**13th Inter-American Symposium on Ethnography and Education**

**UCLA September 18-20, 2013**

**Session: Teachers Between Majorities and Minorities**

**“Teachers´ work in a Rural Context: The Relationship with the Community, Parents and Children in the First Years of Teaching.”**

**Alicia Lily Carvajal Juárez**

**(UPN-México)**

This paper is the result of a research focused on the reconstruction of the experience and practice of teachers in their first years of teaching primary and secondary education in a disadvantaged context in Mexico. The main purpose of this study was to identify the problems that teachers face at their work, how they deal with them and how they solve them. The study was conducted by Dr. Etelvina Sandoval Flores and sponsored by SEP/SEB-Conacyt. It is now in its final stage.

The field research involved thick interviews with teachers of primary and secondary education from Mexico City and from Chiapas State, between 2011 and 2012. These interviews were recorded and transcribed in the first place, subsequently they were videotaped. Likewise, some classes were observed and videotaped in the case of primary teachers from Chiapas. All interviewed teachers of primary education had less than five years teaching and worked at schools in rural or urban disadvantage context.

The data presented in this paper corresponds to the interviews of the four teachers from Chiapas: one teacher who worked at a one teacher school (at Ocosingo, Chiapas), and three female teachers who worked at a three teachers school (at Sabanilla, Chiapas). Both schools are considered rural.

There are two analysis axes used in the presentation. The first one is focused on the first teachers’ experiences when they related with children, parents and the population of the towns where the schools are. There are local aspects that emerge and have influence on these relationships; teachers have to learn to negotiate in order to be able to work and live together with the community. As beginners, these teachers could establish relationships that helped them to bear the difficulties of being away from their families. By working at these isolated schools, teachers learned how to handle certain gender and cultural aspects, as well as considerations of personal or family nature that arose in the course of their relations with others. The isolation experienced by these teachers forced them to learn how develop boundaries with the children and to value the relationship with them and their parents. When teachers leave these towns to go to a school closer to a city and with better working conditions, they long for this relationship with parents and children because they have learned its value. Being young is a key aspect to being able to work in those contexts.

The second analysis axe refers to certain working contributing factors which forced these teachers to change their working place in a small period of time, causing loss of continuity and rooting in the rural communities and damaging the education of the children who live there.

Finally, some questions and considerations are introduced which deal with the possible answers to the training necessities that were identified through the project, and how this could be considered while designing the evaluation policy for the admission and permanence of teachers which are being posed nowadays for elementary education teachers.