

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE EXPERIENCE OF THE TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM AT THE DISTANCE EDUCATION CAMPUS OF IPLACEX

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Abstract

This article presents research on IPLACEX's Teacher Support Program (hereinafter PAD), which focuses on improving the distance learning experience from the perspective of professional teacher development. The objective is to evaluate teachers' perceptions of the PAD and its impact on skills development. A qualitative approach was used, including semi-structured interviews and content analysis. The results indicate that the PAD is effective in providing constructive feedback and practical tools, highlighting the importance of communication and interpersonal relationships. However, areas for improvement were identified, such as the need for more continuous support and more effective teaching strategies.

Keywords: Teacher support—teacher perceptions—skills—teaching preparation—communication—feedback.

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Introduction

Higher education has undergone a radical transformation in recent years, with a marked post-pandemic consolidation of distance learning (Canaza-Choque, 2020). This change has highlighted the need to address not only the academic needs of students, but also the training needs of teachers, who play a crucial role in the success of this educational modality. In this context, the Chilean Professional Institute IPLACEX has been a pioneer in designing and implementing a Teacher Support Program (PAD) in all degree programs at the Distance Education Campus (hereinafter CED), seeking to improve educational processes in a virtual learning environment.

The research presented here seeks to recognize the perception of participating teachers about this program, especially teachers from the School of Education, analyzing how it has influenced their professional development and teaching practice between 2022 and 2023. The relevance of this study lies in its approach to a critical aspect of distance education (Ruiz, 2010) that has been scarcely documented: the experience and systematic professional development of educators through the implementation of a program. Through a qualitative approach, this work seeks to contribute to the current emerging literature on the subject, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of the PAD and its impact on teacher development at IPLACEX.

The rationale for this research is based on the paradox observed at the IPLACEX School of Education, where, despite having highly qualified professionals in the field of teaching, the teaching index is lower than at other schools within the institution. This fact highlights the importance of taking a closer look at teaching practices and teachers' perceptions of the PAD in order to identify opportunities for improvement and ensure a quality educational process.

Throughout this article, you will learn about the principles of the IPLACEX Institutional Educational Model, which include effectiveness, autonomy, collaboration, and student responsibility, and how these are integrated into the PAD. The pedagogical actions carried out by teachers on the Moodle virtual platform will also be evaluated, considering the three main areas of professional development for teachers at the IPLACEX Distance Education Campus : lesson preparation, teacher-student communication, and feedback.

This study aims not only to explore the aforementioned dimensions, but also to contribute significantly to the field of distance education by offering evidence-based recommendations for improving teaching practice and professional development in virtual environments.

Background of the Research Problem

The history of teacher support programs in higher education in Chile reveals a rich diversity of approaches and outcomes.

In 2017, the Universidad del Desarrollo hosted ECAD, a prominent event in the field of teaching, providing a space for discussion on its development and the exchange of experiences. Here, INACAP's innovative ADA plan was presented, aimed at improving teachers' pedagogical practices. This program focused on four specific groups: new teachers, those in charge of milestone subjects, teachers with evaluations below 75%, and those with evaluations above 80%. The implementation of ADA proved to be effective, reflecting a significant improvement in teaching practices, as evidenced in the Teacher Evaluation by students (Henríquez and Martínez, 2017).

On the other hand, the University of Concepción adopted a distinctive approach with its Pedagogical Accompaniment Program (PAD). Unlike INACAP or IPLACEX, where participation in the PAD is more regulated, the UdeC opted for a voluntary enrollment model for teachers. This program emerged in response to the challenge of virtualizing teaching during the 2020 pandemic. As in other programs, UdeC emphasizes synchronous meetings between pedagogical advisors and teachers, with a focus on the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of improvement strategies. A distinctive aspect of UdeC is the use of intermediate perception instruments applied to students to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of the strategies implemented.

In their research at the Catholic University of Temuco, García and Moya (2017) identified that the successful participation in teacher support programs depends largely on the "link between these programs and institutional incentives" (p. 22) that recognize and value continuing education.

Zeballos (2020) and León (2017) agree that the role of pedagogical advisors is fundamental in a teacher development support program, highlighting the importance of establishing a horizontal and collaborative relationship during the support process, rather than adopting executive and vertical strategies.

At the Latin American level, experiences such as that of Santos and Armas (2020) in Cuba and the CEDDIE Teacher Support Model at Tecnológico de Monterrey illustrate effective approaches to teacher support. These programs emphasize collaborative work among peers to ensure that teachers adapt to the institutional educational model, establishing a coherent relationship with other Chilean teacher support programs such as DUOC-UC's PAD and the UdeC PAD described above.

However, as will be stated during this research, scientific evidence on the experience and effectiveness of distance learning teacher support programs is still in its infancy.

Research objective

The objective is to recognize the perceptions of distance learning teachers at the School of Education of the Chilean professional institute IPLACEX, following the experience of implementing a teacher support program (PAD) between 2022 and 2023. In other words, the research topic is directly related to a pedagogical experience that aims at the professional development of teachers at a higher education institution.

Research Context

To understand the scope of the research topic, it is essential to identify the context in which the pedagogical experience that supports it was produced. IPLACEX is a Chilean higher education institution that offers more than 70 distance learning professional training programs and is one of the national leaders in this modality. In its ongoing quest to improve teaching and learning processes, the Distance Education Campus Teacher Support Program was designed and implemented in early 2022. Its objective is to promote the professional development of the institution's teachers by providing them with pedagogical and reflective tools that encourage continuous improvement in their virtual classroom practices. This type of action is relevant in any formal educational environment. As Montes-Serrano (2021) points out, the reflective professional training of the teaching staff is closely related to the quality of the educational process and student learning: "promoting reflective competence to improve and transform pedagogical practice. This last point is vital if we seek to improve student learning" (p. 330).

The CED IPLACEX teacher support program has been implemented while safeguarding the active integration of the principles of the Institutional Educational Model, which are summarized below: Relevance, Effective Learning and Accessibility, Innovation, Flexibility, and Progressive Assessment of Learning. The principles of the institutional educational model aim to guide a training process that guarantees the professional development of key skills for our students to face the 21st century, such as collaborative, dialogic, and participatory learning; professional performance based on ethics and integrity; flexible engagement with real social and professional problems; and autonomy understood as a competency that guarantees ongoing training, based on a critical reading of one's own professional needs in accordance with the context of performance, and an ongoing, evidence-based evaluation process. In the face of these enormous educational challenges, ensuring ongoing professional development is understood at the institutional level as a key responsibility (IPLACEX Educational Model, 2020).

What pedagogical actions do IPLACEX teachers carry out? The teaching-learning process was carried out until November 2023 on the Moodle platform. On this platform, pedagogical actions are carried out that have been categorized into three areas, according to the Teaching Management Area: teaching preparation/teacher-student communication/feedback. The educational process begins every two months with a thorough review of the educational

materials that make up the subject, using a checklist to identify their relevance, consistency between their various didactic and curricular components, and the quality of the resources that make up the learning path. The pedagogical relationship between teacher and student is essentially conducted in writing, through asynchronous communication, which takes place in common spaces such as Consultation Forums and Discussion Forums, or in private spaces such as internal platform messaging and email. Teachers have 24 hours to respond to their students' questions, in accordance with the principles of effective learning and progressive assessment defined in the Institutional Educational Model. Finally, feedback is a fundamental part of the distance learning process, as it allows teachers to guide their students' learning, with an emphasis on recognizing opportunities for improvement and strengths based on evidence (Dorrego, 2016). As in other successful teacher support experiences in Latin America (Inchaustegui, 2013), at IPLACEX, the PAD, as a teacher training program, is based on a dialogical relationship between the teacher being supported and a pedagogical advisor, who over the course of two months identifies opportunities for improvement in their performance. Together, they collaborate in the search for performance strategies that can enable their professional growth and development, contributing to the quality of the teaching-learning process.

Why raise this issue with the teachers of the School of Education? There are two main reasons for conducting this research. First, because the CED IPLACEX School of Education, paradoxically, has the lowest teaching index in the institution. The teaching index is the result of the teacher evaluation survey, which is conducted every two months to assess teacher performance as reported by their students. Although it has multiple limitations, like any instrument that seeks to measure perception, it is the most direct result to represent the professional performance of teaching. The average institutional ID (as the Teaching Index is abbreviated in the institution) was 81.5% between the first and fourth two-month periods of 2023, while the ID of the School of Education was 78.5% in the same period. During the period analyzed, the first two-month period (March and April) showed the greatest difference between the overall DI (84.56%) and the specific DI for the School of Education (77.25%), with a percentage difference of 7.31%. This is considered a paradoxical result, given that all professionals working in teaching at this school have training in the field of education, a situation that does not occur in other schools with better results, such as Computer Science, where less than 50% of teachers have formal pedagogical training.

Problem Statement

The IPLACEX professional institute faces a significant challenge in the professional development of its teachers. In early 2022, the Teacher Support Program (PAD) was implemented in the School of Education, a pedagogical initiative aimed at improving educational processes in a virtual learning environment.

However, the effectiveness and impact of the PAD, especially in terms of teachers' perceptions and experiences, have not yet been explored in depth. Given the current context, distance learning has become an essential modality in Chile. According to current data from the National Accreditation Commission (CNED, 2023), undergraduate enrollment in professional institutes has grown the most this year (5.3%), compared to universities and technical training centers (CFT). This growth is mainly represented by IPLACEX and IACC, the two leading institutions in distance learning in Chile, which in turn have the highest annual enrollment growth among all higher education institutions. Between them, these two institutions have more than 55,000 students enrolled. Given the social responsibility underlying this educational reality and the complexities involved in ensuring the quality of educational processes in environments with these characteristics, it is crucial to understand how teachers perceive and experience a continuing professional development initiative that aims to improve the implications of the teaching process.

This study seeks to address the gap in understanding teachers' perceptions of the PAD at IPLACEX by analyzing how this initiative has influenced their professional development and teaching practice between 2022 and 2023. The research focuses on recognizing and evaluating the experiences of teachers who completed the PAD experience, identifying strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement in the context of distance education. Successful completion of the PAD is considered to refer to 100% attendance at the synchronous sessions planned with the pedagogical advisor, active attention to the opportunities for improvement identified by the pedagogical advisor during the virtual classroom review, participation in the collaborative construction of the improvement plan that addresses these identified weaknesses, as well as the result of the professional metacognitive process, and finally, the production of evidence of improvement in their teaching practices in the virtual classroom.

This problem will be addressed through a qualitative approach, collecting and analyzing data from interviews and relevant studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of PAD on teaching practice at IPLACEX.

Research Questions

- How do teachers at the IPLACEX School of Education perceive the experience of having participated in the Teacher Support Program from the perspective of distance professional development?
- How do teachers value the teaching support and feedback initiatives provided by the PAD?
- What are the challenges and opportunities identified by teachers in relation to the PAD?

Deficiencies in knowledge of the problem

Some of the main gaps in knowledge of the research problem developed in this article are:

Lack of specific research on Teacher Support Programs in distance higher education: Despite the growing importance of distance education, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a notable lack of studies focused on evaluating teacher support programs in this modality. While the available literature generally addresses distance education and teacher professional development (Bairral, 2002; Valencia, 2013; Peña-Ruz, 2020), there is a scarcity of research that focuses specifically on teachers' perceptions and experiences of initiatives such as the Teacher Support Program (PAD) implemented by IPLACEX. This gap in research limits understanding and discussion of how these programs effectively impact teaching practice and professional development in virtual environments, a critical aspect for educational quality in distance learning.

Shortage of specialized distance learning teacher support programs: A second aspect that highlights a gap in knowledge, which serves as the starting point for this research, is the limited availability of teacher support programs specifically designed for distance learning in higher education in Latin America. Most professional development programs for teachers have traditionally focused on face-to-face teaching, and there is a significant gap in terms of adapting and specializing these initiatives for virtual education contexts. This shortage is even more evident when considering the unique characteristics and challenges of distance learning, such as the need for specific technological skills, communication and feedback strategies adapted to the virtual environment, and pedagogical approaches that encourage student participation and engagement in a non-face-to-face setting (Mera-Mosquera and Mercado-Bautista, 2019). The lack of support programs that address these specific needs of distance education limits the support and guidance available for teachers facing these challenges, potentially reducing the effectiveness and quality of teaching in these environments. Therefore, the development and evaluation of teacher support programs in distance higher education is part of the global challenges facing the education system.

Theoretical Framework

Teacher perceptions in virtual education

Studies on teacher perceptions related to the experience of virtual education have flourished during the pandemic (Urquijo, Álvarez, & Peláez, 2019; Náñez-Rodríguez, Solano, & Bernal-Castillo, 2019; Santos, Villanueva, Rivera, & Vega, 2020; Rojas & González, 2021; García, Peñaloza, and Sosa, 2021), as it is no longer accurate to say that this is an emerging field of scientific study.

Over the last four years, interest in learning about teachers' experiences and perceptions of virtual education has been evident at all levels of study, although it has been particularly prominent in higher education, as this is where the main transformations have taken place in the post-pandemic context. Virtual education has become an area of growing development. It is symptomatic that this growth in some areas of Latin America, such as Chile, is even more rapid than that of face-to-face education (Varas-Meza, Suárez-Amaya, López-Valenzuela, & Valdés-Montecinos, 2020; CNED, 2021).

This research will examine teachers' perceptions in relation to the theoretical proposals of Baron and Byrne (2005) and Vander Zanden (1990), who point out that perception is a way of understanding the social environment and how individuality is linked to that environment (cited in Díaz, Solar, Soto, and Conejeros, 2015).

Teacher training in virtual distance education

What skills should a teacher in distance education have? At IPLACEX, in accordance with the functions of a teacher responsible for a learning process with a predefined curriculum and teaching proposal using standard materials, three areas of professional development are highlighted for good performance in the virtual classroom:

- a) **Teaching preparation:** According to Núñez de Hoffens (2020) and Bórquez (2020), the considerations that must anticipate the implementation of a course in a virtual environment are fundamental to its success. It is crucial that teachers are clear about the elements necessary for learning and teaching in virtual environments. This includes familiarization with the course program, where the entire methodological proposal is developed and the course objectives are carefully defined.
- b) **Teacher-student communication:** In distance education, communication between teachers and students and among students is essential for building a participatory and collaborative learning environment (García Aretio, 2002; Ruiz, 2016). The communicative relationship between teacher and student, and its considerations in a modality where relationships are essentially asynchronous, is fundamental for tracking and monitoring specific learning trajectories, as this educational modality requires the continuous presence of the teacher and a special interest in recognizing the individualization of the learning process (Núñez de Hoffens, 2020; Bórquez, 2020). For its specific didactic development, forums and email messaging are of crucial importance (Ruiz, 2016), as they are the resources available on most of the educational platforms used in this modality that facilitate this permanent interaction (Lima and Fernández, 2017).

- c) **Feedback:** For most authors, feedback is at the heart of the distance education process (Alvarado García, 2014; Salas-Quirós, 2016; Regional Government of Ayacucho, 2020; Véliz and Villegas, 2021). At IPLACEX, we share the principles upheld by Alvarado García (2014), who points out that good feedback is based “on the timely detection of omissions, errors, and successes of students in the different activities they perform. This allows the teacher to continue guiding and redirecting learning in accordance with the objectives to be achieved and to show how further improvement can be made (...) It is the means by which the student identifies what they need to achieve success in accordance with what is expected of them” (p. 64). Feedback is therefore understood as a continuous and meaningful process that is not limited to the evaluation of educational milestones. Feedback is continuous in nature, sustained by teacher-student communication in which the student’s individual performance is accompanied throughout the process by providing suggestions and points for reflection on their performance and possible areas for improvement. With the same relevance as individualized feedback, IPLACEX also develops collective feedback, an action through which the teacher identifies opportunities for improvement and common successes/strengths in the group’s performance, communicating them, recognizing them, and submitting them to a guided discussion for educational purposes through the channels defined for this purpose in the virtual learning environment (Román Maldonado, 2009).

Research Methodology

The qualitative paradigm and phenomenological-hermeneutic approach were adopted to explore in depth the perceptions, experiences, and opinions of teachers participating in the PAD experience (Carabajo, 2008). This approach allowed for a detailed understanding of social phenomena from the participants’ perspective (Hernández Sampieri, 2018).

For the data collection phase, semi-structured interviews will be conducted. These interviews will allow for the collection of detailed data and an in-depth look at individual experiences and perceptions of the PAD (Folgueiras, 2016), in order to recognize the transformations in their teaching practices and opportunities for program improvement.

Along with data collection through interviews, institutional databases were reviewed to recognize the quantitative representation of the performance of teachers at the CED School of Education. Other research experiences on distance teaching support were also reviewed to complement and contrast the data obtained in the interviews.

With regard to the participants in the research, all teachers from the School of Education who participated in and completed the PAD during 2022 and 2023 were selected. The selection includes a total of three teachers, distributed by gender as two women and one man. Their

professions are, respectively: educational psychologist, preschool teacher, and nurse. It is worth noting that all three teachers have completed postgraduate studies in education.

Regarding the research procedures, the interviews were scheduled in advance and conducted virtually via the Teams platform, according to the participants' availability. Each interview lasted approximately 35 minutes.

An interview guide was developed with open-ended questions based on the research questions, allowing teachers to freely express their opinions and experiences. The questions that guided the interviews were:

- (i) How would you evaluate your mentoring experience?
- (ii) Did the PAD experience contribute to your professional development as a CED IPLACEX teacher?
- (iii) Before starting the PAD, did you have any expectations? If so, did it meet your expectations?
- (iv) How would you evaluate the role of the pedagogical advisor during the mentoring?
- (v) What would you improve about the experience offered by the PAD?

The data collected through the interviews was transcribed and analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Segments of material were used to code and identify emerging categories related to teachers' perceptions of the PAD.

Document analysis complemented the findings from the interviews through triangulation, providing a more holistic understanding of the implementation and impact of the PAD.

Ethical considerations

The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were guaranteed. All participants were informed of the purpose of the research and asked for their informed consent before participating in the interviews. Throughout the data analysis, and in order to protect their identity, they have been labeled with the letters "S," "M," and "E."

The research will be conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of respect, justice, and beneficence, ensuring integrity and respect for the participants.

Discussion and Results

The triangulation of the data collected through interviews and bibliographic analysis allowed for the identification of four emerging categories related to the formative contributions of the PAD and, in parallel, the opportunities for improvement that were recognizable in the speakers' discourse, namely:

1) Evaluation of the experience:

- 1.1 **Feedback:** There is a clear tendency to strongly value feedback on professional teaching actions in the virtual classroom. Contrary to what is commonly believed, teachers value feedback on their practices positively, expressing explicit concern for improving the educational process. Along the same lines, interviewees "S" and "M" point out that it was important in their training process that feedback on their actions was connected to evidence of their performance. In other words, there was a clear reference to identifying errors and proposing a better strategy for working with students. As interviewee "E" indicated, "it was a task that we reviewed based on his observations of what we needed to improve. How to address certain aspects with the students." This statement highlights how the PAD has been fundamental in providing a platform for the development of constructive feedback skills, an aspect corroborated by research that emphasizes teacher-student communication as key to success in distance education (Lozano and Tamez, 2014).
- 1.2 **Sense of Accompaniment:** Synchronous counseling is valued above other instances of professional development, such as access to pedagogical guidance capsules, as the accompaniment of counselors promotes a sense of belonging and collaboration. As interviewee E pointed out, "it makes you feel like you are working with another human being." As the evidence indicates, a distance learning model based on support relationships will offer better results during and at the end of the process (Freixas and Ramas, 2014). Consequently, supporting teachers and contributing to the improvement of their pedagogical practice directly contributes to student learning outcomes (Montoya, 2021).
- 1.3 **Provision of tools:** A third aspect valued by the teachers who received support is that, during the support process, they were provided with useful tools for their professional performance, especially those of a practical nature. The IPLACEX Distance Education Campus agrees with Ruiz Méndez (2016) regarding the idea of a "pedagogical tool" in a virtual environment. As concluded in a research paper that gathers the perceptions of teachers in virtual learning environments, "teachers act as mentors, learning guides, and developers of students' abilities; they must teach how

to learn, motivate, and provoke intellectual curiosity; they are consultants who resolve doubts and promote the use of ICT in various environments" (n/a).

2) **Contribution to professional development in virtual classroom teaching:**

2.1 **Teacher-student communication:** Two of the teachers interviewed pointed out that communication with students was an aspect developed during the pedagogical support. Specifically, reference is made to the use of the forum as a tool for interaction between the subjects of the process, especially with regard to attitudinal aspects such as respect and assertive communication. There is a clear convergence between the perceptions of the teachers interviewed and the theoretical aspects outlined in this research.

2.2 **Teaching preparation:** The teaching preparation process is probably the least evident of all in distance education. When learning resources have been institutionally standardized to ensure quality in the training process, it seems that the teaching process is limited to interaction based on answering students' questions. However, at IPLACEX, the intention has been for the teaching-learning process to begin with the teacher's appropriation of the training trajectory: prior to the implementation of a subject, the teacher must recognize the existence, coherence, and curricular and didactic correlation between the subject's study program, its learning objectives, activities, resources, and assessments. Teachers appreciate having been accompanied and guided in this pedagogical action. As interviewee "S" pointed out, "verify the content in the classroom. (...) That it is properly loaded, that it corresponds to the assessment criteria, the learning criteria."

2.3 **Teacher Metacognition:** In the words of teacher "M," the support was not configured as an experience of knowledge transmission, but rather as a reflective space where self-evaluation of performance plays a relevant role in the process led by the pedagogical advisor. Teachers are invited to reflect on their practices, where self-recognition of their limitations and strengths is the starting point for developing the accompaniment process. In her own words, interviewee "M" stated that "the mentoring was an opportunity to reflect on my work as a teaching professional. It allowed me to stop and, together with the advisor, self-evaluate my performance while receiving direct support from the professional."

The emergence of this subcategory is interesting, as it is unusual in educational discourse focused on technological mediation, although it is abundant and supported by current and compelling research in the field of face-to-face education (Balcikanli, 2011; Fourés, 2011; Pacheco-Cortés and Alatorre-Rojo, 2018). However, teacher reflection is a component that has a planned presence in the teacher support plan

analyzed in this article. From the first synchronous session, a dialogical relationship is built in which the pedagogical advisor invites the supported teacher to reflect on their practices, strengths, and opportunities for improvement, as well as their self-identified training needs, and then to represent them in an improvement plan that intersects with the evidence gathered from observing practices in the virtual classroom.

3) Evaluation of the advisor's role:

3.1 Assessment of interpersonal relationships: "Closeness," "kindness," "respect," "willingness," and "support" are recurring words in the discourse of teachers when asked about the work of pedagogical advisors, and they can be understood in this context as equivalents, in that they imply a clear appreciation for the social relationships promoted in this pedagogical experience. It is noteworthy that the three responses from those consulted begin with the survey of these characteristics, as it can be inferred that a similar value has been attributed to them as to the academic properties expected of a pedagogical advisor, such as disciplinary expertise, sufficient professional experience, solidity in the didactic area, or other intellectual qualities that are not necessarily linked to the social and emotional development of a professional who performs teaching tasks. This does not mean that teachers do not explicitly value knowledge and professional growth in their discourse, as evidenced in the categories "Evaluation of experience" and "Contribution to the professional development of teaching in the virtual classroom." However, it is important to note that these expressions arose spontaneously in response to the question about the role of the pedagogical advisor in their support process, rather than any other reference to the work of advisors. It may be relevant to note that for teachers accompanied by the School of Education, interpersonal relationships are a prerequisite for initiating advisory work, and that these essential attributes were identified in the work of their advisors.

4) Opportunity for improvement of the PAD:

Based on the teachers' perceptions represented in this research, it was possible to identify two subcategories that emerge from the main category "opportunity for improvement of the PAD": "improvement of organizational aspects" and "improvement of teaching aspects."

4.1 Improvement of organizational aspects:

4.1.1 Ongoing support: The teacher support program with CED pedagogical advisors lasts for two bimesters. It includes three synchronous sessions and asynchronous communication throughout the duration of the support. However, for interviewee "E,"

the support would be more useful and in-depth if this communication were ongoing, given that working in distance education involves the need for continuous learning.

4.1.2 Communication: There is a need to understand precisely the implications of the support program before it begins.

4.2 Improvement of teaching aspects:

4.2.1 Exemplification strategy: one of the teachers consulted suggests that the modeling of teaching strategies in the advisor/accompanied teacher relationship should be carried out through examples that allow for a deeper understanding of the suggestions. As stated in their intervention, “it would be good to be able to share the screen showing the platform and leaving the type of message you want to leave for the students. (...) exemplify it. (...) show that welcome message, perhaps with an image or format, or which words should be highlighted, or perhaps give them the opportunity to elaborate on it, perhaps with the bulk of the message already prepared, but commenting together, let’s see, what would you add? Here, let’s find it in an image, let’s put it in an image, look, within the text, what would you highlight in bold? I would highlight this.”

Final Reflections

1. Pedagogical and human value of the PAD:

The PAD has proven to be a valuable tool in the professional development of teachers at IPLACEX, providing effective tools to improve virtual classroom support strategies, as well as practical tools that have been highly valued by participants.

Its pedagogical and human value can be deepened by understanding the relevant aspects of the PAD experience in teachers’ perceptions, which highlight its significant impact on several key aspects of professional development. Teachers have particularly valued the way in which the PAD has allowed them to reflect on and improve their teaching strategies, which is essential in distance education. The feedback received has been particularly valuable as it is directly linked to performance evidence, allowing teachers to identify and work on specific areas for improvement. In addition, the provision of practical tools has enabled teachers to more effectively address the unique challenges of online teaching, thereby improving their competence and confidence in this environment. In summary, the PAD has proven to be an important experience for professional advancement, contributing, in the words of the teachers, to the quality of the educational process at IPLACEX.

2. Importance of communication and interpersonal relationships:

In line with the perceptions of the teachers interviewed, effective communication and the quality of interpersonal relationships between teachers and pedagogical advisors are crucial aspects for the success of the PAD, highlighting the need for a human and personalized approach during the mentoring experience. These elements act as fundamental pillars that sustain the educational experience in a virtual environment, where physical distance and the absence of a sense of community can create additional barriers.

The quality of communication and interpersonal relationships directly influences teachers' receptivity, motivation, and commitment to the program, as can be interpreted from the interviewees' comments, who unanimously highlighted this aspect. Effective communication not only conveys information but also fosters an environment of support and trust, which is vital for professional development in a virtual setting. Positive and constructive interpersonal relationships between teachers and pedagogical advisors create a safe space for learning and reflection, allowing teachers to openly express their concerns and work collaboratively to improve their teaching practices. This human and personalized approach is essential to overcoming the limitations of distance education, ensuring a more enriching and effective learning experience.

3. Opportunities for improvement PAD.

During the research, significant opportunities for development and growth were identified in the CED IPLACEX Teacher Support Program. Addressing opportunities for improvement in the organization is essential to strengthening the learning experience from the outset. It is important to remember that the support process is a complementary activity to teaching, which takes place in a work environment with people who are likely to be educators at other institutions, as their involvement with IPLACEX is not exclusive. Therefore, in order to create a favorable attitude towards the experience, it is necessary for teachers to clearly recognize the program's objectives in advance, as well as the organizational aspects that it will involve.

In terms of teaching strategies, greater effectiveness could be achieved through the use of practical and applicable examples that model real teaching scenarios based on the experience with IPLACEX students. These strategies should focus on the practical implementation of theoretical concepts, which would help teachers to better visualize and apply these strategies in their own virtual classrooms. A more effective implementation of these practices would contribute significantly to improving the learning and teaching experience in the context of distance education.

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