university authorities and he points out the fact that there are people with different responsibilities involved in the task. He reveals a lack of confidence concerning the possibility of carrying out the task adequately as is evident from his use of the word *mad*. This is less related to his academic background than to the resources provided by the university itself and even the human resources at the Language School. By resources I mean training, appropriate means of communication, library resources and technology. By human resources, I mean all those in charge of providing training and resources. Hugo did not appear to have enough information about the changes that the authorities expected teachers to implement and yet he seems to have enough experience, or knowledge, to make such a statement. He is also showing that experience was important to start organising the work. Hugo, being cooperative and committed, started keeping a log of the meetings outlining the development of the New Model.

Although Hugo did not feel quite confident about himself and his colleagues carrying out the task of designing the new study plan based on the specific parameters imposed by national policies, he knew teachers had to speed up the process, as the university authorities were expecting it to start in autumn, 1999. Once again, the force that moved the informants to participate in this endeavour was a strong sense of responsibility and, of course, pressure from the authorities. Therefore, teachers became committed to their role as facilitators and arranged meetings to get the work organised.

After my first encounter with the New Model, I kept on attending the meetings organised in the offices of the coordinators of the English BA and the Department of Foreign Languages. With the help of an overhead projector, the facilitators sketched out a way in which the design of the new study plan could be approached, or advanced. It was highlighted that the model of credits could be categorised as semi-flexible and its presentation covered three levels: 1) an initial phase or basic; 2) an intermediate phase, or disciplinary that would correspond to the stage when students focus on the discipline of their BA as the name of this phase implies; 3) a final stage. (Hugo, MEIF Log, 2003)

Based on my observations during the research process, Hugo continued to attend the meetings mainly because of his sense of responsibility. However, he might have felt obliged to carry on with the task because of his friendship with the head of the school. On the other hand, a close relationship might make people become too relaxed, leading them to expect special treatment or benefits, which is not the case of Hugo as shown in extracts 002, 007 and 008.

Teachers had to learn the theories and become familiar with the policies behind the New Model. They also had to learn the processes involved in the project so that they could become promoters of the principles it espoused. This is expressed by Lucy in the following extract:

It is necessary to get to know all these new philosophies well. I'm trying to internalise them and make them mine. They refer to the fact that education will make us better teachers and we have to change this concept radically, although Unesco itself thinks this is just utopic… Perhaps this change is not going to be so *hard* for *them* [teachers] as they are used to carrying out their work built on all these great theories of education such as the idea of learning to learn. I'm sure there are colleagues who have

already put this into practice. We're supposed to start with this new model in 2004. I have high expectations that it will come to pass. I hope we'll become models for our students who will become better citizens and human beings. They need to question more the events that happen around them. (Lucy, INI, 20.09.03)

Lucy suggests that it is no longer enough to be aware, to be an expert and to be supportive and creative; teachers and managers have to be participative and committed to carrying out assigned tasks. Through the extract, Lucy seems to be proposing the idea that teachers should perform different roles such as subject expert, promoter of values and reflective teacher. This may be the appropriate moment to suggest that more than just one role can be in a main or focal dimension (Polanyi, 1958). Lucy also makes it evident that teachers should be concerned about being experts in their subjects.

Lucy's perception was that teachers demonstrated their expertise by using the knowledge they had acquired from studying theories of education. Still, I wonder why she uses the word *hard* when the change is going to be difficult in one way or another for other members of the educational setting such as administrators. I also wonder if she is only referring to teachers who can handle theories. Lucy uses the pronoun *them* and so excludes herself from the group, but she shows confidence in terms of her specialised knowledge. Perhaps she is just making a distinction between herself as an experienced, full-time teacher and others who are less experienced, meaning sessional teachers.

In short, the moral responsibility of teachers refers to when they adhere to the goals of the group and uphold them because they believe they are right. It is evident that responsibility is profoundly connected to commitment and devotion, especially when teachers look for a way to give their students the tools to succeed,

even after concluding their studies at school. Teachers respond with more dedication when they understand, internalise and make the projects of the institution their very own. In addition, both novice and experienced teachers, whether they are employed as sessional or full-time teachers, struggle to become up-to-date in subject matter knowledge and technology. This may cause teachers review their commitment to the institution, especially if they are only sessional teachers who do not have tenure. However, there is a group of teachers, comprising both full-time and sessional, who for one reason or another feels a moral responsibility towards their work, their students and possibly the institution. This type of teacher, as revealed in the data, works with colleagues and students and has a disposition for teamwork. However, apart from moral responsibility, another important issue that emerged was teachers' need to feel confident in order to carry out their work. This issue is discussed in the following section.

Confidence (Levels of)

In the various roles a teacher has to play the term *confidence* can have different connotations and interpretations. Based on the responses of my informants, I shall discuss the issue of teachers' professional confidence under four different headings: lack of confidence in other people's ability, self-confidence, and confidence as trust (occurring when the teacher is the one to whom students or other colleagues disclose their private affairs), and, finally, factors which affect confidence (which includes support from colleagues). The quotes from my data were organised in a way that could make sense to the reader. It relies on the way I observed teachers behave. This behaviour was observed while my informants were giving their points of view. These points of view are observed

at a micro-level, the language classroom, and at a macro-level, the institution as a whole.

Lack of Confidence in Other People's Ability

The first context for confidence may influence a teacher's involvement. Teachers might remain faithful to traditional roles and methodologies so as not to undermine their confidence. By traditional roles, I am referring to teachers who adhere to traditional methodologies. Although there may be many other reasons that a teacher adheres to traditional methodologies, the fact is that confidence emerged as a relevant reason in this investigation. These teachers could be narrow-minded and rarely accept the opinions of students, so their classes could become quite passive. On the one hand, their determination to adhere to traditional ways of doing things might suggest to their colleagues that they do, indeed, lack self-confidence. On the other hand, their behaviour may give their colleagues the impression that they are self-confident, but only playing the role of a traditional teacher, as illustrated in the following extract:

> Some of the teachers don't completely believe in the role of a facilitator, the teacher who provides knowledge in an accessible manner. I feel they are so confident in their role of traditional teacher. I am afraid that the traditional teacher believes that he is the only one who has power in a classroom and that whatever he says or does is law and he is the absolute power source and no one can contradict him. No one is able to think outside of his criteria. I really prefer the idea of facilitator and giving more power to students, because after they leave school, they can continue learning. It is up to them. I think they should have the tools they need to be able to do so. (Margarita, INI, 05.10.03)

This suggests that some teachers feel secure playing a role they have mastered through experience, but they might not feel so confident with new methodologies. Therefore, they may show a lack of trust towards new roles in order to avoid losing face.

Self-Confidence

The second use of the term *confidence* refers to when people have faith in what they do. Sometimes, people may have an overview of what is happening in a specific situation and are sure they can sort out any problem. In the following extract, the informant seems to take it for granted that all teachers are concerned about improving their students' training. There does not seem to be any doubt that the new task can be carried out in spite of the constant flow of more questions.

> The document showing the results of the evaluation of Study Plan 90 indicated that it had been approved and accepted as adequate, but it proposed a few adjustments: establishing a real common core area with three final specialised areas. All attempts to approach the New Model became more difficult due to the constant surging of more questions, for example, what relationship would there be between this new model with a credit system and the postgraduate courses. (Hugo, MEIF Log, 2003)

Hugo appears to be quite confident in expressing his views. He knows what he is talking about. He implies by his comments that the work carried out related to the evaluation of the current study plan resulted in its approval and acceptance. It just demanded a few changes and adaptations. He also seems quite confident when expressing his opinion concerning the design of the study plan based on a new educational model. He observes that there are still a lot of doubts in relation to such work and, as an example, refers to the matter of credits.

In addition, teachers can have confidence in other teachers for different reasons, as shown in the following section.

Confidence as Trust

Confidence as trust refers to when the teacher may be a confidant of her/his students and colleagues, enabling her/him to play the role of tutor or facilitator.

> I'm in touch with students, although I have a lot of them. If I have 15 or 20, I can be a guide and get closer to them. Unfortunately, I have a group of 36 and contact becomes harder and this is a group in the New Educational Model. However, even in these large groups, I manage to keep in touch with students and clarify their doubts about the content of the lesson even after class. And many other students have the confidence to tell me other things, but not everyone, of course. (Alfonso, INI, 12.10.03)

This sense of confidence as trust changes considerably how students view their teachers, since they become more like friends, parents or tutors. In Roberto's case, as shown in the following extract, students' comments help him feel confident and, in turn, he plays the role of confidant.

> Students ask you for advice… they let you know when they like your work. 'No, Sir, you really do your best'. Some teachers don't… they arrive late. I encourage them [students] to feel confident to express their doubts about any part of the content of the course, not about personal stuff; however, I listen to whatever they want to share with me and try to support them. Some students have the confidence to tell me why they didn't attend a class, or what they didn't understand. They have the confidence to tell me private things, touchy matters you cannot even imagine that have nothing to do with learning English. This helps you to have a wider picture of who your students are and what you can do to help them learn. (Roberto, INI, 07.10.03)

Factors Which Affect Confidence

The fourth context of confidence is when the teacher feels more confident about performing a certain task or doing certain activities because of the support he/she has received or perceived. An example of this is in the following extract. On the one hand, the teacher feels more confident because he belongs to an apparently more 'promising' programme and, on the other, he feels more emotionally supported by the people involved in the Distance ELT BA programme.

> Recently, I decided to leave the exam commission and focus on working for the Distance ELT BA, because of the lack of support [to carry out the tasks of the exam commission], although I'm still helping to design exams for some subjects. I don't want to go back to the old system where you could attain a good mark at a certain level with a given teacher, but you knew you might even fail with another teacher at the same level. That's why some of us are trying not to lose the departmental standard exams. (Roberto, INI, 07.10.03)

Roberto was confident about his capability of carrying out two different activities without thinking of the effort and time invested. Indeed, the time and effort invested does not appear to have been the problem that led him to stop participating in one of the projects, but, rather, the lack of support. Therefore, confidence here seems to be linked to support: if there is support, there is more confidence to perform an assigned task.

Findings

One assumption that emerged from my findings is that teachers may move from one role to another, even though the roles chosen might seem to be contradictory in their description. For example, why should teachers perform the roles of evaluator, facilitator and tutor with the same attitude? Might this be due to the fact that they may be seen by students as an academic with contradictory behaviours? Apparently, teachers are more strict and distant when playing the role of evaluator than when playing the role of tutor. Some of the consequences of this shift might be reflected in the

teachers' inability to make a balanced distribution of the energy invested in these different roles, which could lead to exhaustion, causing lower participation levels and creating an impoverished learning environment.

The research findings indicate that teachers' perceptions of a more positive and professional attitude towards new roles are characterized by their moral responsibility and confidence.

Teachers demonstrate their expertise by using the knowledge they have acquired from studying theories of education. In addition, teachers are not isolated islands. They need to work in agreement with the whole staff, students and those involved in administrative affairs. Therefore, better organisation and more communication require improved co-ordination amongst the head of school, planners and teachers. Communication, teamwork and leadership, thus, play an important role in helping teachers feel confident, more convinced and conscious of their role during innovation. All these roles and tasks can be carried out, on the one hand, when teachers show moral responsibility towards the institution for which they work. On the other, confident teachers cannot work in teams, reach agreements and plan their work unless they have confidence in what they know and what they do.

In addition, teachers' attitudes play an important role in the design and implementation of a study plan. They may affect the teachers' level of confidence and commitment regarding the request to design a new curriculum (Bascia, 2005; Nias, 2005; Durrant & Holden, 2006), as well as their personal use and adoption of new roles, concepts and methodologies. When a teacher accepts a role, s/he accepts the positive and negative aspects involved in its description. Teachers' attitudes and perceptions will determine the final success or failure of every initiative to introduce change.

In sum, in this paper I have discussed the different interpretations and uses of the concept of *confidence.* Firstly, teachers may give the impression that they suffer from lack of confidence due to their attaching themselves to the traditional roles they know by heart in order to avoid getting involved in innovative tasks. This may be because they do not feel qualified to carry them out. Secondly, teachers demonstrate a confident attitude towards other colleagues. Thirdly, confidence also seems to be linked to support: support leads to confidence and trust. Teachers can have confidence in other teachers, but more importantly, they need to have confidence when carrying out what they are asked to do. Teachers need to feel supported in carrying out their work, in performing different roles, and they need to clearly understand what is expected of them and have their own expectations fulfilled.

It also emerged from the data that there are subtle differences between the different roles performed by a researcher depending on the demands of the task. Most teachers might be involved in research, but not all to the same degree. Teachers might play the role of researcher because of their skills, responsibilities, commitment and other factors. Apparently, when teachers start playing the role of researcher, they attempt to define their basic role as teacher before they start playing other roles. These research findings broaden our understanding of teachers' perceptions of the educational quality of their school. Therefore, research findings suggest that educational change has to include teachers' development of role awareness.

If teachers' perceptions towards innovation are negative, the design of a study plan will be limited. To gain the support of the teaching staff, which Miller (2005) concluded is a necessary condition for the success of innovative programmes, the

teachers' priorities must be taken into account. Teachers are definitely most aware of the needs of their students and institution in general (Jordan, 2004; Zembylas, 2004, Nias, 2005). Although they might need some specialized training and need to carry out research, they are the ones who may better frame what is required by the students and the institution in general. Teachers need to consciously and efficiently play the different roles requested during change.

Conclusion

Teachers' confidence in their professional practice and improved working conditions could facilitate the process of change (Bascia, 2005; Durrant & Holden, 2006). Certain models of innovation propose better working conditions and better interrelationships amongst staff. For example, Durrant & Holden (2006), in their model "for teacher-led school change", suggest giving teachers more power when taking a plan of action. In addition, Smylie & Perry (2005), in their model, state that restructuring schools demands mechanisms, such as incentives, learning opportunities and expert professional educators from whom novices can learn. They, in turn, influence academic life in general. Institutional and school practices generally require collaboration between novice and experienced teachers, and understanding of the different roles teachers play, or any other new role or function, regardless of whether the managerial perspective is bottom-up or top-down.

An important factor that seems to be missing in the models of innovation shown in this paper is any reference to teachers playing the role of head-teacher. Indeed, he might play the role of leader in front of the rest of the teachers, but he still needs special training to perform the role appropriately, as in the case of curriculum-designer, agent of change or facilitator. It is clear that teachers are interested in playing these roles adequately after being trained, or through self-instruction, because they are responsible and committed to the institution. Although some models take into account teachers' participation in the process (Taylor, 1970; Skilbeck, 1990; White, 1988), they seem to ignore the fact that there are contexts in which teachers' lack of training leads them to lose confidence when performing different roles and new tasks. In an organization, those in power are expected to show commitment and subject-matter expertise in order to become models for teachers. Managers need to know which innovation model they are using, how they plan to implement it and what they expect from others. They also have to find the best way to communicate their policies, instructions and expectations. Once teachers know what is expected of them and that they are supported during change, anxiety may well be reduced.

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