

STUDY GROUPS AS SPACES TO DEVELOP FAIRNESS, RESPONSIBILITY AND
RESPONSIVENESS AS MORAL DISPOSITIONS: A SELF-REFLECTIVE
PROCESS FOR IN-SERVICE TEACHERS

A Thesis Presented by

JAVIER ALEXANDER RIVERA ARIAS

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Approved as to style and content by:



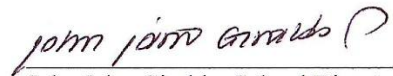
Ana María Sierra Piedrahita, Chair



Clelia Zobeida Pineda Báez, Committee Member



Adriana María González Moncada, Committee Member



John Jairo Giraldo, School Director
Escuela de Idiomas

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family and especially to my parents who helped me become who

I am and who showed me the correct path to get things done.

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I give special thanks to my advisor Dr. Ana Maria Sierra Piedrahita, who believed in me and my work and who always supported me during all phases of this process, encouraging me to do my best. Moreover, I want to express my honest gratitude to all my teachers in the Master's program who showed their professionalism and commitment to help me become a better professional and researcher. I also want to give special thanks to my best friends Alejandro Valencia Quintero, Victor Alexander Jaramillo, Marco Antonio Peralta and Gustavo Adolfo Cardona for their constant words of encouragement every time I thought of giving up. Furthermore, I want to express my deepest appreciation to both participant teachers who allowed me to explore their processes within the study group and better understand the nature of a teacher. Finally, I want to acknowledge the valuable comments and suggestions of the evaluators: Dr. Clelia Pineda Báez, which improved the quality of this manuscript, and especially to Dr. Adriana González Moncada who inspired me to become a better educator.

ABSTRACT

STUDY GROUPS AS SPACES TO DEVELOP FAIRNESS, RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS AS MORAL DISPOSITIONS: A SELF-REFLECTIVE PROCESS FOR IN-SERVICE TEACHERS

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M.A, JAVIER ALEXANDER RIVERA ARIAS, B.A. UNIVERSIDAD DE ANTIOQUIA
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Directed by: Professor Ana María Sierra Piedrahita

The exploration of moral dispositions in teachers becomes a fundamental aspect in order to enrich the continuous preparation of in-service teachers. In the present study, moral dispositions are depicted as contextually-developed and evolving values and qualities essential for promoting teachers' behavioral change. Particularly, this study aimed to analyze in-service teachers' development of fairness, responsibility and responsiveness through their engagement in a study group.

The present study was guided by a sociocultural perspective of teacher learning which acknowledges the fact that humans learn about themselves and others and grow together through interaction and cooperation. As a result, this single case study reports the analysis of two in-service teachers who participated in a teachers' study group in a private school and whose main purpose was to promote teacher self-reflection in terms of moral dispositions. The data collection procedures included semi-structured individual interviews,

audio- recorded meetings and classroom observations: including teachers' feedback to these observations.

Findings revealed that teachers' engagement in the study group and the activities conducted within it proved to be useful in their development of fairness, responsibility and responsiveness. Both teachers became more aware of their actions, implemented changes in their classes to effectively include all learners, fostered learning and group work, and aimed to fulfill their particular pupils' needs. In a like manner, findings indicated that the frequent feedback provided by the facilitator to the participant teachers greatly contributed to their development of such moral dispositions. Besides, it is important to notice that teachers' commitment was an essential factor for their development of moral dispositions. The limitations and implications of the study are also presented together with some further research questions.

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Introduction

Teacher education and professional development normally focus on the development of knowledge, skills and dispositions in teachers. The latter become a key topic to be studied since teachers are compelled to show certain dispositions which can help them to better understand and carry out their roles as effective educators. Professional development, unlike teacher training, seeks to foster teachers' personal growth manifested through their practices (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.4). In this respect, dispositions, the unity that involves attitudes, beliefs and values in each human being (Sherman, 2006, p.43), play a fundamental role. These elements can dramatically influence how teachers perform their teaching practices.

The literature has recently linked professional development with dispositions in terms of the necessary behavioral practices teachers should acquire and manifest within their job. Regarding dispositions, Dottin (2009, p. 85) claims that these have been associated with professional development since teachers should have an internal motivation which may guide their teaching practices. Teaching practices, by nature, involve moral conducts in each of the endeavors teachers perform, particularly, when they approach their students and establish diverse relationships with them and when they reflect on the best manner to orient their learners. Some authors like Johnston and Buzzelli (2001, p.874) claim that teaching practices are fundamentally linked to moral issues. That is, moral values, and particularly, moral dispositions interplay with teaching practices in all the circumstances teachers interact with their colleagues and pupils.

However, these moral conducts are not always evident in teachers, thus, there is a need for them to initially gain awareness of their moral conducts, and subsequently refresh, modify or develop such conducts so that they can reorient their classes and establish better and fairer relationships with the students. Teachers should be aware of the implications that being a teacher involves and the necessary moral dispositions they should develop to be more effective educators. Besides, all educators are moral agents (Oser, 1994, p.88), and in that sense, they must show moral dispositions like fairness, responsibility and responsiveness to their learners. I specially wanted to focus on these three moral dispositions for several reasons. First, teachers need to examine their assumptions towards their students. Second, there is an imminent moral responsibility that teachers have with their learners to adequately teach them. And third, teachers should adapt their lessons to the reality of their students while being sensitive to their worries, preferences and special conditions. In sum, fairness, responsibility and responsiveness are undoubtedly the conducts that exalt teachers' practices and allow them to approach their learners showing respect and understanding their needs.

My experience as Academic coordinator in various high schools has permitted me to understand the need to help in-service teachers to gain awareness of the dispositions they possess and help them to develop these dispositions so that they are aware of the implications of being a teacher, and feel able to cope with different circumstances such as being sympathetic to students' problems and encouraging them to do their best in their school assignments. Being aware of this situation, including the school where I currently work, I conducted a pilot study with the teachers of English in my school to better understand the moral dispositions they possessed that allow them to be effective teachers,

and those they might need to develop to be more effective. Six in-service teachers of English, including the participant teachers of the study, participated in the piloting study. It was carried out between August and September of 2012. To do this, teachers signed a consent form in which they authorized me to conduct some class observations, some individual interviews and surveys. The information collected helped me select the two participant teachers for this study. In general, I found that, in general, teachers are not aware of the moral dispositions they have and those they should develop to carry out a more effective job in educating their students. It is important then that in-service teachers think carefully about their practices, analyze the dispositions they have and change their behaviors in order to benefit themselves and their students. Therefore, these teachers needed to develop fairness, responsibility and responsiveness due to their behaviors inside and inside the classroom as well as their opinions regarding their roles as educators. One essential way to help teachers develop such dispositions is through self-reflection. In this regard, teachers could reflect on those scenarios in which students' participation and inclusion are favored or restrained.

Largely, this study was based on Stooksberry, Schussler and Bercaw's (2009) theory of dispositions. These authors regard dispositions as willingness guided by beliefs and attitudes which evolve over time and which can be contextually developed. Even though these authors deeply analyze cultural, intellectual and moral dispositions, this study only focused on moral dispositions since they become essential aspects for every teacher to manifest and for the moral essence that teaching practices entail. They describe moral dispositions as values and qualities which can be shaped through people's interactions with others. Given that there are specific moral dispositions which seem to be influential in

teachers' actions inside and outside the classroom, this study focused on understanding the development of fairness, responsibility and responsiveness in two of the in-service teachers who participated in the study group.

Study groups are spaces to help teachers develop dispositions through self-reflection. These are understood as spaces which foster a sense of community among teachers and promote professional growth; they center their goals in transforming teachers' practices through reflection and dialogue (Aldana & Cárdenas, 2011, p.59). They have an impact on teachers' institutions and permit teachers' learning and cooperative work among colleagues, through teachers' interaction (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.60). Moreover, these groups provide teachers with the opportunity to share their experiences with their peers, find new perspectives on their practices, develop language skills and share their own agenda while feeling praised and valued (Hudelson, 2001, p. 21). Considering that moral dispositions in teachers can be developed through a process of self-reflection, study groups can be a good strategy. In this case, teachers can have a better impact on their students and their lives, as they become role models for their students.

Despite the possibilities that study groups offer to develop teachers' moral dispositions, the development of moral aspects, as pertaining to values in the teacher learning literature in Colombia, has been disregarded. Consequently, there are no studies in which the development of moral dispositions has been explored. That is, few Colombian authors have explored the development of teachers' dispositions through study groups since they have focused their studies only on the development of attitudes. For instance, Sierra (2007a) analyzed the attitudes, skills and knowledge that some teacher candidates and teacher educators developed as they participated in a study group. She found that through

their participation in the study group, these teachers developed attitudes such as initiative, commitment and risk taking. Sierra (2007b) also explored the attitudes and skills that the facilitator of a study group developed as she facilitated the work in this group. In terms of attitudes, this facilitator developed initiative and a democratic attitude. Finally, Bedoya and Montoya (2011) explored four teachers' self-reflection processes through a study group. They found that study groups enabled teachers to reflect on their attitudes and the influence of these attitudes in their pupils.

Keeping this in mind, I decided to conduct a study with the teachers of English in my school with the following purposes:

- To help in-service teachers develop certain moral dispositions as they reflected about their job as teachers through their participation in a study group.
- To help in-service teachers become aware of the moral dispositions they possess.
- To help in-service teachers develop behaviors that can favor students' learning process.

With this study I expect to contribute to the professional development field by suggesting a more structured profile of teachers in Colombia in terms of the moral dispositions they should possess to carry out more effective teaching practices. Therefore, I posed the following research question: What moral dispositions, if any, do in-service teachers develop through their involvement in a study group which centers its work in fostering self-reflection?

The present case study was conducted in a private, coeducational school, located in the outskirts of Medellin city. The participants of this research were two in-service English teachers at this school. These teachers were both male and were 29 years- old. Data indicate that the participant teachers engaged in constant self-reflection of those actions which favored or restrained students' participation and inclusion in their classes. Before their participation in the study group, these teachers did not pay attention to students' behavior disorders or cognitive limitations, they tended not to listen to students' suggestions concerning their classes and sometimes lost their temper and called students inappropriate names during class sessions or even in recess times. These behaviors were observed during the pilot study conducted before starting the study group and during the first weeks of the study group. After a process of helping these teachers to reconsider their values and how their actions did not contribute to the role of effective mentors, both teachers started to implement diverse changes in their classes and showed evident characteristics of being fair, responsible and responsive teachers. This teachers' process really contributed to the solution of class participation and inclusion problems since the teachers made their best effort to involve all the students in the class while engaging them in the class activities.

Moreover, the findings suggest that there were some influential factors that contributed to these participant teachers' development of moral dispositions. Such factors comprised the activities fostered by the study group, the frequent feedback provided by the facilitator and essentially, the great commitment to the work of the study group that the participant teachers had.

In the subsequent sections of this manuscript, I first present the theoretical framework that guided this research discussing the development of dispositions and moral

dispositions from a sociocultural perspective. The setting section provides information concerning the school where this study was conducted. Besides, in the methods section, I describe both participant teachers and explain how I structured the study group sessions and selected the appropriate data sources to collect the information needed in order to explore these teachers' behavioral changes. In the findings section I describe the main outcomes of the study, presenting the changes related to each moral disposition explored in this study. In the discussion section, I analyze those aspects which were influential for these teachers' development of moral dispositions in the light of the theories about dispositions and moral dispositions in particular. Finally, I present the conclusions of the study, its limitations and some suggestions for further research.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I discuss moral dispositions and their importance in teaching contexts. Then, I explain the connection between the development of moral dispositions and teachers' study groups through self-reflection. Finally, this section closes with the conceptualizations of the moral dispositions explored in this study--fairness, responsibility and responsiveness--and delineates possible gains for both teachers and students.

In the following pages, I present the fundamental theory of this study, which regards moral dispositions as values or qualities which have a great influence over human actions (Stooksberry, Schussler & Bercaw, 2010). This theory depicts dispositions as contextually-developed and evolving elements essential for promoting teachers' behavioral change, that is, changes in dispositions which are related to the sociocultural perspective of teacher learning that illuminated this study. Such perspective acknowledges the fact that humans can learn about themselves and others while growing together. This common growth is due to their interaction and cooperation with others in a context in which people could feel confident to express their ideas. Even though people can learn individually, it is their interplay with other people which permits both personal fulfillment and mutual learning while considering their own viewpoints.

Dispositions as Contextually Developed

Stooksberry, Schussler and Bercaw (2010) state that "dispositions involve the inclination of a teacher to achieve particular purposes and the awareness of the self and the context of a given situation to employ appropriate knowledge and skills to achieve those purposes" (p.351). In this sense, teachers' dispositions can be assumed as the willingness

they manifest to perform their activities in specific contexts, guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values and qualities such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice (Sherman, 2006, p. 55). Since dispositions are present in people's actions within specific environments, people can manifest all dispositions in different manners depending on the context. Indeed, as Diez (2007, p. 207) states, dispositions manifest and change depending on the context humans interact with and throughout the different stages of their lives. That is, people's dispositions develop as they grow, and are modified depending on the amount of time they are exposed to particular contexts. Other authors such as Breese and Nawrocki-Chabin (2007, p. 34) and Oja and Reiman (2007, p. 93) also suggest that dispositions can be developed depending on the interaction people have with these contexts.

Taking into account the previous theory by Stooksberry, et al. (2010) about dispositions as developed and evolving aspects within human beings, it can be said that teachers' dispositions in general can be developed and nurtured according to both the contact they have with some specific environments and the quality of this contact. For instance, teachers may develop new behavioral attributes and manifest them towards their students if they are given the appropriate input and the constant feedback which may lead them to reconsider their values and qualities as well as their roles in society as educators and individuals. Since teachers' primary context is the school, they are compelled to deal with diverse circumstances in which their dispositions should be revealed. These circumstances comprise all the interactions that teachers have with their students not only inside the classroom but also outside of it and where they exhibit those dispositions.

Besides, if they are exposed to a context in which they grow as humans and educators in terms of the human attributes that they should show, they can benefit their students, their colleagues and themselves.

Moral Dispositions

Dispositions, as evolving aspects, consist of diverse domains that describe the different connections that teachers establish with others. On this regard, Stooksberry, Schussler and Bercaw (2009, p.721) claim that dispositions should be shaped with regard to three specific domains which encourage teachers to reflect on their active and inactive dispositions. These domains are comprised of intellectual, cultural and moral dispositions. Intellectual dispositions are understood as the connection teachers make between what they should know and what they are able to do. That is, the decisions teachers make to determine what they teach and do not teach and how they teach it. Cultural dispositions are seen as the connection teachers make between their own cultural identity and those of their students. This is observed, for instance when teachers are able to seek a culturally teaching approach in which they focus on their students' achievement and cultural competences. Although these two previous domains constitute important aspects within teachers' roles, moral dispositions, the ones to be addressed in this study, become essential attributes in teachers to perform their teaching practices in a more adequate manner. These authors regard moral dispositions as values or more specifically as "the inclination to think through the assumptions and ramifications behind those values, considering desirable ends and the processes to achieve those ends" (p. 353). That is, teachers make the decision to set aside their own needs to help another attain his or her goals and show all his or her abilities.

Moreover, Stooksberry, Schussler and Bercaw (2010, p.358) also consider that moral dispositions can be shaped through the interaction between human beings and their communities and that moral dispositions are related to individuals' aptitudes to reflect on their own moral values and the manner these individuals relate to others . Thus, for teachers to develop moral dispositions, it is necessary that they reflect on the values and qualities they manifest in their school contexts. Burant, Chubbuck and Whipp (2007, p.405) associate moral dispositions with moral sensibility and some personal qualities which are related to reflective thinking. These personal qualities are humility, lovingness, persistence, responsiveness, fairness, openness to growth, personal responsibility, and reflectivity. There is then a great necessity for teacher candidates and in-service teachers to reflect on their teaching practice in order to develop those dispositions which will help them to better understand their students and attempt to satisfy their needs (Freeman, 2007; Raths, 2007; Shiveley & Misco, 2010). This necessity for teachers to self- reflect on their practices is then imminent. Here, self- reflection is understood as “approach to teaching in which teachers collect data about teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching” (Richards & Lockhart, 1996, p. 1). If teachers reflect on their values and qualities manifested through their actions, they could better respond to their students' necessities and be considered better teachers, bearing in mind that this self-reflection should be constant, and aimed at developing the proper attitudes, values and beliefs (*i.e.* dispositions) necessary to be effective role models, mentors, cheerleaders or agents of social change.

The process of self-reflection should be guided and nurtured so that teachers become aware of their actions and commit themselves to modify certain behaviors that do not contribute to their roles as educators or hinder students' learning. Hence, teachers must

be aware of those circumstances in which disrespect or indifference to students' processes are manifested. It is also important that teachers reflect on their values and the qualities they show to their pupils to determine if those values favor or restrain students' learning.

In a like manner, when teachers reflect on their dispositions, they can analyze those inner aspects that hinder their effective interaction with their peers and pupils. This self-reflection should be in terms of analyzing the acceptable and unacceptable behaviors and practices they show in their classes and in all the scenarios they share with their students. Given that there are many influential dispositions in teacher performance such as temperance, flexibility, willingness, self-control, patience, and sense of fairness, among others, there is a great need for teachers to reflect on these dispositions aiming to improve their local school context. That is, if teachers reflect on their actions towards the learners and the quality of education they are imparting, they can have a better impact on their learners and help them to learn more easily in a fairer class environment. Notwithstanding, in order to help teachers to develop moral dispositions through a self-reflection process, it is necessary that this process be effective and permanent and promoted within teacher communities such as study groups. The reasons to explore fairness, responsibility and responsiveness correspond to the inarguable connection between teaching practices and moral values. In this respect, teachers should be fair to provide students with what they respectively need and deserve. They should be responsible to properly focus on effective teaching, and they should be responsive to effectively guide students in their learning process while being attentive to them not only as learners but as human beings.

Fairness, Responsibility and Responsiveness

Due to the fact that teachers, regardless of the subject taught, become essential elements in the moral and affective development of students (Velea & Farca, 2013, p.864), it is paramount to understand what is implied within the moral dispositions explored in this study. In this regard, fairness is related to the moral principle that states that people, in this case the students, should not be treated differently unless significant justifications are provided (Berry, 2008, p. 1150). In this sense, a fair teacher should provide students with the particular instruction needed to accomplish their academic goals, bearing in mind their individual conditions and contexts. Basically, a fair teacher should give each student different and particular opportunities to succeed.

Responsibility is understood as the extent to which “the individual feels personally accountable and responsible for the result of the work he or she does” (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2013, p. 15). That is, this disposition can be explained in terms of the responsibility teachers have toward others, the necessity to reflect on their values and the assumptions and consequences of their decisions (Stooksberry, Schussler & Bercaw, 2009, p.723; Oja & Reiman, 2007, p. 95). In education, teacher responsibility then implies the commitment that all educators have to their students, their needs and individual processes, regardless of the subject they teach. A responsible teacher is one who takes personal action to deal with students’ problematic conditions, who promotes student learning and who becomes an effective moral mentor to all his or her pupils.

Finally, responsiveness includes paying attention to individual students, being empathetic, being patient, and creating a supportive environment in the classroom (Sherman, 2006, p. 467). Responsive teachers are effective mentors when they devote more

time to those less skilled students and aim to respond to their learning needs while exploring diverse strategies that favor their learning. In this regard, if teachers are really disposed to understand their students and focused on satisfying their needs, they can create a better classroom environment and do what it takes to be perceived by their pupils as innovative, sympathetic and good human beings.

When teachers are responsive, responsible and fair, both teachers and their learners receive a great number of benefits. Some of the benefits that teachers with moral qualities can have are the transformations of their practices while fostering particular values in the learners. For instance, students can learn better and more easily; they can find in the educator a person to trust, holding a clearer perception of such a teacher. Moreover, they find that their ideas are valued and respected and feel freer to participate or even express their concerns about different classroom and teaching issues. Besides, teachers who exhibit these moral values can become better educators and be considered as examples to follow.

Moral Dispositions and Study Groups

There is a strong connection between the development of moral dispositions and teachers' work in communities. Those teachers who work in communities show more confidence to participate in group discussions, become better listeners, give more value to students' responses and demonstrate a deeper level of self-reflection regarding their practices (Stooksberry et. al., 2009, p.723). In this respect, their involvement in communities encourages them to be more reflective, willing and responsive (Dottin, 2006; Stooksberry, 2009; Breese & Nawrocki-Chabin, 2007). Such communities should have an open environment in which teachers could freely interact and introspect about their own assumptions and values, and teacher study groups can offer this ideal scenario. A study

group is defined as a space in which “two or more teachers collaborate to achieve either their individual or shared goals or both on the assumption that working with a group is usually more effective than working on one’s own” (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.51). Consequently, teacher study groups are not only meant to help teachers to learn what they can do independently but also to pursue the development of enhanced group awareness among individual participants (Sherman, 2006, p. 55).

Moreover, study groups offer a great deal of benefits to those participant teachers. Specifically, Stooksberry, Schussler and Bercaw (2009, p. 731) argue that by working together, teachers can be challenged to reflect on their own assumptions and how these assumptions influence the decisions they make for their students. Besides, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999, p. 271) claim that teachers’ co-construction enables them to identify discrepancies between what is thought and what is done and conclude that learning is fostered in teacher gatherings which promote mutual professional growth. Teacher communities such as study groups promote learning because they encourage the participants to constantly reflect on their practices and pursue positive changes in their jobs as educators (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.51). Therefore, study groups become a key space for developing moral dispositions since teachers could reconsider their weaknesses and strengths related to teaching, learn from others, understand others, help each other and, ultimately, grow professionally. Although there is a vast number of moral dispositions that teachers can develop, in this study the work with teachers focused on the development of fairness, responsibility and responsiveness as some of the most important moral dispositions that teachers should develop. These specific moral dispositions are described below.

In summary, in this study moral dispositions are regarded as those behaviors, values and qualities which can be developed and shaped through a process of self- reflection in a professional development space like teachers´ study groups. Since these groups enable teachers to reflect on themselves, they can help teachers to reconsider those behaviors, values and qualities that favor or restrain students´ learning, and gain knowledge from other colleagues while growing together. When teachers are morally disposed, they have a more positive impact on their colleagues, their pupils and essentially on themselves as human beings and as educators.

Setting

This study was conducted in a private educational institution located in the outskirts of Medellin city that imparts preschool, elementary and secondary instruction to approximately 380 students. The school was founded 68 years ago and since then it has promoted teaching through values and respect for all religious beliefs, as well as cultural and intellectual diversity. The school promotes Jewish based instruction through a method known as Horaa Mutemet and Hebrew language is taught to all the pupils. All teachers and students participate in the diverse Jewish festivities, for example, Tuvishváh, Purim, Iom Kippur and Rosh ha-Shana.

For the most part, the school's classes are made up of about 20 students who come from a high social background and well educated- parents from different religious milieus. Only 30% of the student population holds Jewish beliefs while others are Christians or Catholics. Since the school puts emphasis on teaching Mathematics and English subjects, students receive 20 hours per week of English instruction in subjects such as Grammar, Literature, Phonetics, Conversation, Computers, Science, Social Studies and Arts which are all taught as separate courses. Most of the students have direct contact with the English language either because their parents know the language or due to frequent trips to English speaking countries. According to the institution's psychology department, approximately 12 percent of the school population is diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and/or mental disabilities. Therefore, the school fosters a personalized education to all learners with clear policies for an inclusive education that bears in mind students in such conditions.

One of the school guidelines is to foster discipline in the students in order to encourage them to show a good behavior and be responsible for their actions. In this respect, teachers play the role of facilitators and encourage the students to respect themselves and follow school rules. Moreover, the school promotes a good relationship between teachers and students in which respect is a fundamental aspect as well as trust and kindness. The relationship between teachers and students is close and friendly to the point that students call teachers by their first names or even their nicknames. However, English teachers have the restriction to only speak in English with students at all times inside and outside the classroom in order to increase students' proficiency level.

In terms of professional development, the school has not provided teachers with many opportunities to participate in professional development programs, and teachers have not been previously involved in study groups. The sole professional development programs the school has fostered are some workshops based on the textbooks that teachers follow and some methodological strategies to accomplish the academic goals within each school term. In a like manner, teachers complain about their heavy work load since they often have to devote their free time to prepare some events related to the Jewish festivities. Thus, teachers need time to reflect about their practices.

Given the necessity for these teachers to reflect about their teaching practices, I decided to create a study group to provide them with a space for this reflection and an opportunity to develop those dispositions that I considered as essential for them to carry out a more effective teaching practice. When invited to participate in the study group, eight out of ten teachers of English accepted the invitation. All of them seemed to be interested in participating in this study since they considered this a great opportunity to reflect on their

roles as teachers as well as to improve their English language skills. Besides, some of them were so interested in this proposal that as soon as they were invited they wanted to know more about the readings that we would discuss.

Methods

The main goal of the study was to determine the extent to which a group of in-service teachers could develop certain moral dispositions through their participation in a study group. To accomplish this, I conducted a study within the qualitative paradigm since it permitted me to have a closer picture of the insights of the participants and have an in-depth understanding of these teachers' cases. This qualitative research paradigm could help me to analyze the particular behaviors of the teachers and associate them with the moral dispositions I wanted to explore within the study group. Thus, I carried out a single case study to explore certain situations and the events which took place in the study group (Yin, 2009). Moreover, this case study allowed me to understand the process of the teachers in the group and the moral dispositions that they developed in terms of fairness, responsibility and responsiveness.

Participants

A purposeful sampling technique, as proposed by Patton (1990), was used in order to select the richest cases for the study. Along the thirteen study group meetings that took place, I initially focused on collecting data of all eight in-service teachers in the group. However, as the research progressed, I focused on two teachers who provided the richest data in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the moral dispositions they developed (Patton, 1990). The following is an accurate description of these teachers which was the result of some observations conducted both during the piloting stage and the time these teachers spent at the school prior to the study.

Daniel¹ is 29 years-old and has a bachelor degree in Foreign Languages from a public university in Medellin. He graduated in 2010 and has 7 years of teaching experience. He decided to become a teacher because some university professors inspired him with their methodology and the affective relationship they had with their students. He has been a full-time English teacher in the school for 3 years. At the time of this research, Daniel was the Science and English teacher and was in charge of a specific group of elementary learners with a teaching load of twenty- four hours per week. Additionally, he was teaching Grammar, Social Studies, and Science in different elementary grades. It is also important to mention that approximately 15 percent of Daniel's learners were diagnosed with any attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and/or mental disabilities.

In general terms, Daniel's relationship with his students was empathetic since he tended to have a constant communication with them. He strongly believes that educators should play the roles of facilitators and be understanding and friendly. However, he constantly showed some disrespectful actions when he approached his students and was not very tolerant regarding students with any attention deficit disorder. In the interview conducted for the pilot study, he expressed:

I sometimes say some things like "hey, retarded". Even though I did not mean it or I say it as a joke. (...) and if I see that he or she got angry at this, I decide to apologize. But it happens so often that I disrespect students in this way (Interview, Daniel, 09/21/12).

In addition to this, he restrained those students who suggested some changes in his classes, he did not have sufficient time for those students who approached him outside the

¹ A pseudonym was used to protect participant's identity

classroom to talk about their personal concerns, and he seemed to favor those higher proficient learners within his classes.

I selected Daniel as one of the cases for this study because he attended all the study group meetings and showed clear evidence of being involved and committed to the activities carried out within the study group. Moreover, he actively participated in the reading discussions showing his peers what he had accomplished as well as his internal struggle to perform those activities. Besides, outside the study group meetings, Daniel was often eager to share with the group the adjustments he made in his classes in order to better satisfy his learners' needs and had a very positive attitude to receive feedback. These comments were basically manifested during recess or in teachers' general meetings since he used to express his satisfaction for what students had done in class or else because he felt grateful for being part of the study group.

The second participant of this study is Esteban². He is also 29 years-old and was always motivated to be a teacher, although not necessarily an English teacher. He decided to pursue a foreign language teaching degree after several attempts to identify his area of interest in teaching and graduated in 2010. Esteban has been a full-time English teacher in the institution for 3 years with a teaching load of twenty- two hours per week. At the time of the study, he was the homeroom teacher of an elementary course. Besides, he was teaching Grammar and Conversation in elementary and secondary grades. It is to highlight that approximately 10 percent of Esteban's learners were diagnosed with any attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and/or mental disabilities.

² A pseudonym was used to protect participant's identity

Although Esteban had a close relationship with all his students, he tended not to listen to those who wanted to change the way he had planned his classes and/or the manner in which he had structured class activities. Prior to the study group, Esteban did not pay attention to his students' behavior disorders or cognitive limitations as he tended to teach all learners equally knowing that some of them had some special learning needs. Indeed, he did not clearly know what strategies these special learning needs implied or how to address these students' cases. There were also some moments in which he tended to be angry with his students which did not contribute to a good class environment. For instance, one of his comments in an interview carried out as part of the pilot study he commented:

I write a word on the board: attitude. For example, Valentina³ is doing something different from the class like writing on her iPad. When she looks at the board, she already has three negative points. So she frowns and I dislike this. So I tell her "if you keep doing this, you are going to have another negative point and possibly all those more you want". So she stops doing that, but I hate her attitude. To be honest with you, I haven't talked to her in private (Interview, Esteban, 09/21/12).

I selected this teacher since he showed commitment to attend the study group meetings. Moreover, at the beginning, he was rather skeptical about what this group might offer him; however, he wanted to read about moral dispositions. Though he was fairly introverted, he wanted to be engaged in the group discussions and express his perspectives about the readings. Additionally, he constantly manifested to have time constraints in order to better devote to those learners who needed some extra explanations due to their special learning conditions. And, in some of his comments in the study group, he claimed to feel useless to satisfy many pupils' needs and showed some reluctance to respond to their special learning needs.

³ A pseudonym was used to protect all students' identity

The Study Group

The study group was created to offer in-service teachers a space for reflecting on their practices and subsequently developing fairness, responsibility and responsiveness as essential moral dispositions in teachers. We met weekly and each meeting lasted approximately an hour and a half. Between February and June of 2013 we held 13 meetings which were carried out in English because some of the participants' motivation was also to practice and improve their language proficiency. The last study group session was held in June 4th, 2013. Teachers were not paid or given a stipend, but the principal agreed to include our meeting time as part of their teaching workload.

Within this group, I proposed several activities that aimed at helping Daniel and Esteban to reflect and develop the moral dispositions previously mentioned. Such activities were carried out in order to motivate the participant teachers to explore their values and to express their points of view about the assigned readings. Moreover, these activities aimed to help Daniel and Esteban to become role models by exhibiting certain attitudes which could have a positive impact on their practices and their students. Activities included reading discussions, reflection tasks such as exploring students' cases, commenting on videos related to the roles of a good teacher, reflecting on quotes related to effective teaching, and giving students some recognition, among others.

For conducting the activities within the study group, I chose several readings which aimed to accomplish several goals. One of these goals was to help the participant teachers get acquainted with what a study group entailed. Another goal was to help teachers become aware of those moral dispositions they possessed while getting other perspectives of their teaching practices. Finally, I wanted to help Daniel and Esteban develop fairness,

responsibility and responsiveness so I brought some readings related to these dispositions. (See appendix A for the list of readings we did in the study group).

My role in each of the study group meetings was that of a participant-observer. Furthermore, I facilitated the study group meetings, selected the readings to analyze the moral dispositions in which this research was based on, designed some other activities to help teachers to reflect regarding each of these moral dispositions, motivated these participants to be part of the discussions, and played the role of a researcher through the collection and analysis of the data that emerged from different sources.

Data Sources

Data for the study included multiple sources of information such as interviews, audio- recorded meetings and classroom observations which include teachers' feedback to those observations. In order to explore in detail the participants' interventions and comments, I audio- recorded all study group meetings. The intention was also to analyze their possible changes concerning values over time, for instance, by showing more respect, empathy, commitment and fairness to their learners. After the meetings, data were transcribed and analyzed to keep track of both teachers' diverse processes through their involvement in the group.

In addition, three semi-structured individual interviews were conducted at the beginning, middle and at the end of the process with both participants. The purpose of the first interview, which was conducted as part of a pilot study that I carried out before creating the study group, was to explore the values teachers had and how these values were manifested in the way they related with their students (See appendix B for interview protocol). The second and third interview aimed at determining how the study group had

fostered teachers' self-reflection and awareness of the manner in which they promoted students' participation and inclusion within classes while being attentive to their needs; that is, what progress these teachers had made in terms of fairness, responsibility and responsiveness. Interviews were conducted in Spanish to make participants feel more comfortable and free to express their insights concerning the questions proposed (See appendix C for interview protocol). Interviews were transcribed and analyzed to keep track of the teachers' processes in the group and the possible development of moral dispositions.

Four classroom observations were conducted, and as suggested by Guion, Diehl and McDonald (2002, p.2), the same observation check sheet was used for all observations in order to establish validity of the information collected through this source and identify possible changes concerning both teachers' behaviors in their classes. The first observation was conducted as part of the pilot study. Its purpose was to witness the teacher- student relationships and see what values and attitudes teachers showed in their classes. The second, third and fourth classroom observation aimed at establishing the possible impact of teachers' participation and self-reflection in the study group on their relationship with the students. Similarly, these classroom observations were carried out to analyze the values and qualities these teachers showed (See appendix D for observation protocol).

Concerning the ethical considerations in the study, all eight teachers voluntarily participated in the group. They signed a consent form in which they authorized the observation of their classes, the audio recording of the study group meetings and the individual interviews. In this consent form, all teachers were informed about the purpose and use of the data and that there would not be consequences for their work status in case they decided to withdraw from the study (See appendix E for consent form).

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the fairness, responsibility and responsiveness that the two teachers developed within their participation in the study group, I used a qualitative approach to explore teachers' insights from the readings, their perspectives in the group discussions and their moral dispositions manifested through their interactions with students. Firstly, I read the transcriptions from the thirteen study group meetings, the interviews and class observations several times and highlighted the key ideas or the passages that were related to each of the moral dispositions I wanted to explore (fairness, responsibility and responsiveness).

Following Saldaña's perspective on grouping participants' ideas into codes (Saldaña, 2002, p.2), I made my first attempts at coding the data capturing participants' content and essence into a specific code. Then, I wrote on the side of the transcripts the specific aspect within each moral disposition the passage made reference to, and I established some categories and subcategories related to each disposition's features. For example, the codes about praising students' achievement were related to responsibility and those about involving students in class were related to fairness. Moreover, I read the coded passages again and merged those that corresponded to the same feature while bearing in mind the research question of this study. Besides, I associated the most recurrent categories within each teacher's data to create themes determining what pieces of data could better correspond to the moral disposition I was exploring. To do this analysis, I used the qualitative data analysis software NVivo to organize data. Finally, three main themes arose from this analysis: (a) developing fairness, (b) developing responsibility and (c) developing responsiveness.

Trustworthiness

During all this process, I carried out a series of actions in order to enhance trustworthiness in this research. For instance, and as suggested by Kvale (1996, p.158), I used member checking with the participant teachers by sharing with them my preliminary findings and interpretations to know if they felt identified with them. Moreover, I triangulated the data by verifying findings in all sources of data following the methodological method of triangulation suggested by Guion, Diehl & McDonald (2002, p.2). Finally, this data analysis and my interpretations of the findings were periodically shared with my advisor who provided a different perspective of them.

This section described the participants and the context of this research as well as the analysis of the data concerning the development of moral dispositions, specifically, fairness, responsibility and responsiveness. In the following section, I aim to illustrate both teachers' progressions through their participation in this study group.

Findings

As described in the previous section, this research aimed to analyze the moral dispositions in terms of fairness, responsibility and responsiveness two teachers developed through their participation in a study group as they reflected on their roles as teachers, the values they possessed and how these affected their classes.

Within the study group, a series of activities were carried out in order to challenge teachers with respect to their teaching methods and their perspectives on their teaching practices. In this case, the participant teachers were encouraged to reflect on those attitudes they exhibited in their classrooms which permitted or restrained students' involvement as well as to present ideas on how to respond to their students' necessities, preferences and inquiries. They were asked to develop an activity in their own classes every week and they reported their insights regarding this to their colleagues during the study group sessions. Diverse activities such as readings, videos, and hypothetical problems fostered self-reflection, discussion and constructive feedback among the teachers. (See appendix F for an inventory of the activities to develop moral dispositions). These activities were discussed in the group setting and follow-up conversations with me outside the study group. In this sense, data showed how all the aforementioned activities contributed to adjust these teachers' practices and, through a constant self-reflection, pursue their objectives of being role models for their students. Both teachers commented how remarkable these activities were and the great impact they had on their lives as it was expressed by one of the teachers in his last interview:

These activities are very practical, right? So these activities are related to our practices, so we are gaining something from the beginning. (...) Then these activities really helped me to reflect upon the things I do and my teaching practice.

(...) This has been a great contribution and also a very positive one, which I deeply remember, I mean, this is something not easy to forget. I mean, this is not a theory you tend to forget, right? No, you won't forget this. These are the things that happened to me, and I solved them with my study group and I will remember it all my life from now on (Interview, Daniel, 06/20/13).

All in all, both teachers showed progress in having developed fairness, responsibility and responsiveness to the same extent as it is depicted in the following pages. For example, Daniel and Esteban became more tolerant towards their students, included them into their classes regardless of their special learning needs, and they showed more appropriate behaviors to their students, among others. However, these behaviors sometimes overlap; that is, some behaviors correspond to fairness and responsiveness at the same time. Detailed explanations and evidence of both teachers' development of fairness, responsibility and responsiveness are presented in the following segments.

Developing Fairness

Being fair is one of the most relevant actions a moral teacher must show (Sherman, 2006, p. 42). Data suggest that both teachers started to take actions such as fostering students' participation, valuing all pupils' opinions in class, engaging students with learning difficulties in class, being open to students' diversity and planning classes according to students' needs and interests. Below I explain how both teachers developed fair practices with their students.

Fostering students' participation. Before the activities carried out in the study group, there was some evidence that some of these teachers' classes were focused on the textbooks and basically students had to complete the exercises without interacting with the teachers. Similarly, they tended not to involve some students in class while focusing on

those with a better proficiency level. For example, in one class observation I conducted as part of the pilot study, I noticed how Esteban had a conversation with a new student who wanted to know about the bonuses he had implemented for class games, but he did not want to explain this to her and focused on another student who knew this game and used to win those extra points as illustrated below.

One student asked: “teacher, what does Gurrupletos mean?” Teacher said: “oh, you don’t know this? Oh, you’re new here. Don’t worry stay there, just do nothing today, I’ll explain to you next class”. (He walked away to talk to another student) “Hey Samuel, this is the second Gurrupleto you win this week. That’s something easy for you!” (Class observation, Esteban, 09/20/12).

Along the study group process, both teachers showed some progression with respect to their teaching behaviors. This advancement was an outcome of the facilitator’s continuous feedback following class observations as well as comments articulated in the study group meetings. For instance, Esteban could reflect on the impact he had on those students who felt disregarded and ostracized. Adopting a better attitude to the learners, he began to think about those students who did not frequently participate in his classes and found more ways to involve them by having a more constant visual contact with the learners and assigning all students a role or a topic to be discussed within the classes in order to engage them all in the class.

Similarly, Daniel denoted progress towards the way he fostered interaction and students’ participation by approaching those students who did not frequently speak and choosing a student per class to tell others what was done in the previous class. Evidence of this is provided in the next excerpt from a subsequent observation done to Esteban. In one of his Grammar classes in fourth grade, he brought a reading about Africa and students had

to read and answer some questions. Here, he involved and motivated students to provide more information about the topic and mention what they knew about this continent.

The teacher fostered participation in the class when he said: “hey, guys, everybody should have something to say in the class, anything. It could be a question, comment, idea, anything. Please ask me anything if you don’t understand. Don’t stay behind the topic. Don’t feel afraid to speak” (Class observation, Esteban, 04/23/13).

In sum, both teachers implemented changes in their classes in terms of making fairer decisions in which students were actively involved.

Valuing all students’ opinions in class. Prior to the commencement of the study group, Daniel and Esteban tended not to listen to students who wanted to change the way they had planned their classes and/or the manner they had structured the activities as expressed by both teachers when they were given feedback concerning their class observations conducted during the pilot study. In this sense, they conducted their classes based on how they thought they would be suitable for their students, without considering students’ opinions. A clear impact of the activities conducted in the study group was the fact that Daniel, for example, began to listen to his students’ opinions about class activities and encouraged them to participate in decision making. In this respect, Daniel commented how he tended not to listen to students’ opinions, and due to one of his students’ comments related to how much he liked basketball, he decided to teach his classes in a different environment such as the basketball court, giving all students the message that every member of the class was heard and taken into account when dealing with group decisions. The following excerpt from one of the interviews illustrates this.

Although I have always been a cool teacher with the students, there is always something and students feel afraid to ask or say something. I believe things have been changing because students see they have a voice, and that it makes sense for

them to say something in class. Let's say a game, let's do it in English; let's go outside and play something. These days, for example, we went out to play basketball and I changed some rules based on what we had talked in the meetings (of the study group), but related to basketball. Then I said: if you score, you would have a bonus. So they were very motivated, and this was good because it was related to a student who liked basketball a lot. Then they realized they had a voice and when they said something, they were easily taken into consideration (Interview, Daniel, 06/20/13).

Engaging students with learning difficulties in class. Undoubtedly, involving students in class constitutes another relevant characteristic of a fair teacher. In this case, Daniel and Esteban did not like to be interrupted in class while they were explaining their lessons and continued their classroom instruction being careless about to the students who were unable to keep up with the lesson's momentum. Furthermore, Daniel and Esteban called the attention to those students who were distracted and did not pay attention to them, ignoring their conditions of hyperactivity or attention deficit disorders.

Through the readings and group discussions which aimed to help these teachers to see themselves as agents who should understand students' limitations, both teachers could reflect about the importance of their role in the classroom and began to engage those students who had attention deficit disorder or cognitive disabilities in the topics discussed and the activities done in classes. For instance, in his last interview, Daniel narrates how he got a different perspective of his students' learning process and highlights the importance of taking into account students' particularities to teach them. Besides, he acknowledges the self-reflection promoted in the study group and how he behaves towards students now.

I still call the attention to a student who is distracted and is not paying attention to me. And I get a little bit impatient. But we now must look at other things, and things are different now because I look for the reason why he is distracted, right? (...). For example with Santiago, he gets distracted so often. (..) So I call his attention in this way instead of scolding him and say: "Hey, why aren't you paying attention?, you're not going to learn, you'll fail" and things like those which I used to say before that were inappropriate. Now we look at this and say: "hmm ... the

things I said” (showing some disappointment with his face) and this boy Santiago is now a different guy. He passed the bimestrial test with 7.5 which is an improvement (Interview, Daniel, 06/20/13).

Openness to students’ diversity. Being fair also entails openness to the wide variety of students in a classroom. These participants’ classrooms included many students who came from abroad. However, Esteban and Daniel were inclined to teach their classes assuming that these students understood the local context. As a result, they used to refer to the Colombian setting, celebrities and situations when they provided examples in certain lessons, favoring those from Colombia and disregarding those from abroad. This situation is exemplified in the following comment from the study group meetings in which Esteban mentions that he has some foreign students in his classes, but that he had not elucidated any strategy to involve them in the class and help them understand the examples he normally provides.

Esteban: “Well about the students from foreign countries, I have Ignacio in tenth grade, Alejandro in ninth grade, Eliana and Victoria”

Javier: “What do you do to include them?”

Esteban: “Nothing, to be honest”.

Javier: “What can be done to include them?”

Esteban: “Nothing, to be honest” (Meeting, 03/05/13).

Esteban subsequently changed this behavior due to one of the activities in the study group for which he had to create a game in which all students should be involved; especially those he never included in his explanations. This activity was useful for Esteban who commented the following in a study group session:

OK, about the activity, I guess things went very well and it worked perfectly. One of those foreign students, who had more difficulties with identifying landmarks, won the contest. Because the result was what we were discussing. I mean, that the good students tried to eliminate other good ones in the game. So this guy won and he felt very happy. (Meeting, 03/12/13).

Through an analysis of the great diversity of the school population with the help of the psychologist of the institution to understand some of the students' cases in elementary and secondary sections in terms of hyperactivity and attention deficit disorders, these teachers implemented some changes in their classes. These changes were also evident through a reflective task which aimed to analyze the class activities that favored or disfavored their students in terms of the familiarity they had with the topics. For example, Daniel made his Social Studies classes more dynamic and started to include other places that were more common to students. He asked the students to invent a city based on the cities they had lived in or their imagination. His purpose with this activity was to teach the concept of society bearing in mind students' provenance. Esteban for instance, decided to value all students' abilities within the activities he brought to his classes by making some adjustments. The following excerpt from a class observation illustrates the situation of a student who was a slow note-taker because of his dyslexia and how Esteban introduced a small variation in his classes to include this student keeping in mind his condition.

The teacher had visual contact with the students and implemented a game which involved listening and speaking skills. The activity consisted of listening parts of the songs and trying to understand what the artist said. When Esteban stopped the song, students had to raise their hands and say out loud what they thought the singer had said. Here Esteban said: "all of you should write down what the singer says... and then raise your hands"; so one student said: "Teacher: do I have to write down too? That is going to be harder for me!" and teacher said: "Sorry, Federico, you can only raise your hand and tell me what you understand. In that way it will be easier for you". (Class observation, Esteban, 06/12/13).

Planning classes according to students' needs and interests. I observed at the beginning of the study group that both teachers had been preparing Grammar classes largely based on the topics and characters contained in the textbook. The teachers in the study group concluded that this generic approach did not fully engage students during

classes since the dialogues contained in the textbooks were very basic and the situations depicted there were not meaningful to them. To improve students' engagement, I asked the teachers to customize their Grammar class to incorporate previously identified students' interests, and to change the names of the book's characters for those of the students. The idea was that both teachers would use their students' interests as a guide in designing and implementing class activities, which would lead to higher engagement. Data showed the effectiveness of this change, as Daniel described it in his last interview:

The impact has mainly been in class planning, in how I teach classes. So this is a bit harder, right? But obviously I am more aware that students are key elements in the classroom, so I take my students more into consideration and look for the way to please them. It's not only with Alan, who won the diploma, but with all the students who have different preferences. Then you start planning your classes toward this, to write every single thing for them. If a student likes Justin Bieber, write it down because that's important for her and it doesn't matter if others laugh at this. I deal with it and we all laugh then. And this is valuable information for us. So I say these activities have had a great impact to the point that now a student says something and I feel the need to write it down because I would forget it. Also, when one colleague comments about a game, I feel I have the duty to write it down and implement it in my class. This is basically the impact of these activities and in (my) planning (Interview, Daniel, 06/20/13).

Esteban, however, was more reluctant to adapt class topics and activities to his students' interests and needs. He asked students to do the exercises in the workbook regardless of their necessity or relevance to them. He participated in the study group and completed the assigned tasks, but did not show significant progress beyond reflecting on lesson planning according to his students' needs. Therefore, he continued planning his classes in the same way, but became more aware of his students' interests and promised to modify some units of the textbook according to students' preferences as he expressed it.

I keep planning basically in the same way, right? But I have taken into account some of the specific comments that my colleagues said in the meetings and from some of the activities. For example, I remember this game a lot. Even Catalina implemented it. It was the game in which students were forming groups once they were eliminated. I have never thought about it and hadn't done it until now (Interview, Esteban, 06/20/13).

Both Daniel and Esteban showed some progress in terms of adapting their classes to their students' cognitive and/or physical conditions, and interests, involving them in classes, and showing them that they could participate freely and without discrimination. Besides, they progressed in making class decisions along with their students. However, teachers developed other important moral values that may help them to become true role models for their students. The following segment details the teachers' progress in developing responsibility towards their students' learning.

Developing Responsibility

Study group activities such as the discussion of the readings and reflective videos had a considerable impact on Daniel and Esteban (See appendix F for inventory of the activities to develop moral dispositions). In particular, activities such as commenting on videos related to the roles of a good teacher, reflection activities like exploring student case studies, and reading discussions proved useful. Both teachers demonstrated increased acceptance of their responsibility to promote students' learning by showing respect for students, and becoming more open to students' suggestions.

Promoting students' learning. A responsible teacher must find the best ways to help students to learn. That is, constantly motivating students to show their abilities and praising them for their progress. However, prior to the study group meetings, Daniel and Esteban were focused on fulfilling their school's academic requirements and completing textbook

exercises in order to satisfy parents, regardless of the students' mastery of the topics. That is, this school required them to cover all the topics that the book comprised and parents asked the teachers to solve all the exercises and finish all the book units so that it validated their financial investment. During one of the study group meetings, Daniel expressed how his Science classes were carried out and he commented that his students were not learning and having fun simultaneously.

In Science class, they (students) don't have the possibility to go out and observe the nature since we only have to work in the book. My students told me that we were too focused on the book and that they were not learning anything cool (Meeting, 03/12/13).

Through the reflective tasks within the study group, and through the discussions and ideas offered by colleagues, teachers were compelled to express the key roles of an effective teacher and fostering learning was one of those. In his last interview, Daniel acknowledged the contribution of these reflection activities in increasing his awareness about his role as a teacher and his responsibility to his learners:

I guess this is all what we have talked about. (...) Because we are many times distracted by the noise, inattention, academic results, and so on and I think that is not the kind of teacher that I want to be. I mean, a teacher who teaches and fosters learning, no matter if they learn a little or a lot, but I guess it's more significant that they learn something instead of being with their heads down and say, 'I don't want this class, right? So I guess these activities have made me reflect a lot (Interview, Daniel, 06/20/13).

This progress corresponded to his self-reflections and participation in the study group meetings as well as his willingness to bring new things to class which might be interesting for his students and colleagues. Likewise, Esteban continued with his classroom games, smiled more frequently at students, and fostered a pleasant environment in which

students could have fun and learn at the same time. He understood that students needed constant motivation, and that their learning processes were varied and unique.

Showing respect for students. A fundamental demonstration of teacher responsibility is showing respect for students as people and learners. In other words, teachers should establish formative relationships with their students and foster an environment of empathy and courtesy. This is necessary for students' learning processes since students can build better rapport with their teachers, be more committed to the class, manifest their doubts or comments, and show their abilities. Prior to this research, both teachers sometimes lost their temper and called students inappropriate names during class sessions or even in recess times. For example, Esteban liked to have harsh physical contact with his students, and he inadvertently promoted some inappropriate behaviors like punching and kicking. In one occasion, I observed how Esteban reprimanded a student for having physically attacked a classmate. The student did not want to apologize to his classmate because he had seen Esteban doing the same thing with other people. That is, Esteban used to punch and kick his students since he believed this was a way to build rapport with them. Undoubtedly, these behaviors were quite inappropriate and did not clearly contribute to students' learning processes and self-esteem. Besides, disrespecting their students in front of their peers could alter students' motivation in class and affect the image they have of these educators.

In order to help these teachers to respect their students, they were encouraged to read the Colombian Code for Children and Adolescents and focus on the chapter on minors' rights against physical abuse by adults. The purpose of this was also to help teachers reflect on their inadequate behaviors towards students. Besides, both teachers were

compelled to analyze their body language to the eyes of learners, their way of responding to their questions, and the frequency of their physical contact with students. After all this, both teachers became aware of these inappropriate actions and decided to stop promoting these behaviors in students. For example, when both teachers arrived to class, they encouraged the learners to avoid physical contact among themselves stating that it was disrespectful. Instead of this, Daniel and Esteban softly grasped their students' shoulders to greet them and recaptured students' attention during class using gentle language and avoiding having harsh physical contact. In the last interview, Esteban expressed how the class environment changed and how he was aware of the possible legal consequences he could face with this situation. This would definitely affect his stability in this school and limit his desire of being an effective teacher.

Interviewer: How are physical contact issues with your students after what we discussed in the study group?

Esteban: I guess this has been a 360-degree change because I had some difficulties to stop doing certain things that I daily did. And I did that with my students. I am aware that that shouldn't be done and I even think about it before doing it. However, I did it. Because as I said to you it was difficult to me; and I enjoyed doing that. For example, how could I say this? I grabbed students by the arms (...) when I entered a classroom, let's suppose one student: Carlos, he is a good person and student. He makes a lot of effort and respects others. So one day I entered and he hit me so badly on my back. I felt very angry. But how could I ask him to respect me if I did the same to him before? (...) Let's say now the case with David. I hadn't had those contacts with him, but he liked this very much. But this was basically a matter of letting him know about it, and I told him: no, David, I don't like to play like this, calm down. I have tried to change this a lot because I think that was not favorable for my classes and the role I have, I think it was not acceptable! (Interview, Esteban, 06/20/13).

Being open to students' suggestions. Another fundamental aspect within teacher responsibility is to hear and consider students' ideas and proposals regarding classes.

However, prior to this research, both teachers tended to limit the participation of those

students who intervened or wanted to suggest new things. For example, some students complained that rules were being changed in the middle of games. Others reproached the teachers for not giving them extra time to finish their work. However, they did not feel free to express these issues since teachers would not listen to them as I noticed it in some class observations during the pilot study. In these observations students used to complain to the teachers about the decisions made in class and presented some suggestions to the teachers which were not heard. Through study group discussions and subsequent personal reflections, both teachers became more open-minded and began to accept students' suggestions. Then they considered which changes might be possible and they gradually implemented new routines in their classrooms. In the following excerpt, Daniel explains how he began to value students' input after the discussions in the study group, and how he became more tolerant towards what students expressed:

Well, at the beginning, I didn't think there would be much difference being in the group, right? However, through the discussions I had with the other teachers I found out something, right? That the actions I took or words that I said...for example, a very clear case, when I said "NO". I really feel touched with that, right? Students said: "Can we play something?" And I said "NO". Students said: "Are we going to do something?" And I said "NO". Students said: "Are we going to work outside?" And I said "NO". I really feel touched about this. This immediately influenced me a lot because before I was teacher who said NO, because I needed to cover the attainment targets or there was not even a reason. I feel transformed because now I take into account students' opinions. I don't say NO now. I mean, I immediately want to say NO, and then I remember that moment, and I don't say NO. Instead of this, I said: "sure, but let's do it tomorrow when we have more time or at the end of the class once we finish this or we can do it next week when we have more time, right?" I mean, I avoid saying NO because I realized my students felt frustrated when I did that. So it had a great impact in the disposition I have for the class, right? That not always this has to be negative and I should value students' opinions and in that way to make students feel comfortable and that they have a voice in the class (Interview, Daniel, 06/20/13).

Ultimately, Daniel and Esteban both acknowledged the impact of the study group on their teaching practices, as they became more respectful and tolerant towards students. Becoming more open to students' opinions enabled them to foster a more dynamic learning environment. Evidence of this is manifested in of his comments in the format given after his class observations in which he showed some progress related to how became more open to students' opinions.

When someone observes you, you have another point of view and you can realize of this. I wasn't aware of what I was doing. And that was my mistake. And then, when you said this, I worked on it and promised myself not to say No as an answer. And even this wasn't a NO as an answer; it was not like "NO Because we have already gone out"(of the classroom). It was an absolute NO. This stopped everything immediately and today we're going out of the classroom. (Class Observation feedback, Daniel, 04/17/13).

The following segment details both teachers' development with regard to attentiveness and friendliness, which are critical attributes of responsiveness.

Developing Responsiveness

Data showed some progress in teachers' attentiveness to students and how they modified their methodology to respond to their students' needs. Both teachers became devoted to their students and encouraged them to show their abilities as I explain in the following pages.

Availability to students. Prior to the study group, Daniel and Esteban were described as not having sufficient time for those students who wished to approach them outside the classroom and tell them about things unrelated to classes. For instance, in one of the interviews for the pilot study, the participant teachers reported that some students would look for them during recess but since they were doing something else they were not

available to them and preferred to talk to them only in class. Particularly, during recess time, Daniel preferred to stay in the teachers' lounge, and Esteban spent his time with colleagues practicing sports. For the most part, when these teachers dedicated some time to their students, they only talked about grammar explanations or their grades and did not listen to their students' worries or dreams. Much changed after the study group, and specifically after the reflective tasks. One task required them to share recess time with their students and build some rapport. To carry out this task, it was necessary to request the School principal to let English teachers speak in Spanish only during recess time. Thus, teachers could talk about their personal lives and share opinions with the students without the limitation of the language. In the study group meetings, both teachers acknowledged that this activity enabled them to inspire more trust among the learners. For example, after this activity, one of Daniel's students began to wait for him outside the teachers' lounge, and Daniel devoted time to listen to his problems and feelings. He recounted the experience in one of our study group meetings.

I have a favorite student, but it's not because I had initiated that. He is Miguel who waits for me at teachers' lounge every morning at 7:00 and says: "Good morning". Sometimes, I am not bothered with that and say: "Hi, how are you?" And then he begins to tell me all his things, what worries him. I understand his hyperactivity problem. Last year, other teachers and I used to take him out of the lounge, and in this moment, I permit him to be there. He is a well-mannered boy and greets all the teachers. He is sometimes a little bit irritating, but through what we have talked about in the meetings, I know now how to deal with this (Meeting, 05/14/13).

Fostering collaborative work. Another aspect of teacher responsiveness is the ability to integrate all students' skills and create a functioning mixed ability environment. Both teachers usually planned class activities so that students could work individually and show their personal knowledge. However, they did not encourage them to share this

knowledge with their peers and did not integrate their diverse skills. For example, prior to the study group and during the first class observations done to Esteban, I could observe how a student from elementary grade who had shortly been registered at the school, was compelled to work independently in the classroom regardless of her misunderstanding of the topics that the teacher explained and the bonuses that Esteban used to implement in his classes. This situation is illustrated in the following excerpt from that class observation:

The students in this class were working on their own after the teacher had explained the lesson; basically they were writing some sentences in their notebooks which should be handed in to the teacher as soon as they finished. There was a girl named Raquel who seemed to be confused with what others were doing. I had not seen this girl before in the school so I approached her. She told me her name and that she had entered the school a week ago and expressed that her confusion was related to the Gurrupletos and Lukas used by the teacher in the class. Besides, she said that since she did not understand the class topic very well, she would like the teacher to assign a peer to better explain these concepts to her. After the class observation, I asked the teacher about this situation and he reported not even having noticed that the girl was there and consequently, he did not know her proficiency level (Class observation, Esteban, 09/20/12).

Consequently, in the study group both teachers were assigned a task in which they would identify those students with high proficiency and motivate them to help those with lower proficiency. Daniel and Esteban gained understanding of the importance of having students working together through some mixed ability class sessions. These sessions are defined by Tice (1997,p.5) as those scenarios in which there is a very clear difference in language level among the students and the teacher makes them help each other aiming to potentiate their skills. The task of mixing students for a linguistic interaction also helped to raise teachers' awareness of diversity in the classroom. For instance, Esteban could identify particular students' difficulties and encouraged them to work together and mix their strengths and weaknesses for the sake of learning. In the following comment from one of

the study group meetings, Esteban described the case of a highly proficient student who helped his peers while he (the teacher) devoted to those less skilled students who also required further explanation:

I say something here. What I did as homework was to take advantage of the students. For example, Luis in eighth grade, he has a very good English level. He sometimes does not understand grammar rules, but he has a very good level in English because he is a native speaker and he can help the rest of the students, right? I asked him to do it and he did it. He liked to explain the topics to others when they didn't understand. Besides, I walked around the classroom and checked what they were doing (Meeting, 05/28/13).

Adjust explanations according to students' abilities. Part of showing responsiveness to students involves modifying some teaching methods to better fit their needs. Given the excessive work load, these teachers expressed their time constraints to design extra or different material for those students with special needs. To help these teachers to better respond to students' needs, the study group implemented an activity in which they had to plan a class according to their own particular students' needs. Both teachers showed some progress in how they responded to this activity since they had to identify their students' difficulties with the language and prepare some alternative material for those who had vision problems to help them learn. Daniel adjusted his explanations and class activities to get the best from his students, and also devoted more time to explain things to those students who especially needed it. He described his approach in a study group meeting:

What I now do is adapting the level of difficulty of the activity. For example, I make a student who has disabilities do less or not always less, the same quantity of things or the same activity, but now I take into account his level, even though he needs to improve his learning. It's not that he's going to be in the limbo of knowledge and stay there. The idea is that he learns something and performs what we are doing, but the level or explanation I give now to this kid is very particular. For example, I have some students, who I have to help first and I make them work.

Then I approach another one, and I carefully explain to him what he has to do. (Meeting, 05/28/13).

Willingness to inquire about students` preferences and needs. These teachers also developed responsiveness in terms of their disposition to explore and understand conditions which might hinder the learning process, such as behavioral disorders or cognitive limitations. Before the study group, these teachers tended to deliver their classes to all students in a similar manner, despite knowing that some of them had certain special learning needs. However, they did not completely understand what these special conditions implied or how to address particular students´ cases. Through the supplementary tasks, the teachers were encouraged to deeply analyze some students´ cases and better understand some of their behaviors inside and outside the classroom. For instance, Esteban looked for more information from different sources in order to better respond to what his students needed and help them to explore their abilities in a more effective manner. He shared this experience in one of our meetings:

Going back to what you said: “What are we doing to ask the school for some resources for the students?” I guess the teachers never do that. I have never gone to the principal´s office and asked for any training in Autism or Asperger, and in this moment I have a student who faces this condition. But I learned about these issues and got acquainted with them and also I talked to his parents. I didn´t know about these diseases, but I try now to satisfy his needs regarding the linguistic abilities he should develop, even though you know he won´t develop them easily. He´s going to have some trouble with that and maybe he doesn´t achieve it, but I do everything I can so that he can go further next year or next school term (Meeting, 05/21/13).

Taken together, both participant teachers showed a significant change in terms of responsiveness since they devoted more time to listen to their students´ problems and feelings, adjusted their explanations and class activities to get the best from them and even researched several sources of information to better respond to what they needed and help them to explore their abilities in a more effective manner.

The preceding sections detailed the development of these two participants regarding some of the most relevant aspects of fairness, responsibility and responsiveness. The teachers became more aware of their actions, implemented changes in their classes to effectively include all learners, fostered learning and group work, and aimed to satisfy their particular pupils' needs. In the following section, I will analyze these findings in the light of specific theories about moral dispositions.

Discussion

Fundamentally, the findings of this study suggest that both teachers developed some qualities related to fairness in terms of involving students in classes, and showing them that they could participate freely and without discrimination. In a like manner, both teachers showed some improvement concerning responsibility since they became more respectful and tolerant towards students and assumed a more open behavior to their opinions. Regarding responsiveness, both teachers became more attentive to students while modifying their teaching methods. All these scenarios correspond to what Stooksberry, Schussler and Bercaw (2009, p.721) claim when they conceive dispositions as active and inactive aspects which could be shaped and encouraged in teachers to reflect on their practices. In this sense, both teachers, through their involvement in the study group, reflected on their own values and qualities which favored or hindered their roles as effective teachers and subsequently develop these moral dispositions.

In this section, I discuss the findings in the light of the theories about dispositions in general and moral dispositions in particular that I presented in the theoretical framework as well as other studies conducted by local and foreign authors. I organize this discussion in terms of the influence of the diverse self-reflection activities the participant teachers carried out in the study group, the role of the facilitator, and teachers' commitment to the work of the study group which contributed to the development of moral dispositions in both teachers.

Largely, these two teachers developed such moral dispositions depending on the circumstances they were involved in, the activities they carried out and the guidance they received. This idea is similar to what Diez (2007, p. 207) states when she argues that

dispositions can be developed depending on the amount of time individuals are exposed within some specific contexts. In a like manner, this study validates the conception that study groups are moments for teachers' self-reflection and mutual learning since they permit teachers to be in a pleasant environment with other colleagues who understand their realities and share some insights regarding education. In this sense, this conception is also consistent with what Bedoya and Montoya (2011) found in their study about fostering teachers' knowledge through study groups. They found that study groups can enable teachers to reflect on themselves and subsequently have an impact on their students. Therefore, study groups constitute a space for mutual benefit for both teachers and students.

In the following lines, I aim to interpret the development of moral dispositions in Daniel and Esteban by analyzing the aspects that favored or restrained both teachers' behavioral changes concerning fairness, responsibility and responsiveness.

Self-Reflection Activities and the Development of Moral Dispositions

Given that the present study aimed to focus on self- reflection to develop moral dispositions, both teachers were essentially challenged to analyze their values and qualities as human beings and teachers. This was possible due to a self-reflection task concerning those factors that were interfering with their teaching practice. Since one of these tasks was the readings, teachers might have felt identified with them and encouraged to emulate the ideal behaviors that these readings suggested. In this regard, they may have considered if what they did in the classroom had a connection with what these authors mentioned in their articles about the ideal role model teachers should become. This is coherent with the affirmation of Freeman (2007), Raths (2007) and Shiveley and Misco (2010), who assert that in- service teachers need to reflect on their teaching practice to develop dispositions to

better understand their students. If this is the case, then the self- reflection activities within the group may have been like a paradigm in which both teachers may have analyzed their roles and their commitment to the students. In the following lines, I discuss how both the activities and the self-reflection they prompted in the study group helped these teachers to be fairer.

Activities aiming to develop fairness. Largely, both teachers were encouraged to identify the reasons why they favored and disregarded some students in their classes and analyze possible solutions to change these actions. They had to overlook their personal assumptions regarding their students to become fair agents in and outside the classroom. This idea is consistent with the notion that moral dispositions are values related to “the inclination to think through the assumptions and ramifications behind those values, considering desirable ends and the processes to achieve those ends” (Stooksberry, Schussler & Bercaw, 2010, p. 353). In this respect, to eventually involve their students in their classes, Daniel and Esteban may have analyzed what biases they had and showed to their students and the actions they implemented in order to favor some of them and disregard others. However, they not only showed to be fair when they involved all their students in the classroom regardless of their abilities but they also aimed to satisfy their needs.

Daniel and Esteban showed to be fair when they engaged those students with learning difficulties in class and understood their feelings when they were not taken into account in the class activities. This understanding could have been caused by the videos watched and discussed within the group which aimed to analyze how fair they were and what they could do to satisfy their students’ needs. All in all, both Daniel and Esteban

showed certain progress in fairness since they felt the desire to meet their students' needs and looked for ways to include them in class.

Although these self-reflection activities proved to be useful in developing fairness, they were also helpful to develop responsibility in both teachers as it is shown in the following paragraphs.

Activities Aiming to Develop Responsibility. Data show that both teachers promoted students' learning by finding other strategies to help them to access learning. According to Sherman (2006), responsible teachers should deal with students' conditions and promote learning while being moral mentors (p.47). Teachers' internal reflection derived from the videos, readings and discussions done in the group permitted them to reflect on their values and qualities. Such videos and discussions were basically to examine their roles as teachers and the moral responsibility they have with the learners and their parents. This confirms the assertion that moral dispositions can be evidenced in terms of the responsibility teachers have toward others, the necessity to reflect on their values and the assumptions and consequences of their decisions (Stooksberry, Schussler & Bercaw, 2009, p.723; Oja & Reiman, 2007, p. 95).

However, another possible reason to explain why these teachers looked for other strategies to help students learn could be related to their necessity to keep their job at the school. Since they were compelled to show outstanding academic results, they may have committed to differently teach students with special learning needs and devote more patiently to them while understanding their diverse learning processes. Given that one of the policies of the school is to include students with special learning needs in regular classrooms, it is possible that teachers may have adjusted their teaching aiming to personify

the teacher role that this school fosters. That is, an educator who understands all of the students' conditions and aims to satisfy their needs. As Lauermaun and Karabenick (2013) state, through self-reflection these teachers were responsible for their roles, and understood the real purpose of being a teacher which is educating better human beings while promoting their learning.

In a like manner, Daniel and Esteban were encouraged to show responsibility when they decided to respect their students by avoiding physical contact with them and gently recapturing their attention when they were distracted. As Hammett and Staeheli (2011) argue, respect is related to responsibility and learners are human beings before being students. In this sense, teachers were compelled to respect themselves as teachers and respect their students as human beings. Thus, Daniel and Esteban may have analyzed the kind of relationships they established with their students and the extent to which these relationships were respectful or contributed to maintain the positive image among the students in the school. However, it is possible that these teachers changed their behavior because they did not want to be involved in legal issues that would seriously affect their jobs if one of the students' parents or other teachers complained about this situation.

Another possibility for these changes in terms of responsibility for both teachers, could also be argued that they felt forced to modify this behavior due to the fact that I am the English coordinator in this school and they thought that if they did not improve their behaviors, there would be consequences for their jobs or affect the positive image they possess as good teachers. However, data indicate that these changes can be attributed to the self-reflection activities conducted in the study group.

The following paragraphs will detail how the activities carried out in the study group influenced these teachers to develop responsiveness.

Activities Aiming to Develop Responsiveness. Concerning responsiveness, both teachers became more attentive to their students and receptive to their worries or concerns after implementing some of the activities in the study group. This transformation was exemplified when teachers were told to spend their recess time with students in order to know them better. Therefore, it is likely that such transformation occurred when teachers approached students without the limitation of having to speak to them in English. Both teachers might have felt more confident to share their insights about any topic, not necessarily related to school issues, and regardless of school's policy of having to speak in English to the students at all times. Therefore, teachers found some music or sports preferences in common with the students, given that they were also very young. This fact allowed them to get closer to the students.

Besides, the visit of the psychologist of the institution to the study group helped Daniel and Esteban to have a more clear perspective of what their students needed. This new perspective helped them analyze other strategies to approach them. It is possible then that these teachers may have felt more sensitive to what their students felt and liked and decided to focus their classes on those topics that could motivate them more and satisfy their necessities benefiting their learning process and strengthening their relationship.

Finally, Daniel and Esteban showed to be morally responsive when they focused on searching other strategies to teach those students with special learning needs. They became aware of the diverse limitations their students faced in their relationships with others and of the challenges they had to overcome in order to succeed in all their classes. All these teachers' achievements concerning moral dispositions were possible not only to the self-reflection activities carried out in the study group but also to the important role the facilitator played in this process. Below, I discuss the influence of the guidance of the

facilitator in both teachers' development of moral dispositions. This guidance is supported by Johnston & Buzzelli (2001, p.881) who state that it is crucial to help teachers reflect on their moral discourse.

The Role of the Facilitator in the Development of Moral Dispositions

My role as facilitator in this study basically comprised providing feedback to these teachers in order to raise awareness of the importance of being morally disposed, and lead them to understand students' diverse learning needs through the exploration of their own values as teachers and their commitment to students. This feedback was given within the study group sessions and after the class observations. During the study group sessions, I led the discussions derived from the readings, videos and assigned activities and helped them reflect, through direct questions, on the influence that all teachers have on their students and how some teachers' actions help students learn more easily and be accepted in the classroom regardless of their special conditions. Concerning the feedback after class observations, I analyzed with both teachers those aspects that I noticed in their classes and which were either beneficial to their teaching practices or which should be modified. Afterwards, both teachers wrote their insights in the class observation format concerning not only how they felt during the class observation but also what they learnt through the feedback given.

Although I focused on helping these two teachers to develop all the moral dispositions proposed in this study, data showed that the facilitator's feedback contributed more to the development of fairness and responsiveness. One reason for this could be that the feedback given after class observations aimed to invite teachers to reflect on their relationship with the students, how they promoted students' participation and how they

dealt with those students with special learning needs. Feedback within the study group sessions was more directed to focus on the moral principles all teachers should have and manifest. Below, I analyze this feedback's influence regarding fairness and responsiveness.

The role of the facilitator and teachers' development of fairness. Both teachers showed some behavioral changes related to fairness due to the constant feedback and remarks provided by the facilitator. For instance, Daniel showed some gains understanding that his students are unique and that his classes have to be adapted to students' needs and interests and that every situation in the classroom should be handled differently since every student is different (Berry, 2008, p.1156). This understanding may have been caused by the constant guidance and the effective rapport that the facilitator built with both participant teachers which aimed to help them analyze the extent to which they could show to be fair and, specifically, reflect on how frequent their students could talk freely in their classes without being disregarded, and how often these students' opinions were taken into account in the classroom. Particularly, Esteban, through the frequent facilitator's suggestions, analyzed his weaknesses as a teacher and focused on implementing what the facilitator suggested which apparently led him to adopt a better behavior towards his learners.

The role of the facilitator and teachers' development of responsiveness. Daniel and Esteban showed some progress in terms of the manner in which they adjusted their explanations according to students' abilities which is consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Stooksberry, Schussler and Bercaw (2009) which determined that moral dispositions are influential factors in teachers' thinking and actions aiming to raise awareness. In this case, the facilitator encouraged these teachers to reconsider their values

and their true principles as teachers. Thus, this study supports Velea and Farca's (2013) study which found that all teachers are representations of moral principles for their students and that they should understand their particularities in order to foster the best interaction with them. It is probable that after class observations' feedback, Daniel and Esteban reflected on their roles as moral agents and the extent to which their class explanations were really addressed to all their learners, aiming to be more responsive. Another explanation for this change could be that, as teachers spent their recess time with some of the learners identifying their worries and their learning needs, they could explain to them in a more detailed way some content aspects from the classes which were unclear to them, and in that way, they showed their responsiveness to students.

In sum, the feedback provided by the facilitator permitted these teachers to develop fairness and responsiveness and help them to reflect on those actions that hindered their roles as effective educators and to take actions to improve their practice. It is to mention here that my cheerful and sensitive personality might have contributed to create a pleasant space in which the participant teachers felt confident and understood. Likewise, I attempted to use a gentle language with an assertive discourse which definitely influenced the teachers' improvement. Besides the influence of the role of the facilitator in the development of moral dispositions, there is also the influence that teachers' commitment played in this process. Below I provide a discussion of how teachers' commitment contributed to the development of moral dispositions.

Teachers' Commitment and the Development of Moral Dispositions

At the beginning of this study, teachers' commitment was not immediate and they showed some skepticism regarding the impact this study group might have on their practices as well as some resistance to change. These teachers' skepticism can be explained by the fact that most teachers tend to show some resistance concerning change and, even though they want to participate in professional development programs, some believe they would not learn anything new. They are even doubtful if these programs might help them reflect and change their principles and perspectives regarding teaching.

However, these teachers decided to start this process and accomplish all the tasks proposed within the study group. Perhaps they made this decision given that both saw this as a unique opportunity for knowing more about themselves, improving their level and share their insights with others since they had not participated in any study group before and the school did not provide them with many professional development spaces. These teachers' commitment was evident when they did the readings assigned, attended the study group sessions, shared their opinions with their colleagues, provided some suggestions to their peers about any situation, showed willingness to adopt changes in their classes when feedback was provided, and most importantly, when they were willing to do all the activities assigned in the study group. That is, both teachers were motivated to implement one activity per week in their own classrooms and report their insights and comments regarding these activities in the following study group session. Daniel and Esteban were always eager to share with their colleagues what they did in the classrooms and what they learnt about themselves and their students. As a result, data showed that this teachers'

commitment contributed more to the development of fairness and responsiveness, as it will be explained thereafter.

Teachers' commitment and the development of fairness. Daniel and Esteban's involvement in this study group proved to be useful since they denoted progress towards how frequent they fostered students' interaction and participation as well as the manner in which they planned their classes aiming not to favor any student in particular and praising all students' contribution to the class. This can validate the notion that teachers' commitment to a group can contribute to modify certain teachers' behaviors and foster effective self-reflection acknowledging Aldana and Cardenas's (2011) assertion of study groups when they state that study groups promote teachers' learning and self-reflection. It also supports the ideas of Richards and Farrell's (2005) who suggest that support groups have a positive impact on teachers and encourage them to learn and work cooperatively. Therefore, these teachers' involvement in the study group permitted them and other colleagues to better express their ideas regarding students' inclusion and participation in the classrooms.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that even though both teachers showed to be committed to the study group, Daniel developed some characteristics of fairness in a different degree than Esteban since the last one showed some reluctance to adapt class topics and activities to his students' preferences. This reluctance might be explained by the fact that he did not easily permit anyone to modify the way he had planned his classes, and when he did, he alleged that his classes would not be successful; although this does not imply that, throughout all this process, he had not been committed to the rest of the activities for which he could show his values as a fair teacher.

Teachers' commitment and the development of responsiveness. Both teachers' commitment to the group had also an impact on their development of responsiveness. In this case, Daniel and Esteban found other strategies to integrate all their students' skills while fostering a collaborative work environment. It can be said that this achievement corresponded to their engagement in the activities, specifically, when they met outside the meetings to socialize the best ways to perform the tasks assigned and suggested each other what they could do to integrate their students' language skills. It is possible that through these extra gatherings both teachers adopted a new perspective of their roles as responsive educators. It can also be claimed that, through their involvement with their peers, they understood that their students could better learn if they were permitted to interact with others. This is similar to what Hudelson (2001) found in her analysis of study groups for which she concluded that teachers' commitment is essential for them to expand their knowledge in many ways and their sharing enhances their interest to continue learning from other colleagues. Thus, both teachers may have realized the benefits that study groups bring to teachers and they decided to help their students to interact more with their peers while potentiating their skills.

All in all, it is paramount to assert that these teachers' involvement in the group encouraged them to be reflective, willing and responsive (Dottin, 2006; Stooksberry, 2009; Breese & Nawrocki-Chabin, 2007), and constituted a fundamental aspect in the development of moral dispositions in both teachers. On the whole, the present study has emphasized the necessity of developing moral dispositions in teachers while praising the role of study groups to accomplish this. Besides, as Burant et al. (2007, p.405) claim in their research, moral dispositions have a strong connection with moral sensibility and personal qualities which are related to reflective thinking. Thus, study groups are

fundamental strategies for teachers' professional development since they can contribute to teachers' exploration of their own biases and pursue reciprocal learning as it was discussed in the previous lines.

This section has provided an analysis of the main findings of this study and the possible explanations concerning the influences of the assigned activities within the study group, the feedback given by the facilitator to the participant teachers and their engagement to the work of the study group in the development of moral dispositions. In the next section, I will explain how this study responds to the research question I posed, present some conclusions of this study and also highlight some of its possible limitations. Besides, I suggest the implications of this study for diverse stakeholders and some ideas for further research.

Conclusions

This study has shown how in-service teachers could develop fairness, responsibility and responsiveness through an active participation in a study group while reflecting on themselves and their actions within the classroom. Some of the most significant findings reveal that both teachers showed evident progress related to students' involvement in class, reflected on those actions which enabled or restrained students' learning and aimed to satisfy those less-skilled students' needs. Both teachers gained a new perspective of their practice, showed to be morally disposed in terms of fairness, responsibility and responsiveness and demonstrated how, through a reflection process, they changed some aspects which prevented them from being effective educators.

Furthermore, findings suggest that in general the activities conducted within the study group such as readings, video reflections, and hypothetical problems fostered reflection and discussion among the participants. More specifically, these activities helped both teachers to develop fairness, responsibility and responsiveness and were key factors for teachers to reconsider their values and behaviors towards their students and how they approached them inside and outside the classroom.

From the outcomes of this study, it is also possible to conclude that moral dispositions, specifically, fairness, responsibility and responsiveness could be developed if teachers are willing and committed to engage in the process. Thus, teachers' commitment is essential for any study group to be successful in enriching teachers' practices. Furthermore, this study validates the importance of teachers' study groups since they enhance teachers' self-confidence, enable them to share their concerns, worries and ideas, and essentially permit them to reflect on themselves and their practices while working cooperatively

(Sierra, 2007a, p.302). Besides, study groups help teachers to support each other and find common solutions to their worries as well as to analyze those factors that may influence their students' learning processes (Hudelson, 2001, p.23).

Moreover, the role of the facilitator within a study group and his or her constant feedback and guidance can foster teachers' awareness of their moral principles. If the facilitators' feedback is systematic and precise, teachers can eventually positively respond to it and adopt new behaviors. That is, constructive feedback by the facilitator definitely permits educators to reconsider their behaviors, understand themselves and manifest significant and lasting changes in their teaching practices.

In a like manner, when teachers are engaged in professional development strategies such as study groups, both their learning and pedagogical gains are more easily obtained allowing them to find common solutions to their worries and needs while building rapport among themselves, and essentially, cultivating professional communities.

Finally, this study indicates that fairness, responsibility and responsiveness as moral dispositions are possible to develop in a context in which both teachers learnt about themselves and exhibited proper behaviors and inclusive actions towards their students through cooperation and interaction with their colleagues. That is, teachers' values were shaped and properly manifested to their learners thanks to their participation in the study group and the reflection process they went through concerning their assumptions about their pupils which led them to regard their pupils as both learners and individuals. Despite the positive results of this study, it is important to analyze its limitations which comprise diverse aspects. I discuss those aspects in the following lines.

Limitations of This Study

A number of limitations need to be considered within this study. These limitations comprise some biases with respect to the research design and the researcher's role.

Research design. This study only focused on exploring teachers' development of fairness, responsibility and responsiveness within the study group from the teachers' and the researcher's perspective and did not include students' perspectives regarding both teachers' development of fairness, responsibility and responsiveness as moral dispositions. Including the students' perspective could have provided information to support or counter the changes that the teachers achieved. Moreover, given that I was the English coordinator in this school, it is possible that this role may have influenced these teachers' behaviors making them feel obliged to show certain behavioral changes during the process which could have altered the results of the study.

My role as a researcher. Within this research, I was an insider since the participant teachers and I worked in the same institution and had a very close relationship which could have influenced my perspective concerning the participant teachers' development of each one of the moral dispositions I wanted them to develop to the point of losing my objectivity. Besides, it is possible that Daniel and Esteban have shown some behavioral progress related to any other important moral disposition, but I did not consider it since the study focused on the development of fairness, responsibility and responsiveness. In sum, my condition as an insider and my research interests may have influenced what the findings reveal.

Along with the conclusions and the possible limitations of the present study, it is paramount to mention some of the implications of this study concerning different stakeholders in Colombia, as it will be explained thereafter.

Implications

Besides presenting some of the benefits and behavioral changes that in-service teachers can have through their engagement in a study group, this study suggests diverse implications for stakeholders in our country. What follows is a description of some aspects that school administrators, teacher education programs, in-service teachers, professional developers and professional development programs should consider when implementing study groups to foster in-service teachers' development of moral dispositions.

School administrators should stimulate and support the creation of study groups in their institutions. In this respect, they should provide teachers with sufficient time and resources so that they analyze their practices for the benefit of the students. This support should be understood as scheduling pedagogical meetings for teachers to analyze their concerns and insights concerning their teaching practices. This might constitute a starting point for those educators who want to create a study group in their institutions to address their interests and needs as educators. Moreover, school administrators should help in-service teachers to reflect on their values and develop moral dispositions such as fairness, responsibility and responsiveness to foster a more human approach to teaching. In this scenario, more disposed teachers could understand their students' needs in more detail and create more inclusive classrooms.

Concerning the implications of this study for teacher education programs, it is recommended that such programs aim to revise their curricula and include moral issues in

the preparation of pre-service teachers. One way to do this is by encouraging pre-service teachers to understand the importance of moral dispositions so that they can exemplify proper behaviors and foster more satisfactory students' learning processes with their future students. Another way is to provide pre-service teachers with the tools to learn to regard their future learners as individuals and not only as learners. The inclusion of moral dispositions in teacher education programs should focus on fairness, responsibility and responsiveness given that these are useful to promote behavioral changes in teachers and become the most evident and imperative moral dispositions that all educators should exhibit as this study indicates.

A key implication for in-service teachers corresponds to the fact that they should devote more time to reflect on the inner values and qualities that they possess and manifest while educating their students. That is, they should focus on developing the moral dispositions necessary for teaching in inclusive contexts while keeping a constant reflection process on their own biases and assumptions concerning the students they have in their classrooms. It is therefore desirable that all in-service teachers are aware of how they approach and include their pupils.

Regarding the implications for professional development programs, it is important to create professional development programs that promote the development of moral dispositions in in-service teachers since there is a need for them to become more sensitive human beings, understanding mentors and effective colleagues. That is, professional development programs should be more focused on exploring the moral dispositions that in-service teachers possess, help them to develop those they need and guide them in the process of becoming moral educators. Such exploration can be obtained by helping them reflect on their actions and showing them those real scenarios in which a moral teacher can

make a difference. Last but not least, professional development programs should acknowledge the fact that teachers have a great responsibility to instruct students and help them become moral citizens. In this sense, they should provide teachers with a group of professionals such as psychologists who could offer a different perspective of themselves as educators and support their personal development.

Finally, facilitators of professional development programs should focus on how to motivate in-service teachers to reflect on themselves and their practices. Particularly, they should design strategies to keep these teachers committed and constantly motivated to better perform in their classes and approach their students in a more adequate manner. Besides, they should enhance their leadership skills as facilitators to better guide teachers in their learning process and provide them with effective feedback. Furthermore, they should help teachers to develop their leadership skills with the aim of instructing them on how to guide a similar process with other educators.

Further Research

Given that the participant teachers in this study developed some moral dispositions in terms of fairness, responsibility and responsiveness through their involvement in the study group, it would be worth exploring how these teachers can help their learners to develop these same dispositions. Similarly, it would be worth exploring how in-service teachers can develop these moral dispositions through other professional development strategies such as peer coaching. That is, through the guidance of a coach who could provide teachers with the necessary activities and feedback to help them reflect on themselves and their behaviors towards their pupils.

Besides, researchers could analyze how in-service teachers can develop some other important moral dispositions through their participation in a study group. These other moral dispositions to be explored could be honesty, persistence and dignity. It would be also interesting to conduct a similar study in a public school where in- service teachers' circumstances may vary, for instance, in terms of time and resources provided to teachers. In this sense, we could have a broader perspective on how moral dispositions in in-service teachers are developed and what aspects could be determinant within their development. All these possible studies could contribute to the professional development processes of teachers in our country and shed light for other researchers who may be interested in exploring the human dimension of teaching.

On the whole, this study showed to be useful to understand how in-service teachers can reconsider their values through their involvement in a study group and how their reflection and commitment and the facilitator's feedback can help them to become moral agents and carry out more effective teaching practices.

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APPENDIX A: READINGS DISCUSSED IN THE STUDY GROUP

LIST OF READINGS IN THE STUDY GROUP

Developing Teachers' Moral Dispositions in a Study Group

JAVIER ALEXANDER RIVERA ARIAS

- Berry, R. A. W. (2008). Novice teachers' conceptions of fairness in inclusion classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24*(5), 1149–1159.
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APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 1

Teachers' Interview Protocol Form 1

Developing Teachers' Moral Dispositions in a Study Group

Fecha: Septiembre ____, 2012

Entrevistado: _____

Entrevistador: Javier Alexander Rivera Arias

Objetivo: Explorar qué valores tienen los docentes y como se manifiestan estos en sus prácticas.

Preguntas:

1. ¿Cuántos años hace que usted es profesor?
2. ¿Qué lo motivó a ser profesor?
3. ¿Cómo se describe usted como profesor en términos de las relaciones que establece con sus estudiantes?
4. ¿Hasta qué punto cree usted que satisface las expectativas de sus estudiantes y sus preguntas?
5. ¿Qué hace usted cuando los estudiantes llevan a la clase situaciones diferentes de los aspectos académicos?
6. ¿Podríamos decir que usted es un profesor justo? ¿En qué momentos no los es?
7. ¿Cuán a menudo usted potencializa el talento de sus estudiantes y distribuye responsabilidades de manera equitativa?
8. ¿Cómo manifiesta usted respeto por sus estudiantes?
9. ¿Cuán a menudo usted reflexiona sobre las situaciones que pasan en el salón de clase y hace los correctivos necesarios?
10. ¿Qué consejos le da usted a sus estudiantes para que sean mejores seres humanos?

Post Interview Comments:

A. What points were relevant in this interview which I have to analyze more deeply regarding the moral dispositions I want these teachers to develop?

* Fairness _____

* Responsibility _____

* Responsiveness _____

B. Other aspects to consider for a future interview are:

C. What is the contribution of this interview to my research topic?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 2

Teachers' Interview Protocol Form - 2

Developing Teachers' Moral Dispositions in a Study Group

Fecha: _____, 2013

Entrevistado: _____

Entrevistador: Javier Alexander Rivera Arias

Objetivo: Entender cuanto ha contribuido la participación de los docentes en el grupo de estudio para desarrollar disposiciones morales como la responsabilidad, la sensibilidad y la justicia mediante la reflexión de su práctica.

1. ¿En qué le ha aportado la reflexión que el grupo de estudio posibilitó a su labor docente?
2. ¿Qué piensa usted acerca de las actividades que se realizaron en el grupo de estudio y en qué contribuyeron estas a su práctica docente?
3. ¿Cuál es su opinión acerca de las relaciones establecidas por usted y los docentes en el grupo de estudio?
4. ¿Qué le ha aportado el grupo de estudio en las relaciones que usted establece con sus estudiantes?
5. ¿Qué podría usted decirme sobre la manera en que usted reflexiona sobre su quehacer pedagógico a partir de lo discutido en el grupo de estudio?
6. ¿Cómo lleva a cabo usted las actividades de clase de acuerdo a lo planteado en el grupo de estudio?
7. ¿Qué incidencia ha tenido lo aprendido en el grupo de estudio con relación a la manera como usted plantea las clases a sus estudiantes?
8. ¿Qué deberíamos mejorar en el grupo de estudio para el segundo semestre?

Preguntas puntuales para los docentes

- En la entrevista anterior mencionabas que tenías dificultades para manejar el trato brusco con los estudiantes. ¿Ha cambiado esta actitud con ellos a partir de la reflexión fomentada en el grupo de estudio y los temas discutidos allí?

(Pregunta para profesor 1)

- En la entrevista anterior mencionabas que te impacientabas con tus estudiantes cuando hacían cosas diferentes en tus clases. ¿Ha cambiado esta actitud con ellos a partir de la reflexión fomentada en el grupo de estudio y los temas discutidos allí?

(Pregunta para ambos profesores)

- En la entrevista anterior mencionabas que quisieras reflexionar más sobre hechos de irrespeto o injusticia a los estudiantes. ¿Ha cambiado esta situación a partir de la reflexión fomentada en el grupo de estudio y los temas discutidos allí?

(Pregunta para profesor 2)

- Resumen de lo manifestado por el docente en la entrevista
- Preguntas sobre si el docente quiere agregar algo, expandir o aclarar algún aspecto mencionado.
- Agradecimiento al docente participante por su tiempo y comentarios.

APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Classroom Observation *

Developing Teachers' Moral Dispositions in a Study Group

Date of Observation _____ Time: _____ Teacher: _____

Grade. _____ Observer: Javier Alexander Rivera

Purpose: The purpose of this classroom observation is to see how teacher- students' relationships are and what values these teachers show in the classroom setting.

<i>Highly evident</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Lowest</i>	<i>Not Evidenced</i>
5	4	3	2	1	0

Teacher's fostering and educational climate for learning	Scale	Comments
The teacher and students seem to be interested and enthusiastic concerning what happens in the class		
The teacher uses students' names		
Teacher involves students in deciding what issues to discuss		
The teacher has constant eye contact with his students		
Humor is used appropriately by the teacher		
The teacher does not embarrass or belittle his students in any way		
The teacher fosters a participative classroom atmosphere		
Class delivery is paced to his students' needs		
The teacher pays attention to students' cues of boredom and confusion		
The teacher helps quieter students to interact with others		
The teacher prompts awareness of students' prior learning and experiences		
The teacher provides students with the opportunity to mention problems/concerns within the class, either verbally or in writing		
The teacher shows favoritism to certain students		
The teacher is available to his students before or after this class		

* This form was taken and adapted from the Community College of Aurora's [Mentor Program Handbook](#) and Staffordshire University's "Guidelines for the Observation of Teaching,"
<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/resources/peer/instruments/>

Developing Teachers' Moral Dispositions in a Study Group

Classroom Observation - Teachers' comments

Teacher: _____ **Date:** _____

Observer: Javier Alexander Rivera

- **How did you feel during the class observation?**

- **What did you learn through the feedback given?**

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSIDAD DE ANTIOQUIA – ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS
MAESTRÍA EN ENSEÑANZA Y APRENDIZAJE DE LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS
PROPUESTA DE INVESTIGACIÓN: DEVELOPING TEACHERS' MORAL DISPOSITIONS IN A STUDY GROUP

JAVIER ALEXANDER RIVERA ARIAS

CARTA DE CONSENTIMIENTO

Febrero 19 de 2013.

Cordial saludo.

Usted está invitado a participar en un proyecto de investigación que estaré llevando a cabo desde Febrero de 2013 hasta noviembre de 2013, aproximadamente, bajo la supervisión de la asesora Ana María Sierra. Mi propuesta de investigación consiste en realizar grabaciones de las sesiones del grupo de estudio, observaciones de clase periódicas y entrevistas esporádicas, con el fin de hacer un análisis de las disposiciones morales que un educador puede desarrollar en un grupo de estudio, mediante la reflexión de su práctica docente y con miras a mejorar su rol como educador y sus relaciones con sus estudiantes.

Si usted está de acuerdo en participar, deberá formar parte del grupo de estudio conformado para esta investigación en el Colegio Theodoro Hertzl. Igualmente, será entrevistado varias veces durante el proceso y sus clases serán observadas con miras a analizar sus cambios de comportamiento a partir del trabajo en el grupo de estudio. Las entrevistas, al igual que algunas partes de las clases, serán audio grabadas con su autorización. La información que quede consignada en los materiales tomados de esas grabaciones será borrada cuando el proyecto haya llegado a su final. Su participación no implicará ningún riesgo personal. Por el contrario, el objetivo de mi propuesta es contribuir con su desarrollo profesional y tener una oportunidad de trabajo y de aprendizaje en mi caso.

Los resultados de este estudio serán presentados en un trabajo final de investigación que será guardado en la Biblioteca Central de la Universidad de Antioquia y en la Biblioteca de la Escuela de Idiomas y serán enseñados a la comunidad académica. Igualmente, podrían ser presentados en conferencias locales y/o nacionales, y/o publicados en un artículo para una revista de investigación. Su nombre no aparecerá en ninguna publicación o presentación oral. Se utilizará un seudónimo para proteger su identidad.

Su participación en este proyecto es completamente voluntaria y usted tiene la libertad de retirarse del mismo cuando lo considere. Su elección de participar no afectará su estatus como docente en la institución. Si lo desea, puede hacer una copia de los resultados de la investigación cuando el estudio concluya.

Información de contacto

Si tiene preguntas acerca de este trabajo, por favor contacte a Javier Alexander Rivera por teléfono al 2283301, al celular 3147923412, o por correo electrónico a: jrivera@theodoro.edu.co o la profesora Ana María Sierra por teléfono al 2195799 o por correo electrónico a: amsierra3@gmail.com.

JAVIER ALEXANDER RIVERA ARIAS

AUTORIZACIÓN: He leído la información arriba consignada y entiendo la naturaleza de este estudio. Estoy de acuerdo en participar en él y acepto las condiciones.

Firma: _____ Fecha: _____

APPENDIX F: INVENTORY OF THE ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP MORAL DISPOSITIONS

* SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP FAIRNESS

Discussion of the readings: “Novice teachers’ conceptions of fairness in inclusion classrooms” by Berry (2008) and “The moral is in the practice” by Hansen, D.T. (1998). In this case, teachers were motivated to read and bring to the study group sessions all those students’ names of which came to their minds when they read the articles. They should discuss with their colleagues their insights to the readings, the names of those students they were thinking about during the readings as well as some of the reasons for this.

Reflective videos:

“Heart of teacher”. Video taken from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tN1U0uu2e4>. This video shows some inspirational stories about teachers who made the difference and aimed to make classroom a more fair scenario.

“Dear future Mom”. Video taken from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ju-q4OnBtNU>. This video shows the responses of some Down syndrome people to a mom who is expecting a baby with this condition. The video was used to make teachers feel as the addressers of this letter and the diverse possibilities these children in the classroom and their lives can have.

Hypothetical problems: To imagine themselves as students who are rejected by other classmates and disregarded by their teachers. What would they do about it? What can be done about it?

* SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP RESPONSIBILITY

Discussion of the readings: “Respect and responsibility: Teaching citizenship in South African high schools” by Hammett, D., & Staeheli, L. (2011) and “Moral dispositions in teacher education: Making them matter” by Sherman, S. (2006). In this, teachers’ insights about these readings were discussed with their colleagues. Besides, teachers were motivated to list the responsibilities they considered they had with their students and how these responsibilities could be manifested. Particular student case studies were widely discussed.

Reflective videos:

“Teachers make a difference”. Video taken from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tlp7UvLvqXI> . This video deals with the importance of teachers’ role in the formation of our students. Besides, it aims to motivate and challenge students to learn.

“Thank a teacher” video taken from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_pGiUeVFEU . This video emphasizes the different roles that teachers play in the classroom regardless of the great diversity of students in a classroom. It aims to value their jobs and motivate them to continue transforming their pupils.

*** SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP RESPONSIVENESS**

Discussion of the readings: “Cultural responsive training of teacher educators” by Prater, M.A, & Devereaux, T. (2009) and “Ethical and moral matters in teaching and teacher education” by Bullough, R. (2011). These readings encourage teachers to be attentive to students’ diverse circumstances and how to be sensitive to their problems or inquiries. Teachers shared their insights and presented some personal ideas on how to exemplify this moral disposition.

Reflective videos:

“A touching commercial that rubs the deepest part of your heart”. Video taken from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l48FyAmQNOc> . This video depicts the story of a Japanese teacher who showed to be responsive to her students and received a priceless recognition by one of them.

“A Girl’s hope”. Video taken from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWx47qeCqyk> . This video shows the story of a girl who wants to visit the Young Olympic Games. Teachers were encouraged to find their students’ preferences to include them in the classroom planning and better address their needs.

Visit of the Psychologist: The psychologist of an institution can provide the teachers with another perspective of their teaching practices and point out some students’ particular necessities which could be assisted by responsive teachers.