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ARTICLE / ARTÍCULO

Possibilities and challenges of collaborative teaching networks between university and school: a multi-case study

Posibilidades y desafíos de las redes colaborativas docentes entre universidad y escuela: un estudio multicaso

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Abstract: This article presents the main findings of a multi-case study carried out within the framework of a research project on collaborative networks in education, the aim of which is to gain an in-depth understanding of some experiences aimed at generating inclusive, horizontal and transdisciplinary spaces for dialogue, reflection and collaboration in the design and implementation of pedagogical practices from a critical perspective. This networked, dialogical and participatory research enables the transfer of the results beyond the academic sphere and has an impact on the process of progress and improvement of the centres and teachers involved. From a qualitative, comprehensive and participatory methodological approach, we proceed to analyse various educational scenarios which, despite idiosyncratic differences, share an interest in generating pedagogical knowledge in a collaborative and democratic way. From this perspective, three case studies are presented that reflect university-school collaboration through the implementation of different initiatives in learning communities, pedagogical laboratories and rural contexts. The results obtained show that the construction of networks promotes the exchange of knowledge, the strengthening of links between institutions and the possibility of moving towards other educational models that are more democratic, dialogic, inclusive, critical and committed to social change.

Keywords: Case study, Teacher education, School-community relationship, Participation, Open education.

Resumen: El artículo recoge los principales hallazgos de un estudio multicaso llevado a cabo en el marco de un proyecto de investigación sobre redes colaborativas en educación, cuya finalidad es comprender en profundidad algunas experiencias dirigidas a generar espacios inclusivos, horizontales y transdisciplinares para dialogar, reflexionar y colaborar en el diseño e implementación de prácticas pedagógicas desde una perspectiva crítica. Esta investigación en red, dialógica y participativa, posibilita que la transferencia de los resultados traspase el ámbito académico e incida en el proceso de avance y mejora de los centros y docentes implicados. Desde un enfoque metodológico cualitativo, comprensivo y participativo, se procede al análisis de diversos escenarios educativos que, a pesar de las diferencias idiosincrásicas, comparten el interés por generar conocimiento pedagógico de forma colaborativa y democrática. Desde esta perspectiva, se presentan tres casos de estudio que reflejan la colaboración universidad-escuela mediante la puesta en marcha de diferentes iniciativas en comunidades de aprendizaje, laboratorios pedagógicos y contextos rurales. Los resultados obtenidos ponen de manifiesto que la construcción de redes promueve el intercambio de saberes, el fortalecimiento de vínculos entre instituciones y la posibilidad de transitar hacia otros modelos educativos más democráticos, dialógicos, inclusivos, críticos y comprometidos con el cambio social.

Palabras clave: Estudio de casos, Formación de profesores, Relación escuela-comunidad, Participación, Educación abierta.

1. Introduction

This article is a collective endeavour derived from the "ReDoC: Collaborative networks in education. Critical teaching for an inclusive society (PID2022-138882OB-I00)" Research Project, funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, the aim of which is to analyse, understand and assess some of the collaborative projects and experiences, from a comprehensive approach, undertaken at the Faculties of Education at the universities of Malaga, Granada, Valladolid, Extremadura, Cantabria, Valencia, Jaén and Cádiz.

Working in a networked environment makes it possible to generate and build knowledge through the creation of links, relations and cooperation between different collectives and institutions in civil society. As Sancho-Gil et al. (2022) propose, never has there been so much talk about networks as there is now, which shows an awareness of global connection and the need to acknowledge the participation of different actors in training processes. This is demonstrated in some of the studies that have been carried out to that effect (Aguilar-Mediavilla et al., 2025, Azorín-Abellán, 2021; Santos-Rego et al., 2022; Solvason, Cliffe & Snowden, 2018; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2009).

The current social context has individualist, capitalist, and heteropatriarchal values running through it, which are in keeping with a market-driven trend and one in which knowledge is instrumentalised (Garcés, 2013; hooks, 2024; Freire, 1970; Fricker, 2017; Biesta, 2023; Rodríguez-Izquierdo & Lorenzo-Moledo, 2023; Rivas et al., 2022). In order to deal with this reality, it is both necessary and urgent to review the educational tenets that advocate for critical education, to rethink them to discover how other means of knowledge production are being formulated, as well as other links that move away from the academic hierarchy as the hegemonic model, and other actions that include know-how coming both from the university environment and from the community (Bauman, 2003).

In this sense, in the university sector we must ask ourselves: What spaces for openness and relations with other training operators do we generate? How is knowledge produced? From where? Which people take part in the knowledge generation processes? What knowledge is certified as valid?

All these questions lead us to delve deeper into the possibilities that can be found in collaboration networks as alternative channels to be able to think of another type of education, another type of society (Azorín-Abellán, 2021; Santos-Rego et al., 2022; Leite-Méndez et al., 2018; 2020; Zeichner et al., 2015; Rivas et al., 2022; Hargreaves & O´Connor, 2020). This is the central thread of a project that, despite being woven together from different scenarios and groups, they all share the same purpose: to generate inclusive, horizontal and transdisciplinary spaces in which to encourage dialogue, reflection and collaboration in the design and implementation of pedagogical practices from a critical perspective.

Collaboration, as a political and pedagogical tool, opens the field to explore and go deeper in the search for alternative paths for education to follow. Such paths or channels weave together skills, knowledge and experiences that challenge all the actors involved: university teachers and students, school teachers and students, and the community as a whole. The construction of a third space (Zeichner, 2010) for

meeting, learning, exchange and dialogue is an integral part of a defence of open, inclusive education that takes from all available skills and contributes to breaking down the barriers that prevent or hinder the social transformation of the contexts in which it intervenes (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2009; Parrilla et al., 2017).

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that egalitarian dialogue, horizontal accompaniment, participatory research, joint production of skills and the creation of new learning spaces generate open training proposals that are critical, inclusive and transformative (Ainscow, 2016; Rivas-Flores et al., 2015; Coburn & Stein, 2010).

2. Method

The research study has taken a qualitative, comprehensive and participatory methodological approach that takes shape in the design of a multi-case study (Stake, 2005; Simons, 2009) that enables us to reflect, and acquire a deeper understanding of the processes that revolve around the networks analysed from an interpretative perspective.

The purpose of the study is to find out more about some of the university-school collaboration initiatives and projects that have arisen in different scenarios, in order to generate lines of reflection that help to identify the strengths and challenges entailed in working as part of a network. Consequently, the ideal option for the purpose in question is considered to be the ethnographic case study, as it allows for an objective analysis of a particular project or programme "endeavouring to understand the case in its sociocultural context" (Simons, 2009, p. 44). The research questions[1] that act as an axis of the investigative process are as follows:

RQ01. Why, and for what purpose. do these collaborative networks arise?

RQ02. What elements foster the development of these collaborative network spaces?

RQ03. What benefits/strengths does participation in these networks provide?

RQ04. What are the difficulties/limitations that these networks face?

Exploration is not imposed by external institutions or entities, but rather it arises from the group's own training needs and an interest in systematising and better understanding what is happening in the different educational contexts in which the members play an active role. This paradigmatic approach provides an opportunity to break away from the traditional structural division between research and practice (Álvarez-Álvarez, 2015; Burkhardt & Schoenfeld, 2003), the natural consequence of which is the minor importance that research coming from universities has for schools (Feuer, Towne & Shavelson, 2002). By contrast, this way of approaching an in-depth study of a specific social and educational reality enables us to engage the people involved in every stage of the process (Gray & Campbell-Evans, 2002), acknowledging their status as peers in the work team, and breaking down the hierarchical relations

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[1] The process of generating the research questions was carried out collaboratively by the research group at a seminar open to the scientific community, in keeping with our commitment to open science, and where the ontological, epistemological, methodological and ethical perspectives of the research project were discussed. A summary of this seminar can be found at https://reunid.eu/2025/01/07/pensando-la-investigacion-educativa-desde-la-construccion-colectiva-de-sentidos-bitacora-de-viaje/

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between who is researching and who is the subject of the study, which makes it possible to achieve a joint construction of meanings (Freire, 1970).

The information was essentially collected by means of participant observation (in classes, at events, workshops, etc.), taking notes in the corresponding field logs, carrying out open and semi-structured interviews, and through organising focus groups, considering each one of the selected cases intentionally, as communities in which there is a dialogical openness that allows us to advance in the collective and horizontal construction of knowledge (Freire, 1970; Wenger, 2001; Phillips et al., 2013; Corona-Berkin, 2019).

In this regard, we defend the feasibility of thoroughly analysing the operating dynamics of a given network, while helping to weave that network with the actions that each person implements from their respective scope of action, as research dealing with collaborative networks for critical and inclusive teaching must directly challenge those who carry out that work, and it should be taken as a valuable opportunity for professional development.

For the analysis, we have systematised the collected data in each case through the assorted tools, to then use the questions to gradually define the different categories of analysis that are shown in Figure 1, and which have been specified thanks to the metacognitive process of the research team in a series of regular meetings.

Needs linked to the creation of networks	To articulate University/School connection mechanisms
	To improve teacher training
	To transform educational research
	To recognise the relevance of educational contexts
Enabling elements	Horizontal and ethical relationship of care
	Mutual learning predisposition
	Common objectives
	Egalitarian dialogue
	Distributed leadership
	Active listening and mutual understanding
Benefits/strengths	Reciprocal learning and shared knowledge construction
	Sense of belonging
	Critical reflection of the teaching practice. Teacher-researcher role
	Reconstruction of professional identity
	Interdisciplinarity and collaboration
Difficulties/limitations	Lack of institutional recognition
	Work overload and lack of time
	Tension between academic logic and school logic
	Personal sacrifices

Figure 1. Category system.

Ethical considerations occupied a central place in the research design. Informed consent was obtained from the teachers and students, and their participation was voluntary, noting that they could withdraw at any time. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, assigning codes and pseudonyms to the participants and institutions, and storing all data securely, in keeping with data protection regulations. The results and discussion were presented from a respectful, dialogical and reflexive position, and said presentation was negotiated with the participants in the study.

To conclude this section, we offer a brief description of the cases analysed for the purposes of this paper.

2.1. Case I: RedComunidades [communities network]. Building training networks for collaborative work with education centres.

To see how links were created with the education centres with which there is current collaboration, we would need to go back more than 15 years, when the related work began in subjects from different degree programmes at the Faculty of Education Sciences at the University of Malaga. The intended aim was for students to be able to build their professional identities and feel part of an education community from the first year of their teacher training (Fernández-Torres et al., 2019; Mastache et al., 2023; Márquez et al., 2020; Wenger, 2001).

This initiative is based on the conviction that democratic projects must be put into practice that are aimed at promoting investigation and transformation processes from the responsibility and joint commitment of all the institutions involved in teachers' initial training (Barnes, 2017; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2003; Rivas et al., 2016). The objective with this is to foster the consolidation of a network with centres at different levels of education, recognised as Learning Communities[2].

In recent years, ties have been strengthened between the participating institutions, establishing times and spaces for growth through a dialogical relationship (Leite-Méndez & Velazco-Fano, 2022; Márquez-García et al., 2022; Rodríguez-Gallego & Ordóñez-Sierra, 2015; Procie et al., 2025).

To achieve a deeper understanding of life in those centres, two of them were selected, which, due to their characteristics, offered the possibility of designing a collaborative research project.

The first centre in question is a school located in the city centre, with one class per academic year. The population profile is very diverse, with some families living in an area considered more deprived (economically, socially and culturally) with a significant number of immigrant students, and others coming from a residential area, with a higher economic and sociocultural level.

One of the identifying features of the centre is its cultural diversity, as a large number of students come from abroad, making them a majority presence in each classroom. Apart from the challenges this poses, it has become an opportunity to grow on the basis of their differences and to discover other customs, cultures, beliefs, etc.

The second school is located in a rural area in the mountains. This centre takes in students from Infants up to the second year of Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO). Much like other rural schools, it endeavours to survive in a context where a lack of students is a constant concern, brought on by the exodus of families moving to other areas with better communication, due to economic or educational needs. This situation can generate a reduction in the teaching staff and uncertainty in each school year.

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[2] https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/educacion/portals/web/escuela-familias/participacion/experiencias/comunidades-de-aprendizaje

Over the last few years, areas have been prepared and equipped for carrying out a range of activities, based on pedagogical and fundamental perspectives, and sustained through the dialogical establishment of links between the education community and the rest of the people who live in that town.

2.2. Case II: PedaLAB pedagogical laboratory. Research as a meeting space between schools and universities.

The PedaLAB pedagogical laboratory arose out of an initiative by the ICUFOP Research Group at the University of Granada. It began in January 2021 under the institutional momentum of the ERDF Operational Programme in Andalusia 2014-2020. The funding of the project "The pedagogical laboratory as a driving force for inclusion of the education community in the ESO stage: Assessment and implementation of emerging and disruptive practices (B-SEJ-374-UGR18)" made it possible to launch this laboratory in its first two years of existence, which has continued its activity thanks to an innovation project funded by the Quality, Teaching Innovation and Foresight Unit at the University of Granada and a research project that has been approved by the Regional Government of Andalusia Department of Education Development and Vocational Training. Thanks to the recognition of their work in the process of building bridges between schools and universities, they now form part of the structure of the Area of Education, Mediation and Territorial Outreach, which comes under the Vice-chancellor's office for Outreach, Heritage and Institutional Relations at this university.

The lab was created with the purpose of establishing collaboration networks between schools and universities, generating a meeting space where professionals from both institutions could discuss and, following this exchange, initiate processes of training, research and transfer in education. The inspiration for their creation came from citizen labs, which have emerged in the last decade as a tool to connect people from wide-ranging fields of knowledge and to design projects that can transform different social environments (Pascale & Resina, 2020).

The initial phase of their lab activity entailed a call across diverse media to generate a virtual encounter, in which teachers of formal and informal education, from different stages and areas, tackled the challenges and needs of their work environments. In this "virtual café", they discussed the importance of research as a process through which to improve the teaching practice, art as educational mediation, and the need to create exchange networks. These topics were included in the lab's road map. Two types of activities were organised: a) seminars of experiences, where teaching professionals shared the practices being developed at their centres, thus promoting the requested exchange network; and b) conferences and talks with experts who addressed the specific training needs or wishes put forward by the teachers.

It was precisely during one of these encounters that a common interest emerged regarding the incorporation of students' musical preferences in the classroom, and the contradictions that were raised with regard to the use of this music which, in many cases, was not deemed appropriate for a school environment. The need to understand these processes, and to do so from a critical educational position, fostered the initiative to carry out a collaborative research project. In this way, the figure of the teacher-researcher (Stenhouse, 1981) was placed in the centre as the person responsible for highlighting the research component that exists naturally in the

daily life of the classroom, and to take it to a more advanced level through a process of systematisation.

This collaborative research began with a pilot project that enabled them to identify the conceptual framework, the questions, methodology, information collection and analysis tools that would serve to build a research project with the title "Musical identities and democratic values in the classroom: the educational implications of using students' musical preferences (PIV-021/22)", which was endorsed by the Regional Government of Andalusia, and which has been the central axis of the Lab's activity. The transfer of activity in this network has come about through their web page, their YouTube channel, social media, and participation in different academic events and teacher training exercises, the preparation of a text (Ocaña-Fernández, 2023) and by holding the 1st and 2nd PedaLAB Encounter in face-to-face format.

In this lab, there is no first-class knowledge or skills, no undisputed actors, no decisive roles, as this common good that is education requires an assembly of heterogeneities (Lafuente, 2022). Research has become the mortar that has made it possible to build that bridge so that schools and universities can come together, and from a dialectic experience of understanding and collective action, they can find a way to imagine scenarios in which it is worth living (Garcés, 2020).

2.3. Case III: Red EducoRural [rural education network]. Universities and the rural environment

The seed of the Red EducoRural was planted after the 1st International Congress on Rural Education, which was held in Cortes de la Frontera in April 2024. One of the most talked about and recurring topics at this event was the need to approach the reality of the Centros Públicos Rurales [clusters of rural schools forming one education centre] (CPR for their initials in Spanish) at the different degrees of education, as there are currently no university subjects that deal specifically with the unique features that define these particular education contexts. To respond to this question, a group of professionals from different institutions decided to work together to implement specific actions that could highlight rural schools, and to link knowledge that has traditionally been considered as academic with those experiential skills that come from direct contact with the actual cases in the different territories. From this perspective, the collective has launched some interesting initiatives, such as their participation in academic and dissemination events, writing articles for publication in scientific journals, and organising a blended 25-hour course on "Methodological strategies for socio-educational attention in rural contexts", which marked a definitive step in consolidating the network and endeavouring to ensure that collaboration in the training processes is systematic, continuous and long-lasting, underlining the learning potential of the synergy for all parties involved.

3. Results

Following the research process that has been shared in the methodology section, we now present the results of the field work carried out in each case. The evidence provided stems from the voices[3] and reflections[4] of the participants, and it responds to

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[3] Interviews with teachers (ED), seminars (S) and focus groups (GF).

[4] Class forums (FC) and university students' learning stories (RA).

each one of the questions that were raised at the start, when designing the research project.

3.1. RQ01. Why, and for what purpose. do these collaborative networks arise?

Even though there is a different reason for the creation of each specific case, the three cases presented share the need to minimise the existing gap between universities and schools. This distance is common knowledge in the university environment, and that is why collaborative projects are trying to generate meeting spaces aimed at a joint construction of knowledge, with the participation of all the sectors involved: students undergoing training, university teaching staff and teachers at education centres and schools, as well as entities and associations that collaborate with both universities and schools.

In the first case, collaboration with the centres is initiated following the university teaching staff's express intention to ensure that students can build their professional identities by associating themselves with school contexts, for the purposes of creating situated, open learning with a deep commitment to the population as a whole. In this sense, teachers appreciate the students' participation in the classroom and they share perceptions regarding how they relate, what they do, why and for what purpose. Likewise, they try to ensure that there is sufficient reflection and debate about which pedagogical skills should be strengthened and what the main obstacles that make the teaching job difficult are.

The students are placed at the centre of the training process. Both in the class forums and in the accounts of their learning, the students claim that

«it is a unique experience, being able to participate in the centres as equals» (FC E1) and that «they feel like they are a part of everyday life at the centres» (FC E2).

They also recognise that

«we have a lot to learn and we realise that there are a lot of gaps in the training we have received» (RA E3).

In turn, there are those who have discovered their passion:

«teaching is my life» (RA E6), «this is what I want to do in the future» (RA E8);

and those who have been surprised to find out

«what they are like, how they speak, and the knowledge the children have» (FC E7),

fostering a discussion about the ideas of childhood that prevail in the hegemonic discourse in initial teacher training.

In the second case, the fact that the impact of the research carried out at universities is minimal, or practically zero, in school contexts, gave rise to the possibility of setting up a pedagogical lab to enable different skillsets to come together and research projects to be developed from schools and with schools. The purpose of this is to foster an educational transformation based on scientific evidence that comes from

an analysis of the experience itself, and not just from the analysis carried out by academia, leading to an emancipation of the teaching staff. Below are some of the fragments taken from a dialogue at one of the lab seminars:

> «That's a university thing»; «research is for those who know and have time on their hands»; «universities come to schools just to collect data and then they just publish, publish, publish»; «research deals with questionnaires and data that serve no purpose at all in schools» (S 1).

In the third case, the reason behind the creation of this network was the conviction that the urban-centred paradigm that permeates today's ever-changing, fast-paced modern life, has led to the teaching work in rural schools being swallowed up, work which has already been affected by a series of circumstances that need to be known, because what is not known, is not understood, and what is not understood, is not valued. To this effect, it is considered that the best way to introduce the characteristics that define teaching in single and multi-grade classes in faculties of education is by establishing contact with teachers in rural schools, who are willing to have their teaching work highlighted and to share their experiential skills with university students. One of the teachers interviewed says as much, when they claim that these kinds of actions are relevant

> «because they contribute to expanding the students' concept of inclusion to accommodate human and contextual diversity, as not all education centres have the same characteristics and needs» (ED 1).

3.2. RQ02. What elements foster the development of these collaborative network spaces?

In these processes, where education actors and institutions undertake and initiate the joint construction of common spaces, we recognise some elements that appear to be essential for ensuring they are made into a place for everyone. In all three cases, we can stress that the participants were all predisposed towards mutual learning, arising from a horizontal relationship based on the ethics of care, and which sets the common objectives at the education centre. This is how it is expressed and acknowledged by those participating in the network, where the direction of said network is a constant feature from the outset:

> «The network is gradually built from the contributions of each and every member, we are all here because we want to, so I think that nothing is forced upon us here, and if we are suggested anything that we are not convinced about, then we talk about it. So I believe that the strength of this network is that it enables us to be who we are, we are valued for who we are, and we can be however we want to be» (S 2)

Egalitarian dialogue stands out as a driving force both for learning and for professional development. Everything is possible through dialogue, but it has to be emphasised from an early age. We must also ask ourselves why today's society does not promote a mutual exchange of skills.. In the interviews, the management teams highlight the power of pedagogical projects and the fact that everyone involved participates on an equal basis in the proposed actions.

> «That gives us assurance» (ED 2) y «we all learn» (ED 3).

So, several features stand out, such as: dialogue of knowledge, active listening, mutual understanding, distributed leadership, and horizontal accompaniment. In this regard, the aforementioned aspects coincide with the principles of collaborative professionalism that Hargreaves and O´Connor (2020) discuss in a research project that explores different education contexts in different countries.

3.3. RQ03. What benefits/strengths does participation in these networks provide?

In all cases, an emphasis is placed on the possibility of reciprocal learning and the generation of shared knowledge that participation in a network provides. This learning takes all skills into account, it gives them their space and recognises their worth. The teaching staff are amazed at what the children say through the dialogue that is generated in the different talks and gatherings.

> «They bring up subjects and issues that I would never have thought they could mention» (ED 4).

These ideas are shared and produce another type of knowledge through experience, other resonances in other groups of teachers and students:

> «I was able to see how they considered me when making decisions, and that I could suggest activities to the group that I was interested in. I think that the coordinator does a good job to ensure each participant feels part of the group and her leadership is marked by her ability to unite the group and all our different profiles» (GF 3)

There is a break from the vertical training structure, giving way to the design of new horizontal training strategies, where everyone involved plays a part.

> «Taking our daily worries and difficulties as a starting point, we gradually think as a whole, as a group; ideas and forms of action are put forward, and this generates bonds and learning» (ED 5).

By establishing an approach to schools from a different position that enables other ties to be created with the education community, university teaching staff can better understand the schools' reality:

> «With the perspective of this year of work, and everything it has given me as a teacher and as a researcher, I don't have the slightest doubt that it is worth rejecting that other path that is more connected with the productive logics of academic research. As a teacher, I now go into the classroom without the imposter syndrome that has always haunted me. Now I can tell my students the reality of today's classrooms of which I have first-hand experience, thanks to this research project» (GF 2)

The reconstruction of the teaching identity is also recognised, which is gradually generating an emancipatory process through a *Freirian* approach, as well as a process of interdisciplinary understanding of the pedagogical practice.

> «Working with others is enlightening and rewarding, it gives you confidence and security. Moreover, what one person can't think of, another one can, or the proposals dealt with collectively have a greater impact on the work and on that emotional dimension of feeling a part of something» (ED 2)

In this cooperative work, the margins between the teacher and researcher roles are blurred, and the teaching staff begin to question their pedagogical action with the aim of becoming aware of the possibilities of progress, through critical and grounded reflection:

> «The lab has given me the chance to systematically reflect on my teaching work instead of having the feeling that my achievements over the years have just been a lucky break or by having 'common sense'» (GF 3)

Egalitarian recognition and participation produces a sense of community and belonging to the group, something which drives and embraces all those who form a part of it:

> «One of the secrets to making this work is that we speak the same language, it is good to find a place where people understand what you say and why you are saying it. At my education centre, I feel that I am swimming against the tide, and since I have been at the lab, I am more motivated and with more enthusiasm to do different things at my school» (S 1)

3.4. RQ04. What are the difficulties/limitations that these networks face?

However, the creation of collaborative networks is not without its challenges. We cannot ignore the complexity of joint work, as well as the implications that this entails both in the professional and personal spheres for those involved. Both the school teaching staff and the university teaching staff face a series of limitations that can have a bearing on the work undertaken by the different established networks.

Among the main difficulties in all three cases, we can specifically point out the lack of recognition by the institution. The people who participate in these networks do so on a voluntary basis and out of a concern to improve both the education processes and their own teaching work. Nevertheless, they do not feel that their efforts are valued in the institutional environment, nor do they feel they are given any recognition, as does occur in other cases of continuous training:

> «For me, personally, it's nice to know that I am spending time on something that is going to have a positive impact on my classes, although it would help if we could get some kind of certificate or if it would count towards our six-year service period» (GF 3).

Along that same line, they remark on the lack of time and the amount of effort required to include these networks in the job in parallel to their professional duties, sacrificing their personal time to be able to fulfil the responsibility that they have taken on, and they convey as such in their statements:

> «We carry out a lot of actions and activities, but there is very little time for preparing and recording, with a collaborative university-school initiative, you could think and work differently to be able to recover and account for the education centres' work» (ED 6).

Lastly, the people who make up the network recognise the differences in research culture. This research has traditionally focused on "extracting data" from "reporting persons", and translating the results in an academic language that has little or nothing in common with schools' wishes or needs, providing merit only in the direction of those researching. In these cases, the dialogical sense of research studies

must apply a different focus that does not yield in the same way, as the objectives are gradually set as they go along, and the merit is shared with all the people involved:

«Taking part in this research project has entailed certain sacrifices as a university teacher. Carrying out this study requires time and dedication that makes it impossible to do other things that, for me personally, would be more beneficial» (GF 2).

4. Conclusions

Responsible, committed and critical interaction on the part of the members of the networks is key for their consolidation and to ensure they last over time. Mutual trust and commitment are progressively generated through regular working sessions where dialogue takes centre stage in the training process (Hernández-Rivero et al., 2020). This possibility for dialogue in the sense put forward by Freire (1970), hooks (2024) and Corona-Berkin (2019), enables there to be a space for open, egalitarian conversation, where listening is genuine in order to understand, to form relationships, to think about community and to ensure that everyone's interests can be taken into account, and to generate processes of educational transformation.

The diversity of individual experiences and the existence of disagreements at the heart of a heterogeneous group fosters an environment for discussion that is conducive to the construction of ideas (Bennett & Gadlin, 2012). This intersection of subjectivities generates dissent and negotiation around the subjects they are dealing with, which enriches community actions and views (Barnes, 2017).

However, the construction of this dialogic space is no mean feat, as it requires responsible and committed interaction on the part of the people who make up the network. It is therefore necessary to overcome the individuality/collectivity tension so that, once the other person and oneself are recognised as individuals, a community vision can come into play (Bauman, 2003; hooks, 2024).

The promotion of solid social ties and the creation of a space where everyone has a voice and their voices are heard, makes it possible to achieve a dialogic exchange of skills and knowledge. However, this model also faces its own challenges, as a rejection of vertical and centralised forms of organisation can lead to a lack of stable, long-lasting structure. Hence the importance of coordination under distributed leadership that is vigilant to be able to detect and correct any possible inertias that may be conducive to reproducing power relations (Hardt & Negri, 2017).

These networks allow us to rethink the cultures of training, innovation and research that exist both in the university institution and in the school institution. They generate meeting spaces where these cultures are questioned and redefined, searching for new ways of existing, on the basis of approaches that connect with critical pedagogy, feminist discourses and the idea of teacher-researcher. The idea of change and improvement is a recurrent theme in the start and development of networks, which become spaces for connection that need to be supported by the accomplishment of a mission that is clearly aimed at meeting needs and getting results that bring about benefits for the whole group (Garcés et al., 2022).

Working together broadens our views of pedagogical practice through an interdisciplinary understanding that brings different skills (disciplinary, practical and experiential) into play, and which enables an explanation to be put forward from a range of perspectives of one same situation, generating learning that would not be possible using a single analysis carried out by the actors from one side or the other. Hence the importance of making these spaces converge and accepting that the responsibility is shared by the entire education community. The need for teachers in training to experience the inherent reality in schools first hand is therefore understood, and it is important that they share their visions with practicing professionals (Cantón & Tardif, 2018; Madueño & Márquez, 2017).

Within the existing training pathways, the possibility of being and being part of life in schools from the outset is yet another stance that enables both the students in attendance and the schools, as well as the university teaching staff, to design shared research projects to work towards achieving social, institutional and personal transformation (Cortés & Márquez, 2017; Leite et al., 2018, 2020; Rivas et al., 2015).

This other way of carrying out research alerts us to the transformative capacity that including research in the classroom can have as an element for empowerment and emancipation. This emancipation is not determined merely by access to knowledge, but by "the possibility to be on an equal basis in the dispute over who can know what, from which point validity is given to our skills, and what consequences there are of how we live" (Garcés, 2018, p. 27). So, research and pedagogical action converge in a collective process of shared knowledge creation that becomes a common good, and which generates an interdependent relationship between schools and universities that is necessary now more than ever.

Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that time is a key element in the set-up of these networks, it is a slow process that makes it necessary to dissociate from the academic world's productive logics and to slow down and allow ourselves to be amazed by the events that unfold around us (Biesta, 2023). We find ourselves faced with a degree of resistance to bureaucratisation and precariousness that cancels out the chance to develop different processes, and which forces us to make a greater effort, because these "other" paths do not work in fast networks, neither do they adapt to the paces set. On the contrary, they need to take their time and be tolerant to ambiguity, negotiation and empathy (Zafra, 2017).

Cultural and political differences in the work of both institutions pose a challenge to the creation and development of these networks. Differences related to the recognition of certain activities and with discrepancies regarding the culture of research, make it necessary to acknowledge the diverse professional identities and origins, as well as redefining participation, action and investigation concepts (Santos, 2016). Despite being tied to the university institution, these networks are generated from the sidelines, taking into account the voices of those who build them from those sidelines This circumstance, which entails difficulties related to a lack of recognition, lack of resources or a rejection by certain sectors, becomes a strength that enables other more transgressive ways of doing things to be constructed, ones which are committed to the decentralisation of institutions. Cultural models are changing by implementing another way of building knowledge.

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These networks allow thought to be decolonised, in the sense that they break down the hegemonic thinking, taking into account other voices and other skillsets. They promote spaces for dialogue where dissent is considered a value and where difference is allowed.

In these networks, the participants' commitment, honesty and generosity is essential. The relationships that are slowly and steadily forged with these elements give rise to an emotional/personal connection that strengthens the network's foundations and activity, and enables it to develop and expand. In this regard, the key factors of time, space and relationship sustain the networks, but they also become dimensions with dual value: they make change possible and result in new paths, or they block movement, leading to stagnation and neglect.

By way of an epilogue, it is worth highlighting the words of Galeano (2017) from one of the short stories in his famous The Book of Embraces: "the world is a heap of people, a sea of tiny flames." (p. 5). To prevent these small, solitary and isolated flames from going out over time, they have to be given oxygen. Following on from this metaphor, working as part of a network provides the oxygen necessary to ensure that those flames, which symbolise teaching actions aimed at developing critical and inclusive thinking, are kept alive. In short, in keeping with the results obtained in the research study, we are able to affirm that the collaboration and active participation of people outside of the strictly academic sphere in the training and research processes is a breath of fresh air that strengthens education. Therefore, we must endeavour to always leave the windows open.

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6. References

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