

**USING REFLECTIVE PROCESSES TO PROMOTE
ATTENTION TO DIVERSITY IN SCHOOLS:
A STUDY OF PRACTICE IN CHILE**

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for
the degree of PhD in the Faculty of Humanities

2007

ANA LUISA LÓPEZ

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

LIST OF CONTENTS

LIST OF DIAGRAMS	5
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS	6
LIST OF TABLES	7
LIST OF TABLES	7
ABSTRACT	8
Declaration	9
Copyright statement	9
Introduction	11
Chapter 1. The context of the research	14
Personal experiences of learning, exclusion and diversity.....	15
My encounter with the discourse of UNESCO	17
Deepening my knowledge about attention to diversity and inclusive education	21
Chilean education system: pursuing quality and equity.....	29
Purposes and research questions	37
Final words	37
Chapter 2. Action research as an approach to inclusion	39
Principles and purpose of action research	40
Design of an inclusive action research approach	58
The researcher’s role in the inclusive action research model	66
Final words	71
Chapter 3. The process of data collection and analysis	73
Pilot study in an English school: exploring methodological strategies.....	74
Data gathering.....	76
Data analysis.....	89
Trustworthiness.....	93
Final words	94

Chapter 4. Introduction of the Gabriela Mistral School and the evolution of the inclusive action research process.....	95
Understanding Gabriela Mistral School.....	96
General overview of the evolution of the inclusive action research model.....	107
Roles facilitating the inclusive action research model	115
Concluding remarks.....	121
Chapter 5. Developing reflective processes on attention to diversity in the Gabriela Mistral School	122
Individual reflection about class observations.....	123
Enhancing reflective co-researchers	136
Promoting a reflective community.....	143
Lessons learnt.....	151
Chapter 6. Introduction of the Nelquihue School and the evolution of the inclusive action research model	155
An NGO local development programme in a deprived community.....	156
Understanding Nelquihue School	158
General overview of the evolution of the inclusive action research model in Nelquihue School	169
Roles facilitating the inclusive action research model	179
Concluding remarks.....	183
Chapter 7. Developing reflective processes on attention to diversity in the Nelquihue School	184
Promoting reflective practitioners through individual reflection about class observations	185
Promoting reflective communities through meetings and workshops.....	199
Lessons learnt.....	210
Chapter 8. Learning about the promotion of inclusive action research approaches in schools.....	215
Changes in understandings and practices in relation to diversity.....	216
Conditions to develop inclusive action research processes on attention to diversity	236
Final words	244

Chapter 9. Learning about the roles of researchers as facilitators of inclusive action research approaches	245
Principles as guidance for the researcher.....	246
Researcher's double agenda	259
Final remarks.....	262
Chapter 10. Implications for future actions	263
Lessons learnt.....	265
Implications for the Chilean context.....	270
Implications for educational contexts, particularly in underprivileged conditions	272
The role of universities and educational institutions for teachers' professional development.....	273
The role of UNESCO in the Education for All agenda	275
Final words	276
Appendix 1. Description of action research projects relevant to my research	277
Appendix 2. Introduction of representative participants of the Gabriela Mistral School...	280
Appendix 3. Introduction of representative participants of the Nelquihue School.....	282
BIBLIOGRAPHY	284

LIST OF DIAGRAMS

Diagram 2.1. The learning pathways grid.....	49
Diagram 2.2. First design of the inclusive action research model.....	59
Diagram 3.1. Chronological process of data analysis during and after fieldwork based on grounded theory	89
Diagram 4.1. Evolution of the inclusive action research model in Gabriela Mistral School in the community, coordination team and individual teachers.....	108
Diagram 5.1. Emphasis on the evolution of the inclusive action research model in Gabriela Mistral School	151
Diagram 6.1. Evolution of the inclusive action research model at Nelquihue School at three levels: community, coordination team and individual teachers	170
Diagram 7.1. Emphasis on the evolution of the inclusive action research model at Nelquihue School	211
Diagram 8.1. Revision of the inclusive action research model.....	219
Diagram 8.2. Pathways in addressing barriers and facilitators to attend to diversity in relation to particular topics	221
Diagram 8.3. Tensions of the barriers and facilitators faced by the members of Gabriela Mistral School and Nelquihue School.....	237

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 4.1. School environment.....	96
Photograph 4.2. The Andes seen from the school playground.....	96
Photograph 4.3. Taken by secondary students, Y2: “Different opportunities for learning, not only academically”.....	98
Photograph 4.4. Taken by secondary students, Y2: “The diversity of the students. Freedom, no uniforms”.....	100
Photograph 4.5. Taken by primary students, Y7: “I like it that people with learning and mental difficulties are accepted, because they are given an opportunity”.....	101
Photograph 4.6. School playground.....	105
Photograph 4.7. School teachers’ workshop: Exposition of students’ photographic activities....	111
Photograph 4.8. School teachers’ workshop: Tree with barriers, facilitators and lines for action for the dimension of practices.....	112
Photograph 4.9. School teachers’ workshop: Teachers voting for lines of action to be prioritised in the school.....	114
Photograph 6.1. Taken by primary students, Y7: “We like the new dormitory houses”.....	158
Photograph 6.2. Taken by primary students, Y7: “A good library where we find information to do our homework”.....	159
Photograph 6.3. Taken by primary students, Y7: “We like the new refectory”.....	160
Photograph 6.4. Taken by primary students, Y7: “I don’t like that our classmates bully and insult us”.....	165
Photograph 6.5. A primary teacher explains the barriers, facilitators and actions planned to a group of school colleagues. First reflective workshop, 28 Feb ’05.....	176
Photograph 6.6. Groups of mixed teachers discussing accounts of class observations. Third workshop, 12 Aug ’05.....	178

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1. Example of a dimension, with its associated indicator and questions of the <i>Index</i>	26
Table 1.2. Enrolment and coverage of the Chilean Education System, 1990-2001	35
Table 3.1. Members of each school who participated in the initial and final interviews (chronological order).....	79
Table 3.2. Methodological strategies to elicit evidence for reflection (population involved in chronological order).....	84
Table 3.3. List of some codes and sub-codes of the category ' <i>Reflection</i> ' with definitions and links to the research questions to which they respond	91
Table 4.1. Indicators selected by Gabriela Mistral School	110
Table 4.2. Barriers, facilitators and lines of action in relation to different dimensions of Gabriela Mistral School.....	113
Table 6.1. Topics under analysis and data used in school reflective workshops in Nelquihue School.....	175
Table 6.2. Topics under analysis and data used in the reflective meetings at each phase of schooling in Nelquihue School.....	177
Table 8.1. Comparisons of transformations in understandings and practices observed in Gabriela Mistral School and in Nelquihue School.....	228
Table 9.1. Comparisons of facilitator roles to promote participation in each school.....	247
Table 9.2. Comparisons of facilitator roles to promote learning in each school.....	251

ABSTRACT

Over the last decade or so, various writers have argued that inclusive practices are more likely to be developed when school communities are involved in collaborative processes of inquiry, reflection and action in order to learn how to respond to learner diversity. Bearing this in mind, the research reported in this thesis set out to throw light on how educational communities in Chile can develop sustainable inclusive policies, cultures and practices. More specifically, the study explored strategies for encouraging those within schools to develop reflective communities that are able to analyse and minimise barriers to the presence, learning and participation of their members. It also analysed whether such reflective processes led to better understanding and practices in relation to diversity and explored the roles researchers might play in order to facilitate meaningful reflective processes.

The research was carried out in two schools with different characteristics: Gabriela Mistral School, in the city of Santiago, is one of the pioneer schools in the country in integrating disabled students, whilst Nelquihue School is located in one of the most isolated rural areas of Chile and responds to a high population of *Mapuche* ethnic students.

Guided by literature on action research, the study made use of an inclusive action research model that guided the process in both schools. This model emphasises the need to concentrate efforts on the promotion of reflective practitioners, as well as reflective communities. It also involves a process that was planned to be owned and coordinated by a team of co-researchers.

Although the researcher is Spanish, she has a good knowledge of the culture of the country, as a result of living and working in Chile for five years as a field officer for UNESCO. During a period of nine months she closely engaged in the two schools facilitating the action research model; accompanied school members in the implementation of the process; and carried out an ethnographic study of each school. All of this led to the adaptation of the approach in each context.

Data generated by teachers' interviews, focus groups and activities with students, and observations of lessons were presented to school staff in individual interviews and school workshops. These events were intended to challenge teachers and other professionals to question their own underlying theories about the diversity of their students and their teaching; and see how their beliefs, values and attitudes affected their practices. This process also provided opportunities for school members to analyse the values embedded in its culture and make decisions about how to give steps to put them into action in order to provide school members with meaningful learning experiences.

A limitation of the study is that the research processes were developed in two very distinctive schools in Chile. Given their characteristics, these schools cannot be considered as representative of Chilean schools. However, a distinctive strength of the study is the long period of time the researcher was closely involved with the schools, which is unusual in educational research studies. As a consequence, the study makes well-informed suggestions about how researchers can collaborate in the implementation of action research processes that are flexible to school conditions, even in challenging circumstances.

The thesis draws conclusions about ways in which reflective processes can help to minimise defensive attitudes amongst school members and engage them in challenging their own thinking about how they can create ways of working that can reach every child, whatever their characteristics or personal circumstances. However, the evidence presented is insufficient to guarantee the sustainability of these reflective processes. This would warrant further research.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Copyright statement

Copyright in text of this thesis rests with the author. Copies (by any process) either in full, or of extracts, may be made **only** in accordance with instructions given by the author and lodged in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester. Details may be obtained from the Librarian. This page must form part of any such copies made. Further copies (by any process) of copies made in accordance with such instructions may not be made without the permission (in writing) of the author.

The ownership of any intellectual property rights which may be described in this thesis is vested in The University of Manchester, subject to any prior agreement to the contrary, and may not be made available for use by third parties without the written permission of the University, which will prescribe the terms and conditions of any such agreement.

Further information on the conditions under which disclosures and exploitation may take place is available from the Head of School of Education.

To Mel and Andy, for your patience and wisdom.

Para Ana María, Fausto y Estitxu,
por apoyarme con dedicación y cariño en el camino de la vida,
y para Bernardo por ser parte de la familia.

Para Rosa por inculcarme tu amor por la educación,
y para Margarita, Usune, Eugenia y Wilson,
por vuestra amistad y hospitalidad en Santiago.

Para las y los directivos, profesionales, docentes y estudiantes
que participaron en esta investigación.

Gracias por abrirme sus puertas y su corazón,
he aprendido mucho de ustedes, y les admiro mucho.

Y sobre todo para Txus, por tu amor incondicional,
esta hazaña no hubiera sido posible sin ti.

Introduction

Since 1990, Chile has worked towards the construction of a democracy by trying to promote equal rights for all. Although the country and its citizens have still a long way to go, Chilean governments have embraced agreements and commitments declared by international agencies. In particular, the Ministry of Education has signed and followed UNESCO regional and international declarations and recommendations, based on the framework of '*Education for All*' in 1990 and 2000. Inclusive education is one of UNESCO flagships in the Latin American region. This study has to be seen in relation to this wider policy context.

The study builds on my experience over the last few years. Although I am Spanish, I have been involved with Chile since 1997, firstly as an NGO volunteer, and later as a field officer for the UNESCO Regional Office of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, situated in Santiago, the Chilean capital.

As I explain in Chapter 1, during the last decade the Chilean Ministry of Education has established close collaboration with UNESCO, in order to develop an educational system that responds to diversity within a context characterised by hierarchical cultures and traditional practices. Ministerial actions have been focused on four different arenas: re-organization of the special education system; promotion of inter-cultural education; positive discrimination for schools in vulnerable situations; and the inclusion of the values of citizenship and democracy within the curricula. Nevertheless, there has not been an integration of these parallel strategies, and little has been done to promote the conditions of regular schools and the capacities of teachers in order to respond to the diversity of the students in their classes.

Set within this wider context, the study reported in this thesis set out to throw light on how Chilean schools and communities might develop sustainable inclusive policies, cultures and practices. For this purpose I take inclusive education to involve a process of analysing and minimising barriers to presence, learning and participation experienced by the members of an educational community. This requires schools to engage in a continuous process of change aimed at responding to all learners and reducing marginalisation and exclusion. Building on evidence from international studies, I explore strategies for encouraging schools to become reflective communities which are able to create ways of working that can reach every child, whatever their characteristics or personal circumstances.

In the last few years, some research literature has suggested that action research approaches and reflective processes can promote changes in the way schools address diversity. I explore in

Chapter 2, the family of approaches of action research, in order to build up a theoretical framework which suggests that inclusive practices are more likely to be developed when those within school communities are involved in collaborative processes of inquiry, reflection and action, in order to learn how to respond to diversity. Based on the principles of action research, I designed an inclusive action research model which guided the collaborative processes to be carried out in schools at three levels: at individual level, at community level, and with a coordinator team consisting of volunteer school staff.

In Chapter 4 to 7, I analyse the evolution of the model as it was trialled in two different educational communities, Gabriela Mistral School, a middle class private school in Santiago, the capital city, and Nelquihue School, a rural school in an underprivileged area in the 'south'¹ with a high population of *Mapuche*² people. The approach was aimed at facilitating reflection at an individual and social level. With this in mind, I provided teachers and other professionals with data gathered through observations, focus groups with students and staff, and activities with students. During individual interviews, group meetings and workshops, teachers reflected on their practices and the situation of the school and considered actions for improvement.

Through the research, I aimed to make direct contributions to the development of thinking and practice within the particular contexts, whilst, at the same time, generating an understanding of how reflective processes contribute to transforming teachers' understandings and practices in relation to the barriers their students experience. In Chapter 8, I underline the importance of creating the opportunities where teachers could confront defensive strategies which prevent them from being aware of how their attitudes and practices affect their students' learning processes. I describe these as moments for '*reframing*', when, either individually or socially, each teacher could question their understandings from new perspectives. I argue that this process can lead to transformations in teacher's underlying theories and practical arguments, and, in some cases, to sustainable transformations in school cultures, policies and practices relating to the diversity of its members.

Given the active roles I played in both the development and research elements of the study, in Chapter 3, I describe the methods for data gathering and analysis used during and after my fieldwork. Later, in Chapter 9, I analyse the impact of my contributions in order to consider the possible roles of external facilitators in fostering inclusive ways of working in schools. By

¹ I use the analogy of '*the south*' in two ways, the school was geographically situated in the south of Chile, and in addition, its characteristics could be generalised to other schools in underprivileged conditions.

² *Mapuche* means '*people of the land*'.

scrutinising my own role, I deepen my understandings about the particular conditions under the action research process evolved in each school and analyse my own interpretations of the actions carried out. In addition, I question the validity and trustworthiness of the knowledge gained by this research.

I conclude, in Chapter 10, with some recommendations on strategies for the promotion of school-based action research initiatives that foster schools' and teachers' capacities to improve the way they are responding to the diversity of their population in Chile, as well as more generally. I recommend that it is crucial to implement particular conditions in schools, in terms of opportunities for professional development, time and space, which would facilitate reflection and learning amongst members, particularly in schools in underprivileged circumstances. I throw light on those aspects necessary to promote in schools in order to minimise discriminatory attitudes, and contribute to the staff's commitment to adapt their teaching to the learning needs of their students. And finally, I consider the role of external agencies, such as UNESCO, universities and other research bodies, in fostering action research and reflective processes within and among schools, in order to develop innovative progress towards an education for all. This would, I conclude, contribute to transforming schools into democratic learning communities for all.

A limitation of the study is that the research processes were developed in two very distinctive schools in Chile. Given their characteristics, these schools cannot be considered as representative of Chilean schools. However, a strength of the study is the long period of time I was closely involved with the schools, which is unusual in educational research studies. As a consequence, the study makes well-informed suggestions about how researchers can collaborate in the implementation of action research processes that are flexible to school conditions, even in challenging circumstances.

Chapter 1. The context of the research

*“8.15 a.m. This first day does not start very well.
I’ve just received a phone call from Spain, there has been a terrorist attack in Madrid.
The first news says there have been 30 people killed in Atocha train station.
(...) we live in a country well-known because of death and terrorism.
(...) The fight goes on, we are not alone, and hatred will never be beaten by hatred.
We need to find out other ways to make this anger and this energy join
to work for a better world, although sometimes it is not easy.”
(11th March 2004, personal diary recorded the first day of fieldwork for my MSc³)*

The principle of mutual understanding is an important part of my personal philosophy, as well as, I believe, the inclusive movement. Mutual understanding is necessary to learn from each other and to jointly build a community based on trust and dialogue. I think that democracies cannot be constructed upon violence, which has been the case in my country for almost a century. Many other countries are suffering violence at the moment for the sake of a misunderstood ‘democracy’, as well as historically, numerous cultures and populations suffered it for the sake of a misunderstood ‘civilization’. Imposing power over people, and seeing ‘the others’ as enemies or inferiors, create societies where exclusion becomes an accepted norm. By promoting space for dialogue and mutual understanding, I believe, individuals can feel a sense of belonging and therefore, actively participate in positive, non-violent ways to build up democratic societies. This argument stands at the heart of my research.

The anger I expressed in my quotation emerges from my feelings of frustration as I have witnessed exclusion, terrorism and violence in my country during my whole life. My personal experiences of exclusion have influenced my philosophy about the values that should be fostered in order to educate committed democratic civilians. Thus, my beliefs in the values promoted by inclusive education have had a strong impact on the design and evolution of my research. In this chapter, I introduce my philosophical journey in relation to education and diversity. First of all, I analyse some of my personal life experiences in relation to learning and exclusion. I then describe my encounter with UNESCO principles of education and inclusion, before explaining what I have learnt about inclusive education and attention to diversity from other authors.

It is important to understand that theories and values of inclusive education are not developed in a vacuum. Rather, they are adapted to the historical and cultural backgrounds of each country. For this reason, I describe the Chilean education system and the efforts made to respond to the diversity of its population. I also highlight some tensions observed in the Chilean context which

³ López, A. L. (2004). *Becoming Inclusive: Studying Teachers' Views*. Faculty of Education. Manchester, University of Manchester. **MSc in Educational Research**: 104.

moved me to design my research in order to gain knowledge about the conditions necessary to promote inclusive educational communities in that country. I conclude the chapter with a summary of the research proposal, its purpose and the research questions I designed aiming to contribute to the Chilean education system and its schools.

Personal experiences of learning, exclusion and diversity

Since I have memory, I recall learning in relation to other people. Until I was eight, I lived in a village. I hardly have any memories of my first school, but I clearly remember the things I learnt out of it. Moving to a town was a shock in many senses. It was then when I started to feel the sensation of belonging nowhere, followed by the need to find my place in the world. This feeling was not clear at that age, but it grew more explicit over the years, particularly since I became an immigrant in Chile and then in England. At that moment, I faced a new context, a new school, and no friends.

The Catholic school for girls was not a desirable place for me to interchange with others, or even to learn. It was hard to follow the homogeneity they were imposing on us. Nevertheless, I benefited from other learning experiences. My parents enrolled me in a Catholic club, where I could meet with other girls and boys during weekends and go to the mountains. For more than ten years, I enjoyed this space where I could be creative, discuss different topics, and reflect on my emotions and those of others. All of this provided opportunities to experience the social learning processes that have been central in my life.

During my years studying social science, I continued attending this club as an educator. Those five years taking part in a team were crucial in encouraging my commitment to education. We organized imaginative and participatory learning experiences. Children were everybody's responsibility and their learning process was a common concern.

As educators, we established close friendly relationships. We had space to evaluate the activities and analyse our participation. The experience helped me to be reflective, and to value working as a team as crucial, in order to learn from each other and grow. I got used to discussing and sharing my ideas on education. I believed that by engaging every child in a group with her⁴ peers, and promoting a sense of belonging among the group members, children could learn from each

⁴ I deliberately use the feminine genre as a generic voice throughout the text in order to highlight the role of women in education and research.

other. They could be receptive and respectful to the others' characteristics and needs, and develop social values like friendship, justice and solidarity that could support them in becoming changing agents in society.

At the same time, the historical Spanish context was providing us with a new future. We were the '*generation of democracy*' and I grew up learning to fight to keep it. The end of the dictatorship opened the way to an age of hope, where we could imagine and view a new country. Even in the Basque Country, where governmental impositions were harder, we recovered our rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Nonetheless, living as a Basque citizen in Spain, I had to experience and witness violent impositions. I got used to living with terrorism. In my opinion, terrorism is not only the physical violence imposed on an individual. It also consists of the ideological oppression and struggle any person has to experience on a daily basis.

In a place like the Basque Country, oppressive discourse comes from two sides: the Spanish national discourse and the Basque nationalist one. Exclusion, I believe, has become a way of relating to people: "*if you don't think like me, you are against me, you are my enemy*". I see this situation as a crusade against diversity, where each citizen is not considered to have equal rights either because they were or were not born in the Basque Country, they do or do not speak *Euskera*⁵, or they do not support a particular political ideology, among other things. Both sides are trying to impose a homogenous identity, language and culture, therefore preventing any dialogue or mutual understanding, or the appreciation of diversity as a wealth for society.

For this reason, I continued to feel as if I belonged nowhere and, unconsciously, started searching for other '*excluded voices*'. When I finished my degree, I decided to join an organization for mentally disabled adults as a volunteer. I knew little then, or now, about their medical conditions. Over three years, I spent my leisure time with them. Again, my approach was from an educational perspective, creating space for sharing and learning together.

I later started to broaden my concern with notions of diversity. I wanted to learn more about other cultures in underprivileged countries. Consequently, I began to collaborate with a non governmental organization, (NGO). Then, in 1997, I had the opportunity to go to Chile for the first time, to live in an ethnic *Mapuche* community for three months, in a rural area in the poorest region of the country. I learnt then about their history, the Mapuche people had fought against the

⁵ *Euskera*, the Basque Language is historically considered the oldest language in Europe.

Spaniards for centuries, and were proud of never having been defeated. Nevertheless, their governments had neglected them up to the point of not officially recognising *Mapudungun*⁶ and by reducing them to poverty.

I spent hours simply talking and sharing opinions and ideas with them, listening to the most 'excluded voices' I had ever heard in my life, and learning from them. This experience changed my view of life and triggered my interest in contributing to the inclusion of these 'excluded voices' into society through education. But above all, it helped me to understand what Savater, a Spanish philosopher argues. He considers that diversity is natural, yet the wealth of humanity stands on what we have in common; the capacity for mutual understanding:

"(...) it is said that the great wealth of humanity is its diversity. This is obvious. Human beings are diverse. We are distinct in colour, disposition, tastes, customs, and traditions. All of this is then converted into the great wealth of humanity ... It is not true... the true wealth of humanity lies in our similarity. (...) Human beings that can understand one another, comprehend our needs, our demands. Herein lies the true wealth of human beings. Thanks to this we have been able to develop the most important institutions – those of mutual assistance, solidarity and progress."

(Savater, 2006: 29)

My encounter with the discourse of UNESCO

In 1999, I had the opportunity to work for the UNESCO Regional Office of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, located in Santiago de Chile. During almost five years, I became familiar with the principles and the philosophy behind this institution. I also came to appreciate the reasons why international cooperation is not as fast and efficient as I would like or expect.

One of the first documents that attracted my attention was the Delor's Report "*Learning: the treasure within*" (UNESCO, 1996). In it, I recognised that my own ideas about education as the promotion of a social learning process were embedded in the philosophy of UNESCO. For the members of the committee that developed the report, learning goes beyond academic achievements. It argues that education must contribute to four 'pillars' - "*learn to be, learn to know, learn to do, and learn to live together*" - in order to develop citizens who will contribute to

⁶ The Mapuche language.

the construction of democratic modern societies and promote a culture of peace. These four pillars, particularly *'learn to live together'*, are, I believe, at the core of the inclusive values I describe in the next section.

In addition, in my experience of working with UNESCO, the goal of *'Education for All'* proclaimed at the world conference held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, was based on the principles of these four pillars of education. At that conference, representatives of the participant countries agreed to commit themselves to guarantee the response to the basic learning needs of every child, young person and adult within a decade. On that occasion, the focus of the conference concentrated mainly on access to education for all.

Therefore, in 1994, UNESCO considered it necessary to hold yet another world conference in Salamanca, Spain, in order to work on the commitment of the right for quality education for all, especially for those with special educational needs. In the Salamanca declaration, the following extract is particularly relevant in relation to the characteristics of the populations that should be attending what are sometimes described as *'regular schools'*:

“The guiding principle that informs this Framework is that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.”

(UNESCO, 1994: 6)

In my opinion, this aspect is central to the idea of inclusive education and attention to diversity⁷, although I recognise it has not yet been achieved. The concept of *'special educational needs'* in the Salamanca Statement intended to change the perspective of students' differences, particularly the view of how to educate disabled students. Before 1990, in Latin America, as well as in other regions, education for disabled students was considered as remedial, in other words, education was seen as the means to *'fix'* what was wrong with these students. Disabled students had to be medically diagnosed, and the educational plans which students followed would be guided by their statements. In most of the cases, they would be taught in segregated special

⁷ Attention to diversity is a term broadly used in Latin America and Spain. I give a description of this concept in a later section.

schools or classes, and would be under the responsibility of a special teacher or other professional (UNESCO, 2001).

The inclusion of the '*special educational needs*' concept at the Salamanca Conference, following the arguments of the '*Warnock Report*' (DFES 1978), had the purpose of underlining that regular schools should be responsible for the learning processes of every student, independently of their individual characteristics or their medical statements. In this sense, representatives of the Salamanca Conference tried to provide a pedagogical framework to move from the '*deficit or medical model*' of differences, which underlines that it is the individual who has the problem that prevents her from learning, towards a '*social model*' which considers that any individual faces barriers to learning due to the conditions in the schools and classes, and the educational responses they receive. For this reason, in order to respond to the students' educational needs, schools should organize their resources and make use of the resources provided by the community (MINEDUC, 2004c) with the aim of creating the conditions where every student can learn.

Despite the emphasis stressed by the Salamanca Statement, during my time working in the Department of Inclusive Education for UNESCO, I observed that most of the efforts to promote inclusive education were addressed towards the integration of disabled students into regular schools (Blanco, 2000). This has been a major achievement, since the percentage of disabled students on mainstream programmes has increased considerably since 1990 (UNESCO, 2001; MINEDUC, 2004b).

Nevertheless, I experienced that many educational actors had adopted the terms '*inclusion*' and '*special educational needs*' (SEN) as synonyms for '*integration*' and '*disabilities*' (UNESCO, 2004a). In addition, those schools responding to '*integrated students*', as they are called in Chile, have adopted pedagogical strategies based on individual responses to students with SEN, and regular teachers have a low participation in their education. Furthermore, homogenizing educational approaches are still common (UNESCO, 1999; MINEDUC, 2004b), and educational systems and schools have not taken into consideration other characteristics of students, such as gender, ethnicity and socio-economical background, in order to adapt the curriculum and the educational plans to the students' needs.

Despite this, in my experience, the role of UNESCO has been important in the region in promoting the commitment of the countries in relation to inclusive education. This, in my opinion, is clearly observed in the follow up to the '*Education for All*' mandate which took place in 2000. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean met in Santo Domingo in the Dominican

Republic, to agree on their regional framework for action. The representatives of the countries seemed to commit to the challenges directly related to the quality of education and the promotion of inclusive education policies. In particular, they made a commitment to:

“Formulate inclusive education policies and design diversified modalities and curricula to respond to the population who suffer exclusion due to individual, gender, linguistic or cultural reasons.”

(UNESCO, 2000: 3)

In my opinion, there is clear evidence of the continuity of this commitment, which was confirmed at the most recent regional conference held in Buenos Aires in Argentina in March 2007, where the countries declared the urgency of working on the construction of more inclusive educational systems and institutions (UNESCO, 2007a).

Nevertheless, although the Ministries of Education have made attempts to move towards inclusion within their legislation and the reorganization of their educational systems, I note that little has happened in the schools and among teachers (UNESCO, 2004a). Aware of this situation, together with my colleague Rosa Blanco, a UNESCO specialist in inclusive education, we developed a regional network of educational innovations named INNOVEMOS, *‘Let’s innovate’*. The aim was to create a space where teachers could interchange about the educational innovations implemented in their schools, and evaluate and reflect on them. Although this space contributed with a new strategy to promote inclusive educational practices in schools, the focus of the network was more general, so the actual interchange of experiences about how teachers and schools were attending to diversity was limited.

By getting involved in the coordination of the network and reading the variety of educational experiences shared by teachers, I realised, however, that I knew very little about what was really going on in schools. I also found that promoting inclusive cultures and practices among teachers was challenging, but exciting. Likewise, I came to the conclusion that any changes implemented by the educational systems would not become a reality if teachers, other professionals and any other member of the educational communities were not actively engaged in them. In my opinion, inclusive systems and schools would not be possible until efforts were concentrated on teachers’ professional development and school organizational improvement.

I, therefore, began to search for relevant theories and knowledge about the conditions required for an educational community to become more inclusive, and about how other researchers have promoted inclusive education in regular schools.

Deepening my knowledge about attention to diversity and inclusive education

Before moving on, I would like to explain that the phrase ‘attention to diversity’ is a term broadly used in Latin America and Spain, and goes beyond inclusive education in a number of ways. Although throughout the thesis I use both terms, I would like to devote this section to explaining the subtle distinctions that, in my opinion, characterise each concept.

During meetings and seminars on attention to diversity organized by UNESCO, I had the privilege to learn from people who are actively committed to inclusive education at national and international levels. I listened to teachers, other professionals and representatives of the Ministries of Education about their concerns and their achievements. I was also enriched by the knowledge that academics, researchers and representatives of international organizations generously shared with me. I observed them interchanging their knowledge and building up friendships and support networks. The strong personalities and beliefs on attention to diversity of some of them made me reflect on my own commitment to education. All of which had been a crucial experience for me at an early age.

Above all, my knowledge and engagement with the idea of ‘*attention to diversity*’ was made possible thanks to the professional and personal relationship that Rosa Blanco, the UNESCO specialist, and I developed during the years we worked together. She was the one who introduced me to the idea that each person is unique. As she would put it, every child goes into school with her ‘*backpack*’, full of her life history, expectations, motivations, feelings and emotions, skills and interests; and schools have the obligation to engage children in learning experiences that are meaningful for them (Blanco, 2005). She strongly states that there are no children who are ‘*unsuitable*’ for schools, but schools that are ‘*unsuitable*’ for children, because they do not have the conditions to respond to their individual characteristics and needs. She argues:

“(...) it is the school that should adapt itself to the needs of the students and not the students who adapt to the requirements of the school.”

(Blanco, 2000: 41)

Her principles, as I see them now, are directly related to the philosophy behind the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). The *Index* is a set of materials which were developed over a period of three years under the coordination of the Professors Mel Ainscow and Tony Booth by

a team consisting of teachers, parents, members of school councils, researchers and representatives of organizations of disabled people with experience in inclusive initiatives.

From 1997 to 1998, a pilot version of the *Index* was used in six primary and secondary schools in England with the financial support of the *Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE)*. A second version was tested through an action research programme in seventeen schools within four English local educational authorities (LEAs) in 1998–1999. Given its relevance, in May 2000, the Government distributed the *Index* to each school and LEA in England. The use of the materials by schools and LEAs seems to have had a positive impact on the development of inclusive cultures and practices within educational institutions in England.

The UNESCO specialist and I perceived that the process of working with the *Index* was in itself designed to contribute to the inclusive development of schools. It could assist school members in a detailed examination of the barriers to presence, learning and participation faced, in all aspects of their schools in order to minimise them. For this reason, we considered that the material could be useful in the Latin American region. I translated the document into Spanish which was later adapted by Rosa to the characteristics of the regional context.

The translation of the material was important for me at two levels. On the one hand, it provided concrete resources focused on school-based processes of improvement and professional development. This was in tune with my interest and purpose to concentrate on the direct development of school cultures and practices. On the other hand, it opened up a broad literature about attention to diversity and inclusive education for me to explore.

Attention to diversity

As explained previously, attention to diversity is a term broadly used in Spain and Latin American countries. It is similar to the principles associated with inclusive education. I consider, however, that it is a broader concept that responds to the particular characteristics of cultural contexts, and to the structure of educational systems.

I recognise that Spanish authors place a special emphasis on the emotional climate that educational communities need to have in order to respond to the diversity of their learners (Blanco, 2000; Echeita and Sandoval, 2002; Blanco, 2005; Echeita, 2006). In their opinions, the members of schools should feel accepted for who they are. In this way, individual differences are welcomed and embraced as,

“(...) an opportunity to enrich teaching and learning processes and not as obstacles that must be avoided.”

(Blanco, 2005: 175)

Echeita (2006) argues that schools should work to establish among their members, particularly children, a sense of belonging to an educational community, where each person is valued as an equal. I observe that his ideas are based on a strong belief in the role of the community and the social relationships embedded in it to promote social participatory transformations towards inclusion.

In addition, I understand that the concept of attention to diversity has become a theoretical concept that intends to respond to a transformation of the structure of educational systems. These systems, I consider, are characterised by separate educational departments that work in isolation to respond to particular populations in danger of exclusion, for example, special education, intercultural education, education for poor populations, and gender, among others.

This is what I observed in the Chilean educational system. In the last commission, consisting of relevant actors in education of the country, the Ministry of Education suggested that attention to diversity should guide the articulation of policies and educational departments towards interdisciplinary actions, with the purpose of establishing a more coherent and adequate educational response for all (MINEDUC, 2004b).

Attention to diversity requires, therefore, an articulation of the educational system which is guided, I believe, by the *‘social model’* I described earlier. Furthermore, it underlines the importance of creating within schools an emotional climate where each member feels a sense of belonging, and works to construct a community where everyone can learn and participate. For this to happen, efforts to promote attention to diversity cannot be concentrated, in my opinion, on particular school members; it requires the whole school community to engage in a process of development and improvement. In the last decade, some inclusive education authors have stressed this argument that action research approaches can support schools becoming inclusive communities.

The inclusive education tradition

Far from being a unified thinking discipline, I observed that the inclusion movement is diversified with different biases, which have been described by Ainscow, Booth, Dyson and their colleagues as:

“... a typology of six ways of ways of thinking about inclusion:

- 1. Inclusion as a concern with disabled students and others categorised as ‘having special educational needs’.*
- 2. Inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusion.*
- 3. Inclusion in relation to all groups seen as being vulnerable to exclusion.*
- 4. Inclusion as developing the school for all.*
- 5. Inclusion as ‘Education for All’.*
- 6. Inclusion as a principled approach to education and society.”*

(Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006: 15)

I perceive that my interest in the promotion of inclusive education stands on the idea that in order to avoid exclusion and marginalisation and to promote mutual understanding and democratic cultures, schools and their members need to work to minimise the barriers to presence, learning and participation. Besides, considering the Chilean national context, I think that the driving force behind the argument of my research stands on the fact that the Chilean government has assumed the *‘Education for All’* regional commitment to develop more inclusive systems and societies.

Nevertheless, before examining the theories behind the inclusive education tradition more deeply, I must highlight that this discipline has been criticised as being *‘political, subjective and ideological’* by special education scholars and professionals (Brantlinger, 1997: 425). One of the main criticisms relates to the argument that disabled students and those with special educational needs are better educated separately, receiving individual attention from professionals. Among other issues, this argument stands on *‘the deficit model’* described earlier, which is, as Brantlinger (1997) underlines, as *‘ideological’* as any other tradition. This paradigm concentrates on the idea that it is the individual who needs to be transformed.

On the other hand, inclusive education authors, following a *‘social model’*, state that schools and teachers have the resources and the knowledge to create the conditions where students can learn and participate, independently of their individual characteristics. They stand on an

'organizational paradigm' which considers that it is the organization which needs to be transformed in order to adapt to the individual learning needs of their students. This is closely related with the argument behind attention to diversity presented earlier.

In addition, segregationist traditions, I believe, overlook the fact that many schools and teachers have to deal with the diversity of students who are actually already attending regular schools. Furthermore, there are no special schools or additional segregated resources in isolated rural areas and in disadvantaged suburbs in Chile. For this reason, many students are at risk of being marginalised from education, either because they cannot attend specialised schools or because their educational needs are not met by regular teachers and schools.

Strengthening the capacities of schools and teachers to attend to the diversity of their students is one of the main purposes of the theories of inclusive education, and it is central in my research. Besides, by developing the professionalism of school staff and transforming school structures and policies, educational communities could reach other students who have been excluded from education until now. This is one of the reasons why I have concentrated my attention on those theories and research which explore the conditions for promoting transformations in schools and their members towards a more inclusive education:

- engaging school members in inquiry processes to analyse the barriers to presence, learning and participation and minimise them;
- promoting inclusive values;
- establishing a culture of collaboration;
- fostering leadership;
- building up learning communities;
- listening to excluded voices;
- strengthening commitment towards students;

One of the first aspects that attracted my attention to the *Index* was that its authors use the concept of **barriers to presence, learning and participation** to refer to those difficulties experienced by any member of an educational community. These barriers can be caused by the interaction of each person with her context. It recognises that people's lives are affected by individuals, policies, institutions, cultures and social and economical circumstances.

The *Index* material focuses particularly on the analysis of those barriers that emerge from the school cultures, policies and practices. It invites schools to engage in an on-going process of

change and improvement (Ainscow, 2002; Booth and Ainscow, 2000; Ainscow, Booth et al, 2006). In Table 1.1, an example of the dimensions and indicators which school members can analyse through the Index can be seen,

Table 1.1. Example of a dimension, with its associated indicator and questions of the *Index*

DIMENSION A Creating inclusive CULTURES	INDICATOR	QUESTIONS
A.1. Building community	A.1.1. Everyone is made to feel welcome	i) Is the first contact that people have with the school friendly and welcoming? ii) Is the school welcoming to all students, including students with impairments and transient students such as travellers?

Resource: (Booth and Ainscow, 2000)

Going on to review the literature about inclusive education, I came to the conclusion that the aim of inclusion is that school members should engage in a permanent process of cultural and structural change, challenging **their values** and reducing attitudes of marginalisation and exclusion (Dyson and Millward, 2000; Dyson, Howes et al. 2002; O’Hanlon, 2003; Armstrong and Moore, 2004; Ainscow, 2006). So, for example, Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) consider that educational communities should engage in what they refer as processes of ‘*improvement with attitude*’. For them, this involves:

“We articulated inclusive values as concerned with equity, participation, community, compassion, respect for diversity, sustainability and entitlement.”

(Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006: 23)

The promotion of inclusive education, as these authors see it, requires that school members engage in dialogues about these inclusive principles in relation to their context. The common debate aims to agree on those values and attitudes that should characterise their school culture and ethos.

I perceive that another important characteristic of inclusive education is the establishment of a **culture of collaboration** (Kugelmass, 2001; Dyson, Howes et al. 2002). This is intended to promote involvement and participation of the members of a school: amongst students, staff, between staff and parents, and between staff and students, and with the wider community. Of late, inclusive education researchers have valued collaboration between and beyond schools (Howes, Frankham et al, 2004; Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006). For them, the construction of support networks between schools, universities and governmental bodies can promote transformations towards more inclusive schools, educational systems and societies in general.

One particular aspect I would like to stress is that, in many schools, teachers tend to work on their own. However, in order to establish more inclusive cultures and practices, schools should establish the conditions to facilitate collaboration between teachers to plan jointly, to engage in dialogue and to share their experiences (Susinos, 2002; Kugelmass and Ainscow, 2003).

Nevertheless, several authors underline the complexities of school cultures and relationships among staff (Dyson and Millward, 2000; Dyson, Howes et al, 2002a). Therefore, negotiations and consensus of meanings are necessary in order to engage teachers and other educational professionals in collaborative learning processes. It follows that **effective leadership**, committed to the inclusive principles, is crucial in order to create and maintain the conditions that guarantee collaboration and learning (Kugelmass and Ainscow, 2003; Ainscow and Howes, 2006).

Corbett (2001) stresses the importance of establishing open, flexible and communicative relationships amongst staff members. She argues that collaborative relationships can contribute to the empowerment and agency of school members. Therefore, collaboration can promote the **construction of a learning community** where staff and students grow intellectually as well as emotionally (Kugelmass, 2001).

The concept of learning communities is also central in Ainscow's work (1999; 2002; 2004). He highlights the importance of promoting school improvement through teachers' professional development. For this reason, he states that inclusive schools should build up educational communities *"where every member of the school community is encouraged to be a learner"* (Ainscow, 2002: 29). For him, these communities establish a culture of collaborative inquiry (Ainscow, 2006) where staff share, analyse and reflect on evidence gathered in their schools, in order to overcome barriers to presence, learning and participation. Through these social learning processes, teachers and other educational professionals can become *'reflective practitioners'* (Schön, 1983) and improve their practices. At a collaborative level, reflective inquiries could lead to shared understandings and values about inclusion and the establishment of interdependent working relationships; in other words, it could promote collegiality among community members.

The **voices of students, particularly of those who face exclusion**, need to be listened to and considered in the process of the construction of inclusive educational communities (Ainscow, 2002; Ainscow, Howes et al. 2003; Armstrong and Moore, 2004; Ainscow and Ferreira, 2005). Their perspectives can help to analyse relevant aspects which have been overlooked by adults but may be jeopardizing their learning and participation.

Examining students' learning processes, Kugelmass (2001) highlights that inclusive schools share a central philosophy and belief in the value of diversity. She observes that inclusive teachers must have a **strong commitment to respond to the diverse characteristics of their students**. For her, an inclusive culture should be characterised by '*child-centredness*', "a school culture that puts children at the centre of instructional decisions" (Kugelmass, 2001: 47).

In relation to this aspect, Corbett (2001) argues that schools should critically analyse the '*deep culture of inclusivity*', where children feel included or otherwise excluded. For the author, inclusion should be the responsibility and the concern of the whole school. I understand that Corbett's '*connective pedagogy*' stands on the argument that learners should engage in meaningful learning processes that provide them with the capacity to become '*independent learners through their lifetimes*' (Corbett, 2001: 49). O'Hanlon (2003) underlines that children should have access to a variety of learning opportunities to achieve their potential, to develop their capabilities and to contribute to society. For this to be possible, Hart recognises that teachers need to exercise an '*innovative thinking*', which, she argues,

"(...) involves going to work on our existing understanding of a situation - or child's learning - that is causing concern, in the belief and expectation that, if we do so, we will be able to discover new ways forward, even in most seemingly intractable situations. We do this by asking ourselves questions that help to free up our thinking in order to become able to see new possibilities."

(Hart, 1996: xi)

Returning to Corbett's ideas (2001), teachers should be behavioural role models for their students. In order to respond to the '*individuality*' of each learner, she considers that inclusive schools should create responsive climates where relationships between teachers and students is based on respect and communication.

Through the analysis of inclusive education literature, I would like to conclude that inclusive schools are characterised by a central philosophy and strong beliefs in values of respect to diversity, collaboration, participation, equity and solidarity. This common ethos considers the learning process of each individual as central in the school decisions and practices. Inclusive schools become then highly committed educational communities which promote the active participation of teachers, other educational professionals, students and parents, whilst minimising discrimination and exclusion. An open climate of communication and collaboration is established among staff members and students, which leads to the creation of learning communities where

their members are challenged to reflect on the barriers to presence, learning and participation experienced in order to take further steps towards inclusion.

In the last seventeen years, since the end of the dictatorship, the Ministry of Education has worked to widen access to education for all, with, what I consider, successful results. Nevertheless, I perceive that the Chilean government currently faces the challenge of achieving equal quality education for all. In my opinion, inclusive education principles and practices, such as the ones underlined in this last section, could be a key factor in pursuing improvement of quality with equity.

Chilean education system: pursuing quality and equity

The Chilean education system is characterised by its historical background and complexities. It is not my purpose in this section, to describe it in detail; rather, my intention is to link the actions carried out by the Ministry of Education in the last decades with the aspects which are related to attention to diversity, equality and the principles of inclusive education.

In order to understand the situation relating to education in Chile, I first introduce particular measures implemented during the dictatorship, which have jeopardized the promotion of education for all. I then concentrate the attention on the strategies followed by the democratic governments to improve the quality of education and minimise inequality. In what follows, I underline the achievements over the last two decades, in terms of access and equal opportunities for education. I conclude with the tensions faced by the system in general and, particularly by schools, at the time I embarked on my research.

Experimental educational reform during the military regime, 1973-1990

On my arrival in Chile in March 1999, I witnessed a very special moment in the history of the country. The dictator Augusto Pinochet was temporarily detained in the London Clinic while a Spanish judge, Baltasar Garzón was negotiating Pinochet's extradition to Spain to be judged for crimes against humanity. Although this episode ended up with an embarrassing arrival at the Chilean airport where Pinochet '*miraculously*' stood up from his wheelchair and walked, I observed the real miracle in the streets of Santiago. People recovered their hope and their faith that justice would prevail, and they overcame their fear of speaking up and discussed how to construct a real democracy unrestrained by past ghosts. I could sense a resemblance to the

feelings of optimism and expectation I had witnessed as a child during the Spanish transition to democracy.

The dictatorship period, from the coup on the 11th of September, 1973 to 1990, had a strong impact on the management and financing model of the national education system. In 1981, the regime carried out an experimental reform based on the decentralisation of the educational administration to the municipalities following market strategies. Through it, the role of the state transformed from a central role to a subsidiary role. The following principles guided this decision (OCDE and MINEDUC, 2004):

- Municipalities were responsible for administrative matters, while the Ministry of Education continued to have competencies over pedagogical decisions through the regional departments.
- Decentralised administration was thought to be more efficient because it was implemented through a mechanism of individual subsidies. Schools received a subvention for each child or teenager who attended regularly.
- Families had the freedom to choose schools. Based on this premise, competition among schools would directly improve the quality of the service. Inefficient schools would become extinct due to their decreasing enrolment numbers, whereas on the other hand, successful schools would have higher enrolment rates and therefore their efforts would be rewarded with more funds from the state.
- A system of national assessment tests to measure the quality of education, '*Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación*' (SIMCE) was implemented to monitor the achievements of the schools and to make these assessments public (Baez, 1999).

This education system, based on market measures to achieve quality, had a strong effect on maintaining and broadening the gap between rich and poor (Baez, 1999). Furthermore, it did not contribute to the improvement of education in rural areas, particularly for isolated populations with multi-level schools. It seems that equity was not a priority in the dictatorship's agenda.

As described in a report carried out by the Ministry of Education and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OCDE and MINEDUC, 2004), decentralisation also had a detrimental effect on the teachers' labour conditions as well. They lost their status as civil servants, and fell under the arbitrary administration of municipalities. This policy of weakening teachers' corporations was part of a pernicious agenda against their opposition to the military regime. Although democratic governments had worked forcefully to recognise teachers' identity

and role, the culture of mistrust, and therefore authoritarian imposition towards teachers, still persisted in the relationships between teachers and the governing bodies.

Educational transformations in democracy: 1990 - 2007

Transformations in the education system were initiated as soon as the first elected democratic government took over in 1990 under the presidency of Patricio Aylwin (1990-1994). With the fundamental purpose of national reconciliation, the Ministry of Education aimed to respond to human rights and promote social justice through a profound reform of the education system (Baez, 1999).

Since democracy, the role of the state has become one of promotion, in the sense that it has assumed the responsibility for provoking radical changes in the education system. Although decentralisation strategies had been maintained, its purpose has concentrated on articulating mechanisms to connect with the demands and needs of the population. With this idea in mind, the state has focused on reforming the culture and strengthening the capacities of the regional governing bodies (OCDE and MINEDUC, 2004).

Nevertheless, in order to pursue quality of education with equity, the educational policies have concentrated on schools. These policies have materialised by means of universal and specialised programmes towards the promotion of schools' autonomy (UNICEF and MINEDUC, 2004).

School-based programmes to improve quality and equity

The school-based programmes are strategies used by the Ministry of Education to bring about improvements in terms of quality and equity. In order to achieve progress in the quality of education, the programmes supply schools with additional teaching and learning resources. They also promote teachers' proficiencies through in-service teacher training, particularly in curricular subjects, collaborative work and leadership. Teachers also have allocated time for planning and team work. Their purpose is to create the conditions to foster innovative educational processes.

The Ministry of Education also aims to enhance the autonomy of the educational community for pedagogical management. Each school has to develop its own *PEI*⁸, '*Educational Institutional Statement*', to organize its actions and plans. The Ministry of Education has also implemented

⁸ The '*Proyecto Educativo Institucional*' is the document where the mission, vision and the educational purposes of the school are declared.

legislation for the establishment of governing bodies comprising school staff, families and students.

'MECE Básica' and 'MECE Media' were two 'Programmes for the Improvement of Quality of Education' implemented universally in primary education from 1992 to 1997, and secondary education from 1995 to 2000. They were addressed to the total enrolment of the public and subsidised sector⁹, which represents a 92% of the total coverage of the education system (OCDE and MINEDUC, 2004). Schools developed, 'Proyectos de Mejora Educativa' (PME), 'Programmes of Educational Improvement', which were annually assigned by competition and funded by the Ministry of Education.

In addition, the education system has placed great emphasis on establishing equal opportunities for education. They considered inequity was the major debt inherited from the military government. Specialised programmes have been implemented in order to respond to particular populations experiencing exclusion to quality educational opportunities. These programmes are based on positive discrimination strategies to provide resources and infrastructure, and to promote staff capabilities. I summarise below those programmes I consider more relevant in terms of attention to diversity.

- 'P-900', 'the programme of the 900 schools' was implemented in 1990 to respond to the 900 schools with the highest levels of vulnerability and the lowest achievement records in the SIMCE tests. The programme was expanded to 1,200 primary public and subsidised schools, around 11% of their enrolment, and lasted until 2000 (OCDE and MINEDUC, 2004).
- 'Rural Education' was created in 1992 to support rural primary schools with one, two or three teachers (OCDE and MINEDUC, 2004).
- 'Liceo para Todos', 'Secondary Schools for All', started in 2000 with the aim of reducing drop-out figures, especially in schools with high levels of educational and social poverty.
- Mainstreaming programmes (República de Chile, 1994) have been promoted to integrate disabled students into regular schools since 1997. Individual schools or a group of educational institutions can voluntarily enrol disabled students and therefore receive the funds destined for each student to respond to their special educational needs. Through

⁹ Schools in Chile are divided into three categories: private schools with the independency to elaborate their own educational institutional statement and curriculum; subsidised private schools receiving ministerial funding; and public schools.

the individual subventions, the Ministry of Education demands that schools create the conditions to guarantee the maintenance of the programmes in terms of contracting support professionals, adapting infrastructure, and teacher training. 68,820 disabled students attended education in 2004, with 20,746 of them in regular schools. In 1997, the number of integrated disabled students was only 3,365 (MINEDUC, 2004b).

- Of late, the '*Programa Orígenes*', '*Origins Programme*' has been created to implement intercultural and bilingual education in schools for Aymara, Atacameño and Mapuche ethnic populations. The programme is based on the cultural development and strengthening of their communities (MIDEPLAN, 2007).

In recent years, these programmes have become part of the strategic structure of different educational departments in the Ministry of Education. Their implementation and progress have been possible due to the transformation of the principles of the education system towards, what I perceive as, principles of inclusive education. These changes have been promoted by the curricular reform carried out since 1996.

Curricular reforms

Curricular reforms have been implemented in consecutive stages. This began with primary education in 1997, followed by secondary education in 1998, and concluded with the new curriculum for early childhood education in 2000. The philosophy behind the reform stands on the search for an integral development of learners throughout life. The learner becomes central and an active actor in her learning process. In addition, everyone can learn in their own way and rhythm. For this reason, the curriculum transcended from a focus on contents towards a focus on capacity and skills development (UNICEF and MINEDUC, 2004).

The promotion of the values to live together is central in the new curriculum. They are materialised in cross-curricular themes that should be embedded in each area of learning. These themes respond to the values of citizenship, human rights, morality, personal identity, self-esteem, respectful relationships, solidarity, promoting a culture of peace, and respect for the environment (UNESCO, 2007b).

In relation to the educational needs of the populations experiencing exclusion, although they were not considered in its design, special modifications in the curriculum were made to include them. In terms of disabled students, those who are integrated into schools follow the common curriculum, with the necessary adaptations to respond to their educational needs. Norms have been

implemented to regulate the promotion and certification of educational achievements. In addition some text books have been adapted (MINEDUC, 2004b; UNESCO, 2007b).

Referring to ethnic populations, intercultural and bilingual education has become one of the educational modalities of the system. Intercultural education has been included as a voluntary subject for those schools with a high ethnic population. A policy of non-discrimination guides the design of text books. In addition, although it is a recent initiative, some text books are attempting to respond to the requirements of the indigenous languages and cultures (UNESCO, 2007b).

Teachers' professional conditions

The strengthening of the professional conditions and development of teachers was one of the first measures established with the first democratic development. Negotiations of common salaries and working conditions have been guaranteed and maintained through different statutes in 1991 and 1995.

The curriculum for initial professional development has been followed up by the Ministry of Education in universities, and collaboration for the design of a common teacher training curriculum has been initiated (CPEIP, 2007; MINEDUC, 2007b). In-service capacity-building initiatives have concentrated in massive workshops to familiarise teachers with the new curriculum. Other strategies of professional development have been through the promotion of school-based programmes, preparing teachers for collaborative work, shared leadership, and innovative education programmes.

Avalos (2004) underlines that the conditions for professional development implemented by the Chilean government have contributed to a transit from an in-service training based on a '*deficit theory*', which considers that teachers need to be taught what they do not know, towards a continuing professional development aiming to empower and strengthen teachers' capacities through team work and interchange of experiences. Despite the efforts, there is still a long way to go in the reinforcement of teachers' professionalism, self-esteem, autonomy and innovative thinking.

Incentives have been implemented for those teachers who work in isolated rural areas. Teachers engaged in mainstream programmes have been trained in issues related to attention to disabled students. Nevertheless, the perspective behind most of the courses is still embedded in the '*medical rehabilitator paradigm*', therefore teachers do not find them useful in responding to the learning processes of their students (MINEDUC, 2004b; 2004a). Two universities located in areas

with large ethnic populations have developed initial and in-service training programmes for specialised teachers in intercultural education (OCDE and MINEDUC, 2004).

Achievements of the democratic education system

The policies and strategic programmes developed have had a huge impact on the access and expansion of educational opportunities for all. The first achievement was the establishment in 1997 of the '*Jornada Escolar Completa*' (JEC), '*complete school day*', which consists of six pedagogical hours a day, eight periods of 45 minutes. The second achievement was the extension of compulsory education to twelve years in 2004, eight years of primary education and four years of secondary education.

In terms of enrolment and fulfilment of education, Table 1.2 demonstrates the increase in primary and secondary education. In comparison with the situation of the country less than twenty years ago, and the educational achievements of other countries in the region, Chilean progress has been remarkable (UNESCO, 2007b).

Table 1.2. Enrolment and coverage of the Chilean Education System, 1990-2001

Year	Enrolment		Coverage	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
1990	2,022,924	719,819	91.3%	80.0%
2001	2,361,721	850,713	97.0%	85.0%

Source: (OCDE and MINEDUC 2004: 14)

In terms of completing primary and secondary studies, UNESCO underlines that 95% of 15 to 19 year-olds complete primary education, whereas 90% of 20 to 24 year-old students finish the two first years of secondary studies (UNESCO, 2007b).

Considering the purpose to minimise unequal access to opportunities for education, UNESCO observed that the enrolment and completion rates of primary education are almost equal in rural and urban schools and amongst different socio-economic groups. The same tendency seems to apply in the access to primary education for ethnic populations, though, inequalities increase in secondary education. Only 60% of indigenous students complete this level (UNESCO, 2007b).

Despite these achievements, the Chilean government is still concerned with the quality and equity of its education system. Recent official reports from the Ministry of Education, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNESCO underline the following challenges.

Challenges faced by the education system

The democratic government continues with some of the marketing strategies implemented during the military regime. It is still financing schools through the system of individual subsidies, with the argument that it guarantees social distribution (OCDE and MINEDUC, 2004). It has provided those schools responding to disabled students with additional individual funds to attend to their special educational needs. At the same time, schools receive the '*beca indigena*', '*indigenous grant*', for each indigenous student who regularly attends.

Nevertheless, this strategy has been proved to jeopardize the stability and continuity of those schools committed to attend to diversity. The individual subsidies do not make distinctions in relation to the particular context of the schools and the specific demands students may require for their learning process. Restrictive funds cause an inability to contract pedagogical professionals to work and collaborate with teachers to support the learning processes of their students (MINEDUC, 2004b). They also impede the creation and maintenance of the conditions for professional development and collaborative work in those schools suffering isolation and deprivation (OCDE and MINEDUC, 2004).

Another tension is observed in the system of decentralisation in the regional departments and the municipalities. Supervision in the regional departments appeared to be unprepared to provide pedagogical support for schools to respond to students' learning processes. Furthermore, these bodies are still characterised by authoritarian and bureaucratic cultures. This situation hinders the autonomy of schools and teachers in responding to the new philosophical principles of the educational reform (OCDE and MINEDUC, 2004).

Furthermore, the lack of financial resources and management expertise of some small and poor isolated municipalities cannot guarantee the continuity of teaching staff and their working conditions (OCDE and MINEDUC, 2004). If schools are in poor municipalities, they cannot count on the necessary resources to achieve high quality education for their members. Therefore, schools in disadvantaged areas would maintain the cyclical exclusion of poor, rural, and, in many cases, ethnic citizens. This is the case of one of the schools engaged in the research; I refer to the situation at the Nelquihue School discussed in Chapter 6.

Facing this situation, it can be seen that there are still huge transformations to be made in order to continue improving an education system that is still fundamentally exclusive. The Ministry of Education has tried to deal with inequalities through different departments and educational programmes. Nevertheless, it has not contributed towards the reorganization of an inclusive

education system with an articulated response to the diversity of its learners (Ainscow, 2004). Furthermore, a recent evaluative report by the Ministry of Education and the OECD has concluded that the educational reform and its principles have not reached the classroom (OCDE and MINEDUC, 2004). Promoting transformations in the way schools and teachers are responding to the learning processes of their students is central to my research.

Purposes and research questions

Committed to the principles of attention to diversity and inclusive education, and faced with the challenges of the Chilean education system, the purpose of my research is to throw light on how schools and educational communities can develop sustainable inclusive policies, cultures and practices. With this in mind, it explores strategies for encouraging schools to become reflective communities which are able to create ways of working that can reach every child, whatever their characteristics or personal circumstances.

The research is guided by a theoretical framework which suggests that inclusive practices are more likely to be developed when those within school communities are involved in collaborative processes of inquiry, reflection and action in order to learn how to respond to diversity. The research questions I address are:

- What conditions are necessary in order to develop collaborative reflective processes in addressing diversity within Chilean schools?
- To what extent do such processes lead to better understanding and practices in relation to diversity?
- How does the researcher's role evolve during, and contribute to, the facilitation of collaborative reflective processes in schools?

Final words

During the dictatorship, non-governmental research organizations promoted action research amongst groups of teachers to analyse their practices and carry out educational innovations (Avalos, 2004). Nevertheless, it seems that action research programmes have vanished under recent democratic governments (OCDE and MINEDUC, 2004).

Therefore, I perceive that my research may foster teachers' professional development and school improvements. This is in tune with one of the political priorities demonstrated by the Ministry of Education; the promotion of autonomy and capacity building within schools in order to create

equal opportunities for learning for all. Transformations achieved at school level, as well as the knowledge gathered from the research, can demonstrate that the promotion of reflective processes have positive effects on the development of school staff's professionalism and school re-organization, with resources that are reasonably available within the Chilean context, even in those schools in disadvantaged areas.

The strategy that guides this research concentrates on the principles of inclusive education and attention to diversity, and analyses whether these values are put into practice by scrutinising the barriers to presence, learning and participation experienced by school members. I argue that this strategy can help teachers and professionals transcend from an '*individual model*' of students' differences, focused on '*fixing*' students' individual '*problems*', towards a '*social model*' which underlines the need to make better use of the resources available in the school and in the local community, in order to respond to students' learning processes.

My personal experiences of exclusion and education as a social process can inform my role as facilitator of the action research process, with the purpose of engaging different school members to participate in the implementation of the approach, particularly those suffering marginalisation. This collaboration can help to understand how schools can become democratic organizations, where each member participates and learns from each other. This can contribute to the development of a country where the diversity of its population is valued as a richness of the society and where every citizen can understand each other and live together.

Chapter 2. Action research as an approach to inclusion

*“I’m one of those who dreams that this can change,
therefore searches to motivate lives to create.”
(Illapu¹⁰, Chilean Folk Group)*

As explained in the previous chapter, with this research I aimed to contribute to the development of educational communities which addresses barriers to presence, learning and participation experienced by its members (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). This involves promoting inclusive values: respect for diversity; community; equity or fairness; participation; sustainability; compassion and entitlement (Booth and Black-Hawkins, 2001; Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006).

The type of research approach chosen should provide the conditions that contribute to the development of an inclusive educational community. Based on the literature of inclusive education, the approach requires the involvement of a community in a sustainable reflective process about their cultures, policies and practices in order to improve how those involved are attending to diversity (Ainscow, 1999, 2002; Booth and Ainscow, 2002; Ainscow, Howes et al. 2003).

In this chapter I first explain the principles and purposes embedded in action research which I consider crucial in the development of inclusive practices in educational communities in Chile. This leads me to explore action research literature, in order to analyse how researchers have dealt with the challenge of research involving people, of engaging them in reflective processes which can promote changes in their lives; and particularly of the power tensions that can arise. I also observe the way that action researchers consider the construction of valid knowledge which could contribute not only to theory but also to practice.

Secondly, I present the model of inclusive action research which I designed as the basis of my involvement in the schools. This model sets out to respond at three levels: individual practitioners, teams of co-researchers, and the educational community. Different action research traditions have promoted reflection in distinct ways and, as I will explain, I have drawn on certain aspects of each tradition in order to develop an approach where, I hoped, individual, group and community reflection could lead to sustainable changes.

Then, in the subsequent section, I use the action research literature to uncover the guidelines which a researcher needs to follow in order to facilitate this kind of approach. I conclude the

¹⁰ Album: Momentos vivos, 2000. My translation.

chapter by underlining the difficulties I faced in finding literature on action research processes carried out in Latin American countries. I therefore, consider the contribution which my research could have on the theories of action research, particularly in the area of inclusive education.

Principles and purpose of action research

Action research is presented as a unique methodology, or even a new paradigm (Reason, 1998; Fals Borda, 2001; Reason and Bradbury, 2001) for research involving people. The review of action research literature provided me with the principles and purposes that informed my research and the design of an inclusive action research model that guided my approach. Nevertheless, I need to underline that action research consists of a family of approaches, characterised, among other things, by their purposes and their perspectives about knowledge, power and validity.

In what follows, I present in detail the theoretical and practical features of action research in general, and in particular participatory action research (PAR); co-operative inquiry; action inquiry/action science; and educational action research approaches which informed the methodology I used. I based my research upon the following principles and purposes: research with people, particularly those in vulnerable situations; establishing equal power relationships; promoting collective and individual reflection; fostering change; and producing valid knowledge.

Research involving people, particularly those in vulnerable situations

One of my first concerns when planning my research was the design of a collaborative approach where the members of the schools involved could actively participate. I was particularly aware of this challenge in relation to those individuals experiencing marginalisation.

Examining action research literature, I discovered that it is described as an active approach which involves members of a community in carrying out research in relation to aspects of their lives. Through this approach, action researchers engage individuals, not only in analysing what is happening in their community, but also in trying to change and improve the situation through joint reflection. The involvement of members of a particular group in reflecting on their life conditions and acting to improve those conditions in accordance with their principles, values and expectations is, I believe, the pivotal characteristic of action research.

In addition, action research provides the possibility of adapting processes of inquiry to the particular context where it takes place, and to the concerns and purposes of the individuals involved in the process. In this case, the approach responds to different cultural and historical contexts, as well as, various personal agendas.

Kurt Lewin is generally regarded as the father of action research. From the 1930s, Lewin carried out quasi-experimental research in factories and neighbourhoods guided by the argument that by promoting democratic participation improvements would be achieved in productivity and in social order. He was aiming to provide people in general, and minority groups in particular, with an approach that empowered them to reflect, discuss, make decisions and take actions to improve their lives (Adelman, 1993). This approach, he believed, could help people from minority groups raise their self-esteem and become independent. Action research is perceived, then, as the means for these populations to overcome the historical exploitation and colonisation they have suffered for centuries.

Lewin was interested in studying relationships, with the purpose of solving social conflicts through the promotion of communication, co-operation and democracy. Some authors consider that this kind of approach and the institutionalisation of democratic relationships can only be possible in privileged societies, for example, Norway with a high quality welfare state, where wealth, education and other social services are more equally distributed. These authors describe it as the '*quality of life*' approach (Wirth, 1983 cit Adelman, 1993: 15).

Nevertheless, since the 1970s, in different parts of the world, several researchers have used this methodology to respond to the social transformation of those in powerless situations and in poor countries. Participatory action research (PAR) has been developed with the primary aim of contributing to individuals' lives and their conditions, in order to reach to fair social transformations.

Based on Freire's tradition (1970; 1992; 1996), Fals-Borda (2001) sees PAR as part of the liberationist movements for those populations living in poor and underprivileged regions under economic exploitation and human and cultural oppression. PAR considers that knowledge is the means of achieving power and control over one's life. The main purposes of this approach are, therefore, to support people in becoming aware of their underprivileged conditions; and allow them understand that they suffer this situation because the power of knowledge has been, and still is, under the control of a privileged minority (Reason, 1998; Hall, 2001).

Participatory action researchers claim that people have the right to know more about their life and the factors which affect it, in order to be able to change these factors and their lives. This is necessary for them to defend their own interests as individuals, and as a group, and to gain the self-confidence, agency and the capacities to engage in social transformation (Fals Borda, 2001). In Gaventa's and Cornwall's view (2001), this approach challenges power relations because it addresses the following aspects:

*“Knowledge – as a resource which affects decisions;
Action – which looks at who is involved in the production of such
knowledge; and
Consciousness – which looks at how the production of knowledge
changes the awareness or worldview of those involved.”*

(Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001: 74)

Some educational action researchers find that this approach is relevant for teachers and educational institutions in underprivileged countries, or with educational communities in vulnerable situations. Practitioners engaged in action research experience a professional and personal transformation, and this is particularly important for those educators working in restricted conditions where there may be lack of training; strong hierarchical structures; material constrictions; low expectations; and low self-esteem (Pryor, 1998; Dyer, 2000). Educational action researchers in Latin America have observed that this approach could help teachers to overcome what they call the ‘*culture of silence*’:

*“(…) passive citizenship, a feeling of impotence and lack of engagement,
(…) a concept of learning, which means listening, repeating, memorising
and reproducing (Freire 1970) a ‘culture of silence’.”*

(Garrido, Pimenta et al. 1999: 387)

This approach is particularly significant among underprivileged populations for long term capacity building. It promotes changes in educational practices, and in teachers' understanding and in the theories behind these (Pryor, 1998).

PAR researchers consider that the knowledge produced and the actions carried out would be of direct help to those involved in the process (Hall, 2001; Park, 2001). They also underline that the process empowers people since it engages them in reflection, which contributes to the development of their own knowledge about themselves, their beliefs and values, and their situation in the world. Paulo Freire designates this process as ‘*consciousness-raising or conscientization*’ (Freire, 1970, 1992, 1996), where individuals become aware of their position as

oppressed by others, and work as a group to overcome this relationship between oppressed and oppressors. But, in order to achieve this *'conscientization'* and knowledge production, it is necessary to establish equal power relationships between participants and researchers.

Establishing equal power relationships

Through my literature review I observed that action research promotes community awareness and empowerment for change and transformation, yet, it depends heavily on the researcher's role and involvement (Schein, 2001). My agenda as a Spanish PhD researcher had a strong impact on the design of the approach. Being Spanish in a Latin American country, very specific tensions arise in establishing relationships with the members of the schools. I believe that the shared history of the Spanish colonization, centuries ago, and the re-colonization of Spanish enterprises nowadays, is vivid in Latin American and Spanish minds.

For this reason, I explored how other action researchers had tackled the issues of power in action research processes in order to minimise the tensions which could emerge. It could be argued that any member of an underprivileged group could start this type of research without any support. In most cases, however, a researcher or researchers would begin the process of *'conscientization'* from a privileged position; someone with academic knowledge and, therefore, in a position of power (Reason, 1998). Reflection could then be oriented to fulfil the culture and philosophy of those in power, and therefore the knowledge achieved can be in danger of being manipulated by existing power hierarchies and relationships (Hall, 2001). Thus, power relationships are a matter of consideration, otherwise the groups involved in the research are in danger of being *'colonised'* and controlled by researchers from dominant classes.

Educational researchers express their awareness of the power issues that arise when working in educational communities. Educators might experience inferiority, for instance, when engaged in research with university researchers. Some authors describe this situation as *'academic imperialism'* and underline that it is necessary to acknowledge this tension and to try to avoid it (Elliott, 1991; Garrido, Pimenta et al. 1999; Dyer, 2000). Elliott questions:

“How outsider researchers from higher education can facilitate ‘insider research’ in schools, without fostering dependence on the ‘academic authority’ of the former.”

(Elliott, 1991: 13)

Tensions and communication barriers may arise in this situation which may prevent the development of the process and the establishment of a collaborative relationship and a professional dialogue between the 'outsiders', the researchers, and the 'insiders', the members of the educational community (Elliott, 1991). Therefore, creating and maintaining balanced power relationships are crucial in order to establish a climate of 'knowledge sharing' (Dyer, 2000: 12). A power balance is harder to achieve in those communities where hierarchical structures are strong. Pryor argues that teachers' professionalism, knowledge and status must be acknowledged by researchers. He also claims that researchers must make efforts to move from 'power over the teacher to power with them' (Kreisberg, 1992 cit Pryor, 1998: 226) by involving teachers in the process of decision making and knowledge production.

Stuart, Morojele and their colleagues underline that researchers need to encourage educators to become more autonomous through the action research process by fostering their researching skills and their confidence (Stuart, Morojele et al. 1997). The aim is to promote their autonomy and commitment in order to create a 'critical community' based on equal relationships (Stuart and Kunje, 1998). Aiming to achieve this and to avoid the 'academic imperialism' underlined by Elliot (1991), Stuart and Kunje (1998) consider that participants should actively engage in the action research process from the formulation of the research questions, the collection of data, the analysis of the information until knowledge is constructed and made public to a wide audience.

Reason (1998) underlines that researchers involved in this approach require commitment and need to establish an open dialogue with the people participating in the research. These two conditions could help to develop a more equal collaborative relationship and achieve a clearer and deeper understanding of the context, the people involved, and the issues under inquiry.

Fals Borda (2001) underlines that academics involved in PAR need to go through a process of professional and personal transformation:

“(1) we need to decolonize ourselves, that is, to discover the reactionary traits and ideas implanted in our minds and behaviours mostly by the learning process; and (2) to search for a more satisfactory value structure around praxis to give support and meaning to our work without forgetting scientific rules.”

(Fals Borda, 2001: 29)

Despite this, power relationships are a matter under permanent scrutiny because each member of the group has their own expectations and beliefs about the others, particularly those who have suffered oppression during their lives (Reason, 1998).

For this reason, authors involved in PAR consider it necessary for researchers and participants to engage jointly in the process of on-going reflection and action (Fals Borda, 2001). For Fals Borda, in order to guarantee that the voices and opinions heard are authentic, it is necessary to avoid the manipulation of participants by creating spaces of trust and open dialogue. Both researchers and participants in the research should contribute as '*real 'thinking-feeling persons', ('senti-pensantes')*' (2001: 30), who reciprocally share and value their experiences and views about life. Fals Borda underlines that it is a matter of what Heller describes as '*symmetric reciprocity*', or in other words, the development of mutual respect in order to establish horizontal relationships and create a climate for reflection. This could help to establish relationships of mutual understanding, where each participant can give their opinion, value the others' opinions in an authentic climate of trust, without any fear of manipulation or marginalisation.

Promoting reflection

One of the purposes of my research was to provide the schools with the space to reflect and experiences of empowerment through reflection, collaboration and knowledge development. Through the literature, I observed that reflection was a central aim in action research traditions, though each approach concentrates on the promotion of reflective thinking at different levels. Action scientists and authors such as Dewey and Schön focus their attention on the reflection of individual practitioners, co-operative inquirers, educational researchers and action inquirers contemplate reflection within teams of professionals, whereas participatory action research focuses on community reflection.

The promotion of reflection at these three levels became central to my design of the inclusive action research model I describe later, and therefore, I dedicate this section to the analysis of the way each action research approach addresses reflection.

Engaging people in individual reflection

In order to understand the theoretical framework behind the promotion of reflective practitioners, I focus the attention first on particular authors who have had an impact on my thinking. Firstly I address Dewey's contribution with his theory of reflective thought and action. Secondly, I analyse Schön's ideas about the '*reflective practitioner*'. And finally, I address the '*models of theory in use*' of action science and action inquiry.

John Dewey's **theory of reflective thought and action** considers that any reflection starts when an individual faces an *'indeterminate situation'* (Miettinen, 2000). For Dewey, if people perceive that their behaviour and way of thinking is ineffective, they can engage in a process of *'intellectualization'*, or definition of the problem. By doing this, each individual or practitioner studies the conditions of the situation and forms a working hypothesis.

The practitioner then engages in a second phase, defined by the author as *'reasoning in a narrower sense'*. At this stage, the practitioner carries out *'thought experiments'*, where the working hypothesis is tested, and redefined. The individual then tests their hypothesis through action (Miettinen, 2000: 66). John Dewey underlines that the hypothesis can only be tested in practice, where conclusions and validity are built. He argues that proper reasoning only takes place when the hypothesis is tested in action.

The hypothesis may not be confirmed when tested, though, from Dewey's point of view, any hypothesis implies a learning process, as its result can be compared with the ideas and conceptions about the initial hypothesis.

There are two types of results in Dewey's *'reflective thought and action'*. The first one is the direct result where the situation is modified to solve the initial problem. Secondly, there is the production of meaning and intellectual learning about the situation, that can be used in future problems. In Dewey's view, this second intellectual result is more valuable in the long term than the factual direct one, because it requires the individual to get involved in a reflective learning process that will increase control over their life (Miettinen, 2000). John Dewey's stages of *'reflective thought and action'* seem to be crucial for the development of Schön's *'theory of reflection-in-action'*.

Schön's (1983) argument on the **Reflective Practitioner** is that professionals have based their actions on a problem-solving approach adopting *'Technical Rationality'*. For the author, practitioners have ignored the need to concentrate on problem setting instead of problem solving. In Schön's opinion, professionals need to have a clear idea of the nature of the problem they are tackling before thinking about how to solve it.

The theories developed by Schön (1983) have contributed to my perspective, mainly in his effort to analyse the structure of *'reflection-in-action'*, and the relationships between thinking and acting. The author distinguishes various procedures in practitioners' thinking, the first one being *'knowing-in-action'*. Schön states that *"competent practitioners usually know more than they can say"* (Schön, 1983: viii), showing a tacit *'knowing-in-practice'*. Any professional makes instant decisions in their everyday practice, based on their judgements, experience and certain rules.

These actions, Schön believes, are based on tacit knowledge and in many cases, professionals are not aware of it, they cannot explain how they do things in a particular way.

Through practice, professionals gather a repertoire of expectations, experiences and procedures they use to respond to everyday situations. Over time, this tacit '*knowing-in-practice*' makes professionals more specialized. Nevertheless, at the same time, practitioners can become, less aware of the new situations they face. Therefore, their thinking is no longer challenged. Schön considers that professionals at this stage suffer from '*burn-out*' which restricts them and makes their actions more rigid. In other words, "(...) *the practitioner has "over-learned" what he knows*" (Schön, 1983: 61), and they are then no longer able to define the problems faced.

Professionals' '*burn-out*' could be solved, Schön argues, through reflection on their practices. In some situations, professionals reflect while they act. This is what Schön defines as '*reflection-in-action*'. On the other hand, sometimes reflection is triggered by surprises; something unexpected that challenges professionals to go back to their past actions and think about the familiar aspects of their day-to-day practice. Schön describes this process as '*reflection on knowing-in-action*' (1983: 50) or '*reflection-on-action*'.

In the author's opinion, these reflective processes are the means for practitioners to define the problems and difficulties encountered (Schön, 1983). Through these processes, practitioners revisit not only their practices but also the understandings behind them, they re-conceptualise their understandings, and include them in further actions. They may even re-consider their own role, functions and responsibilities.

When professionals '*reflect-in-action*', they become involved in a process of rigorous inquiry. Schön considers that they develop a new theory of practice, since they view this problematic situation as unique. Through the reflective process, they do not separate the purpose of the action from the way in which it will take place. They do not detach thinking from acting; they are all parts of a whole. This process is context specific and refers to the particular and unique situations practitioners face in their day-to-day life (Schön, 1983).

Practitioners frame problems that they feel they can solve. They become involved in a process of inquiry they feel confident with, and try to not only understand the problem but also to change it. In Schön's view, while practitioners are challenged by a new problem, they use their repertoire of past experiences, concepts, understandings, and actions to frame it. They perceive a new unfamiliar situation from a familiar perspective, and then act as in other situations. In this dialogue with the new situation, they may reflect on the similar and different aspects of the new problem,

and *'make sense of their uniqueness'* (Schön, 1983: 140). Schön argues that the experience gathered during the new process of *'reflection-in-action'* enriches practitioners' repertoire.

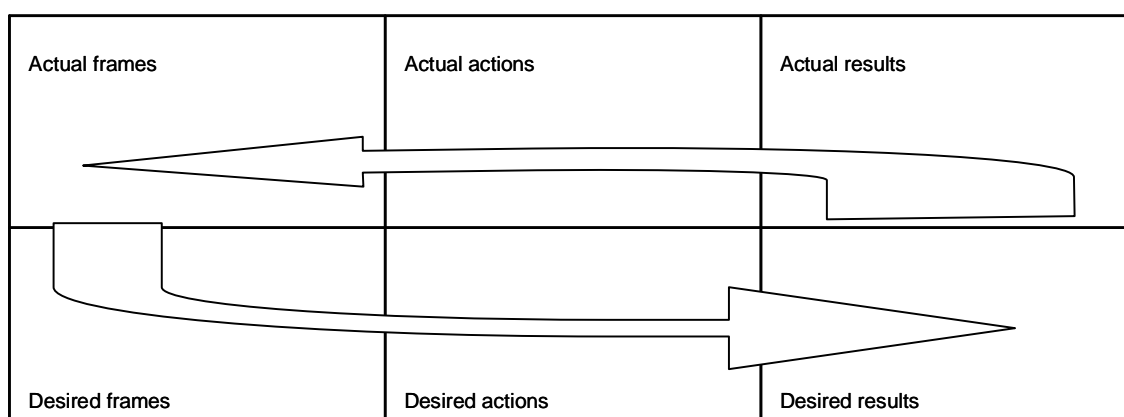
Within the process unintended changes may take place. The evaluation of these changes may involve practitioners looking back and engaging in dialogue with the situation (Schön, 1983: 135). Considering the relevance of the unexpected changes, practitioners may need to find new meanings to the problem and, as a consequence, a new framework (Schön, 1983). The new problem framework will be judged by practitioners within the flow of the reflective inquiry, partly on the basis of the quality and the direction of the *'reflective conversation'*. They may also judge the potential of the congruence and coherence that practitioners may achieve within further inquiry.

Schön's theories underline that experiments are developed through *'reflection-in-action'* in a *'virtual world'*. These *'representations in virtual worlds'* provide practitioners with the possibility of testing their experiments rigorously. The practitioner becomes involved in learning sequences where she can try moves, see the unexpected results of each move, and search for alternative ones. Different experiments and alternatives can be undertaken in the *'reflective conversation'*, avoiding undesirable errors in reality. But finally Schön argues that the validity of the experiment will only be tested by its reliability in representing a real situation (Schön, 1983).

Of late, Rudolph, Taylor and Foldy (2001) have argued that Schön's *'reflection-on-action'* process is a key strategy to maintaining conversations with the experiment. They consider that conversations of *'off-line reflection'* develop skills in three ways. Firstly, they provide the practitioner with the time and space to rethink a particular action. At that point, the practitioner can analyse her feelings and thoughts. She can also evaluate the impact of the actions she was unaware of when they took place.

These reflections provide the opportunity of experimenting without negative impacts on *'on-line'* practice, what Schön calls *'reflection-in-action'*. They also create the appropriate situation where a practitioner can hypothetically experiment with different strategies of implementation, measure their possible impacts in practice and, therefore, develop and re-shape actions and behaviours that respond better to the situations faced in practice (Schön, 1983). The *off-line reflection* focuses on six stages of the *learning pathways grid*:

Diagram 2.1. The learning pathways grid



Source: (Rudolph, Taylor et al. 2001: 407)

For Rudolph and her colleagues, the purpose of the ‘*off-line*’ reflection is to analyse the contradictions between the desired frames and the actual results of the practitioner’s actions. The authors argue that in some cases, practice improvement would mean minimizing the incongruence between the ‘*desired frames, desired actions and desired results*’ and the ‘*actual frames, actual actions and actual results*’.

Systematic ‘*reflection-in-action*’ and ‘*off-line reflection*’ may provide the practitioner with the courage to manage uncertainties, and the flexibility and openness to consider a variety of alternative explanations, thus a less biased view. This distinctive rigour would be seen as a never-ending-process where each practitioner is constantly challenging her theories about practice (Schön, 1983: 164).

Nevertheless, although the practitioner’s attitude towards reflection might be open, she can still be biased by her own perspective, trying to move towards familiar territories and not seeing the new paths issued by the experiment. In Schön’s opinion, some of the limitations to ‘*reflection-in-action*’ and ‘*reflection-on-action*’ are then related by the sense of vulnerability of the practitioner. This sense of vulnerability may prevent her being able to reflect on her role, the problem setting and her underlying theory of action. Her defensive attitude to protect her sense of vulnerability prevents herself from being open to uncertainties, errors or surprises which provoke her reflection (Schön, 1983: 229). This is considered by action science and action inquiry authors as the ‘*defensive mechanisms*’ used by practitioners to justify their actions.

The central aspect of the **Models of Theories of Action** in action science is that the actor's behaviour is determined by two types of theories:

“(...) espoused theories, which are those an individual claims to follow, and theories-in-use that can be inferred from action.”

(Reason, 1998: 273)

Argyris and his colleagues consider that the gap between ‘*espoused theories*’ and ‘*theories-in-action*’ can become explicit through reflection on action, as Rudolph, Taylor and Foldy (2001) try to unravel with their ‘*learning pathways grid*’. Nevertheless, one of the difficulties underlined by action science is the ‘*defensive personal mechanisms*’ used to justify actions (Argyris, Putnam et al. 1985; Reason, 1998). For this reason, the authors argue that it is necessary to reflect on the strategies for action, as well as the assumptions behind the actions, the ‘*governing variables*’ (Reason, 1998: 274).

The authors distinguish between the two theories of action. ‘*Model I*’ is a defensive theory that hinders reflection; and a normative theory, or ‘*Model II*’, which encourages an open attitude towards research. The authors express that under ‘*Model I*’ conditions, practitioners can transform those aspects which do not threaten their underlying assumptions and rules. They can also change those issues that cannot be ‘*camouflaged*’ (Argyris, Putnam et al. 1985). Nevertheless, it would not be possible to transform those considerations which challenge their governing frames. These aspects would be considered a threat to their professionalism and to the organization; therefore their behaviour would be defensive, blaming other external factors for the problem.

In order to achieve better solutions to the problems faced, practitioners are invited by Argyris, Putnam and McLain Smith (1985) to engage in a ‘*Model II of Theory-in-Use*’ which would lead them to a ‘*second-loop learning*’, where governing frameworks are challenged and long term real transformations are possible. The authors claim that this ‘*Model II*’ is common as an ‘*espoused theory*’, though it rarely materializes since most practitioners are more used to performing with and working under ‘*Model I, Theory-in-use*’ (Argyris, Putnam et al. 1985). One of the opportunities to challenge these individual ‘*defensive strategies*’ could be, I believe, by the promotion of space for co-inquiry and collaborative reflection.

Involving professionals in co-researcher teams to lead reflection and transformations

The theoretical background to promote co-researcher groups bases on the approaches followed by action inquiry, co-operative inquiry and educational action research. In the following sections, I underline those aspects I considered relevant for the design of my inclusive action research model.

There is an indispensable principle in promoting collective processes where all members are involved, feel respected, and contribute to the transformation of the educational community: promoting the **transformational leadership of a co-researcher team** composed of school members. **Action inquiry** is observed by Torbert as the way to transform organizations and communities into environments for collaboration, self-reflection and research (Torbert, 1989; 1991; 2001). The author emphasises the collaborative aspects of action inquiry, as a means to change institutions and communities. In Torbert's opinion, Argyris's '*Model I and II*' present a binomial negative/positive stage.

'*Transformational leadership*' is considered by Torbert as crucial in allowing an organization to evolve from a '*defensive theory in Model I*', described as a '*single learning loop*' (Torbert, 2001), to the collaborative reflective position of an inquiry-based '*normative theory, or Model II*', what he calls a '*double learning loop*' (Torbert, 2001). However, he attempts to go a step further to a '*triple learning loop*' (Torbert, 2001), where organizational transformations are possible. At this stage, leadership promotes shared reflection; collaborative relationships; continuous challenge of assumptions and actions; and evaluation and feedback to those involved in the inquiry (Torbert, 1989, 1991; Reason, 1998). The leadership's transformational power is based on this '*triple learning loop*', which means empowering others to self-reflect on their behaviour and transform it collectively.

Co-operative inquiry is based on the idea that people can make their own decisions about their lives. This becomes possible if they work in groups through open communication which allows them to free from social restrictions (Reason, 1998). One of the most important aspects underlined in this approach is that people are the '*authors of their own actions*' (Reason, 1998: 264) through their intentions, aims and choices.

Co-operative researchers argue that those involved in this approach are at the same time co-researchers and co-subjects of research (Reason, 1998; Heron and Reason, 2001), each one sharing their own agency, ideas and actions, and all taking part in the process of inquiry,

reflection and action. Despite this, not everyone is involved at the same level or in all aspects of the research. Each member has their own role and contributes differently to the process (Reason, 1998). The argument behind this approach is the belief that good research is conducted *'with'* people, instead of *'on'* people (Heron and Reason, 2001).

Heron and Reason (2001) emphasise that external researchers who initiate a collaborative inquiry must consider three aspects carefully. Firstly, they need to ensure that the participants of the inquiry own the process. Engaging practitioners in the process contributes, the authors argue, to their *'cognitive and methodological empowerment'* (Heron and Reason, 2001: 86).

Secondly, researchers have to promote conditions for participation in decision-making and in all the aspects of the inquiry process, in order to guarantee an authentic participation of the co-inquirers. In this way, in Heron's and Reason's opinion, practitioners experience *'political empowerment'*.

And finally, external researchers should contribute to the creation of an emotional atmosphere where personal distress and anxieties about the inquiry can be freely expressed when they arise, shared among the members of the group and subsequently dealt with, in order to smooth the action research process. The authors consider that this atmosphere can foster the practitioner's *'emotional and interpersonal empowerment'*.

The members of the co-operative inquiry undergo four stages of action and reflection (Reason, 1998; Heron and Reason, 2001):

"Phase 1. Co-researchers agree on an area for inquiry and identify some initial propositions. (...) They also agree to some set of procedures by which they will observe and record their own and each other's experience. (...)

Phase 2. The group then applies these ideas and procedures in their everyday life and work (...)

Phase 3. The co-researchers will in all probability become fully immersed in this activity and experience. (...)

Phase 4. (...) the co-researchers return to consider their original research propositions and hypotheses in the light of experience, modifying, reformulating, and rejecting them, adopting new hypotheses, and so on."

(Reason, 1998: 265-267)

These phases form part of the cycle of reflection and action which should be repeated several times in the process of co-operative inquiry. The repetition of the cycles guarantees the balance in the definition and re-definition of the issue under investigation, considering it as a whole and as different aspects within it. The cyclical process enhances the group's co-inquiry skills, cohesion and self-criticism (Heron and Reason, 2001), and also promotes the validity of the inquiry process, along with the creation of congruous knowledge by each individual and by the group.

Considering the **educational action research tradition**, Elliott points out that through the cycles of democratic 'reconnaissance', planning, action and evaluation, educational practitioners reflect collaboratively on their particular circumstances and educational contexts, focusing not only on products, but more importantly on processes, whereby "*theoretical analysis is subordinated to practical understanding and judgment*" (Elliott, 1991: 53). Nevertheless, Elliott underlines that in order to involve teachers in any educational innovation, it is necessary that educators feel the necessity for change. For educational action researchers, collaborative reflection empowers teachers (Elliott, 1991; Day and Sachs, 2004), fosters professional development, and promotes a learning community (Ainscow, 1999; Kugelmass, 2001; Ainscow, 2002; Day, 2004), described by some authors as a '*critical educational community*' (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Garrido, Pimenta et al. 1999).

Participatory action research and the promotion of collective reflection

In the case of participatory action research, community meetings form a crucial part of the development of the process of group collaboration and dialogue by means of discussion, reflection, motivation and the development of a collective identity (Park, 2001). PAR researchers consider that these instances engage community members in authentic participation by trying to avoid any manipulation (Fals Borda, 2001).

These meetings are crucial at different levels: at a rational level, the members of the group recognise and develop their own knowledge, creativity and thinking; at the emotional level, they share their feelings, their fears and anxieties and feel motivated to act (Fals Borda, 2001; Park, 2001).

In order to provide participants with significant and meaningful data for reflection, PAR researchers recognise that it is necessary to be aware of the language used in the accounts presented. It is important to use an engaging style of writing, combining data with imaginative, literate and artistic interpretations, embedded in the culture of the community (Fals Borda, 2001;

Hall 2001). Any data collection that can provoke discussion, debate and common interchange of feelings and life-stories is considered within this approach, as it empowers community members and gives them voice to tell their own story.

For PAR researchers, community meetings also enable participants to become conscious-free actors in their own lives. Therefore, as Salazar expresses, they can overcome the “*culture of silence based on centuries of oppression, to find ways to tell and thus reclaim their own story*” (Salazar, 1991 cit Reason, 1998: 272).

By these processes of reflection and awareness, I believe, the members of any educational community can experience transformations in their thinking and in their actions at an individual and community level. It is therefore necessary to analyse how action research authors contemplate the possibility of transformations through these processes.

Fostering change

From the origins of action research, Lewin relied on the involvement of actors in a process of systematic enquiry, where all participate democratically and make decisions for future actions. Both research and action are seen as intrinsically connected and only have meaning jointly (Gustavsen, 2001). As Lewin explained: “*No action without research; no research without action*” (Marrow, 1969 cit Adelman, 1993: 8). Lewin placed the emphasis on the participation and the processes more than on the outcomes. The foundation of this approach is “*studying things by changing them - in ‘natural’ situations*” (Adelman, 1993: 15).

Action research is visualized as a social process where research is directly connected with action. The main purpose of this social process is to bring about change and, if possible, improve the situation of the community and its members.

“The fundamental aim of action research is to improve practice (...) The improvement of a practice consists of realizing those values which constitute its ends.”

(Elliott, 1991: 49)

The actors in the research are not only the participants of the change, but also, they are changed by it (Reason, 1998; Stuart and Kunje, 1998; Ainscow, 2002). In this sense, action research may involve the actors in a personal and professional transformation of attitudes, perspectives and values, as well as practice (Howes, Frankham et al. 2004). Shaeffer and Nkinyangi describe action research as:

“Research with a purpose to introduce modifications directly into practice, often in new and experimental forms and often as a ‘community activity’ in which affected participants interact through (and are often trained by) the research process.”

(Shaeffer and Nkinyangi, 1983 cit Dyer, 2000: 3)

In educational contexts, action research has often been focused on teachers’ practices, in-service training and professional development, with the aim of transforming educational cultures and practices (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Elliott, 1991; Day, 1997; Ebbutt and Elliott, 1998; Day, 2000; Day, Fernandez et al. 2000; Zeichner, 2001; Day, 2004).

Instead of concentrating on a particular problem solving activity, this approach tries to promote a new attitude towards educational practices, based on questioning and challenging teachers’ underlying theories, their understanding about educational practices (Davidoff, 1997; Armstrong and Moore, 2004) and their moral purposes (Day, 2000; Sanger, 2001; Day, 2004). It helps to develop an educational actor’s critical self-reflecting attitude in order to transform practices (Lloyd, 2002). Action research in educational communities can also promote the agency and autonomy of their members (Pryor, 1998; Stuart and Kunje, 1998; Dyer, 2000; Sanger, 2001; Somekh, 2003; Walker, 2005) and can even transform their identity (Biott, 1996; Day, 2004).

But action research does not only promote individual changes, it is a social approach focused on understanding and transforming the complex social processes which happen in everyday life, and in this case, in educational communities (Howes, 2001; Howes, Frankham et al. 2004).

Great efforts have been made to engage educators and educational communities in collaborative action research processes in the belief that changes in individual practices can be fostered by organizational transformations and vice versa (Davidoff, 1997; Garrido, Pimenta et al. 1999).

As observed in the previous chapter, inclusive education is embedded in the values of participation and community. For this reason, inclusive action research projects promote community commitment and participation, in order to achieve changes towards more inclusive school cultures, policies and practices (Booth and Ainscow, 1998; Howes, 2001; Booth and Ainscow, 2002; Miles, Ainscow et al. 2003; O’Hanlon, 2003; Armstrong and Moore, 2004; Howes, Frankham et al. 2004; Ainscow and Ferreira, 2005; Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006; Ainscow and Howes, 2006).

Nevertheless, action researchers consider that there is a dynamic interconnected relationship between theory and practice. For this reason, they do not only aim to contribute to changes in practices, but also to produce valid theoretical knowledge.

Producing valid knowledge

Through the review of the literature, I note that action researchers consider that knowledge is socially constructed (Hall, 2001). Peter Park describes three different kinds of knowledge that is developed through PAR, '*representational, relational and reflective knowledge*' (2001: 82).

'Representational interpretive knowledge' embodies the feelings and intentions involved in the interpretations of human experiences and actions. It aims to understand the interaction between the '*knower*' and the '*known*' by changing both. Park (2001) considers this knowledge as part of the PAR knowledge due to its strong link with practice.

Through '*representational interpretive knowledge*' people interrelate and listen to each other, building empathy and mutual understanding, not only emotionally but also rationally. '*Relational knowledge*' is considered by Park as having a crucial role in strengthening community links, identity and solidarity, and the quality of this type of knowledge is guaranteed by the involvement of every member of the community in meaningful reflective processes. Some authors describe it as '*quality as relational praxis*' (Bradbury and Reason, 2001).

The third type of knowledge considered by Park is '*reflective knowledge*'. It is related to the idea that meaningful knowledge must not only understand the world but also try to change it. For the author, this kind of knowledge promotes community autonomy and responsibility (Park, 2001). In Bradbury and Reason's view its quality stands on the relationship between reflection and action, due to the fact that reflection lead to changes which are useful and significant for their practices. They call it '*quality as reflexive – practical outcome*' (Bradbury and Reason, 2001).

As explained earlier, the development of theory and knowledge in this approach is directly related to actions and changes in social processes. There are some authors from other traditions who do not agree with this idea, and therefore reject action research as a scientific discipline. Habermas claims that the creation of theory and that of practice are two unrelated discrete activities (Gustavsen, 2001). In Habermas' perspective, the oppression suffered by people needs to be overcome through theory. Liberalisation may only be possible, in Habermas' view, through theory (Gustavsen, 2001). Martyn Hammersley underlines that a relationship exists between theory and practice, but this relationship is '*less than isomorphic*', and therefore, leads to tensions

(Hammersley, 2002). From his point of view, the only solution is that one of them, either research or practice, needs to be subordinated to the other. For this reason, Hammersley argues that action research is a contradictory term.

On the other hand, PAR authors believe that practice determines the '*praxis-theory binomial*', and the only purpose of knowledge should be to improve practice (Fals Borda, 2001). In their opinion, validity is achieved in relation to the following aspects: common agreements on knowledge reached by the group; transformation and improvement of practice and social processes; and the liberalisation of the lives of those involved in PAR.

Concerning co-operative inquiry, from Reason's perspective, knowledge generated through this approach focuses on '*four 'territories' of human experiences*':

*"(...) knowledge about the system's own purposes (...)
knowledge about its strategy (...)
knowledge about the behavioural choices open to it (...)
knowledge of the outside world (...)"*

(Reason, 1998: 274-275)

Reason (1998) considers that the validity of this approach remains in the development of a collaborative '*critical subjectivity*' which means that the co-researchers put their views into continuous critical self-reflection, acknowledging their perspectives and making them public (Heron and Reason, 2001). Two are the main validity threats underlined by Reason: '*unaware projection*' and '*consensus solution*'. '*Unaware projection*' can be caused as a defence to the anxiety caused by engaging in a collaborative systematic inquiry. The danger is that, due to this anxiety, the co-researchers might deceive themselves by using '*defensive arguments*' and projecting their anxieties onto external factors. The second threat is '*consensus collusion*', whereby the co-researchers try to defend themselves from their anxieties by not considering certain aspects which may challenge their own views (Reason, 1998).

Heron and Reason (2001: 184-185) recommend that by analysing inquiry aspects periodically, and by becoming immersed in regular action research cycles, these threats to validity can be minimised. Through these procedures, co-researchers may have a better idea of their perspective and can express their views and limitations to their readers for their consideration (Reason, 1998).

Lather (1986), and Bradbury and Reason (2001) have concentrated on the types of validity that can be reached through action research processes: *'face validity'*, *'construct validity'* and *'catalytic validity'*.

Lather argues that *'face validity'* may be achieved by involving co-researchers in the analysis, and by receiving member-check and feedback of data gathered and analysed by the researcher. This may guarantee that the information and the conclusions reached are reliable.

Furthermore, theory can only be produced if the researchers assume a *'self-critical attitude'* towards their own assumptions. Lather refers to this as *'construct validity'*. The construction of knowledge may provide then a *'quality of plurality of knowing'* (Bradbury and Reason, 2001) and a deeper understanding of the action research process, the way to facilitate it, and the means to promote reflection in order to achieve changes.

And finally, the achievement of *'catalytic validity'* (Lather, 1986) may be possible if the action research process contributes to *'conscientization'* (Freire, 1970), self-awareness, self-reflection and the self-determination of those community members involved in a process which is useful and significant for them (Bradbury and Reason, 2001).

The principles and purposes presented in this section are at the heart of the inclusive action research model I designed to implement in the schools in Chile. Its structure is based on people; those who would be involved and would actively participate in the process. Inclusive education is about people, community and principles, and this model needed to illustrate that the most important part of the process were the members of the community, myself as facilitator and the relationships and values established between all of us.

Design of an inclusive action research approach

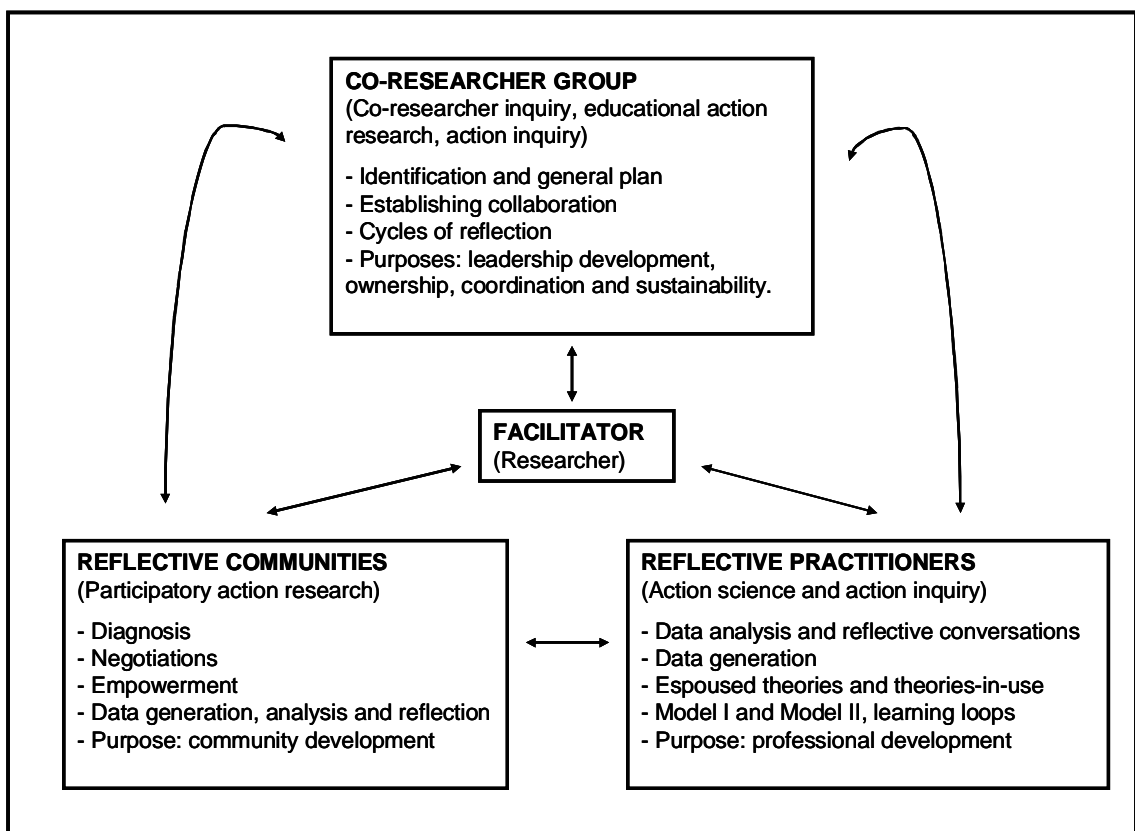
I sought to design an inclusive action research framework which could respond to the principles described earlier. It was important that the framework could adapt to the context and the situation of different educational communities, and from my point of view, it was necessary that school members were involved. For this reason, I understood that the approach needed to respond to their agendas, or in other words, that the members of the communities found the approach useful and relevant for them.

One of my main concerns when designing the inclusive action research model was to make it sustainable over time. The main question I had in mind was: how can inclusive reflective capacities be created and developed and be maintained over time? Therefore, I considered that a

three-level approach, based on the active participation of community members would guarantee the sustainability of the process.

In Diagram 2.2, I present the design of the inclusive action research model which I planned to implement in both schools. I endeavoured to visualise a holistic panorama of those community aspects that could support the transformation of schools towards inclusion. The research model I planned to develop in both schools had different areas of action and promoted three levels of reflection on attention to diversity.

Diagram 2.2. First design of the inclusive action research model



At an individual level, reflective interviews with teachers and other professionals were designed following Schön's theories about the '*reflective practitioner*', and the theories of the '*Models of Theory-in-Use*' and '*learning loops*' from action science and action inquiry. Through this perspective, educators, other professionals and myself would be able to analyse the variety of personal governing frames (Argyris, Putnam et al. 1985), and understand how their '*underlying theories*' (Schön, 1983, 1991) have had an impact on their reflection and in their practices attending to diversity.

At community level, a participatory action research approach was followed to hold community reflective meetings where different members of the educational community could discuss the data

collected; learn from the different learning materials presented; reflect on their practices and the challenges faced; and plan future actions.

In addition, in order to coordinate the approach in each school, I decided to organize and develop a group of co-researchers. This team would have active part in the design of the inclusive process, making decisions about the aspects to analyse, the people to be involved, the methods to be used, and the action plan to be carried out. I followed theories of co-researcher inquiry, educational action research and action inquiry in this matter.

In the following sections, I describe the design of the model at the three levels: the promotion of reflective practitioners, the communities and the co-researcher team.

Design of a model which encourages reflective practitioners

In order to promote inclusive communities of inquiry and practice, I found it necessary to guarantee the development of personal reflection in order to promote **professional development**. While I was planning the inclusive action research model, I took into consideration the conditions for individual reflection which could lead school staff from a '**defensive theory, Model I**' (Argyris, Putnam et al. 1985; Friedman, 2001), or '**single learning loop**' (Torbert, 2001) where individuals try to justify barriers from external factors, towards a '**normative theory, Model II**' (Argyris, Putnam et al. 1985; Friedman, 2001), or '**double learning loop**' (Torbert, 2001) where they take responsibility for the aspects they can change.

As observed in Diagram 2.2, I planned that individual educational staff would embark in '**off-line**' **reflective interviews** (Rudolph, Taylor et al. 2001) with me, where they could analyse different data collected in the school in general and in their classes, and reflect on the gap between their '**espoused theories**' about education and their '**theories-in-use**' in attending to the needs of their students (Reason, 1998; Friedman, 2001). Through hypothesis testing, or '**conversations with the situation**' (Schön, 1983; Rudolph, Taylor et al. 2001), changes in thinking and educational practices could be achieved at a personal level.

I perceived that if individual reflective processes were generated, group reflective processes would be promoted in small groups and in the community. These reciprocal relationships can be observed in the arrows in Diagram 2.2. A synergy could be created where progress at one level would promote progress in others. If challenging thinking occurred, I believed, it would enrich the whole action research process, becoming dynamic and cyclical.

Small groups of teachers, other professionals and other members of the community could also engage in reflective meetings where, through the analysis of the students' and families' opinions, they could experience a model of '**single loop inquiry**'. They would have the possibility of analysing the difficulties faced in their practices and reflecting on how they could change them. They could reach a model of '**double loop inquiry**', by discussing the values and assumptions behind those aspects to be changed (Bradbury and Reason, 2001; Friedman, 2001; Torbert, 2001). These individual '**learning loops**' could also lead to a '**triple learning loop**' whereby the community felt the need to make changes which could be sustainable over time (Torbert, 2001). Then transformations towards more inclusive cultures, policies and practices could be achieved.

Design of a model to promote reflective communities

In these reflective experiences, I planned that members of the community would hold discussions in order to reach an understanding of the particular challenges and issues in relation to diversity in their school. They could reflect on the evidence gathered about the issues they had diagnosed earlier, and design action plans for change. The purpose of the promotion of reflective communities was **community development**.

I assumed that there would be people in both schools: educators, staff, students and parents, who were in vulnerable situations. For this reason, it was essential to establish conditions where school members could speak openly about their educational difficulties and challenges. I adopted these concepts from the PAR movement and educational action research.

Examining the designed model presented in Diagram 2.2, I planned that the **diagnosis** of the barriers to learning and participation would be made by the members of the community in the first reflective meeting. They would have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the concepts of inclusive education, barriers to learning and participation, and action research. In this first meeting, they could share their ideas about the barriers, and collaboratively reach a first diagnosis of the situation of the school and the aspects or indicators they would like to know more about. I would recommend to them that they should follow the indicators suggested in the Spanish translation of the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth and Ainscow, 2002).

Through systematic **collaborative reflection**, I considered that they could understand the barriers to learning and participation faced by students, teachers, staff, and parents. They could also get involved in a learning process, creating knowledge (Lather, 1986; Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001; Park, 2001) about how to respond to these barriers, and change their cultures, policies and

practices to improve them. The approach was planned to challenge their consciousness, their knowledge and their actions (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001).

As presented in Diagram 2.2, I considered that **negotiations** would be necessary at different community levels and in all the stages of the process. Negotiations with headteachers and other members of the governing bodies would facilitate my entrance (Losito and Pozzo, 1997; Stuart and Kunje, 1998; Garrido, Pimenta et al. 1999), the collaboration of different members of the school and their engagement in the inclusive action research process.

Nevertheless, during the whole research process, negotiations would take place any time I established research relationships with school members. I was aware that having the permission of the headteacher or any representative of the governing body would not guarantee that I was welcomed or even accepted in other contexts.

For example, Elliott (1991) claims that researchers need to coordinate negotiations with teachers to get access to their classrooms. This kind of negotiation with teachers does not only give them the power and the autonomy to decide, but also shows the researcher's respect of the teachers' workplace and their professionalism. This approach could help to build up a relationship of collaboration and respect.

As expressed earlier, inclusion is about values of participation, respect and collaboration, and the research needed to stand on those principal values. Miles and her colleagues express this idea of developing inclusion through research by saying, "*the medium is the message*" (Miles, Ainscow et al. 2003: 96). But the negotiation stance was only the first step towards **collaboration**. Therefore, I considered that it was crucial to create the conditions that empower members of the communities to take an active part in the reflective process.

I planned that collaborative reflective meetings would give the participants the chance to learn about inclusive education practices and values, share opinions and experiences with others and analyse the barriers they were facing. By doing this, I believed that participants would be **empowered**, as they would be given a voice to speak about the challenges they were facing and how they were trying to deal with them (Lather, 1986; Biott, 1996; Pryor, 1998; Fals Borda, 2001; Lloyd, 2002; Armstrong and Moore, 2004; Walker, 2005).

They could raise their awareness, and make decisions about changes in practices in order to respond better to the barriers to learning and participation, and plan future meetings or debates for reflection. In addition, the inclusive model tried to include those who were normally excluded

from participation and decision making in the community, and this would give them the right to have their say and take an active role in the research process.

Nevertheless, in order to create conditions that promoted sustainable changes, I observed that it would be necessary for some members of each school to assume a transformational leadership role as participants of a co-researcher team.

Design of a model that fosters reflective co-researcher groups

Ownership and **sustainability** of the inquiry process in the educational communities were major aims of my design. Through the literature, I observed that there are a variety of ways of initiating a co-operative inquiry (Heron and Reason, 2001). In this case, I saw myself as initiating the process, as an outsider researcher. In order to involve the community in a useful and significant research process, a group of volunteers from each community would be essential to become co-researchers and **coordinators** of their school's reflective process.

At the same time, these groups would be responsible for the **leadership** of the future projection of the inclusive action research when I left. This idea was adopted from the co-operative inquiry approach (Reason, 1998; Gustavsen, 2001; Heron, 2001; Heron and Reason, 2001), educational action research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Elliott, 1991; Kemmis, 2001; Zeichner, 2001) and action science (Torbert, 1991; 2001).

The design of the model, as presented in Diagram 2.2, demonstrates that the co-researcher team would engage in the **identification and clarification of the general idea** (Elliott, 1991), would continue by making a **reconnaissance** or **diagnosis** to verify the nature of the situation (Stuart, Morojele et al. 1997) and would underline the factors for change (Ainscow, 2002). This stage would be also crucial for the outsider researcher, since she could acquire information on the conditions and tensions within the educational community, and on the challenges facing those who worked in disadvantaged situations (Dyer, 2000).

After the first diagnosis made by the educational community in the first reflective meeting, the group of co-researchers would specify the issues to be addressed; the data collection methods to be used, such as interviews, observations, surveys, etc.; the classes and events to be observed; and the students, teachers and families to be interviewed. As the purpose of the study would be **transformative** (Heron and Reason, 2001), the co-ordinating group would need to search for information that could lead them to reflection for further changes. I would be in charge of the data

collection. The description of the methods used for data collection and analysis is explained in the following chapter.

In order to build up the participants' capacities, confidence and agency to become involved as co-researchers, each group would be trained to use the methodological approach. Those educational action researchers who have worked in underprivileged countries consider that professional development (Pryor, 1998) is the first step if the researcher wants to guarantee the co-researcher members achieve confidence and agency and feel capable of contributing to the research (Stuart, Morojele et al. 1997; Pryor, 1998; Stuart and Kunje, 1998; Dyer, 2000; Wijesundera, 2002).

It would be necessary as well, to establish the conditions that promote equal relationships for **collaboration**. Day claims that "*collaboration may not always be comfortable*" (1997: 201) because each teacher has their own agenda, different personal 'selves', emotions, interests and personal and institutional beliefs. I considered that it would be necessary to minimise the risk of imposing my own agenda, and to mitigate power tensions among the co-researchers.

For these reasons, a climate of openness and common understanding should be established, where opinions could be openly expressed in order to reach consensus and a common language (Elliott, 1991; Stuart and Kunje, 1998; Garrido, Pimenta et al. 1999; Wijesundera, 2002). In addition, I would have to work consciously to build up rapport, trust and respectful relationships among the co-researcher group (Dyer, 2000; Wijesundera, 2002).

Some aspects which I perceived as important to discuss with the members of these groups would be:

- Design how the research would be implemented.
- Decide how other groups of the community would be involved. I would underline that one of my priorities is to engage students, among them those experiencing barriers to learning and participation (Ainscow, 1999, 2002; Miles, Ainscow et al. 2003; Armstrong and Moore, 2004; Fox and Messiou, 2004).
- Generate an open collaborative process where different members of the community, not only teachers, take an active part (Elliott, 1991).

The group of co-researchers should also consider and plan in advance the time, the responsibilities and the degree of participation that being coordinators require (Dyer, 2000; Howes, 2001). Schools are busy institutions where time and financial restrictions might be of

great consideration, and co-researchers should only get involved in a feasible and realistic **action research plan**.

Once the data has been gathered, and recorded, the group could collectively analyse the evidence, reflect on it and select the information for reflection within the community. They then could organize the reflective meetings in the school. After each community reflective meeting, the group would be in charge of reconsidering the initial plan, and facilitating and developing the reviewed action plans.

As described in Diagram 2.2, the co-ordination group would engage in a **cycle of reflection and decision making** following four stages: agreement of the area for inquiry; application of ideas and procedures; full immersion; and re-consideration of the initial research plan (Reason, 1998: 265-267). Through the research process, the members of the coordination group would repeat this reflection cycle any time they analyse the data gathered.

These meetings would be useful to share experiences, and reduce the participants' anxiety and self-defensiveness (Elliott, 1991; Howes, 2001). The outsider researcher and the other members of the co-inquiry team could share their different professional skills, experiences and insights, promoting reflection and new understandings to improve their practices (Dyer, 2000; Ainscow, 2002). In the light of these new understandings, the action research plan would be considered. The action plan would be adapted to respond to the new challenges faced.

In summary, I find that the interconnections of the different approaches of action research could build up an inclusive action research approach that promoted participation and the involvement of different members of the educational community, especially those facing barriers to presence, learning and participation. I also sought to create an approach that contributed to the educational communities by means of reflective spaces which lead to changes and transformations in their practices, cultures and policies. And finally, the inclusive collaborative action research approach was aimed to be owned by the members of the community and become a sustainable process as part of the educational plans of the schools. This transformational process required, in my opinion, the role of an external facilitator.

The researcher's role in the inclusive action research model

Although my role as facilitator was described during the definition of the inclusive action research approach, I would like to address some aspects of it separately. While I was explaining the approach, I underlined that this had to respond to the agendas of the members of the educational community. Nevertheless, my own agenda was a matter of consideration.

There were two aspects of my concern. The first one was the community members' perception of my '*self-hood*' (Bell, Caplan et al. 1993). As I am Spanish, this could lead community members to understandable tensions against a '*female colonialist university researcher trying to teach them how to do their work, or even how to live their lives*'. I was aware that it was necessary to avoid members of the community experiencing reactivity towards me (Pryor, 1998).

To acknowledge the presence and the impact of the researcher is an issue that authors from feminist approaches consider essential in order to establish an authentic and collaborative relationship in the fieldwork (Finch, 1992; Bell, Caplan et al. 1993; Karim, 1993; McAuliffe and Coleman, 1999). This tradition argues that the researcher needs to describe, acknowledge her situation, her influence on the researched, and the difficulties of being, at the same time, researching and part of the phenomena under investigation.

This discipline presents the different '*selves*' of the researcher. Within the research, they relate their personal and professional lives as part of a whole. Feminist researchers perceive the inquiry as a process of personal learning and professional development. They exhibit their emotions and consider that the knowledge they produce is grounded on the relations and interactions established within the fieldwork. Knowledge is therefore embedded in the specific context and people the researcher has been involved with.

Researchers of this tradition use a '*reflexivity perspective*' in order to develop the research and analyse the phenomena. As they consider that the researcher is one of the main actors of the phenomena, they write accounts about themselves. I perceived the need to use this strategy from the design of the model, with the aim of becoming consciously aware of the power tensions and attitudes that my presence and behaviour might have, and then, to take appropriate actions.

The second aspect is that I saw myself as someone having a double agenda. The purpose of my research was to implement the inclusive action research process in both educational

communities. In this case, data gathering was merely the means to contributing to the reflective process.

But at the same time, the aim of the study was also to get a PhD. I saw myself in a dual role, as facilitator of the research, and as an ethnographer, gathering data to present a reliable and valid case to academic researchers and, therefore, to contribute to knowledge. I was interested in gathering knowledge about the facilitator roles of researchers in promoting action research, described by Elliott as a '*second order action research*' (Elliott, 1991). For this reason, I was aware of the control I needed to keep over the data gathering and analysis, in order to record the process and gain an understanding of what happened during the implementation. In this section, I focus my attention on my role as facilitator; the following chapter addresses my role as ethnographer and the description of the methods used.

Researcher's power

In this research, the action research process was designed and initiated by myself, what Schein describes as '*researcher initiated inquiry*' (Schein, 2001: 228), and this implied major power issues to take into account. Although I have analysed this aspect in earlier sections, I concentrate here on those strategies that researchers can use to minimise the power tensions which can emerge.

Rowan (2001) considers that there are two different types of power that a researcher can exercise on the inquiry. These types of power respond to different individual stages: '*power at the mental-ego stage*' is power over people, whereas '*power at the real-self stage is power with others, or power from within*' (Rowan, 2001: 120). In the second, '*real-self power*', the researcher is involved as a whole person in the inquiry, presenting herself as an authentic and integral person, not hiding anything and not holding back. I noted that these aspects relate closely to the '*reflexivity*' approach used by feminists (Bell, Caplan et al. 1993).

Through the literature on action research, I came to the conclusion that power cannot come from outside, but needs to be generated by the members of the action research group. The researcher has to facilitate the creation, establishment and maintenance of equal power relationships during the inquiry. For this reason, the researcher needs to keep an open attitude to the others and be receptive to what they are saying in order to learn.

Hargreaves' highlights that the outsider researcher must seek a variety of evidence and alternative opinions from different actors in order to present a representative account of the whole

situation (Hargreaves, 1996 cit Day, 1997). In order to achieve this, Maslow (Rowan, 2001) explains that the researcher should have an open attitude to listen and observe, and to maintain a holistic perspective, instead of attempting to discover from the others participants' discourse a partial version of perhaps what the researcher wants to hear. Maslows argues:

“Any clinician knows that in getting to know another person it is best to keep your brain out of the way, to look and listen totally, to be completely absorbed, receptive, passive, patient and waiting rather than eager, quick and impatient. It does not help to start measuring, categorizing or classifying. If your brain is too busy, you won't hear or see well. Freud's term 'free-floating attention' describes well this no interfering, global, receptive, waiting kind of cognising another person.”

(Maslow, 1969 cit Rowan, 2001: 116)

That is the attitude I wished to adopt during the research process in both educational communities, and in both roles, as an ethnographer, during observations, interviews and focus groups; and as a facilitator, not only in the 'off-line' reflective interviews with individuals, but also in the co-researcher group meetings, and the community reflective days.

My strategy would not be to focus on specific problems or particular aspects that could be 'mended' technically, instead my intention was to listen and to observe the whole picture of the situation as to how the educational community was attending to diversity within its context, and how each participant perceived it as a whole phenomenon. The focus was not to work on the technicalities of specific problems, but to work towards cultural and attitudinal changes which would lead to improvement in practices in attending to diversity. This attitude required, I believe, the development of certain facilitation skills.

Facilitation skills

I wanted to act as catalyst; a 'critical friend' who finds ways of supporting educators in reflecting on their practices; analysing their emotional and moral purposes (Day, 2000; 2004), and their underlying theories (Schön, 1983) about their teaching and diversity, to implement changes in their classrooms or their educational community (Elliott, 1991; Stuart, Morojele et al. 1997; Garrido, Pimenta et al. 1999; Ainscow, 2002; Wijesundera, 2002). I planned to contribute to create a 'behavioural world conducive for reciprocal reflection-in-action' (Schön, 1991: 358).

Wadsworth (2001) describes the different facilitation capabilities that a researcher must have in order to:

- facilitate understanding and involvement of the participants in the research, as I have addressed earlier;
- create a dialogic inquiry where every member can express their concerns, reflect on evidence, decide and put in place plans of action, in cyclical stages;
- build a common research process where participants can develop new understandings as a person and as a group;
- and that the inquiry is not only owned by the individual members and by the co-researchers group, but also permeates into the educational community.

Nevertheless, there are certain aspects that Wadsworth does not consider and which, in my opinion, should be crucial in a collaborative action research approach. Although the researcher may take care of the power relationships established within the membership of the inquiry, there is little she can do to minimise the power tensions beyond the boundaries of the group. For example, in the case of a group of teachers involved in an inquiry process, power tensions can come from the different status they have in the school, from the administration, from other forces of the educational community, the educational system, and the national context in general.

Another aspect under consideration is that the researcher needs to be cautious about the expectations she can realistically offer the participants in the inquiry. If the expectations are too high and cannot be fulfilled, this may prevent participants from engaging in further cycles of the inquiry process. Therefore the action research process will fail to become part of the culture and the practice of the educational community.

Self reflective attitude

The aspects described above cannot be taken into consideration, I believe, if the researcher does not take a self-reflective attitude in terms of their practice and the inquiry (Marshall, 2001). Torbert refers to this as *'first-person research/practice'*, and considers it as the first stage necessary for an action inquiry. The purpose is to build up the researcher's own *'awareness, mutuality and competence-expansion'* (Torbert, 2001: 251-252).

Judi Marshall (2001) describes several *'attentional disciplines'* to follow in order to develop a self-reflective inquiry. In the author's opinion these frameworks support the development of the researcher's inquiry as a way of life; a living inquiry.

Firstly, Marshall discusses the cycles where the researcher develops her inner awareness about her own perceptions, meanings and assumptions. The strategies I planned to use to build up my

awareness through a researcher diary are described in the following chapter. Marshall presents this process as '*inquiring through inner arcs of attention*' (2001: 433). Periodic conversations with my supervisors and mentors are part of the methods I adopted, which are also explained in Chapter 3.

On the other hand, the author argues that the researcher also needs to research through '*outer arcs of attention*' (Marshall, 2001: 433), by involving other people in a collaborative research process. This provides the researcher with new opportunities for learning. I decided to keep written reports and systematic field notes which could be shared for member-check and feedback. By following this methodological process, I was aiming to enhance the trustworthiness of my interpretations of the phenomena.

In summary, I wanted to keep the balance and the interconnections between the '*inner and outer arcs of attention*' (Marshall, 2001) in order to broaden my analysis and interpretations and gather knowledge about the process of inquiry; the phenomena under research; the theory of the collaborative research process; and achieve personal and professional knowledge about myself.

The second '*attentional discipline*' recommended by Marshall is '*engaging in cycles of action and reflection*' (2001: 434). Keeping the balance between action and reflection would help me to engage in periodic cycles of reflection on the situation; planning future actions; putting them into practice; analysing the outcomes of the actions; and gathering knowledge. Marshall's theory supports the notion of Schön's (1983) '*reflective practitioner*' which has previously been explained.

Thirdly, Judi Marshall recommends that the researcher needs to be active and receptive. She describes these two attitudes as '*agency and communion*'. The researcher's agency is defined as the '*independence through self-protection, self-assertion and control of the environment*' (2001: 435). Communion relates to the feeling of being part of a community; of a whole, and taking an active role within that community, and Marshall argues that the researcher finds her own meaning by interrelating with others. I observed that it was necessary for me to be aware of these relationships in order to understand my role, my attitudes and my behaviour in relation to the other members of the community.

The self-reflective inquiry attention and action would help me to learn and grow at different levels: at a personal level, at a professional level and at a social level. John Heron observes that the two main results of an action research process are mainly personal achievements:

“Transformations of personal being brought about by the inquiry, which are inseparable from (...)

Transformative skills, the practical knowing-how involved in the domain of practice that is the focus of the inquiry.”

(Heron, 2001: 337)

At a professional level, through a self-reflective inquiry, I could learn about the topic and the technical skills that this type of research requires. At the personal level, I could discover more about my beliefs, my emotions and my assumptions about life; about my cultural and historical roots; my own identity; and about the world (Hollingsworth, Dadds et al. 1997). At the social level, I could become aware of how I establish relationships with others, how I communicate with them, and what I value and respect in other people. And finally, I was not only willing to develop at an emotional and social level, but also at an academic level, by means of creating knowledge.

I considered that the researcher must not only start and facilitate a collaborative inquiry process, and a self-reflective inquiry, but should also contribute to knowledge. This knowledge can then permeate the collaborative inquiry educational community. Nevertheless, knowledge created by an action research process aims to transcend to the academic community of education and research. It also contributes to the changes of structures and systems that benefits people in general, and members of educational communities in particular, specifically those who suffer oppression, poverty, or any other kind of exclusion (Rowan, 2001).

Final words

As I reviewed the literature, I considered that action research responded to the purposes of inclusive education, and I see it as an approach that promotes the participation of the members of a community to develop practical knowledge, in order to take control of their lives. Action research seeks to establish a strong link between reflection and action, and theory and practice, with the purpose of finding practical solutions to the everyday concerns of a community and in general to improve the lives of its members.

I sought to find literature, including Spanish literature, about action research projects on inclusive education in Chile, or Latin America, promoted by researchers from privileged countries, but I did not succeed in this. I needed to broaden my review, and subsequently managed to gather information about inclusive and educational action research projects carried out by British researchers in Africa and Asia. I also had the opportunity of reviewing some literature on inclusive and educational action research projects carried out in other Latin American countries, such as

Brazil, Mexico and Bolivia. Their main purpose was to promote teachers' professional development. A description of these research projects can be seen in Appendix 1.

The gap in the literature which I observed offered me the possibility of making a contribution to knowledge about inclusive action research in general and particularly in Latin America. I can also offer an understanding of action research processes designed by a researcher from a colonialist country, in order to develop sustainable action research processes in collaboration with members of the educational community, taking steps towards inclusive policies, cultures and practices. The model concentrated on the promotion of reflection at three levels: individual, co-researcher group and community, and may also contribute as an approach to guide inclusive transformations in schools, even in those with scarce resources and responding to disadvantaged populations.

In this chapter I have described the design of the methodological approach, based on action research literature. In the following chapter, it is necessary to explain the strategy for data gathering and analysis which I followed during my research.

Chapter 3. The process of data collection and analysis

*“Traveller, there is no road; you make your path as you walk”
(Antonio Machado¹¹, Spanish poet, 1917)*

In earlier chapters I have expressed my personal interest in inclusive education as a way of achieving quality of education for every student in regular schools. I have also contextualised the concept of attention to diversity in the Chilean educational system. In Chapter 2, based on literature relating to action research and inclusive education, I have demonstrated the inclusive action research model which guided the work with two schools in Chile.

Before describing the case studies in the ‘*evolution*’¹² of the approach, I would like to concentrate on the strategies for data collection and analysis which I used before, during and after my fieldwork. In 2004, I had the chance to explore the methods for data collection and analysis in a pilot study I carried out in Manchester, which I describe in the first section of this chapter.

I then present the process of data collection in the fieldwork. The data gathering had various purposes. On the one hand, it was to understand the context of each school, the evolution of the collaborative action research approach and evaluate its impact. In addition, I needed to provide the members of the educational communities with evidence that promoted reflection. The process of data analysis started during the fieldwork and continued for more than a year, while I constructed and interpreted the case studies which I present in later chapters. I conclude by explaining the strategies I followed in order to guarantee the trustworthiness of my interpretations and the knowledge produced.

¹¹ Machado, A. (1917). *The Landscape of Castile. Poems by Antonio Machado*. Translated by Berg, M. and Maloney, D. New Cork, White Pine Press.

¹² I use the term ‘*evolution*’ to describe the natural flow of the process, going backward and forward.

Pilot study in an English school: exploring methodological strategies

The quotation at the beginning of this chapter represents the journey I have taken as an educational researcher in the last four years. As a sociologist, I was introduced to the world of research more than a decade ago. However my adventure as a qualitative researcher in schools began on the 11th of March 2004 in Manchester (López, 2004). During my involvement with Green Park Primary School, I realised that, as in any journey, no matter how much I planned it, I felt I needed to *“make my path as I walked”*. In other words, I had to acquire flexibility in my attitude, performance and methods used and adapt to the busy schedule of school life.

I carried out this pilot study as part of the requirements for my MSc degree in Educational Research. I recognised it as an opportunity to train and exercise myself in those methods I was planning to use in my PhD fieldwork in Chile. Green Park Primary School was characterised by the diverse cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds of its students, teachers and other staff. It attracted my interest because it had voluntarily become involved in the Manchester Inclusion Standards Pilot Project, carried out by Manchester City Council with the professional support of a team from the University of Manchester (Fox and Messiou, 2004; Moore, Jackson et al. 2004). Therefore, I had the impression that the school's educational community was willing to move towards more inclusive cultures, policies and practices.

My study was based on the argument that analysing the school's conceptualisations on inclusion and their relationships with educational practices would be useful to understand the school culture and its priorities in attending to the diversity of its students. In order to research the opinions about inclusive education, I interviewed Y5 and Y6 support assistants. Six students from Y5 and Y6 also participated in an activity where they wrote a letter about what they thought of their class. In addition, aiming to get a flavour of the educational practices, I observed lessons in Y5 and Y6 and in assemblies. I also held informal conversations in the staff room, and similar encounters with students in the playground and in the corridors.

Nevertheless, one of my major interests was to explore the conditions for interviewing procedures necessary to elicit information on the teachers' underlying theories about inclusive education, and their impact on the way they responded to their students. For this reason, I carried out two rounds of interviews with Y5 and Y6 teachers. In the first round, they discussed their values and ideas about teaching in response to the diverse characteristics of their students. In the second round, I presented the teachers with evidence from their previous interview, the observation of their

classes, and the opinions of their students. The purpose was to engage them in reflecting on their understandings of educational practices and consider the consistencies and contradictions between their theories and their teaching.

At a methodological level, the study helped me to become familiar with strategies for interviewing. Instead of straightforward questions, I tried to elicit teachers' ideas by addressing particular aspects of their educational practices. Semi-structured interviews helped me to minimise the imposition of my own assumptions and opinions about attention to diversity on the teachers. Spending time in the school and in classes was useful to build up trust and rapport with them. The two over-time interviews also allowed teachers to feel confident and more open to sharing their concerns and analysing their practices. They also provided me with rich descriptions (Maxwell, 1996) about the school culture as well as their beliefs and understandings about inclusive education.

Gathering evidence from other sources deepened my understanding about the school and the way it was either fostering or preventing inclusive practices. I explored strategies of eliciting the views of young pupils, even from those who faced barriers to learning and participation, and also learned about ethical issues relating to researching with people in general and with children in particular.

Evidence from the students' activities and the participant observations appeared to be a resourceful material to guide the interviews. The teachers considered that the students' opinions had helped them to evaluate their practices. Nevertheless, I observed that only the Y5 teacher used the evidence provided to reflect about her practices. In our second interview, the Y5 teacher found that her students' opinions and the account of the observation of her class gave her tips to include in her teaching in order to reach particular students. In the case of the Y6 teacher, although he found the views of his students useful to evaluate his lessons, evidence did not appear to encourage him into reflection.

I observed as well, that there were other personal factors to take into consideration in order to create the conditions where different teachers could reflect on their educational practices. For this reason, I determined to acknowledge the need to explore other methodological strategies in order to promote teachers' reflection which could lead towards transformations in more inclusive practices.

The experience introduced me to the complexities of data gathering and analysis. It also provided me with experience of interviewing, observing and organizing activities where students could

contribute by giving their opinions about their school. But furthermore, I found a challenging aim for my PhD: to explore the conditions where teachers could reflect and improve the way they were responding to diversity. The inclusive action research model described in Chapter 2 had this purpose. In addition, the methods I present in the following sections are intended to facilitate the approach and analyse its impact in the educational communities involved.

Data gathering

The pilot study provided me with experience and insights about the methodological strategies I had planned to use in the Chilean schools. Although their context and characteristics were far from similar to Green Park Primary School, I considered that the methodological expertise and knowledge acquired could serve me as a compass in *'my new path'*.

In both experiences I was a foreigner: a young female Spanish researcher, and I had to be aware of the effect of my presence; what Pryor (1998) calls *'researcher reactivity'*. Although in this case I spoke Spanish, my mother tongue, I could be in danger of assuming that I also shared the same culture (Ebbutt and Elliott, 1998). My experience of living in Chile for almost five years proved to be useful for me to understand Chilean culture and language. I tried to make efforts to come closer to the members of both schools by including Chilean terms and idioms, and also by softening the way I spoke.

Apart from the language aspect, I also spent long periods of time in the schools having informal conversations with students, teachers and other professionals, which appeared to help build a relationship based on trust and mutual understanding (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In addition, I tried to minimise possible tensions which might arise within the schools due to the research. For this reason, in the first introductory meetings, I distributed a document identifying the ethical baselines, and the code of practice for the action research process (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Hollingsworth, Dadds et al. 1997). Teachers and other professionals could read the document and sign their consent to participate. I tried to use an accessible language, and stressed that they had the right to withdraw if they felt uncomfortable or unwilling to continue.

Although I spent a year planning my fieldwork in advance, there were several factors which provoked changes in the methodological design. They were particularly related to the logistical practicalities of each institution, and the availability of teachers, other professionals and students with busy schedules (Nind, Sheeshy et al. 2002). Furthermore, I also tended to adapt the methodological approach to the demands of the members of each community. Therefore, in the

next sections, some of the differences in the methods used and the population involved in each school can be observed.

I intended to play a flexible role in order to respond to the schools' complex dynamics, which on certain occasions made me feel a strong dependency on my gatekeepers, and a loss of autonomy and control over the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Keeping the balance between flexibility and control appeared to be challenging but at the same time it became an important lesson, which taught me how to rely on and collaborate with my gatekeepers and other members of the educational community, especially in Gabriela Mistral School in Santiago.

This flexibility also helped me to refine and improve the methods used for data collection. Reflections and comparisons about previous interviews enhanced the flow of the conversation and the information gathered in later interviews. My observations and registrations of meetings and workshops became more focused on those aspects of major concern that arose in each school. As the activities with students unfolded, they were re-structured in order to guarantee the active involvement of every student, including those facing barriers to learning and participation.

In the following sections I describe the methods used for data gathering in order to understand the development and impact of the collaborative action research process: documentary analysis; interviews; participant observations in meetings and workshops; and my researcher's diary. I also present those methodological strategies aimed at gathering evidence for reflection: focus groups; activities with students; and participant observations in classes and school life.

Methods of understanding the context, the evolution and impact of the inclusive action research approach

Documentary analysis

In my initial encounters with the representatives of each school, I collected some institutional documents relating to:

- School mission and vision.
- Characteristics of the population attended.
- Structure and organization.
- Timetables.
- Educational plans and programmes. (Gabriela Mistral School)

- Public information about the school in its website. (Gabriela Mistral School)

I carried out a documentary analysis of the documents, using the computer programme *Atlas.ti*. My main interest was to make an exploratory study of the context and characteristics of each educational community, as a baseline to construct a collaborative approach towards more inclusive cultures, policies and practices.

In this first exploratory documentary analysis, I concentrated my attention on those barriers and facilitators to presence, learning and participation that the members of the schools could experience. Through the documents, I tried to remain open to '*unexpected clues*' which could help me to understand relevant aspects of each school (Stake, 1995). In particular, the philosophy and identity of Gabriela Mistral School provided me with a clearer picture of its commitment towards disabled students.

The information from the documents and my interpretations were later completed and contrasted with my own observations and conversations with the headteachers, the educational psychologist in Santiago, and other representatives of Nelquihue School, and the NGO in charge in the south.

Initial interviews

The purpose of the initial interviews was to gather more knowledge about each educational community regarding the barriers and facilitators perceived by its members. As they were carried out after the introductory meetings of the inclusive action research model, I was also interested in learning about the expectations the members had about the process. In Table 3.1. below, the people who participated in the initial and final interviews in each school can be seen.

The teachers and educators who were involved in the two rounds of interviews, were also engaged in different aspects of the inclusive action research process. For example, the Y2¹³ primary teacher and the Natural Science teacher in Gabriela Mistral School and the Spanish teacher in Nelquihue School were volunteer members of the teams that coordinated the approach in each school. I explain the role of these teams in following chapters.

¹³ Primary education goes from Y1 to Y8, ages from 6 to 13; Secondary education goes from Y1 to Y4, ages from 14 to 18.

Table 3.1. Members of each school who participated in the initial and final interviews (chronological order).

Methods for data collection	Gabriela Mistral School		Nelquihue School	
Initial interviews	Ed. psychologist.	3rd Mar	Spanish Teacher. Primary and secondary.	23rd Mar
	Neruda Organization. External support. (2)	18th Mar	Computer Teacher. Secondary.	23rd Mar
	Primary Teacher. Y2.	6th April	Early Childhood Assistant. Level 2.	28th Mar
	Natural Sci. teacher Primary and secondary.	6th April	Early Childhood Educator. Level 3.	1st April
	External support prof.	12th April	Special Teacher. Primary	2nd May
Final interviews	Primary teacher Y2 & Natural Sci. teacher.	19th Aug	Spanish Teacher. Primary and secondary	16th Aug
			Computer Teacher. Secondary.	16th Aug
			Early Childhood Assistant. Level 2.	16th Aug
			Early Childhood Educator. Level 3.	16th Aug
			Special Teacher. Primary	16th Aug

By the time I held the interviews, I had already met most of the teachers and other professionals in the introductory meetings about the inclusive action research model. In addition, sharing school events with them and informal conversations facilitated the construction of an open relationship based on trust and rapport (Spradley, 1980; Cannon, 1989; Frankham, 2001; Sanger, 2001; Corbin and Morse, 2003). As they became more familiar with me, I could also sense that their tensions and reticence towards me diminished (Powney and Watts, 1987).

I decided to use semi-structure interviews (Powney and Watts, 1987; Robson, 1993; Fontana and Frey, 1994) with the aim of establishing a power balance between the interviewee and myself (Corbin and Morse, 2003). As interviewer, I asked open-ended questions based on the aspects I wanted to explore. Therefore, I was in control over the topics to be covered yet, on the other hand, the interviewee had the power to decide what and how much to say.

In addition, I asked them to choose the location for the interview. My flexible attitude enhanced the rapport but hindered my control over the necessary conditions to create an intimate atmosphere in which to talk (Powney and Watts, 1987; Davies, 1997). Most of the teachers in the south met me in the staff room, and those in Santiago in the Technical Pedagogical Unit, which I

describe in Chapter 4. In both schools, the location of the interview limited its duration, since the rooms were used during break times by the rest of the staff. We also suffered numerous interruptions which on occasions made the flow of the conversation difficult. Sometimes the noises jeopardized the quality of the recording. Nevertheless, the conversations lasted mainly from half an hour to three quarters of an hour, and the most important aspects were covered in depth.

Although during the initial meetings each member of staff had been familiarised with the document concerning ethical issues, I started our conversations by asking them for their informal consent and their permission to record the meeting. I then explained the purposes of the interview (Powney and Watts, 1987; Finch, 1993), guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of their opinions (Corbin and Morse, 2003), and informed them about how I would use their information.

The semi-structured interview addressed the aspects presented below:

- Personal history in the school.
- Professional role and responsibilities played.
- Considering attention to diversity, relevant changes in the school.
- Response to students.
- Collaboration with other colleagues.
- Work with support professionals.
- Communication with parents.
- Personal expectations of the inclusive action research approach.

In addition to the recording, I took notes in Spanish throughout the conversations. I used straightforward questions to open up the interview or to address further topics, and probed more deeply during the general flow of the conversation (Powney and Watts, 1987; Robson, 1993; Sanger, 2001). By asking them about their educational practices and their work with other members of staff at the school, I could elicit their ideas about the barriers and strengths they perceived (Pointon and Kershner, 2000).

During the conversation, I also expressed my feelings and impressions. The staff at the schools were aware of my theories and perspectives about attention to diversity because I had spoken about them in the introductory meetings, so by sharing my ideas with them I had tried to establish a more equal and friendly atmosphere; that which Corbin and Morse (2003) call '*reciprocity*'.

Throughout the interview, the interviewee and I were able to share our ideas and open up to the other's values and meanings on education and attention to diversity (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995).

At the end of the interview, I thanked the interviewee for her time and voluntary collaboration. I also reminded her of my willingness to hold follow-up interviews in order to discuss her perception of the evolution of the process in the school.

Final interviews

I followed the same type of approach for the final interviews. Their purpose was to get feedback about the inclusive action research process, and my role as facilitator. The semi-structured interviews covered the following aspects:

- Evaluation of the inclusive action research process.
- Impact of the process in the school.
- Perception of my role as facilitator.

As I had been involved in the school for more than seven months, I recognised that we were more honest and discussed views more critically in our conversation. I played a more active-listener role, leading the interviewee to specific topics which I was interested in covering during the conversation (Powney and Watts, 1987; Holstein and Gubrium, 1995; Davies, 1997). Especially, I wanted to hear their evaluation of the approach and their comments on how to improve it in the future.

I considered it important to share my personal feelings about how I viewed the evolution of the process and the involvement of the members of the community. By sharing my own perspectives, I attempted to demonstrate to the participants my personal commitment to them, the school and the research (Frankham, 2001; Chambers, 1992 cit Miles, Ainscow et al. 2003).

In addition, I carried out numerous individual interviews where teachers reflected on accounts relating to their classes. I followed a similar approach and maintained a similar attitude. In Chapters 5 and 7, examples of these particular interviews are described and analysed.

Participant observations

The information from the documents and the interviews was completed by my own experience as a participant observer of school events. During my collaboration in both schools, I spent time becoming familiar with the atmosphere in the staff rooms, playgrounds, refectories and other school spaces. I also participated in school meetings and other events. I took field notes in Spanish of those aspects I considered as barriers or facilitators to presence, learning and participation.

I also wrote reports in Spanish of the meetings and workshops organized as part of the inclusive action research approach. In these reports, I took notes concerning:

- Date and place of the event.
- Participants involved.
- Purposes and structure of the event.
- Detailed documentation of discussions held.
- Agreements and following steps.

The reports of the meetings organized in Santiago to develop the inclusive action research process were later shared with the educational psychologist and the coordination team for revision and feedback.

During the workshops held in each school as part of the action research process, I took photographs and kept written documents of the activities carried out individually or in groups, like posters and mind maps. At the end of each workshop an evaluation sheet was distributed to each participant to receive anonymous feedback about the activity.

Researcher's diary

The evaluation sheets were completed with the participants' impressions, along with my own opinions and emotions about each step of the approach, which were recorded in my researcher diary. I attempted to maintain a '*self-reflective attitude*' towards the research by periodically recording a diary (Marshall, 2001). During my fieldwork, I tape-recorded my thoughts in Spanish. Back in England, I kept a written diary in English. I reflected on the following aspects of each school:

- Characteristics of the context.
- Planning and coordination of activities.
- Evolution of the inclusive action research process.
- Follow up of the methods used for data gathering.
- Reflections about my role and the relationships established with participants.
- Personal emotions about the process.
- Relationship between my research experience and interpretations of existing literature.

In order to obtain some feedback of my own impressions, I held informal conversations with my mentor in Chile and my husband, which I recorded for further reflection. I also maintained telephone contact with one of my supervisors. These conversations helped dispel any anxieties. As these people knew me personally and professionally, they gave me their opinions of my impact in the schools. After my fieldwork was completed, I continued reflecting with the support of my supervisors through periodical meetings with them.

Apart from my interest in learning about the evolution of the approach, I also gathered evidence that could engage the members of the community into thinking analytically about their school. The methodological strategies followed are described next.

Methods to gather evidence for reflection

As explained in Chapter 2, the principal aim of the research was to promote reflection, individually and in groups, among the members of the educational communities. I had observed during my pilot study that evidence elicited in the school could provide information to analyse cultures, policies and practices. In Chile, I told the teachers and the other professionals in each school that the evidence I gathered could be seen as a *'radiography or a mirror'* in which they could examine the aspects they needed to take into consideration to implement improvement.

The variety of the population involved in the activities can be seen in Table 3.2, and was dependent on the interests of each school. Most of the teachers in Nelquihue School wanted to be observed in order to get suggestions for improving their practices. I observed classes with every early childhood educator and secondary teacher, as well as a great number of primary teachers. In Santiago, the educational psychologist and the members of the coordination team were willing to listen to the opinions of other colleagues; therefore I held focus groups with TPU professionals, and primary and secondary teachers.

Table 3.2. Methodological strategies to elicit evidence for reflection (population involved in chronological order).

Methods of data collection	Gabriela Mistral School		Nelquihue School	
Focus groups	7 students: Prim. Y7 to Sec.Y2.	8 th April	2 groups: 12 stud. each. Secondary Y1A.	22 nd Mar
	4 students with Down syndrome. Pri. Y7 to Sec. Y4.	8 th April	3 groups: 10-12 stud. each Secondary Y1B.	23 rd Mar
	2 primary teachers.	8 th June	3 groups: 8-10 stud. each. Secondary Y4.	4 th May
	4 professionals. Technical Pedagogical Unit.	8 th June		
	5 secondary teachers.	8 th June		
Activities with students	Photography. Primary Y7. Group A and B.	12 th April 7 th June 9 th June	Photography Primary Y 7. Group A.	18 th April 19 th April
	Photography. Secondary Y2. Group A.	7 th June 9 th June	Photography Primary Y7. Group B.	2 nd April 3 rd May 15 th June
	Games. Pri. Y5.	6 th June	Games. Primary Y4.	20 th April
Observations	Primary Class. Y2.	7 th April	Secondary Y1A. History, Maths, Spanish	22 nd Mar
	Primary Y7. Spanish.	7 th April	Secondary Y1B. Carpentry, English, History, Maths, Music, Spanish.	23 rd Mar
	Secondary Y1B. Spanish.	7 th April	Early Childhood Classes – Level 1, 2 & 3.	28 th Mar
	Secondary Y1A. History.	7 th June	Primary Class. Y4.	31 st Mar
	Primary Y5A. Natural Science.	8 th June	Primary Y7B. Course Assembly, Dance, Natural Science, Sports, Mapudungun, Spanish	2 nd May
			Secondary Y4. History, Math, Spanish, Tourism	4 th May
		Secondary Y3 and Y4. Computer, Secretary	5 th May	

I had primarily planned to organize focus groups with students, in order to get their opinions about the school, and the barriers to presence, learning and participation they faced. As presented in the table, students' focus groups took place at the very first stages of the data collection. In Santiago, the educational psychologist selected a sample of ten students from primary Y7 to secondary Y2 who corresponded to the characteristics of the population considering their

different learning patterns, gender, involvement in the students' council, and years in the school. Together with the educational psychologist, we devised a letter to inform the parents about the focus group and to ask for their signed consent. Seven students returned the signed consent and participated in the focus group. The students were extremely eager to talk but after an hour and a half, the conversation had to be concluded, as they had to go back to class. In Nelquihue School, I carried out focus groups with every secondary student in Y1 and Y4 in groups of eight to twelve. When asked, teachers did not consider it necessary to request parents' consent. The focus groups lasted around twenty minutes. It was difficult to get the students to actively express their opinions, though afterwards they said they would like to have this type of activity more often, so their teachers would consider their views.

At the beginning, I introduced myself and explained the purpose of the focus group. I tried to use terms that they could understand (Powney and Watts, 1987). I then asked them for their permission to record the conversation. I clarified that the information would be used by their teachers to enable them to understand their opinions about what they like and dislike about the school, but that their names would remain confidential. I also told them that I would transcribe the focus group discussion and, before presenting the information to their teachers, would provide a copy of the transcription for them to review.

I managed the group so that every participant could have their input, and I also attempted to manage the time in order to cover the most relevant topics (Fontana and Frey, 1994). The students suggested that they felt freer to express their opinions and talk about their teachers to me because I was not one of them. Within the flow of the conversation I asked for clarification and used a variety of techniques for listening and questioning (Powney and Watts, 1987).

The focus groups with teachers and other professionals in Gabriela Mistral School followed the same dynamic and ethical considerations. The indicators of the *Index for Inclusion* selected by the coordination team were used as guidelines for the focus groups. The indicators selected are presented in Chapter 4. I distributed a copy of the indicators to each participant and they read each indicator consecutively and discussed it. The duration of these group interviews was around forty five minutes. I concluded every focus group by thanking the participants for their voluntary collaboration. In a second session, I distributed the transcription and, after reviewing it, the participants gave their permission for it to be used in school meetings and workshops for reflection.

In Santiago, following the educational psychologist's recommendations (Griffiths and Davies, 1993; Miles, Ainscow et al. 2003), I also carried out a focus group with four students with Down's

Syndrome. The group was coordinated with the external support professional who led the conversation. Each student talked about her week in the school, the things they had been doing; those they liked and those they did not like, and they gave their reasons why they liked or disliked particular lessons and teachers. After the session, I made a summary of each student's opinions and presented it to them. The support professional read the summaries out loud, and the students gave their approval to share their views with the teachers and other professionals.

Activities with students

As shown in Table 3.2, other activities to elicit the students' views were also carried out. With younger children, from Y4 and Y5, I was able to use some of their class hours to do the activities with the whole group. One of the activities was *"the message in a bottle"* (Davies, 1999). They had to complete sentences such as *"In class I feel well when..."*, and *"In class I feel bad when..."*. The messages needed to be anonymous. They later put their messages in a bottle.

I also designed a game based on ideas from different researchers who have made materials to research with children (Pollard, 1987; Griffiths and Davies, 1993; Davies, 1999; Messiou, 2001; Nind, Sheeshy et al. 2002; Miles, Ainscow et al. 2003; Fox and Messiou, 2004; Norwich and Kelly, 2004). The children were grouped into teams to play a game based on the dynamic of the *Trivial Pursuit* game. I used a large dice and a big game board drawn. Guided by the students' questionnaires of the *Index*, I wrote part sentences on pieces of paper, such as the following:

- "- When I work in class in couples or in groups, I don't like..."*
- When I work in class in couples or in groups, I like..."*
- When I need help in class..."*
- If I don't go to class, my teacher..."*
- When the children fight, I ...*
- When the children fight, the teacher..."*

Each time a child threw the dice, she had to complete one of the sentences. I tried to create engaging and accessible activities to foster participation. I considered that by writing, children would feel in control of the opinions they wanted to express (Powney and Watts, 1987; Nind, Sheeshy et al. 2002). Likewise, this way they would not be influenced by me or their classmates. Nevertheless, it was a challenge for those students who had difficulty in writing. As I had witnessed during the class observations, some of their classmates offered them their help to write down their views.

Although I tried to create a *'fun atmosphere'*, I also explained to the children that their opinions would help their teachers to improve their school: *"they will know what you said, but not who said it"*. After my explanations, they appeared to be willing to participate because they felt they were going to help their teachers.

With Y7 and secondary Y2 students, I organized a photographic activity based on the ideas of Schratz and Steiner-Löffler (1998). This type of activity has been encouraged of late by inclusive education researchers (Kaplan and Howes, 2004; Miles and Kaplan, 2005; Kaplan, 2006). I worked with each class group for two or three one-hour sessions. In the first session, I asked them to think individually of three positive things and three negative things about their school. The students later agreed in small groups on the three things they liked and disliked, and planned how they were going to represent them in photographs.

During the second session, I accompanied each group around the school to take the photographs, as I wanted to guarantee that each student could take at least one photograph, particularly those who experienced barriers to participating in groups. In addition, I requested that they avoid taking 'negative pictures' of teachers or students they disliked; I told them they might feel offended, so, alternatively, I gave them suggestions to frame the attitudes they did not appreciate in a different way. In the final session, they displayed the photographs in a poster, explaining the reasons why they felt the photographs represented negative or positive aspects of the school. In Gabriela Mistral School, some sessions were coordinated by the educational psychologist and some teachers.

The students' and staff's views represented a powerful resource for reflection. Nevertheless, I felt it was necessary to confront their opinions with my observation of the educational practices, adding then another sphere to consider about the school experience.

Class participant observations

The table demonstrates that I held participant observation of numerous classes (Spradley, 1980; Robson, 1993; Yin, 1994). I went to each class five minutes before it started, and on entering the room, I requested the informal consent of the teacher to observe the lesson, and thanked her for her co-operation. I then asked the teacher where I should sit. Although in some cases the location was not the most suitable to get a good view of the whole room, I considered that, by this gesture, the teacher might feel more in control of the situation. While the students entered the class, I took several minutes to settle down and observe the atmosphere.

During the class, I took notes in Spanish. Note taking gave me the flexibility to participate (Foster, 1996), but my level of participation depended on the dynamic of the lesson. Particularly with the youngest children in the nursery and primary Y2, I had to stop note taking to play an active role in the activities of the class. For these classes, I later made tape recordings in my diary of what I remembered about the structure of the lesson and my impressions. I also tried to analyse how my presence might have influenced the normal rhythm of the class (Foster, 1996).

In my first observations, I felt overwhelmed by all the things that were happening in the class and its complexity (Spradley, 1980) and I was anxious to gather as much information as possible (Foster, 1996). In time, I learnt to focus my observations on those aspects that I perceived as barriers or facilitators to presence, learning and participation, and I developed descriptive observations on the following aspects (Spradley, 1980):

- The flow of the lesson.
- Characteristics of the teacher and the students.
- Relationships and communications between the teacher and the students and among students.
- Resources to support the learning process of the students.
- Particular events that fostered or jeopardized the presence, learning or participation of any student.
- The setting: decoration, seating, boards, accessibility of materials.

I felt the need to write down the structure of the lesson to organize myself and clarify how the general '*cultural domains*' (Spradley, 1980) were related in a chronological sequence. In addition, I kept records of my impressions, my feelings and interpretations while observing (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

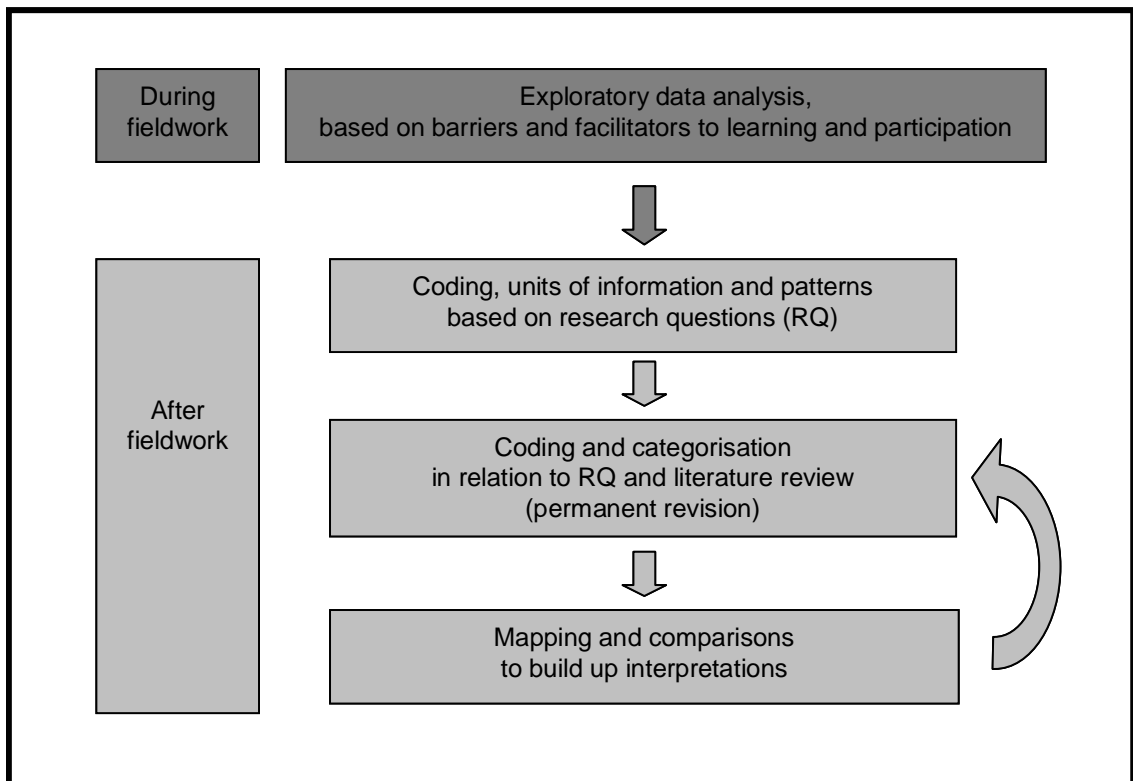
After each observation, I refined my account of the lesson which I presented to the teacher for member checking during the reflective interviews. Through the conversations, I had the chance to clarify certain aspects that I had taken for granted during the observation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), as well as consider any assumptions or misrepresentations I had imposed in my analysis of the events experienced during the lesson (McNamara, 1980).

The data gathered from different sources underwent an on-going rigorous process of data analysis which I describe in the following section.

Data analysis

In the case of this study, data analysis became a permanent process of analytical induction based on grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) that started during fieldwork and lasted over two years (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Robson, 1993). This process helped me to develop theoretical sensitivity about the phenomena under study. Although it is challenging to describe it in a logical order due to its complex nature, I try to present the stages of the analytical progression during and after fieldwork in the following chronological diagram (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Diagram 3.1. Chronological process of data analysis during and after fieldwork based on grounded theory



As observed in the diagram, during the fieldwork I carried out a first exploratory analysis of the data in Spanish. The information analysed derived mainly from the verbatim transcriptions of the focus groups, students' photographs and opinions, and accounts from class observations. The purpose of this analysis was to provide the members of each educational community with evidence for reflection. I based the analytical process on themes related to barriers and facilitators to presence, learning and participation that could be observed in the school culture, policies and practices. In Santiago, the analysis also followed the indicators from the *Index* selected by the school members, and which are presented in Chapter 4.

When the fieldwork was over, I started a second stage of the analytical process in English. In addition to the data analysed in the exploratory stage, I transcribed verbatim the initial and final interviews; the reflective interviews; and my researcher's diary. In addition, I analysed the records of the field notes, minutes, reports and other documents from meetings and workshops. Using data from a variety of sources was useful in order to complete the information gathered via observations, focus groups and interviews, as well as being able to detect possible contradictions which could be questioned and analysed further.

In order to follow up a thorough analytical exploration of the data based on grounded theory, I used the computer programme *Atlas.ti* to select relevant units of information to respond to the research questions. Although the information was in Spanish, I began by coding *in vivo* in English. The English codes went through a process of constant revision and redefinition by questioning them in relation to the research questions. I then identified patterns within the data and grouped codes into categories when they referred to similar themes (Robson, 1993; Stake, 1995; Hargreaves, 1998).

After the first codification and categorisation taking into account the research questions, I felt I needed to go back to the literature on action research and inclusive education. For example, I particularly explored the principles of the different traditions of action research which I analysed in Chapter 2: co-inquiry research, action science, action inquiry, participatory action research and educational action research.

The literature review facilitated a third stage of redefinition of the existing codes and categories. Rules and properties of the nature of each category code were assigned. The diagram of the inclusive action research model presented in Chapter 2 guided me to refocus the codes and categories and the relationships between them. The codes and categories were in permanent redefinition, particularly those codes which had not been included in any of the categories (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Robson, 1993; Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). I developed a list of categories and codes along with their definitions, following the recommendations made by Miles and Huberman (1994). An example of these lists can be seen below.

Table 3.3. List of some codes and sub-codes of the category ‘Reflection’ with definitions and links to the research questions to which they respond

CATEGORY	CODES, SUBCODES AND DEFINITIONS	RQ
Reflection	Ref – underlying theories <i>Perceptions expressed about barriers and facilitators faced to attend to diversity.</i>	RQ 1 RQ 2
	Ref – uth – emotions <i>Emotions expressed about barriers and facilitators faced.</i>	RQ 1 RQ 2
	Ref – uth – values <i>Values expressed that influenced their perceptions about barriers and facilitators faced.</i>	RQ 1 RQ 2
	Ref – uth – educational theories <i>Educational theories and theoretical knowledge expressed that influence perceptions about barriers and facilitators</i>	RQ 1 RQ 2
	Ref – uth – experience <i>Knowledge-in-practice expressed that influence their perceptions about barriers and facilitators faced.</i>	RQ 1 RQ 2

At the end of each analytical session, I wrote an analytical report which described the systematic approach to the data and the process of rigorous analytical thinking (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Yin, 1994; Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). The analytical reports contained information about:

- Source and data analysed.
- Codes and definitions.
- Families, categories and codes included.
- Memos with interpretations of those units of information relevant to the research questions.
- Maps with relationships between units of data, codes and categories.
- Temporary conclusions and steps for future analytical sessions.

The third and fourth stages of the data analysis were carried out almost simultaneously. In the final stages, I concentrated on mapping and establishing relationships to build up explanations and interpretations in English. I drew matrices and networks (Miles and Huberman, 1994) to study causal links, and build up meanings about the conditions in which the inclusive action research process evolved, its effect, and the development of my role as facilitator. Examples of “*time order matrixes*” can be seen in Chapters 4 and 6, where the diagrams of the evolution of the inclusive action research process for each school are displayed.

In the middle of the process of building up interpretations and explanations, I felt the need to return to the literature to further explore the theories of the promotion of teachers as ‘*reflective*

practitioners'. The book "*Reflection in teacher education*" (Grimmet and Erickson, 1988) especially provided me with greater understanding of the process of reflective thinking that helped me to question my data. As a result, I could produce a '*cognitive map*' of the pathways of individual reflection which is discussed in Chapter 8.

During this process of interpretation, the data was questioned and the codes interrogated to reach further explanations (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). Discourse analysis was used to build up the meanings of the processes of individual reflection in the teacher's reflective interviews (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Potter, 1997). I analysed and made interpretations of the teachers' beliefs, values and underlying theories about education and attention to diversity, and I was also able to understand how teachers did or did not reflect on their knowledge and practice in order to make changes.

Interpretations were possible through a process of systematic comparison from different units of data and sources of information of each case. I analysed possible contradictions and inconsistencies in order to construct a more approximate overview of the context and the evolution of the inclusive action research process (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Robson, 1993; Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). The construction of meanings was also enhanced by the analysis of the '*variability of different versions*' (Potter, 1997) and the search for '*alternative explanations*' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Yin, 1994).

Comparisons in each case study facilitated the construction of '*thick descriptions*' (Maxwell, 1996); a coherent rounded view of the phenomena which enhanced the internal validity and trustworthiness of the case. The systematic comparative process between the two case studies promoted the generalisation and the external validity of the approach. The process of data analysis concluded when I experienced saturation of the codes and categories, when regularities emerged, and when the remainder of the data did not contribute to any further understanding of the phenomena (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Throughout the analytical process, the data in Spanish went into a constant deconstruction, while interpretations and meanings were reconstructed in English (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). I was also challenged by this tension between Chilean Spanish data and English meanings while I translated the accounts and quotations which will be presented later in the case studies.

Atkinson (1992) considers that researchers need to be cautious in the way they represent the complexity of social life in a form which is comprehensible for readers. In my case, I could not translate the quotations word-for-word from the interviews, or the accounts of the class

observations. I was challenged by the complexity of translating the meanings, intentions and feelings. I tried to translate the data keeping the meanings which I understood to have been expressed by the participants. Nevertheless, I found it especially difficult to translate those words which were charged with emotion, as I am not as familiar with the emotional nuances of the English language as I am with academic English. In the following chapters, it will be demonstrated how I used footnotes to explain the meanings of particular words and expressions used in accounts and quotations.

The issue of trustworthiness is a particular challenge to forms of research that require people's participation. Although I have described throughout the chapter the strategies I followed to guarantee internal and external validity, I summarise them in the following section.

Trustworthiness

One of the strategies I found useful in exploring the significance of evidence is that of '*triangulation*' (Robson, 1993). Three forms of triangulation were relevant to produce '*rich data*' (Maxwell, 1996):

- comparing and contrasting evidence from both schools, and from different school members: teachers, support professionals and students;
- scrutinising events from different angles by making use of a variety of methods for collecting information, such as analysis of school documents, interviews, activities with students and participant observations;
- and using my own observations, keeping written reports of meetings, interviews, conversations, observations and systematic field notes of the process of inquiry and the methods used.

Schön (1991) suggests that appropriate rigour in the research should focus on validity, by analysing how we know what we claim to know, and on utility, by questioning ourselves as to how useful the research is to the participants. Considering these aspects, I followed various strategies:

- I shared meeting reports, observation accounts and transcriptions with those involved for member-check and feedback.
- I carried out anonymous evaluation sheets after each reflective workshop to gather the participants' impressions and recommendations for further action.

- I used evaluative interviews to analyse the participants' perception of the impact of the action research process and my facilitator role.

In addition, I searched for clues in order to understand the way I was perceived by school members. I became sensitive to events where teachers and other professionals made comments about their perceptions of my role as facilitator, and I present some examples in Chapter 9.

According to Marshall (2001), and as described in Chapter 2, a researcher needs to develop a '*self-reflective attitude*'. I reinforced my awareness by writing and tape-recording a researcher diary about my feelings, ideas, intentions, and challenges, as well as the way I was trying to deal with them. I decided to systematically tape-record them, in order to achieve further understanding of my personal and professional role and the situations I was experiencing.

Furthermore, in order to maintain my ability to stand back from the action research process, I tape-recorded periodical conversations with my supervisors, my fieldwork mentor, Rosa Blanco, the UNESCO specialist, and even my husband in order to gather new insights which could challenge and question my thinking and help me to develop further understanding.

Final words

The methodological strategy designed for data elicitation and analysis suffered from transformations and adaptations to the demands and logistical constraints of the schools involved. The methods sought to respond to a double purpose and agenda. My PhD agenda demanded the gathering of valid information from different sources in order to understand the context of the schools, the evolution and impact of the approach, as well as my role as facilitator. The process of data analysis through grounded theory allowed me to experience a systematic learning progression, where relevant themes emerged from the data which were in constant question and comparison with other sources from the same case study, the other case study, the research questions and the literature.

Furthermore, my action researcher agenda compelled me to elaborate the evidence that engaged the members of the educational communities into reflection. I considered that qualitative data provided explanations about the reasons behind the barriers and facilitators experienced by students, teachers and educational professionals. At the same time, this type of data gave clues as to the actions necessary for improvement. The case studies that follow intend to offer the reader an understanding as to how inclusive collaborative reflective processes can evolve in schools.

Chapter 4. Introduction of the Gabriela Mistral School and the evolution of the inclusive action research process

*“All comes from the school, which incubates in each child the germ of her future (...)
According to how the school is, so the whole nation will be.”*

(Gabriela Mistral, 1916)¹⁴

Chilean teacher and first Latin American to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1945)

This chapter presents a description of one of the schools where the inclusive action research model described earlier evolved. The Gabriela Mistral School¹⁵ is a private middle class school situated in the heart of Santiago, the Chilean capital city. Firstly, I provide a brief introduction to particular aspects of its context which are necessary in order to understand the evolution of the inclusive action research process. My interpretations derive from the analysis of school documents, my field notes, data from interviews, and activities with students.

Secondly, I introduce a general overview of the collaborative action research process carried out during the nine months I worked in the school. I give particular attention to the process of negotiation, coordination and decision making held by different members of the community under the leadership of the educational psychologist and myself. And finally, I explain the roles I played in the school in order to facilitate and support the action research process on the barriers to presence, learning and participation. The analysis is based on reports of meetings, interviews with different participants, and my research diary.

¹⁴ Mistral, G. (1923). "Pensamientos pedagógicos." *Revista de Educación*. II(1). My translation.

¹⁵ Due to ethical reasons, the names of the schools and the persons presented have been changed.

Understanding Gabriela Mistral School

In contrast with its deprived neighbourhood, Gabriela Mistral School appears like an oasis; a colourful open space, full of nature and the sounds of birds singing and children playing. At the entrance, painted with the colours of the school, the porter smiles, kindly greets me and indicates where to go. Around the open pathway, I see some children playing chess. They are not the same children I have just come across in the



Photograph 4.1. School environment.

streets. The faces of these children and their variety of clothes remind me of wealthier districts and well-off families. Walking through the playground and in the corridors, I find people talking enthusiastically in groups, those I pass by smile at me, and say 'hello'. I smile back at them. The Andean mountains witness the playtime, where there are children playing football, among them a boy with Down's syndrome. Some teenagers chat on the terrace of the canteen under the shadow of the trees. The music is loud. A teacher approaches a group of girls who kiss and hug her.



Photograph 4.2. The Andes seen from the school playground.

When I pass the small house where the headteacher's office is, I can hear classical music through the open window, and I see a Picasso picture, the "Gernika", instead of the usual photograph of the Chilean president. The picture, a symbol of peace for those who have suffered oppression, takes me back to my Basque roots. Gernika is a Basque village bombarded during the Spanish dictatorship regime.

The classes are located in one or two storey buildings and surround the playground. In the corridors, coloured posters and other works by the students decorate the walls. I can also see some announcements of the sport and cultural activities which are taking place at the weekends and where the members of the 'Mistral' community are welcome. Painted on one wall, a sentence attracts my attention: "*Despite being a private school, we cannot forget our social reality*".

Inclusive values at the heart of the ‘Mistral’ identity

In my interpretation of its culture, the school had a strong commitment to create an emotional atmosphere based on love and trust that promoted learning processes embedded in personal values such as, responsibility, consequence, authenticity and coherence. These values are related to each other, along with social values such as, democracy, ecology, solidarity, justice, respect of diversity and freedom. The mission statement of the school stated:

“The Educational Statement has a humanistic approach. It is centred on the person who learns to be, to live, to communicate and to value diversity. The transversal axis of this statement is respect and love to people and nature. The purpose is to promote holistic integral personal development for students, teachers and parents through access to science, technology and arts.”

(Actualisation of the Institutional Educational Statement¹⁶, 2003: 1)

While I was familiarising with the school, I realised that the values of inclusion (Booth and Ainscow 2002; Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006) were the essence of its overall approach, its vision and mission. It seemed that this vision was spread through the members of the community, as it can be perceived in the opinions of the students:

“This school opens us different doors where we can get in with no difficulties. It prepares us to face things in a happy but concrete way. We face our problems, our sorrows, our distresses, our reality, but we are given the tools to find the solution. It transmits us values, as well as learning. It gives us a space of freedom, but with respect.”

(Photographic activity with primary students in Y7, May 2005)

As was underlined in the evidence based on the opinions of different school members, this culture seemed to be possible due to the close relationships between teachers and students. I understood that emotions were central to the teachers’ perception of their educational endeavour. This emotional relationship seemed to be a motivational feature for many students as well as for the teachers, who continue learning in order to prepare themselves for their students and their classes.

¹⁶ I have translated into English quotations presented in the case studies.

“Isabel – But the relationship is special, I mean, you can know the teacher not only as a person who teaches you, but also ... she is not a friend either, but a person that...

Cristina – Of course, something more than a teacher. (...)

Alejandra – I have been in other schools and they are very strict (...) but here for example, one goes walking through the football ground and finds such a good atmosphere (...)

Pedro – It is like a community.”

(Focus group, students from primary Y7 to secondary Y2, 8th April 2005)



Photograph 4.3. Taken by secondary students, Y2: “Different opportunities for learning, not only academically”

From the quotations above, it could be perceived that the ethos of the school responded to a broad inclusive culture focused on promoting community building, participation, democracy and quality of education for all. The ethos went beyond the ‘*child-centredness*’ approach (Kugelmass, 2001) towards ‘*person-centredness*’, considering all the members of the community as learners. In my opinion, the philosophy of the school was that of a ‘*learning community*’ (Ainscow, 2002) based on common values, collegiality and the active participation of its members.

Participation channels

Analysing school historical documents, I came across particular situations which encouraged the active involvement of different school members in its development. As a private school, from its origins, the Ministry of Education gave it complete independence over its Institutional Educational Statement and its curriculum. However, it did not receive any ministerial financial support and had to face economical struggles. Families and teachers contributed directly to its maintenance and development, by actively participating up to the point of becoming shareholders and decision makers in the Anonymous Society of Gabriela Mistral School in 1979. The institutionalisation of the Society required the creation of a governmental body, called the Directorate, made up of different members (mainly shareholders), parents and the headteacher. The Directorate was in charge of the decision making about both pedagogical and economical school matters.

This historical situation was a precedent that established a strong structure for community participation, but it was the arrival of a new headteacher at the turn of the new millennium which

drew the educational community to actively participate to achieve deeper transformations: the renovation of the school's overall mission and organization. The school organized different activities where students, families, teachers and other professionals discussed the Institutional Educational Statement.

The school members were seeking an improvement in efficiency and performance and, therefore, decided to implement educational action plans which responded to the specific problems identified. Since then, several action plans have been designed each year with evaluation criteria to measure their achievement. Each action plan was implemented and followed up by a group of teachers under the coordination of a member of the Technical Pedagogical Unit (TPU), whose role is explained later.

In addition to the official channels of participation, evidence from my observations, interviews and focus groups showed that there were informal channels of communication that established a sense of '*learning community*'. There seemed to be a common practice among teachers to talk informally and exchange experience and knowledge. Furthermore, teachers seemed willing to give a more official structure to these informal channels of sharing and learning.

“Patricia – I think so, I think that the experience of our colleagues is well used. We could get more out of it, in a more systematic way. Because as I told you, here it is like “hey, come on, tell me how it worked for you?” But we may lack instances..., something that we have talked about so many times, in the councils, in the councils of primary teachers, to put topics on the table, but concrete matters... (...)

María – Of course, it should not only be during the coffee break, in the corridors, in the playground when you walk and talk about it.”

(Focus group of primary teachers, 8th June 2005)

I found it relevant to address the community participation for different reasons. Firstly, the members of the community, mainly teachers, had official and unofficial channels to participate in the development and the decision making of the educational practices. They had developed a critical attitude and a commitment to improvement. As I understood it, the sense of community and their commitment to take part in it became essential aspects in the promotion and ownership of the collaborative action research process.

In addition, the members of the Technical Pedagogical Unit (TPU) and the headteacher, indicated their willingness to get involved in the inclusive action research process since they were aiming to

establish a sustainable educational action plan on inclusion. Using a participatory approach in order to design an inclusive action plan acknowledged the school structure and practices and above all, the vision of Gabriela Mistral School as a '*learning community*' which was open to diversity.

Openness to diversity

As I described earlier, being a private school with high fees, it did not respond to the surrounding neighbourhood of its location. Nevertheless, it seemed that historically the emphasis on responding to diversity had been developed over the years, at least within certain social classes. As explained above, there was a diversity of members that were involved and took active part in the school organization and decision making; from teachers, parents and, more recently, even students. In addition, the educational community had also opened its doors to different populations of students and families, and therefore had been transformed by the diversity of its new members.



Photograph 4.4. Taken by secondary students, Y2: "*The diversity of the students. Freedom, no uniforms*"

Given its political identity, Gabriela Mistral School became a welcoming community for those children and families who came back from exile during the 1980s. The school embraced those children who felt outsiders while they were living, or even born, abroad, and in addition, felt like outsiders and were disenchanted by their parents' country when they returned.

After democracy was established, the school's commitment to innovative educational experiences to respond to diversity led them to seek a new challenge. At the end of the 1990s, a disabled people association asked the school to integrate disabled children, with the support of professionals from an external team, the Neruda Organization. This organization was recognised nationally by the work of its professionals in supporting regular schools in integrating disabled students. Through a participatory debate, members of Gabriela Mistral educational community concluded that this challenge was in tune with its ethos and the '*Mistral*' identity, and since then, have tried to develop an integration programme as part of its Institutional Educational Statement.

Throughout time, this commitment required changes in the educational organization, among them, a revision of the integration programme.

The revision of the integration programme

This programme seems to have experienced modifications over the last six years. This had increased the population of children defined as having *'special educational needs'* up to 20 students in a total population of 480 by 2005. From its origins, the programme was designed to respond mainly to

disabled students and counted on the support of professionals from the external support team. The school signed a contract with the Neruda Organization that committed it to integrate disabled students in their nursery

and primary classes. This commitment had expanded in the last few years to secondary classes, when the disabled students reached these levels.

Since then, the professionals of the external support team agreed to provide individual support for these disabled students, inside or outside the classes, depending on their educational needs; to assist individual teachers in planning and adapting the curriculum for the disabled students; and to organize sensitisation activities for families and students, and training courses for teachers. Although it was conceived as a whole school commitment, only the families of disabled students were paying for the services of Neruda Organization or other individual external professionals.

In 2003, a group of parents of disabled students got together and voiced their complaints about the integration programme in relation to the service provided within the school and from the external support team. In response to the parents' demands, a number of meetings took place. In one of the working documents based on the reports of these meetings, representatives made several recommendations to the Directorate. They argued that the integration programme should become part of the Institutional Educational Statement.

In addition, they considered that the school should have its own internal support professionals for the students *'with difficulties'*, consisting of an educational psychologist and a speech therapist, dedicated to coordinate and plan for the diversity of the students in the classes. As a result of this crisis, an educational psychologist was contracted as part of the TPU. The role of this team is explained later.



Photograph 4.5. Taken by primary students, Y7: "I like it that people with learning and mental difficulties are accepted, because they are given an opportunity"

The representatives recommended several issues to focus on:

- Support arrangements should put emphasis on intellectual development.
- Periodical staff development by Neruda Organization.
- Extension of the integration programme to all the children with difficulties and special educational needs, not only to those with Down's syndrome.
- Involvement of all teachers in the programme as part of the institutional commitment and their educational practices.

The records of this event, as they appeared in the '*Report of the first meeting with parents of students with special educational needs in the school – 11th August 2003*', showed how the school was trying to move forward in relation to its conception of the ways in which diversity should be addressed. They went beyond a model that was basically medical, concentrated on the individual deficiencies of students, towards a more broadly defined model considering the special educational needs and the '*difficulties*' of other students. Nevertheless, the argument was still concentrated on individual students.

On the other hand, it seemed that the meetings and their reports provided a starting point for the inclusive action research process which I proposed to encourage within Gabriela Mistral School. The representatives considered that the transformation of teachers' work was necessary; they also acknowledged the need for the scope for capacity building and interchanging teachers' experiences and uncertainties. These aspects were at the centre of the framework for my research, as well as the *Index for Inclusion*. The recommendations presented in the report mentioned earlier, suggested that school members were feeling the need, and a willingness, to embark on a process to analyse how their cultures, policies and practices could respond better to students' diversity.

Nevertheless, it must be stressed that while I was working with the school, I could still appreciate some of the tensions that arose in the crisis of the integration programme in 2003. From the evidence I gathered, there seemed to be a tension within the institutional structure to support students, teachers and families. The teachers and the members of the TPU involved in the focus groups appreciated the work done by the educational psychologist, Carola. On the other hand, they did not seem to consider that the external support team were doing a systematic job. Secondary teachers complained about this matter in their focus group:

“Paz –Apart from the work Marta¹⁷ does with Carola now, she is very systematic (...) What can Marta do in that stupid room (support unit)? We, the educators, are those who do a more systematic job, and Carola asks me how Marta is getting on, what she has done, and I review her notebook. With Rosa I’m not very happy, because I don’t have contact with the external support professionals. Some days I see them, some days I don’t. It is annoying! So I cannot see where the work is that they are doing.”

(Focus group with secondary teachers, 8th June 2005)

Some of the difficulties for the coordination of the external support arose in the evidence from the interview with one professional in relation to the allocation of time for team work with teachers.

“Cristian – Eh, but in some way we have managed to coordinate it, with the teachers and with Carola, that is a great achievement. And she helps me (...) coordinating with the subject teachers. (...) This is the hardest part due to the time. Do you understand?

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Cristian – So many times I have to coordinate in the breaks, (...) in the free times. (...) I go to find some teachers (...) More than meeting them, it is ‘catching’ them.”

(Interview with professional of Neruda Organization, 12th April 2005)

The structure of the support did not seem to be the only tension experienced by the members of Gabriela Mistral School who were considering diversity. Educational practices, mainly those of the secondary teachers, were concerns underlined by students, TPU professionals and teachers.

Educational practices addressed to a homogeneous student

In my analysis, I identified that a general concern was that attention to diversity was the commitment of certain individuals of the school, but not all. The members of the TPU in charge of observing classes expressed this worry:

¹⁷ Marta and Rosa are students with Down's syndrome.

“Julio – I have observed all the effort that some teachers make who are always trying new options, creating alternatives, therefore, we have a double reality. (...) I think that there are some teachers who should think about renewing their practices or enriching what they are doing. With my supervisions, one (...) finds very active teachers who organize and manage the group well, and encourage all the children to take part. And there are other teachers who address (...) ‘the chorus of those who listen’, and nothing more, and those who do not understand are left out.”

(Focus group with TPU members, 8th June 2005)

As I interpreted through my conversations and observations, the personal commitment of certain teachers was triggered by getting involved in the integration programme. As teachers in higher schooling phases had recently received disabled students in their classes, adapting their educational practices to their students’ diversity still seemed to be a challenge for them. The disabled students in their focus group stated that the practices of certain teachers provoked unfair situations for them.

“My week was fine. I went into all the classes, I don’t like the class, but I still went in. I’m going to change my school. I don’t like Gabriela Mistral School. I don’t understand anything. Yesterday we had Spanish; we had to mark another classmate’s test. They did not give it to me. I felt bad. I work in the school, teachers have to give me tests, and I do them. I like to read the little book. In Science, I look through the microscope, I see insects, ants. They look big. The teacher doesn’t give me tests in Mathematics, she doesn’t give me notebooks. I feel bad and I get bored.”

(Summary account of Pablo, a Down’s syndrome student, Y7 primary level, 8th April 2005)

These tensions affected the evolution of the inclusion action research model described in earlier chapters, and the decisions made about the members who were involved. The headteacher and the members of the TPU seemed to be willing to become autonomous in the way they were responding to diversity; therefore they were reluctant to involve Neruda Organization professionals in the action research process. In addition, the school representatives acted cautiously and at a slow pace. They feared that if the action research process with regards to their barriers to presence, learning and participation did not succeed, they might be exposed to parents’ criticism for a second time.

In the following section, I firstly present a brief account of the work in the office of the TPU. The description is based on my field notes of the numerous observations I carried out there. The educational psychologist and I had coordination meetings there, and I also spent long periods of time in this office working on my field notes and writing my researcher diary. After the account, I go on to explain the importance of the work of its professionals in order to promote attention to diversity, and in the evolution of the collaborative inclusive action research process.

The Technical Pedagogical Unit: coordinating the educational practices of Gabriela Mistral School

The office of the Technical Pedagogical Unit (TPU) faces the playground, and connects it with some classrooms. Five professionals share the space. I go into the office, greet everybody and approach the educational psychologist to arrange my time schedule for the week. During the break, several people come in and out. The teachers make jokes, ask for the keys to the toilet, talk about some students or coordinate meetings. The headteacher comes to communicate and share information. Students go in to search for some teachers, check their timetable or explain why they did not attend a class.

A secondary student with Down's syndrome asks the educational psychologist where the person is who is in charge of the photocopier because he has a vocational workshop with him. In this lively atmosphere, concentration is difficult for me, as well as for the academic coordinator who sighs and says loudly, *"I couldn't peel a potato in the whole morning!"*, meaning that she could not do too much work.

When the break finishes, I sit at a big table to observe. I share the table with three primary teachers who are planning classes and writing in their books. The primary level coordinator is having a meeting with a teacher he has been observing. I can hear them talking about methodological strategies, students of concern and parents to contact. They also discuss that the teacher needs some training.



Photograph 4.6. School playground.

Suddenly, a primary teacher arrives with a student, who seems to be violent. The teacher looks desperate and explains what has happened. The student lies on the floor. I observe how the educational psychologist stops her work, takes his hand and asks him to sit on the chair next to

her desk. Carola calms him down by saying: “*Which foot do you push the brake with?*” She spends some time calming him down. When the child seems calmed, he goes to sit on the sofa.

While Carola and I are organizing a meeting, one teacher interrupts us and asks the educational psychologist for some mathematics materials, to work with a student in her class with special educational needs. Later, the educational psychologist meets the external support professional from Neruda Organization to coordinate work in the support unit, to make adaptations to some learning materials, and to arrange meetings with the teachers in charge of the courses. When I say ‘*goodbye*’ to the members of the TPU, I look around the office; the walls are full of pictures, big timetables and a board announcing meetings and observation schedules; a computer screensaver claims ‘*Utopia*’.

The above account gives a flavour of what I experienced in the TPU office. From my point of view, a large part of the work of the TPU was focused on the development of inclusive education in the school. Its professionals were responsible for the planning, implementation, support and evaluation of the learning processes. As part of this unit, an educational psychologist carried out the initial evaluation of the students with special educational needs. She planned the individual work with the ‘*integrated students*’ and coordinated the external support for those with special educational needs in primary and secondary education.

As observed in the account presented earlier, TPU work frequently involved the continuing relations between and collaboration with teachers, students, support professionals and parents. Given its physical location, the TPU office played a central role in the communication and participation of different members of the community. In addition, some members of the TPU, in close collaboration with me, also played a fundamental part in the evolution of the inclusive action research process relating to the barriers to learning, presence and participation. I introduce the evolution of the inclusive action research model below.

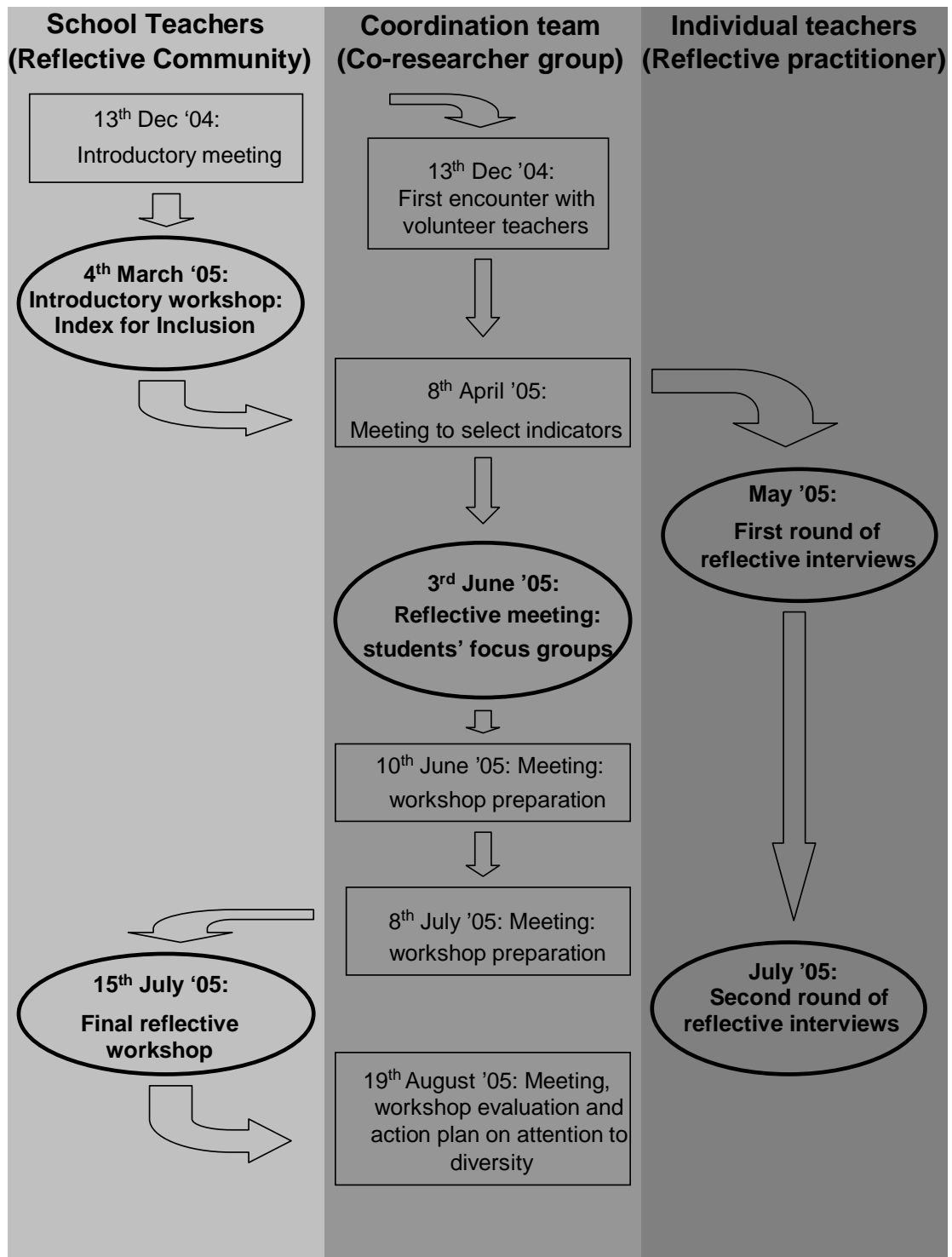
General overview of the evolution of the inclusive action research model

In this section, a general overview is presented of the inclusive action research model that evolved in the school. This account is based on meeting reports, interviews with participants and notes from my researcher diary. Although many members of the school were actively engaged in the process, I introduce here some characters who were involved and represented different perspectives within the community. I must emphasise that these opinions are from people who were actively engaged in the process and, therefore, they cannot be seen as being representative of the school as a whole. They are José, the headteacher; Carola, the educational psychologist; Gabriela¹⁸, a Y1 and Y2 primary teacher; Paula, a primary and secondary Natural Science teacher; and Wilson, a secondary Biology teacher. A further description of these participants is presented in Appendix 2.

As described in Chapter 2, I endeavoured to design an inclusive action research model that would support any educational community, to reflect on how its members were attending to diversity. My intention was that the model would help school members to share their opinions and learn about the barriers to presence, learning and participation that they were facing, and in consequence, put specific actions in place to overcome or minimise them. I tried to conceive a flexible approach that could adapt to the particularities of each context. Below, I present a diagram demonstrating the flow of the process in Gabriela Mistral School during the time of my collaboration.

¹⁸ I have deliberately used the name of the school to identify this teacher. In my opinion, she represented the essence of the spirit of the school.

Diagram 4.1¹⁹. Evolution of the inclusive action research model in Gabriela Mistral School in the community, coordination team and individual teachers



¹⁹ Headings in brackets refer to the categories of the inclusive action research model in Chapter 2. Events in a square box were meetings to organise and make decisions about the process. Those in a circle were planned and developed to promote reflection among participants.

Introduction and negotiations

As can be seen in Diagram 4.1, the initial purpose was to introduce the inclusive action research model and negotiate with school members their interest in participating. The opportunity to contact Gabriela Mistral School arose in December 2004 through the national workshop “*Inclusion in action: diversity and democracy*” relating to *Index for Inclusion* materials. Two teachers and two TPU members, including Carola, participated in this workshop.

As a result of the national workshop, an introductory meeting was held in December 2004 with representatives of the educational community, a mother representative of the Directorate, around thirty-three teachers of a population of fifty-five, and three professionals from Neruda Organization. At this meeting, one of my supervisors, Professor Mel Ainscow, and I presented the *Index* as an approach to provide steps towards inclusive education, and we invited them to take part.

This stage created the basis to work on a collaborative process. José, the headteacher, acknowledged that the argument presented went beyond the integration of disabled students towards a better educational response for all and, therefore, agreed with the mission of the Educational Statement. Carola, José and the two teachers involved in the national workshop proposed to incorporate the inclusive action research model as one of the action plans for 2005 under the coordination of a group of volunteers. I offered myself as a ‘*critical friend*’ to support them during the initiation of the process.

This meeting was followed by the first workshop for reflection in March 2005, where fifty teachers, the headteacher and TPU members familiarised themselves with the *Index* materials, its philosophy and indicators, and shared their opinions about the barriers to presence, learning and participation faced in the school. In my presentation, I sought to picture the inclusive action research model in the context of Gabriela Mistral School. Based on the documentary analysis I had carried out, I suggested that it may help them to examine whether the values of the mission statement matched their actions.

Carola introduced the dimensions and the indicators of the *Index*, and the teachers organized themselves into groups, where they discussed the indicators in relation to their reality. Following the discussions, a general debate took place. School staff recognised that the inclusive action research process provided them with the opportunity to get closer to the school’s values.

Coordination and decision making

As noted in Diagram 4.1 the role of the coordination team was central in the evolution of the inclusive action research model. Nevertheless, the work of the team would not have been possible without the leadership of Carola and myself. In the third section of this chapter, I describe the roles I played as facilitator, and concentrate on the collaborative work with the educational psychologist. But firstly in this section, I present the work of coordination and decision-making carried out in the meetings with the coordination team.

During the introductory phase, a group of ten teachers volunteered to form a coordination team. The purpose was to develop their leadership in order to consider the process as their own and to make decisions about its development. The first meeting took place in April 2005. The teachers reviewed the indicators of the *Index* and decided the aspects they considered relevant to analyse within their context. The indicators selected can be seen in the following table. The team also planned the level of participation of other members of the educational community.

Table 4.1. Indicators selected by Gabriela Mistral School

DIMENSION	INDICATOR
Dimension A: CULTURE	A.1.2. Students and members of staff help each other. A.2.2. Staff, members of school council, students and families share a philosophy of inclusion. A.2.3. All students are equally valued. A.2.5. Staff seek to remove barriers to learning and participation in all aspects of the school.
Dimension B: POLICIES	B.1.2. All new members of the community are helped to settle into the school. B.2.2. Staff development activities help staff to respond to student diversity. B.2.4. Assessment of special educational needs and support are used to reduce the barriers to learning and participation of all students.
Dimension C: PRACTICES	C.1.1. Planning and development of classes to respond to student diversity. C.1.4. Students are actively involved in their own learning. C.1.8. Teachers plan, teach and review in partnership. C.2.2. Staff expertise is fully utilised.

The organization of most of the meetings was characterised by a restriction of time for the teachers to meet. As they were organized parallel to other meetings, some teachers had to assist in more than one at the same time. This is one of the reasons why the team suffered from a fluctuation of teachers in the meetings. Sometimes Carola and I were uncertain whether the meeting would take place at all.

In June and July, the coordination team concentrated its work on the preparation of the reflective workshop with the teachers of Gabriela Mistral School. They focused on evidence I had gathered to organize a participatory workshop, where teachers could analyse data, reflect and discuss how

they were attending to diversity. Finally, they could arrive at specific lines of action to put in place in order to make improvements.

After the reflective workshop, in August, 2005, the members of the coordination team evaluated the event. They assessed that it had been the result of good team work. The coordination team committed to continue working; wanting to guarantee its sustainability in the long term. The team concentrated its work on the promotion of reflection among teachers.

Reflection

Reflective interviews

In Diagram 4.1., the events organized to promote reflection are presented in the form of circles. I designed and conducted the reflective conversations with individual teachers. In these conversations, I provided them with an account of an observation of one of their classes. Then we established an informal interview where the teachers discussed with me about aspects of that particular class and their classes in general.

In some cases, they showed different levels of reflection about how they tried to respond to diversity within their practices. In the first round of reflective interviews, carried out in May, two teachers were interviewed. In the second round in July, where three teachers were involved, I decided to include a set of questions derived from the selected indicators of the *Index*. The purpose was to promote further reflection and insights about teachers' underlying theories on teaching and diversity. The analysis of the reflective interviews is presented in Chapter 5.

Reflective meeting with coordination team

In June, the coordination team reflected on the opinions of the students' focus groups. The purpose of this meeting, which was coordinated by Carola and I, was to engage the coordination team members in the analysis of the evidence gathered. Secondly, based on the reflection made, the aim was to begin organizing the school's reflective workshop. I coordinated a small exercise where the teachers analysed the students' opinions in groups. I had categorised the information by the selected



Photograph 4.7. School teachers' workshop: Exposition of the students' photographic activities.

the following table. Some of the aspects highlighted were closely related to the indicators selected by the coordination team.

Table 4.2. Barriers, facilitators and lines of action in relation to different dimensions of Gabriela Mistral School

DIMENSION	BARRIER	FACILITATOR	LINES OF ACTION
CULTURES	Fragmentation of the teaching staff due to working and administrative issues. (C.1.8) Inadequate teaching practices, scarce, scattered and homogeneous, not inclusive in relation to attention to diversity. (C.1.1) Economic instability.	Good teachers' disposition. (A.1.2) Horizontal relationships, pleasant and caring atmosphere based on trust. (A.2.3) Coherence with the mission of the school. Kind of students with human quality.	Have permanent professional support within the school. (B.2.4) Be more proactive in aspects that the teachers leave to the TPU and other spheres. Solve emergencies when they occur. (C.2.2) TPU coordinating teachers' work to optimise resources for team work. (B.2.4; C.2.2) Include teachers as a unique body. Follow up of graduate students.
POLICIES	Lack of institutional structure to accompany and integrate students, teachers and families (B.2.4) Improvising and lack of continuity. Access to the files of the students with barriers to learning. (B.2.4)	Positive intentions in the individual and institutional level considering inclusion. (A.2.2) Socio-emotional atmosphere that promotes freedom and respect to the ways of working. (A.1.2)	Review principles for evaluation and curricular adaptation. (B.2.4) Professional development based on the areas and needs of the Educational Statement. (B.2.2) Collaborative work to interchange and register our experiences. (B.2.2; C.2.2)
PRACTICES	Predominant traditional practices. Emphasis on content, too much pencil and paper and expositive classes. (C.1.1) Lack of professional support. (B.2.4) Lack of infrastructure and materials.	Good communication of all for all. (A.1.2) Emotional climate. Good relationship among teachers and students. (A.1.2)	To sensitize and spread the concept of inclusion. (A.2.2) To diversify and enrich our educational practices. (A.2.5; C.1.1) (8 votes) To promote a self-managed and collaborative professional development. Enrichment among ourselves. (B.2.2) (19 votes)

As presented in Table 4.2., all the teachers considered the key strength to be a socio-emotional atmosphere based on trust which promoted freedom and respect to the ways of learning and working. The lack of institutional structure to accompany and integrate students, teachers and families, and the lack of professional support seemed to be two of the most important barriers underlined by teachers.

Those groups where culture was under consideration suggested lines of action based on the establishment of permanent professional support within the school. They considered that the role of the TPU should be to coordinate the work of the teachers in order to optimise the resources and promote team work. This decision seemed to be in line with the reluctance shown by Carola to involve Neruda Organization in the coordination of the inclusive action research model. I address this aspect in the following section.

The table demonstrates that the teachers who discussed culture and practices understand that educational practices addressed to a homogeneous student were the main barriers in responding to students' diversity.



Photograph 4.9. School teachers' workshop: Teachers voting for lines of action to be prioritised in the school.

Regarding this, those groups analysing the dimensions of policies and practices believed there was a need to diversify and enrich their educational practices through professional development. The first priority, voted by nineteen teachers, was the promotion of a self-managed and professional development, or as stated in the lines of action on the dimension of policies *“collaborative work to interchange and register our experiences”*.

Consequently, it was considered a priority that the school established a systematic structure for reflection and exchange of experiences and educational practices. This could help them to plan more flexible practices that responded to everyone. These instances, teachers considered, would promote changes in their practices and in their professional development as teachers whilst attending to diversity.

I would like to conclude this section by saying that, in my opinion, the collaborative reflective process was a crucial opportunity for this informal learning community to take further steps in the institutionalisation of opportunities to share experiences and build up knowledge about practice. In the following section, I describe the variety of roles I undertook to facilitate the evolution of the process.

Roles facilitating the inclusive action research model

In the last section, I outlined the evolution of the inclusive action research model in Gabriela Mistral School. Although Diagram 4.1 was based on the model defined in Chapter 2, it does not describe my involvement as a facilitator throughout the process. In fact, this role was central to the way that the inclusive action research model evolved. Therefore, in order to understand the reflective process of attention to diversity described in detail in Chapter 5, I consider it relevant to highlight the variety of roles that I played. In the following description, I address several aspects that were common in both schools. Nonetheless, I concentrate on particular situations related to Gabriela Mistral educational community. As can be seen, one of the major differences was the collaborative work with the educational psychologist.

I interpreted the following roles based on the analysis of the evaluation interviews with different teachers of the coordination team, conversations with my supervisors and my mentor in Chile, field notes of events and informal conversations, and notes from my researcher diary, where I reflected upon my facilitator role. I summarise my roles as follows:

- reflective ethnographer;
- planner;
- diplomat;
- group leader;
- capacity builder; and
- reflection promoter.

Reflective ethnographer

One of my first aims was to understand the situation of the school, in order to adapt my approach and my collaboration to the context. I spent time in Gabriela Mistral School observing and sharing informal conversations with its members in coffee breaks and other community time. I saw myself as an ethnographer who tried to grasp the history behind their culture, decisions and actions. I also spent time understanding their relationships, communication channels, and how the conditions of the school affected the behaviour and learning processes of its members. I also gathered data to get a flavour of the practices in relation to attention to diversity.

I wrote field notes and in my researcher diary in order to maintain a continuous questioning and checking of my own preconceptions and beliefs, in order to readjust them. For this reason, I also considered myself as a reflective ethnographer, who tried to reframe my underlying theories with the purpose of improving my understanding of the school, my skills and my practices as facilitator of the inclusive action research model.

Planner

Constant planning was crucial. I needed to keep a balanced plan in relation to the agenda of the school, and the teachers' agenda, as well as my own agenda. This was particularly difficult for me since I was living 800 kms. away from the school, and I had to distribute my time in order to also work with Nelquihue School in the south.

Delays in decision making and the apparent slow pace of the process made me fear that the members of Gabriela Mistral School would abandon the venture. At certain times, I became rather assertive in order to guarantee that the process continued. This situation was a response to the tensions of my own agendas. On the one hand, I wanted to support the school's improvement on how it attended to diversity. On the other hand, I aimed to get my PhD, and I did not want to lose control over the whole process. For this reason, I focused my attention on those aspects considered useful for the school. I was trying to avoid a situation where they lost interest and stopped the research process. The tension between the promotion of the autonomy of the participants in the process and my control over it requires further consideration and is discussed in Chapter 9.

As I had to adjust to the academic year and the educational events of the school, I became a constant flexible planner. I tried to plan having in mind the whole picture, the purpose of the inclusive action research process, its sustainability and my purposes as a researcher. I also paid attention to the closer picture, planning the next steps before my school visits in order to be ready to respond effectively.

Part of my work with the educational psychologist was collaborative planning. I kept in constant communication with Carola to arrange my visits. Due to Carola's tight and busy workload, although she was in charge of the coordination of the inclusive action research model, she gave it priority during my visits. As a result, most of the meetings with the coordination team took place when I was there.

On each visit, we agreed on my time and requirements for data collection, the work with the coordination team, and the reflective process to be carried out at the three levels: the community, the coordination team, and the individual teachers. I strongly depended on Carola's decisions concerning which course and teacher to observe, and which people to interview. As I explain in Chapter 9, this dependence might have prevented me from seeing different angles of the school. On one occasion, I expressed this concern to Carola, and I felt that afterwards she was more open by letting me observe other teachers. Nevertheless, most of my data was gathered from teachers who were involved in the coordination team.

Diplomat

The main purpose of the diplomat role was to negotiate with the school members the conditions that could guarantee collaboration. Given my personal characteristics, I was concerned that being a Spanish academic this might raise power issues. In our interview, the external support professional recognised that I was perceived by teachers and other professionals as someone prepared and with more knowledge. Therefore, I took great care to establish relationships based on power balance. In my interventions, I expressed that I was a sociologist, and that I knew about the methodological approach we were developing. Nevertheless, I frequently acknowledged I wanted to learn from them, as they knew more about education and attention to diversity in practice, and they were experts about their school. I also made efforts to build up trust and to avoid overstepping the limits of the confidence they had placed in me.

From the design of my research, one of my main aspirations was that my contribution would be useful and meaningful for the members of the educational community. I tried to show my availability and flexibility to work with them. Although it might be construed that I had decided on the inclusive action research model in advance, my purposes were to develop it and to adjust it to concentrate on those aspects that the school members considered relevant. In one of our first meetings with the headteacher, Carola and another TPU member, I stated that the process would be like *"a sailing ship guided by you, but in certain moments I might need to move the mainsail to correct the course"*. With this purpose, I tried to share my knowledge and my skills as researcher and to contribute with research methods and with the inclusive action research model.

Emotional relationships were an important premise in the community in order to establish collaboration. I tried to create an empathic atmosphere to work with Carola, appreciating her time and efforts. At certain times, I also tried to minimise and release tensions and confrontations, which were mainly related to the uncertainties and anxieties associated with any process of

change. We also faced mismatch of agendas. I interpreted it as part of the nature of the educational work of school staff in contrast with the nature of research. Carola wanted to see quick results and to get action as soon as possible. On the other hand, I tried to explain to her that these processes require time for reflection, sharing and common understanding in order to lead to sustainable changes for the community.

Some tensions were also linked to school power issues and hierarchical structures. The greatest tension we experienced was preparing the final school workshop. Carola presented me a workshop proposal she had developed with another professional of the TPU. I interpreted this as them having taken control of the workshop without considering the decisions made by the coordination team. The tensions which arose helped me to understand part of the political structure of the school. This situation reminded me of the dangers of manipulation by existing power hierarchies recognised by Hall (2001). I had understood that, although the teachers' participation and opinions were welcome, the TPU members were ultimately responsible for the decision making in school matters. Besides, I felt that the process was being taken out of my hands, but this event made me realise that they owned the process, and my role was to accompany them in their decisions as an external facilitator.

Nevertheless, I needed to guarantee that the work and decisions made previously by the coordination team were taken on board. I expressed my concerns to Carola and the TPU professional, and recommended a review of the reports of the coordination team meetings in order to build a proposal together based on the decisions made earlier. They shared their willingness to present a strong proposal to the coordination team. Aiming to achieve a sustainable action plan on inclusive education, they felt it was necessary that the workshop was a success. The agreed proposal was later presented to the coordination team for discussion.

Group leader

As a group leader, I aimed to promote participation involving different school members. I found it difficult to open participation to external support professionals and parents. José, Carola and other TPU members suggested that they feared being exposed and, therefore, preferred to work mainly with teachers as they wanted to feel secure in what they were doing.

Carola expressed her concerns about involving the professionals from Neruda Organization in the coordination of the process. She considered that given the financial situation of the external support, their collaboration might create some problems, and that it may not be sustainable over time. I also perceived that the tensions, which were the product of the crises in 2003, were still

latent in her reasoning. I interpreted this decision in two different ways. On the one hand, they wanted to avoid the tensions which had been suffered earlier. On the other hand, one of the aims of promoting the inclusive action research process was to become autonomous from the external support, and that school professionals and teachers acquired more competencies. My interpretation was confirmed in the conclusions reached in the final workshop, as explained earlier.

I used the formal and informal communication channels established in the school in order to promote the participation of students and teachers in the process of data gathering. In the coordination team, Carola and I worked to delegate and share responsibilities with the teachers through concrete tasks. As it is a busy school, it was sometimes difficult to adjust to the teachers' schedule, and we had to negotiate time allocation for meetings with the headteacher.

I accompanied the coordination team through the evolution of the process. Through my collaboration, I had to be aware and ready to respond to their agenda, rhythms and needs. I tried to listen and wait until I felt the members of the team, mainly Carola, were ready to take a step further. I moved backwards and forwards with the coordination group with the doubts, tensions and uncertainties that they faced during the process. In our meetings, I tried to motivate teachers and avoid stagnation, collapse or burn out, and Carola and I also worked to create an emotional climate among the members of the coordination team, recognising other members' labour and contributions.

Capacity builder

My main focuses here were empowerment and the professional development of the coordination team members. I concentrated on helping the participants to understand the process, and I coordinated the work and motivated the volunteer teachers and Carola in order that they would be able to continue in the future. With this purpose in mind, I promoted the agency of the educational psychologist to take the lead of the coordination team. In addition, Carola and I worked to involve other members and to enhance their transformational leadership within the group.

In our meetings, I constantly referred to particular aspects underlined by students and teachers in the interviews, focus groups and other activities, in order to add further perspectives to the debate. I also gave them examples from the school in the south on how they were developing the process.

Nevertheless, I did not consider the opportunity to train Carola and the teachers in techniques for data gathering and analysis, as I did not believe there was enough time. My interventions concentrated on motivating them, enhancing their sense of belonging, and showing them the aspects for improvement considered by other members of the '*Mistral*' community. In my opinion, my participation helped them to understand how they could contribute to the philosophy and the purposes of the school.

Reflection promoter

I considered myself as a reflection promoter who worked on creating the conditions for reflection at three levels: the community, the coordination team and individual teachers. Firstly, I gathered data, registered it and provided engaging evidence for reflection. I then organized dialogues and events that prepared teachers to be open to consider others' opinions in order to analyse their thinking and reframe their underlying theories about attention to diversity. The collaborative reflective meetings and workshops were planned to promote community knowledge building about the barriers to presence, learning and participation faced by school members, and how to minimise them. Each reflective instance was designed to conclude with decisions about concrete actions to be put into place.

I perceived that Gabriela Mistral School was characterised by activism and an urgency to get jobs done. In some of the meetings with Carola and the coordination team, I had to slow down the process in order to promote further reflection.

Confidentiality and member checking were crucial aspects which I had to consider in order to facilitate comfortable reflection. I transcribed and registered all the data gathered from interviews, observations and focus groups, and afterwards, I asked the participants to review the data and give me feedback about it. I then asked for their consent to use their opinions and observational accounts in the reflective meetings with the coordination team and in the reflective workshops with teachers. In these accounts, I sought to conceal the identities of the participants, and worked to avoid jeopardizing their personal and professional image in front of their colleagues and teachers. Although it was difficult to guarantee complete confidentiality, I recognised an open relaxed atmosphere that promoted common reflection and knowledge sharing amongst the participants in the reflective events. In the next chapter, I strengthen the understanding of how the reflective processes were promoted and the impact they had on the educational community.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have provided an introduction to Gabriela Mistral School, emphasising the particular aspects I considered relevant in order to understand the process implemented by my collaboration. In addition, the evolution of the inclusive action research model was presented, with descriptions of the three levels of the inclusion action research process: the community, the coordination team, and the individual teachers. I finally gave an account of the variety of roles I had to play in order to facilitate a process based on collaboration and attention to diversity. In the following chapter, I provide an analysis of the reflective processes on attention to diversity which occurred in Gabriela Mistral School.

Chapter 5. Developing reflective processes on attention to diversity in the Gabriela Mistral School

*“Vanity is the worst vice of a teacher,
because the person who believes themselves to be perfect is closed,
in fact, to all the paths towards perfection.
We are all responsible for either the progress or the loss of prestige of a school.”
(Gabriela Mistral, 1923²⁰)*

After describing Gabriela Mistral School and the inclusive action research process implemented, in this chapter I consider the accounts of the cycles of reflection in relation to three levels: individual teachers, the coordination team and the community.

At the individual level, I present the account of a class observation of three teachers and the reflective interviews shared afterwards. I then analyse the process experienced by the coordination team and make interpretations about the factors that enhanced the group into becoming reflective co-researchers.

At the community level, I aim to highlight the aspects that this approach promoted in order for the members of Gabriela Mistral School to become reflective. Among them, I consider how far these reflective processes led to a better understanding in terms of diversity. I based the analysis of the discourses of different members of the school on interviews, meetings and workshops. Finally, I analyse my interpretations in relation to the literature on the conditions necessary to develop reflective processes in addressing diversity in Gabriela Mistral School. I also concentrate on the way my researcher role evolved and contributed to the facilitation of the inclusive action research model, and particularly the reflective processes in the educational community.

²⁰ Mistral, G. (1923). "Pensamientos pedagógicos." Revista de Educación. II(1). My translation.

Individual reflection about class observations

As it has been demonstrated in earlier chapters, part of the inclusive action research model was focused on the promotion of reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983). With this purpose, I observed different classes and afterwards carried out *'off-line'* reflective interviews (Rudolph, Taylor et al. 2001) with the teachers. This was intended to take the form of what Schön describes as *'coaching reflective teaching'* (Grimmet and Erickson, 1988). In the first round of interviews, I used an account of the observation of the class to encourage conversation and reflection. In following rounds, I considered it necessary to include some questions of the indicators of the *Index* to gain further reflection and insight.

The purpose of individual reflection was that teachers could analyse and question their own understanding about education and attention to diversity. The aspects considered were teacher's emotions; beliefs and values; educational theories or *'underlying theories'* (Schön, 1983; 1991) about attention to diversity; and knowledge gathered from practical experience, and referred to as *'practical arguments'* (Fenstermacher, 1988).

I define this process as *'framing and reframing'* individual understanding in light of the evidence from the class observation report and through the reflective conversation. In other words, the interviews served the purpose of supporting teachers to *'frame'* their own understanding about the barriers and facilitators experienced by students in their classes, and in some cases to *'reframe'* them, by questioning their thinking with alternative explanations. The aim was to promote changes in the teachers' educational theories and practices.

In the following sections, I present three accounts of the class observations, followed by extracts of the interviews held. I have selected these accounts based on two criteria. Firstly, they represent examples of how teachers attended to diversity within their practices, and secondly, they portrayed the way these teachers thought and reflected about their practices. In summary, they are vivid examples of the different pathways of individual reflection on attention to diversity. Together they build up a framework for individual reflection that I present in Chapter 8. I should point out that the teachers presented in these accounts were members of the coordination team, and therefore they would be expected to be more sensitised and committed to the topic.

A Y2 primary class: Gabriela putting inclusive values into action

Observation of the class, 7th April, 2005

“*Good morning!*”, the pupils greet the two ‘*aunts*²¹’ who are in the class. They recite a funny poem to describe each one of the teachers. The *aunts* answer: “*Good morning dear penguins!*” referring to a picture of a penguin on the wall with the names of the class inside it²². Today, two children are in charge of calling the register. The girl calls out the names, and the boy marks them on a big list on the wall. Gabriela, one of the teachers, follows the names in her book. When they finish, Gabriela says: “*Thank you very much!*” A disabled ginger-haired girl goes over to Gabriela and gives her a hug.

While the children are seated, Gabriela asks them: “*What happened to you today?*” Various children tell different stories. One girl says: “*I came late because my mum felt asleep, she works at night.*” A boy with Down’s syndrome says that his father gave him money to buy something before lunch. Meanwhile Violeta, the other teacher, is helping some children to hang their coats and sit down quietly at the tables grouped in fours.

One boy let us know that he had a nightmare the previous night, and had got up crying. Then he said he was happy because he could fall asleep on his own. Gabriela reminds him that he had been having nightmares for the last few weeks. He agrees. Another boy stands up and recounts that he had the same problem a long time ago and had come up with a successful solution: the ‘*nightmare catcher*²³’. He offers the ‘*nightmare catcher*’ to the other boy under the condition that he takes care of it. Gabriela thanks him, referring to him by his name.

The *aunts* and the children are constantly in contact with each other, a kiss, a hand on the shoulder, a hug, a look, a smile. One girl helps Violeta to distribute the notebooks and the materials for the activity which will follow. The children sit in groups of four. Violeta asks the pupils to remind her of the routine of the class. She encourages them to answer more loudly by saying:

²¹ In Chile, most of the adults who work or have strong relationships with children and teenagers are called ‘*aunt*’ or ‘*uncle*’. This is the way that boys and girls show respect and affection to those who are teaching or taking care of them.

²² In this school, all primary classes are identified with an animal in this way. The Scouts use this technique as part of their educational methodology. It helps the group to achieve a strong sense of belonging and common identity.

²³ The ‘*nightmare catcher*’ is a wooden ring decorated with colourful threads that can be hung in the bedroom. The boy believed that it could make nightmares disappear.

“Am I Cristine? No! Oh, it is the routine!” When a child mentions one of the routines, both teachers congratulate him or her.

The ginger-haired girl follows Gabriela, and then goes to lie down on a mattress on one side of the class. Later, she approaches me and asks, *“Can you cover me up?”* I cover her up and close the curtains to keep the sun off her face.

In pairs, the children have to draw the routines of the day in class. Each pair selects one routine. One boy decides to work with me. We then decide how we want to make the picture; he draws himself; I draw Gabriela as a witch. One girl goes to the mat to show her picture to Violeta. The teacher looks impressed by the drawing. Gabriela asks the boy with Down’s syndrome to help her to pick up the books and put them on the shelves. They chat while they tidy the books. When each pair of children finishes, they put their drawings on the wall and go to the playground.

Conversation about the account of the class observation

Gabriela stated that she enjoyed reading the account of my observation, and she was astonished by the amount of things that happened in that class. Throughout the interview, she tried to explain her underlying theories about education and gave reasons for her educational practices.

She talked about the importance of involving students in the dynamics of the class, because it makes children responsible for their learning process. In this sense, she seemed to promote participation and collaboration, and students’ peer support. She underlined the importance of developing children emotionally. In relation to this matter, I reminded her of the event concerning the *‘nightmare catcher’*:

“Ana Luisa –I realised that you did not even have to answer. The other child took the lead and helped him with the ‘nightmare catcher’ and all that.

Gabriela – And he brought it to him.

Ana Luisa – Did he?

Gabriela – I ... (expression of astonishment)

Ana Luisa – (Laughs)

Gabriela – And they (the nightmares) vanished! In three days!

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Gabriela – And he brought it back with a chocolate.

Ana Luisa – That’s great!

Gabriela – Incredible! Because, how do you learn to be a good friend?

How do you learn about solidarity!

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Gabriela – You learn it early.”

(Reflective interview with Gabriela, 12th May, 2005)

She then described how they established the dynamics in class, adapting it to the children by listening to them and giving them time to do things. In my opinion, this aspect of her practice became explicit with the example of the ‘*nightmare catcher*’. Based on her strong beliefs of the social values of education, the spontaneous response of the child seemed to make her stop and give them time to build up friendship and emotional support. Her performance could be characteristic of how teachers ‘*reflect-in-action*’. Schön underlines this aspect of teaching reflective practices in his chapter *Coaching Reflective Teaching* (1988: 27).

Gabriela also explained to me how, together with Violeta, they planned earlier and later classes to achieve the purpose of their work: the ownership of the routine of the class. Through their educational process, they aimed to teach their students to work as a team, in collaboration.

“Gabriela – I think my love, that in this century we have to live in (...) many things have been done in education, and now, I think that with all the technology we have, the most important thing I can give to them (...) apart from decoding reading and math codes (...), is that they learn to work as a team, and see their strengths, and understand their weaknesses in collaboration”.

(Reflective interview with Gabriela, 12th May, 2005)

In my opinion, I view Gabriela as a good example of how attention to diversity can be achieved through ‘*values in action*’ (Booth and Black-Hawkins, 1998; Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006). I feel that although the interview might not have been useful to understand her level of reflection, it seems that she bases her practices on her strong beliefs confirmed throughout the years and her experience as a teacher. I relate her personal and professional characteristics to Day’s (2004) description of a ‘*passionate teacher*’ whose ‘*moral purposes*’ guide her teaching in order to ‘*make a difference*’ to her students’ lives. It might also be interpreted that during my observation she showed her expertise in ‘*reflecting-in-action*’. Either she did not describe this process of reflection in our interview, or I was not able to address it properly.

She might have thought that I was more interested in her values and her attitudes towards diversity in her class than in encouraging reflection about her practices. In that respect, I must

underline that in our interviews and in the coordination team meetings, she expressed that her major concern was the need to promote inclusive values and attitudes among all the members of the educational community. This could have also been her main contribution to our reflective conversation. Nevertheless, other teachers provided me with further insights, as can be seen below.

A Y5 primary Natural Science class: Paula, reflecting on her teaching practices

Observation of the Natural Science class, 8th June, 2005

Paula goes into the class with me, and we say hello to the students. While they sit down, Paula asks: “*Why are there so few of you?*” The thirteen girls and boys explain that a disabled student has locked herself in the toilet and does not want to come out. It seems that another girl is dealing with her.

The class is decorated with a poster with the roles and responsibilities of each student. On one of the walls I can see the word ‘*welcome*’ and the names of all the students. There is a calendar with the students’ birthdays marked, a ‘*syntoniser*²⁴, and a timetable with the subjects. The students sit in couples in two rows.

The teacher reminds the students what they had been doing the previous week. She asks questions; calling each student by name, to see if they remember. A girl enters and says that the disabled student does not want to come out of the toilet. The support assistant had told her she will take care of the situation.

I see the subject book on the table and a notebook with the activity plan: “*Throwing a projectile*”. Paula moves around the class to explain the activity and brings projectiles made from different materials with her to make it more explicit. While she is explaining, she also addresses a boy whose hand is up.

Paula - “Yes, tell me”.

Boy - “No, I think that you are going to say it.”

Paula – “Please, you can say it.”

²⁴ The ‘*syntonizer*’ is used by the staff of Gabriela Mistral School as a large poster-type calendar showing each month with reminders of all the academic events: tests, holidays, cultural activities, and so on.

The boy explains and when he has finished, Paula says: *"Perfect!"* During the explanation some students ask: *"Aunt, new sheet?"* The teacher answers: *"You have to see if it is more convenient for you a new or an old sheet."* All the students look at her as she explains the exercise. They are going to go in groups into the garden. Paula stresses: *"Listen to the instructions carefully because I will only tell you once."* The teacher goes to the board to write and she finds a pentagram drawn there. She starts singing the instructions, and the students laugh. She draws on the board, and then says to the students: *"Shall we write it down?"* One girl asks Paula to move away from the board so that she can copy down the instructions, and Paula jumps away from the board.

In order to describe the activity, the teacher throws a ball and a girl catches it. Paula gives an example and invites the students to give theirs: *"Try to invent a projectile less boring than mine"*. Some boys and girls start inventing out loud. She then continues giving instructions:

Paula – "Any questions, has anyone doubts of what to do?"

Girl – "I don't understand."

Paula – "Wait a minute and I'll tell you!"

Before going to the garden, the teacher explains: *"We have 20 minutes to do this. Let's make groups of three and go to the garden."* In the garden, the students and Paula prepare the materials to do the activity. The teacher organizes the groups: *"Get into teams. We have to organize quickly. Don't fight!"* She gives clear orders and further explanations to those who do not understand.

In the groups, each member does the exercise in turn, while one throws the ball, the rest draw the angles and talk. Paula approaches each group and establishes individual dialogues with them to see how they are working and if they understand: *"What can you change? You can change the form of the projectile; you can change the strength with which you throw it."* A group of students tell her a joke: *"Look Paula, the hippie ball!"* Two girls argue. One says: *"It is my turn now!"* The other answers: *"No, it is my turn!"* Paula goes to them and asks: *"What has happened, girls? Where did you get lost?"*

A girl and a boy go to the teacher to show her a picture of the exercise in their notebooks. After reviewing the girl's notebook, the teacher suggests that she should observe her classmate's throwing and gives her further explanation. After twenty minutes, Paula shouts: *"We have to finish, let's go into the class, don't forget anything!"* On our way, a girl hugs the teacher. Back in class, the students put the projectiles into a bag. Paula thanks them.

Going out of the class together, a mother asks Paula about her child. She explains to her that she locked herself in the toilet. Some students had tried to coax her out, but finally the support assistant had to take care of her.

Conversation about the account of the class observation

While Paula was reading the account, she laughed at some of the things she had said and done during the class. It seemed to me that she planned thoroughly in advance, as I could see in her notebook during her class. She could describe the whole process, which allowed me to understand her purpose. Although my observation had been a month before, she could remember the process of the class, the preparation of the activity in earlier classes, and the closure of the topic in following classes.

During our interview, it became apparent that she gave me explanations of her underlying theories about education and how they influenced her practice. She considered that each student had to be responsible for their own learning process. For this reason, she seemed to plan her classes with the idea of engaging them as much as possible. When planning, she organized her educational practices bearing in mind various factors, such as the hour of the day and the interest of the topics. As observed in the lesson, she also kept a notebook with the plan of each activity in order not to lose track, and to maintain the rhythm and dynamics of the class.

Throughout the interview, she framed some aspects that she considered she had to concentrate on. She revealed that the root of the problem was that she did not give clear enough instructions to the children, as she had never taught in primary education before. She also told me about the measures she had followed in order to deal with this. I understood from this that she was showing me she had framed the problem, had taken steps to understand it, and had found a strategy to deal with it.

“Paula – One of the things that I can see repeated here, and that I know is one of my weaknesses, is due to the level I’m working with, which is too easy. (...) This is the mistake. When they say “Shall I write it down, aunt?”

Ana Luisa – Oh, yes!

Paula – “Aunt, here!” And I say, “I don’t know!!” (Laughs)

Ana Luisa – (Laughs)

Paula – That is the problem! (...) As I have always been in secondary education, I have not got it internalised (...) and I have just realised now. That is why I'm reviewing the notebooks of this level!"

(Reflective interview with Paula, 11th July, 2005)

As this conversation was held during the second round of interviews, I used questions of some of the indicators of the *Index* to promote more reflection about the class practices. On this occasion, one of the questions seemed to have helped her to reframe her ideas and try new actions in order to engage her students in their learning. The question suggested that students were involved in the improvement of learning materials for other students. She accepted that she had never thought of doing it before, and she considered it could be useful to make students more responsible for their learning process and more collaborative with their classmates.

In my opinion, this '*reframing*' process, in other words, the capacity to see her underlying theories from a new perspective, was possible because she had an open attitude to learning and was able to see her practices differently, subsequently enriching them. Of course, it may also have been the case that she wanted to appear to appreciate my suggestions, but was in fact not really taking them into account. Nevertheless, during my involvement with Paula in the coordination meetings, and in my observations of how she collaborated with other teachers, I perceived that she showed an open attitude to learn from others and to consider colleagues' recommendations in order to improve her teaching.

While I was observing, I realised that some students were not able to understand as quickly as others, and Paula gave them time and further explanations, until she seemed sure that all had understood, even those facing difficulties to learn.

Nevertheless, I was concerned about the presence of the disabled student who did not want to go into the class. I wanted to know how Paula was promoting this student's learning process. I felt that mentioning the absence of the student during the conversation helped me to see how Paula had observed the disabled student and reflected on how to work with her. She had made inferences of the educational targets to be achieved, and finally she had recognised some improvements. As she was talking, I realised that she had gained knowledge and improved her practices at the same time.

“Ana Luisa – For example, a student is in the toilet and does not want to come in. I think she is a girl with Down’s syndrome, isn’t she?”

Paula – Hmm, yes.

Ana Luisa – And what do you do then? Obviously you need to continue the class and...

Paula – Yes, that is complicated. I mean, in that group, because Pamela (disabled student) always tends to go out. It is difficult to follow her...

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Paula – And sometimes she arrives in different moods. I cannot work with her parents. Now I have some objectives for her, which I will change next month. They were, first, that she stays in class.

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Paula – (...) Second, she has a notebook where I told her to write down what it is happening. And we have achieved that. We have achieved those two objectives quite well, I think.

Ana Luisa – Ok.

Paula – Ok? And now, I have just realised that Pamela is writing. And then I can dictate to her, slowly (...) When she focuses, she focuses well (...) and she writes slowly!”

(Reflective interview with Paula, 11th July, 2005)

It seemed that she had observed the educational characteristics of the student, *“I realised that she is writing”*, so she made actions to promote the process, *“I can dictate”*. She acknowledged these small achievements kept the student and herself motivated.

As I had pointed out that the disabled student did not participate in the class, it may also be the case that she felt the need to impress me with her progress with the disabled student. She might even have been using a defensive strategy (Schön, 1988, Torbert, 2001) to justify the difficulty in teaching her, when she stated *“I cannot work with her parents”*. In fact, as described in the observation, the disabled student’s mother asked Paula about her child at the end of the class. Considering this matter, during my observations in the TPU office, I frequently saw Paula talking to Carola and planning the educational support of her students who experienced barriers to their learning. In our first interview, she also described in detail her collaboration with two of the professionals of the external support team.

Interviewing her gave me the impression that each time she defined a problem, she tried to link it to aspects that were related to her practice. She set the problem in order to find out how she could solve it within her educational practices. I believed that she used her empirical knowledge or '*practical arguments*', and the analysis of the situation to frame the problem in order to improve her practices. In my opinion, as a '*reflective practitioner*', she seemed to be always analysing and challenging her practices in order to respond better to all the students in her class, in particular those who found barriers to presence, learning and participation.

Being reflective about one's practices, however, does not always require changes towards more inclusive practices. This is highlighted in the following account.

A Y2 secondary Biology class, Wilson, managing different situations in the class

Observation of the Biology class, 7th June, 2005

The teacher and I enter the class and say '*hello*' to the boys and girls. While we are waiting for the rest of the students to come back from their lunch, Wilson places four tables and chairs in line on one side of the class with the help of several students. Afterwards, four students sit at these tables and chairs and the teacher gives them a test. The rest of the eighteen girls and boys are talking around the class. The teacher asks them to sit down and approaches some students to talk to them individually. I sit next to the teacher's desk, close to the students answering the test.

Wilson starts explaining the lesson as he draws on the board, "*The replication of the cell*". At the beginning of the explanation, he reminds the class that the four students are doing a delayed test. Wilson uses a theatrical voice: "*They are doing a test, don't look at them!*" The students laugh. He continues: "*Silence*".

A boy answering the test looks to a classmate; he seems to want to ask something. Suddenly, Wilson approaches the boy, and he looks at the board. The teacher reminds him that the explanation is not for him.

Wilson continues explaining, a girl asks, it seems that she understands the subject well. The teacher establishes an individual conversation with her. After a while, some students seem to have lost interest. Wilson begins again by asking questions to the rest of the class and giving explanations.

I see the student with Down's syndrome working on his own at the back of the class. At the beginning of the class, I had the impression that Wilson had given him instructions of what he had to do in his notebook. The student seldom talks with the girl next to him. It seems that she is clarifying what he has to write down.

Wilson continues explaining at the board. I perceive that the students show different levels of attention, until he says: *"Please, write it down."* A student asks: *"What..., teacher?"* During the explanation, a girl is leaning on her table at the back. One of the students completing the test looks around paying no attention to the test.

In order to keep their attention, Wilson speaks dramatically, using a tone which is full of suspense: *"A blind hand cuts the DNA."* The students laugh and begin to pay attention; they now seem to be interested. He then writes down some definitions on the board for the students to copy. Meanwhile, he asks the students some aspects of the topic to see if they have understood. The girl who asked earlier is the one who answers all of them.

Half an hour after the class has started, two students come in and leave some assignments on the teacher's desk. Wilson carries on with the lesson and asks the students to write some definitions down. He goes around the class responding individually to any doubts. He approaches the student with Down's syndrome to see his work. He then goes to the students who are completing the test to explain some doubts and to motivate them: *"It is easier than you think!"*

The teacher goes back to the board to carry on with the lesson. He seems to dominate the subject. Nevertheless, the longer the explanation takes, the more and the louder the students talk. A student in the first row is reading a paper; it does not seem to be linked to the class. When the students appear to be losing attention, Wilson repeats: *"Silence, please! Write this down!"* The teacher establishes a dialogue of questions and answers and most of the students follow. When the hour-long class finishes, the students give the test to the teacher and he says: *"That's all for today! Goodbye!"*

Conversation about the account of the class observation

Wilson seemed to concentrate our conversation on two particular aspects: his underlying theories about education, and his practical knowledge as a teacher. These aspects gave form to his teaching and lesson planning. He underlined that the learning process of his students is not only the result of their academic learning but also of the dialogues and relationships he established with them during the class. He believed that students needed to be developed as integral people.

He considered that teachers should maintain close relationships with the students in order to be legitimate role models for them.

Based on his view, he expressed that this class in particular was designed as a dialogue to promote questions where everybody could engage and understand the explanations. He also described the way he planned his classes, considering practical issues about the topic, the hour of the class, and other external factors that could affect the motivation of the students and the dynamics of the class. It appeared to me that he analysed his teaching skills and how the mood of the students affected their concentration. An example was his use of humour and dramatisation in order to motivate and engage the students in the lesson. He also admitted he tried to manage the time to be able to attend to the three situations that were happening simultaneously: the students in the test, the disabled student with individual work, and the explanation of the lesson with the largest group.

Throughout the interview, Wilson described to me, what might be interpreted as, the way he '*reflected-in-action*' when he tried to adapt the plan of the class to the real situation; managing the times and the cycles of the class.

“Wilson – Of course, seeing how one imagines the class, and how the class is designed, eh...”

Ana Luisa – Yes, planned...

Wilson – Even how it is planned. In the teacher’s mind. And how effectively, eh...

Ana Luisa – It happens later, hmm, hmm.

Wilson – Of course, in this sense, there is a gap. But it is not a matter of minimising this gap.

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Wilson – It has to do with how we adjust it immediately to the reality. Ok?

Ana Luisa – Hmm.

Wilson – To new solutions that again have to be as spontaneous as the students’ interventions, or the situations that occur, which were not previously planned.

Ana Luisa – Of course, they cannot be calculated.

Wilson – Those events cannot be foreseen.”

(Reflective interview with Wilson, 11th July, 2005)

Another alternative explanation could be that in fact he was not showing any level of reflection, and that he might be telling me what he thought I was expecting to hear. As I had expressed my interest in reflection, he may be showing me his mastery of his knowledge of teaching. He could even be trying to impress me, as I was a young Spanish woman. In that respect, he seemed to show this same kind of analytical thinking in the coordination team meetings.

Nevertheless, although he appeared to be really committed to teaching his students, I did not perceive any evidence of reflection or explanation in his work with the student with Down's syndrome. During the conversation, I interpreted that he did not feel responsible for his learning process. Wilson stressed that he had explained things to the Down's syndrome student when he was asked. However, during my observation, I noted that it was the classmates who were the ones supporting the disabled student.

His explanations seemed to be based on defensive strategies, justifying that it was the disabled student's responsibility to manage the time and resources, instead of being the teacher's role. In my opinion, his defensiveness prevented him from moving towards a better understanding and response to the student's educational demands.

“Wilson – Because I’m a spectator on that matter. Ok?”

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Wilson – (...) the boy with Down’s syndrome realises that there are times when he cannot ask me.

Ana Luisa – Of course, hmm. You are attending to others.

Wilson – And that is why he goes to his classmate (...) Then, I think that he is aware of...

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Wilson - ... certain aspects, when I can, and when I cannot do anything, so he also manages his own resources.”

(Reflective interview with Wilson, 11th July, 2005)

This matter was also tackled by the external support professional of Neruda Organization. In our interview, he considered that secondary teachers did not feel that disabled students were their responsibility. It could also be the case that he was in fact ‘a spectator’ due to the way the student's learning plan had been designed by the educational psychologist, the external support team, the disabled student and his family. His comment might also be responding to the coordination difficulties with the external support professionals, as five secondary teachers had expressed in the focus group.

In any case, my interpretation of his defensive model made me conclude that reflection can be a key process to make teachers aware of the situation of the students in class, and to improve their practices to respond to their educational needs. Nevertheless, as I have just underlined, if there is no real sense of responsibility for the disabled students, reflection might not lead to tackling the barriers to presence, learning and participation for those in most need. As can be derived from the other examples, the teacher's professional knowledge, practical arguments, and the ability to reflect in and on action needs to be accompanied by a set of values that makes the teacher sensitive to each student's individual needs, which are not homogeneous, but diverse.

A defensive attitude towards diversity and the homogeneity of educational practices also appeared to be matters of concern in the meetings with the coordination team and the teachers' workshops. Those teachers who had been involved in the reflective interviews became familiar with the reflective process of looking, thinking and acting (Miles, Ainscow et al. 2003). Gabriela, Paula and Wilson, together with another teacher of Spanish who also reflected on the observation of her classes, had a strong role in the common sharing of analysis and reflection within the coordination team.

Enhancing reflective co-researchers

The purpose of collaborative reflection was that the members of the school shared their underlying theories and practical arguments about the barriers and facilitators of the school policies, cultures and practices on attention to diversity. Their underlying arguments would be challenged by evidence and other colleagues' views. The collaborative reflective events could help individuals to '*reframe*' their understanding of attention to diversity, and support the group to reach common knowledge about their situation, in order to agree on actions to improve it. As described in Diagram 4.1, the coordination team met several times, and in their meetings, the volunteer members reflected and made decisions on how to develop the model in the school.

Analysing the discourses of the members of the team, I perceived that these meetings promoted particular factors that enhanced their roles as reflective co-researchers. They appeared to go through a process of negotiating meanings and, in addition, they collaborated and organized themselves as a team. Finally, they demonstrated that they had accepted the reflective process as their own, and felt responsible for the development of a future inclusive plan for Gabriela Mistral School.

Negotiating how Gabriela Mistral School should attend to diversity

Throughout the meetings with the coordination team, I interpreted that the teachers engaged in the group with clear ideas about their underlying theories on diversity, and how Gabriela Mistral School should respond to it. I understood this from my first interviews with two of the team members, when we addressed their expectations about their engagement in the group. Gabriela emphasised the need to change attitudes towards diversity.

“Ana Luisa – What do you expect from the inclusion plan of the school, now that you are part of it... ?

Gabriela – I would love to organize work aiming to change attitudes... no-one should question again whether this school does or does not include.”

(Initial interview with Gabriela, 6th April, 2005)

Paula considered that school educational practices were focused on high academic achievements of a homogeneous type of student. This view seemed to be more common among secondary teachers.

“Paula – I think that it is really hard for us, above all, I believe, for secondary teachers more than primary teachers. Because we were taught that (...) we had to create little experts on the topic, and that there was nothing more important than Biology when I studied.”

(Initial interview with Paula, 6th April, 2005)

In my collaboration with the coordination team, I concluded that these two aspects were the main areas of concern for its members, as well as those of Carola and José. The meetings for coordination and those for reflection seemed to become events where teachers expressed their beliefs and ideas about attention to diversity. Discussions among teachers did not only help them reach common understandings. Furthermore, in my opinion, the teachers were able to articulate their concerns, negotiate and prioritise aspects to tackle, and agree on common issues to discuss with their colleagues in the workshops.

Considering the meaning of attention to diversity

During their meetings, teachers reached agreements on the meanings of attention to diversity within their school. Throughout their discussions, they seemed to be able to socially 'reframe' their ideas on inclusion and attention to diversity in the light of their colleagues' perspectives. In addition, I believed that the teachers tried not only to define the concept but, at the same time, they addressed how it impacted on their practices. They also seemed to make decisions about the steps to be followed by the school. The revision and redefinition of the concept was periodical.

In the meeting for the selection of the indicators of the *Index*, two team members highlighted the indicator "A.2.3. *All students are equally valued*". One of them underlined:

"We need to understand that equal opportunities do not mean we have to give the same thing to everybody."

(Coordination meeting report, 8th April, 2005)

These considerations seemed to strengthen when the coordination team reflected on the opinions given by the students in the focus groups. The members divided into three groups where they analysed the position of the school relating to one particular dimension: cultures, policies and practices.

The group analysing the evidence in relation to practices interpreted that some teachers only focused on the academic process. Those reflecting on the dimension of culture (Gabriela was among them), were astonished by the clear picture that the students had about the attitudes and practices of certain teachers. The students realised that some teachers did not prepare work for those students who experienced barriers to learning. In accordance with the diagnosis made by the students, Wilson saw that they had to promote changes in the teachers' behaviour in order to facilitate other types of learning processes.

For these reasons, the participants negotiated a common idea to share with the rest of the teachers in the school workshop. In one of their last meetings before the workshop, Gabriela expressed that they had to present a clear message to their colleagues:

"Inclusion is not only related to those children with special educational needs. We need to understand that we are doing this with around five hundred boys and girls, because we are all different."

(Coordination meeting report, 8th July, 2005)

In order to make changes in practices possible, the team members also believed that it was necessary to transform the attitudes of certain teachers.

Promoting reflection in order to transform attitudes

During my involvement with the school, Carola's and Gabriela's main concern appeared to be that it would not be possible to change teachers' practices without a major change in the teachers' attitudes towards their students' diversity. Throughout the meetings, Gabriela seemed to be able to make other teachers understand that attitudes were a major challenge in order to promote real transformation.

By my interpretation, Gabriela considered that some teachers had defensive arguments and attitudes which prevented them from reflecting and minimising the barriers experienced by their students. In one of the meetings, one teacher argued,

“For some people this job is like any other job. Working towards reflection about inclusion takes time and thinking that some teachers do not engage in.”

(Coordination meeting report, 8th April, 2005)

In accordance with this argument, the coordination team selected the indicator “B.2.2. Staff development activities help staff to respond to student diversity”, considering that it could help them to generate reflection about the topic among teachers.

The promotion of reflection was the main purpose of the school workshop. The coordination team discussed ways to make teachers question their own thinking. In my own words, they were trying to create opportunities for ‘social reframing’ where teachers could confront their defensive arguments in the light of other colleagues’ views. As Gabriela expressed,

“It is very difficult to change one’s ideas. (...) We need to discover how to make them question things. If we achieve that, it would be a great success!”

(Gabriela’s comment, coordination meeting report, 3rd June, 2005)

Considering the teachers’ workshop, Paula underlined that the evidence I had gathered was a good material that could lead teachers to reflection. Nevertheless, she did not only find it necessary for teachers to reflect on their attitudes and practices, she went a step further. She considered that teachers had to conclude the workshop with commitments. I understood that her

main aim was to put *'values into practice'*, and that every teacher should get *'in tune'* with the school action plan to improve attention to diversity.

Sharing their reflections and opinions may have empowered them into acquiring a common view of the situation of the school and the changes to be put into place. I perceived strong commitment and willingness among team members, and I felt these could not have been possible without the creation of a collaborative atmosphere where they felt as a team.

Fostering collaboration

In the teachers' opinions, the approach and my role as facilitator had prompted them to become organized as a group. Paula and Gabriela acknowledged this contribution:

"Paula – First, I think we have organized ourselves.

Ana Luisa – Ok.

Paula – That's fundamental, because I understand that we all handle some ideas in a certain way, don't we? It guided us, we knew exactly where to start, which criteria to consider. It forced us to organize ourselves and frame the area needing work. (...) We laughed as we said, 'Ana Luisa is coming! Ana Luisa is coming!'

Ana Luisa – Yes. (Laughs)

Paula – That is true, it has allowed us to give it continuity."

(Final interview with Paula and Gabriela, 19th August, 2005)

In addition, the periodical visits and meetings seemed to have promoted a sense of collegiality among the volunteer teachers. This collegiality also appeared to empower them to collaborate and make decisions about the process. The teachers valued the creation of an atmosphere of trust that made them more comfortable to consider and accept other colleagues' opinions and, therefore, they could *'reframe'* their own understanding and learn.

"Paula – Look I (...) really have trust in this group that was created.

Gabriela – The group.

Ana Luisa – Hmm.

Paula – (...) Because we are very different, I think, I fully trust each one of the people who is here.

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Gabriela – I feel it is really diverse (...), but we are super responsible and committed, we are a team! (...) Because (...) I feel we all

have trust in the team, we are all able to say “actually, if someone is telling me that I’m wrong...”

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Gabriela – “Ok, I’m wrong!” (...)

Paula – Do you understand? I don’t blind (...) No. (...) I don’t get stuck.”

(Final interview with Paula and Gabriela, 19th August, 2005)

It became apparent that the sense of collegiality built up by the members of the team reinforced their responsibility to the school and the inclusive action research process. They progressively seemed to assume their role and to project it into the future.

Developing ownership of the process

In my opinion, the meetings with the coordination group helped its members to develop a leadership role in the transformational process which they considered the school needed. They made decisions about the tasks which were to be carried out in the following months, having in mind the long term aims and the final workshop. This became clear after the brainstorming session in the first encounter we had after the introductory meeting, where teachers recommended,

“Focalise and organize our own potentialities.

We are talking about things that we have talked about before. We need to reflect on what we are doing.

Systematise our own knowledge.”

(Report of the first encounter, 13th December, 2004)

During my collaboration I saw that teachers took an active part in making decisions about the indicators to reflect on, and the members of the school to engage. They seemed to critically analyse others’ points of view and, under the leadership of Carola and I, they reached conclusions. As the months went by, the group acquired a sense of responsibility and focused their work on the organization of the workshop with the teachers. As noted in the quotation, the meetings may have helped them to achieve a common purpose.

“Carola writes on the board:

Target – Philosophy of inclusion, the big dream of inclusion.

15th July – Reflection Workshop with every teacher at the school, engine that generates actions.

Task of coordination group: filter from the evidence where we have the complex points.”

(Meeting report, 3rd June, 2005)

This sense of common purpose was not only related to the coordination team but also seemed to expand towards the educational community. Some of the comments I heard during the meetings considered that part of the role of the team was to contribute to the identity of Gabriela Mistral School. As Paula highlighted, *“we want this to work and that it works for the whole school”*.

During the evaluation of the workshop, Paula considered that they had agreed on crucial lines of action and the challenge of the coordination team was to work to design an inclusive action plan for the future. They also decided that they should include inclusion in each action plan for the school.

In the final interview with Paula and Gabriela, they showed their interest in continuing with the challenge of inclusion. I interpreted this to mean that they wanted to keep on working to maintain the team created in the school.

“Paula – I feel we have a great challenge... I mean, we cannot lose it.

Gabriela – We cannot ‘fall asleep’.

Ana Luisa – Aha.

Paula – Of course, we cannot lose this group, we cannot stop investing energy in this group... (...) and inventing interesting things for everybody.”

(Final interview with Paula and Gabriela, 19th August, 2005)

In summary, through collaborative reflection, the coordination team members seemed to feel empowered at different levels; at a methodological level, they understood and took their role to develop the collaborative approach; at an emotional and interpersonal level, they shared their feelings and showed their sense of belonging to the team; and at a political level, they become the coordinators of the school inclusive action plan. The coordination team seemed to play a central role in the development of Gabriela Mistral School as a reflective community.

Promoting a reflective community

Following the leadership of the coordination team, school staff were involved in the process through three consecutive events as noted in Diagram 4.1: the introductory meeting, a workshop to introduce the *Index*, and a final workshop for reflection. Analysing the discourse of the teachers in meetings, interviews and in anonymous evaluation sheets, I perceived that several transformations took place which could lead to the development of a reflective community that would respond to the diversity of its members.

Among them, the most relevant aspects appeared to be that teachers reframed their understanding and reached common agreements about how the '*Mistral*' community should take steps to attend to diversity. Firstly, an emotional and motivational atmosphere was established that appeared to empower teachers to reflect on and question their own beliefs and underlying theories about the barriers faced; and secondly that teachers agreed on lines of action that could be implemented in a sustainable inclusive action plan for the school.

Reframing understanding and assuming responsibilities on attention to diversity

Since the moment I started analysing the documents of the school integration programme, I realised that community members used the term '*special educational needs*', when they talked about disabled students or other children experiencing learning difficulties. At the beginning of my engagement with the school, I heard teachers demanding additional specialised resources to respond to the '*special educational needs*' of individual students.

I recognised this situation at the outset in the introductory meeting we held with a large number of representatives from Gabriela Mistral School. When invited to take part in the inclusive action research model, they stressed the need for concrete materials to be made available to teach students with '*special educational needs*', especially for disabled students. Carola responded by stating that it was difficult to get specific materials for particular needs because "*every child is different*". José emphasised that one of his concerns was that the professional support was only available for a few disabled students. I believed that the headteacher thought the concepts promoted by the *Index* focused on quality of education for each individual and was in tune with the School Educational Statement.

The two teachers who had been involved in the national workshop expressed their opinions and encouraged their colleagues to engage during the introductory workshop about the *Index*. They

demonstrated that rather than providing them with set materials, the process could help them learn and improve their practices for all the students. The process was also considered helpful in the transformation of the school structures in order to respond better to the diversity of its members.

“We have all complained sometimes because we did not feel prepared to respond to special educational needs. (...) ‘Inclusion’ is a broader term (...) It goes beyond the ‘special educational needs’ term and means that we all have difficulties in learning. It is a way of seeking school improvement, when the students’ learning is improved, the whole school improves. ‘Inclusion’ requires organizing the school to improve the learning for all. If the school vision is based on attention to diversity, we have to assimilate this concept.”

(Teacher who participated in the national workshop, introductory workshop report, 3rd March, 2005)

As shown in the quotation, the meaning of ‘attention to diversity’ used by each school member was directly involved with the school mission and identity, and its policies and practices. They seemed to relate their theories about diversity and ‘special educational needs’ to their everyday school life. Nevertheless, it became apparent that school staff did not know how to put their theories and values into practice. I include here a comment by one of the teachers who participated in the analysis of the indicators of the *Index*. Considering the indicator “B.2.4. *Assessment of special educational needs and support are used to reduce the barriers to learning and participation of all students*”, a teacher expressed “*I know the theory but the practice eludes me*”.

In the evaluation sheets of the final workshop, many teachers stressed they had a clearer understanding of the concept of inclusion, which did not only focus on the ‘special educational needs’ of individual students, as they had thought.

Other comments showed that teachers seemed to have realised that they could contribute to their students’ diversity by changing their educational practices. Some highlighted the fact that the workshops had helped them to see their capacity to jointly review their situation, and their strengths and weaknesses in order to improve them.

“I have learnt about the concept of inclusion in more depth, because before I thought it only included those with SEN.”

“I have learnt that we have to be a school ‘for all’.”

“I have learnt that the barriers can be and are within ourselves.”

(Comments from the teacher’s anonymous evaluation of the workshop, 15th July, 2005)

As noted in Table 4.2 in Chapter 4, in the final workshop, the barriers expressed by teachers were related to their ‘*traditional*’ educational practices focused on a homogeneous type of student, and the infrastructure of the school to support their teaching. In my opinion, accompanied by the reflection and the work done by the coordination team, most teachers had gone beyond their views at the beginning of the process, when they demanded additional resources to support those students with ‘*special educational needs*’. They now seemed to feel more responsible and capable in responding to their students’ learning processes through their educational practices. Apparently this may have been possible thanks to the creation of a motivational and sensitive atmosphere by the coordination team, the headteacher and the TPU professionals.

Building up a motivational and emotional atmosphere for teachers’ empowerment

From the beginning of my involvement with the school it became clear that José, Carola, and other TPU members were used to carefully preparing meetings in order to establish an open and participatory atmosphere to engage teachers. I could witness this common practice in the introductory meeting. The two teachers who had participated in the national workshop underlined their historical scepticism towards inclusion, but shared with their colleagues that the national workshop had made them realise that the approach could lead them to new understandings to improve the education of all their students. Carola expressed that the *Index* provided them with the opportunity to interchange and reflect on their experiences and create their own materials, more relevant to their context and to the reality of their students. As it was expressed in the introductory meeting,

“We need to dream in big, but take, small steps.”

(Introductory meeting report, 13th December, 2004)

The coordination team seemed to be aware of the need to maintain a motivated atmosphere. They tried to encourage teachers to feel a sense of belonging and collegiality. In this way, teachers could engage in reflection with the purpose of contributing to their school and students. One teacher encouraged her colleagues in the first workshop saying,

“This is the opportunity to know ourselves better, accept ourselves and value ourselves. We can have a new insight to create a warm atmosphere where the learning experiences of our children could be more participative. (...) We are the educators. (...) We must have the courage to open up to new knowledge.”

(Teacher’s comment, introductory workshop report, 4th March, 2005)

During the final workshop, the emotional and participatory atmosphere created by the coordination team was valued as was demonstrated by the teachers’ evaluation sheets. It seemed to have helped them feel confident to open up and reflect on the situation of the school. Teachers commented,

“We are all anxious to improve our professional endeavour; this is a boost of energy.”

“I have learnt about the diversity of opinions, and about the humbleness to express them without fear of seeming ignorant.”

(Final workshop report, 15th July, 2005)

In the meeting with the coordination team to evaluate the workshop, Gabriela underlined the emotional atmosphere created where teachers could share their fears and uncertainties.

“We discovered things we had not been aware of before. Teachers were asking for help. We were all vulnerable to the same things.”

(Gabriela’s comment, evaluation meeting report, 19th August, 2005)

In addition, it appeared to me that the participatory atmosphere made teachers feel empowered to contribute to the process. After analysing the indicators of the *Index* in the introductory workshop, teachers seemed to feel invited to participate in decision making. They first acknowledged the importance of developing the model in their school. They expressed the view that they saw the indicators as aims that they had not yet achieved. Therefore, they believed that the collaborative inclusive action research process provided them with the opportunity to get closer to their Educational Statement. As one teacher proposed, *“This Index helps us walk towards inclusion.”*

This active participation continued into the final workshop. I perceived that its organization and the atmosphere created by the coordination team supported teachers in acquiring a commitment to continue improving their practices and to play an active role in the organization of the school. As can be seen in Table 4.2, and in the lines of action presented below, teachers appeared to be focusing on reorganizing their practices and exchanging their knowledge in order to respond to everyone.

“Culture dimension, line of action: Teachers need to be more proactive in solving small problems that we pass on to the TPU.

Policies dimension, line of action: Collaborative work to interchange and register our experiences.

Practices dimension, line of action: Promote a self-managed and collaborative professional development.”

(Final workshop report, 15th July, 2005)

In the evaluation sheets of the final workshop, teachers appeared satisfied with the work done. I had the impression that they felt empowered to analyse the evidence, discuss the situation of the school, and agree on the steps to follow. They seemed to have realised they had the capacity and the professionalism to make improvements in order to attend to diversity.

“The workshop clarified in part how I can participate in the inclusion plan: what I can do and how I can improve my practices in the class.”

“I have learned that it is necessary to reorganize periodically to improve what works and repair the aspects that do not work well.”

“I have learnt that the team I work with is qualified to improve our practices.”

(Comments from the teacher’s anonymous evaluation of the workshop, 15th July, 2005)

Teachers seemed to have gone through a learning process where they realised the aspects they could concentrate on to respond better to all their students, not only those with ‘*special educational needs*’. They analysed the challenges faced and made decisions about how to deal with them. Moreover, they acquired a sense of responsibility and commitment to improve the way they were attending to diversity. Likewise, they planned lines of action to guarantee that the improvement would be sustainable over time. They got involved in the dynamics of reflection and decision making that could lead, in the long term, to a more participatory and democratic structure and organization for Gabriela Mistral School.

Supporting a sustainable process

Throughout the months of my collaboration with Gabriela Mistral School, I had the sense that the educational management team took steps to guarantee that teachers' participation would contribute to sustainable transformations. Its institutional support was recognised from the first introductory meeting, where José and Carola had carefully planned the meeting with the purpose of engaging teachers. The headteacher actively participated, listening to teachers' opinions and underlining that the values which defined the *Index* were embedded in the mission and culture of the school.

In addition, I got the impression that Carola and José played a proactive role during the process. They proposed to include the reflective process on attention to diversity as one of the action plans for 2005; to establish a coordination team with volunteer members; and to make diversity the central theme of the annual agenda which they distributed to every member of the school. The 2005 Agenda announced,

“We have declared this year as the Year of Diversity. For this reason, we have decided to advance towards a more inclusive school. This means that as an educational community, we will start the difficult process of eliminating barriers that we have all built up. They jeopardize the learning and development of equal opportunities for every student.”

(Agenda 2005, Gabriela Mistral School: 11)

Carola, José and other TPU professionals appeared to maintain a close and encouraging relationship with the coordination team. In the first encounter with the group, the headteacher considered that the model offered them the possibility to foster their Educational Statement. I interpreted his comments as his willingness to own the process and make it sustainable over time.

“This could be the great innovation of Gabriela Mistral School. We could develop a more democratic school, more human, one that adapts to everyone. We need to incorporate this concept in our lives. This is the pedagogical opportunity to foster our Educational Statement.”

(José's comment, report from the first encounter with the coordination team, 13th December, 2004)

In my meetings with José and Carola, it became clear to me that José considered it necessary to promote the transformational leadership of the coordination team, in order to involve other colleagues. He did not want the inclusive action research model to be perceived as something imposed by the pedagogical management team. He was concerned that if the staff did not own the process, it would not have any impact in the school. Therefore, José viewed the role of the coordination team as central to the engagement of other school members.

This institutional follow up of the evolution of the process seemed to guarantee its sustainability in the future. Nevertheless, it could also limit its impact. Trying to achieve the success of the process, I felt that José, Carola and other TPU members might be trying to control it and impose boundaries on its development in other spheres of the educational community.

I could envisage this situation in relation to their reluctance for the professionals of Neruda Organization to take part. My interpretation was that the school wanted to develop their own autonomy in response to their students' learning processes. This became clear in one of my first interviews with the educational psychologist, and was confirmed in the conclusions reached in the final workshop. In one of our interviews, Carola stated,

“Carola – One of our targets is to improve the integration plan.

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Carola – It also comes from the crisis in 2003. (...) The idea is that the school (...) is at the mercy of Neruda Organization or any other professional body, and it (support) is not seen as a matter for the school.

Ana Luisa – Of course.

Carola – Therefore, since the re-organization, the school demands, (...) Instead of Neruda Organization telling us what to do. (...) It was a big change.”

(Interview with Carola, 3rd March, 2005)

Although I understand their need to be cautious in the process, I would underline that the control of the decisions of the headteacher and the TPU members could prevent the school becoming more participatory and inclusive. I sensed this tension in the argument with Carola and the TPU professional when organizing the final workshop. On my arrival at the school, I had the impression that they had made decisions counter to the agreements reached by the coordination team. They argued that they wanted to guarantee the success of the workshop and, therefore, the institutionalisation of an action plan on inclusion. In my report of this meeting, I wrote,

“Planning of the workshop: The management team had decided to dedicate the whole day to working on the same dimension.

The coordination team does not know this yet.

Action of mistrust – there is no previous experience that teachers work in this way (referring to the coordination group). It is necessary to provide them with a proposal for them to work on.

“We need to be in charge, because, in the end, we are responsible for this institution.”

(Report of meeting with Carola and TPU member, 7th July, 2005)

For this reason, one of my fears would be that the situation could reach a point where the necessary transformations would not occur, due to the management team’s fear that the process could be taken out of their hands.

Nevertheless, at the closure of the workshop José stated that the work carried out up until then had only been the first step in making inclusion the educational innovation of Gabriela Mistral School. He seemed to stress the importance that the process would be formally institutionalised. It would require political decisions in order to establish the conditions for its development, in terms of recognising the coordination team and its role, assigning time, space and salaries for those involved. The process that had just started could lead to ‘*attention to diversity*’ being a central part of the school Educational Statement and its identity. As Gabriela expressed in one of our interviews,

“Gabriela – Yes, in fact, it is something very idealistic, isn’t it?”

Ana Luisa – Hmm.

Gabriela – But that is what I would like.

Ana Luisa – Well, yes, besides, I think that inclusion has to do with utopia, hasn’t it?

Gabriela – Hmm.

Ana Luisa – It is what we aim at; it will never be completed, will it?

Gabriela – Of course! (...) It is the way.”

(First interview with Gabriela, 6th April, 2005)

Lessons learnt

Conditions in which the inclusive action research model evolved

Some of the school conditions seemed to have created a situation whereby the inclusive action research model would evolve in this particular way. It appeared that Gabriela Mistral School regarded itself as having a strong identity, a sense of belonging, and a commitment to, as well as participation with, its members. It had been open to diversity since its origins and its members had worked as a community to improve their response. The headteacher, the TPU members and some teachers appeared to have a clear determination that the process would lead them to an educational innovation on attention to diversity, in order to diversify their educational practices, gather autonomy, and minimise the tensions in relation to the external support team.

In the following diagram, the evolution of the inclusive action research model in Gabriela Mistral School can be seen. Diagram 5.1 provides a representation of the model presented in Chapter 2 within the context of this particular school during my collaboration.

Diagram 5.1. Emphasis on the evolution of the inclusive action research model in Gabriela Mistral School

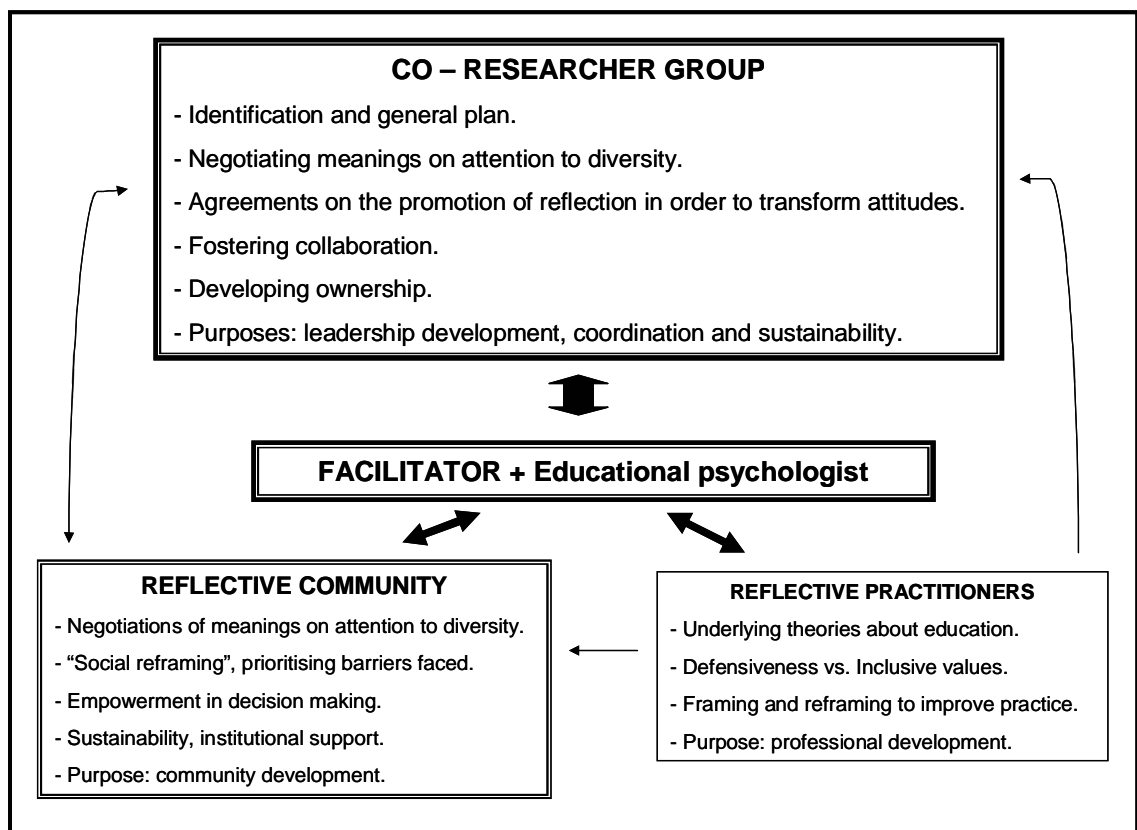


Diagram 5.1 shows that most of the work appeared to have concentrated on the development of the coordination group. My facilitator role was shared with and dependent on the collaboration with the educational psychologist. The strongest bilateral relationships seemed to be established with the coordination team members, the '*co-researcher group*' in Diagram 5.1, in order to promote their leadership role, make decisions about the process and organize the final workshop. In my interpretation, the meetings with the coordination team were useful to establish further conditions for the evolution of an action research process. The coordination meetings served to promote team work and transformational leadership. They were the instances where teachers seemed to share a sense of belonging to the group and the school, and it appeared that the meetings helped to promote collaboration among teachers. It became apparent that the participants owned the process and made decisions about the development of their community in relation to attention to diversity.

Teachers' reflections in the initial meeting, I believe, helped the coordination team, Carola and I to define the indicators to be analysed. Although, I had the impression that the promotion of individual '*reflective practitioners*' was not perceived as a priority, I carried out five reflective interviews which enlightened me about the aspects to concentrate on with the coordination team and in the reflective workshop. Additionally, those involved in the reflective interviews appeared to contribute to some degree in the reflection and decision making of the coordination team. They also played a strong leadership role in the final workshop.

The promotion of the '*reflective community*' consisted of the initial and final workshops with teachers. In these events, I perceived a climate of rapport, trust, openness and common understanding, and teachers seemed to be empowered to be able to talk about the situation of their school, discuss their opinions with other colleagues, and decide on lines of action.

One of the difficulties I recognised that the model faced was paid time allocation for the educational psychologist's coordination, and for the meetings to take place with the coordination team. But above all, although the institutional support of the pedagogical management team appeared to be crucial in the evolution of the process, its control over it could also jeopardize its development and the involvement of other community members in the decision making and the implementation of a sustainable inclusive plan for the school.

Contribution of the inclusive action research model to understandings and practices in relation to diversity

During my nine months of collaboration with Gabriela Mistral School, I saw a transformation in the way the community understood diversity. At the beginning, their worries seemed to be related to disabled students and those considered having '*special educational needs*'.

Through the cycles of individual and collaborative reflection, and faced with the evidence gathered in the school, I believe that the teachers considered that attention to diversity was related to the argument that all students should receive a quality education. They jointly constructed a common knowledge about how their practices should evolve and how the school should create the conditions to make this sustainable over time.

The cycles of individual reflection to promote reflective practitioners helped me to understand the teacher's underlying theories or/and practical arguments about education and attention to diversity. In the light of the class observations, I could visualise how some teachers used defensive strategies to justify the exclusion of disabled students from their educational practices. In other cases, teachers appeared to show that their inclusive values promoted '*reflection-in-and-on-action*' that helped them to adjust their educational practices in order to respond to everyone.

I interpreted that the defensiveness expressed by teachers, was a response to the feeling that they were not responsible for those students who faced barriers to learning and participation. This defensive strategy prevented individual teachers reflecting on their understandings and being able to see their practices from other perspectives. The coordination meetings and workshops seemed to provide teachers with an opportunity to share their insights with other colleagues which could help individuals '*socially reframe*' their ideas, beliefs and attitudes.

It became apparent how important the role of the coordination team was in the transformation of ideas about how Gabriela Mistral School should respond to the diversity of its members. They seemed to discuss meanings about attention to diversity and the need to promote reflection in order to change the defensive attitudes of some of their colleagues. In addition, they seemed to assume the responsibility to design and implement an inclusive education plan for the school. With this purpose in mind, they considered the lines of action which had been agreed, and prioritised in the teachers' workshop.

In my opinion, at the final workshop, the teachers emerged with common agreements about the most important barriers and facilitators existent in the '*Mistral*' community, and also made themselves responsible for those aspects they could tackle through their individual practices.

They designed lines of action in relation to the school organization and structure. Teachers seemed to be willing to guarantee a sustainable transformation of the school towards more inclusive practices, under the leadership of the coordination team, and with the institutional support of the headteacher and the professionals of the TPU.

Evolution of the researcher's role as facilitator

My role evolved during the involvement with Gabriela Mistral School. Through the inclusive action research model, it appeared that I contributed to establishing participatory reflective work. I invested time and energy, along with the educational psychologist and a coordination team, in creating collaboration based on power balance and inclusive values. I felt I had learnt to accompany the coordination team and its leader in the learning process about the model and to adjust to their rhythm in order to own it. I tried to challenge the team with new insights and to encourage its members to make decisions. Negotiations of meanings and purposes were constantly necessary, and even more so in tense situations where power issues and contrasting agendas emerged, but these negotiations seemed to have enhanced our collaboration.

Nevertheless, my main purpose was to offer meaningful evidence to promote reflection on how to improve the conditions of Gabriela Mistral School in order for it to respond to diversity. While I was gathering data for reflection, I also became familiar with the school and understood its strengths and weaknesses in being able to promote a collaborative action research process. My aim had been to gather evidence from different perspectives and to present the community with representative accounts of the whole situation.

In conclusion, I believe I was not only facilitating the social learning process of the '*Mistral*' community, but I also seemed to be engaged in a journey where I learnt about my own personal and professional selves. While I was influencing the evolution of the model, I experienced being transformed by my involvement with the community. During the process, I felt the pressure to keep the balance between my double agenda, contributing to the transformations of the school, and engaging at the same time in a '*second order action research*' (Elliott, 1991). In the next chapter, I introduce the context of Nelquihue School and the implementation of the inclusive action research model.

Chapter 6. Introduction of the Nelquihue School and the evolution of the inclusive action research model

*“Have we got nothing left, but crossing our arms?
Poverty is not written in the stars;
underdevelopment is not the fruit of a dark design of God.”
(Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan writer, 1971²⁵)*

Having presented the case study of Gabriela Mistral School, I would now like to introduce Nelquihue²⁶ School. In contrast, it is a rural school located in the IX Region in the south of Chile, 800 kms. away from the capital city. The region has the highest national levels of poverty, and a high percentage of its population belongs to the Mapuche ethnic group. In this chapter, I firstly frame Nelquihue School as part of a Spanish NGO local development programme, and also explain my involvement with this programme since 1997.

Secondly, I describe the particular characteristics of Nelquihue School that shaped the evolution of the inclusive action research model. I based my descriptions on data from my field notes; school documents; interviews with teachers; focus groups with secondary students; activities with primary students; and my researcher diary. In what follows, a detailed picture of the way the model evolved is provided. I then consider the roles I played in order to facilitate the collaborative action research process among teachers. My interpretations derive from reports of meetings and workshops; interviews with teachers; notes from my researcher diary; and conversations with my supervisors and my mentor in Chile.

²⁵ Galeano, E. (1971). *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*. México, Siglo XXI. My translation.

²⁶ ‘Nelquihue’ means liberation in Mapudungun.

An NGO local development programme in a deprived community

The first time I heard about Nelquihue School was in Spain in 1997. I was taking part in a non governmental organization course. It consisted of training sessions and a three-month visit and collaboration in one of the NGO programmes. At the time, I only had vague ideas about Chile, and had not heard of the Mapuche people. I learnt that they were proud of not having been defeated by the Spaniards, centuries ago. Apart from that, they were struggling to maintain their culture and their traditions, and their own language, Mapudungun, was not considered an official language by the State.

The NGO had worked in the IX Region for almost two years. At that moment, the programme was composed of a Catholic parish, an orphanage for 0 to 6 year old children, and a Catholic primary school with dormitory houses for those children who lived in the mountains, miles from the school with poor road access. The village and its surroundings have suffered from a high migration of young people to the cities, where they become displaced and often work as cheap labour. Given the particular features of the local community, the programme had a double educational purpose: recover and promote the Mapuche culture and language, and build up the capacity of the people to regenerate their own community. This can be noted in the school mission statement,

“Being part of this concrete reality, the school assumes the commitment as a truly apostolic ministry. For this reason, it proposes to: recognise the common and individual features of our indigenous communities and preserve them in order to present them to future generations; promote the specific values of the Mapuche and Latin American cultures, particularly the Chilean one, in a climate of openness and integration to all men and cultures; help the students and their families to be aware of their surroundings, enhancing their integration into the place they live, to make them feel responsible for building up, transforming and giving life to the local community.”

(Nelquihue School Mission Statement)

During my first stay, from July to September in 1997, I shared my life with the priests and the volunteers of the NGO community. I collaborated with the primary teachers, basically with the integration unit, and I also spent numerous hours with the children staying in the dormitory houses and living with a Mapuche family in the mountains. I was surprised by the warm emotional links I established with the children, and the hospitality of the Mapuche people. While I was living with the family, the parents lent me their bed and they slept in a small cold kitchen. The experience changed my view of life completely.

Since then, I have played an active part of the NGO programme. In 1999, I returned to Chile to work for UNESCO. My then future husband and I visited the NGO community frequently and shared their ideals and worries; their highs and lows. Nevertheless, I felt that given my professional knowledge, I could contribute more to the school, and the opportunity arrived with my PhD in 2004. I proposed to Father Miguel²⁷, headteacher and manager of the whole NGO programme, that my research could be used as an opportunity for teachers' professional development and the promotion of attention to diversity in the school. We then moved to live at the school and became part of the NGO community during the ten months of my field work.

The programme had grown quickly in the previous decade. The school had expanded, with a nursery for three to five year old children, and a new secondary level, specialising in vocational subjects which responded to local work opportunities. Thirty teachers taught a population of around five hundred students. More than a hundred of these students lived in the dormitory houses during the week. A high quality infrastructure had been built up for the orphanage, the dormitory houses, the nursery and the secondary level. In addition, industrial development had been promoted by an organization of local working men, and the formation of agricultural cooperatives with women from very isolated areas of the community.

My personal involvement with the programme for such a long period of time gave me a deep understanding of the complexities of the context. These complexities became more evident during our stay, as the NGO community was going through a strong structural crisis that affected us all. Nevertheless, my heart and soul are really dedicated to this programme and I found it difficult to disentangle my rational interpretations from my feelings. However, I try to provide an accurate account of the situation here. As my descriptions evolve, I would like to reinforce that no

²⁷ Father Miguel Hidalgo was a rural Mexican priest who in the XIX century called the Indians to fight for their freedom: *"Are you determined to make an effort to recover, from the hated Spaniards, the land stolen from your ancestors three hundred years ago?"* (Galeano, E. (1971). *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*. México, Siglo XXI.: 67) My translation.

matter how challenging the circumstances might seem, most of the people involved have a strong commitment to the local community, as well as to the children and young people who are its future.

Understanding Nelquihue School



Photograph 6.1. Taken by primary students, Y7: "We like the new dormitory houses"

Every morning, my husband and I have our breakfast looking through the window at the impressive extinct volcano that dominates the village. It is freezing outside, and I can see children coming and going from their houses to the refectory, while trying to keep warm.

Someone knocks at the door. The three girls who came yesterday afternoon for a chat say "good morning aunt!" and offer me a bread roll. I kiss them and they go away, laughing. I go out and see Father Miguel driving the bus up the hill, taking the children to the nursery. Some 'aunts' greet the priest as they walk the children from the orphanage to their classes.

I go through the woods to the primary school and pass some of the children who live in the dormitory houses. Most of them smile at me and say: "Hello aunt!" The younger ones come near and give me a kiss. I smile at them, call some of them by their names, and ask about their weekends at home.

Approaching the school, I find Fernando, a 6-year old boy who lives in the orphanage. He is lying face down on the muddy ground, surrounded by children. He is crying and does not want to get up. The children tell me that, as he has poor eyesight, he has tripped over a rock. But suddenly they leave. I help him up and, after a while comforting him, a teacher comes along and takes care of him.

Close to the church, the old one-storey building where the primary classes take place is surrounding the playground. In each class, a group of children is lighting the fire. I go through the playground and see the Mapuche culture teacher playing football with some boys. Then I enter the staff room where teachers are having coffee. They invite me to join them and, through our conversation, I arrange the photography activities with the Y7 teacher. A large window overlooks the lively playground. On the wooden wall, I see a picture of General Pratt who died in the war against Peru in 1879. When the bell rings, the teachers leave to go to their classes and I enter the library to meet the teacher in charge. We agree on a date for the coordination team to meet.

As I go out, I find Vicente alone in the playground. I ask him why he is not in class. He replies, “Aunt, I have to go to Y4 but the class is boring! I think I am going back to Aunt Mercedes’ class.” Mercedes is the teacher in charge of the integration unit, where Vicente stays most of the time. The folklore music teacher passes me, and heads quickly for Y8. I see Nieves outside the Y4 class. I come close and she tells me that her teacher has thrown her out of the class, but she does not want to say why.



Photograph 6.2. Taken by primary students, Y7: “A good library where we find information to do our homework”

I leave Nieves at her class door and make my way to the priests’ house. Father Miguel is working with a young Spanish woman, one of the NGO volunteers, on the budget for a new project. He gives me some minutes to organize the teachers’ workshop. Then his phone rings and he has to rush out with the truck to an emergency. The volunteer and I laugh and comment on his busy life.

Afterwards I pass the woods, the dormitory houses and go up the hill to the new buildings of the secondary school. It is their break time and through the windows of the classes, I see the students chatting as they keep warm by the fire. At the entrance to the staffroom I see a notice board with photographs of students and some news. Inside, the teachers invite me to have another coffee, and between laughing with them, I arrange the timetable for the individual reflective interviews. The new Natural Science teacher is marking. The head tells her that they have agreed they should not use red for marking, as a strategy to avoid stigmatising those students with low marks. The table and the shelves in the staffroom are full of books, and the walls are covered with timetables and academic calendars. We listen to music on the radio.

A group of Y4 girls come into the room, and ask the teachers for their support in organizing a ‘basic basket’²⁸ for one of their classmates who is in hospital, 50 kms. away. She has lost her unborn baby due to a medical error; something quite common during my time there. When they leave, the teachers and I discuss how to support the girl and convince her to come back to school. The break finishes, the Spanish language teacher picks a large pile of subject books and goes to Y1. I go out at the same time, talking to him about our next coordination meeting.

²⁸ Students and teachers contribute with money, clothes and food to support families in difficult circumstances.



Photograph 6.3. Taken by primary students, Y7: "We like the new refectory"

In the afternoon, I go up the hill to the nursery. The aunts are kissing goodbye to the children as they get on the bus home. Through the windows, I gaze at the beautifully decorated new classrooms full of toys, games and other educational resources. The tiny colourful shelves, tables and chairs have been made in the carpentry workshop of the programme, as have all pieces of furniture and all the timber for its buildings.

I go with the aunts to the orphanage where they have their staffroom. Listening to the noises of the children downstairs, the head prepares coffee and biscuits. We then talk about the survey I have carried out with families to find out about their involvement in their children's education. But soon we direct our conversation to some children from the orphanage, and how they can be calmed down and how their demanding behaviour in class can be managed. When we finish, I leave with one of the educators. She is a Spanish volunteer. We go down to the priests' house to prepare dinner, and we talk about two children from the orphanage. The girl is being adopted by a European family, and the boy is going back to his grandmother. We hope they will have a better future.

Catholic values as Mission Statement: freedom, justice and solidarity

Since the arrival of the NGO, together with the Spanish priests, the philosophy of the school has experienced a significant shift. A decade ago, the school culture stood on the values instilled by the dictatorship. In contrast, democracy, autonomy and solidarity were the pillars that the new Mission Statement proclaimed. For example,

"Within a religious Catholic background: (...) Educate in freedom and for freedom. (...) Educate in respect for others. Welcoming attitude among educators, students and families, avoiding any kind of discrimination due to intellectual, religious, economic, social or any other reason. Educate for justice and solidarity. Justice is an exigency of dignity and equality among men as God's sons; and education for justice and solidarity is fruit of our option to serve mankind."

(Nelquihue School Mission Statement)

Embedded in the Mission Statement, in my opinion, are inclusive values which are a key aspect of the new vision of Nelquihue School. Nevertheless, it seemed that newcomers believed that it was necessary to create the conditions within the educational community to embrace this philosophy. The expansion of the school into early childhood and secondary education levels presented the opportunity to recruit younger generations with a more open attitude towards these values. The new teachers were invited to commit, not only to the school, but also to the broader NGO programme. Despite the efforts, I perceived that these values were still not shared by all school members, and the situation resulted in latent tensions among teachers, which may have jeopardized participation.

Tensions to participation

As observed in the account, I personally found it difficult to establish a fluent communication with school members. For example, the distance between the buildings of each phase of schooling was substantial. Likewise, I recognised that there was no distinct central body which canalised and coordinated school decisions. Since 2000, with the expansion, an educational management team had been created, with representatives or heads for each level of schooling. Nevertheless, several factors seemed to prevent the orchestration of communication and participation.

Hierarchical culture

Central in the Institutional Educational Statement was the promotion of participation and the sense of belonging by the members of the educational community. Nevertheless, the decisions for both the school and the programme were likely to be centred on Father Miguel. He was perceived as a *'father figure'* and, though I had the impression that teachers depended on him to make decisions, at the same time, they also blamed him for anything which went wrong.

I felt that this situation maximised during my stay, due to the structural crisis experienced in the NGO community. One of the priests in charge left the programme in the middle of the academic year, and this affected most of the school members. It entailed a revision of the structure of the management team, and the organization of school timetables and responsibilities.

The educational management team worked at a method of redistributing responsibilities. However, this was seen by teachers mainly as an information and communication channel. I interpreted that the heads constituted a consultation body in order for the headteacher to make decisions. I noted this situation in conversations with teachers, for example with Violeta,

“Violeta – Considering the information we receive, it is always good, because when we have our teachers’ meetings, she (head of secondary level) tells us everything. And then, I imagine that she arrives there (management team) with her notebook and she asks everything she has written down.

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Violeta – And she brings back all the answers written down. And if we, for example, remember something in a break, we remind her to ask him (headteacher). (...) I think in that sense the management team works well.”

(First interview with computer secondary teacher, 23rd March, 2005)

Other participatory strategies were established. As seen in the quotation, the teachers of each phase of schooling had weekly meetings to coordinate their work. In addition, monthly school meetings were held for the whole body of teachers. Nevertheless, participation in school meetings seemed to be low. They were basically informational events conducted by Father Miguel. This situation was not only due to the structure of the meetings but also the participatory culture of its members.

Most of the teachers felt they did not have the knowledge to contribute in school meetings, and were more confident collaborating in their teams. I felt that some of them had a lack of agency and low self-esteem. This was closely related to how they felt about their competencies as teachers. I unravel this aspect in a following section about professional development. The early childhood assistant commented on this aspect in our interview,

“María del Carmen – They (other teachers) bother me, because I am the most quiet and I do not speak too much. If I do not know very much about a topic, I’d rather stay quiet, understand what teachers are talking about, and then contribute.”

(First interview with Y2 early childhood assistant, 28th March, 2005)

Low participation was also observed while I interviewed secondary students in the focus groups. It took them a long time to answer my questions and give their opinions. In the focus groups, they considered that they were not often asked their opinions. Although they took part in decision making through the students council, they did not seem to have a sense of belonging. In my interpretation, the lack of identification with the school as a community was also a matter of concern among teachers, and one of the major barriers to participation.

Balkanization among teachers

Participation was also difficult due to the confrontational relationships among teachers. Those teachers who had worked in the school for decades saw the newcomers as being *'with the priests'*. This implied discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, mainly between primary teachers and those in other teams. In the first workshop, one teacher expressed,

"There is no sense of 'school', each one backs her own team, forgetting that we are all responsible for the good and the bad things that happen."

(Teacher's comment, report of first reflective workshop, 28th February, 2005)

Secondary teachers and early childhood educators, on the other hand, considered they had a good atmosphere for collaboration and support among their colleagues within their schooling level. They expressed they worked as a team, and they learnt from each other. Most of these teachers, along with the new primary teachers, were also committed to the NGO programme. In my opinion, they shared a sense of identity and belonging to the programme, but they did not show unity as a school.

Teachers at primary level did not seem to have a good team relationship and a common philosophy. Latent tensions were perceived between senior and junior teachers which jeopardized collaboration and interchange. I felt that senior teachers acted as disruptive factors by demonstrating disagreement with the new management team and its vision. Likewise, particular teachers seemed to present different stages of *'being burnt out'*. The Spanish teacher discussed this in our interviews,

"Alfredo – In primary education there are several dissociating elements.

Ana Luisa – Yes, it is very complicated.

Alfredo – Unfortunately, they jeopardize the team work. (...) Because if you are building up a team and someone arrives and starts undermining it, in the end it falls apart."

(Final interview, primary and secondary Spanish language teacher, 16th August, 2005)

In my opinion, this situation did not allow teachers to share a common view and attitude towards diversity. As seen in the account, the attitudes of certain teachers had a strong impact on students, and particularly on those suffering exclusion.

Tensions in attitudes and practices towards diversity

Nelquihue School had a strong commitment towards the Mapuche people, their language and culture. As it was considered a voluntary subject in the national curriculum, the Mapuche language and culture was a subject in primary education. Mapuche traditions and festivals were celebrated in the school by the *lonkos*²⁹, the heads of the tribes, and every student and teacher participated. One of the major achievements in the last decade had been the change of attitude towards the Mapuche people. This was acknowledged by one of the two Mapuche teachers at the school,

“Mercedes – And also the topic about the Mapuche culture, there has been a big change. Intercultural aspects have worked.

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Mercedes – Especially, those who consider themselves to be Chileans, mainly because they did not see the Mapuche people as Chileans, (...) children have learnt that we are all Chileans. (...) I don’t hear any more words undervaluing those children who are Mapuche.”

(First interview with primary special teacher, 2nd May, 2005)

In addition, there is a political school commitment to respond to those students from vulnerable families. Despite being a subsidised private school, students did not pay to attend. The school operated with funds from the Ministry of Education and the NGO. Likewise, free school buses guaranteed that every child had the right and the accessibility to go to school.

Nevertheless, discriminatory attitudes and exclusionary practices were common, particularly at primary level. Some of the barriers perceived were that teachers had low expectations of their students. Their attitudes seemed to be the result of patronising cultures, and teachers felt that they had to provide their students with the needs they believed the students did not get from their families. In my opinion, female teachers played the role of a *‘mother or protector figure’*, whereas male teachers acted more in an authoritarian role. Punishments were common practices when a student did not behave as expected.

²⁹ The *‘lonko’*, which means *‘head’*, is selected by each Mapuche tribe to be its leader. His role is to lead the community to follow the decisions agreed by its committee of representatives. I interpreted this committee as a *‘group of wise men and women’*.

From my point of view, secondary teachers had a different approach towards their students. They also perceived they had to respond in some way to the deprived conditions their students lived in. In my observations, I interpreted that teachers considered themselves as role models for students. They established close relationships with them, talked about their problems, and tried to help them find solutions. Those teachers who had been brought up in similar conditions put themselves forward as motivational examples for students to continue studying. The secondary students in the focus groups expressed that they valued the emotional relationships their teachers established with them, and felt that their teachers understood and motivated them.

On examining teaching practices, students stressed that they behaved better and performed better for those teachers who *'disciplined'* them. The external control and reinforcement over their academic performance was something valued by the primary and secondary students. Based on an activity carried out with primary Y4 students, they seemed to perform better in class in response to getting rewards from their teachers. Ten children out of nineteen answered in the following way,

“In the class, I feel well when... my teacher gives me a good mark.”

“In the class, I feel bad when... the teacher gives me a negative or a bad mark.”

(Y4 primary students, 20th April, 2005)



Photograph 6.4. Taken by primary students, Y7: “I don’t like that our classmates bully and insult us”

In Chapter 7, I present some examples of the educational practices in classes where these aspects are highlighted. Exclusionary attitudes and discrimination seemed to be common among students. I interpreted that students felt they were expected to behave in a certain way, and those who were different suffered exclusion. A disabled secondary student shared his experience with the focus group,

*“Ana Luisa – What things do you not like so much about the school? (...)
Jorge³⁰ – When they bully³¹ me. (...) I’m used to it. (...) Since primary
education I have let them bully me.*

Ana Luisa – Do you think you could do something to change that? (...)

Jorge – I had to change myself.

*Macarena –But the rest of us should also have to change, we should call
him by his name, instead of bullying him. (...) And he should call
the others by their names as well.”*

(Focus group, Y1 secondary students. 23rd March, 2005)

As in the example, disabled students were those who seemed to suffer the higher levels of exclusion and segregation. At primary level, they attended the integration unit on a regular basis, at secondary level they stayed in class with their peers without any kind of support to advance their learning.

Segregated integration unit

In 1997, the school decided to develop an integration programme for disabled students under the Ministerial integration programme. The Ministry funded between 7 and 15 students who had been diagnosed as disabled. During my collaboration, 15 disabled students attended Nelquihue School. I observed that the educational practices of the integration unit followed the medical model that characterised the ministerial programme. On the one hand, the integration unit gave disabled children the opportunity of access to education in their local community, but on the other hand, segregated remedial classes maintained a lack of inclusion for disabled students.

It seemed that Mercedes, the special teacher, had made specific arrangements with certain teachers for disabled students to share some class time with their peers. Nevertheless, these arrangements did not respond to any of the students’ learning programmes and were not structured. Mercedes expressed to me that she had to negotiate the time to be spent in regular classes with her students, and she felt they experienced rejection by both their teachers and their classmates.

The special teacher also indicated that she had recently established collaboration with a few primary teachers who had asked her for support with particular students who found it difficult to

³⁰ Jorge is a disabled student.

³¹ There is no specific Spanish term for ‘bullying’, children normally describe it as ‘being annoyed’. Nevertheless, I wanted to use the English term to make it clearer.

follow the lessons. I believed that this collaborative practice was sporadic and informal. In my interpretation, Mercedes' work was focused on the education of disabled students separated from the rest of their peers and following a parallel curriculum.

Part of the teachers' attitudes and educational practices seemed to be the result of deficits in their in-service training. In the next, section I consider the conditions for professional development which the school and the local community appeared to provide.

Conditions for professional development

During my time living at the school, teachers expressed constant concern about their training and their living conditions. Most teachers lived alone, separate from their families. Some teachers had arrived at the school due to basic financial need; others had vocationally chosen to dedicate their efforts to teaching underprivileged children. In both cases, I felt that the living and working conditions of teachers affected their motivation. Maite described her situation in our interview,

*“Maite – Then I said to myself, “if I get depressed, I think I will pack my things and leave.” Or I’m going to talk to Father Miguel and tell him “Father, I can’t go on, I miss my daughter so much.” (...)
And I don’t want that to happen!”*

*(Reflective interview with primary and secondary English teacher,
22nd April, 2005)*

In addition, teachers seemed to think they were not ready to respond to the heterogeneity of their students. I believed that they showed a lack of agency and low self esteem about their professionalism. In the case of the secondary teachers, this was due to their professional backgrounds. They said they were professionals of their subjects or the specialities they taught, but had little knowledge about teaching. In addition, the supervision and in-service training provided by the Ministry was perceived as very theoretical and not relevant to their educational practices within their particular context.

In response to this situation, the NGO programme offered opportunities for training and learning. Part-time teaching courses for individual teachers were financed, and, every weekend, teachers attended the teaching courses at the nearest university, a hundred kilometres away. In addition, Spanish professionals had collaborated in training sessions. I was seen as one of these professionals, who volunteered to support their professional development. One of the senior teachers of the school acknowledged these training opportunities,

“Dolores – I’m very grateful for what Father Miguel is doing (...) Because in fact, we have had many opportunities. (...) It is excellent that they brought (name of volunteer professional). We were with him in Spain, when Father Miguel sent us, (...) Nevertheless, he came here to work with us, (...)”

Ana Luisa – Of course.

Dolores – And we clearly understood what we had to do.”

(First interview with Y3 early childhood educator, 1st April, 2005)

Due to the geographical isolation, the teachers had to adapt their training needs to the logistical restraints of living in an isolated area. They had little access to documents and sources of training and for preparing their classes. Teachers acknowledged they had space and autonomy to be creative and to organize their classes, but they considered they had to dedicate their personal free time to this preparation, and had to adapt classes to the diverse needs of their students. They seemed to suffer from time and salary restrictions that hindered their teaching performance and motivation. As Alfredo highlighted,

“Alfredo – I did not dedicate myself to education in order to earn money (...) but I am not an apostle, I have a family, obligations (...) The truth is that I would like to stay here longer, but if I see that the conditions continue as they are (...) basically, I will need to leave.

Ana Luisa – (...) It is also the recognition of one’s work, isn’t it?

Alfredo – Yes, that is important, (...) they don’t say to you here “you are doing well; you are doing badly” (...) I mean, it doesn’t matter (...) The recognition is the same. (...) That is very negative for teachers’ vocation.”

(Final interview, primary and secondary Spanish language teacher, 16th August, 2005)

The challenging working and living conditions, together with the lack of recognition and motivation, seemed to be clear factors in the high mobility of teachers. This jeopardized the educational process of students and the consolidation of a school identity and common philosophy. In the following section, I describe how I adapted the inclusive action research model to the particular characteristics of Nelquihue School, in order to promote awareness of diversity and reflection about its educational practices.

General overview of the evolution of the inclusive action research model in Nelquihue School

Given the characteristics of the school, the difficulties of communication and participation had a strong impact in the evolution of the process. Despite the fact that I had no intermediary, I believe I got to know most teachers both personally and professionally. I had the chance to observe and have reflective interviews with all the educators in the nursery and at secondary level, and with a large proportion of the primary teachers. I observed and interviewed twenty-four of a total of thirty teachers, and this helped me to gather a rich understanding of the context.

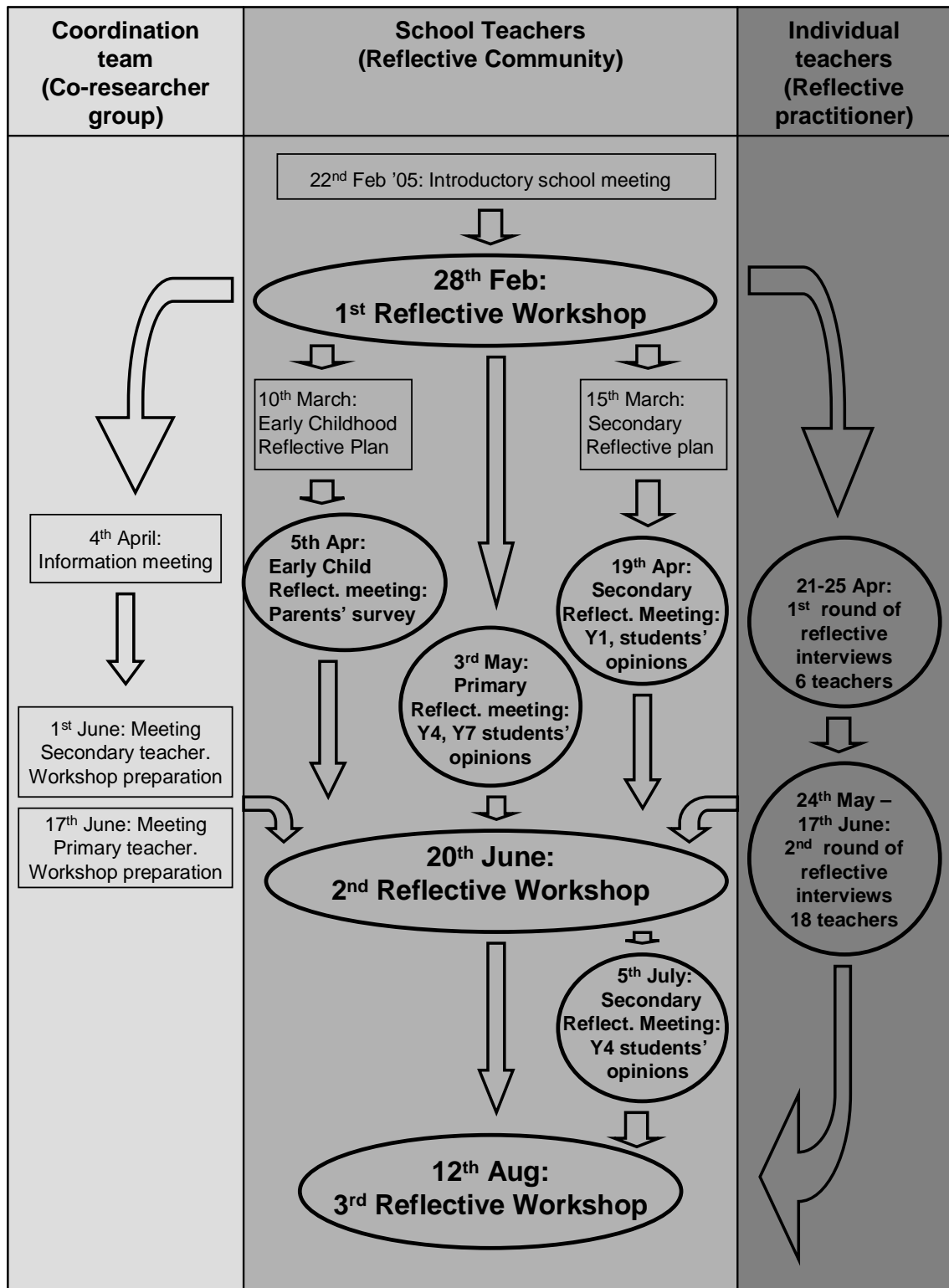
In order to have a flavour of how the members of the educational community were involved, I introduced six school members who participated in the process. I selected these members as an example of the different levels of participation they played in it. I also chose teachers because they provided me with an understanding of how their level of reflection, or lack of reflection impacted on the way they were attending to diversity in their classes. I examine this aspect more deeply in Chapter 7. Although it might be argued these members to be representative, I would like to emphasise that they helped provide an overall picture of the situation at Nelquihue School while it was immersed in the action research process.

The characters chosen are Father Miguel, headteacher and manager of the NGO programme; Mercedes, the special primary teacher; Pamela, the Y4 primary teacher; Alfredo, primary and secondary Spanish Language teacher; Claudia, head of the secondary level and History teacher; and Marlene, Mathematics secondary teacher. In Appendix 3, I provide a description of these members.

In Chapter 2, I presented an inclusive action research model that could be adapted to the conditions of the school and its members. In Chapter 4, I described the evolution of the process at Gabriela Mistral School. Below, in Diagram 6.1, I present its evolution at Nelquihue School.

Central to the process was the promotion of a reflective community. Teachers were invited to reflect on the barriers and facilitators to presence, learning and participation faced by school members. Promotion of reflection and exchange of opinions were conducted in two spheres: reflective school workshops; and reflective meetings at each phase of schooling. Reflective meetings were events where teachers discussed and exchanged perspectives about specific matters related to their level.

Diagram 6.1.³² Evolution of the inclusive action research model at Nelquihue School at three levels: community, coordination team and individual teachers



³² Headings in brackets refer to the categories of the inclusive action research model in Chapter 2. Events in a square box were meetings to organise and make decisions about the process. Those in a circle were planned and developed to promote reflection among participants.

Introduction and negotiations

Prior to the introductory meeting with the school teachers (as presented in Diagram 6.1), I assisted at one of the educational management team meetings and introduced the action research process to the headteacher and to the representatives of each phase of schooling. During the meeting, Mercedes underlined that the process could help teachers have a further understanding of the concept of diversity. Claudia stated that the secondary teachers had ascertained that, during 2004, they had not succeeded in creating space for reflection. That aspect had been recommended by the Ministry of Education, and she considered that my proposal may give them the opportunity to do this. Father Miguel recognised my work could be useful for two reasons. Firstly, the process could sensitise teachers to the characteristics of their students, and how to take them into consideration in their classes. Secondly, he was keen that I should make a diagnosis of students' individual and family problems which might jeopardize their learning process. However, such a diagnosis was far beyond my sphere of knowledge or my remit.

In response, I had to negotiate my role and my purpose. I underlined that I could help teachers to analyse which were the factors within the school which were barriers to students' learning. The purpose of this was to make them realise that teachers had the power to influence school viewpoints and educational practices. The educational management team agreed, and Miguel suggested they had a proactive role in the introductory meeting with teachers in order to engage them.

As Diagram 6.1 shows, the introductory meeting took place on the 22nd February 2005. Around twenty teachers collaborated, and as agreed, the heads of each phase of schooling encouraged teachers to get involved. They emphasised those aspects commented on in the educational management team meeting. The head of the nursery stressed that the proposal gave them the chance to see that they shared the same difficulties in the class, and they could learn from each other. Father Miguel indicated that the project should be a school commitment to be maintained over time. He perceived it as central in the Educational Improvement Plan, *PME*, for 2005 required by the Ministry of Education. Father Miguel expressed,

“We need to overcome our fears of feeling exposed. I even find it hard to believe this, but it is necessary for us to open our windows to let fresh air in that will make us improve. As teachers, we have a life full of frustrations that either pushes us to leave the vocation we had at the start, or we become passive and nothing matters except carrying on with our timetable. This can be the chance to motivate ourselves again. And not only for these seven months, this time should be useful for us to get used to reflecting and introducing it into our school culture.”

(Father Miguel, introductory school meeting, 22nd February, 2005)

During the meeting teachers did not take an active part in the debate. I understood that they believed the decision had already been made by the management team without any discussion with themselves. As teachers' acceptance and participation in the process was a major concern, I tried to work on this in the first reflective workshop. I explained the structure and the purposes of the reflective workshops later. At the end of the meeting, I distributed a consent form to each teacher, the purpose of which was to inform them about my ethical commitment towards them and to ask for their signed consent to observe their classes. I was attempting to make them feel in control over part of the process. In addition, I invited them to become volunteers in a team that would coordinate the action research process in the school. Five teachers joined the coordination team, one early childhood educator, two primary teachers, one secondary teacher and Alfredo, a primary and secondary teacher.

Coordination and decision-making

Coordination team

As presented in Diagram 6.1, in my opinion, the role of the coordination team in practice was marginal. Due to the members' responsibility demands, we had to arrange the meetings outside the academic timetable, but despite this, it was still unworkable. Although the team was created on the 28th of February, our first and only meeting took place in April. The meeting was an informational event where the representatives of each phase of schooling informed the rest about the progress achieved and the future steps planned. My idea of creating a team that could unify the process in the school and make it sustainable over time did not become a reality. I made several attempts to organize further coordinating meetings without success. In June, I only managed to meet individually with Alfredo and with a representative of the primary level. In those meetings, I provided them with data from my class observations, Alfredo read and analysed

accounts of the secondary classes, and the other teacher did the same for the primary classes. We selected data for reflection, discussed educational practices and considered those aspects necessary to work on for the second reflective workshop.

Educational Management Team

As stated in the account presented at the beginning of the chapter, I was in charge of the coordination of the whole process. Given the structure of the school, there was no specific time dedicated to the evolution of the inclusive action research process, and therefore I had to adapt to the academic schedule. I arranged the dates of the reflective workshops in the educational management team meetings. In these meetings, the heads also commented the progress of the action research process within their phase of schooling.

As Father Miguel did not participate in the workshops, the heads of the different phases and I committed to informing him about the suggestions made by the teachers. Therefore, after each workshop, I presented a report to the management team meeting which was followed by discussions about actions to be put into place. The team discussed norms in class and strategies to develop a sense of belonging to the school. The possibility of developing a ministerial integration programme for secondary level was also under consideration. Claudia, the head of secondary level, considered that through this programme, teachers could receive support in order to respond and adapt their lessons to those students who had difficulty in following. Consideration was also given to situations where students abandoned classes due to teachers' exclusionary practices.

Nevertheless, the main decisions made were related to the re-organization of secondary education by thematic classes, where each teacher would be responsible for one class. The idea was to promote autonomous learning and participation by students and teachers, by taking care of the resources and the infrastructure of each class. This idea had been under consideration before, but seemed to strengthen throughout the inclusive action research process. The visit and the participation of five teachers to the reflective workshop at Gabriela Mistral School in Santiago were also considered by the team. In addition, it was also decided to continue with the training workshops on attention to diversity after I had left.

Meetings of each phase of schooling

I also had to coordinate the process with each team, and I established informal communications, visiting teachers in their break time, to arrange my observations and individual reflective interviews. As can be seen in Diagram 6.1, each team designed a reflective plan during the first reflective workshop. In order to follow the plan, I participated in the meetings where teachers made decisions about aspects and school members to analyse. On these occasions, I coordinated the times for data collection, and each group dedicated at least one of these meetings for reflection.

Reflection

Promotion of a reflective community

In Diagram 6.1 the promotion of a reflective community was central. During the first meetings with the educational management team, the organization of school workshops was agreed. The purpose of these events was for teachers to understand the need to adapt their educational practices to the individual needs of their students, share their experiences and reflect on how to improve their teaching. The representatives were also willing to carry out reflective meetings at each level of schooling in order to strengthen particular aspects. The following table shows the topics for reflection and the materials and data used in school workshops.

The workshops were divided into two sessions: one session to address school matters, and another session where each group of teachers reframed understandings about matters of concern at their phase and decided on actions to put into place for improvement. The reason for this design was to avoid exposing of the challenges experienced by a particular team, which could lead to discrimination against or tensions with other teams. In addition, it was necessary to guarantee that teachers felt comfortable to open up and participate, and this seemed to be the case when teachers were divided into small groups with team colleagues.

Table 6.1. Topics under analysis and data used in school reflective workshops in Nelquihue School

Reflective event	Topics	Data and materials	Outcomes
1st Workshop 28th Feb.	Inclusive education and attention to diversity Reflective processes Barriers to presence, learning and participation	Accounts of teachers from Zambia ³³ (EENET 2003)	Reflective plans: Nursery: Parents' involvement. Primary: Punctuality. Secondary: Y1 students with low achievements.
2nd workshop 20th June	Values of the Mission Statement. Norms to create a learning atmosphere in class. Students' motivation. Teaching strategies.	Data from school and class observations. School Mission Statement. Special Needs in the Classroom ³⁴ (UNESCO 1993). What makes that students engage in learning? ³⁵ (Marchesi 2004)	Common values and strategies to put them in practice. Motivational strategies. Common reflection on teaching methodologies. Class planning.
3rd workshop 12th August	Participation in reflective workshop in Santiago. Emotional and behavioural problems. Strategies to minimise barriers to presence, learning and participation in class. Promoting reading. Evaluation processes. Teacher collaboration.	Data from school and class observations. Special Needs in the Classroom (UNESCO 1993).	Awareness about the diversity of their students and their individual needs in class. Shared strategies to respond to students with emotional and behavioural problems. Common understanding about strategies to promote reading. Reframing evaluation processes. Common knowledge about how to collaborate with other teachers.

Table 6.1 shows that the first workshop focused on the introduction of the concepts of inclusion and attention to diversity; barriers to presence, learning and participation; and reflection. The purpose was to help teachers discuss and make a diagnosis of the barriers and facilitators to presence, learning and participation faced in Nelquihue School. Based on the diagnosis, the teachers at each phase of the school designed a plan for reflection.

³³ EENET, Ed. (2003). *Researching our Experience*. Manchester, Enabling Education Network, EENET.

³⁴ UNESCO (1993). *Conjunto de Materiales para la Formación de Profesores. Las Necesidades Educativas en el Aula*. París, UNESCO.

³⁵ Marchesi, A. (2004). *Qué será de nosotros, los malos alumnos*. Madrid, Alianza.



*Photograph 6.5. A primary teacher explains the barriers, facilitators and actions planned to a group of school colleagues.
First reflective workshop, 28 Feb '05.*

The early childhood educators decided to concentrate on the involvement of parents in their children's education, the primary teachers were worried about the punctuality of students and teachers, and secondary teachers focused their attention on those Y1 students who had repeated year or showed low achievement. Nevertheless, I perceived that their diagnosis and plans were based on the belief that these barriers were out of

their control. They were blaming other external factors and were not considering that the school culture, policies and practices might be the cause of some barriers faced by school members.

Therefore, I collaborated with them in their plans, but tried to use reflective meetings and workshops to broaden the area of analysis in order to make them consider how their attitudes and practices were affecting presence, learning and participation for other members of Nelquihue School. As seen in Table 6.1, in the second workshop in June, I invited teachers to reflect on the school values in order to create a welcoming atmosphere for learning. In the evaluation sheets, I asked teachers to suggest topics to tackle in the following workshop. In August, based on teachers' suggestions, the last workshop focused on strategies for teaching, evaluation and teachers' collaboration.

Each workshop was designed with activities which promoted participation and work in groups, and I used data from my observations to promote reflection. In some respects, I felt it necessary to include other materials to support teachers reframe their understandings. The workshops concluded with team work where teachers made suggestions about strategies and actions to put into place. In Table 6.2, the topics that were analysed in the reflective meetings with each school team are displayed, along with the data and materials provided.

Table 6.2. Topics under analysis and data used in the reflective meetings at each phase of schooling in Nelquihue School

Reflective meetings	Topics	Data and materials	Outcomes
Nursery, 5th April	Parents' involvement in the education of their children.	Parents' survey	Strategies to make parents take part in the nursery.
Primary 3rd May	Importance given by students to their teachers' opinions and feedback. Culture of 'punishment and reward', discipline in class. Importance of giving positive feedback to students. Discrimination towards one Y7 group.	Y4 students opinions Y7 students photos Strategies to work in class ³⁶ (Hernández and Andújar, 1999)	Teachers to reflect and interchange about class observations. Sharing teachers' discriminatory attitudes and practices.
Secondary 19th April	Students' low motivation and participation. Engaging classes. Discipline in classes. Disabled students who spend time out of class. Difficulties of those students who come from rural multilevel schools.	Focus groups of Y1 students.	Search for more information from Y4 students. Observation of Y4 classes: specialities. Follow up academic performance. I need to provide them with learning materials.
Secondary 5th July	Class planning and teaching methods, make them accessible for all. Learning resources and materials. Mapuche language and culture classes. Exams. Students' sense of belonging to the school. Students' participation. Relationships between students. Relationships between students and teachers. Students' future expectations.	Focus groups of Y4 students. Indicators of the <i>Index</i> (Booth and Ainscow, 2002)	Strategies for class planning and elaboration of materials. Strategies to promote students' participation through the students' council. Organization of thematic classes and exam calendar.

The same pattern of workshops was used in the reflective meetings with each team. In these cases, data came from the opinions of parents or students. In the discussions, teachers began blaming external factors for the situation, but throughout the meetings, the opinions presented, together with supporting materials, the comments of colleagues and my suggestions, helped teachers to reframe their understandings. I expand on this aspect in Chapter 7. As can be seen in Table 6.2, particularly in the secondary meetings, the topics shifted the focus from the students' characteristics to issues related to school organization, class planning, material preparation and students' participation. It must be underlined that in my opinion, the transformations in understandings experienced in reflective meetings and workshops were the result of the

³⁶ Hernández, R. and Andújar, C. (1999). *Educación en la Diversidad: Algunas Estrategias para Trabajar en el Aula. Cuaderno 3*. Santo Domingo, Secretaría de Estado de Educación y Cultura de República Dominicana.

individual work carried out with teachers through the reflective interviews which I conducted with most of the staff.

Development of reflective practitioners

In contrast with Gabriela Mistral School, a great part of my collaboration with Nelquihue School was dedicated to individual reflective interviews. I observed twenty-four educators, and we established conversations where each teacher talked about their practices and the barriers faced by their students, the interviews following the same pattern as at Gabriela Mistral School. In the first round, held in April, six teachers engaged in



Photograph 6.6. Groups of mixed teachers discussing accounts of class observations. Third workshop, 12th Aug '05.

reflective interviews. In our conversations, teachers were expecting me to give them recommendations and advice, though I tried to concentrate on facilitating their analytical thinking.

During the second round carried out in May and June, eighteen educators participated. Derived from my analysis of their classes, I used indicators from the *Index* to facilitate reflection and also provide them with suggestions and clues to incorporate in their practices. Three teachers (Claudia and Alfredo were two of these) were involved in both rounds, and I was aware of the evolution of their thinking. I address this aspect in Chapter 7. In the case of the nursery educators, there were two or three of them in each class and, therefore, the interviews were in fact reflective conversations with all the educators I observed. I concluded the interviews with a summary of the aspects and lines of action considered during the conversation.

Throughout the description of the evolution of the inclusive action research process, I have presented a picture of the roles I played to facilitate it. In the next section, I clarify the main responsibilities I assumed.

Roles facilitating the inclusive action research model

As demonstrated in earlier sections, I felt very isolated during the process. In contrast with Gabriela Mistral School, I did not have someone to coordinate and plan with, and also the coordination team did not work as expected. Therefore, on the one hand, I did not feel dependent on other people's decisions, and I felt I had the freedom to interrelate, communicate and observe anyone who gave me consent. On the other hand, I believed that the members of Nelquihue School considered the process as mine and that it would conclude when I left. For this reason, I tried to make the most of my collaboration in order to be as useful as possible to the teachers, in terms of sensitisation and capacity building on attention to diversity.

As described in the following sections, I had to maintain a constant revision and adaptation of my role as facilitator. I saw myself as being in constant negotiations between my personal principles, the principles of the research approach, and the factual needs and situations faced. I developed the following roles in order to facilitate the inclusive action research approach:

- Reflective ethnographer;
- Coordinator and planner;
- Group leader;
- Reflection promoter;
- Capacity builder;
- Confidant.

I base my analysis on evaluative reports from workshops and meetings, interviews with five teachers, conversations with my supervisors and my mentor in Chile, and notes from my researcher diary.

Reflective ethnographer

Living in one of the dormitory houses, observing the school and classes and talking with the teachers, members of the management team and students gave me a deep understanding of the situation at Nelquihue School and the local community. I considered this was a major strength in order to adapt the approach to the challenging circumstances of the school. Reflections I recorded in my researcher diary helped me identify the topics to tackle with teachers; as

individuals and as a group. As I observed more classes and reflected on their dynamics, I became more aware of the key issues to address during reflective interviews.

In addition, my knowledge of the school gave me an important background in order to design the activities and working groups in the workshops. I return to this aspect in following sections. I also got to know the channels of informal communication which helped me to coordinate my actions as facilitator and researcher.

Planner and coordinator

During my time at Nelquihue School, I had to follow a double coordination pattern. At school level, I arranged and made decisions about reflective workshops with the management team. Due to the school schedule and my visits to the school in Santiago, I had to constantly negotiate the plans for the reflective meetings and data collection for each phase of schooling. For this reason, I constantly communicated with the heads, and I got used to visiting each team at break times in order to confirm that a meeting or an interview would take place. My communications with the headteacher were also fluent, as we talked about the plans for the educational management team during dinner time.

Group leader

Being a Spanish person with an academic background and viewed as a volunteer of the NGO, I felt the need to be aware of the power issues that might arise. I saw that the teachers' challenging situations and their lack of agency and low self esteem made it necessary to create conditions which promoted their involvement and collaboration. Although aware that I would not be able to control the tensions, I tried to build up relationships based on trust and power balance. Despite getting permission from Father Miguel and the educational management team, I also took care to confirm that teachers gave their formal signed consent. Likewise, any time I was going to carry out an observation or an interview I asked for their permission. I also asked teachers for authorization to hold focus groups and activities with their students, as they considered parents' consent would not be necessary.

One of the aims of the reflective workshops and meetings was to promote teachers' participation and motivation. Knowing about the tensions between teachers' teams, I tried to be cautious while designing the workshops. Given the culture of participation among teachers, I based the workshops on team work. In the sessions where school matters were addressed, I grouped the teachers in advance in order to get a mixed representation of the three schooling phases. Being

in small groups, the teachers seemed to be open to sharing and interchanging with their colleagues.

Accounts of class observations were shared among teachers at the same phase to avoid exposure or discrimination from other teachers. As at Gabriela Mistral School, I asked teachers for their consent to use the accounts of their classes, and tried to guarantee confidentiality. Nevertheless, it was easy for teachers to recognise students and colleagues, therefore, as much as possible, I tried to protect them from being in uncomfortable situations.

Throughout the workshops and team meetings, I judged when it was the right moment to go a step further in terms of participation and collaboration within and between groups. My purpose was to enhance their agency and to make them responsible for their own learning process.

Capacity builder

As described in the first section of the chapter, most teachers showed high levels of uncertainty about their performance. For some, the reason was that they had not studied to be teachers; others blamed the limitation of opportunities and resources for professional development. I included the training element in the reflective workshops and meetings through documents and learning materials, which I photocopied and distributed when they were relevant to the topics under discussion. The material I used was basic reading about attention to diversity, specifically designed for teacher training. When I left I gave a copy of a set of teacher training documents to the headteacher and to the head of each level of schooling.

In addition, the activities in the workshops were designed with the purpose of providing teachers with examples of the type of methods they could use with the students in their class. I observed that teachers showed a high level of enthusiasm in most of the activities, and in their evaluation forms they expressed their willingness to include these in their teaching repertoire.

Reflection promoter

At individual level, reflection was developed following the same pattern as in Gabriela Mistral School. I believed that those teachers who did not have an open attitude to thinking critically about their practices found it difficult to engage in a process of reflection. I analyse this argument in Chapter 7.

Reflecting on this challenge, I considered that workshops and meetings were crucial events for social reflection and learning. Faced by evidence, teachers gave their opinions and

understandings of the situation at the school and about their educational practices. Listening to others, teachers had the opportunity to reframe their own thinking with their colleagues' perspectives. The materials distributed provided new perspectives to provoke teachers' questioning. The final aim was to support teachers in the process of analysis and share ideas about strategies for improvement.

The social events for reflection responded to two aims. They minimised power tensions; teachers were the ones giving opinions about their own practices, instead of a Spanish outsider. In addition, they appeared to promote a sense of belonging; a sense of common identity.

Confidant

In my opinion, there were several factors as to why I became a confidant for the teachers. I tried to establish an equal trust relationship by showing my genuine commitment to their cause, the children and their families. As I lived in one of the dormitory houses surrounded by houses full of children and shared with the local community, I established caring relationships with several students and their families. In my conversations with teachers, I shared my concerns about the children, we talked about their problems and discussed what to do.

As I was sharing my time with them, some opened up and talked to me about their worries about the school, about Father Miguel, the management team, their colleagues and the NGO programme. I interpreted that given the barriers of communication, I was seen as a person they could rely on and share their feelings of frustration and de-motivation. I also perceived that due to my close relationship with Father Miguel they might view me as a mediator. Despite this, I was cautious in my conversations with the headteacher and kept teachers' comments to myself.

I maintained the same attitude towards my reflections about class observations. I guaranteed to teachers that the information I gathered would be kept confidential, but I thought they might find it difficult to believe, given my close relationship with Father Miguel. I considered that they might fear that their working situation could be jeopardized, and it took me several months to show teachers that I was not revealing information about their teaching practices to the headteacher. As a result of my ethical commitment, my opinions about individual teaching practices were only shared with the teacher in the reflective interviews. Only on one occasion did I share some concerns with the head of secondary level. She was worried about the students' low results in one of the subjects, and I merely confirmed her suspicions.

Father Miguel respected my attitude and never asked me about any teacher. Although sometimes this was difficult to maintain, I believed that being a *'confidant'* of the teachers helped to promote a climate of trust and mutual understanding that contributed to collaboration and openness to dialogue and reflection.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter I started by presenting the context of the school. I described the NGO local development programme and my involvement since 1997. I then presented the particular characteristics of the school that shaped the evolution of the inclusive action research model and my collaboration with school members. Diagram 6.1 showed the evolution of the process. I provided an explanation then of the phases of introduction and negotiation; coordination and decision making; and reflection and capacity building. I concluded the chapter by addressing the diversity of roles I played in order to facilitate the approach within the challenging conditions of Nelquihue School.

Chapter 7. Developing reflective processes on attention to diversity in the Nelquihue School

“She has opened the dialogue. Firstly she had opened her class to me, her intimacy as teacher. Now she has opened her heart to me.”
(Rosa María Torres, Ecuadorian educational researcher and former Minister of Education, 2000³⁷)

Having presented the characteristics of Nelquihue School and the evolution of the inclusive action research process, in this chapter, I analyse the processes of reflection carried out at an individual level, through reflective interviews, and at school level, through meetings and workshops. My main aim is to analyse whether it is possible to promote reflection among teachers under such challenging conditions. In other words, through my analysis I provide evidence that throws light on the extent to which teachers were seen to question their beliefs and underlying assumptions about attention to diversity and were able to look at them from other perspectives. I also explore how far this led them to change their understandings, attitudes and practices. Where I saw evidence of what I believed to have been reflection, I focus my attention on the factors that encouraged teachers to overcome defensiveness in order to reframe their understandings about educational practices and diversity. As I explain, my interpretation is that these factors were both individual as well as social.

I start then by presenting the promotion of reflective practitioners. As in the other case study, I firstly introduce an account of a class observation and an analysis of the reflective interview that followed. Secondly, I concentrate my analysis on the promotion of reflective communities, through team meetings and workshops. I conclude the chapter by drawing out the lessons which have been learnt.

³⁷ Torres, R. M. (2000). *Itinerarios por la educación latinoamericana. Cuadernos de Viaje*. Buenos Aires, Paidós y Convenio Andrés Bello. My translation.

Promoting reflective practitioners through individual reflection about class observations

In this section, I analyse the promotion of reflection amongst three teachers, Pamela, a primary teacher, and Claudia and Marlene, two secondary teachers. I selected these teachers for two reasons. On the one hand, I was interested in the way they were responding to diversity within their classes. On the other hand, they also provided me with what I interpreted as different pathways of either reflection or non-reflection that led to movement and transformation, or to deadlock. In my analysis, my intentions were to search for evidence where these teachers appeared to reframe their beliefs and underlying theories about barriers faced by their students, in ways that could facilitate changes in their attitudes, understandings, and in their practices, in order to minimise the barriers.

In the case of Pamela, I first offer the account of the observation of her class, followed by an analysis of the reflective interview held afterwards. As she took part in the second round of interviews, questions related to the indicators in the *Index* were used. These were linked to my analysis of her practices. Claudia and Marlene performed two consecutive reflective interviews. Although I present only one account of their class observations, I concentrate on the evolution of their analytical thinking throughout both conversations.

A Y4 primary class, Pamela, tensions in an excluding class

Observation of the class, 31st March, 2005

I go into the class with Pamela. The children have not arrived yet and the teacher asks me to sit at Vicente's place at the front of the class. She says to me: "*I think Vicente will stay in the integration unit today.*"

At the back of the class there is an altar with the Virgin Mary. The walls are decorated with phrases, such as: "*Good manners help the body and the soul.*" There are also a poster of Chilean animals and an old 2004 calendar. On the teacher's table, covered with a cloth, there is a basket with paper toilet rolls, and a pot with paintbrushes and pencils. Around the class, there are shelves where children can get reading books. I also notice that the class is decorated with cut plastic bottles where children are growing some plants.

Seventeen children enter noisily and sit at the desks organized in groups. Pamela stays at the door and kisses the children as they enter. Nieves and Carlos are sitting in my group. At the

beginning of the lesson, Nieves stands up and starts praying. Pamela calls her attention and asks a different girl to pray. It seems that it is her turn today. Later, the teacher goes round the class reviewing the students' notebooks to see if they have done their homework. It seems that only four students have done it. She comments, *"See, I have caught you out! Where is your perseverance? If you do not do your homework, what will happen with the SIMCE³⁸?"* Pamela asks some questions out loud and the students answer her. She says, *"Good, I see you have been reading."*

I see Pamela going to write on the blackboard the rules for the work they are going to do in groups in Geography. She tells the students to copy this down and goes round the tables to make sure they are working. Four more students come into the class. Pamela approaches Carlos, *"Can you do it, son? Show it to me later."* Then she tells the students to hurry up. Two students get up and come to Pamela to show her their work. She congratulates them.

The teacher asks for silence by saying, *"You must lower the volume! It seems it is going to rain, because you are all very talkative!"* Pamela addresses Nieves: *"You have been here since the beginning of the class and have still written nothing!"* One student is helping Carlos to copy. The teacher reviews Carlos' notebook, but she erases what he has written and copies it again.

Pamela continues dictating the Geography work. *"It does not matter how you do it, I want you to do things for yourselves. We need to learn together."* There are some students who seem to have problems copying, Pamela tries to correct one of them, but the rest of the class has finished by then and demands her attention.

The students start working in groups. I observe Nieves annoying her classmates. Pamela tells her: *"If you are the head of the group you have to show that you are in charge."* It seems to me that anytime Nieves attracts the teacher's attention she starts working. But soon, I hear her intimidating one of her classmates, *"I'm going to hit you!"* Nieves continues dictating from a Geography book to her group, but she does not seem to have understood what they have to do.

Suddenly, I see Pamela looking at the group. She finds Nieves trying to strangle one of her classmates with a belt. The teacher hurries and loosens the belt. She then tells Nieves to get out of the class. Later, when Pamela goes to search for her, she is missing.

After break time, Nieves comes back to the class, but I did not observe whether Pamela talked things through with her. It is reading time and when the students have finished, the teacher asks

³⁸ Ministerial system to measure schools educational standards.

one student to collect the books. Nieves complains out loud because she is never asked to do things. She then gets up and talks through the window with Vicente who is outside. Pamela shouts at Vicente: *“Are you going to come in or are you going to the integration unit?”* I see Vicente coming in, but he soon leaves.

The teacher continues with the lesson and writes on the blackboard *“Drawing”*. All the students cheer happily. They start drawing, and when Nieves finishes, she goes to Pamela to proudly show her work. The teacher tells her off because she is chewing gum. Nieves throws her notebook onto the table in a rage. Pamela continues telling her off. When the teacher finishes, I observe the girl lying on the table for several minutes. She covers her face with her jacket.

After a period of silence, Pamela takes the jacket off Nieves' face. I wonder why the teacher does not say anything to her. I try to make eye contact with Nieves, but she looks at her picture and scribbles over it. Some minutes later the teacher approaches her, looks at Nieves' picture, and tells her she has to describe the *‘weird’* picture she has drawn. Pamela pinches Nieves' nose tenderly and the student continues writing until the end of the lesson.

Conversation about the account of the class observation

Most of our conversation concentrated on Nieves and how to manage her demanding behaviour. Pamela expressed her inability to deal with this level of distraction, for example,

“Pamela – There are things, well, I don’t find it strange but, how many times Nieves appears!”

Ana Luisa – Hmm, yes, yes.

Pamela – Because she distracts me, and the rest.

Ana Luisa – Yes, above all because, other students who do not demand so much attention, do not receive the attention they need, and in the end, they are jeopardized because of this.

Pamela – Yes. And she is getting worse, now it is worse. So I don’t really know what to do!

(Reflective interview, 30th May, 2005)

“Not knowing what to do” seemed to be the recurrent theme throughout the interview. It seemed that Pamela felt a lack of agency and competence to deal with the situation. Generally, during the interviews I tried to allow teachers to talk about their experiences of the account, avoiding giving my comments. Often I perceived insecurity and lack of agency amongst the teachers which prevented them from reflecting out loud.

Even when I tried to give Pamela suggestions about some aspects for consideration, like in the quotation presented, she continued to offer what I took to be defensive comments that, in my opinion, prevented her from reflecting and, perhaps, getting a deeper understanding of the way she could respond to Nieves' needs in the class.

As can be seen in the following quotation, her actions towards Nieves seemed to be based on pity, due to her situation as an orphan. As a result, it seemed that her justifications, based on a patronising attitude, prevented her from thinking about new strategies for responding to the student's emotional demands. She expressed,

“Pamela – She has a diary goal. I mean, she puts it in for herself in the morning when she arrives. She says, “you know, I am not going to achieve it!” Even she...!

Ana Luisa – Yes, but at least, it is good to tell her, “ok, you achieved it during the time, so tomorrow you have to do it for another half an hour...” In a way, this will make her feel that the positive things are more important than the negative things she does. Otherwise, she will try to attract attention in any way...

Pamela – That is what she always does. (...) I do understand her, because I say, what punishment she already has! (...) Poor, poor girl! (...) I don't know, what could I do for her? (...) Then I don't know, I mean, I can do nothing.”

(Reflective interview, 30th May, 2005)

Pamela continued to reveal this kind of attitude during the interview when considering other students who faced barriers to learning and participation in her class. So, for example, she discussed Carlos and underlined that she should give him more personalised attention. She considered that he could not learn anything more, noting, *“He is blocked. He cannot do any more!”* Asked about her collaboration with the special teacher in order to support Carlos' learning progress, Pamela explained that Mercedes said the boy should carry on in the class. Nevertheless, it did not seem that they had worked together on strategies to support his learning.

During the interview, I felt that Pamela was not being consistent with her answers; sometimes appearing even to contradict herself. For example, later in our conversation she referred to Carlos' learning as, *“Sometimes it is his writing that is not so good, (...) but in fact, he understands a lot more now.”* These inconsistencies made me doubt the credibility of some of her statements. During my observations, I felt she might be acting, trying to give a good impression to

those she perceived to be in authority positions, or, as she had participated in the workshop earlier, she may be just trying to tell me what she thought I was expecting to hear from her. I felt too that she could fear I might pass on her comments to the headteacher. I also might have intimidated her with my suggestions, so that perhaps she felt the need to give me a better impression.

As Pamela took part in the second round of reflective interviews, I had the feeling that the questions of the *Index* could have helped her to reframe her understandings of her attitude and educational practices. However, I found that Pamela and a number of other teachers could not understand the questions in the *Index*, and I had to give them further clarification. I interpreted that this was due to the limited vocabulary they had to talk about their educational practices. Even after my explanations, I did not feel that the questions were helping Pamela to reflect. Indeed, I continued to have the impression that she was using justifications to defend her practices in class. For example, when asked about adaptations to the lessons to respond to the different rhythms of her students, she held the ministerial enquiries responsible for her traditional practices addressed to a homogeneous type of student.

Other teachers also referred to ministerial demands when they discussed the adaptation of the contents of the educational progress of their students. Alfredo, the Spanish Language primary and secondary teacher, expressed this concern on several occasions. For example:

“Alfredo – Unfortunately, we are in a very rigid system where they..., well you know, there is the SIMCE, a measurement system, where contents are measured in relation to each phase of schooling. Therefore, you cannot indulge yourself by going down to the level the students bring (...) But students come with many failings (...) especially, you might have realised, those who come from the mountains³⁹.”

(First reflective interview with Alfredo, 21st April, 2005)

I perceived similar defensive assumptions towards the diversity of their students amongst many of the teachers. I related these assumptions to the ‘normal cynicism’ that Schön considered characterised schools (Grimmet and Erickson, 1988: 18).

³⁹ He is referring to those students who study primary education in remote multilevel schools, with one or two teachers for all the children.

Some teachers also explained their incapacity to change in terms of the circumstances they were facing. As far as I could tell, they felt they had no control over their students' learning due to external factors like ministerial demands, lack of resources, lack of family support, lack of student motivation and low educational performance, among other things.

As described in Chapter 6, the professional conditions of these teachers were quite restricting and I could understand their point when they made reference to the rigid ministerial system and the curricula. Given the characteristics of Nelquihue School, the Ministry of Education provided students with free subject books which were the same for the whole country. The teachers felt that they had little margin for flexibility and limited time to diversify their educational methods in response to student differences.

However, I observed a significant difference between those teachers who justified their practices due to their situation, and those who tried to find ways of responding to their students' learning and personal development. These teachers seemed to manage to achieve what Day (2000; 2004) describes as '*room to manoeuvre*' and autonomy to provide the students with meaningful learning experiences. This double reality among teachers seemed to provoke latent tensions which arose at particular moments of the reflective meetings and workshops.

During our reflective interviews I found it difficult to challenge teachers who used defensive arguments to reframe their understanding of the barriers to learning and participation faced by their students, and to search for strategies to minimise them. On the other hand, some teachers, such as Alfredo did ask for my suggestions, showing a willingness to compare their work with that of other colleagues and acknowledging the need for more training.

For this reason, I saw the reflective meetings and workshops as potential opportunities for capacity building and sensitisation, where teachers could question each other's defensiveness with views and opinions from their colleagues. Nieves' account was discussed among teachers, so I return to it in subsequent sections. But first, I introduce the cases of two teachers where the reflective interviews appeared to help them to gain a deeper understanding of their educational practices, and their attempts to respond to the diversity of their students.

A Y1 secondary Geography exam, Claudia, reflecting on her lessons planning to respond to diversity

Observation of the Geography exam

Claudia and I enter the class and she requests that I sit on the drawer to keep the wood, located next to the fire place and her desk. There is a board on the front wall. The windows on each side of the class overlook the village and the playground respectively. Twenty-six students sit in couples in three rows. Before the class starts, Jorge and Silvia offer to go and bring some wood. The teacher accepts. Jorge is a disabled teenager.

When the students leave, Claudia announces to the rest of the class, *"Today you have an oral exam, you will be chosen at random. I recommend that you revise while I question your classmates."* The students complain out loud. Suddenly, Claudia realises she has forgotten to bring the material for the exam from the staff room and runs to fetch it. The students start revising individually or in pairs. I observe one of the students going out to talk with his friends through the window of another class. Two girls come in late; one approaches and hands me a note that explains her delay. I tell her she should give it to her teacher.

The teacher comes back and exclaims: *"This is great! You have taken out your notebooks! No-one knows who is going to be 'awarded'!"* Claudia asks me for a number. I say a number and one girl, Milagros, comes to the teacher's desk, and sits next to the teacher. Meanwhile, I can perceive a tense silence around the class; it seems that most of the boys and girls are studying.

Claudia asks Milagros to locate a lake on the map. The girl says: *"I did not understand the question"*, and the teacher explains to her. She uses small transparent maps, where the student can write the answers with an erasable marker. The student does not seem to know the answer, so Claudia tries to support her by marking north, south, east and west on the map. Then, Claudia sighs: *"Oh, Milagros!"* and asks another question. After Milagros has made several attempts at answering, the teacher says: *"It is not so bad; I am going to give you half a point. The next question is worth three points."* Claudia shows Milagros a handmade jigsaw; she has to put the pieces together.

I can see the notebooks are clean and tidy; showing some maps of different places with the names written on them. Two girls in the front row listen to Claudia's questions and search for the answers in their notes. Fifteen minutes after the class has started, Silvia and Jorge come back with the wood and start lighting the fire. Later Jorge takes his Geography book and asks:

“Teacher, what work do we have to do?” I wonder what would have happened if he had been chosen to do the exam.

Twenty-five minutes after the start of the lesson, Milagros finishes her test. The student chooses a number and another girl comes to Claudia’s desk. I observe that the students are becoming distracted; they talk to each other and those in the back row stand up. I see two girls who live in the dormitory houses drawing a poster for their English class. When the Geography class is about to finish, I see that Silvia has still not opened her book, and that some students at the back are throwing paper balls to each other. The second girl finishes her exam, but does not look very pleased. Then, Claudia concludes: *“We will continue with the exam tomorrow. I suggest you study tonight. Have a nice day!”* and she exits the class, chatting with me.

Conversations about the accounts of the class observations

Claudia began our interviews by thoroughly analysing my accounts. Comparing different reflective interviews, I interpreted that each individual had her own pathway for reframing her thinking and search for improvement. In this case, I related her reflection to the ‘*the learning pathways grid*’ (Rudolph, Taylor et al. 2001) considered in Chapter 2. These authors describe the six stages a practitioner goes through when facing contradictions between the desired frames and the results achieved. In my opinion, during our conversations, Claudia showed her level of individual reflection, analysing her practical arguments in light of the results of the lesson, and searching for alternative actions to put into place, in order to achieve the results she wanted.

I usually started every reflective interview by asking *“What attracts your attention about the account?”* and with Claudia, I basically followed the flow of her thinking by means of prompting. She started by describing her purposes and expectations when she planned the classes. She then compared her expected results with the actual results based on the dynamics of the class, and ended up explaining how she had shifted her plan for the following lessons. On several occasions, after recognising that certain aspects had not gone as desired, she shared her ideas with me as to how to improve her plans in the future.

I present some examples to strengthen my argument. In our first reflective interview, Claudia explained to me that she had planned the oral exam in order to assess not only their knowledge but other skills as well. Throughout the interview, I also had the feeling that she might have been trying to raise the students’ marks by considering other factors of their performance. She said,

“Claudia – I did it thinking that it would be a support (...) Because I could have made a written exam with a blank map. (...) But this might have given me worse marks. (...), I had an assessment guide.

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Claudia – I had the contents, if they answered them well. (...) But then, there were other aspects, if they used logic to answer, (...) how they used the map.”

(First reflective interview, 21st April, 2005)

Nevertheless, observing the account, she confirmed one of her worries at the end of her class. Her comments helped me to understand her analytical thinking of reviewing the dynamics of the class in order to plan future lessons that would respond better to achieve her desired results. It appeared that she was reflecting, or in other words, she was trying to find alternative strategies to manage her students' behaviour and promote their learning. Claudia made it known that she had realised that the students' distraction in the last part of the lesson was due to how she had planned the exam. Therefore, she explained to me what she should have done to avoid it. For example,

“Claudia – The account is quite similar to the idea I had that day. (...) If you do not give them some work to do, while I was doing the exam, (...) That is what happens. That is reasonable!

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Claudia – You say to them, “you have to study”, and despite the fact that they should be studying for their own oral exam, some would do it, others would do it for a while, and finally, they would all end up distracted. Directed work is what is necessary. And I (...) did not prepare any alternative work. (...) I mean, I did not design an activity that helped them to study.”

(First reflective interview, 21st April, 2005)

In my analysis of Claudia's engagement in 'reflection-on-action', I believed that she constantly referred to her practical arguments about how she planned her lessons to attend to diversity. I interpreted that her arguments were driven by her interest as teacher (Louden, 1991), the subject, and the students' learning process. She seemed to orchestrate all these variables in order to plan a variety of lessons that attracted the interest of different groups of students.

During our second interview, Claudia reflected on a History lesson with Y4. The dynamic of the class was based on her presentation about the European Middle Ages. In support of her explanations, and so that students could follow, she also projected an overhead with a matrix. She concluded the class by giving instructions about working in groups on the topic. I used questions from the *Index* to support her analysis. Confronted with these questions, I felt she provided me with some insights that gave strength to my interpretations about her practical arguments and the way she recognised aspects for improvement. She expressed,

“Claudia – (Reading out loud) “Is the methodology of the class adjusted to respond to the different learning styles of the students?” I think so, I mean, because I do different kinds of classes: guides for those who like reading, summaries for those who like to summarise, conceptual maps for those who find it easier to do diagrams of the subject. (...) I use different things, eh, though sometimes I may fail to make more enjoyable classes.”

(Second reflective interview, 15th June, 2005)

Nevertheless, despite her thorough planning of her lessons and design of materials to respond to different groups of students, Claudia seemed to find it difficult to analyse her practice in relation to the individual needs of some students. After observing Jorge in the Geography class, I asked her about the support she was providing him with to promote his learning progress. *“With Jorge, the truth is that each day it becomes harder for me. (...) We do not know how to engage him.”* Claudia explained to me she had held individual conversations with Jorge to consider his behaviour, yet she acknowledged that she did not know how to respond to his learning process.

I interpreted that this was due to a number of different reasons. Firstly, school members had not established any collaboration channels with Mercedes, the special teacher, therefore it was difficult for them to know how to support Jorge’s learning. In addition, Jorge was used to being taught individually in the integration unit and was not used to following a lesson with other classmates. I also had the impression that Claudia’s planning was addressed to the whole class, and, at that moment, she did not seem able to reflect on how to respond to an individual’s needs. In the next section, Marlene offers a different pathway to reflect on her practices which considers the characteristics and needs of specific students.

A Y4 secondary Mathematics class, Marlene, responding to individual needs for personal development

Observation of the Mathematics class

When Marlene and I enter the class, the twenty-five girls and boys are around the fireplace in groups discussing the electoral debate they have just participated in. The teacher asks them *“What do you think about the debate?”*, and the students tell her, *“It was bad!”* A heated discussion erupts between those students who are in favour of the lists of representatives for the Students' Council, and those who are against them.

Sitting at the back of the class, I observe as the teacher requests that the teenagers sit down, but they take a while to go back to their desks. Marlene hands a marker pen to one boy and asks him to do the first equation on the whiteboard. They are going to correct their homework. Then, she demands *“Please, put away materials from other subjects!”* I see César at the board joking with a girl on the front row. Marlene shouts at him: *“Are you going to take the work seriously?”* It seems that he does not know how to do the exercise. The girl from the front row explains it to him and César writes it down.

Marlene approaches the student and begins to clarify the equation; César follows and copies the first two numbers. Suddenly, the teacher takes the marker pen and invites the boy to sit down. She continues with the exercise whilst asking questions.

“Marlene - Can we make a subtraction?”

Students – Yes! No!”

A girl who looks pregnant puts her hands up and shouts, *“Teacher, teacher! Why can't we subtract?”* Marlene gives further details to the whole class, while she writes the equation down on the board. She then requests that the girl makes a summary of the explanation in order to see if she has understood.

While Marlene goes on with the next exercise, I notice that several girls have not opened their notebooks and another girl is playing with her mobile phone. César is now lying on his desk. Marlene addresses the students *“When it is time to work, please, make the most of it! As we do when it is time to talk about our problems!”* She continues to ask one girl to write the next equation on the board. When she has finished, Marlene informs the group about the results of their last exam.

She points out, *“This year your sacrifice has to be bigger or at least equivalent to earlier years.”* Marlene highlights that they have got the same marks as they had in Y1. Some students ask if she is going to repeat the exam.

“Marlene – This year I’m neither going to repeat them nor raise the marks.”

César – At last you have realised! Congratulations!”

She calls each student by name and hands them their exam, while she explains how they did. *“The performance of some students surprises me. (...) Congratulations on your mark, Mr. Marcelo! It surprises me because I don’t see you work. (...) I’m shocked that Ms. Katy has a bad mark, because I see you working and making an effort!”*

I listen to a girl saying, *“If I have a bad result it is because I deserve it.”* A boy stands up *“Let’s take it easy, I’m going to get a 1 anyway.”* When he sees the exam, I hear him exclaiming *“I’m coming back with my head high, I got a 4⁴⁰!”* I notice Jocelin got a 2, and as she heads to her desk she rips the exam paper without looking at it. One boy also tears up his exam paper. *“Give me five!”* he yells to Jocelin.

When Marlene finishes distributing the exam papers, she tries to explain the homework for next week. However, there is only five minutes left until the end of the day, and the students seem to be very distracted. Some boys and girls stand up to go. I hear the bell ring. Katy approaches the teacher’s desk to ask for further explanation of her exam. Meanwhile the rest of the students leave.

Conversations about the class observations

During our two reflective interviews, Marlene shared her underlying theories about the barriers to presence, learning and participation of her students. She considered that most of them suffered from low self-esteem that impacted on their motivation to study. Throughout our long conversations, I perceived she reflected on her practical arguments. In other words, she tried to find different explanations for how her lessons might be influencing her students’ low participation and performance. I had the impression that she then thought about strategies to motivate her students to learn and participate in her Maths classes. In my opinion, her *‘reflection-on-action’* seemed to focus on two particular interests, her love of Mathematics and her willingness to support her students in their personal development.

⁴⁰ In Chile, 1 is the lowest mark, and 7 the highest. An exam is passed with a 4.

Marlene talked about individual students during our conversations, calling them by their names. She shared her concerns and how she tried to deal with them. For example, discussing the students from the dormitory houses, she had even talked to their carers in order to know more about their personal characteristics and their situation, to try and agree on common actions to support their self-esteem and to engage them in their learning. It appeared that her concentration on the individual needs of her students was one of her strengths in promoting their personal development. As in the cases of Gabriela and Paula in Chapter 5, it seemed that her values were at the core of her reflections and actions.

Furthermore, I recognised that she tried to translate her values into practice in order to promote learning. When asked about Jorge, the Y1 disabled student, I felt she demonstrated that she had analysed the barriers to him to learning Maths, and was trying to find solutions. She expressed,

“Marlene – I think I’m going to adopt a methodology with Jorge to make him work on the basics.

Ana Luisa – Hmm.

Marlene - (...) There are some things Jorge knows, but he forgets them.

Or it is laziness and he says he has forgotten. But he forgets!

Ana Luisa – Hmm.

Marlene – He forgets how to subtract, how to add ... And I think that, in his life, being able to do that is going to be more useful for Jorge.”

(First reflective interview, 21st April, 2005)

Her purpose seemed to be that Jorge should become more independent in life. In our conversations, she referred to the strong dependency Jorge had on Mercedes, his special teacher throughout all his primary education. Claudia also underlined this aspect in our reflective interviews, recognising that Mercedes did Jorge’s homework, and this was jeopardizing his learning process. In my interpretation, both teachers were willing to sever this dependency, in order to get more involved in Jorge’s development. Nevertheless, they now both seemed to have just started considering Jorge’s learning as a result of my collaboration.

From our first conversation, I recognised Marlene’s openness to thinking critically about her lessons. Although I generally tried to play the role of a listener who could facilitate the teacher’s thinking, Marlene began the conversation by demanding my comments about her class. Sharing my opinions seemed to help us establish a sense of companionship, and I got the impression that

this was useful because it not only made Marlene more open to my suggestions, but also more willing to deepen her thinking. For example,

“Marlene – Come on, just tell me!

Ana Luisa – I don’t know, in fact, what attracted my attention was the way you were in charge of the class. You focused a lot on yourself. Eh, I don’t know how to explain it! You were at the board explaining the equations...

Marlene – Ok.

Ana Luisa – Weren’t you? And the rest were just copying (...).

Marlene – Very directed? (...) I may agree with you, it might have been too directed.”

(First reflective interview, 21st April, 2005)

The account presented earlier was the result of my second observation of her lessons. She started our conversation relating her analysis of the account to the aspects discussed in our previous reflective interview. Marlene said,

“Marlene – What attracts my attention? (3 sec.) Here, I failed in the same thing you told me about last time, when you said to me “why don’t you let him do the exercise?” (...) Of course, why didn’t I let him go on?”

(Second reflective interview, 16th June, 2005)

Throughout our interviews, I could feel a tension. Marlene was still concentrating her practices on traditional methodologies which collapsed, along with her values and interests in responding to her students’ individual needs. I considered that our reflective conversations helped her to make a diagnosis of those aspects she might need to tackle. She highlighted,

“Marlene – That is also one of my mistakes, I might not have done enough, I have not searched for training about different educational methodologies. (...) And the rhythms ... (2 sec.) Because I arrive generally prepared to do the same activity with everyone. (2 sec.) And there are always some who finish earlier. They understand and so they finish quicker.

Ana Luisa – Yes, those who are faster.

Marlene – (...) Instead of having, for example, another activity ready for the ones who understand (...) And then I could have more time to spend with those who find it harder. I think I fail on that.”

(Second reflective interview, 16th June, 2005)

The quotations above help to appreciate how, through periodical reflective conversations, Marlene seemed to have become more aware of her educational practices and to consider alternative strategies to improve them. On the other hand, the awareness seemed to support her in transforming her understandings about how she could promote participation and involvement, but not in her actual practices, even though it might be argued that she was acknowledging her deficiencies and was willing to improve them. Although I did not witness any changes in her practice during my second observation, she pointed out that she was using some suggestions provided in the reflective workshops and meetings, such as students' peer support. I go into more detail about this in the next section.

Promoting reflective communities through meetings and workshops

As explained in Chapter 6, information gathered from my observations, and the opinions of the students were shared in meetings with each schooling team level and in three workshops where the majority of teachers participated. My analysis of these events helped me to understand the impact that the inclusive action research process had on the educators. In the following sections, I interpret the influence of the model in promoting changes in the perceptions that teachers had about barriers to presence, learning and participation faced by their students. I also consider whether there was any changes of action to minimise these barriers. I based my analysis on the development of teachers' discourses in interviews, meetings and workshops.

Given the challenging conditions of Nelquihue School, I found evidence of only small first steps towards awareness of attention to diversity and the promotion of reflection among teachers. In my opinion, during my seven months collaboration, this only contributed to the basis of what could have been a journey towards a reflective inclusive educational community. When I left, I had the feeling that everything was just taking off. Had I stayed for a longer period, some real changes might have been achieved by the teachers.

Creating conditions to promote awareness

During the presentation of the reflective interviews, I underlined the fact that many teachers placed the barriers faced by their students outside their control. I was shocked when I observed this common defensive attitude in the first workshop. In a brainstorming activity, I asked teachers to write down anonymously one barrier to presence, learning and participation. Teachers responded in the following ways,

“BARRIERS TO LEARNING:

Socio-cultural reality: alcoholism.

Ministerial programmes not related to our intercultural reality.

Very permissive educational reform (many rights, few duties)

Parents’ low educational level.

Lack of commitment at each level.

Teachers’ low expectations.

Teachers who cannot respond to such heterogeneous students.

Students do not understand what they read.

Lack of preparation of those students from other schools.

This school is good; it has good teachers. We give students more hope.

But they have a passive attitude. They don’t make any effort.”

(Report of first reflective workshop, 28th February 2005)

Some of the comments appeared to be responding to the challenging conditions teachers have to face in schools in this region. Nevertheless, few factors seemed to be related directly to the teachers’ values, attitudes and practices. Since that time, it had become a priority to support teachers in becoming aware of the way they were affecting their students’ learning process. In other words, as Alfredo expressed to his colleagues after participating in the workshop in Gabriela Mistral School in Santiago,

“We have to assume how much of this situation is due to us, that is what this work is about, instead of getting stuck in the difficulties that come from outside.”

(Report of third reflective workshop, 12th August, 2005)

Throughout my time collaborating with the members of the school, I could perceive changes in teachers’ discourses. By my interpretation, teachers seemed to become aware of their attitudes and behaviour and more sensitized to the diversity of the educational needs of their students. I

felt this change of discourse in the teacher's anonymous opinions on the evaluation sheets from each workshop. For example, they expressed,

“I have learnt to analyse and take more care of what we say to the students. Sometimes we don't realise that we hurt the students and lower their self-esteem.”

*(Teacher's evaluation sheet,
second reflective workshop, 20th June, 2005)*

“It has influenced me. I have changed my vision that ‘teaching to all’ is not the same as ‘all learn’.”

*(Teacher's evaluation sheet,
third reflective workshop, 12th August, 2005)*

Analysing teachers' discourses, I considered that they could be taking responsibility for those factors they perceived they were able to change. In their comments, they talked about a *'feeling of unsettledness'*, which in Spanish means that they felt the need to know more. In my last interview with Mercedes, she underlined that the approach had opened up the primary teachers' interest into organizing self-training sessions and to learn more about how to diversify the curriculum and their practices to respond to the diversity of their students.

I sensed this willingness in the first reflective interview with Marlene, when she expressed she was planning to use some of the suggestions made in the reflective meeting in order to promote Jorge's personal development.

“Marlene – Yes, I wrote it down the day we had the meeting with you, a ‘notebook of commitments’ ...

Ana Luisa – Yes, a kind of commitment (...) that can be assessed later.

Marlene - (...) Because I found it good. I even talked to Jorge about it. I told him “we could have a ‘notebook of commitments’” ...

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Marlene - ... so you know what you agreed on.”

(First reflective interview with Marlene, 21st April, 2005)

Nevertheless, few teachers acknowledged changing their practices and I did not witness any transformations in their teaching methodologies. The major impacts appeared to be in the teachers' awareness and sensitisation.

Enhancing motivation and empowerment

Many of the teachers' comments seemed to be considering the fact that different aspects of the inclusive action research process made them feel motivated and empowered. Firstly, the opinions of the students motivated them. In the reflective meeting with primary teachers, the Religious Education teacher commented,

“Reading their opinions, the boys and girls catch what the teacher says quite well. One gets the impression that no one listens, but it seems they do.”

(Report of primary reflective meeting, 3rd May, 2005)

Secondary teachers also appeared to be satisfied when they analysed the focus groups of Y1 and Y4 students. They perceived changes; they saw Y4 students were more mature and had more elaborate opinions, and teachers interpreted that these changes were in part the result of their support of the students' personal development.

In addition, they expressed the opinion that the workshop had a motivational influence on them. In my view, this was particularly important for the teachers, and even for myself. During the time I lived there, I could not only feel the teachers' de-motivation, but my own as well. Something happened everyday that reminded us of the challenges the students and their families had to face. Teachers shared their demoralisation with me, as they saw themselves fighting against something that had no solution. Most of them felt lonely in this fight and, for this reason, the workshops seemed to provide the teachers with 'cathartic' moments in which to share their feelings and frustrations and to support each other. Claudia demonstrated this to me after the first reflective workshop.

“The coordinator of the secondary level told me that the workshop was useful for teachers' motivation. In her opinion, engaging people was the most important thing.”

(Researcher diary, 2nd March, 2005)

Reflecting in groups may have fostered teachers' agency and empowerment, as in their discussions with other teachers they realised they shared the same difficulties and worries when teaching. They could also exchange educational strategies in their attempts to deal with particularly demanding behaviours. By the second workshop, the teachers were providing recommendations for the capacity building topics to be tackled in the subsequent workshop.

I also recognised that in the final reflective meeting with the secondary teachers, they felt empowered to contribute to the organization of their level of schooling. They discussed the need to elaborate a teaching programme for one of their specialities. Nevertheless, given the hierarchical culture of the school, I believed that the teachers felt more comfortable providing suggestions about how to improve their practices and deciding on action plans for their particular classes. Despite this, they did not focus their opinions on school organizational matters. For example,

“I realised that one is able to reflect and give opinions about one’s educational practices.”

*(Teacher’s evaluation sheet,
second reflective workshop, 20th June, 2005)*

I had the impression that agency was enhanced through the teachers’ engagement in the cyclical process of reflection and ‘social reframing’. In other words, teachers had the opportunity to see their assumptions about the barriers faced by their students in the light of alternative explanations given by their colleagues, or provided by the materials distributed. They also seemed to feel supported by their colleagues in the challenging process of questioning their thinking.

Reducing defensiveness by ‘social reframing’

As explained in the first section, during my engagement with the teachers of Nelquihue School, I was challenged by their defensive arguments that seemed to prevent them from reflecting on their attitudes and practices. Considering the earlier example of Nieves’ demanding behaviour, during the reflective meeting with the primary teachers I witnessed the following situation,

“I commented that it was Nieves who said that she likes to be taken into account. The Religious Education teacher answered in an ironic tone, “of course, we take her into consideration”. He was referring to her bad behaviour.”

(Report of primary reflective meeting, 3rd May, 2005)

This teacher’s comments seemed to bring about a deadlock, which hindered the opportunity for his colleagues to further discuss the barriers experienced by the student and her teacher.

On other occasions, I felt that the data gathered incited tensions among those teachers with defensive arguments and other colleagues with contrasting views. It appeared that these tensions provided the group with opportunities to confront beliefs about the diversity of their students, and exchange opinions about how to deal with particular situations. I describe these events as

moments of *'social reframing'*, where teachers had the chance to question their arguments and, in some cases, move towards a new understanding of their educational practices in order to attend to diversity.

In the meeting with the primary teachers, I felt a opportunity for *'social reframing'* took place. At the beginning of the academic year, the school experienced a high registration rate in Y7, due to the migration of students whose multilevel schools do not teach up to that phase of schooling. Primary teachers had agreed to divide the students in two groups. Y7A consisted of students from Nelquihue School. Y7B comprised the new students and those who had to repeat the year.

The Mapuche language and culture teacher, who was Y7B tutor, explained that he had heard discriminatory comments about his group and continued, *"it is necessary to reflect on the way we act, and our discourse as teachers. We have to motivate our students, and the negative comments should be dealt with individually with each student."*

The discussion escalated and some teachers tried to justify these attitudes and the circumstances that had forced them to group the students. The Religious Education teacher argued *"we tried to search for some criteria to avoid these difficulties, but in some way we felt that something could happen (...) But judging with words is another matter. I don't approve of it as educators; however any teacher might have said it unintentionally."*

The Natural Science teacher expressed that these attitudes jeopardized the students' self esteem, and the debate concluded with another comment from the Y7B tutor, *"I would hope that my comment would be useful for reflection. I did not want to indulge in a polemic, but to put the document⁴¹ we have just read into practice instead. (...) Finally, we are models for our students (...) We need to be careful of our vocabulary when we are criticising our students."*

Reflective meetings seemed to promote discussions that teachers might be generally keen to avoid for fear of confrontation and rejection by their colleagues. On these occasions, I had the feeling that my presence had a kind of *'referee effect'* that prevented the discussion getting out of control. In my opinion, these debates did not only give teachers the chance to know other colleagues' views and beliefs, but even to question their own. They also helped teachers to agree on the values, attitudes and educational practices that should characterise their school, and discussions could help promote a sense of belonging and identity. In the second workshop, I

⁴¹ To promote discussion, I had distributed a document about how to use positive feedback in the class.

presented some discriminatory comments I had heard during my observations, which provoked Claudia's following comment,

"This kind of attitude should not be part of our school!"

(Report of second workshop, 20th June, 2005)

Nevertheless, I believe that 'social reframing' was not only possible when certain teachers confronted different views, but I also perceived that other participatory activities gave teachers the opportunity to move towards new understandings and practices. In the workshops, I requested that in groups teachers should analyse the accounts of events in classes. I felt that they helped provide explanations for the situations that occurred in class, and contributed with suggestions to put into practice in a climate of collaboration. Returning to Nieves' account, teachers worked in groups to write down their thoughts. The conclusions of one of the groups noted,

"Origin of the problem: *lack of attention and love.*

There is no clear concept of what "being the representative of the group" means.

It happened that day but it could happen any time.

Suggestions: *give her responsibilities, tell her when she has done well.*

Try to reinforce the positive in a caring way.

Award her with encouragement.

Respect her individuality.

Do not treat her like an object in class.

Establish strategies in a more caring way for all the children in the group.

How to assess: *Behavioural norms in class.*

Talk to her.

Permanent registration of the student's attitudes and her relationship with the teacher. Sometimes an external observation is necessary to search for solutions.

Registration as a strategy to evaluate the achievements.

Talk to other teachers to see if there has been any change."

(Report of third reflective workshop, 12th August, 2005)

These opportunities for 'social reframing' and movement did seem to be generalised. As I observed in later interviews with Marlene and an early childhood educator, it did not only help those teachers who were working with Nieves but also teachers who faced challenging

behaviours from other children. Nieves' example could have facilitated other teachers being able to reflect in the way they were attending to other children with emotional issues. In our interview, Dolores acknowledged,

“Dolores – The same case we covered in the last workshop...

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Dolores – It reminded me so vividly! I have a girl like that in the class!”

(Final interview with Y3 early childhood educator, 16th August, 2005)

As can be observed in the evidence, most of the reflection was concentrated on teachers' attitudes and practices in order to promote students' learning and participation in class. I noted, however, that the situation of disabled students was absent from the discussions, although data was presented about them. I had the sense that teachers tended to talk only about those students they considered their responsibility, whereas disabled students were seen as Mercedes' responsibility.

In my interpretation, the participation of five teachers in the final workshop at Gabriela Mistral School opened a new dimension in their arguments about attending to diversity, and Alfredo shared his concerns with the rest of his colleagues in the last workshop at Nelquihue School. He seemed to consider that they were not ready to deal with the situation. Alfredo commented,

“In Santiago, they had a multidisciplinary team that includes disabled students in ‘normal’ classes with ‘normal’ students. Teachers talked about their difficulties in responding to students’ problems, mainly those with Down’s syndrome. We do not have adequate tools to be able to include them in the learning process.”

(Report of the third reflective workshop, 16th August, 2005)

It might be argued that teachers need to feel a certain level of agency in order to reflect on particular aspects of their practices. Although at certain times I could see they were struggling to acknowledge their situation, reframe their thinking and consider new actions to put into place, they seemed to move forward on those issues they felt were within their capacities. However, it became apparent that reflecting on the participation of disabled students in their classes proved a big step for them.

In my opinion, it might be necessary to analyse the starting point of the teachers to be able to facilitate reflection within the territory they feel comfortable with, and to assess when they are ready to move a step forward. The teachers seemed to need a sense of control when they were facing struggles and tensions questioning their theories about education and their students'

diversity. I considered that it was not a matter of protecting teachers, or patronising them, but a question of calculating the pace of the group to avoid possible frustrations that would prevent them from engaging in further reflection. Promoting a collaborative approach might give the facilitator clues as to when further topics could be introduced into the process.

Promoting participation and ownership of the process

The design of the action research approach set out to promote inclusive values. For this reason, I tried to encourage a collaborative process where teachers would be able to take part. In the first place, I designed meetings and workshops with the purpose of creating a participatory climate where teachers could open up and share with their colleagues. One teacher voiced her appreciation by saying,

“I think the work was well structured, using simple language. You give us trust and create a welcoming atmosphere to learn from each other. It has been extremely enriching in terms of values and concepts. You were able to create instances in this educational unit where everyone could learn, no matter what our phase of schooling, you have succeeded in providing us with a big new challenge for our future, to make a change.”

*(Teacher’s anonymous evaluation sheets,
final reflective workshop, 12th August, 2005)*

Teachers appeared to value the participatory dimension of the workshops. It seemed that it was the first time they had been involved in such dynamic activities. Dolores who had been working in the school for the last ten years underlined this point in our final interview,

“Dolores – The workshops were great! (...) Because we all participated.

(...)

Ana Luisa – Yes, hmm.

Dolores – (...) Because we have had many workshops, but none was organized in this way (...) Other methodology that is more like sitting behind a desk...

Ana Luisa – Of course.

Dolores - ... and someone is telling you, you have to do it this way, and you have to do it that way, but there is no movement at all.”

(Final interview with Y3 early childhood educator, 16th August, 2005)

Considering the inclusive action research model presented in Chapter 2, I tried to guarantee community collaboration and ownership of the approach through the organization of a coordination team. As explained earlier, due to several circumstances, the team did not work as expected. Therefore, I promoted other channels of collaboration where school members could own the process.

In the first workshop, I asked the teams at each phase of the school to design a reflective action plan to be carried out with my collaboration. I observed that teachers found it difficult to develop a reflective plan. On the one hand, it gave me the impression that I had perhaps not made the meaning and the purpose of the plan clear. On the other hand, teachers tended to focus their attention on actions and activities. I considered that part of the teachers' culture seemed to be action-oriented, in contrast with the researchers' culture which concentrated on questioning and analysing. I realised their difficulties in understanding the purpose of a reflective action plan in the first reflective meeting with the educators of the nursery, when the coordinator asked me: *"Is this what a reflection plan should be?"*

As explained in Chapter 6, the teachers appeared to concentrate their plans on aspects that were mainly unrelated to their educational practices, such as punctuality, lack of family support, students' self-esteem, etc. Although I tried to support their plans, I appreciated that they did not respond to the methodological approach I was aiming to develop. My purpose was to facilitate reflection on their educational practices; therefore our plans went on parallel pathways. Facing this situation, I intended to involve teachers in decision-making about the action research process I was dealing with in the reflective meetings at their phase of schooling. Through engaging in the analysis of evidence, the members of each team seemed to make decisions about aspects for further analysis, classes to observe, and populations to interview. In my opinion, teachers contributed and felt part of the action research process at their level of schooling. In what follows, an example of the decisions made by the secondary teachers is presented,

"How do we want to continue now?"

Assess the learning process of those who will finish this year, in Y4.

Focus group on academic aspects. Assess if they feel ready for their future.

Ask students to evaluate teachers at a personal level.

Observe classes: specialities where Y3 and Y4 are together, and Y4 classes."

(Report secondary reflective meeting, 19th April, 2005)

By the end of my work with Nelquihue School, I also witnessed signs that teachers were making their own attempts at contributing to the action research process of the school. Without prompting, the teachers who participated in the workshop in Santiago prepared a presentation for their colleagues to initiate our final reflective workshop.

Nevertheless, I had the feeling that the teachers considered the process was my responsibility, and therefore, I could not succeed in elaborating a common plan. In our last interview, Alfredo underlined that the process was characterised by a latent tension between my agenda and the school agenda. Due to this tension and other factors at Nelquihue School, I believed that the approach was not owned by teachers, and therefore, would not be sustainable in the future. Alfredo underlined,

“Alfredo – I think you are working on a thesis, I mean, you come with a formulated hypothesis...”

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Alfredo - ... and you come to work on it. But, how do we engage? That is out of your control. Because you come with a preoccupation and we are immersed in another...

Ana Luisa – Yes.

Alfredo – So, it is complicated to match both preoccupations. (...) The negative aspects I see are mainly due to us. In my modest opinion, this school has not really assumed the purpose of this work, which was to implement an education that practices inclusion.

Ana Luisa – Hmm.

Alfredo – We continue working, don't we? We think about the problem. We have not sat down to work seriously on actions for implementation. That is the pending task, and I don't know that when you leave...

Ana Luisa – Hmm.

Alfredo - ... we are going to finish this task.'

(Final interview with Alfredo, 16th August, 2005)

Lessons learnt

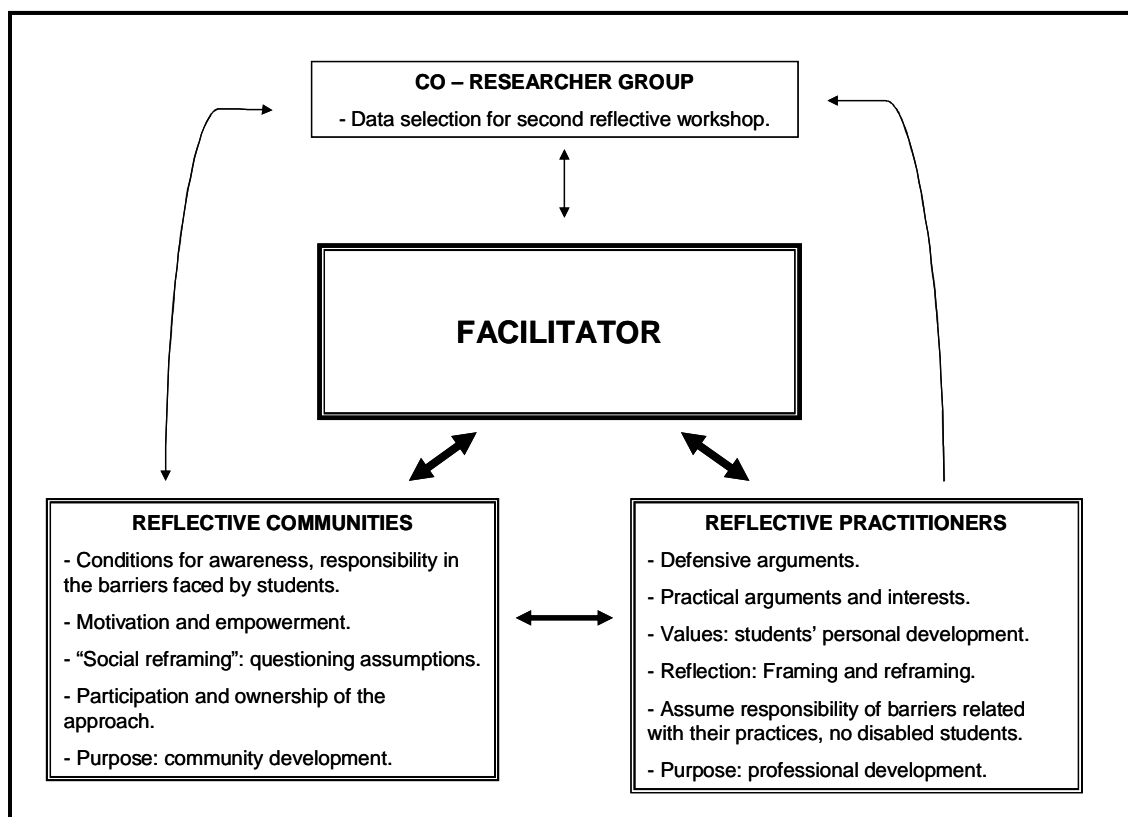
Conditions where the inclusive action research model evolved

The particular characteristics of Nelquihue School meant that the inclusive action research process was largely dependent on my involvement, and concentrated on the promotion of reflective communities and the development of reflective practitioners. The school was part of an NGO programme that over the last decade had a strong impact on its mission and structure. The priests and the members of the NGO inculcated Catholic values based on freedom, justice and solidarity, and gave special importance to the recuperation of the Mapuche language and culture.

Nevertheless, during my time there, the school suffered a strong structural crisis and faced serious tensions that hindered the participation of its members. The hierarchical culture and tensions among groups of teachers were demonstrated in their attitudes and practices towards diversity. Discrimination and segregation seemed to be common barriers to the presence, learning and participation of a number of students, among them, disabled children and teenagers. In addition, I believed that the teachers' living conditions and professional development were tough, which affected their motivation and performance in class.

The introduction of the inclusive action research model was possible through negotiations with the educational management team at Nelquihue School and in the introductory meeting with the teachers. Due to the difficulties in organizing and meeting the voluntary members of the coordination team, I became the one who coordinated the approach and adapted it to the timetable and structure of the school. Meetings with the educational management team seemed to be useful in making decisions about school workshops. I assisted at the meetings of each school level, to coordinate the action research process with each team and to carry out group reflection. In Diagram 7.1, I present the evolution of the inclusive action research model at Nelquihue School.

Diagram 7.1. Emphasis on the evolution of the inclusive action research model at Nelquihue School



I worked with the coordination team, or co-researcher group, who contributed to selecting the data and the topics for reflection in the second workshop. The participation of the members of the team in reflective interviews, meetings and workshops appeared to enhance their agency to make decisions about this particular workshop. I individually organized and carried out reflective interviews with the purpose of promoting reflective practitioners. As the teachers had taken part in the first workshop and the reflective meetings previously, they seemed to be more sensitised to the topic when we held individual interviews. At the same time, it became apparent that engaging teachers in individual conversations about their practices also facilitated teachers taking an active part in the subsequent meetings and workshops for reflection. The information gathered from the co-researcher group, the interviews, meetings and workshops gave me new insights about areas to include, data to analyse and the learning materials to be used in the subsequent reflective events.

Contribution of the inclusive action research process to the understandings and practices in relation to diversity

As noted in Diagram 7.1, I held interviews where teachers could reflect on the accounts of the observation of their classes. The purpose was to promote professional development by engaging teachers in a process where they could frame and reframe their understandings about their practices, using different perspectives for improvement. Most teachers seemed to use defensive arguments, considering that the barriers to presence, learning and participation of their students were due to factors out of their control. In these cases, I found it difficult to help them become aware of their responsibilities as to the barriers faced by their students.

In my interpretation, other teachers were able to analyse their practical arguments and their interest when attending to diversity in their classes. Reflection on the individual needs of particular students appeared to be more common among those teachers with interests and values closely linked to the individual development of their students. Nevertheless, I became aware that teachers did not feel they had the competencies to reflect on how to accompany the learning process of the disabled students.

The promotion of the reflective community was possible through three reflective workshops and meetings at each phase of the school, and teachers were provided with evidence and training materials to reflect on the barriers faced. Given the school conditions, I interpreted that the events were useful in establishing the basis for the first steps of the construction of a learning community that attended to diversity. They were designed to create an atmosphere where teachers felt comfortable to participate, express themselves, and work in groups. They demonstrated that they felt motivated into sharing their feelings, concerns and opinions. It appeared that the activities promoted agency and capacity building, and teachers felt empowered to give suggestions to their colleagues, and also to design actions to be put into place in their classes. In each school team, teachers also made decisions about the action research process; considering the aspects to be analysed, the classes to be observed, and the populations with which to become involved. Nevertheless, they did not seem to provide comments about aspects related to the organization of the school.

In my opinion, there were two major interlinked results of the meetings and workshops which enhanced community development. As described in Diagram 7.1, the teachers seemed to become more aware that their attitudes and practices influenced the learning processes of their students. I believed that they were taking the first steps in questioning their own defensive

arguments. This seemed to be possible due to the opportunities that the group discussions gave for '*social reframing*', which meant that each teacher had the opportunity to see their beliefs and underlying arguments about education and diversity in the light of other perspectives that came from their colleagues', the evidence and the training materials provided. Teachers reflected on their attitudes and behaviour, and their teaching strategies in order to respond to their students. I had the impression that they also came to agreements on the values and practices that Nelquihue School should promote, which seemed to foster a sense of identity and belonging among teachers. In spite of these first movements forwards, they did not, however, seem to be prepared to reflect and analyse the barriers faced by their disabled students. In addition, the teachers interviewed and I had serious doubts that the action research process would have any continuity without my support.

Evolution of the researcher's role as facilitator

During my collaboration, I played several roles to accompany the members of Nelquihue School in the process. I realised that I had to be constantly flexible to the conditions of the school, adapting my personal principles and my principles as a researcher to the real demands and needs of the educational community. Acting as a reflective ethnographer helped me to understand the conditions at the school, in order to adapt the approach to their pace and structure. As explained earlier, coordination and planning appeared to be a central part of my role, and I had to be in constant communication with the heads of each school team and with the headteacher in order to adjust my agenda to that of the school.

During reflective workshops and meetings, I developed my personal and professional skills as group leader to promote participation. I felt that the data distributed and the participatory activities were crucial for reflection. In the reflective interviews, I tried to ask open questions to facilitate teachers' individual reflection. I gave my suggestions when teachers asked, or in those cases where they seemed to be stuck in defensive arguments that did not allow them reframe their own understanding about how to respond to their students' diversity.

To promote teachers' agency and confidence, I also had to become aware of their needs for capacity building, and be open to their suggestions on topics to be tackled and for learning materials. In addition, I tried to guarantee confidentiality when designing materials for reflection. In those cases when it was difficult to maintain confidentiality, I used different evidence with each group of teachers, in an attempt to avoid uncomfortable exposure and criticism.

But above all, as I was perceived as an NGO member, I felt the need to constantly work to establish a relationship based on trust and power balance. Considering the teachers' professional conditions, I tried to concentrate my efforts on those aspects which could be useful to them, and therefore, I included a capacity-building component in each event organized. In addition, I seemed to establish informal conversations, where teachers and I shared our concerns about the NGO programme, the school and the students. My purpose was to show them that I was committed to the same cause. This attitude, together with my personal characteristics, seemed to make me the confidant of some of the teachers who felt closer to me and were worried about the school. Through sharing with them, we built up friendships that have since been maintained.

To conclude this chapter, I would like to emphasise one final point. My facilitator role followed a central principle, that inclusive values should lead the process and should, at the same time, be its main purpose, in order to promote a sense of community, participation, respect of diversity, compassion, justice, equal rights and sustainability. I could never be sure to have achieved any of these, but they guided my journey with both Gabriela Mistral School and Nelquihue School.

Chapter 8. Learning about the promotion of inclusive action research approaches in schools

“As they discoursed, they discovered some thirty or forty windmills, that are in that field; and as soon as Don Quixote espied them, he said to his squire, ‘Fortune doth address our affairs better than we ourselves could desire; for behold there, friend Sancho Panza, how there appears thirty or forty monstrous giants, with whom I mean to fight, (...)’ ‘What giants?’ quoth Sancho Panza. (...) ‘I pray you understand,’ (...), ‘that those which appear there are no giants, but windmills;’ (...) he spurred his horse Rozinante, (...) and encountered with the first mill that was before him, and, striking his lance into the sail, the wind swung it about with such fury, that it broke his lance into shivers, carrying him and his horse after it, and finally tumbled him a good way off from it on the field in evil plight. (...) ‘Good God!’ quoth Sancho, ‘did I not foretell unto you that you should look well what you did, for they were none other than windmills? nor could any think otherwise, unless he had also windmills in his brains.’”
(Miguel de Cervantes⁴², Spanish writer, 1605)

In earlier chapters, I have introduced the Chilean educational context and the notions of inclusion and attention to diversity. I then concentrated on the design of an inclusive action research model which could support schools in their attempts to minimise the barriers to presence, learning and participation experienced by its members. Next a description of the methods for data collection and analysis was presented. Then, in Chapters 4 to 7, case studies of the evolution of the inclusive action research approach at Gabriela Mistral School and Nelquihue School were described and analysed.

In this chapter, I compare the analysis of the action research approach in both schools and relate this discussion to themes from the literature I summarised earlier about inclusive education and action research. My central purpose is to understand more about the ways in which the designed inclusive action research model can contribute to attempts by schools and their staff members to improve their attention to diversity.

This leads me to consider first the transformations in understandings and educational practices that may be achieved through these processes within schools. I also explore the necessary conditions to use such an approach, particularly in the context of Chile.

The discussion presented in this chapter is guided by evidence which emerged from the process in relation to the inclusive action research model and theoretical aspects relevant to it. However, before the theoretical discussion, it should be underlined that the knowledge acquired is based on the analysis and the comparisons derived from two case studies only. For this reason, any

⁴² Cervantes, M. (1605). *Don Quixote, Part 1*, translated by Thomas Shelton. Vol. XIV. The Harvard Classics. New York, PF Collier & Son. Available at www.bartleby.com/14/.

generalisation made needs to be considered cautiously in light of the interpretations of what I learned from the case studies and from other authors' arguments.

With these considerations in mind, I try to remain cautious in interpreting the evidence, in an attempt to keep a balance between Quixote, the knight's ideals of justice and goodwill, and the more down-to-earth wisdom of his squire, Sancho. In this sense, my intention is to avoid *"crashing into the windmills believing they are giants"*.

Changes in understandings and practices in relation to diversity

Throughout my work with both schools, and in considering further literature, I came to the conclusion that reflection was central in order to produce change. Others have noted:

"The function of reflective thought is (...) to transform a situation in which there is experienced obscurity, doubt, conflict, disturbance of some sort, into a situation that is clear, coherent, settled, harmonious."

(Dewey, 1933: 100-101 cit Grimmet and Erickson, 1988: 6)

As Howes suggests, schools have to engage in *"complex social processes through which changes happen"* (2001: 44). From my observations in the two schools, when the inclusive action research approach led to a process of change, it appeared to be characterised by complex reflective dialogues based on trust and openness which permeated all levels of the educational community.

Based on the analysis of the case studies, the inclusive action research approach seemed to have, at times, promoted reflection at three levels. Where this happened, it appeared to have some potential in contributing to changes in the schools' policies, cultures and practices.

At an individual level, I intended that the approach would be concentrated on the development of teachers' personal attitudes, values, understandings and educational practices. Here, there was evidence that reflection was sometimes triggered by the stance of the reflective interviews, when I tried to *'coach'* the analytical thinking of my teacher partners (Schön, 1988). In these contexts, I saw reflection as a process whereby an individual questions and reframes their own understandings about education and attention to diversity.

As we saw, by and large, the members of the school in the south were more interested in these interviews than those in Santiago. Given the apparent difficulties for professional development which jeopardized teachers' confidence at Nelquihue School, which I address in following

sections, teachers there seemed willing to engage in the personal interviews with me in order to receive my comments about what they were *'doing wrong'* in their classes. This is the reason why I held twenty-one reflective interviews there, in contrast with only five in Santiago, where, on the whole, staff were more interested in working with their colleagues. Nevertheless, while engaged in the facilitating of reflection, or what Ainscow (2004) calls *'interruptions to thinking'*, I faced difficulties in supporting teachers' reflection. I explain this in greater detail later in this chapter.

At community level, the approach was intended to focus on the transformation of cultures, policies and structures. Here, reflection was enhanced by reflective meetings with a team from each phase of schooling at Nelquihue School, and reflective workshops where the cultures, policies and practices of both schools were challenged.

As described in the case studies, teachers at Nelquihue School participated in three workshops, and Gabriela Mistral teachers in two. I interpreted that these events seemed to provide the participants with instances of *'social reframing'*, where teachers had the opportunity to question and challenge their own thinking by listening to other colleagues' views. They also appeared to develop a sense of common purpose and belonging to the educational community. I address this aspect in following sections.

This promotion of a reflective community was led by groups of volunteer teachers. My intention was that these colleagues would contextualise the approach to the actual situation of their school; in this way, I hoped that the process was led and owned by the team. It was apparent that reflection among the members of the team promoted their transformational leadership. Due to the characteristics of Nelquihue School, and the role I played there, the coordination group did not appear to work. On the other hand, at Gabriela Mistral School, the team played a central role in the evolution of the approach. In the meetings, the volunteer teachers, together with the educational psychologist and I, made decisions about the process and reflected on evidence gathered.

I will argue that this inclusive action research model is a new contribution to thinking in the field. Throughout the literature I did not encounter this three-level approach which consists of the characteristics of different action research traditions. Reason (1998) considers that there are three action research approaches each with a distinctive focus. For him, participatory action research (PAR) concentrates their work on communities; co-operative inquiry on groups of co-researcher practitioners, and action science mainly on individuals. The author underlines that the three approaches complement each other. Therefore, it seems that my design approach responds to the observation made by Reason:

“(...) how the three approaches complement each other, so that together they stand as the beginnings of a robust ‘paradigm’ of research with people.”

(Reason, 1998: 263)

Nevertheless, I included principles and characteristics of other action research trends which, I believed, complemented the inclusive action research model. PAR authors have concentrated their work on the community in general, with the purpose of promoting cultural and political changes (Rosas, 1997; Fals Borda, 2001; Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001; Wadsworth, 2001; Walker, 2005), whereas action inquirers have focused on leadership and organizational improvements (Torbert, 1989; 1991; 2001).

Transformations towards more inclusive cultures and policies have also been the main focus of those action researchers who collaborated with schools, particularly in England (Ainscow, 1999; Dyson and Millward, 2000; Howes, 2001; Booth and Ainscow, 2002; Gallannaugh and Dyson, 2003; Howes, Frankham et al. 2004; Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006).

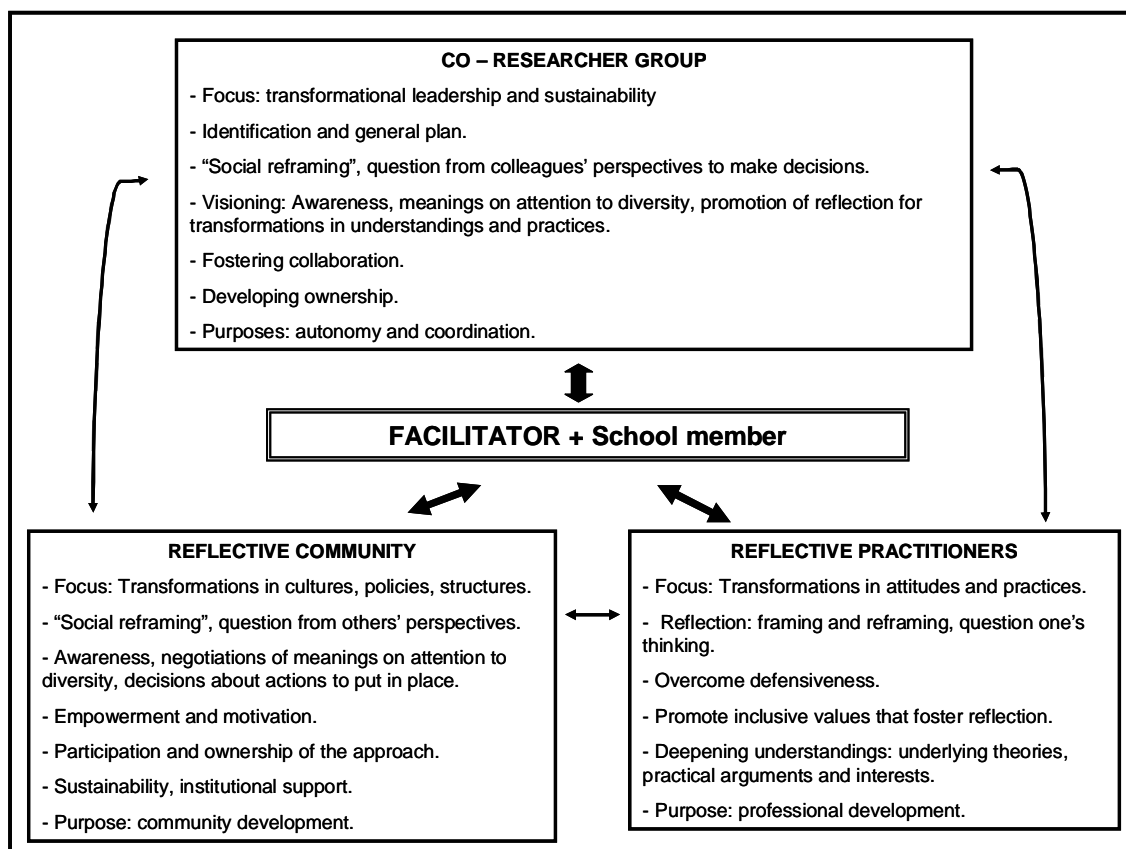
The main purpose of co-operative enquirers, action science authors and educational action researchers has been the promotion of reflective practitioners who could improve their practices individually or in groups (Schön, 1983; Argyris, Putnam et al. 1985; Grimmet and Erickson, 1988; Elliott, 1991; Louden, 1991; Schön, 1991; Day, 1997; Day, 2000; Friedman, 2001; Heron, 2001; Heron and Reason, 2001; Day, 2004; Day and Sachs, 2004).

In my search of the literature, I only encountered one particular research that concentrated on two levels: the individual and the organizational level. Davidoff used a two-level approach with the purpose of establishing *“a culture of ongoing personal, professional and institutional development at schools”* (1997: 100).

Nevertheless, I did not find any approach that contemplated the role of a group of co-researchers who owned and coordinated an action research process which engaged other members of their community. In my experience, although the implementation of a coordination team was not possible in both schools, its work in Gabriela Mistral School, under the leadership of the educational psychologist, had a major impact in the evolution of the process. It also enhanced the autonomy of the school in terms of promoting a collaborative action research approach relevant to their reality and which was sustainable over time. I address the role of the coordination team in the transformation of understandings and practices in subsequent sections.

Diagram 8.1 represents a revision of the inclusive action research approach in light of the analysis of its evolution in each school. The diagram points to changes in understandings and practices witnessed in the promotion of reflective practitioners, reflective communities, and a co-researcher team in each school. In what follows, I explain these processes in detail by discussing each level presented in the model.

Diagram 8.1. Revision of the inclusive action research model



Transformations towards reflective practitioners

The literature suggests different theories as to why teachers or other professionals come to reflect on their practices. As with Dewey in the quotation above, some authors consider that people tend to reflect in order to find clarity and harmony in situations they do not understand within their current framework of thinking. For example, Loudén talks about:

"(...) attempting to overcome the gap in understanding using the preconceptions one presently has."

(Louden, 1991: 191).

Others presume reflection is triggered by surprises faced by teachers when analysing evidence, particularly from the opinions of students, or by observing other colleagues' practices (Ainscow

and Howes, 2006; Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006). Nevertheless, during the reflective events I did not seem to witness teachers experiencing surprises in relation to the accounts of their classes or to the opinions expressed by other school members. Rather, they seemed to suggest that it was normal and what they would have expected. As Shulman argues:

“But surprise presupposes knowing or expecting something in the first place. One needs determinate understandings to comprehend that what one is confronting is not simply chaotic but indeterminate, thus falling outside the boundaries where algorithms or rules of thumb can be employed.”

(Shulman, 1988: 34)

In my view, Shulman is arguing that teachers need to be capable to identify gaps in understandings, or to be surprised when observing evidence about their practices. The author considers that reflection should be informed by theory and theory by reflection. For this reason, he relates the lack of surprise to teachers' need of theories and knowledge which could inform their reflection about their teaching. This was something I observed, when coaching teachers at Nelquihue School. I found that they did not feel they had adequate knowledge or the professional capacity to see through their own practices. This is the reason why I included a component for professional development in meetings and workshops.

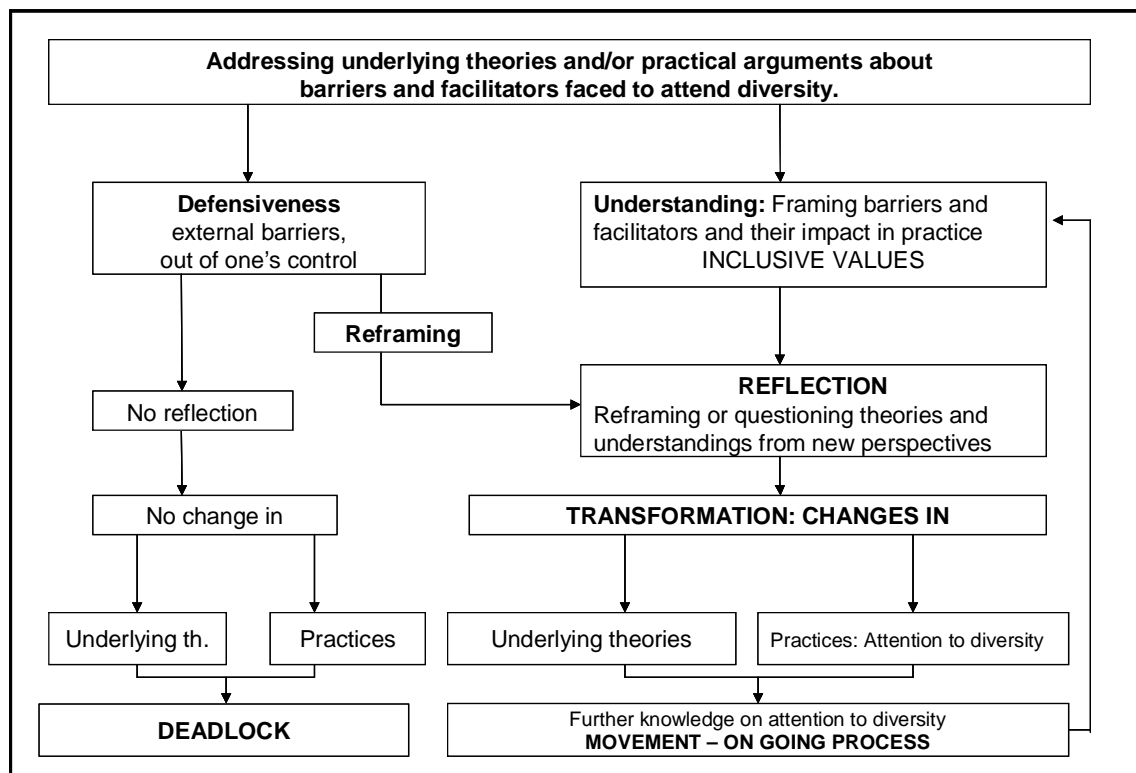
At Gabriela Mistral School, on the other hand, despite the fact that they appeared to have high levels of teaching performance and professional knowledge, along with their working experience, the teachers did not express surprise or lack of understanding at the barriers faced by certain students in their classes. Consequently, I did not perceive that surprise triggered reflection.

For this reason, I needed to strengthen my understanding of the processes of reflection which teachers experienced when analysing barriers and facilitators to learning and participation. With this in mind, I first analysed the twenty-six reflective interviews. In doing so, I also found that I needed to go back to the literature to gather more knowledge on how other authors viewed the way in which teachers reflected. In particular, I found that Grimmet and Erickson's *“Reflection in Teacher Education”* (1988), added to my understanding of Schön's theories about the *‘reflective practitioner’*.

After a thorough analysis of the teachers' interviews and a further consideration of the relevant literature, I developed Diagram 8.2. This attempts to illustrate the different individual pathways which lead teachers to reflect in order to change their understandings and practices on how to attend to diversity. The diagram does not claim to characterise certain teachers as defensive, or

others as reflective. Rather it suggests that the pathways followed by individual teachers depend on the moment and on specific topics. As I was coaching during the reflective interviews, I saw how, at certain moments, teachers were more able to frame their understandings about barriers and facilitators and reflect on them. Then, at other times, I saw how the same teachers seemed to use defensive arguments that prevented them from critically analysing their beliefs, values, attitudes, underlying theories and practices.

Diagram 8.2. Pathways in addressing barriers and facilitators to attend to diversity in relation to particular topics



Before going into detailed explanations of this diagram, I would like to point out that during the reflective interviews, I had to create an atmosphere of trust and understanding, where teachers felt open to talk and share both their certainties and uncertainties about their role as educators. I believe that, in most cases, my own personal attitude helped to facilitate a climate which enhanced dialogue and smoothed possible defensive attitudes. I will return to the analysis of my role as facilitator in Chapter 9.

As is presented in Diagram 8.1, my contributions related to the consideration of how to facilitate teachers moving from defensiveness, where they would try to argue that the barriers experienced by their students were external and out of their control, towards a more reflective stance, where

they became aware of the influence of their own attitudes and practices in hindering their students' learning and participation.

Defensiveness

Diagram 8.2 suggests three major tendencies that I observed when teachers reflected on barriers and facilitators faced when responding to their students' diversity in relation to particular topics. As explained earlier, I carried out five reflective interviews in Santiago and twenty-one in the south. Although I could use evidence from other reflective interviews, I concentrate my argument on those described in the case studies in Chapters 5 and 7, as they appeared to be representative of the different pathways followed by the teachers.

At Gabriela Mistral School, Wilson's explanations when considering his responsibility in the learning process of the student with Down's syndrome; and Pamela's '*not knowing what to do*' with Nieves' challenging behaviour at Nelquihue School, are representative examples of what I interpret as defensive arguments.

Confronted by a tense or uncomfortable situation, these teachers tended to argue that the cause of their students' difficulties in learning and participating were to be found in external factors which were outside their control. Some of these factors were to do with the education system, others were about the families or lack of them, some related to the students' culture, their personal characteristics, their behaviour and motivation, the challenging working conditions, or indeed, any other aspects that were in fact having some impact on the learning process of their students. In the case of Nelquihue School, many comments were related to the teachers' beliefs that they lacked knowledge and the professional capacity to diversify their educational practices. The effect of the difficult working conditions of teachers on their practices has been recognised by other researchers in Latin America (Rosas, 1997; Torres, 2000; Avalos, 2004).

In addition, the need for more opportunities for professional development, particularly to respond to students' needs, was a common concern in the study. Day and his colleagues (Day, 2000; Day, Fernandez et al. 2000; Day and Sachs, 2004) acknowledge that the new demands which education systems impose on teachers provoke anxieties and frustration, and many teachers do not feel suitably prepared. Nevertheless, the author underlines that there are certain teachers who could manage '*room to manoeuvre*' in their practices (Day, 2000; 2004). These teachers are described by Day (2004) as '*passionate teachers*' with the moral purpose of making a difference in their students' lives. The author considers that these teachers are characterised by their engagement with reflection in, on and about their practices as a central strategy for their

continuing professional development. On the contrary, the author describes that other teachers use a particular '*mechanism of personal agency*'

“Among the mechanisms of personal agency, none is more central and pervasive than people’s beliefs about their ability to exercise control over events that affect their lives. (...) Teachers who, for example, emphasize that the environment overwhelms their ability to have an impact on student’s learning, ‘exhibit a belief that reinforcement of their teaching efforts lies outside their control, or is external to them’ (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, p. 204).”

(Day, 2004: 72-73)

Accordingly, I observed that these defensive attitudes, as I call them, prevented teachers from seeing further and understanding those factors that were under their control which might make a difference to children’s participation and learning. In this sense, Schön (1988) argues that practitioners sometimes use defensive strategies in order to protect themselves from vulnerable situations, such as those they may experience when confronted with information about their own practices. He also refers to these defensive arguments as characteristics of the normal cynicism embedded in schools. For him, '*coaching reflective teaching*' can be a strategy to minimise defensiveness.

Defensiveness has been described by authors from different traditions. For example, those linked with the special educational needs and inclusive education tradition tend to relate defensive arguments to what they describe as the "*deficit view of ‘difference’*" that some teachers seem to have when considering disabled students, or those with special educational needs as '*lacking something*' (Ainscow and Howes, 2006). I heard comments which reflected this '*deficit view*' in both schools.

Other authors amplify this '*deficit view*' and underline that, in some cases, teachers associate students' barriers with their ethnic or socio-cultural background (Gallannaugh and Dyson, 2003; Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006). In this line of thinking, Simpson (2004) highlights the tension created by the mismatch of cultures between that of the teachers and the school, and the culture of the students and their families. I vividly experienced these tensions at Nelquihue School.

During my collaboration with individuals, I observed how much defensive arguments appeared to prevent teachers from reflecting and possibly transforming their understandings and practices in order to respond to their students' learning processes. These were, I felt, examples of Gallannaugh and Dyson's (2003) argument that such attitudes limit the search for alternative

actions. Likewise, I perceived that defensiveness led teachers like Pamela and Wilson to a deadlock which impeded their ability to enrich and diversify their practices.

Action science and action inquiry authors refer to this form of defensiveness as ‘*Model I*’, and encourage people to move towards what they call ‘*Model II*’ in order to promote deeper understandings.

“This theory of action which they called ‘Model I’, accounts for much individual and organizational ineffectiveness and lack of learning. In order to facilitate learning, Argyris and Schön (1974, 1978, 1996) proposed ‘Model II’ a theory of action aimed at maximizing valid information, free and informed choice and internal commitment.”

(Friedman, 2001: 161)

Deepening understanding

In Diagram 8.2, parallel to the defensive pathway, we see how sometimes teachers tried to deepen their understandings about the barriers and strengths experienced when responding to their students’ diverse learning processes. During the analysis of the case studies in Chapters 5 and 7, we saw how the teachers in each school framed their understandings of the barriers and facilitators.

As presented in Diagram 8.1 earlier, in the box referring to reflective practitioners, the factors that seemed to enhance teachers’ analytical thinking were their underlying theories, their practical arguments and their interest about education and attention to diversity. But above all, the factors that appeared to make the difference when reflecting on how to improve the way they were responding to their students’ diverse learning processes were their personal values.

In Santiago, Wilson and Paula described their underlying theories about education to explain to me how their practices adapted to the purpose of education. Wilson talked about the importance of establishing dialogues and relationships with his students, whereas Paula’s concern was to make students autonomous and responsible for their own learning process. In this way, they both appeared to use their ‘*repertoire of practical arguments*’ (Fenstermacher, 1988) to show how they ‘*reflected-in-action*’ (Schön, 1983) and adapted the planned lessons to the dynamics of the class. As Shulman (1988) underlines, these teachers had achieved a level of professional knowledge that supported their reflection. During the years, they had, it seems, elaborated their educational

theories and constructed knowledge from practice experience that facilitated them in deepening their understanding about how to respond to their students' differences.

On the other hand, at Nelquihue School, Paula and Marlene seemed to frame the barriers faced using practical arguments gathered from their experience and their personal interests in education (Louden, 1991). For example, Paula's interest was that their students learnt about Geography and History, and made comparisons between her plan of the lesson and the way the class had evolved. In Chapter 2, I explained that this form of reflection has been described as the '*learning pathways grid*' (Rudolph, Taylor et al. 2001). Paula aimed to analyse the necessary actions to put into place in further lessons, in order to improve the level of attention and participation of her students.

Nevertheless, I observed that often teachers' values were the central forces which engaged them in framing barriers and facilitators and the way these affected their practices. At Nelquihue School, during our interviews, Claudia, and particularly Marlene, showed their concerns of the personal development of their students. I related their preoccupation to the ideas of Armstrong and Moore when they talk about teachers who try to "*make a difference in the lives of their pupils*" (2004). Considering the challenging conditions of the students in the south, this purpose was central in the teachers' minds. Inclusive values also seemed to be part of the '*Mistral*' identity in Santiago, and as I interpreted, were the driving force of reflection for Paula, and more strongly for Gabriela, as observed in the example of the '*nightmare catcher*'. I related their personal and professional characteristics to Day's '*passionate teachers*' whose moral purposes and commitment towards their students drive them to reflection (Day, 2000; 2004).

Hart argues that in order for teachers to overcome defensive justifications they need to acquire a positive attitude, or '*positive rationale*', which helps them to develop '*innovative thinking*'. She comments:

"Rooted in the positive language of possibility rather than pathology or deficiency, this rationale (...) recognizes the subtlety of the thinking required to find and exploit previously unexplored possibilities."

(Hart, 1996: 96)

Certainly I observed moments when personal attitudes and values seemed to encourage teachers to reflect. In other words, they took the challenge to reframe and question their understandings about how to respond to their students' learning processes from new perspectives. In my opinion, this is what reflection is about; Kilbourn describes reflection as "*looking at things in a different way*" (1988). In Ainscow's opinion (2002; 2006), reflection gives

the opportunity to analyse previously “*taken for granted assumptions*” in order to consider new ideas which could minimise the barriers faced by students in their learning process. However, even when teachers reflected and were able to put forward new ideas to be put into practice, as in the case of Paula when she read the questions from the *Index*, I did not witness any transformations in their educational practices. Marlene, at Nelquihue School, also expressed a willingness to use the recommendations derived from our reflective interviews in her classes, but I did not perceive any changes in my second observation.

This is the reason why, in Diagram 8.2, I present a separation between possible transformations in teachers’ underlying theories and in their actual practices. In the cases I analysed, transformations in understandings did not seem to directly lead to changes in practices. On the other hand, I did observe that when teachers reflected, they gathered further knowledge and a willingness to continue reflecting and to learn more about how they could minimise barriers faced when attending to their students’ diversity.

Action researchers argue that this awareness, or ‘*conscientization*’ (Freire, 1970) should guarantee the ‘*catalytic validity*’ of the approach (Lather, 1986). This means that when teachers could engage in a self-reflective commitment, this should lead to transformations in their values, theories and practices. Nevertheless, in the short period of time I collaborated with the schools, it seems that I could only observe transformations at an early stage.

In the case of Gabriela Mistral School, teachers expressed their interest in getting involved in on-going reflective processes, in order to improve their practices to respond to all their students, no matter what their individual characteristics. On the other hand, at Nelquihue School, teachers did not go this far. They apparently did assume that their practices could be hindering their students’ learning experiences. Nevertheless, although I discussed the matter with Claudia and Marlene, teachers did not seem to feel responsible for the learning of their disabled students, who they saw as being the special teacher’s responsibility, which is in line with the ‘*individual medical model*’ described in Chapter 1.

Returning to Diagram 8.2, it can be noted that the third pathway towards reflection has not been described. This is related to those times where teachers using defensive arguments feel encouraged to challenge their thinking and question it from other perspectives. I call this process ‘*reframing*’. Dyson and his colleagues seem to have the same idea in mind when they refer to such moments as “*spaces partly provided by the operation of dissonance*” (Dyson, Gallannaugh et al. 2002). Other authors refer to ‘*inquiring stances*’ where existing thinking about teaching and learning is challenged (Ainscow and Howes, 2006).

During my individual interviews, I did not witness this move from defensiveness towards reflection through *'reframing'*. In the analysis of the case studies, however, I interpreted that instances of *'social reframing'* emerged in the workshops and meetings, where teachers had the opportunity to question and challenge their own thinking by listening to other colleagues' views. I address this aspect in the following section.

As summary, then, I have so far highlighted the reflective pathways that teachers seemed to follow when addressing barriers and facilitators they faced as they attempted to attend to diversity. I underline that some teachers' difficulties in thinking critically about their practices appeared to be due to their defensive attitudes, arguing that the barriers experienced were out of their control. Transformations in understandings about practices seemed to be possible when teachers owned a set of inclusive values that made them feel responsible for their students learning processes. It appeared that teachers deepened their understandings by analysing their underlying theories, their practical arguments and their interests in education and their students. Nevertheless, I must stress again, that although I observed changes in understandings, I was not able to witness transformations in practices.

Transformations towards reflective communities

As described in the accounts of the two schools, and summarised in Diagram 8.1, I had the opportunity to observe moments of what I saw as *'social reframing'* during the meetings and workshops in the south, and in the meetings with the co-researcher group, and workshops in Santiago. I interpreted these as moments when teachers analysed evidence and negotiated meanings about education, values and even the identity of their school. I will return to the negotiated meanings of the coordination team later.

In Nelquihue School, for example, the meeting with the primary level allowed teachers to discuss their discriminatory attitudes and actions towards some of their students. The opinions of one group of students and the learning material encouraged some teachers to share their beliefs and opinions, and they appeared to *'reframe'* them in the light of their colleagues' views. These events seemed to echo what others have also noted, for example:

"(...) listening to unfamiliar voices or of listening to familiar ones in new ways."

(Armstrong and Moore, 2004: xi)

Other authors, such as Ainscow and his colleagues (Ainscow, Howes et al. 2003; Ainscow, 2004; Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006), Charles (2004) and Lloyd (2002) agree on the importance of instances for critical collaborative reflection as a ‘*social learning process*’ where teachers’ attitudes, ideas and practices are shared and analysed with other colleagues to facilitate improvement. This was possible, I felt, thanks to the role of the coordination team and the educational psychologist, at Gabriela Mistral School, and as a result of my role as facilitator at both schools. Through these opportunities for social reframing, I perceived some changes in understandings and practices. These are summarised in the following table.

Table 8.1. Comparisons of transformations in understandings and practices observed in Gabriela Mistral School and in Nelquihue School

Transformations	Gabriela Mistral School	Nelquihue School
Understandings	<p>Negotiations of meanings on attention to diversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusive education, not only for students with special educational needs but for all. - Awareness of teachers’ attitudes and practices as barriers. - Teachers’ responsibility: every student, no matter their individual characteristics. <p>‘<i>Social reframing</i>’, prioritising barriers faced. ‘<i>Unsettled</i>’, willing to know more about how to attend to each student’s diversity.</p>	<p>Negotiations of meanings on attention to diversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating the conditions for awareness, teachers’ responsibility in the barriers faced by students. - Teachers’ responsibility: those students in class, not disabled students. <p>‘<i>Social reframing</i>’: questioning assumptions, beliefs and values. ‘<i>Unsettled</i>’, willing to know more about how to attend to each student’s diversity.</p>
Practices	<p>Empowerment, autonomy and participation in decision making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - changes in individual practices; - organization of school professional development opportunities based on reflection and interchange of experiences; - changes in the organization of the existing support of the school – focused on teachers as well as students. <p>Sustainability with institutional support. Design and development of a school inclusive action plan.</p>	<p>Empowerment and autonomy: they felt able to make decisions about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - changes in individual practices. - changes in the organization at their phase of schooling. <p>Participation and ownership of the approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - active participation in the meetings and workshops; - decisions about the process at their phase of schooling.

Transformations in understandings

Negotiation of meanings, beliefs and values in relation to attention to diversity was one of the main purposes of the collaborative reflective processes in both schools. The promotion and development of values is considered by some authors as having an important impact on the engagement in action research processes (Howes, Frankham et al. 2004).

Observed in the case studies, each school started the process at different stages in their '*journey*' towards an inclusive school (Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006). Therefore, the transformations experienced seemed to respond to the level of development the school members had achieved in relation to inclusion.

As we see in Table 8.1, given the starting point of Nelquihue School, the process allowed them to create the conditions for sensitisation and awareness. In the workshops and meetings teachers recognised their own influence within some of the barriers for learning and participation faced by their students. They also assumed their responsibility to respond to the learning processes of the children in their classes. However, as we saw, they did not consider disabled students as being their responsibility. This issue is further explored in what follows.

As inclusive values were apparently embedded in the '*Mistral*' culture and identity, the staff there also seemed to become more aware that their attitudes and practices could be barriers for their students. But as indicated in Table 8.1, they went a step further; they came to the conclusion that inclusive education was not only a matter of how they dealt with disabled students, or even those with '*special educational needs*'. Rather, for them, it was concerned with the idea of achieving a good quality education for all. For this reason, they acknowledged their responsibility for every student, regardless of their individual characteristics or the support they were receiving.

Campbell (1996) argues that the literature tends to reinforce the idea that school members should share a set of beliefs and values. Nevertheless, she highlights that schools are characterised by philosophical tensions amongst teachers. In their book, Miles and her colleagues (Miles, Ainscow et al. 2003) also underline the fact that teachers do not necessarily share the same values and beliefs when considering democracy and human rights. I observe how in Nelquihue School, teachers had contrasting values, which were part of the reasons, as well as the consequence of their apparent balkanization of school teams. The collaborative approach seemed to highlight these existing tensions and promote opportunities for '*social reframing*', where assumptions, meanings and values were challenged and the teachers discussed and agreed on common values and purposes. I experienced one of these instances in the second workshop, when

teachers were invited to read sentences I had heard during my observations and discussions about the school ethos and vision.

The teachers at Gabriela Mistral School also expressed a variety of personal values, which, despite individual tensions, seemed to be respected by its members. Nevertheless, they all shared a strong identification with the '*Mistral*' ethos, and therefore, during their discussions, they worked towards the achievement of the values embedded in the school ethos with the purpose of improving as an educational community. As presented in Table 8.1, during their opportunities for '*social reframing*', the staff members appeared to negotiate and agree on those barriers that were seen as a priority. I perceived these events contributed to the construction of learning communities which provide school members with conditions for learning and personal and professional development (Ainscow, 1999; Kugelmass, 2001; Ainscow, 2002; Day, 2004).

In the interpretations of some action inquirers and action scientists, both educational communities went through '*learning loops*'. They did not only analyse and make decisions about the logistical practicalities of how to overcome the barriers experienced, they also went into a process of discussions, understandings and agreements about the theories, assumptions and values behind these challenges. It has been argued that this form of '*double-learning loop*' should lead to significant changes.

“According to Argyris and Schön (1974), the easiest and most common changes occur at the level of strategies or ‘single-loop learning’. (...) However, simply changing strategies is often insufficient for solving more intractable problems and dilemmas and may even make the situation worse. Under these conditions the action scientist looks at altering actors’ reality images, assumptions, goals and/or values. Change at this level has been called ‘double-loop learning’.”

(Friedman, 2001: 163)

By discussing and analysing inclusive values with the purpose of transforming practices, I perceived that teachers in both schools felt '*unsettled*'; in other words, a willingness to gather more knowledge and professional skills in order to respond better to the learning characteristics and demands of their students. Biott (1996) describes this situation as '*latency*'. He argues that teachers involved in action research processes can experience a transformation in their attitude characterised by '*latency*':

“(...) latency implies expectancy and revival, and it highlights potential for change in daily life at work”

(Biott, 1996: 171).

Given the different conditions of the schools, I had the impression that this potential for change would be fostered or hindered by the opportunities for professional development teachers had available.

Transformations in practices

When examining transformations in practices, as observed in Table 8.1, teachers expressed that the process had motivated and empowered them, although in different areas. Motivation and empowerment have been considered important issues by other researchers, such as Ainscow (2002), Wijesundera (2002) and Biott (1996). By motivation, I mean that the groups of teachers jointly celebrated those aspects they had achieved as a team, and encouraged each other to continue working and learning together to improve the way they were minimising the barriers experienced.

Teachers also seemed to acquire a sense of autonomy in making decisions. The autonomy I observed in each school differed in relation to its culture and structure, as I explain in subsequent sections.

In the final workshop at Gabriela Mistral School, teachers participated in making decisions about changes in individual practices, and they considered they had to be more responsible in the learning process of those students with *‘special educational needs’*. They also agreed on becoming more proactive in the coordination of the support with the TPU unit and Neruda Organization. Teachers appeared to conclude that the school needed to organize opportunities for professional development based on sharing and reflecting on practices. In addition, teachers seemed to feel with the agency to propose changes in the existing mechanisms for support. In their opinion these mechanisms should concentrate on helping teachers adapt their teaching to their students’ demands. I experienced the agreements reached in their lines of action responded to the *‘social model’* or *‘organizational perspective’* promoted by inclusive education authors, as I addressed in Chapter 1.

Table 8.1 describes that teachers at Nelquihue School also appeared to feel motivated and empowered by the process. In my opinion, they took an active part in the meetings and workshops and became responsible for the development of the approach at their phase of schooling. Nevertheless, due to the hierarchical culture and their professional conditions, they

only seemed to feel able to promote changes which they considered were under their control. Changes were apparently related to their individual practices. In addition, I perceived that the early childhood educators and secondary teachers showed their confidence and agency by proposing changes in the organization at their phase of schooling. However, suggestions about school transformations were not expressed.

Howes and his colleagues argue that, in schools, action research has to generate the capacity to overcome the barriers that challenge students' presence, learning, and participation (Howes, Frankham et al. 2004). In the cases analysed here, the effects of the inclusive action research process in the organization and structure of each school seemed to differ according to the existing culture and channels of participation and communication.

The difference tended to be in relation to the time each school had been on the journey towards a more inclusive school. In the case of Nelquihue School, I felt that the approach guided the educational community in their first steps, whereas the members of Gabriela Mistral School appeared to have had the chance to analyse how to institutionalise and improve the actions they had implemented over the last decade.

It must be said, that the promotion of motivation, empowerment, autonomy and collaboration were part of the conditions necessary to be created in order to carry out the collaborative reflective process. However, I cannot guarantee that they became part of the culture and practice of each school. I interpret this as the reason why Dyson and Millward argue that inclusion should be considered as,

“(...) an outcome of actions within a school rather than as an inherent characteristic of the school (...) an outcome which will be limited and provisional.”

(Dyson and Millward, 2000: 170)

For this reason, I would like to underline that the process itself seemed to be inclusive however temporal. I have the feeling that if the process and my collaboration could have been longer, the maintenance of these effects over time could have been analysed. This could be an aspect to explore in further research.

Considering the future of the inclusive action research process in these schools, I would like to highlight that only the members of Gabriela Mistral School seemed to express their commitment to develop an inclusive plan that considered the decisions agreed in the final workshop. I had the

opinion that the sustainability of the plan, would only be possible if the institutional support of the management team and the transformational leadership of the coordination team were maintained. In conclusion, as observed in Diagram 8.1, the actions put into place to promote reflective communities appeared to provide their members with opportunities for '*social reframing*', where participants questioned their own assumptions, beliefs and underlying theories from other colleagues' perspectives and developed a sense of belonging and common purpose. The meetings and workshops with teachers apparently promoted awareness of inclusive values. Teachers had the opportunity to negotiate meanings about attention to diversity and make decisions about actions to be put into place. The participants seemed to feel empowered and motivated to participate and owned the approach. Nevertheless, the sustainability of the transformations observed appeared to depend on the institutional commitment and support of the headteachers and other representatives of the management teams.

Transformational leadership of the co-researcher group

As seen in the case study from Gabriela Mistral School, the co-researcher team seemed to grow and have a strong effect on the approach. However, in my analysis I did not have the opportunity to compare the evolution of the teams from each school. In addition, I could not find literature which provided me with information of these types of groups in other action research initiatives. Therefore, my interpretations need to be seen as context specific and could only be of limited generalisation in schools with similar characteristics to that of Gabriela Mistral School. Nevertheless, further learning might also be achieved by considering those aspects of Nelquihue School that jeopardized the efforts to allow the co-researcher team to work.

For this reason, the interpretations I present in this section need to be considered as the first attempt at understanding the role a co-researcher group might play in the evolution of a school-based inclusive action research process. Further research would be necessary in order to achieve a deeper knowledge of the relevance of these teams. The same could be said of the role of the educational psychologist, coordinating action research approaches in collaboration with external researchers.

The work of the educational psychologist and the coordination team at Gabriela Mistral School concentrated first on the '*reconnaissance*' (Elliott, 1991) or identification of the most relevant aspects to be analysed, through the selection of indicators in the *Index*, and the design of a general plan.

Through the meetings and the analysis of the students' opinions, teachers went into a process of '*social reframing*' where they shared their personal theories about education and attention to diversity, and questioned them in the light of their colleagues' ideas. They concluded that inclusive education within their school required that teachers provide quality education for all.

I interpreted that the educational psychologist and the volunteer teachers owned the action research process and built up their leadership role, visioning the way towards a more inclusive school. As proposed by Torbert's (2001) theories, explained in Chapter 2, the co-researcher team was seen to be going through a process of '*triple-loop learning*'. The team members did not only seem to concentrate on the transformation of tactics, what the author describes as '*single-loop learning*'; or life strategies, which Torbert refers to as '*double-loop learning*'. Moreover, the members of the coordination team also reflected on the '*visioning*' of the school and the inclusive action research process, and therefore, the team members managed to engage in '*triple-loop learning*', as described in Torbert's words (2001: 250).

In my interpretation of Torbert's organizational stages towards transformation, the co-researcher team seemed to be responding to the '*collaborative inquiry*' stage (Torbert, 1989: 87). For the team members, it was necessary to promote teachers' reflection in order to transform their attitudes and make them responsible for the learning process of all their students, independently their personal characteristics. I perceived that the co-researcher team was redistributing the organizational forms of power in order to create the conditions for its leaders and other colleagues to be '*vulnerable to transformation*' (Torbert, 2001). These forms of power are called '*Liberating Disciplines*' by action scientists.

Nevertheless, collaboration was not always easy, and power tensions arose mainly in relation to the institutional management team. On the one hand, the headteacher and the members of the TPU unit were seen to be supporting the work of the co-researcher team and working together to foresee a unified vision of the transformations to be carried out. I believe that this institutional support made teachers feel that their decisions were both considered and could materialise. On the other hand, as observed in the power tensions I experienced at Gabriela Mistral School, those in charge appeared to exert control over the team when they felt the process was going out of their hands.

Furthermore, Howes argues that collaboration requires a "*redistribution of resources including information, people, time, space and materials*" (Howes, 2001: 48). At Gabriela Mistral School, the educational psychologist seemed to have to constantly negotiate the allocation of time and space to meet the volunteer teachers of the coordination team. When the team met after the final

school workshop, I got the impression that they assumed the responsibility of designing and coordinating an inclusive action plan. But, in my opinion, without the institutionalisation of the team in guaranteeing time, space, responsibilities and even salaries, it seemed difficult for the educational psychologist and the coordination team to produce a plan which would be sustainable over time.

I interpreted that this lack of allocation of specific time and space for meetings was also one of the barriers to the coordination team becoming a reality at Nelquihue School. Together with the communication difficulties and tensions among the groups of teachers, the organization of the meetings seemed impossible to achieve. I did have the opportunity of separately meeting the representatives of the primary and the secondary education, though I did not feel they showed commitment as a team or ownership of the process. Besides, given the apparent structural crisis of the NGO community, I had the impression that teachers were experiencing a lack of institutional support, and I also believed that they were not confident that their decisions would be considered or put into practices.

It would be necessary to research in depth to understand the relevance of the development of co-researcher teams in those schools facing challenging circumstances, like the ones described at Nelquihue School. From my research experience, I believe that these teams could support the transformation of communities with strong hierarchical structures into more democratic ones. In my interpretation, the promotion of these groups would require longer periods of time with more frequent collaboration. In this way, the team members could become autonomous and transformational leaders for their schools. The collaboration with an external researcher and facilitator might accompany teachers in their transition and consolidation as a coordination team.

In Diagram 8.1, the issues derived from the case studies which might characterise the development of co-researcher teams is summarised. Through '*social reframing*', the team seemed to agree on the visioning of the aims and the plan of the collaborative action research process in their school. In order for the coordination team to develop, it seems to be necessary that they collaborate and achieve autonomy in the implementation of the approach. Apparently, their work needs to concentrate on promoting the following processes among school members: awareness of the barriers experienced; negotiations about the meanings of attention to diversity; and reflection in order to achieve improvements in the way the school responds to presence, learning and participation of its members. The sustainability of the actions of the team is seen to depend on the institutional commitment and the support of the management team.

Although the three-level inclusive action research model seemed to have contributed to transformations in understandings and practices, the process suffered from different tensions derived from the historical context of each particular school. Therefore, for the evolution of an achievable action research process, I consider it is necessary to adapt the approach to the school's characteristics, dynamics and tensions. Furthermore, I consider that the three-level approach can contribute to minimising these tensions. I seek to clarify this issue in the following section.

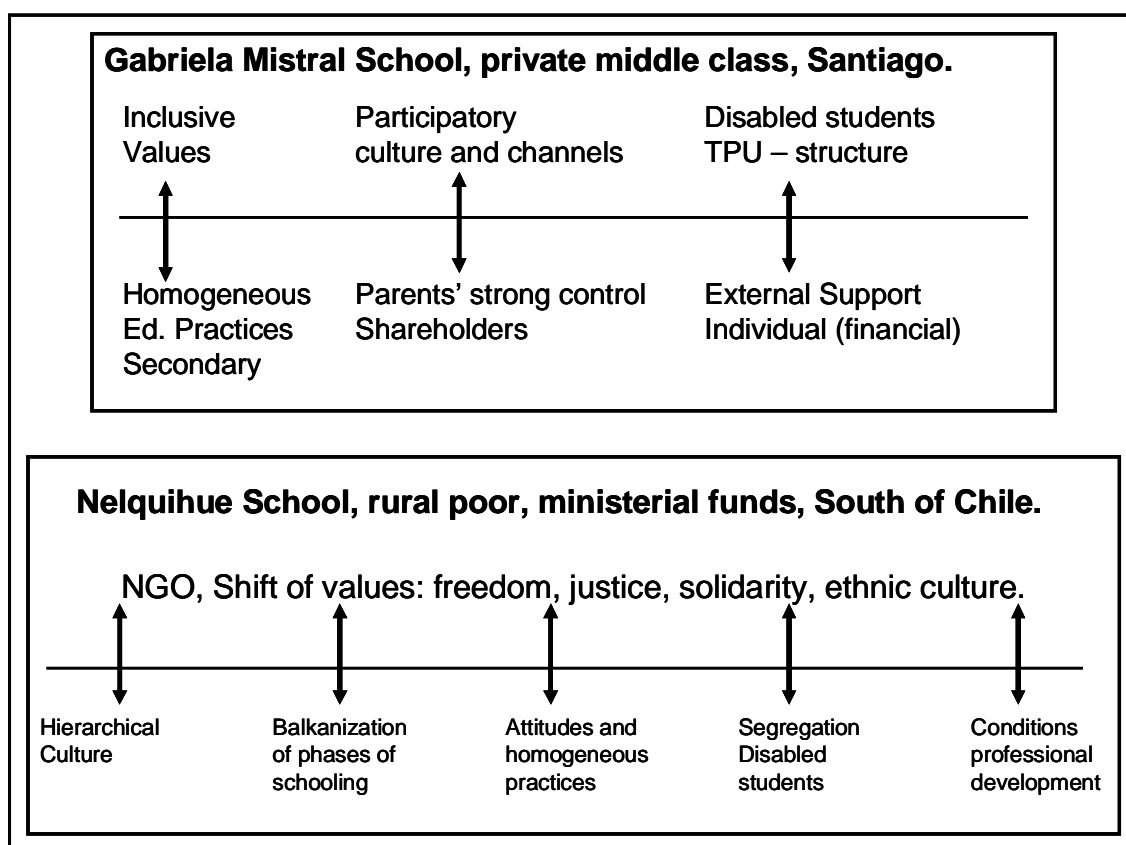
Conditions to develop inclusive action research processes on attention to diversity

My parallel and close collaboration for a long period of time with both schools allowed me to see each school through *'the other school's eyes'*. In this way, I could compare the history, characteristics and dynamics of each one and question how these features gave form to a particular educational community. From the beginning of the process, I realised that the action research approach I had planned needed to be flexible to adapt to the complexities of the structures and cultures of each school. As Dyson and his colleagues underlined, the *'transformational view of inclusive education'* had failed to consider the context within which schools have to operate (Dyson, Gallannaugh et al. 2002: 10).

In contrast, I became immersed over a period of more than seven months in two distinctive schools that responded to very different communities. It became clear, then, that in order to engage them in a meaningful and useful collaborative process, the model had to respond to and take into account the context and the tensions between the barriers and facilitators experienced by school members.

Diagram 8.3 summarises what I see as the principal tensions observed at Gabriela Mistral School and Nelquihue School. These tensions were revealed as a result of the ethnographic analysis I carried out during my research about the cultures, policies and practices of each school and how they had an impact on the way the school was responding to diversity. The knowledge derived from this analysis helped me to adapt the inclusive action research approach to the conditions presented by the school. In this next section, I refer to the particular tensions I experienced in each school and the way the approach had to be adapted to respond to them. To achieve further understandings, I also compare both schools in order to illuminate the reader as to the rationale behind the evolution of each inclusive action research process.

Diagram 8.3. Tensions of the barriers and facilitators faced by the members of Gabriela Mistral School and Nelquihue School



The tensions presented in this diagram influenced the evolution of the inclusive action research model in each school, particularly its purpose; the communication and participatory channels negotiated; the focus on barriers and facilitators; and the resources to promote reflection and professional development.

Diversity of purposes

The initial purposes of the approach varied in the light of the starting points of each school. In Santiago, the process concentrated on involving the school members in a sustainable collaborative action research process that promoted improvements in the way they were responding to diversity. In the case of Nequihue School, much of my efforts were in making teachers more aware of students' diversity and the promotion of participatory dynamics in the school.

The members of Gabriela Mistral School had experience in working and reflecting on the diversity of their students, so my collaboration focused on helping them to collaboratively analyse the aspects they needed to improve in order to take further sustainable steps towards a more inclusive educational community. As described in Diagram 8.3, although staff at Gabriela Mistral

School appeared to have a very strong commitment towards inclusive values, I observed how teachers' educational practices were usually addressed at a homogeneous type of student, particularly at secondary level.

The fact that school members appeared to share a common '*Mistral*' identity and set of values towards diversity was an initial strength that facilitated teachers' acknowledgement of the barriers to presence, learning and participation presented in the evidence. It also encouraged them to discuss actions to improve their practice and the organization of the school in order to address these barriers. In this way, as Ainscow (1999) has underlined, through the collaborative process, they started challenging some of the assumptions behind the school's '*status quo*'. As a result, school members used the approach to try to move towards more inclusive cultures, policies and practices.

The members of Nelquihue School started the process in a very different way. With the arrival of the NGO and its members, a shift towards more democratic and equitable values became a priority. However, discriminatory attitudes and homogeneous educational practices characterised the school, particularly in primary education. In terms of educational practices, this situation is defined by Gallannaugh and Dyson (2003: 7) as a "*mismatch between children's characteristics and established practice*". Aware of the situation, the headteacher considered my collaboration as an opportunity for sensitization and capacity building in relation to the idea of attention to diversity.

Taking account of the ideas of O'Hanlon (2003), who notes that some schools do not have an appropriate organizational culture to get involved in these processes, I considered that, despite the difficulties, the main contribution of the approach in the south was to initiate the creation of a culture open to diversity which could engage Nelquihue School teachers in the analysis of the barriers their students were facing. I perceived that the inclusive values and the focus on attention to diversity had to be embedded in the process. For this reason, I planned that the approach should be equitable and democratic (Dyson and Millward, 2000; Armstrong and Moore, 2004) and promote participation and collaboration (Ainscow, 1999; Gallego, 2002).

Adaptation to school communication channels and negotiations for participation

Back in Gabriela Mistral School, I experienced how the community seemed ready to embark on a collaborative process. As noted in Diagram 8.3, the school appeared to be characterised by a participatory culture, where its members were actively involved through official and unofficial channels of communication. However, the headteacher, the TPU members and the teachers felt they were under the control of the parents, who were shareholders in the anonymous society of the school.

For this reason, the evolution of the model and my facilitation depended strongly on the cautious decisions of the pedagogical management team, who seemed to be unwilling to lose control of the process for fear of exposure and criticism. For example, they decided not to include parents and external professionals in the process, which prevented them from drawing on the opinions of *'alternative voices'* that could have threatened their *'consensus'* (Ainscow, 2002).

Dyson and Millward share concerns about the types of power issues in this kind of collaborative process which I experienced in different meetings with the educational psychologist and other members of the TPU team, mainly when organizing the final workshop. They note:

“(...) we also need to know how power and interest will impact on our endeavours, how they might thwart us and how they might subvert our idealistic intentions until our ‘inclusive school’ comes to serve inherently exclusive interests.”

(Dyson and Millward, 2000: 168)

Given the hierarchical structure and the balkanization of the teams of teachers at Nelquihue School, engaging its members in collaborative processes was challenging. It has been argued that *'conflicting agendas'* and strong contrasting beliefs can jeopardize collaborative analysis and agreements on how to improve attention to students' diversity (Ainscow and Howes, 2006). With this in mind, I had to adapt the approach in order to create the conditions where teachers felt comfortable in discussing and working in groups, and moving towards more collaborative school dynamics.

Approach based on barriers and facilitators: different awareness, different focus

As I explained earlier, the approach I adopted was based on an analysis of facilitators and barriers to presence, learning and participation derived from the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). Of late, promoting inclusive education has been broadly recommended in Europe (Echeita and Sandoval, 2002; Ainscow, Booth et al. 2004; Simpson, 2004; Echeita, 2006; Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006), in Latin America (Ainscow and Ferreira, 2005), and even in Asian and African countries (Booth and Black-Hawkins, 2001; Miles, Ainscow et al. 2003).

In the school in Santiago, the analysis of facilitators and barriers appeared to lead teachers to reflect on those experienced by all the students, including those who were disabled. The school members who participated in the national workshop favoured the use of the *Index* because they felt that the process and its concepts were in tune with their school. Through the selection of the indicators to be analysed and the inclusive action research model, teachers could reflect on the tensions faced regarding support for disabled students, as noted in Diagram 8.3. They also had the opportunity of agreeing on actions to promote the TPU unit as the coordinator of the support for all the students.

The analysis of barriers and facilitators seemed to be also useful at Nelquihue School. There, teachers talked about the barriers experienced by students in their classes. However, given the apparent segregation of disabled students, which was indicated in Diagram 8.3, little was picked up on or decided with regard to their learning processes. Consequently, I felt that I had to specifically address the barriers faced by disabled students in order to make the teachers aware of them.

It seemed that an approach based on the analysis of facilitators and barriers enhanced the awareness of the barriers of those students perceived by teachers as their own responsibility. However, if a particular population of students is experiencing segregation, the facilitators need to be vigilant of any discriminatory assumptions that may be taken for granted by the members of the community, in order to address them within the process through sensitisation and focalised reflection.

Resources for reflection and professional development

Referring back to Diagram 8.3, the situation at Nelquihue School was, I felt, closely related to the challenging conditions facing its teachers and their difficulties in gaining access to opportunities for professional development. This may explain why they seemed to experience a lack of agency and low self esteem, claiming that they did not have the capacity to respond to the diverse learning demands of their students.

Several authors have underlined the challenging circumstances some teachers have to face in many countries, and particularly in Latin America (Rosas, 1997; Garrido, Pimenta et al. 1999; Torres, 2000; Avalos, 2004). Within these contexts, the promotion of teachers' agency and professional development were central purposes of the action research processes put in place (Pryor, 1998; Dyer, 2000).

On the other hand, one of the characteristics that seemed to define Gabriela Mistral as an inclusive school was the apparent agency and capacity for reflection of its teachers. As previously explained, most of those involved in reflective interviews and in the coordination team showed their ability to reflect in and on their practices, the school's systems for support and its organization.

Observing the different capacities for critical analysis that the teachers of each school presented, I made use of a variety of resources that could engage teachers in meaningful reflection within their context. Particularly useful were the evidence gathered in the schools and materials such as the *Index*. Especially in Nelquihue School, I distributed learning resources developed by UNESCO (1993) and EENET (2003) among others, during reflective activities with the aim of enhancing teachers' professional development and agency.

Some of the literature on educational action research presents examples of western teachers who voluntarily embark on action research and reflection for professional development and practice improvement (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Elliott, 1991). Nevertheless, as observed in the case studies, and particularly at Nelquihue School, teachers were not initially voluntarily open to engaging in this process and did not feel capable to reflect. Therefore, I believe that one of the major contributions of my research relates to the analysis of how to promote teachers' willingness and agency for reflection.

Use of school evidence

One of the conditions that appeared to encourage reflection was the use of evidence gathered in the school. The members of each educational community found such information useful and relevant to their school. In Santiago, as illustrated in Chapter 5, the opinions given by students in focus groups encouraged teachers to discuss and reflect on the teaching and learning processes in class and the support received by some students. Similarly, student focus groups grew to be an important source for reflection in the periodical meetings with the secondary teachers at Nelquihue School. The relevance of listening to students' voices has been underlined by different authors, particularly those promoting inclusive education (Griffiths and Davies, 1993; Messiou, 2001; Armstrong and Moore, 2004; Fox and Messiou, 2004; Moore, Jackson et al. 2004).

On the other hand, as we saw, students' photographs were not taken into consideration in either school. This could have been due to the way they were presented at the Gabriela Mistral's final workshop. Cultural reasons may also have been the cause at Nelquihue School, when primary teachers concentrated on the grammatical errors in the students' photographic posters, rather than on what they were saying.

Data from class observations were central to the promotion of reflection for individual teachers and in the workshops in the south. Although considered less important by the coordination team, accounts of classes were also used in the final workshop in Santiago. The accounts seemed to be a powerful tool in raising awareness but, despite my efforts to guarantee teachers' and students' confidentiality, in some cases particular teachers and students could be easily identified. This may have raised ethical issues which could have jeopardized the image of certain individuals. Nevertheless, I did not hear concerns from any teacher on this matter.

Use of materials

As explained in the case studies, during the meetings and workshops at Nelquihue School, I distributed documents and training materials to promote further insights and discussion about particular aspects, such as discriminatory behaviour and diversification of teaching practices. On some occasions, these documents appeared to be more powerful than the evidence to engage teachers in discussions and reflection. Considered particularly significant were some teacher training materials compiled and developed by UNESCO (1993) and EENET (2003).

The *Index for Inclusion* was the document which gave form to the collaborative approach in Santiago. The members of Gabriela Mistral School, who, it will be recalled, participated in the

national workshop, decided to follow the *Index* as their approach towards more inclusive practices. Therefore, the coordination team, although sometimes hesitant, based the analysis on a number of indicators from the *Index*. Even though, the *Index* was used as a tool to analyse the facilitators and barriers faced by the educational community, the school did not follow it step-by-step. Rather, its members concentrated on the three dimensions recommended by the material and those indicators they considered more relevant.

On the other hand, I did not consider it pertinent to use the *Index* in the south. Given the challenging conditions of the school, I opted to concentrate on the analysis of barriers and facilitators that arose from the teachers' workshops, my observations, interviews and focus groups. Even when I tried to use some indicators and questions to facilitate further reflection in the interviews, I perceived that teachers were not familiar with the vocabulary and the concepts of the *Index*, and did not feel confident to answer.

Although I contributed to the translation into Spanish and the contextualisation in the reality of Latin America for UNESCO, I felt that it could not respond and articulate to the culture of the school. Some authors have highlighted that it is necessary to consider the culture and language when using materials from other countries. '*Cross-cultural misunderstandings*' could arise if we wrongly assume that by sharing the same language, we also share a culture and values (Ebbutt and Elliott, 1998). In my opinion, the *Index* takes for granted that the members of the school share inclusive values and awareness about their students' diversity. This seemed not to be the case in the school in the south.

All of this suggests that when considering the conditions for developing collaborative action research processes in attention to diversity, there is also a necessity to analyse and adapt to the school characteristics, dynamics and tensions. Cultures and values; school power and participatory structures; and teachers' conditions for professional development seemed to be relevant in order to develop democratic and participatory approaches that lead to reflection and transformations in order to minimise the barriers experienced by every student.

The approach, therefore, needs to respond to the purposes each school has in relation to its stage in the promotion of inclusive education. Reflection should be promoted by presenting the members of the educational communities with evidence related to their culture, policies and practices. Analytical thinking could also be enhanced by the use of appropriate materials that can be culturally meaningful within the context of each school.

Final words

It could be argued that the model I designed and the interpretations I made of its evolution are clearly influenced by my professional and personal interests. I concentrated my work on the social complexities of the implementation of an inclusive action research approach and the promotion of reflection that leads to transformations. Other researchers from different backgrounds and personal experiences may have placed their attention on other aspects I overlooked or took for granted. Likewise, had I conducted my research at another time in my life, I may have revealed different findings.

Nevertheless, in my argument, I suggest that collaborative approaches which enhance sensitization about inclusive values, and contribute to the establishment of democratic school structures for continuous reflection and professional development, have the potential to improve the quality of education for all.

I recommend that action research should promote reflection at three levels: individual and community level, as well as reflection and decision making for a co-researcher team, who could guarantee that transformations would be sustainable over time. By concentrating on the professional development of staff members and the improvement of the school, these action research processes could provide steps towards an '*organizational paradigm*' which considers that schools need to transform and reorganize their resources to respond to the learning needs of their members.

Given the tensions found in both contexts and the challenging conditions at Nelquihue School, I consider that the research contributed to knowledge about the promotion of inclusive approaches in schools and other educational organizations. Its contribution appears relevant not only within the Chilean context, but more broadly, and even in those schools with scarce resources and in vulnerable situations.

How my role as a researcher evolved and contributed to the evolution of the approach and the promotion of reflection and '*social reframing*' in order to accompany each educational community towards transformations in their understandings and practices is addressed in the next chapter.

Chapter 9. Learning about the roles of researchers as facilitators of inclusive action research approaches

*"How can I enter into dialogue if I consider myself a member of the in-group of 'pure' men, the owners of truth and knowledge, for whom all non-members are 'these people' or 'the great unwashed'? (...) Faith in man is an a priory requirement for dialogue; the 'dialogical man' believes in other men even before he meets them face to face."
(Paulo Freire⁴³, Brazilian educator and philosopher, 1970)*

In the last chapter, I concentrated my attention on the lessons I learnt during the research about the transformations in understandings and practices that inclusive collaborative action research processes can promote. I also analysed the conditions which are necessary in order to develop a flexible approach that responded to the characteristics of the particular context of each school and promoted meaningful change. In the following, I focus my attention on the roles that researchers need to play in order to facilitate the use of such approaches.

In this chapter, I first describe the principles I followed in order to play the roles of facilitator of the processes. Part of the transformations observed in the last chapter appeared to be possible thanks to the principles and values that guided my attitude and my behaviour. As noted in Freire's quotation, if researchers are willing to establish dialogical relationships with people, they need to have faith in them, be respectful and see them as equals. Far from being naïve, I think that when an 'outsider' researcher tries to establish collaborative learning relationships with an educational community, she faces power tensions which require permanent negotiations.

Other difficulties seem to emerge as well from the double agenda of the researcher. This tension is addressed in the second section of this chapter. In my case, I had two purposes in mind. I was first willing to contribute to the school with the facilitation of an action research process which could promote changes towards improvement in the way diversity was being responded. At the same time, I wanted to be rigorous, gain theoretical knowledge and succeed in my PhD.

It must be underlined that I engaged with the schools over a long period of time. As I had lived in the country for five years, I had gained knowledge about the country and the Chilean culture. During my fieldwork, I dedicated time to collaborating with both schools in parallel, and had the opportunity to see 'each school from the other school's eyes'. The comparisons I made of my role as facilitator in the two settings, my permanent reflective analysis, and my reference to the

⁴³ Freire wrote his book in Santiago, Chile, where he lived from 1964 to 1969 during part of his exile from the Brazilian dictatorship. His book was published first in English. The original Portuguese version was not published in Brazil until 1975.

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York, Penguin Books.

literature, could highlight those aspects necessary for an external researcher to foster in order to facilitate inclusive action research processes within schools.

During the analysis of the case studies, I became aware that my personality was having a strong effect on the way the approach evolved in both educational communities. I used my research diary and my conversations with my supervisors, my mentor in Chile, and my husband to make sense of the aspects I was influencing within the process. I also tried to understand how I was being transformed by my close collaboration with the members of the schools. Throughout the chapter, I use quotations from my researcher diary to clarify my argument.

Principles as guidance for the researcher

Following inclusive values: facilitating learning and participation

One of the principles I tried to follow through the approach was that inclusive values needed to be not only the ends but also the means of the process. Miles and her colleagues highlight this point when implementing action research approaches to promote inclusive education in Africa.

“The behaviour and attitudes of external facilitators were often more important than the research methods used.”

(Miles, Ainscow et al. 2003: 14)

Given my personal characteristics as a Spanish academic researcher who was initiating the implementation of an action research process, I was concerned about the power issues brought about by my presence, and by the way the members of each educational community might perceive this. For this reason, I considered it was important for me to follow inclusive values that established relationships of equality, mutual respect and understanding between the members of the community and myself.

Some feminist authors consider reflexivity as a strategy to establish an equal intellectual dialogue between the researcher and the participants. For this dialogue to happen, Karim (1993) recognises the need to increase the researcher’s self-awareness and social commitment towards the subjects involved in the research and their communities.

My self-reflective attitude made me vigilant for clues to ascertain whether I was perceived by the members of the schools as following these inclusive values as guidelines for my role as facilitator. I became sensitive to events where teachers and other professionals made comments about their

perceptions. In the following quotation, I explain what happened after a group of teachers at Nelquihue School saw me angry in an informational meeting about the celebration of the Mapuche New Year.

“They said that they had never seen me so (...) angry. They had considered me as congenial and diplomatic, so they had been impressed by the strong character I displayed at that particular moment.”

(Researcher diary, Nelquihue School, 22nd June, 2005)

I believe I was able to acquire and maintain an attitude of congeniality and diplomacy because I was aiming to contribute to one of the purposes underlined by inclusive education: minimising the barriers to learning and participation. In other words, I was aware that in order to achieve students' highest potential to learn and participate in their schools, I had to promote that school members, particularly staff, could participate and learn throughout the inclusive action research process.

Promoting participation

In Table 9.1, the roles that I played in order to promote the participation of school members in the approach can be seen. To deepen my analysis, I compare the roles I played in both schools in relation to the three levels of the inclusive action research model: at individual level, community level and with the co-researcher team.

Table 9.1. Comparisons of facilitator roles to promote participation in each school

Levels	Facilitator roles	Gabriela Mistral School	Nelquihue School
Educational community	Group leader	Participation in the approach of other members of the community. Hear the voices of other school members: students, support professionals.	Power issues: seen as Spanish NGO volunteer. Promote participation and motivation in workshops and meetings. Hear students' voices.
Co – researcher team	Group leader	Participation in meetings with coordination team. Guarantee collaboration.	
	Diplomat	Teachers' status. Minimise power issues and tensions with educational psychologist and TPU member.	
Individuals	Confidant		Confidant with some teachers. Trust building. Show personal commitment. Tension: perceived as the headteacher's informant.

One role I interpreted to be playing was **group leader in the educational community**. As explained in Chapter 6, at Nelquihue School, I felt I was perceived by school members as an NGO volunteer, and therefore, had higher status. For this reason, I designed the workshops and meetings using activities that allowed teachers to actively participate and give their opinions. In addition, I tried to promote participation by adapting to the structural crisis being experienced. I was cautious in grouping teachers in workshops in order to avoid exposure and unnecessary criticism. The work within the teams at each phase of schooling and in the workshop seemed to minimise tensions among teachers and contributed to their agency. In the workshops, I had the impression that teachers were able to discuss school matters and create the basis for a common school vision and identity. Apparently the reflective meetings at each level of the school encouraged teachers to question their values, beliefs, and underlying theories, and to critically view how to improve and respond better to their students' diversity.

On the other hand, given the apparent participatory culture at Gabriela Mistral School, I accompanied them in their coordination with the educational psychologist. I suggested the participation of other members, of the professionals of Neruda Organization, but without success.

Following my inclusive education principles, I considered that the research should give voice to those school members in powerless positions. Therefore, I managed to rescue the opinions of support professionals in Santiago, and the voices of students at both schools. Teachers in Santiago and secondary teachers in the south seemed to acknowledge the importance of students' opinions to understand the barriers they were facing.

In Santiago I participated as **group leader** in the meetings with the **coordination team**. Activities and discussions were run by the educational psychologist and myself in a way that guaranteed the participation and involvement of the team members. These meetings contributed to the promotion of a sense of identity and leadership among the volunteer teachers.

As observed in Table 9.1, I also saw myself as a **diplomat** at Gabriela Mistral School. Its **coordination team** seemed to play an important role in visioning the necessary transformations to be put into place. Nevertheless, I sensed a strong control by the educational management team over the volunteer teachers. As described in the case study, I had the impression that I faced power tensions when organizing the final workshop with the educational psychologist and another professional from the TPU. On observing that they were taking control of the design of the workshop, I distributed the reports of the coordination team meetings in order to put the decisions made by the teachers under discussion.

As facilitator, I interpreted I promoted that the pedagogical management team recognised the role of the coordination team as leaders of the approach. I saw this as a way of redistributing power among the members of the community. As described, action researchers have underlined the complexities of collaboration which may raise power tensions and the manipulation of school members and researchers (Elliott, 1991; Day, 1997; Day, Fernandez et al. 2000; Dyson and Millward, 2000),

“Collaboration (...) is a complex and unpredictable swirl of power relations and constantly changing ‘selves’.”

(Hollingsworth, Dadds et al. 1997: 56)

As observed in Table 9.1, in order to minimise these power tensions and promote participation in the south, I saw my role as a **confidant towards individual teachers**. Given the hierarchical structure of the school and the lack of agency and self esteem observed among teachers, I appeared to have created the conditions which allowed staff members to engage and participate in the process. I apparently achieved this by building trust and mutual understanding, and by showing them my genuine commitment to their cause. I believe I developed what Marshall (2001) describes as *‘communion’*; a feeling of belonging to the community. Likewise, I became actively involved with school members since I was trying to be useful to them. I trusted that my collaboration could contribute to the improvement of the lives of the teachers and the students. I was also trying to avoid being seen as the headteacher’s informant, as I explain in a following section.

In summary, derived from the analysis of my experience in both schools, I consider that researchers should be aware of the culture of participation in schools and of their communication channels. This knowledge would help researchers to adapt the approach to the reality of the school. Nevertheless, action researchers should, at the same time, make the community and its members aware of other members who could contribute, be listened to and who could participate in the process. Researchers following inclusive action research processes should promote schools in taking steps towards more democratic cultures, and support them in the establishment of coordination channels that facilitate school members’ participation.

Action research processes can enhance the agency and the autonomy of school members, and therefore, accelerate changes in educational communities towards more participatory mechanisms for decision making. For this reason, facilitators need to be aware of the tensions which may emerge when the *‘status quo’* of the school is perceived by powerful members to be under threat. They could prevent transformations from happening. Therefore, researchers need to

be careful to handle these tensions sensitively in order to contribute to sustainable transformation towards more inclusive and democratic cultures and structures. The attitude of a congenial, diplomatic person who promotes participation appears to enhance the creation of a climate for mutual learning.

Establishing learning relationships

Carr and Kemmis, among other educational action researchers, have focused their writings on the importance for teachers of becoming critical researchers following emancipatory action research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; O'Hanlon, 2003). They consider that researchers should become autonomous which would not only improve their practices, but also their working conditions and their lives. Furthermore, the authors argue that teachers should contribute to knowledge in education and be independent of academic researchers.

Certainly there are teachers who with the agency and the competencies could embark on critical action research approaches on their own or with their colleagues. Likewise, the level of knowledge teachers acquire can be significantly useful to practitioners and schools. I consider it important that teachers develop their professionalism and knowledge and fight for their autonomy, along with satisfaction in their work and life. I feel action research can help them in this process through collaborative reflection.

Despite this view, researchers can also facilitate collaborative action research approaches and contribute to educational knowledge. In the case of Nelquihue School, my role was in part focused on enhancing the agency and the capacity of teachers to understand how they could improve their attitudes and practices and respond to their students' diversity. Although it might be interpreted as patronising, action researchers who have worked in partnership with teachers in challenging circumstances stress the importance of the researcher in action research processes for empowerment and professional development (Pryor, 1998; Stuart and Kunje, 1998; Dyer, 2000; Walker, 2005).

It can be observed in Table 9.2 that the roles I played may have provoked school members into reflecting and learning during their involvement in the inclusive action research process. Again, I analyse evidence at individual level, community level and with the co-researcher team in Santiago. I also highlight those aspects I learnt from my engagement with school members in reflective processes.

Table 9.2. Comparisons of facilitator roles to promote learning in each school

Levels	Facilitator roles	Gabriela Mistral School	Nelquihue School
Reflective communities	Capacity builder		Training element in workshops and meetings: - teaching practices that respond to diversity. - Dynamics to use in class.
	Reflection promoter	Community, coordination team and individual levels: - Engaging evidence. - Opportunities for ' <i>social reframing</i> ' from colleagues. - Conclude with decisions of actions for improvement.	Community, level of schooling team and individual levels: - Engaging evidence. - Opportunities for ' <i>social reframing</i> ' from colleagues. - Conclude with decisions of actions for improvement. - Material to promote reflection.
Co-researcher team	Capacity builder	About the approach with educational psychologist and coordination team.	
Reflective practitioners	Reflection promoter	Give them time to share their impressions about the account. When reflection, I prompted to support the flow. When no reflection, I prompted and listened.	Give them time to share their impressions about the account. When reflection, I prompted to support the flow. When asked, I gave suggestions to facilitate reflection. When no reflection, I gave positive feedback and suggestions.

As observed in Table 9.2, throughout the approach I concentrated part of my collaboration on **capacity building**. In Santiago, I collaborated with Carola and the **coordination team** to facilitate their understanding of the materials of the *Index*, and the inclusive action research model.

Given the apparent limitation of opportunities for professional development in the south, I included a **capacity building** component in each event with **staff members**, and distributed training materials about how to diversify educational practices in each workshop and meeting. In addition, the dynamics used in workshops had the purpose of demonstrating to teachers new strategies to put into practice in their classes.

Furthermore, my visits to each school seemed to become a tool for interchanging learning and examples with the members of the other school. This seemed very useful when working with Carola, the educational psychologist in Santiago. While I learnt about the process at Nelquihue School, I could explain the next steps to be taken in Santiago to her. It emerged that I was also a source of information for the teachers in the south, who were constantly asking me about how teachers in Santiago worked in responding to their students' diversity in class. This interchange

culminated in the participation of four teachers in the final workshop at Gabriela Mistral School. Ainscow and his colleagues (Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006) have underlined that networks between schools and with other institutions, such as local educational authorities and academic researchers, can become a resourceful strategy for interchanging experiences, reflecting and learning.

It became evident during the research of the importance of researchers getting involved as ‘outsiders’ in action research processes in schools, by following facilitators skills (Wadsworth, 2001), as described in Chapter 2. They can detect the need for capacity building in the educational community and in those school members in charge of the coordination of inclusive action research processes. Researchers should provide them with resources and knowledge to foster their capacities and enhance their agency and self confidence.

In my case, I did not consider that the teachers had the time or availability to be trained in the use of methods for data gathering. This could have been due to my fear of losing rigour over the process by giving them the autonomy to collect data. Nevertheless, I think it should be necessary to offer teachers the tools to be able to research their own practices, and reflect on them in order to improve them.

In addition, I experienced the relevance of my role as facilitator in accompanying the members of both **educational communities** through a challenging and changing process. As described in Table 9.2, I seemed to contribute to the creation of space for **reflection** and ‘*social reframing*’. This is described by Schön (1991: 358) as the capacity to create an atmosphere for ‘*reciprocal reflection-in-action*’.

One of the central aims at Nelquihue School was to make teachers aware of their effect on the barriers experienced by their students. Confronted by the challenging conditions of the school, with exclusionary attitudes and practices, I tried to create space, individually and in groups, to ‘*reframe*’ or question their defensive arguments and justifications. In one occasion, I reflected on the difficulties to engage teachers into reflection,

“It is also difficult to assume and say, “well, I can change part of that” (...). Of course, I felt disappointed (by the meeting) (...). But I do understand in a certain way (...) that it is a very long process, it cannot be that you show them some evidence and they immediately realise and start reflecting: “look we could create more entertaining classes!” or “what does an entertaining class mean?””

*(Conversation with my husband taped for reflection,
Nelquihue School, 30th March, 2005)*

Wijesundera argues that *“the need for change does not always arise spontaneously from the schools”* (Wijesundera, 2002: 184). Therefore, she acknowledges the importance of an external facilitator as a non-authoritative figure who creates a comfortable climate where teachers are willing to give their opinions and reach consensus in order to improve their situation.

Co-operative inquirers view the role of the facilitator, in this case, is to guide the members of the educational community to promote their *‘critical subjectivity’* by supporting them in engaging with permanent self-reflection and sharing their thoughts with their colleagues (Heron and Reason, 2001). The authors also consider this role relevant to avoid possible threats to validity: *‘unaware projection’* and *‘consensus collusion’*.

“Unaware projection means that we deceive ourselves. We do this because inquiring carefully and critically into those things we care about is an anxiety-provoking business that stirs up our psychological defenses. (...) Consensus collusion means that the co-researchers may band together as a group in defense of their anxieties, so that areas of their experience that challenge their worldview are ignored or not properly explored.”

(Reason, 1998: 268)

In accordance with Wijesundera’s and Reason’s argument, through my collaboration I recognised that researchers can promote reflective processes for change in schools. Table 9.2 shows a comparison of the way I focused my efforts as a **reflection promoter in each school**. As a sociologist, I considered that evidence would be the source for reflection, and therefore, I gathered data from interviews, focus groups and participant observations that not only guided me on my interpretations of the issues to tackle, but also encouraged individual and group reflection towards change. Data collected from a variety of sources and methods had the purpose to provide school members with a holistic view of the situation of the school (Day, 1997). In the

south, reflection was also fostered by the training materials I distributed. In addition to providing school staff with '*rich data*' (Maxwell, 1996) to engage them in reflection, I intended to structure meetings and workshops in a way that participants concluded their discussions by agreeing on actions and strategies to be put into place.

I saw differences in the way I conducted the interviews to **promote individual reflection** in each school. I played a '*sympathetic listener role*' in Santiago, giving them time to talk about the account and prompting them during the conversations, whether they reflected on their educational values and practices or not. On the other hand, I seemed to play a more proactive role in the south, giving suggestions when I was asked which served to unfold further discussion and, in some cases, reflection. When I became aware that a teacher was not reflecting on her attitudes and performance, I gave positive feedback and brief suggestions for improvement. I interpreted that my role as reflective promoter was influenced by my assumptions of the teachers' capacities and needs, and by my perception, whether as an outsider or an insider. I address this point later.

Derived from my interpretations, I consider that in order to promote reflection, researchers need to be respectful of the rhythm of school members, to avoid them feeling that they do not have the capacity to get involved, and may become too frustrated to continue. Parallel to this flexibility, action researchers should encourage school members to move out of their '*comfort zone*' and become more critical of the '*status quo*' of the school (Ainscow, 1999). I believe this is crucial to prevent the school '*getting stuck*' by tackling only those aspects which are comfortable for them to address. Providing participants with '*rich data*' and other learning materials could enrich reflection and help them to analyse '*taken-for-granted*' assumptions. But, in order to support school members put their new understandings into action, researchers need to structure reflective events in such a way that participants are able to conclude with actions to put in place (Wadsworth, 2001).

It should be highlighted that, in my opinion, building up mutual learning relationships and collaboration requires that the facilitator is involved in the process for considerable periods of time. In my case, I spent one week of each month in Santiago, and generally another two weeks of the month in the south. Time invested in the field helped me to establish continual communication and work with different members of each school. When I concluded my fieldwork, I believed that I would need to collaborate for approximately another year in order to contribute to the implementation of sustainable actions for change. For this reason, it may be necessary for researchers in this approach to plan the time required for their commitment in advance.

Nevertheless, time invested in these approaches would contribute not only to the members of the schools but also to the researcher's professional development. I interpreted that my collaboration also enhanced my knowledge about what was happening in the school and learnt about the most important aspects to tackle. I address this issue in following sections.

At the beginning of my research, I considered that given my professional background, as a sociologist specialised in research methodologies, I did not clearly grasp the meaning of the dynamics of the schools' daily life. Considering this situation, Howes (2001) states that when the researcher goes into a school, she does not have enough knowledge to understand what is going on. In my case, I used my naivety in school matters to establish learning relationships with the members of the schools. I could share my knowledge about the action research approach, inclusive education and research methods, whereas they could enlighten me on aspects of the school and their educational practices.

I also recognised that by establishing relationships and dialogues with the members of the educational community, both teachers and researchers can '*socially reframe*' their assumptions, question each other's ideas, and learn from each other. As Ainscow and Howes propose, participants and researchers engage in

"(...) a reorientation of values and goals amongst both groups."

(Ainscow and Howes, 2006: 65)

I would like to conclude by highlighting that researchers should engage in action research processes and be willing to learn from the experience and from their relationships with school members. Researchers should offer their knowledge and skills to be used by educational communities, but they should also recognise the knowledge and experience of their members. Sharing each other's capacities and values may contribute to the professional development of school staff, as well as that of researchers, and to the evolution of a meaningful and useful action research process towards more inclusive communities. These learning relationships between researchers and school members could foster the creation of support networks between schools and other academic institutions, and the dynamic interconnections between educational theory and practice. Nevertheless, researchers need to be aware of the power issues which can arise when they engage in action research processes.

Negotiating power tensions between the researcher and the members of the community

As seen in Chapters 4 and 6, I perceived myself as being in a different position in each school. I felt I was an **outsider** in Gabriela Mistral School, and was playing the role of *'critical friend'* (McNiff, 1988; Day, 1997; Ainscow, 2002), as Carola called me in one of the first meetings. Through my researcher diary, I underlined my position as outsider by talking about *'they'* and *'I'*. In it, I expressed I was experiencing a sense of vulnerability and dependency.

Caplan (Bell, Caplan et al. 1993) acknowledges that the researcher is an outsider in the host community and that she finds herself in a vulnerable situation. The researcher has to be accepted, needs to understand the cultural norms, behaviour and power structures of the community, and be aware of its social dynamics. In this sense, the researcher is in a powerless position. I expressed these feelings in my researcher diary:

"You are the outsider in the school, and here I am more of an outsider than in the other place. They are the ones who draw the guidelines for what I am going to do. I think I also have to adapt to the tempo of the school. Therefore, there are many uncertainties and anxieties about not knowing what you are going to do. The researcher has to handle all this, no matter how they deal with it. I come with everything ready: my tape recorder, my notebook, my memory stick, just in case. Then, according to what the educational psychologists tells me, I will decide how to organize my week."

(Researcher diary, Gabriela Mistral School, 6th June, 2005)

I was even dependent on the information that was provided to me, which might have had an impact on the trustworthiness of the information. For example, when Carola gave me a document with the teachers' opinions of the final workshop, I did not receive any answers to the second question in the evaluation sheet which asked *"In my opinion, what was not useful?"*

In the south, on the other hand, I saw myself as an **insider**, and I used the word *'we'* in my notes. My situation, living and sharing with the NGO community and my visit in 1997, made them consider me as an NGO volunteer. My dual position in each educational community gave me the possibility of understanding different aspects of how I had to plan and develop the process, as a companion/facilitator in Santiago and as a developer in the south.

I seemed to invest effort in playing the role of **planner**. In Santiago I collaboratively planned with Carola, the educational psychologist. She was my connection with the rest of the school. I collaborated by providing engaging evidence. I also organized with Carola the space for reflection with the coordination team. I interpreted my position as one of the facilitator's strategies considered by action researchers,

“I am participating in the production of a collective work but have a different function to the other participants, that of facilitating and structuring.”

(Losito and Pozzo, 1997: 291)

In comparison, at Nelquihue School, I saw myself as having the responsibility of developing the approach myself. For this reason, I had to use its communication channels and structure to coordinate each step of the process. I communicated with the educational management team to agree on the dates for school workshops and to evaluate them. I also had to organize the reflective meetings and the arrangements for data gathering with the teachers at each phase of schooling. On some occasions I felt very lonely and had the impression that the action research process would not be owned by the school members when I left. In both schools, I saw myself as planning each step but having in mind the whole picture.

This prompts me to conclude that researchers should be aware of their position in the school, whether as outsider or insider, and be able to handle the power tensions that may arise. Being dependent on school representatives could help in the coordination of the research process, but on the other hand this may jeopardize the trustworthiness of the information gathered. If the researcher is perceived as in charge of the development of the action research approach, she needs to be careful to establish communication channels with the school representatives necessary for the positive flow of the research. This requires time and energy and a high degree of patience, understanding and communication skills. Furthermore, researchers can feel lonely and sometimes frustrated.

For this reason, whenever it is possible, researchers should rely on representatives of the educational community to coordinate the approach, but at the same time should be cautious to maintain autonomy in the process of data collection and analysis, in order to carry out rigorous inquiries that produce trustworthy knowledge. They also need to be aware of the ethical issues that action research approaches could cause.

Awareness of ethical considerations

My role as **confidant** at Nelquihue School seemed to respond to my concern about how to minimise the ethical threats that some teachers might see in my collaboration. There were two aspects of concern. On the one hand I could be seen as the headteacher's informant. On the other, teachers could feel threatened of being exposed to their colleagues in the meetings and workshops for reflection. Although I could not control all the variables to avoid personal harm, I saw that the facilitator's responsibility was to protect their integrity and work. Nevertheless, as argued by Schein, I did not explore the possible consequences and harm that teachers might suffer by being engaged in the approach.

“The assumptions that research is benign allow researchers to proceed without worrying too much about the effects they may have on the participants.”

(Schein, 2001: 231)

In both schools, as the accounts used for reflection came from the teachers' practices, I tried to guarantee confidentiality in the use of information and I asked all teachers to check the report (Maxwell, 1996) in case they wanted to make any alterations to conceal their identity. Despite my efforts, I could not control the use of the data distributed to members of the school. For example, I was informed that some TPU members had made use of the students' opinions outside the Gabriela Mistral School.

This made me realise the need to anticipate the possible damage of the misuse of evidence by other members of the community. I subsequently found it was important to plan and negotiate the information to be shared in advance, and to agree on the conditions for its use and, if possible made public. In my case, as I had not foreseen this ethical issue earlier, I found it difficult to handle this during the last month, and the situation also jeopardized my relationship of trust with the educational psychologist. Although I had analysed in advance the possible ethical issues that the inclusive action research model might provoke, and had considered the possibility of personal harm, even to the researcher, approaches that require people's engagement should be constantly reviewed. As John Rowan concludes:

“This kind of research actually makes a difference to the people involved – all of them – and to ensure that horrible mistakes are not made is a duty.”

(Rowan, 2001: 122)

In summary, the researcher as facilitator needs to consider the possible ethical issues and restrictions of time, resources and people involved; and other challenges which might be faced by any approach where individuals participate. In addition, the researcher has to be aware of the tensions arising from the agendas she brings to the fieldwork.

Researcher's double agenda

One of the main tensions I faced during my collaboration with the schools was related to my double agenda as a researcher (López, 2006). On the one hand, I was willing to facilitate inclusive action research processes that could promote autonomy and transformations within the members of the educational communities. I also wanted the process to be useful and of direct help to their day-to-day school life. I found myself trying to be flexible (Losito and Pozzo, 1997) and adapting my personal and professional principles and agendas to the needs and demands of the schools and other variables that were beyond my control (Simpson, 2004). The following account is an example:

“In the last few days, I realised that I constantly have to adapt and change the deadlines that I had arranged with the members of the Nelquihue School. This is due to many reasons. On the one hand, the quantity of field notes that I have to handle is enormous, and I don't have enough time to record and edit them for the teachers to reflect. On the other hand, I have to adapt myself to both schools' calendars. There are meetings that are suddenly cancelled, or they are postponed by some teachers. And it is also due to my own situation, mainly because of my visa arrangements.”

(Researcher diary, 14th April, 2005)

But on the other hand, although I tried to maintain a flexible attitude, I did not want to lose control of the processes that were evolving. For me, one of the purposes of the research was to succeed in my PhD, and therefore, I was also concerned about the trustworthiness of the data gathered. In Schein's conceptualisation, I consider this research as a 'researcher initiated inquiry'.

“The research agenda is defined by the researcher or change agent, and the 'subjects' or 'targets' become involved as a result of researcher initiatives. The researcher's skills in gathering and analysing data are the primary bases for the quality of the outcome.”

(Schein, 2001: 228)

As highlighted in Chapter 2, Hammerley's critique of the validity of action research (2002) is based on the idea that the relationship between research and action is not *'isomorphic'*. Therefore in the author's opinion, the contradictory nature of action research will always suffer from constant tension. In my case, I think I might be responding to this tension as Hammerley argues, by making inquiry primary and subordinating action.

Considering this tension, a criticism of my methodological approach might be that my obsession for gathering valid data for my PhD, influenced me into choosing methods I assessed as more valid and reliable. I even utilised the same strategies at both schools without taking into consideration the different professional development of each one. As a result, I might have hindered the possible sustainability of the approach in each school subsequent to my involvement.

Nevertheless, I aimed to achieve what Elliot (1991) calls *'second order reflection'* and learnt about the social processes which occur when schools become involved in inclusive action research approaches. As Ainscow (2002) recognises, I was worried that the process needed to be rigorous in order to contribute to knowledge and the development of further research, educational policies and practices.

For this reason, I believe I took on the role of **reflective ethnographer** in order to understand the context of both schools. I interpreted I was developing my *'inner and outer arcs of attention'* (Marshall, 2001). In the south, it was not only important to get to know the school, but also the NGO programme and the local community. I used more *'traditional'* methodological strategies like interviews, focus groups with different members of the communities, and participant observations, which are described in Chapter 3. My purpose was to construct *'rich data'* (Maxwell, 1996) in order to triangulate those aspects that arose in meetings and workshops and to acquire a deeper knowledge of the situation of the schools.

My permanent visits to Gabriela Mistral School in Santiago helped me to *'see each school from the other school's eyes'*, providing me with further understandings of the approach in each context and about how each educational community was or was not responding to diversity. Through my diary I underline this aspect:

“When I'm here (Santiago) (...) as I spend so much time coming and going (from the school), I have more time to reflect, to think, to compare what I'm doing in one school and then in the other.”

(Researcher diary, Santiago, 10th May, 2005)

The information gathered from each school and my *'self-reflections'* (Marshall, 2001) in my researcher diary helped me to see how to adapt my role and the approach to the conditions of the schools and those aspects to tackle. Furthermore, given the challenging conditions of Nelquihue School where I was living, I experienced frustration and loneliness. My visits to Santiago motivated me to continue with the process in the south.

I consider that my rigorous approach in the process of data collection and analysis was a major contribution to the reflective processes that occurred in the schools. By offering participants opinions from different members, field notes of school events, and accounts of class observations, I gave them a detailed overview of the situation of the school and those aspects necessary to tackle in order to make improvements. The knowledge and skills of data gathering and analysis and a concern for valid and trustworthy data is one of the strengths that any researcher can offer to participants engaged in action research processes in order to reach meaningful interpretations and realistic transformations.

In reference to this, some researchers have questioned that action research is a scientific discipline. Habermas considers that theory and practice are related, but that the creation of theory and practice are separate activities (Gustavsen, 2001). On the contrary, participatory action researchers consider this *'praxis-theory binomial'* as central in the construction of knowledge, because its main purpose should be to improve practice (Fals Borda, 2001), as I intended to do in both case studies.

Through my analysis of the social learning processes of both educational communities, I intended to gather *'representational, relational and reflective knowledge'* (Park, 2001), as explained in Chapter 2. I might have contributed to the construction of *'representational knowledge'* by analysing the values, emotions and assumptions of the teachers when reflecting on their educational practices and/or when they used defensive strategies. *'Relational knowledge'* could be achieved by researching the space for *'social reframing'* where school members engaged. *'Reflective knowledge'* may have been gained when teachers became aware and committed to making changes in their school cultures, policies and practices in order to minimise the barriers experienced by their students.

Final remarks

All this suggests that the researcher's agenda to succeed in her PhD, or research, or to gather valid knowledge might provoke anxieties in imposing strong controls over the evolution of collaborative action research processes. Despite this, the researcher's concern for gathering valid and trustworthy data can have a powerful effect on the action research process, by providing participants with a holistic overview of the situation of the school. This can support school members to reach to meaningful understandings of the aspects to be tackled and lead them to significant transformations. In addition, the analytical comparisons from both context and a self-reflective attitude can help the researcher to engage in critical thinking about her role as facilitator, in order to analyse her actions and improve her performance. Furthermore, by following these strategies, researchers can contribute to theoretical knowledge about facilitating inclusive collaborative action research processes in educational contexts.

In the following chapter, I begin by presenting a summary of the conclusions of this study. The lessons derived from Chapters 9 and 10 give consideration to the learning processes that action research models, such as the one presented in this research, can foster. They contribute to the generation of knowledge on how schools and researchers can work collaboratively in order to respond better to the diversity of school members. This will require further transformations in the educational systems, not only locally, regionally, and nationally, but also at international level. I would like to contribute to the discussion about the strategies to be put into place with the purpose of building democratic communities and societies committed to diversity and mutual understanding, and the construction of democracies.

Chapter 10. Implications for future actions

*“Workers of my Mother country, I have faith in Chile and its destiny.
Other men will overcome this dark and bitter moment when treason seeks to prevail.
Keep in mind that, much sooner than later, great avenues will again be open,
through which will pass the free man, to construct a better society.”
(Salvador Allende, President of Chile⁴⁴ (1970-1973), 11th September, 1973)*

As President Salvador Allende predicted, before dying during the military bombing of La Moneda Palace, democracy was established again in 1990 by general election. This research claims to be a small contribution to the large democratic transformations that have occurred in Chile since then. I had the privilege of experiencing these changes throughout the five years I lived in the country.

During the journey of my research, I had the opportunity of understanding the Chilean education system in depth, and its impact on the way schools responded to the diverse learning processes of their members. In Chapter 1, I presented an overview of the educational actions of the Chilean Ministry of Education in the last decade, with the purpose of achieving quality and equity in education, and promoting democratic cultures in schools. My biographical experience of exclusion and education, my professional approach to education through the discourse of UNESCO, and the theoretical background on attention to diversity and inclusive education were also discussed. This led me to develop my research, based around the argument that inclusive practices are more likely to be developed when those within school communities are involved in collaborative processes of inquiry, reflection and action, in order to learn how to respond to diversity. My aim was to contribute to the Chilean context with new strategies for school-based professional development and school improvement that fostered the learning and participation of every school member.

A literature review of the principles of the different action research approaches was presented in Chapter 2. Based on these principles, I later described an inclusive action research model I designed with the purpose of enhancing reflection at three levels: with individual school staff, with the educational community, and with a group of volunteer co-researchers. I concluded the chapter by addressing particular aspects which researchers need to consider to facilitate collaborative action research processes.

⁴⁴ This was the last speech of the Chilean President Salvador Allende. It was broadcast by Radio Magallanes at 9.10 a.m, on the 11th of September, 1973. He was in La Moneda Palace while it was being bombarded and attacked by military forces during the coup d'état. Ironically enough, Salvador means 'saviour' in Spanish.

In Chapter 3, I described the methods for data gathering and analysis which I followed during and after fieldwork. The information collected and analysed during fieldwork was useful in providing participants with a holistic view of the barriers and facilitators experienced by school members. To varying degrees, data encouraged them to reflect and put actions into place in order to use the resources available in the school to minimise the barriers.

From Chapter 4 to Chapter 7, I described Gabriela Mistral School and Nelquihue School and the evolution of the inclusive action research model. I became closely involved over a relatively long period of time with two remarkably distinctive educational communities, and collaboratively facilitated their attempts to analyse and minimise the barriers to presence, learning and participation. The process was intended to challenge school staff into questioning their own underlying theories about the diversity of their students and about their teaching, and to examine how their beliefs, values and attitudes affected their practices. It provided participants with the opportunity to analyse the values of their school culture and make decisions about how to take steps to put them into action, in order to provide school members with meaningful learning experiences.

Then, in the final two chapters, I engaged in a discussion of the interpretations which emerged from my analysis of the fieldwork data, in relation to knowledge derived from the literature on inclusive education and action research. Through the discussion, I have tried to contribute to the understanding of the necessary conditions to develop collaborative reflective processes in addressing diversity within schools in general, even those in disadvantaged areas, and in Chilean schools in particular. Conclusions can be drawn as well, on how reflective processes can help to minimise the defensive attitudes of school members and engage them in challenging their own thinking and to reflect on how they can create ways of working that can reach every child, whatever their characteristics or personal circumstances. Furthermore, I learnt lessons about the importance of acquiring a flexible but rigorous role as researcher, who facilitates meaningful collaborative reflective processes in schools and, at the same time, contributes to theory.

One of the limitations of the study is that the research processes were developed in two very unique schools in Chile. Given their characteristics, these schools cannot be considered as representative of Chilean schools in general. In addition, the study could not guarantee the sustainability in the future of the reflective processes implemented. Further research would be necessary in order to deepen on this matter. On the other hand, one of the strengths of the study is the long period of time I was closely involved with the schools, which is remarkably unusual in

educational research studies. This gave me a well-informed knowledge of the schools and the reflective processes developed.

I conclude this chapter by providing a summary of the lessons learnt within this research. I also underline some aspects that emerged during this enquiry that would need to be considered in depth before carrying out further research of this kind. My conclusions can be seen as guidance which could inform future educational policies and programmes within the Chilean context. Considerations are also given on how universities and other academic institutions may promote action research processes that contribute to knowledge about school improvement and teachers' professional development. Finally, I give suggestions on key issues to be contemplated by international agencies, particularly UNESCO, in order to support countries in their '*Education for All*' commitment to pursue quality education for all and construct Allende's ideals of '*free and better societies*'.

Lessons learnt

Transformations through individual reflection

Examining individual teachers, the research adds support to the argument that reflection is central in order to produce transformations in thinking and practice. This also links to the view that teachers need to engage in individual reflective processes where they question and reframe their understanding about attention to diversity and education.

The study also throws light on how to engage teachers in such reflective processes. This seemed to be particularly relevant with those teachers who were not familiar with these practices, and therefore were primarily not willing or not confident in participating in such processes.

It became apparent that teachers follow different reflective pathways when confronted by the facilitators and barriers experienced, as they try to respond to the diverse learning processes of their students. In some cases, teachers use defensive arguments by claiming that the barriers faced by their students are out of their control. Teachers' defensiveness seems to prevent them from thinking analytically about their practices and seeing the aspects they could improve.

Transformations in teachers' understandings seem to be promoted when teachers have a set of inclusive values that make them assume the responsibility of responding to their students' learning processes. These teachers also appear to value reflection as a process for improvement.

Those teachers who apparently were able to reflect, thought analytically and questioned their underlying theories, their practical arguments and their interests in education and the learning experiences of their students. Individual transformations in understandings were observed, but not in educational practices.

Transformations within the educational community

In relation to educational communities, the research concludes that transformations appeared to be possible by creating opportunities for '*social reframing*', where school members question their assumptions, theories and beliefs by considering other colleagues' opinions. These instances seemed to enhance a sense of belonging amongst participants and their commitment towards a common cause.

Through the inclusive action research process, school members may increase their awareness and responsibility about the impact that their attitudes and behaviour have on the barriers perceived in the community. Participants can negotiate those meanings about education and attention to diversity that should guide the endeavour of the school. They may also feel motivated and empowered to participate and make decisions about the inclusive action research process, and about transformations to be carried out in the school.

It became apparent that transformations were directly linked to the level of involvement that school members have achieved to attend to diversity. Nevertheless, the sustainability of the changes, encouraged by the action research approach, would depend on the transformational leadership and support of those responsible for its development, the coordination team, and the representatives of the school management team.

Conditions for developing inclusive action research processes in schools

It seemed that inclusive action research processes need to be flexible and to adapt to the historical context, characteristics, tensions and dynamics of each school, in order to develop a process that could respond to the needs of the educational community and be meaningful for its members.

The approach needs to respond to the aims that each school has in relation to its stage in the development of inclusive education. It should concentrate on the analysis of facilitators and barriers to presence, learning and participation experienced by the members of the community.

Special emphasis should be placed on responding to those groups of students vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion.

It became apparent that reflection should be promoted by presenting school members with evidence related to the situation of the school, and with appropriate materials which could engage participants in the analysis of culturally-relevant topics.

The action research process should, I argue, focus on three levels: individuals, co-researcher teams and the educational community. This three-level approach appears to have the capacity to adapt to the characteristics of schools and, at the same time, minimise their tensions.

At an individual level, the process should have the aim of fostering the staff's professional development, whereas the transformation of cultures and policies seem to be possible by promoting reflection at community level. In order to guarantee autonomy and sustainability, it should be recommended that a co-researcher team takes charge of the coordination of the inclusive action research process. In addition, it also seems necessary to explore the possibilities of school representatives and professionals who could implement the approach in close relationship with external researchers.

The researcher's role in facilitating inclusive action research processes

Researchers need to follow a flexible strategy guided by professional and personal principles in order to create the necessary conditions to promote participation and reflection, and to build up common knowledge that has a meaningful benefit in the everyday life of each school and in the quality of education for everyone. The researcher as a facilitator needs to consider the possible power tensions; relationships with participants; ethical issues and restrictions on time, resources and people getting involved; and other challenges that any approach which favours human participation might face. Furthermore, researchers need to adopt a self-reflective attitude to analyse the tensions arising from the agendas she brings to the fieldwork.

Even though researchers can contribute to the development of inclusive schools, cultures and practices, they should be aware of the need for capacity building of school members and should create opportunities for professional development which allows them to be confident to research and reflect on their educational theories and practices. Researchers should understand the situation of schools and support them to move from their '*comfort zone*' towards meaningful changes that favour learning and participation.

Researchers engaged in action research need to consider that it is a slow process, and that it is, therefore, necessary to plan the time commitments it might require in advance. In addition, it is necessary to underline that not everyone participates with the same commitment. For this reason, it is recommended that researchers involve those members who are more motivated and can engage other colleagues.

Researchers' rigour in data collection and analysis should be one of their strengths that contribute to action research processes, by offering participants a meaningful and holistic overview of the situation. This can contribute to the achievement of significant transformations towards more inclusive schools, and to trustworthy knowledge about how these collaborative reflective processes can be developed.

Aspects to be considered in further research

One of the principles recommended in this study is that where researchers choose to use processes of action research to promote inclusion they need to follow a set of inclusive values that could guide their role as facilitators. This creates some dilemmas in the sense that it might be seen as an attempt to persuade those involved to adopt these values in an unthinking way. My experience suggests that the most appropriate strategy for addressing this issue is by making these values clear with the participants from the beginning of the action research process. Then, researchers should attempt to promote reflective processes by engaging school members in discussion about the values embedded in policy documents, such as the mission statement, and the identity of the school. In addition, an engagement with various forms of evidence can give school members the opportunity to analyse how school values are put into action.

At the same time, it is necessary to acknowledge that tensions and defensive attitudes can arise if the values and principles held by the members of the school do not match with those of the external researcher. Therefore, future research should focus on these types of tension in order to analyse how they might be overcome. Such research would add to the ideas developed in this thesis and, as such, would be a significant additional contribution to the field of inclusive education theory and research.

The role of the co-researcher team within schools as coordinators of the inclusive action research model is highlighted as an important strategy in the evolution of inclusive developments. However, this team only appeared to work effectively in one of the case studies and little literature was found that could inform the relevance of its role. For this reason, further research should be necessary in order to analyse the role of such teams in the use of action research processes

aimed at improving the presence, learning and participation of school members. In addition, the leadership role of educational psychologists and other school staff in the coordination of these processes requires deeper analysis.

Given the relatively short duration of the study, the evidence collected cannot guarantee the sustainability of the reflective processes and the changes observed in the schools. Further research is needed in order to understand the necessary conditions to maintain educational transformations over time.

In respect to this issue, there is a strong case for drawing on other theoretical resources. In particular, a consideration of the literature about educational change could provide researchers with assistance in promoting transformations at different levels of the educational system. For example, literatures related to:

- systemic changes (e.g. House, 1979; Fullan and Park, 1981; Hopkins, 1984; Corbett and Rossman, 1989);
- school based improvements (e.g. Hargreaves, 1984; Huberman and Miles, 1984; Miles, 1986; Hopkins, 1987; Miles, Ekholm et al. 1987; Rosenholtz, 1989; Louis and Miles, 1990; Fullan, 1991; Huberman, 1992; Hopkins, Ainscow et al. 1994);
- cultural changes within schools (e.g. House, 1979; Ball, 1981; Sarason, 1982; Hargreaves, 1986; Nias, Southworth, et al. 1989; Rudduck, 1991);
- and even individual school members, particularly teachers (e.g. Aoki, 1984; Fullan and Pomfret, 1987; Louden, 1991; Hargreaves, 1998).

A thorough review of these different perspectives on processes of educational change could help to further strengthen the approaches explored in this thesis in ways that would contribute to sustainable transformations towards not only more inclusive school cultures, policies and practices, but also towards inclusive educational systems and societies.

Implications for the Chilean context

In April, 2007, from La Moneda Palace, the first female Chilean President, Michelle Bachelet, presented the new law proposal that establishes the '*Ley General de Educación*'⁴⁵. This new law is a response to the secondary students' national demonstrations against the education system which took place from April to August in 2006. In my opinion, this proposal responded to the new democratic climate that has been built up in the last seventeen years. In what follows, I concentrate on those aspects underlined in the new '*General Law of Education*' which could foster the evolution of an inclusive education system.

School-based programmes for improvement

As observed in Chapter 1, the Ministry of Education has concentrated its actions on school-based programmes to spread the curricular reform, and to promote educational improvements and innovations. The development of school capacity and autonomy in administrative and pedagogical matters has been maintained as a crucial strategy in the new proposal of the '*General Law of Education*'. The document requires that each school has the obligation to develop an '*Institutional Educational Statement*', or '*PEI*', as part of the criteria to be registered by the Ministry of Education as an official educational institution. In addition, the new law implements strategies to enhance the participation of community members through the establishment of school governing bodies.

These school-based incentives intend to promote autonomy and professional development among the members of each educational community. According to the knowledge gathered through my research, the Ministry of Education should create school conditions that facilitate collaborative action research processes by allocating time and resources for collaborative reflection and work.

The inclusive action research model presented in this study, as well as other action research approaches, could strengthen the professionalism of staff and the structures for communication and decision making in schools, by focusing on three different levels: individual, coordination bodies, such as TPUs, and the educational community.

A transition from the concept of the '*individual model*' of students' differences towards an '*organizational perspective*' could be achieved by the promotion of reflective processes. Through

⁴⁵ General Law of Education, the proposal was presented on April 9th, 2007, in Santiago de Chile.

reflection on facilitators and barriers to presence, learning and participation, schools would be able to create space for continuing professional development and to re-organize their resources in order to respond to the learning needs of their members. The implementation of three-level collaborative action research processes within school-based programmes could contribute to the evolution of schools as learning communities.

By providing schools with incentives and conditions to carry out educational innovations based on collaborative action research processes to improve the learning and participation of all the students, I believe that the Ministry of Education could count on resourceful reflective schools and reflective teachers contributing to transformations towards an inclusive education system.

Resources of the education system to support school-based programmes for improvement

The Ministry of Education offers schools a number of programmes and initiatives to respond to the characteristics and the educational demands of their populations. Despite this, these strategies are segregated programmes addressed to specific groups of students, such as disabled students or ethnic populations. Although most of the programmes have the aim of strengthening school pedagogical management and professional development, by concentrating on a particular group of students, others remain excluded. This situation is not coherent with the complex reality of schools' daily life.

Given the experience gathered during my research, I consider there should be an integration of the parallel programmes that are offered to schools. Attention to diversity should be a principle that guides educational policies and the actions of the departments and sectors of the education system. The Ministry of Education should concentrate its efforts on developing guidance and flexible resource materials to support schools in the adaptation of the curriculum and the pedagogical methodologies to the learning demands of their students.

The proposals of the '*General Law of Education*' recognise the need to strengthen the capacities of the regional departments of education to follow up and support schools to improve pedagogical processes. Within this line, the educational law proposes the creation of a national institution for supervision⁴⁶. Supervision bodies, I believe, should work as facilitators for schools' and teachers' reflective processes, in order to improve the quality of the educational experiences of their

⁴⁶ Superintendencia de Educación.

learners. In this way, supervisors would have a better understanding of the quality of education in the schools in the region, and those aspects that need attention.

In addition, the new law of education proposes a reform of the system of national assessment tests to measure the quality of education (SIMCE). The information offered in the SIMCE should be adapted as a tool to improve pedagogical processes and diminish inequity. Collaborative analysis of the information within schools could be useful in order to expand educational plans that respond better to the needs of their students.

Implications for educational contexts, particularly in underprivileged conditions

Action research processes like the one presented, provide schools with the opportunity to reorganize and make better use of the resources available in the community in order to adapt to the learning needs of their members. In addition, the process can strengthen the capacities of the participants and empower them into becoming involved in the decision making of their organization. This is particularly important in those deprived context where resources and opportunities for professional development are very limited.

At an individual level, promoting the capacities for self-reflection on educational practices can minimise discriminatory attitudes and, at the same time, improve and expand the repertoire of teaching practices. By critically analysing their underlying theories about education and attention to diversity, teachers can be challenged to transform their personal values, beliefs and, in some cases, their pedagogical strategies in order to respond to the diverse educational demands of their students. It can also foster the habit of reflection and of sharing pedagogical experiences and knowledge with their colleagues.

Action research processes at educational community level establish space for collaborative reflection and discussion in order to analyse the vision and purposes of schools. By sharing opinions, school members have the opportunity of '*social reframing*'; or in other words, questioning their views in light of their colleagues', their students', and even the ideas of other members of the educational community. These events may create a emotional climate that can strengthen the commitment of school members towards a common vision and set of values, and also their sense of belonging.

I have come to the conclusion that, under the circumstances underlined in my thesis, these approaches provide schools, even those in deprived, isolated contexts, with the conditions to

either establish or strengthen communication channels and democratic structures for participation, mutual support, collaboration and decision making.

At a coordination level, collaborative action research can strengthen the labour and responsibilities of the pedagogical teams, as channels of communication, collaboration and decision making. As recommended in this research, headteachers and members of the pedagogical management team could work together with a co-researcher team, comprising teachers, support professionals, students and other members, with the purpose of analysing the situation of their school, in order to decide their actions for the short term through educational plans, and for the long term through the institutional programme.

These initiatives would not only have an impact on the improvement of the quality of education, they would also facilitate every learner having equal opportunities to education, particularly those populations suffering discrimination and exclusion.

For this to happen, any educational actor should see herself as a learner who analyses her actions and reflects on how her actions may be perceived by others as barriers in their learning and participation in society. If educational actors reflect in collaboration, as in the case of this research, attitudinal and cultural transformations can be possible. Besides a common commitment to carry out changes in structures, policies and practices can be strengthened.

The commitment towards attention to diversity, I believe, stands on the principles of mutual understanding and collaboration. Therefore, it is necessary that the ministries of education promote support networks between schools, as well as the collaboration of different educational institutions and social organizations with schools: for example, between special professionals and schools, cultural organizations, corporations of ethnic populations, NGOs, and so on.

The role of universities and educational institutions for teachers' professional development

The role of universities and educational institutions in charge of teacher training and educational research should contribute to the principles of the inclusive educational system. I believe that in Chile, and other countries in the Latin American region, there is little collaboration between teachers and academics, and schools and universities seem to be two discrete worlds. There is, therefore, no interconnection between pedagogical theories and educational practices. Academics feel that their knowledge is not used by teachers and educational professionals, whereas teachers believe that academic theories and training courses are not relevant to their

day-to-day practices. In my conversations during my fieldwork, particularly at Nelquihue School, teachers admitted that they did not find in-service training courses relevant to their daily practice.

For this reason, I consider that universities and other educational institutions should promote processes of professional development by working hand-in-hand with schools. From my own experience, I believe that by involving in collaborative reflective processes with school members, academics could understand more about the conditions in the schools and how they can contribute to improving the quality of the educational experiences offered.

Using their research expertise and rigorous methodological strategies, researchers could gather knowledge about the pedagogical processes carried out in schools. They could also gain understandings about how collaborative research approaches could promote teachers' agency and professional development. By using a self-reflective attitude and by receiving feedback from school members, researchers could overcome their *'defensive underlying theories'* towards teachers.

This could contribute to establishing collaborative relationships with school staff of mutual understanding and the ability to learn from each other. Collaborative action research initiatives between universities and schools could become opportunities for professional development. These processes can join school staff and researchers together in the construction of knowledge about pedagogical practices and school improvements to attend to diversity.

Academic institutions can also promote the creation of support networks with schools to carry out action research processes that contribute to strengthening schools as learning communities and researchers as facilitators of collaborative reflective processes.

And finally, the knowledge gathered through action research experiences can contribute to changes in the curriculum for initial and in-service training. Universities should understand that the new requirements for an inclusive education system demand transformations in the professional development of educational actors. Initial and in-service training should concentrate on the promotion of reflective teachers and other professionals who are able to work together in order to provide learners with meaningful educational experiences with their peers, independently of their individual, cultural or socio-economic characteristics.

The role of UNESCO in the Education for All agenda

International agencies, especially UNESCO, should also be actively participating in the move towards more inclusive educational systems and societies as part of their commitment to the *'Education for All'* Declaration. In the EFA declaration, international agencies committed themselves to working together to achieve the goal of education for all. In my opinion, UNESCO should take the lead and become a key ally for financing bodies, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These agencies are providing countries with credits to finance initiatives to achieve EFA goals. UNESCO should work alongside international funding bodies in order to reach common agreements, so that the criteria of funding educational initiatives should match EFA principles and promote inclusive educational systems throughout the world.

Funded educational lines of actions should be based on the aim of contributing to equal quality educational experiences for all, rather than on market strategies that enhance inequalities, disloyal competitiveness, exclusion and segregation of a large number of individuals from the educational system. Given the experience and knowledge of UNESCO, it should demand that international financial bodies follow the principle of attention to diversity in their decisions and actions.

In the last decade, UNESCO has tried to concentrate its attention on schools and on the learning processes of the students. Considering this target, I believe that UNESCO should further explore the opportunities that action research processes could provide in promoting individual and collaborative reflection in schools to improve the quality of the educational experiences of all their students. Networks such as INNOVEMOS should promote reflection and innovative thinking by providing schools and teachers with space to interchange their educational experiences and the facility to reflect on them. Through these networks, UNESCO could build support networks among schools and educational organizations, such as universities, in the research and promotion of educational innovations.

The analysis of the reflective approaches that evolved in the collaboration of schools with academics could generate knowledge about the issues that are necessary to guarantee better response to the diversity of their students. As in the case of this research, this could contribute to shedding light on the way to promote reflective schools and teachers. UNESCO could, in this way, make the connections between schools and Ministries of Education, by informing national policies on the issues to be tackled in order to contribute to the learning processes of their citizens and minimise discriminatory and exclusionary practices.

The “*Open File for Inclusion*” was developed with this purpose in mind, to inform governments all over the world about the policies to implement in order to develop inclusive education systems (UNESCO, 2004). The document gives general guidance about the transformations to put in place. The translation of the “*Index for Inclusion*” (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) by the Regional Office of UNESCO into Spanish, and its adaptation for the Latin American context has also become a reference tool for the education systems of the region.

Nevertheless, I consider it necessary to gather the lessons learnt within national contexts. Generating knowledge and information about the steps taken by particular schools, guided by the principle of attention to diversity, could illuminate the process for other schools and administrative bodies about the implications for policies, cultures and practices. This has been, I believe, one of the contributions of my research.

Final words

The journey I initiated in September 2003 took me into an adventure of personal and professional growth. During this time, I became familiar with the conditions in which schools have to deal with the challenging task of providing students with educational opportunities to learn how to learn, how to be, how to do and how to live together.

With the belief that teachers are learners and schools learning environments, I embarked on action research processes with two very distinct educational communities. By being closely engaged for a long period of time in the action research processes of two schools in parallel, I could not only analyse each school from the other school’s eyes, but I could also contribute to knowledge about the promotion of collaborative reflective processes in schools and the transformations that can be achieved in relation to attention to diversity.

In this way, I intended to contribute to a paradigm that sees knowledge intrinsically linked with practice. For this reason, I consider that this thesis has contributed to transformations in practice, in the schools and the teachers involved, and in my role as researcher facilitator. It has also contributed to my development personally and professionally. And above all, it has contributed to the educational theories and philosophy that seek to make a better world where we can understand and learn from each other and, in the end, live together.

Appendix 1. Description of action research projects relevant to my research

Research focused on the promotion of reflective practitioners

A variety of educational action researchers have focused their attention on promoting reflective practitioners. In England, John Elliot (1991) and his colleagues initiated a teacher-as-researcher movement through the Classroom Action Research Network (McNiff, 1988; Adelman, 1993; Zeichner, 2001). Other research in the country focused on particular aspects of the promotion of reflection. For example, Day (1997) studies the tensions and complexities of engaging in a reflective process, given the different 'selves' of teachers; Somekh (2003) claims the importance of teachers generating knowledge; and Biott (1996) researches the process of identity change for those teachers involved in action research in their workplaces and the complexities they experience when seeing themselves as researchers and teachers simultaneously.

Action research projects have also contributed to the teachers' commitment to research their practices in Australia, thanks to the implementation of this approach by Carr and Kemmis (1986). The authors invited teachers to '*become critical*', recognizing them as professionals capable of analysing their own practices, developing educational knowledge and contributing to the critical development of education. Through educational action research, teachers become part of a critical educational community with a firm political emancipatory agenda (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Zeichner, 2001).

Researchers from privileged countries also contributed to teachers' professional development in underprivileged countries. In India, Caroline Dyer (2000) studied how to foster teachers' agency and confidence through action research. In Ghana (Pryor, 1998), Malawi (Stuart and Kunje, 1998) and Namibia (Ebbutt and Elliott, 1998), action research projects were implemented in collaboration with national educational organizations for teachers' reflective professional development. Other studies concentrated on collaborative classroom action research to promote professional development, such as in Lesotho (Stuart, Morojele et al. 1997).

Several authors used this approach in order to improve inclusive educational practices. Some researchers followed a problem-based methodology (Robinson, 1998); other research practitioners studied a specific disabled student in their class and, through reflection, they achieved changes in their practices to be more inclusive (Charles, 2004); and a broader action

research approach to inclusive practices was implemented by researcher practitioners in classes to promote equal opportunities for their students (Griffiths and Davies, 1993). Several academic researchers supported practitioners to develop a critical reflective action approach to respond to the special educational needs of their students (Lloyd, 2002; O'Hanlon, 2003).

Nevertheless, from my point of view, research following this approach does not respond to the purposes and values of inclusive education. It is teacher-centred; the approach sees teachers as autonomous professionals who set about making decisions within reflective processes. Inclusive education embraces each member of the educational community, not only teachers, but also students, other professionals, support staff, families and other actors of the local community. Any inclusive educational community may consist of a variety of interdisciplinary professionals and members of the local community, who need to be part of the action research inquiry in order to change the educational conditions and improve the learning experiences.

Research focused on the promotion of reflective communities

Several educational action researchers have implemented collaborative action research processes in schools in underprivileged countries, among them, Davidoff (1997) in a school in South Africa; Wijesundera (2002) in Sri Lanka; Garrido, Pimenta and colleagues (1999) in Brazil; and Rosas (1997) and Fierro, Fortoul et al (1999) in Mexico. They focused their research on school-based participatory research with the purpose of teacher training and professional development and the improvement of teaching practices.

Inclusive school policies, cultures and practices have been promoted by participatory action research in different countries. Some of the research has been focused on coordinating networks of English schools using the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) to reflect and design action plans to overcome the barriers to learning and participation which the schools were facing (Ainscow, Howes et al. 2003; Gallannaugh and Dyson, 2003; Ainscow, Booth et al. 2004; Clifton, 2004; Howes, Frankham et al. 2004; Ainscow, Booth et al. 2006). Implementations of the same approach coordinated by British researchers have been carried out in other countries in collaboration with national organizations and schools, such as in Portugal and Romania (Ainscow, 2002), Tanzania and Zambia (Miles, Ainscow et al. 2003), Brazil (Ainscow and Ferreira, 2005), India and South Africa (Booth and Black-Hawkins, 2001).

These examples of research have focused on the coordination of the network and the relationships between the schools, the researchers and other outside institutions involved in the networks, such as the local education authorities. They also address some aspects relating to creating and maintaining the conditions for these inclusive reflective processes to be developed in the schools. Other action researchers have sought to understand the complex processes of change towards inclusion, within the context of specific schools (Howes, 2001; Ainscow and Howes, 2006). Nevertheless, little research has been carried out on the coordination processes established within the educational community, and the promotion of individual reflective spaces.

Research focused on the promotion of co-researchers groups

I found only two examples of research on inclusive education that focused on school-based co-researcher groups. In both cases, these groups were integrated by members of the mainstream school learning support staff, who researched students with challenging behaviour (Simpson, 2004), or disabled students (Sorsby, 2004). The purpose of the co-researcher groups was their own professional development and agency building.

They also wanted that the professionalism and contribution of the support staff would be acknowledged by the educational community, in order for them to become active players in the school organization and in decision making. Although the support staff were the only members of the school involved in the research process, they resolved to broaden the reflective space to other members of the educational community, mainly to teachers. I could not find accounts of the coordination work of co-researcher teams designing school action research plans and engaging other members of the educational community. My research could, therefore, be a contribution to this topic.

Appendix 2. Introduction of representative participants of the Gabriela Mistral School

José was contracted by the Anonymous Society and had been the headteacher for the last five years. He carried out the participatory reform of the school's Educational Statement, and the implementation of action plans and the TPU. He tried to develop a leadership style based on the promotion of dialogue and collaboration among teachers, other professionals, and other members of the community. From the beginning of the action research process, José viewed it as an opportunity to establish an educational innovation on attention to diversity and to include it as a central part of the Educational Statement of Gabriela Mistral School.

Carola had worked part-time as the educational psychologist since 2003, as a result of the changes implemented after the revision of the integration programme. She was part of the TPU team and felt happy with the collaborative atmosphere its members had established. Nevertheless, she expressed that she was not used to working with teachers. Due to the short period of time she had been part of the community, she sometimes feared being rejected by some teachers. Carola also revealed that many teachers viewed the integration programme as her responsibility.

Gabriela had been working as a Y1 and Y2 primary teacher in the school for the last twenty-five years, since she left university. She identified herself with the school, its philosophy, vision and mission. She told me that the relationship she had with her colleagues went far beyond professional and was based on emotional bonds and mutual learning. She considered some of them as close friends. Gabriela believed in collaboration and communication, and she eagerly expressed her beliefs and opinions in our meetings. Nevertheless, due to her strong character, she believed that some teachers did not feel comfortable with her thinking.

Paula had been a Natural Science teacher for five years. She first started teaching at secondary level, and lately she had been teaching at primary level as well. Nevertheless, she stated she had been involved with the school for nineteen years as a parent, since all her children had been students there. Her youngest child was still studying at secondary level in the school. She stated that she maintained informal communication with her colleagues, teachers and other professionals, and even parents, in order to coordinate and learn how to respond to her students' needs. Paula was engaged in the work the school was doing to respond to the students diversity, but she considered it needed structure and institutionalisation. She shared these considerations with the members of the team in charge of the coordination of the action research process.

And finally, Wilson was a Biology teacher at secondary level. It was his fifth year in the school. He started working as a teacher when he finished university, but he then left education for a period of time. In our conversations, he told me that he went back to teaching because he wanted to recover his purpose in life. He felt welcome at the Gabriela Mistral School. In comparison to other schools he had worked in, he thought that here one could talk and express an opinion. He considered he could say what he thought.

Appendix 3. Introduction of representative participants of the Nelquihue School

Father Miguel had been a headteacher in Spain for more than two decades. He arrived in southern Chile around 1996 and took over the educational management of the school. Since then, together with another two priests, he started designing and implementing the local community development programme under the administration of a Spanish NGO. Given the fact that he was in charge of the management of the whole programme, he had little time and energy to dedicate to the school. He was used to working as part of a team, but he found it difficult to create one. Father Miguel was a determined man, and due to his strong character, some teachers, and even myself, found it challenging to express our opinions when he participated in meetings.

Mercedes had been the only Mapuche student at the school, and even in the local community, who had finished university studies. In 1997, she took charge of the integration unit. During the first months of my collaboration, she participated in the educational management team meetings as the deputy manager of primary education. Later, due to the structural crisis, she temporarily took the role of head. She represented the schooling phase in the management team and coordinated the meetings in primary education. Nevertheless, she expressed that she found it difficult to handle tense situations that occurred at primary level involving male teachers.

Pamela had worked as a primary teacher in Nelquihue School for more than twenty years. She participated in all the school workshops and reflective meetings at primary level and took notes. Nevertheless, she seemed to be insecure in giving her opinions and actively participating. I observed that she had good close relationships with senior female primary teachers, but she did not seem to interchange with teachers from the other teams.

Alfredo had been the primary and secondary Spanish Language teacher for the last two years. He was also responsible for the library in secondary education and for the radio programme '*School for Parents*'. He became involved in the inclusive action research model as a member of the coordination group. He appeared to get along well with the primary teachers. Nevertheless, he indicated to me that he preferred the team-work atmosphere of the secondary teachers.

Claudia started working as a secondary level History teacher with the educational expansion in 2000. She later became, as she called herself, the '*coordinator*' of secondary level. She actively participated; giving her opinions in every meeting and workshop. Part of her spare time was

dedicated to giving free support classes for students who lived in the dormitory houses. Given her strong character, new teachers seemed to feel a little intimidated by her. Nevertheless, she had a close relationship with the secondary teachers. At the beginning of my collaboration, I felt she wanted to keep distant, which I interpreted as her desire to protect the autonomy of the secondary level from outside intruders. Later however, I think we established a strong comradeship and we shared our worries about the school.

And finally, Marlene was contracted as the secondary level Mathematics teacher in 2002. As she did not study to be a teacher, she seemed to feel insecure about her teaching performance. In our first interview, she shared with me that she had suffered discrimination from the primary teachers as she was not considered a professional teacher. Despite this, she actively participated in the school workshops and reflective meetings and invited others to give their opinions. In her spare time, she supported students in the dormitory houses with their homework. In addition, Marlene was involved in the promotion of women's agricultural cooperatives. She felt part of the secondary team, where she recognised that she had some very good friends, but she also seemed willing to collaborate in order to create closer relationships with the other school teams.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adelman, C. (1993). "Kurt Lewin and the Origins of Action Research." Educational Action Research 1(1): 7-23.
- Ainscow, M. (1999). Understanding the Development of Inclusive Schools. London, Falmer.
- Ainscow, M. (2002). Using research to encourage the development of inclusive practices. Making Special Education Inclusive: from Research to Practice. P. Farrell and M. Ainscow. London, David Fulton: 25-37.
- Ainscow, M. (2004). Developing inclusive education systems: what are the levers for change? Seminario Regional UNESCO "Salamanca 10 años después". Santiago, Chile.
- Ainscow, M. (2006). From special education to effective schools for all: a review of progress so far. The Sage Handbook of Special Education. L. Florian. London, Sage: 146-159.
- Ainscow, M., Booth, T., et al. (2004). "Understanding and developing inclusive practices in schools: a collaborative action research network." International Journal of Inclusive Education 8(2): 125-139.
- Ainscow, M., Booth, T., et al. (2006). Improving Schools, Developing Inclusion. London, Routledge.
- Ainscow, M. and Ferreira, W. B. (2005). Improving the Quality of Education for All. Sao Paulo, British Council.
- Ainscow, M. and Howes, A. (2006). Leading developments in practice: barriers and possibilities. Improving Urban Schools: Leadership and Collaboration. M. Ainscow and M. West. Maidenhead, Open University Press: 35 - 45.
- Ainscow, M., Howes, A., et al. (2003). "Making sense of the development of inclusive practices." European Journal of Special Needs Education. 18(2): 227-242.
- Aoki, T. (1984). Towards a reconceptualisation of curriculum implementation. Alternative Perspectives on School Improvement. D. Hopkins and M. Wideen. London, Falmer.
- Argyris, C., Putnam, R., et al. (1985). Action Science: Concepts, Methods and Skills for Research and Intervention. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Armstrong, F. and Moore, M., Eds. (2004). Action Research for Inclusive Education: Changing Places, Changing Practices, Changing Minds. London, RoutledgeFalmer.
- Atkinson, P. (1992). Understanding Ethnographic Texts. London, Sage.
- Avalos, B. (2004). CPD policies and practices in the Latin American region. International Handbook on the Continuing Professional Development of Teachers. C. Day and J. Sachs. Maidenhead, Open University Press: 119-145.
- Baez, M. (1999). Developing inclusive education in Chile: private versus public systems. Inclusive Education. World Yearbook of Education. H. Daniels and P. Garner. London, Kogan Page: 148-159.
- Ball, S. J. (1981). The Micro-politics of the School. London, Methuen.
- Bell, D., Caplan, P., et al., Eds. (1993). Gendered Fields: Women, Men and Ethnography. London, Routledge.

- Biott, C. (1996). "Latency in Action Research: changing perspectives on occupational and researcher identities." Educational Action Research 4(2): 169-183.
- Blanco, R. (2000). Inclusive education in Latin America. Meeting Special and Diverse Educational Needs: Making Inclusive Education a Reality. H. Savolainen, H. Kokkala and H. Alasuutari. Helsinki, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland: 40-51.
- Blanco, R. (2005). "Teachers and the Development of Inclusive Schools." PRELAC journal 1: 174-177.
- Blanco, R. and Messina, G. (2000). Estado del arte sobre las innovaciones educativas en América Latina. Santafé de Bogotá, Convenio Andrés Bello.
- Booth, T. and Ainscow, M., Eds. (1998). From Them to Us: an International Study of Inclusion in Education. London, Routledge.
- Booth, T. and Ainscow, M. (2002). Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools. Bristol, Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education.
- Booth, T. and Black-Hawkins, K. (2001). Developing Learning and Participation in Countries of the South. The Role of an Index for Inclusion. Mumbai, UNESCO.
- Bradbury, H. and Reason, P. (2001). Broadening the Bandwidth of Validity: Issues and Choice-points for Improving the Quality of Action Research. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 447-455.
- Brantlinger, E. (1997). "Using Ideology: Cases of Nonrecognition of the Politics of Research and Practice in Special Education." Review of Educational Research 67(4): 425-459.
- Campbell, E. (1996). "The Tensions Within: Diversity in a Multy-Everything Secondary School." Alberta Journal of Educational Research. 42(3): 280-292.
- Cannon, S. (1989). "Social research in stressful settings: difficulties for the sociologist studying the treatment of breast cancer." Sociology of Health & Illness 11(1): 62-77.
- Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986). Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research. London, Falmer.
- Cervantes, M. (1605). Don Quixote, Part 1, translated by Thomas Shelton. Vol. XIV. The Harvard Classics. New York, PF Collier & Son. Available at <http://www.bartleby.com/14/>.
- Charles, K. (2004). Ordinary teachers, ordinary struggles: including children with social and communication difficulties in everyday classroom life. Action Research for Inclusive Education: Changing Places, Changing Practices, Changing Minds. F. Armstrong and M. Moore. London, RoutledgeFalmer: 92-104.
- Clifton, M. (2004). 'We like to talk and we like someone to listen': cultural difference and minority voices as agents of change. Action Research for Inclusive Education: Changing Places, Changing Practices, Changing Minds. F. Armstrong and M. Moore. London, RoutledgeFalmer: 77-91.
- Clough, P. and Barton, L. (1995). Making Difficulties: Research and the Construction of Special Educational Needs. London, Paul Chapman.
- Coffey, A. and Atkinson, P. (1996). Making Sense of Qualitative Data. London, Sage.
- Cohen, M. (2003). Thinking and Rethinking Teaching: Towards a Theory and a Practice of Teacher Development. Faculty of Education. Manchester, University of Manchester. **PhD**: 290.

- Corbett, H. D. and Rossman, G. (1989). "Three paths to implementing change." Curriculum Inquiry **19**(2): 163-190.
- Corbett, J. (2001). Supporting Inclusive Education: a Connective Pedagogy. London, RoutledgeFalmer.
- Corbin, J. and Morse, J. M. (2003). "The Unstructured Interactive Interview: Issues of Reciprocity and Risks when Dealing with Sensitive Topics." Qualitative Inquiry **9**(3): 335-354.
- CPEIP. (2007). "Programa de Formación para la Apropriación Curricular con apoyo de Universidades." Retrieved May, 2007, from <http://www.cpeip.cl>.
- Cross, B. (2003). "'Watch my eyes': the predicament of visual and scribal literacy choices, as explored with rural Jamaican adolescent boys." Compare **33**(1): 65-83.
- Davidoff, S. (1997). School Organization Development in a Changing Political Environment. International Action Research: a Casebook for Educational Reform. S. Hollingsworth. London, Falmer: 100-111.
- Davies, L. (1997). Interviews and the Study of School Management: an International Perspective. Qualitative Educational Research in Developing Countries. M. Crossley and G. Vulliamy. London, Garland: 133-159.
- Davies, L. (1999). "Researching democratic understanding in primary school." Research in Education. **61**: 39-48.
- Day, C. (1997). Working with the Different Selves of Teachers: Beyond Comfortable Collaboration. International Action Research: a Casebook for Educational Reform. S. Hollingsworth. London, Falmer: 190-203.
- Day, C. (2000). Stories of Change and Professional Development: the Cost of Commitment. The Life and Work of Teachers: International Perspectives in Changing Times. C. Day, A. Fernandez, T. E. Hauge and J. Møller. London, RoutledgeFalmer: 109-129.
- Day, C. (2004). A Passion for Teaching. London, RoutledgeFalmer.
- Day, C., Fernandez, A., et al., Eds. (2000). The Life and Work of Teachers: International Perspectives in Changing Times. London, RoutledgeFalmer.
- Day, C. and Sachs, J. (2004). Professionalism, performativity and empowerment: discourses in the politics, policies and purposes of continuing professional development. International Handbook on the Continuing Professional Development of Teachers. C. Day and J. Sachs. Maidenhead, Open University Press: 3-32.
- DFES (1978). Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People. London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Dunn, K. (2004). Challenging behaviour - ours, not theirs. Action Research for Inclusive Education: Changing Places, Changing Practices, Changing Minds. F. Armstrong and M. Moore. London, RoutledgeFalmer: 138-141.
- Dyer, C. (2000). Action research on basic education in India: a perspective paper. Background paper for HEBE III, India. Manchester, University of Manchester.
- Dyson, A., Gallannaugh, F., et al. (2002, 11-14 September 2002.). "Making space in the standards agenda: developing inclusive practices in schools." European Conference on Educational Research. Retrieved September, 2002, from Education-Line, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/>.

- Dyson, A., Howes, A., et al. (2002). A systematic review of the effectiveness of school-level actions for promoting participation by all students (EPPI-Centre Review, version 1.1). London, EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education. Available at <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk>.
- Dyson, A. and Millward, A. (2000). Schools and Special Needs: Issues of Innovation and Inclusion. London, Paul Chapman.
- Ebbutt, D. and Elliott, J. (1998). "Supporting teachers' professional development in a developing country through practice-based inquiry and distance learning: some key issues." Educational Action Research 6(2): 205-218.
- Echeita, G. (2006). Educación para la inclusión o educación sin exclusiones. Madrid, Narcea.
- Echeita, G. and Sandoval, M. (2002). "Educación inclusiva o educación sin exclusiones." Revista de Educación 327: 31-48.
- EENET, Ed. (2003). Researching our Experience. Manchester, Enabling Education Network, EENET.
- Elliott, J. (1991). Action Research for Educational Change. Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Fals Borda, O. (2001). Participatory (Action) Research in Social Theory: Origins and Challenges. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 27-37.
- Fenstermacher, G. D. (1988). The Place of Science and Epistemology in Schön's Conception of Reflective Practice? Reflection in Teacher Education. P. P. Grimmet and G. L. Erickson. London, Teachers College Press: 34-46.
- Ferreira, W. B. (2001). Making Sense of Exclusion in Schools: International Perspectives. Faculty of Education. Manchester, University of Manchester. **PhD**: 348.
- Fierro, C., Fortoul, B., et al. (1999). Transformando la práctica docente. Una propuesta basada en la investigación-acción. México, Paidós Ibérica.
- Finch, J. (1992). 'It's Great to Have Someone to Talk to': Ethics and Politics of Interviewing Women. Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice. M. Hammersley. London, Sage: 166-179.
- Flem, A., Moen, T., et al. (2004). "Towards inclusive schools: a study of inclusive education in practice." European Journal of Special Needs Education. 19(1): 85-98.
- Fontana, A. and Frey, J. (1994). Interviewing: the Art of Science. Handbook of Qualitative Research. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. London, Sage: 361-375.
- Foster, P. (1996). Observing Schools: a Methodological Guide. London, Paul Chapman.
- Fox, S. and Messiou, K. (2004). Manchester Inclusion Standard: Pupil Voice Toolkit. Manchester, Manchester City Council.
- Frankham, J. (2001). "The "open secret": limitations on the expression of same-sex desire." Qualitative Studies in Education. 14(4): 457-469.
- Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogía del Oprimido. Madrid, Siglo XXI.
- Freire, P. (1972). Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York, Penguin Books.
- Freire, P. (1992). Pedagogía de la Esperanza: un reencuentro con la Pedagogía del oprimido. Buenos Aires, Siglo XXI Editores Argentina.
- Freire, P. (1996). Política y Educación. México, Siglo XXI.

- Friedman, V. J. (2001). Action Science: Creating Communities of Inquiry in Communities of Practice. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 159-170.
- Fulcher, G. (1989). Disabling Policies?: a Comparative Approach to Education and Disability. Sheffield, Philip Armstrong.
- Fullan, M. (1991). The New Meaning of Educational Change. London, Cassell.
- Fullan, M. and Park, P. (1981). Curriculum Implementation. Toronto, Ontario Ministry of Education.
- Fullan, M. and Pomfret, A. (1987). "Research on curriculum and instruction implementation." Review of Educational Research 47(1): 335-397.
- Galeano, E. (1971). Las venas abiertas de América Latina. México, Siglo XXI.
- Galeano, E. (1998). Patas arriba. La escuela del mundo al revés. Buenos Aires, Pehuén.
- Gallannaugh, F. and Dyson, A. (2003). "Schools understanding inclusion: issues in inclusion and social class." Retrieved September, 2003, from Education-line, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/>
- Gallego, C. (2002). "El apoyo entre profesores como actividad educativa inclusiva." Revista de Educación. 327: 83-105.
- Garrido, E., Pimenta, S., et al. (1999). "Collaborative Research as an Approach to Foster Teacher Development, Teachers' Production of Knowledge and Changes in School Practices." Educational Action Research. 7(3): 385-398.
- Gaventa, J. and Cornwall, A. (2001). Power and Knowledge. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 70-80.
- Gobierno de Chile (2002). Proyectos de integración escolar. Orientaciones 2002. MINEDUC. Santiago de Chile, Gobierno de Chile.
- Greig, A. and Taylor, J. (1999). Doing Research with Children. London, Sage.
- Griffiths, M. and Davies, C. (1993). "Learning to Learn: action research from an equal opportunities perspective in a junior school." British Educational Research Journal. 19(1): 43-58.
- Grimmet, P. P. and Erickson, G. L., Eds. (1988). Reflection in Teacher Education. London, Teachers College Press.
- Gustavsen, B. (2001). Theory and Practice: the Mediating Discourse. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 17-26.
- Gwynn, J. (2004). 'What about me? I live here too!': raising voices and changing minds through participatory research. Action Research for Inclusive Education: Changing Places, Changing Practices, Changing Minds. F. Armstrong and M. Moore. London, RoutledgeFalmer: 105-122.
- Hall, B. L. (2001). I Wish This Were a Poem of Practices of Participatory Research. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 171-178.
- Hammersley, M. (2002). Action Research: A Contradiction in Terms? Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association, University of Exeter, England.
- Hargreaves, A. (1986). Two Cultures of Schooling. London, Falmer.

- Hargreaves, A. (1998). "The emotional practice of teaching." Teaching and Teacher Education **14**(3): 835-854.
- Hargreaves, D. H. (1984). Improving Secondary Schools. London, ILEA.
- Hart, C. (1998). Doing a Literature Review. London, Sage.
- Hart, S. (1996). Beyond Special Needs: Enhancing Children's Learning through Innovative Thinking. London, Paul Chapman.
- Hernández, R. and Andújar, C. (1999). Educación en la Diversidad: Algunas Estrategias para Trabajar en el Aula. Cuaderno 3. Santo Domingo, Secretaría de Estado de Educación y Cultura de República Dominicana.
- Heron, J. (2001). Transpersonal Co-operative Inquiry. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 333-339.
- Heron, J. and Reason, P. (2001). The Practice of Co-operative Inquiry: Research 'with' rather than 'on' People. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 179-188.
- Hollingsworth, S., Dadds, M., et al. (1997). The Examined Experience of Action Research: The Person within the Process. International Action Research: a Casebook for Educational Reform. S. Hollingsworth. London, Falmer: 49-59.
- Holstein, J. and Gubrium, J. (1995). The Active Interview. London, Sage.
- Hopkins, D. (1984). "Change and the organisational character of teacher education." Studies in Higher Education **9**(1): 37-45.
- Hopkins, D. (1987). Improving the Quality of Schooling. Lewes, Falmer Press.
- Hopkins, D., Ainscow, M., et al. (1994). School Improvement in an Era of Change. London, Cassell.
- House, E. (1979). "Technology and craft: a ten year perspective on innovation." Journal of Curriculum Studies **11**(1): 1-15.
- Howes, A. (2001). "School level action research - creating critical space in school communities." Improving Schools. **4**(2): 43-48.
- Howes, A., Frankham, J., et al. (2004). "The action in action research: mediating and developing inclusive intentions." Educational Action Research **12**(2): 239-258.
- Huberman, M. (1992). Critical Introduction. Successful School Improvement. M. Fullan. Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Huberman, M. and Miles, M. (1984). Innovation Up Close. New York, Plenum.
- INNOVEMOS. (2003). "Programa de las 900 escuelas." Retrieved November, 2003, from <http://innovemos.unesco.cl/>.
- Kaplan, I. (2006). "Student perspectives on what makes a good teacher, England." Enabling Education. (10): 14-15.
- Kaplan, I. and Howes, A. (2004). "'Seeing through different eyes': exploring the value of participative research using images in schools." Cambridge Journal of Education. **34**(2): 143-155.
- Karim, W. J. (1993). The 'nativised' self and the 'native'. Gendered Fields: Women, Men and Ethnography. D. Bell, P. Caplan and W. J. Karim. London, Routledge: 248-251.

- Kemmis, S. (2001). Exploring the Relevance of Critical Theory for Action Research: Emancipatory Action Research in the Footsteps of Jürgen Habermas. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 91-102.
- Kilbourn, B. (1988). Reflecting on Vignettes of Teaching. Reflection in Teacher Education. P. P. Grimmet and G. L. Erickson. London, Teachers College Press: 91-111.
- Kugelmass, J. W. (2001). "Collaboration and compromise in creating and sustaining an inclusive school." International Journal of Inclusive Education. **5**(1): 47-65.
- Kugelmass, J. W. and Ainscow, M. (2003). Leadership for inclusion: a comparison of international practices. Conference of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.
- Laine, M. (2000). Fieldwork, Participation and Practice: Ethics and Dilemmas in Qualitative Research. London, Sage.
- Lather, P. (1986). "Research as Praxis." Harvard Educational Review. **56**(3): 257-273.
- Lincoln, Y. and Guba, E. (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry. London, Sage.
- Lloyd, C. (2002). "Developing and changing practice in special educational needs through critically reflective action research: a case study." European Journal of Special Needs Education. **17**(2): 109-127.
- López, A. L. (1995). Psycho-Ballet. Integración the adultos con deficiencia mental en el arte: danza y teatro. Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociología. Bilbao, Universidad de Deusto. **Licenciatura en Ciencias Políticas y Sociología**.
- López, A. L. (1998). La Integración de adultos con deficiencia mental en actividades de ocio en Bilbao. Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación. Bilbao., Universidad de Deusto. **Máster en Gestión de Ocio**.
- López, A. L. (2004). Becoming Inclusive: Studying Teachers' Views. Faculty of Education. Manchester, University of Manchester. **MSc in Educational Research**: 104.
- López, A. L. (2006). "Analysing barriers to education in rural Chile." Enabling Education. (10): 18-19.
- López, A. L. (2006). "The role of a foreign researcher facilitating reflective processes on attention to diversity within two educational communities in Chile." Retrieved November, 2006, from Education-Line, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/>.
- Losito, B. and Pozzo, G. (1997). The Double Track: the Dichotomy of Roles in Action Research. International Action Research: a Casebook for Educational Reform. S. Hollingsworth. London, Falmer: 288-299.
- Louden, W. (1991). Understanding Teaching: Continuity and Change in Teachers' Knowledge. London, Cassell Educational.
- Louis, K. S. and Miles, M. B. (1990). Improving the Urban High School: What Works and Why. New York, Teachers College Press.
- Macatangay, A. C. (1999). The Impact of Action Research on the Professional Development of Teachers. Faculty of Education. Manchester, University of Manchester. **MPhil**: 155.
- Machado, A. (1917). The Landscape of Castile. Poems by Antonio Machado. Translated by Berg, M. and Maloney, D. New Cork, White Pine Press.
- Marchesi, A. (2004). Qué será de nosotros, los malos alumnos. Madrid, Alianza.

- Marshall, J. (2001). Self-reflective Inquiry Practices. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 433-439.
- Maxwell, J. A. (1996). Qualitative Research Design: an Interactive Approach. London, Sage.
- Mcauliffe, D. and Coleman, A. (1999). " 'Damned if we do and damned if we don't': Exposing ethical tensions in field research." Australian Social Work. **52**(4): 25-31.
- McNamara, D. (1980). "The Outsider's Arrogance: the failure of participant observers to understand classroom events." British Educational Research Journal. **6**(2): 113-125.
- McNiff, J. (1988). Action Research: Principles and Practice. London, MacMillan Education.
- Messiou, K. (2001). On the Margins: the Views and Responses of Children who Experience Marginalisation in a Primary School. Faculty of Education. Manchester, University of Manchester. **MSc in Educational Research**.
- Messiou, K. (2003). Conversations with Children: a Pathway towards Understanding Marginalisation and Inclusive Education. Faculty of Education. Manchester, University of Manchester. **PhD**: 314.
- MIDEPLAN. (2007). "Programa Orígenes." Retrieved May, 2007, from <http://www.origenes.cl>.
- Miettinen, R. (2000). "The concept of experiential learning and John Dewey's theory of reflective thought and action." International Journal of Lifelong Education. **19**(1): 54-72.
- Miles, M. (1986). Research findings on the stages of school improvement (mimeo). Center for Policy Research, New York.
- Miles, M., Ekholm, M., et al., Eds. (1987). Lasting School Improvement: Exploring the Process of Institutionalization. Leuven, ACCO.
- Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994). Qualitative Data Analysis: an Expanded Sourcebook. London, Sage.
- Miles, S., Ainscow, M., et al. (2003). Learning from Difference: Understanding Community Initiatives to Improve Access to Education. Final project report, Department for International Development.
- Miles, S. and Kaplan, I. (2005). "Using images to promote reflection: an action research study in Zambia and Tanzania." Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs. **5**(2): 77-83.
- MINEDUC. (2003). "SIMCE, Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación." Retrieved November, 2003, from <http://www.simce.cl>.
- MINEDUC (2004). La Educación Chilena en el Cambio de Siglo: Políticas, Resultados y Desafíos. Informe Nacional de Chile de la Oficina Internacional de Educación, UNESCO. Santiago de Chile, Ministerio de Educación de Chile.
- MINEDUC (2004). Nueva Perspectiva y Visión de la Educación Especial. Informe de la Comisión de Expertos. Santiago de Chile, Ministerio de Educación de Chile.
- MINEDUC. (2007). "Convivencia Escolar." Retrieved May, 2007, from <http://www.mineduc.cl>.
- MINEDUC. (2007). "Desarrollo Docente, Pilar de las Garantías de Calidad." Retrieved May, 2007, from <http://www.mineduc.cl>.
- Mistral, G. (1923). "Pensamientos pedagógicos." Revista de Educación. **II**(1).
- Moore, M., Jackson, M., et al. (2004). Manchester Inclusion Standard: Guidance for Schools. Manchester, Manchester City Council.

- Moriña, A. (2002). "Lecturas sobre inclusión educativa." Revista de Educación. **327**: 123-137.
- Nias, J., Southworth, G., et al. (1989). Staff Relationships in the Primary School. London, Cassell.
- Nind, M., Sheeshy, K., et al. (2002). Methodological challenges in researching inclusive school cultures. British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, University of Exeter.
- Norwich, B. and Kelly, N. (2004). "Pupils' views on inclusion: moderate learning difficulties and bullying in mainstream and special schools." British Educational Research Journal. **30**(1): 43-65.
- O'Hanlon, C. (2003). Educational Inclusion as Action Research: an Interpretive Discourse. Maidenhead, Open University Press.
- OCDE and MINEDUC (2004). Revisión de Políticas Nacionales de Educación, Chile. París, Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económicos.
- OEI. (2007). "Chile, Sistemas Educativos Nacionales." Retrieved 2007, May, from <http://www.oei.es>.
- Park, P. (2001). Knowledge and Participatory Research. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 81-90.
- Parrilla, A. (2002). "Acerca del origen y sentido de la educación inclusiva." Revista de Educación. **327**: 11-29.
- Pointon, P. and Kershner, R. (2000). "Making decisions about organising the primary classroom environment as a context for learning: the views of three experienced teachers and their pupils." Teaching and Teacher Education. **16**(1): 117-127.
- Pollard, A. (1987). Studying Children's Perspectives - a Collaborative Approach. Doing Sociology of Education. G. Walford. London, Falmer: 95-118.
- Potter, J. (1997). Discourse Analysis as a Way of Analysing Naturally Occurring Talk. Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice. D. Silverman. London, Sage: 144-160.
- Povey, H., Stephenson, K., et al. (2001). "Four Teachers Talking: social inclusion, professional development and (un)contested meanings." Journal of In-Service Education. **27**(3): 377-404.
- Powney, J. and Watts, M. (1987). Interviewing in Educational Research. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Pryor, J. (1998). "Action Research in West African Schools: Problems and Prospects." International Journal of Educational Development. **18**(3): 219-228.
- Punch, M. (1993). Observation and the Police: the Research Experience. Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice. M. Hammersley. London, Sage: 181-199.
- Punch, M. (1998). Politics and Ethics in Qualitative Research. The Landscape of Qualitative Research. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. London, Sage: 156-184.
- Reason, P. (1998). Three Approaches to Participative Inquiry. Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. London, Sage: 261-291.
- Reason, P. and Bradbury, H., Eds. (2001). Handbook of Action Research. London, Sage.
- República de Chile (1994). Ley 19.284 sobre la Intergración Social Plena de las Personas con Discapacidad, Gobierno de Chile.
- República de Chile (2007). Proyecto de la Ley General de Educación, Gobierno de Chile.

- Robinson, V. (1998). "Methodology and the Research-Practice Gap." Educational Researcher, **27**(1): 17-26.
- Robson, C. (1993). Real World Research: a Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers. Oxford, Blackwell.
- Rosas, L. O. (1997). Using Participatory Action Research for the Reconceptualization of Educational Practice. International Action Research: a Casebook for Educational Reform. S. Hollingsworth. London, Falmer: 219-224.
- Rosenholtz, S. (1989). Teachers' Workplace: The Social Organization of Schools. New York, Longman.
- Rowan, J. (2001). The Humanistic Approach to Action Research. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 114-123.
- Rudduck, J. (1991). Innovation and Change. Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Rudolph, J. W., Taylor, S. S., et al. (2001). Collaborative Off-line Reflection: a Way to Develop Skill in Action Science and Action Inquiry. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 405-412.
- Russell, T., Munby, H., et al. (1988). Learning the Professional Knowledge of Teaching: Metaphors, Puzzles, and the Theory-Practice Relationship. Reflection in Teacher Education. P. P. Grimmet and G. L. Erickson. London, Teachers College Press: 67 - 89.
- Sanger, J. (1996). The Complete Observer? A Field Research Guide to Observation. London, Falmer.
- Sanger, M. (2001). "Talking to teachers and looking at practice in understanding the moral dimensions of teaching." Journal of Curriculum Studies, **33**(6): 683-704.
- Savater, F. (2006). "On fashioning humanity." PRELAC journal **2**: 26-29.
- Sarason, S. (1982). The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change. Boston, Allyn & Bacon.
- Schein, E. H. (2001). Clinical Inquiry/Research. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 228-237.
- Schön, D. (1983). The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action. London, Ashgate.
- Schön, D. (1988). Coaching Reflective Teaching. Reflection in Teacher Education. P. P. Grimmet and G. L. Erickson. London, Teachers College Press: 19-29.
- Schön, D. (1991). The Reflective Turn: Case Studies In and On Educational Practice. London, Teachers College Press.
- Schratz, M. and Steiner-Löffler, U. (1998). Pupils Using Photographs in School Self-evaluation. Image-Based Research: a Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers. J. Prosser. London, Falmer: 235-251.
- Sharron, H. (2003). "Total inclusion, total school improvement." Managing Schools Today, **13**(1): 25-27.
- Shulman, L. S. (1988). The dangers of Dichotomous Thinking in Education. Reflection in Teacher Education. P. P. Grimmet and G. L. Erickson. London, Teachers College Press: 31-37.
- Silverman, D. (1993). Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction. London, Sage.

- Simpson, L. (2004). Students who challenge: reducing barriers to inclusion. Action Research for Inclusive Education: Changing Places, Changing Practices, Changing Minds. F. Armstrong and M. Moore. London, RoutledgeFalmer: 63-76.
- Slee, R. (2001). "Inclusion in Practice': does practice make perfect?." Educational Review. **53**(2): 113-123.
- Somekh, B. (2003). "Theory and Passion in Action Research." Educational Action Research. **11**(2): 247-264.
- Sorsby, C. (2004). Forging and strengthening alliances: learning support staff and the challenge of inclusion. Action Research for Inclusive Education: Changing Places, Changing Practices, Changing Minds. F. Armstrong and M. Moore. London, RoutledgeFalmer: 48-62.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). Participant Observation. London, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Stake, R. (1995). The Art of Case Study. London, Sage.
- Stanford, B. (2000). "Advice from the Trenches: Insights from Urban Teachers With High Morale and Career Perseverance." Retrieved August, 2004, from Education-Line, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00001381.htm>.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990). Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques. London, Sage.
- Stuart, J. and Kunje, D. (1998). "Action Research in Developing African Education Systems: is the glass half full or half empty?" Educational Action Research. **6**(3): 377-393.
- Stuart, J., Morojele, M., et al. (1997). Improving Our Practice. Collaborative Classroom Action Research in Lesotho. Qualitative Educational Research in Developing Countries. M. Crossley and G. Vulliamy. London, Garland: 161-197.
- Susinos, T. (2002). "Un recorrido por la inclusión educativa española. Investigaciones y experiencias más recientes." Revista de Educación. **327**: 49 - 68.
- Thomas, G. (2000). "Doing injustice to inclusion: a response to John Wilson." European Journal of Special Needs Education. **15**(3): 307-310.
- Thomas, G. and Tarr, J. (1999). "Ideology and Inclusion: a reply to Croll and Moses." British Journal of Educational Studies. **47**(1): 17-27.
- Torbert, W. R. (1989). "Leading Organizational Transformation." Research in Organizational Change and Development. **3**: 83-116.
- Torbert, W. R. (1991). The Power of Balance. Transforming Self, Society and Scientific Inquiry. Newbury Park, Sage.
- Torbert, W. R. (2001). The Practice of Action Inquiry. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 250-260.
- Torres, R. M. (2000). Itinerarios por la educación latinoamericana. Cuadernos de viajes. Buenos Aires, Paidós y Convenio Andrés Bello.
- UNESCO (1993). Conjunto de Materiales para la Formación de Profesores. Las Necesidades Educativas en el Aula. París, UNESCO.
- UNESCO (1994). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. World Conference On Special Needs Education, Salamanca, UNESCO.
- UNESCO (1996). La Educación Encierra un Tesoro. París, UNESCO.

- UNESCO (1999). Thematic Study for EFA: Participation in Education for All: the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities. Santiago de Chile, Oficina Regional de Educación de la UNESCO para América Latina y el Caribe.
- UNESCO (2000). The Dakar Framework for Action. Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments. World Education Forum, Dakar, UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2000). Educación para todos en las Américas. Marco de Acción Regional. Foro Regional de Educación para Todos, Santo Domingo, Oficina Regional de Educación de la UNESCO para América Latina y el Caribe.
- UNESCO (2001). Overview of the 20 years of the Major Project of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Santiago de Chile, UNESCO Regional Office of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- UNESCO (2004). Informe Final del Seminario Regional "Salamanca, 10 años después". Santiago de Chile, Oficina Regional de Educación de UNESCO para América Latina y el Caribe
- UNESCO (2004). Temario Abierto sobre Educación Inclusiva. Santiago de Chile, Oficina Regional de Educación de la UNESCO para América Latina y el Caribe.
- UNESCO (2007). Declaración de Buenos Aires. Segunda reunión intergubernamental del Proyecto Regional de Educación para América Latina y el Caribe, Buenos Aires, Oficina Regional de Educación de la UNESCO para América Latina y el Caribe.
- UNESCO (2007). Situación Educativa de América Latina y el Caribe: Garantizando la Educación de Calidad para Todos. Informe Regional de Revisión y Evaluación del Progreso de América Latina y el Caribe hacia la Educación para Todos en el marco del Proyecto Regional de Educación (EPT/PRELAC). II Reunión Intergubernamental del Proyecto Regional de Educación para América Latina y el Caribe, Buenos Aires, Oficina Regional de Educación de la UNESCO para América Latina y el Caribe.
- UNICEF (2004). Equidad Educativa en Chile: un Debate Abierto. Santiago de Chile, UNICEF.
- UNICEF and MINEDUC (2004). ¿Quién dijo que no se puede? Escuelas efectivas en sectores de pobreza. Santiago de Chile, UNICEF.
- UNICEF-HINENI-UNESCO, Ed. (2003). Cada Escuela es un Mundo, un Mundo de Diversidad. Experiencias de Integración Educativa. Santiago de Chile, UNICEF.
- UNICEF-UNESCO-HINENI (2001). Inclusión de Niños con Discapacidad en la Escuela Regular: Ciclo de Debates. Santiago de Chile, UNICEF.
- Vislie, L. (2000). "Doing justice to inclusion: a response to John Wilson." European Journal of Special Needs Education. **15**(3): 311-313.
- Wadsworth, Y. (2001). The Mirror, the Magnifying Glass, the Compass and the Map: Facilitating Participatory Action Research. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 420-432.
- Walker, M. (2005). "Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and Education." Educational Action Research. **13**(1): 103-110.
- Wijesundera, S. (2002). "School Improvement: an action-based case study conducted in a disadvantaged school in Sri Lanka." Educational Action Research. **10**(2): 169-187.
- Willig, C. (2001). Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology: Adventures in Theory and Method. Buckingham, Open University Press.

- Wilson, J. (1999). "Some conceptual difficulties about 'inclusion'." Support for Learning. **14**(3): 110-112.
- Wilson, J. (2000). "Doing justice to inclusion." European Journal of Special Needs Education. **15**(3): 297-304.
- Yin, R. (1994). Case Study Research: Design and Methods. London, Sage.
- Zeichner, K. (2001). Educational Action Research. Handbook of Action Research. P. Reason and H. Bradbury. London, Sage: 273-283.