The Training of Educators in Praxis. Experiences Drawn from the Master's Degree in Intercultural Education

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Abstract: This paper aims to defend and illustrate the way university teaching can contribute to overcoming the dichotomies of theory and practice, research and action, scientific knowledge and professional knowledge in the training of educators. To this end, the first section addresses the commitment towards emancipatory research in response to how and with whom to research, from both collaborative and participatory perspectives; the second introduces the intercultural focus as a framework for moving beyond dichotomization; and the third part stresses the role of university education in overcoming these logics, illustrating how our university teaching promotes educational praxis in its dual role as a reflective practice, of research and intervention, in the *Euro-Latin American Master's Degree in Intercultural Education* run by the Spanish National Distance Education University (UNED). To conclude, we list a number of aspects, which we suggest should be promoted in order to provide a renewed perspective on socio-educational intervention and research.

Keywords: intercultural education, master, praxis, research, teacher education

Introduction

The gap between research and intervention in education has been, and still is, a constant that demands solutions and practical alternatives to facilitate the necessary connection between both sides of professional activity. The university, primarily responsible for training educators (trainers, professors, social educators, teachers, educational psychologists), both initially and largely through ongoing training, is no stranger to criticism regarding unsuitable preparation for job performance. Study programs have gradually incorporated professional placement as training spaces in real working contexts. However, it is recognized that it is difficult for university institutions, on an exclusive basis, to train and professionally accredit their graduates (Zabalza, 2011). We find ourselves in a setting where training, intervention and research appear to travel down independent paths that rarely cross. The reasons that explain this poor relationship among the three are the following:

- From a training perspective, the university favors the acquisition and retention of theoretical knowledge over offering a space for participation, action and joint reflection through practice (Palomero Fernández, 2009).

- From a research perspective, the constitution of working teams—barely with room for professionals who do not belong to institutions with officially recognized research activity—, the evaluation criteria of scientific knowledge —where the precedence of positivist validity continues to gain widespread recognition over other modes of generating knowledge—, and the possibilities of disseminating results—evaluated in academia more because of the journals they are published in than by the proximity and interest for professionals in socio-educational

centers and institutions— speak of, in a nutshell, research developed outside active professionals, on themes and methodologies, which do not applaud knowledge generated from practice, divulged in mediums that do not stretch beyond the academic world (the beginning and end).

- From an education intervention and practice perspective, we find ourselves in rushed situations, where the pressing need to provide immediate solutions mitigates the possibilities for a systematic reflection on the activity of professionals who generally lack time, resources and the recognition of research activity which complements and nurtures the tasks they carry out and their responsibilities. Moreover, let's not forget the assumptions of the technocratic focus in education, which favor the separation of theory and practice, the depreciation of the teacher's intellectual work and the standardization of scholastic knowledge (Giroux, 1990).

The discourse on how to link action and research and how to integrate it into educators' training is nothing new in the academic debate (Gil-Jaurena, Ballesteros & Melero, 2015). We can identify diverse methodological proposals that aim to integrate theory and practice (e.g. service-learning, learning communities, problem-based learning, participatory action research, among others). However, these proposals remain isolated practices within official university curricula. In this article, in response to our research question: how to integrate theory and practice, research and action into teacher education programs?, we propose the case study of the *Euro-Latin American Master's Degree in Intercultural Education*[1].

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[1]Info about the Master's Degree in Intercultural Education: http://www2.uned.es/grupointer/master-oficial-edu-inter_en.html

Integrating Knowledge: Links Between Research and Intervention

Collective construction of knowledge through experience and reflection is a sociological and educational research line. Its aim is the transformation of social reality by way of critique, participation and the emancipation of reason. But still we face the need to strengthen this research method. The advances in our training contexts are feeble; we perceive difficulties as barriers rather than as challenges.

Therefore, accustomed to thinking in terms of dichotomy, we have adapted to a logic of static behavior that splits theory from practice and scientific knowledge from professional knowledge. Consequently, the educational community does not show confidence towards academic research.

In our view, as already outlined in other works (Gil-Jaurena, Ballesteros & Melero, 2015), this is so because education researchers and professionals do not work together in the same training and workspaces, and because the disciplinary abstraction we are building is from the academic sphere. The questions we ask ourselves at the university rarely interest the educator because they are posed from disciplinary requirements, not from the reality in everyday practice.

Research has always been a basic and foundational objective at the university, but the demand for publication negatively affects the meaning and role of its teaching staff. As García Aretio recently highlighted, "the problem is when the objective of the academy is publishing, and only publishing, instead of research" (2015, p. 9). The recognition of other merits such as innovation in teaching or research from the significance of practice is pushed into the background without offering professors any form of incentive (Bolívar & Caballero, 2008; Madrid Izquierdo, 2005;

Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 2006; Nuñez Delgado, 2009). Furthermore, numerous works have underscored the limited reception of so-called scientific literature outside the academic world. As Álvarez (2012) points out, theorists and practical professionals do not speak the same language, making it difficult for them to reach an understanding.

The separation between researched realities and the actual researchers is being progressively built and refined. In the words of Boaventura de Sousa Santos, this is called 'abyssal thinking', with its interest starting from denying the possibility of reaching knowledge through the participation of everyone involved:

> "As a product of abyssal thinking, scientific knowledge is not socially distributed equally, and cannot be. It was originally designed to turn this side of the line into a subject of knowledge, and the other into an object of knowledge" (2009, p. 56).

An awareness of serving those hierarchical interests requires us to search for new research methodologies that allow the relationship between researcher and researched on a level of equality. By comparison, participatory research is upheld as a setting for the dialogue of knowledge, through which groups and individuals are no longer considered people who are 'tied', thus facilitating their recognition, authority, and capacity for association via a dialogic relationship (Ghiso, 2000). There is an urgent need to place the ethical side of research at the core of our activity as university professors. Ethics that do not only enquire about the themes to consider, but rather whom to research with and how to do it. Moreover, as Imbernón asserts:

> "Taking a research option is an ideological option and, therefore, involves moving into treacherous and slippery ground. Nevertheless, there is a

need to do so given that eclecticism doesn't exist in the field of education, despite some attempting to invent shaded areas" (2012, p. 2).

As researchers, we also need to break our ties with the dominant scientific model. The logic of experimental science, via the hypothetical-deductive model and criteria of validity and reliability, seeks to be transferable to the study of the social and educational by applying its causal concept. Yet the world of the social operates in open systems where multiple factors converge in time, their arrangement remaining outside a mechanistic explanation. Human aspects are contextualized in time and space; thus the researcher is placed in the historical time of the phenomenon studied, which, far from being definitive, is only a flash in the development of reality (Rojas Soriano, 2012). In historical trends anything is possible, indicates Fals Borda (1986), in justifying a research epistemology of reality for the purposes of transforming it. Rejecting the absolute and denying the explanation-laws are principles based on another form of science aligned towards change and improving social contexts from the vision and action of the leading figures inhabiting them. This, then, signals the start of participatory action research with which to move from 'things in themselves' to 'things for us', justified by Fals Borda in his defense of the dialectic method: all knowledge is unfinished and variable and, therefore, subject to dialectical reasoning. The interest of science has to be in obtaining useful knowledge to advance fair causes. In order to achieve this, dialectics is proposed as a methodology that puts into dialogue popular thought and academic thinking, theory and practice. Thus, breaking the researcher/researched dichotomy and linking science to the contexts and needs of everyday life (Fals Borda, 2008). The stable and permanent is rejected in favor of new categories of thought that open up alternative channels of understanding, critique and change in lived social processes. Fals Borda

(1986) goes on to say that our role as researchers involves combining the experiential and the rational, and from there structuring the research process in a cyclical arch which enables exchange and feedback between theory-concepts and facts-observations —mirrors capable of conferring renewed validity on scientific knowledge. As Freire put it, this concept of praxis as a criterion of validation implies:

> "Dialectic thinking, [where] action and world, world and action are found in an intimate relationship of solidarity. Further still, action is human only when it is not merely an occupation but also a preoccupation; that is, when it is not dichotomized from reflection" (1972, p. 34).

To research is to build knowledge and in the socio-educational sphere there is a need for this knowledge to guarantee the possibility of the emancipation of reason. Thus, there is a demand for an anti-hegemonic project that is distanced from a dogmatic way of constructing science through interests and criteria that do not listen to voices from the public space (where it operates and is owing to socio-educational research). Consequently, we need to re-focus on the links between research, participation and action, and if we don't it is:

> "Simply because we don't need to. Because we are established in a rationality that lays to waste and turns its back on that strategy of constructing professional knowledge which sets out from the recognition of the subject and his capacity to question experience" (Martínez Bonafé, 2008, pp. 2-3).

Returning to emancipatory research, as we have highlighted elsewhere, involves the need to acknowledge people's agency capacity, in the knowledge that they can take on the public nature of social life as a space that belongs to

us, a place to collectively plan and build social life (Malik & Ballesteros, 2015).

The Intercultural Approach as a Framework for Overcoming this Dichotomous View in Education

The dichotomous logic "disconnects" research from social reality, and, as we argued above, devalues socio-educational intervention as it draws attention to a technocratic focus, both in initial training and education practice. The call to separate the concept of execution, along with standardization for better management and control, and the devaluation of critical and intellectual work, are the pedagogical assumptions stressing the instrumental and pragmatic factors in education intervention, as opposed to those which critique and transform (Giroux, 1990). This dichotomization between the construction of legitimized knowledge and practical application has traditionally been correlated with university teaching aimed at the training of education professionals. Therefore, there is normally a separation between degrees/study programs leading to research tasks and the construction of knowledge and those aimed at professional activity and educational intervention, despite the criticism of this separation, which has been happening since the 1970s. Consequently, university education legislation in Spain differentiates between research Master's Degrees and vocational M.A.s.

However, from an intercultural approach in education this dichotomous division lacks meaning, and the intercultural paradigm:

> "Is initially placed on the border between knowledge and action. Its foundations are in the close interlocking of social and scientific, reflective and action-based relations (which do not resume with the 'traditional' and

sterile theory/practice dichotomy)" (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2001, p. 38).

The intercultural approach means understanding the world in a complex and dynamic way. It means understanding diversity, heterogeneity as the norm, as an intrinsic part of social reality, rendering a more complex world which can no longer be reduced to clear-cut and stable differential categories – they cannot be stable because diversity is understood as a process, and the world is viewed dynamically, allowing us to understand that such diversity is constantly changing and being built. This view not only questions positivist research, which tries to divide and classify social reality through static categories, precisely as we contended in the previous section; it also forces us to understand the education process as a process of intersubjective communication and cooperative construction. For that reason, to educate we have to see the real person we interact with, and we have to know them specifically. To get to know people we must learn to communicate through recognition of the other.

> "Learning to see, listen, be attentive to the other, learning vigilance and overture from a perspective of diversity and not difference takes us back to a recognition and experience of the other's existence, experience that is acquired and worked for. We cannot know the other outside communication and exchange" (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006, p. 4).

This is what we are referring to when we say that the intercultural approach is a practice and hermeneutic (Aguado, 2009) and being both it breaks the dichotomy between theory and practice in social and education actions: one cannot exist without the other. Intercultural education is a praxis in the Freirian sense of the term—a simultaneously practical and

reflective action—which questions what Giroux termed the "proletarization" of teachers' work:

> "The tendency to reduce teachers to the category of specialists inside academic bureaucracy, subsequently taking on the role of managing and completing curriculum programs instead of critically developing or integrating curriculums to adapt to specific pedagogical concerns" (Giroux, 1990, p. 172).

If education is an intersubjective process of communication that is developed inside a specific reality then those working on educational intervention can be nothing other than reflective professionals with the capacity to theorize on their own practice and then implement those theorizations. University teaching in intercultural education, or simply the initial training of any education professional, must search for the academic training of these reflective professionals in order for them to take charge of their own development as a basis for reflective practice (Gomes, 2000). As we noted in a previous paper, this does not necessarily involve training on intercultural education, but using an intercultural approach in training (Aguado, Gil-Jaurena & Mata, 2008). We will outline this approach in the next section.

Systematization of the Approach to Reflective Practice in the Master's Degree in Intercultural Education

In order to address our research question (how to integrate theory and practice, research and action into teacher education programs?), our aim is to systematize and share the reflection and lines of action in the *Euro-Latin American Master's Degree in Intercultural Education,* offered by UNED (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia– Spanish National Distance Education University). We present it as a case study, where we introduce the context and

evolution of the program, the conceptual and methodological approach, the objectives and the study program. The sources of information are the Master's documentation, including official documents (study guides, study program, etc.) and students' contributions (final projects). We have undertook a content analysis to identify the principles and strategies of constructivist pedagogy and experiential learning in the Master's Degree, and the way these principles are reflected in the students' performance in their final projects.

Through our teaching work and in the training of educators at the University, we design and develop methodologies to approach the training of reflective professionals in educational intervention. Adhering to research that is favorable to the collective construction of knowledge through experience and reflection, we set out from didactic approaches which bring these same elements to bear for students: experience and reflection, geared towards transforming social reality through critique, participation, and the emancipation of reason. This is our focus on the teaching proposals we have implemented in the *Euro-Latin American Master's Degree in Intercultural Education*, whereby education professionals (school teachers, social educators, adult educators, etc.) gain specialized training, as do other people interested in intercultural studies (translators, anthropologists, journalists, sociologists, Spanish language teachers, etc.). This Master's Degree has been taught in distance mode since the 2011–2012 academic year, and, running up to the 2015–2016 academic year, has been completed by 45 students. The Master's Degree runs for an estimated two years (90 ECTS-European Credit Transfer System), although most students study it part-time and devote more time to completing the program (they have up to five years). Moreover, the *Euro-Latin American Master's Degree in Intercultural Education* is the result of a cooperation project, in the framework of the ALFA Program (América Latina-

Formación Académica-2007/2009), between European and Latin American higher education institutions (Malik, Lobo, Ávila & Espinosa, 2010).

Intercultural education as a proposal for practice and research in education is, internationally, a priority in the academic and scientific training of education professionals. Furthermore, intercultural education constitutes one of the main lines of action in international cooperation education calls, although even today intercultural is a rhetorical aspect, which runs through education discourses and does not always have an effect on practices and research (Aguado, Mata & Gil-Jaurena, 2017). Therefore, we –professors involved in the Master's Degree– feel it is of the utmost importance for researchers and education professionals to gain knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable us to aptly interact in a multicultural society which upholds the ideals of social justice and democratic participation.

The proposal of the Master's Degree is a response to the global socio-economic and political context we live in, where the multicultural composition of societies is becoming more visible through migration, the impact of new technology, new social and political actors, new social dynamics, the recognition of the role of indigenous and ethnic peoples, and hidden diversity. In this setting, the intercultural is put forward as an option that leads towards an understanding of diversity as an inherent characteristic of every group and every person. Diversity is ever-present in societies and existed before these phenomena. This is not a new situation; the way in which we interpret it is just different. We seek to break away from the association between diversity and specific groups, such as ethnic, indigenous and migrant communities. Diversity is normality, and this broad concept of diversity is what enables dialogue between worlds –geographical, linguistic, and disciplinary— that did not previously occur. We set out from the idea that intercultural education is not based on

integration (Aguado, 2009); that is, on a paternalistic view in which the diverse is the other and must adapt to the norms of the dominant group. We have to challenge the idea that difference justifies inequality, particularly when it is used to argue for socio-economic disparities.

The Master's conceptual approach does not see intercultural as an adjective (to be applied in schools, education, management, mediation, health care…) but a vision of diversity, a way to understand it, a metaphor to express it. The intercultural approach involves recognizing that culture is always present in human and education experiences, and therefore we do not know how it is manifested and how culture influences experiences, which means we must avoid simplistic and biased views of diversity which associate it with already-established categories. We must surmise that diversity, is complexity and intersubjectivity. If cultures are palpable in the interactions between people and if diversity is normality, i.e. that which characterizes us all, then a priority in the Master's Degree will be to grant value to our own diversity, prompting valuable interactions between all participants. This does not mean talking about interculturality as though it were something alien and external to us and our lives, or to our way of thinking and relating to one another. It entails adopting an intercultural viewpoint as we study the issues related to diversity and equality in education (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2001), as well as adopting an intercultural approach in the processes and interactions generated upon devising, designing and putting into practice the M.A. Therefore, the Master's Degree is the upshot of numerous discussions, exchanges, dilemmas and agreements between participants (Malik et al., 2010), and we hope that this exchange and dialogue is a constant in the relationship between students and teachers throughout the course's development.

The ultimate aim of the M.A. is for students to gain more in-depth knowledge of the proposals and contributions

of Intercultural Education, so they assimilate them in such a way that they are "able to develop an apt understanding of diversity and to reflect the intercultural focus in both research and educational and social intervention" (UNED, 2017, p. 1), thus responding to the mixed academic-professional approach of the Master's. Another aim is for students to apply this knowledge to the analysis and solving of complex problems in multi-cultural contexts, and in dealing with conflict. The acquisition of communication skills in different contexts bears a relation to the development of skills for intercultural communication and the construction of shared knowledge through participation in exchange networks. Finally, the basic objectives of the program include training in skills to use new technology, and capacities developed for self-training and autonomous study.

The general objectives of the program are the following (UNED, 2017, pp. 1-2):

- "To understand the opportunities afforded by diversity to the benefit of society and to learn how to deal with its challenges.

- To contribute aspects to analyze the structure of social inequality, legitimated through difference.

- To critically reflect on intercultural education as a strategy for dealing with conflict.

- To build and apply knowledge via an international exchange network of intercultural experience.

- To develop attitudes, skills and capacities for intercultural communication, including the communication of knowledge and reasoning.

- To develop skills for autonomous and cooperative learning.

- To use new technology as a tool for advocating exchange.

- To analyze, design and develop projects and socio-educational programs from an intercultural focus."

The Master's Degree offers two itineraries:

- The itinerary of "Intercultural Studies", oriented towards research training in this field. It leads to Doctoral studies.

- The itinerary of "Intercultural Education in Practice", with a professionalizing character.

This classification responds to the demands of the university system and is common in a dichotomous view. The regulation of the University studies in Spain states, in its article 10 about Master's Degrees, that "the aim of the Master's courses is the acquisition by the student of advanced training, specialized or multidisciplinary, oriented to academic or professional specialization, or to promote the initiation in research tasks" (Ministerio de Educación, 2007, art. 10.1), thus promoting two different types of Master's Degrees. Despite this legal structure, in an attempt to break the dichotomy between research and praxis, the courses in both itineraries in the Master in Intercultural Education are common, and the students in both itineraries study together. The main differences between the itineraries, as reflected in table 1, are the number of compulsory and elective courses from each module and the placement implemented in the professional itinerary. The research itinerary mainly approaches reflective praxis in the Master's Degree final project.

Table 1.   Master's Degree in Intercultural Education: Study
Program

ITINERARY 1	ITINERARY 2
Intercultural Studies	**Intercultural Education in Practice**
Research-focused	**Profession-focused**
COMPULSORY COURSES MODULE 1- CONCEPTUAL	
Intercultural Education	Intercultural Education
Epistemological approaches to the intercultural perspective	Re-thinking racism
ELECTIVE COURSES MODULE 1	**ELECTIVE COURSES MODULE 2**
Students must choose 4 courses	Students must choose 2 courses
Diversity, uniformity, identity	Diversity, uniformity, identity
Re-thinking racism	Gender and equal opportunities
Gender and equal opportunities	Ethics facing the challenges of a pluralistic world
Ethics facing the challenges of a pluralistic world	Citizenship and democratic participation
Citizenship and democratic participation	Epistemological approaches to the intercultural perspective
COMPULSORY COURSES MODULE 2- METHODOLOGICAL	
Participatory research methodologies	Participatory research methodologies
Ethnography in education	
ELECTIVE COURSES MODULE 2	**ELECTIVE COURSES MODULE 2**
Students must choose 3 courses	Students must choose 3 courses
Critical discourse analysis in education	Critical discourse analysis in education
Cooperation networks and learning communities	Cooperation networks and learning communities
Cultural relativism as an analytical tool	Cultural relativism as an analytical tool
New technologies for knowledge management	New technologies for knowledge management
Collaborative learning	Collaborative learning
	Ethnography in education
COMPULSORY COURSES MODULE 3- SCENARIOS AND PRACTICES	
Intercultural curriculum and school transformation	Intercultural curriculum and school transformation
	Design and evaluation of programs and projects

ELECTIVE COURSES MODULE 3	ELECTIVE COURSES MODULE 3
Students must choose 2 courses	Students must choose 4 courses
Family and families	Family and families
Cinema, literature and media as cultural spaces	Cinema, literature and media as cultural spaces
Intercultural communication	Intercultural communication
Translation as social mediation	Translation as social mediation
Social mediation in educational contexts	Social mediation in educational contexts
Public policy management	Public policy management
Social participation and community action	Social participation and community action
Design and evaluation of programs and projects	Diversity, multilingualism and language teaching
Diversity, multilingualism and language teaching	
FINAL PROJECT (20 ECTS)	**PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES (10 ECTS)**
	FINAL PROJECT (10 ECTS)

A constant in the way in which we put together the courses we teach in this Master's Degree is to foster the contextualization of knowledge, enquiry, and reflection. In short, to favor an investigative attitude that sets out from the interests and real situations of students and involves processes of agency and reflection. To achieve this, we propose the following methodological strategies derived from constructivist pedagogy and experiential learning:

- Focus on the professional, educational and social experience of our students. Value their experience as a starting point for the collective construction of knowledge (Kaufman, 1996).

- Promote learning through activities in collaboration with other people. For this, the activities require the active involvement of the people protagonists of the study situations. Activities that involve contact, interaction and dialogue in contexts characterized by diversity (Gil-Jaurena, 2017).

- Open spaces for peer tutoring through participation in forums. The forums facilitate the critical debate and the exchange of knowledge and experiences related to the thematic axes of the Master courses. The professor acquires the role of mediator or facilitator.

- Promote mentoring between graduates and new students to facilitate the engagement in the Master (Boyle, Kwon, Ross & Simpson, 2010).

- Involve the students in the organization of seminars, thus breaking the distance between faculty and students.

- Propose continuous evaluation for learning assessment, replacing the examination as a control mechanism. Continuous assessment takes into account the involvement in the tutorial activity, the development of the assignments, the progression in the course and, in some cases, the self-assessment and the peer evaluation. In short, assessment is proposed as training and information on the quality of the student learning (Gil-Jaurena, Aguado, Malik & Cucalón, 2015).

Examples of the activities the students have to complete in the courses are the following:

- Conducting interviews with working educators with different backgrounds and careers and, subsequently, to reflect on their experience and professional expectations.

- Carrying out case studies on socio-educational experiences, which involves a critical analysis and searches in the context of each student with similar experiences.

- Designing intervention projects within the

context of each student by using participatory methodology.

Beyond the particular courses that comprise the structure of the Master's Degree, the training space with greater complexity in the link between professional knowledge and scientific knowledge can be noted in the degree's final project, where students must interweave the knowledge they incorporate from their personal and professional experience, as well as from the M.A. The final project views the questions we pose to students not as themes to consider, but entails the how and with whom of research (see Table 2). There are two basic premises in the approach of the final project we conduct:

- Direct experience in the sphere that is the focal point of the work and interaction with participants in this environment, which requires qualitative and ethnographic approaches. Here there may be differences in the researcher's degree of participation —from the role of observer to more hands-on involvement, and the incorporation of questioning techniques based primarily on the interview.

- The pedagogical praxis, a reflection on practice, which could take different forms: the systematization of experiences, action-research, the meta-analysis of practices, etc.

Along these same lines, final projects have been designed in recent years and figure in table 2, illustrating an experiential, reflective and transformative approach demonstrated by the research we set students in the final training process. The examples selected in the sample mainly refer to the school field, bearing in mind that this journal is primarily geared towards teacher education. We have also included some examples in other educational spheres to reflect the diversity of the Master's Degree. They all reflect

how students put into praxis an intercultural approach in their respective contexts.

Table 2. Examples of the Master's Degree Final Projects

Author, place and year	Title	Summary (what, how and with whom to research)
Mireia Carrión (Spain, 2015)	*Learning Communities. Analysis and Reflections from Practice*	The author carried out teaching practice in a primary school for four months and analyzed the model of Learning Communities in the classroom. She studied the methodology of interactive groups and the interactions among students, the participation of families and volunteers. The joint process of reflection with the community fostered awareness and the design of an intervention project.
Diana Agámez (Italy, 2014)	*An Education Experience through Theatre Forum*	The author presents the experience of the theatre forum as a pedagogical tool via a workshop aimed at training educators, teachers and students from a secondary school, as well as a reflection on the pedagogical use of the forum to renew and generate good practices in communicating and recognizing cultural diversity.
Beatriz Carretero (Chile, 2015)	*Proposals for Dealing with Day-to-Day Life and Coexistence in a Diverse Education Community*	The author describes and analyses day-to-day relationships and coexistence established in a school, described by some professionals as violent. The qualitative case study ends with proposals for properly managing co-existence based on an intercultural focus.
Adriana Inés González (Paraguay, 2014)	*The Intercultural Approach in Educational Practice*	The author analyses the perception of diversity by teaching staff at a school in Paraguay and designs education materials to facilitate the development of intercultural skills for students and teachers. These were subsequently used in the school.
Antonio José Gomáriz (Spain, 2014)	*An Analysis of the Processes of Joint Planning in Intercultural Work Groups. Case Study: Anti-rumors*	This study explores the internal work and functionality of intercultural work groups formed in the Observatory for Immigration in Tenerife, where the author was part of implementing an anti-rumor strategy in the fight against racism. The analysis helps to improve group dynamics.
Adrián Rodríguez (Ecuador, 2016)	*Education and Interculturality: The Reading Schools Program and its Articulation in the Intercultural Bilingual Education System in Ecuador*	The author sets out a critical reflection on the teacher training program *Reading Schools*, which features in-depth interviews and the observation of teachers in the support process involved in training, and the implementation of the program.
Francisco Sanz (Spain, 2016)	*Children's Participation and Citizens' Learning in the Carlos Cano Infant and Primary School:* *Context Analysis and Proposals for its Promotion and Development*	The author presents a qualitative study of the primary school he works at as a teacher, analyzing children's participation as actual learning content. He also presents a series of practical proposals to promote and develop so as to open debate with the school community.

Conclusion

In this final section, we want to contribute our reflection on our own teaching practice throughout the years of implementation of the Master's program, analyzing contradictions, learning and challenges that we can pose for the future.

We recognize ourselves in a scenario that attends to two distinct audiences: one, composed of professors and students, where the discourse of the theory-practice and intervention-investigation integration is accepted; the second, of an institutional nature, which conceives intervention and research as two independent realities. The Spanish National Agency for Quality Evaluation and Accreditation (ANECA), responsible for approving the design and development of university degrees, establishes the differentiation of itineraries: professional and research-oriented. Our Master's Degree, as discussed in the previous section, offers both itineraries and presents them to the student as juxtaposed plans (see Table 1). This initial information constitutes a contradiction and contributes to give a false idea; it is during the course of the Master that we subsequently try to disassemble it, which is sometimes not an easy task.

It is a constant concern for us to link research and intervention in the Master's Degree courses and especially in the final projects. The strategies mentioned in the previous section show our interest in promoting research that is socially useful and an intervention that generates knowledge. We try to do so when using the distance teaching methodology as well as in the face-to-face events (annual seminar held in Madrid, professional placements and preparation of the final projects). In relation to this, the implications of participatory approaches in research and intervention were addressed by the authors of this text and other teachers and students from the *Master's Degree in Intercultural Education* during a face-to-face seminar held in Madrid in 2014. The publication,

coordinated by Mata, Ballesteros and del Olmo (2014), brought together the debates of the seminar and constitutes an introduction to critical approaches in training for research and educational interventions. We look back at some of the agreed contributions that come out of the event (Table 3), in response to the interest in linking intervention and research, which put forward new and necessary challenges on the road towards overcoming dichotomies:

Table 3. How to Link Research and Intervention (Mata, Ballesteros & del Olmo, 2014)

How to conduct socially useful *research*	How to design a knowledge-generating *intervention*
• Making a reflective analysis of society, where everybody listens to one another.	• Incorporating and working from different viewpoints.
• Working in a network with all agents.	• Generating spaces for communication and dialogue, valuing how this collaborative learning is generated through conflicts.
• Detecting people's needs.	
• Considering opposition (conflict as synergy) and evaluating the different positions of the social actors involved.	• Building learning from agents' experience.
	• Working from the prior knowledge of the group.
• Considering research in a provocative way that enables the existing reality to be transformed.	• Integrating everyone's knowledge, bearing in mind that we can all construct.
• Developing it in its context and in a dynamic, participatory, dialogic and transformative way; that is, emancipatory.	• Disseminating the results to socialize the knowledge with all parties.
• Giving back research to the community, and keeping the researcher involved in the process (Osuna & Mata, 2014).	

These methodologies require from the student a commitment to the Master that goes beyond mere individual effort; the training that is achieved is not only the result of study and personal work but of an activity of interaction.

The assessment includes this form of learning as a criterion for the achievement of valuable educational processes and outcomes.

This method of considering the dynamics of the Master's program is well valued by students, and although a certain degree of fear is involved (the topic, the context for carrying out the final project, access to the field, methodological doubts, return, etc.), students' final evaluation in terms of learning, satisfaction and serving the community is positive. In this sense, the overall satisfaction of the students with the Master program was 82,05 out of 100 points in 2016-17, the best rated in the Faculty of Education (source: UNED Office of Information Management).

In the M.A.'s seminar held in April 2017, which featured the participation of postgraduates (who had finished the Master's Degree), current students and professors, we were able to discuss and share impressions and experiences. A number of postgraduates and their final project tutors could resolve the doubts that emerged in the process with current students, in various useful sessions that bring research and praxis closer again.

In this realm, it is not surprising that many students want to maintain a link with the Master's Degree once completed. At their request, we have created an online community with alumni where we can give continuity to initiatives and projects. It includes graduates, teachers, current students and people interested in intercultural education. And that is one of our challenges: to favor a multiplier effect among all the community that conformed the Master's Degree, with incidence on actual practices.

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