



Pedagogical accompaniment: feedback to teachers of the National Institute June 21, Santo Tomás, Chontales

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ABSTRACT

The pedagogical accompaniment strategy implemented by the Ministry of Education arises in response to the need to provide pedagogical assistance to teachers, so that they improve their performance in the development of learning processes and, as a consequence, raise the level of learning achievement of the students. This strategy expresses explicitly and implicitly the guidelines of the National Plan to Fight Poverty and for Human Development, in

the “more and better education” strategy. Undoubtedly, for significant results to emerge from this, it has implied the execution of a series of actions from budget programming to the hiring of personnel prepared for its execution. All these efforts are focused on preparing teachers to provide an education with quality and human warmth. Hence, the main objective of this strategy is to ensure compliance with the educational model. Meanwhile, this article reflects on the main learning experiences offered by pedagogical advice and the results of evaluative content of verbal feedback during pedagogical accompaniment. For this, the interview technique and documentary analysis were applied.

1. INTRODUCTION

Strengthening teacher learning activities and improving teacher pedagogical practices is currently one of the main concerns of education policies worldwide. Hence, since 2007 the Ministry of Education in Nicaragua has been promoting various actions to strengthen the actions of teachers at all levels through the creation of learning opportunities that promote the transformation of teaching practices and learning, among them and the most significant, pedagogical accompaniment.

This strategy emerges as an alternative to respond effectively, permanently, and with quality to the continuous improvement of education, as it is an opportunity that should not be missed. Therefore, it is necessary to reflect on educational processes, from their conception, implementation, and development. This implies that principals and teachers assume challenges in the construction of scenarios and in the permanent search for models or strategies that produce real changes in the educational culture, in this case, in the teachers of the National Institute 21 de junio in Santo Tomás, Chontales.

However, from the teaching side, they must consider, among other aspects: previous learning, the characteristics of the students, the feedback of the learning, and, above all, take into account that the learning achieves the highest level of coherence between the intentions and the training actions. In other words, pedagogical accompaniment must develop, as its ultimate goal, autonomous learning, loaded with significance for the lives of students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this revolutionary context, one of the strategies that have proliferated strongly in the Nicaraguan educational system, to strengthen the collaborative work of teachers, is pedagogical accompaniment before and during the classroom act. This strategy constitutes a form of professional accompaniment based on the observation of classes, in which a member of the management team (principal, deputy director, or head of the area of the educational center),

pedagogical technician, witnesses a complete class or a part of it, and then provides feedback in correspondence with what has been observed.

To speak of pedagogical accompaniment, at present, is to refer to a new concept that goes beyond observation, and at the same time integrates concepts such as advice, supervision, and facilitation of the scientific and methodological aspects that intervene in the teaching work. Therefore, it is considered an inherent strategy of educational improvement plans since it is aimed at carrying out a set of actions focused on improving teaching and student learning, and consequently, educational quality. Hence, “quantitative analyses indicate that measures of teacher preparation and certification constitute the strongest correlate of student achievement” (Darling-Hammond, 2002).

Studies indicate that the implementation of pedagogical accompaniment, before, during, and after the learning process, entails certain tensions, mainly because there is a conflict between the educational actors involved (teachers, directors, and pedagogical advisors) to agree on the intention of presence in the classroom so that a process that contributes to the effective transformation and improvement of classroom practices is achieved. (Bautista Lara, 2017)

Consequently, accompaniment must be understood by all the key actors in the teaching-learning process as a strategic action that allows an approach with a broad and complex perspective capable of identifying the needs, potentialities, and professional capacities of the teaching staff. In this consonance, Rosales and Lazo (2010) consider this strategy as a comprehensive view that allows for cohesion and integration of the processes that consolidate the work of teachers from their daily practice in the classroom. That is, it supports teachers to transform their pedagogical practice by the demands and demands of their students.

Likewise, pedagogical accompaniment should be understood as a systematic and permanent process, mediated by the accompaniment, to interact with teachers to promote reflection on their practice. This serves to encourage both the discovery of the assumptions behind this practice and for decision-making and thus make the necessary changes in curriculum management through pedagogical interactions according to the context. In this sense, the Ministry of Education (2021, p. 12) states that the importance of pedagogical accompaniment is a “set of actions that allow the systematic and permanent conception, planning, organization, execution and control of the improvement of the teacher’s performance”.

Similarly, Law No. Article 582: General Education Act, in Article 5, Chapter X, Article 83 establishes that “the Ministry of Education shall monitor the proper functioning of educational centers and their understanding of the technical-pedagogical aspects and shall exercise its training functions through the corresponding body”. Meanwhile, to comply with this, the Mined designs training plans with national, departmental, and municipal technicians so that they can

then train teachers in search of the enhancement of the intellectual, evaluative, emotional, expressive, and practical capacities of teachers to strengthen their training process and turn them into autonomous subjects. critical and proactive capable of facing their reality.

Finally, it can be said that the person who carries out the pedagogical accompaniment is a professional teacher in the field who does not work in the educational center of the teachers he accompanies, and in coordination with the management team assumes and conducts the actions and strategies of the pedagogical accompaniment.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Improving educational performance and quality at the various educational levels is the direct responsibility of teachers and educational institutions. Hence, the Mined has been carrying out actions that correspond to it as an institution to guarantee the updating of its professors. One of these actions, which is carried out permanently, is pedagogical accompaniment through pedagogical interlearning meetings (EPI). This is a comprehensive strategy that unites and integrates the processes that consolidate teacher training, as well as their daily practice in the classroom that:

contributes to the continuous teacher training, is oriented to the specificities of the didactic action, is organized through a Study Program, worked together with the Universities, allowing teachers to be oriented to educational evaluation and programming. At the same time, they are trained in topics that arise from challenges identified in teaching practice. The ECE is developed territorially through a network of 6,244 headquarters coordinators, of which 760 are ECE site coordinators and 5,484 classroom PPE coordinators. The coordinators of the EPI headquarters are facilitators of the Training Course, who evaluate the contents of each module that they develop with the teachers in the EPI (MINED, 2021-2026, p. 25).

Therefore, this conceptualization of “pedagogical accompaniment” as a basis for “*feedback*” requires a conceptual clarification that allows us to know which terms, from the pedagogical point of view, are related to this macro concept and how they enrich it with a view that allows an approach adjusted to the new and complex educational challenges:

The concept of ***feedback*** in the educational field has acquired significant value in these times because it has in its semantics a duality: support-contribute, and at the same time that of qualifying with corrective intention. In this sense, Melmer et al. (2008) argue that feedback is an integral part of the process of pedagogical accompaniment of teachers in that it provides important information to make adjustments in the teaching-learning process so that they

improve their classroom action and that students, active and core subjects of the learning process, achieve the proposed objectives.

Meanwhile, feedback is a way to support the learning of the main actors in the teaching-learning process, as it provides guidelines to help them overcome the gap. In other words, to fill the space, filling it with its actions aimed at creating its own and shared itineraries of action for the systemic and systematic qualification of educational dynamics, conditions, practices, experiences, and results, not only at the teaching level but also at the level of the groups that cooperate to improve the quality of education. Hence, Mario (2014) states that the success of feedback depends on the knowledge of the difficulties, skills, and personality that the teacher has of each of his students in particular situations. This allows the teacher to delve into the student's process to make changes and action plans for the improvement of the student.

Another term related in the educational discourse to accompaniment/supervision is **monitoring**. In many cases, the presence of pedagogical advisors has generated, in several cases, a double face; the first as inquisitors who come to the classroom looking only for the bad, and, the other is that they provoke sensations and conceptions of figures of expert illustrators in the field. Therefore, the experiences and conceptions they have generated about relationships in the framework of consultancies have been marked by top-down perspectives.

Using the same procedure, accompaniment assumes monitoring, because, from a non-welfare perspective, it attends the educational event and warns (sees and knows) that individual and collective reality that develops in the different educational spaces, influence it positively.

Likewise, the terms **counseling and tutoring** are used in the educational field and are closely related to pedagogical accompaniment. This refers, from the educational point of view, to the directionality of a teacher, that is, he guides and conducts the educational processes with a broad view and focused on a goal; improve the teaching-learning process. In other words, these terms, in education, are synonymous, tutoring is synonymous with support, reinforcement, and guidance, with a view to the development or strengthening of certain specific knowledge and skills of teachers in the short or medium term.

Hence, this has generated top-down sensations and conceptions from the educational hierarchies that are often decontextualized or distant from the contexts of the individual classroom, the school management authorities, the teaching groups, and, therefore, the realities of the students. However, this has weakened the ability of teachers or educational groups to think, reflect, and investigate, because when they are presented with a classroom problem, they are not able to seek the solution by themselves, but rather expect support from outside the educational community and that these actions are tutored both individually and collectively (Melgar, 2020)(Cruzata-Martínez & Bellido, 2018).

The terms developed above bring up the need to support teachers or groups to improve their pedagogical practice. These practices have left sensations of impostures emanating from higher levels in a unidirectional way where it is felt that they do not know the reality of the teachers' practice. Meanwhile, the concepts of counseling and tutoring, in this new context, encourage some new ideas for the improvement of learning and teaching processes.

Finally, the pedagogical accompaniment developed as the fundamental necessity strategy, determined by Mined, since 2019 has made it possible to know the realities of teaching practice, provide alternatives for improvement and strengthen their pedagogical, scientific, and methodological capacities, based on training needs and challenges in the learning process of students. Therefore, it is seen as an opportunity and a means for the recovery, formation, and strengthening of spaces, dynamics, conditions, processes, and perspectives, for the teacher integrated into one or more educational communities.

4. METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out using the qualitative approach and this, according to Hernández Sampieri et al. (2014), is guided by significant areas or topics of research. This indicates that qualitative studies may develop questions and hypotheses before, during, or after data collection and analysis. Likewise, Lawsy and McLeod (2014) suggest that: "while a quantitative research design identifies and addresses specific variables, a qualitative research design focuses on a holistic view of the object studied" (p. 2). Thus, this methodological option allowed the use of instruments and techniques that allowed it to have a significant impact on the subjects of research studies.

In the research, there is a large unit of analysis: pedagogical accompaniment and its impact on teacher performance. Minor units depend on it, such as the pedagogical counseling practices implemented in municipal schools and particularly in the National Institute 21 de Junio in Santo Tomás, Chontales, and the implications of pedagogical counseling for the improvement of teacher performance in the classroom. In addition, minor units of analysis were considered, such as the speeches obtained from the interviews conducted with the director of the center, pedagogical advisors and focus groups carried out with teachers.

For the collection of information, questionnaires were constructed for the characterization of the counseling, a script for discussion groups, and in-depth interviews. To process the information obtained, interpretative analysis was used and for this purpose, a double-entry matrix was developed, as well as documentary analysis. This allowed an analysis of the documents of the Ministry of Education and the secondary school curricula. All this is by Solís (2013) states that this method: "allows us to select informationally relevant ideas from a document (...). The

purposes of documentary analysis transcend the mere retrieval/dissemination of information. They are also aimed at facilitating cognition and/or learning” (p. 18).

The information triangulation technique was also applied and the relationship between the objectives of the study, the research questions, and the units or categories of analysis proposed in the categorical system was taken into account. It was analyzed, considering the proposal made by Piñuel and Gaitán (2010, p. 212) on the analysis of the content, which refers to a:

(...) A set of interpretative procedures and techniques for testing and verifying hypotheses applied to communicative products (messages, texts, or discourses), or to communicative interactions that, previously recorded, constitute a document, to extract and process relevant data on the conditions.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Taking into account that this part of the research is framed in a qualitative approach and its purpose was to deepen, from the analysis of the discourse of those involved, those elements that facilitate the development of counseling, it was necessary to select the informants; teachers, directors and deputy directors of the center, as well as pedagogical advisors. These participants were intentionally selected, safeguarding the same number of teachers, directors, and advisors.

The following tables systematize the concepts that the interviewees expressed recurrently while the in-depth interviews were conducted. These concepts were grouped into “facilitators” and “hindering factors” for the development of classroom activities. First, the facilitators of each category of analysis will be presented and then those elements that the participants recognize as hindering elements in the teaching-learning process will be deepened.

Table 1

Systematization of information facilitating factors of the teaching-learning process

Meta-category grouping	Analysis Categories	Recurring concepts
Factors facilitators for the apprenticeship	Content feedback	Improvement
		Quality
		Self-evaluation
		Learning

Meta-category grouping	Analysis Categories	Recurring concepts
Factors facilitators for the apprenticeship	Advisor-mentee relationship	Confidence
		Collaboration
	Using Rubric	Criteria
		Orients
		Reflection

Table 2

Systematization of information hindering the development of classroom activities

Meta-category grouping	Analysis Categories	Recurring concepts
Factors facilitators for the apprenticeship	Content feedback	Evaluation
		Criticism
		Superficial
	Advisor-mentee relationship	Resistance
		Hierarchy
		Distrust
	Using Rubric	Approach
		Conflict
		Disagreement

In the above tables, it can be seen that the first category is focused on feedback. This is conceived as a process by which the information collected by the advisor or companion acquires value only to the extent that it can be shared. Next, three subcategories of the major category “feedback” will be analyzed, which, according to what was expressed by research subjects, recognize its content as a factor that favorably affects pedagogical practice.

a) Feedback as a focus in the teaching-learning process

In this case, the idea arises that the process of constant counseling or accompaniment favored the identification of critical points of the teaching-learning process, which teachers face daily in the classrooms that not only emerge as weaknesses in strategies but also attitudes on the part of the students. Hence, the experience of the advisors in all areas is recognized, including the information provided in new ways of teaching and evaluating and, that is part of the feedback:

It seemed to me that, with the feedback received, I could make better decisions when facing some critical situations in the classroom. The advisor has a lot of experience and provided me with very good solutions to the way I explain, she made me realize that not only the way I explain exists, but that there are other and easier ways for the student (EDocINST3p6).

The advisor helped me realize that I had to improve the evaluation of the objective of the class for the day, (...) I left that process for the end of the class and many times, it was not enough (...) to close, and did not use strategies for the evaluation of the day (EDocINST2 p6).

The advisors gave us very specific information on the teachers' practices, pointing out relevant aspects, for example, how they contextualize the themes of the stories with reality, for example, of teacher "x" (ESubDirINST1p4)

(...) I was prone to give the answers directly and I didn't let the students discover those answers, in other words, I didn't lead them to find them (EDocINST1p6).

As is evident, teachers value the process of accompaniment and specifically the action of feedback as a strategy that allows them to implement a reflective practice to improve the implementation of various methodological strategies and that these are reflected in the students' learning. Likewise, according to the expressions of other actors involved, in this case, principals, it is evident that, when feedback is given for training purposes, it favors the feeling of well-being with teachers.

b) Feedback as a formative practice

In this case, the interviewees qualify the feedback received by the pedagogical advisors (departmental, municipal), as an eminently formative practice, that is, focused on providing information from a constructive perspective for teachers. Hence, the teachers (DinINST), deputy directors (SubDirINST), and director (DirINST) of the center express:

(...) allowed me to lose the fear of them watching my classes... While it is true, that with the technique we have confidence in each other, it is still not easy to look at, because you will see your weaknesses it is difficult to receive criticism because you never want to do it wrong, but, well mmmmm we fail (EDocINST2p3).

In my case, the technical advisor was always very kind and professional with his comments and made me feel good because he criticized me, but in a good way, we could say, you can see his commitment to his work and not only because of the position and he did everything possible to extort me how to improve and be able to generate a culture of learning every day and evaluation of what I do (EDirINST1p3).

I appreciate that, during the feedback, the teachers expressed that they never felt I was evaluated, but that I was supported to improve the classes (...) clo, it is true that one never tries to do them harm, but I do point out to them that there are things that one does not see as a teacher, things that escape one, but that is what the advisors and uni as director are for to support them (ESubDirINST1p6).

With the above, it is argued that teachers, deputy principals, and principals agree that the feedback offered by the pedagogical advisors allowed them to make a critical reflection and become aware of their classroom practices. In addition, it is highlighted that the advisors were able to produce a sense of security, not of threat, during the accompaniment process and more so at the time of feedback (which is always given at the end of the class; during and after the class through workshops), thus marking one of the necessary conditions for good work performance and that these actions have a direct impact on the learning of the students.

c) Feedback as a process of self-regulation of advisory practice

In this, one of the very important aspects stands out, and that is the questioning that arises in the pedagogical advisors or accompaniers and school directors, about their abilities to perform the role assigned to them. In this sense, reflections come to light regarding the complexity and responsibility involved in assuming this pedagogical practice. From these, the following comes to light:

I realized that, as a principal, it is not good to move away from the classroom and leave the teachers alone. Now as director, I realized how difficult it is to give feedback to the teachers who were even my teachers. I feel that sometimes I lack arguments to discuss with the teachers, or that I lack strategies to suggest to them, I feel that I must improve more, first, and then give feedback to them. Hahaha, I think that umm they notice that the years out of the classroom have hurt me, maybe and I have had to read and read more (EDirINSTp5).

When you have the opportunity to advise or accompany another teacher, you are not only evaluating her, but you are evaluating yourself umm while observing the class, I thought if I faced these students and this subject, what would I do? Mmmmmm and the class ends and you keep thinking about what to say to the teacher so that she can improve. That's when the most difficult part comes, that is, feedback is not easy, because you have to think and comment on useful and relevant issues, otherwise you end up telling them things that the teacher, on her own, already knows she needs to improve (EAPMinST1p3).

For me, due to my little experience, it was very difficult for me to make concrete orientations, (and that the ones I gave could) contribute to the teacher reflecting on his practices, because he is a very, very, very self-taught teacher. For me, that's a problem, because I feel like I didn't manage to be clear enough with the professor, but I learned from him, (me) (EAPMinSTp5).

In my case, what (I) value most about feedback is that I was also able to reflect on how I do the pedagogical accompaniments we ignore how teachers are learning (ESubDirINST1p7).

I think that we all agree that feedback has a great impact on the teaching-learning process and accompaniment, because many times when we go to accompany the learning process, we focus on the time it takes the teacher to address and address the contents, but not on looking at what the children are doing. how their faces are, what doubts they have, and how the teacher supports them to get out of the doubts they have (GFDireSubAPDoc1p2).

The above references, taken from the speeches of teachers, principals, and pedagogical advisors, suggest that they are all aware of the need to strengthen their pedagogical competencies. In this sense, they agree that practice is what allows them to offer relevant information so that their colleagues can improve their professional knowledge and implement better teaching and learning practices. Therefore, the awareness of the advisors is a key factor in moderating and self-regulating feedback. Consequently, teachers value the content of feedback when it allows them to recognize specific aspects of the teaching and learning process.

6. DISCUSSION

The purpose of pedagogical accompaniment is to train teachers who are competent to face the current context, and this is achieved when it has a training objective and therefore effective and effective feedback must be given. Under this model, the accompaniment strategy is aimed at changing the traditional logic of massive, uniform, impersonal, and circumstantial systems of the so-called supervision and is encouraged to overcome training processes or, rather, feedback, according to the results of the accompaniment.

Cuenca et al. (2014) state that the management of pedagogical accompaniment requires clear rules, resources; and strategies defined to advance in coverage, in spatial areas, and at different levels of action, as well as good management capacity (including feedback as the ultimate goal of the macro-process). For this to be realized, the organization on which the strategy must be based includes essential elements such as the following:

- The Ministry of Education, through the planning directorate in conjunction with the areas of Teacher Training, Research, Technology, and Curriculum, must initiate the training of teams of Pedagogical Advisors (at the national, departmental, and municipal levels) with experience in the field, that is, who have experience as teachers in the classroom.
- Teams of advisors by areas, not generic, whose action should be aimed at the pedagogical accompaniment of basic teachers and, even more so, those who are starting their teaching work.

- Create synergy with universities to create knowledge transfer at both levels.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The pedagogical accompaniment strategy promoted by Mined is an alternative that seeks the construction and consolidation of an advisory relationship, from a formative perspective that seeks to assume the learning of the teaching staff and, therefore, is seen in them as students, as a shared responsibility.

Regarding feedback, the participants detected positive factors, the formative approach assumed by some supervisors or pedagogical companions, who generated dialogues to help the teacher to reflect on the pedagogical process. Likewise, the advisors highlighted that the feedback process allowed them to become aware of both their advisory practices and their performance in the classroom, which favored their self-regulation.

Also, both teachers, principals, and advisors recognize that this practice, of feedback after pedagogical accompaniment, requires the development of some specialized competencies, which in some cases are still incipient. The professors indicated that they hope that the directors have experience in teaching in general that it can help them with problems related to their teaching, when necessary, and that the advisor-mentee relationship allows them to propose satisfactory solutions.

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