Analysing trainee beliefs about thesis writing and professional development in a constructivist thesis writing experience

by

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this case study was to identify the beliefs of eight pre-service teachers about thesis writing and professional development while and after writing their BA thesis through diary and survey inquiry. This research was conducted in the teaching area of the major in Modern Languages (LEMO) from the Autonomous University of Puebla (BUAP). The methodology used to identify trainee beliefs was applied in two periods: during the process to include reflection in action, and after the process obtaining reflection on action as suggested by Schön (1983, p. 26). Thus, the participants wrote their electronic dialogue diaries while taking the two Research Seminars and writing their thesis. In this diaries they expressed their thoughts and feelings, sent them to the teacher and the teacher answered them also via e-mail. Then, when the Research Seminars had finished, they answered the questionnaire called Thesis and Professional Development Questionnaire (TAPDQ), which was especially designed for this research taking insights from Eraut (1995), Fullan (1995), Burns et al (1999), Schmekes (2004) and Viaggio (1992). This questionnaire contains Likert scales and some open questions. The findings of these studies reveal that participants were aware of their lack of expertise in thesis writing and they looked for strategies to overcome this problem. Also, the findings suggest that the participants were benefited from the constructivist methodology employed in the Research Seminars. Most of the participants reported having acquired skills, knowledge, having improved their attitude and having become better students after writing their thesis. This doctoral thesis begins exploring an area that has not been explored on ELT teacher cognition at least as reported in the research reviews done by Borg (2003, 2006) and Reyes & Rodríguez (2007). It aims to contribute to get a better understanding the thesis writing processes in teacher education programmes in public universities in Mexico.
I certify that the thesis entitled *Analysing trainee beliefs about thesis writing and professional development in a constructivist thesis writing experience* submitted for the degree of Doctor in Applied Linguistics is the result of my own research, except otherwise acknowledged, and that this thesis or any part of it has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other institution.

The ethics committee approval to conduct the research for this thesis was obtained with the protocol number HE25MAY2007-D05245.

Rebeca Elena Tapia Carlin

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DEDICATIONS

I want to dedicate this thesis to my family, especially to my husband Ricardo, my children Cecilia and Bernardo and to my parents Alicia and Agustín -may he rest in peace-. I want to thank you for your valuable support and patience that were so important to the conclusion of this project.

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