

## **ELTER Colloquium, Boğaziçi University**

**June 22, 2012**

### **Meeting Notes from the “Research” Group**

In the framework of **how** research can help improve the quality of teacher education in Turkey, we first discussed the meaning of ‘improvement’ in teacher education. Simon Borg indicated that improvement can be understood better through studying the impact of it in teacher education, yet we realized that there was a lack of information in terms of “impact.”

Following the discussion on impact, a head of the English Department of a state school mentioned that state schools would benefit from the research facilities being made available to them. The participant shared her experiences, showing that some teachers were willing to engage in teacher education research. However, some participants (teacher educators at the universities) reported their experiences regarding the difficulty of collecting data from the schools to do research. We all agreed that there is a need to support teachers by encouraging them to open their classroom doors and by developing themselves, even though some teachers were reluctant to do it.

#### ***Starting processes/not focusing on own research agenda. Helping others with theirs.***

Helping schools with their issues and not only focusing on what’s happening in the home institution (university) was the suggestion made by the participants. We have to learn and help schools with their needs, their own agenda, and in turn, this may create an impact on doing research together. Schools could benefit from outside help by identifying their needs/ internal issues.

As Simon Borg indicates, to achieve “impact,” it must be of relevance to others, which is directly linked to how to start processes in doing research, but we also need to think about the ways to change attitudes to research so the host sees the benefit. We also discussed that welcoming researchers into classes might be a cultural problem. One of the participants who is teaching in a state school is very positive about teachers wanting to get involved in research due to their impending assessment.

***Buiding trust/unselfishness/credibility.***

The discussion moved to creating an environment in which research can be performed. Creating a climate of trust and establishing nurturing relationships with key individuals can help teacher educators achieve their aim of encouraging joint research activities. One of the participants suggested that collaboration between teachers who have started working in a school and their home university can help **build on existing relations** – known key individuals.

How do the teacher educators perceive themselves? They need to give the impression that they are there to benefit the community. We can start working with teachers to build a community and the research process can develop from this point.

***The idea of how to start research process is the focus here.***

The participants agreed that close relations with key individuals in school settings need to be developed to support research. We should also encourage in-service teachers to become research partners. The teacher educator is not the authority in the research process. In-service teachers should set their research agenda/needs and teacher educators (academicians) could then work with them. This brings the idea of **teachers as collaborators, not subjects**. In other words, teachers become a partner rather than a subject.

The Ministry of Education should also be collaborating with schools/universities more. Schools could be matched with universities to identify their teaching/learning needs and to work on their research agendas for better practices. Universities can involve schools/teachers in the design of research. Also, universities can visit the Ministry of Education and call on them for collaboration for university/school research partnerships.

Another issue raised by the participants was that we were not aware of what colleagues and teacher education programs were doing, it was not actually known. We need to know what kind/type of research there is to build on it. Creating a list of research studies was suggested by the participants. **We can start compiling lists** which should be one of the missions of the universities to make effective teaching and learning practices more noticeable and encourage **evidence-based practice**.

We ended the discussion by reaching the conclusion that we are willing to share and that we should build the process of working together from here. **Collaborative Action Research** was highly emphasized by the participants in the framework of visiting the school, talking, setting up joint research – high in relevance to the school – do something useful for the school, foster equal relationships, and focus on the needs of the school. Research partners should give one another systematic and constructive feedback during the project, which can lead to useful contributions and enhance ownership.