ARTICLES

The school-university association:
collaborating teachers' perceptions of primary education degree programs in Chile*[1]

Lady Sthefany Bastías Bastías[2]
ORCID: 0000-0002-6228-1894

Abstract

Over the last ten years, international educational organizations have emphasized the importance of establishing partnerships between universities and schools during the practical training of future teachers, with an emphasis on improving the quality of learning during their initial training. Therefore, the objective of the study is to describe the school-university relationship during practical training in primary-education pedagogy from the perception of collaborating teachers in practice centers. To achieve this, a qualitative methodology was used, which included the analysis of semi-structured interviews with eleven collaborating teachers. For the analysis of the empirical material, some guidelines of Grounded Theory were followed. The main results indicated that the school-university relationship is characterized by the responsibilities assumed by the school and the university during the practicum, the conditions for a successful partnership, as well as aspects still pending in the organization of practical experiences. Finally, these findings are discussed in terms of the growing evolution of responsibilities that schools and collaborating teachers have assumed, coupled with the insufficient instances of dialogue between training teachers during practical experiences, pointing to gaps in reciprocity between the institutions.

Keywords

Iinitial teacher training – Higher education – School-university relationship – Practicum – Primary education.

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Introduction

In recent years, international educational organizations have suggested the importance of establishing partnerships between schools and universities for the initial training of teachers (OECD, 2009, 2017; OEI, 2015). In line with this, specialists in the field have argued that teacher training, particularly practical training, requires strong relationships between both institutions, involving actors both within and outside the academic environment (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Engeström, 2008; Gutiérrez; Nailer, 2021; Huong *et al.*, 2020; Smith, 2016; Toe *et al.*, 2020). As a result, partnerships with greater strength have been emerging between schools and universities. The American discussion, for example, highlights the gap between practical and theoretical training and warns about the need to establish strong relationships with schools to improve the quality of teacher training (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Furlong *et al.*, 2005; Zeichner, 2019). England has been working for a decade under a school-based practice model that requires universities to partner with schools (Buhagiar; Attard, 2015; Hobson, 2002, 2009; Jacques, 1992; White; Timmermans; Dickerson, 2022). Likewise, Norway has been moving towards research on school-university partnerships (Daza; Gudmundsdottir; Lund, 2021; Farrell *et al.*, 2023; Jakhelln; Postholm, 2022; Smith, 2016); and New Zealand has also been funding research since 2013 for initial teacher training programs to work on innovative mechanisms of articulation with schools to improve graduate profiles (Bernay, 2020). All these countries work to understand the conditions and outline possible models of school-university relationships that contribute to quality education in teacher training.

Therefore, regarding the types of school-university partnerships, proposals have emerged that reflect levels ranging from total separation to deep and collaborative articulation between the institutions (Farrell, 2023; Jones *et al.*, 2016; Smith, 2016). In the case of total separation, the school is considered a utilitarian resource for the future teacher training process, with a short-term connection (Huong *et al.*, 2020). On the other hand, more collaborative levels are based on the belief that learning to teach is a task for both the university and the school, where future teachers need "adequate academic, practical, and personal support to function smoothly in the different environments of teacher training" (Mauri *et al.*, 2019: 2).

Chile has also been receptive to the suggestions proposed by the OECD on the need to ensure "closer contact with schools" (OECD, 2017, p. 24). Likewise, other national reports, resulting from school reform processes implemented in the country, have highlighted the need for collaborative work between schools and universities during the training of future teachers (Consejo Asesor Presidencial para la Calidad de la Educación, 2006; Panel de Expertos para una Educación de Calidad [PEEC], 2010; Comisión Nacional de Acreditación [CNA], 2018). These suggestions have become so important that they are now one of the three dimensions considered in the mandatory accreditation of pedagogy programs in Chile. The origin of this change dates back to 2022, when the process of updating the standards for the accreditation of Pedagogy programs began. During this review, a criterion focusing on practical training was introduced. This criterion emphasizes the progression of such training, highlighting the monitoring and accompaniment of students

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during their school practices, as well as emphasizing the importance of establishing a solid connection with school institutions (CNA, 2023).

The role of the collaborating teacher in teacher training

Field experiences are an important part of the initial teacher training, and collaborating teachers who receive future teachers in their classrooms play a fundamental role in support and guidance along this formative stage (Betlem *et al.*, 2018; Clarke; Winslade, 2019; Hankey, 2004), especially considering the high presence of student teachers from the early years of training in the case of concurrent models (Buhagiar; Attard, 2015; Nevins-Stanulis; Russell, 2000; Gutierrez; Nailer, 2021). Some of the tasks of the collaborating teacher include monitoring the teaching process (Daza; Gudmundsdottir; Lund, 2021), evaluating the future teacher's performance, and modeling good professional practice (White; Timmermans; Dickerson, 2022; Crasborn *et al.*, 2011; Mauri *et al.*, 2019). However, despite the significance of the collaborating teacher in the practical training of future primary school teachers, there are few articles that address the relationship they have with higher education institutions from their own perspective (Andreasen, 2023; Clarke; Winslade, 2019; Betlem *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, considering that the collaborating teacher in practice centers is a central actor during the practical experiences of future teachers, this study aims to understand the school-university relationship during practical training in primary education pedagogy from the perspective of the collaborating teachers in practice centers.

Methods

A multiple case study was applied in two institutions with different organizational characteristics. This methodology allows us to understand different conditions in which a phenomenon occurs (Coller, 2005). These two universities (case 1 and case 2) present diversity in their legal nature (state and private); size according to enrollment numbers (medium and large); and quality assurance according to the years of accreditation of the universities (advanced and excellent).

Instruments and validation

A semi-structured interview was the technique used to collect information, which allowed access to the subjects' perspectives in order to understand their interpretations and perceptions (Gainza Veloso, 2006; Taylor; Bogdan, 1994; Wengraf, 2004). The interview guideline comprised six dimensions: roles, collaboration, practice activities, rewards, and difficulties of practice. Additionally, two procedures were used to validate the interview guideline. The first procedure was an expert judgment review, in which twelve faculty and teachers with experience in the study area participated (Escobar-Pérez; Cuervo-Martínez, 2008). The second validation process involved piloting the interview guideline.

Participants and procedures

Participants were contacted via email based on a list provided by the directors of the pedagogy programs at the participating universities. This communication detailed the purpose of the research and the anonymous handling of the data. Participants who agreed to be part of the study did so voluntarily, signing an informed consent form. The data collection period took place from September 2021 to November 2022, as shown in Table 1. The study was also approved by the university's Ethics Committee (Folio: 09/2021), the authorization of University 1 for fieldwork, and the approval of the Ethics Committee of University 2. The total sample consisted of 11 participants (Table 1). Among other elements, 10 teachers have been in the role of a collaborator for 0 to 9 years, and only 1 teacher has been a collaborator for 10 to 19 years. Finally, there are no teachers in the ranges of 20 to 29 years and more than 30 years.

Table 1- Characterization of the collaborating teachers

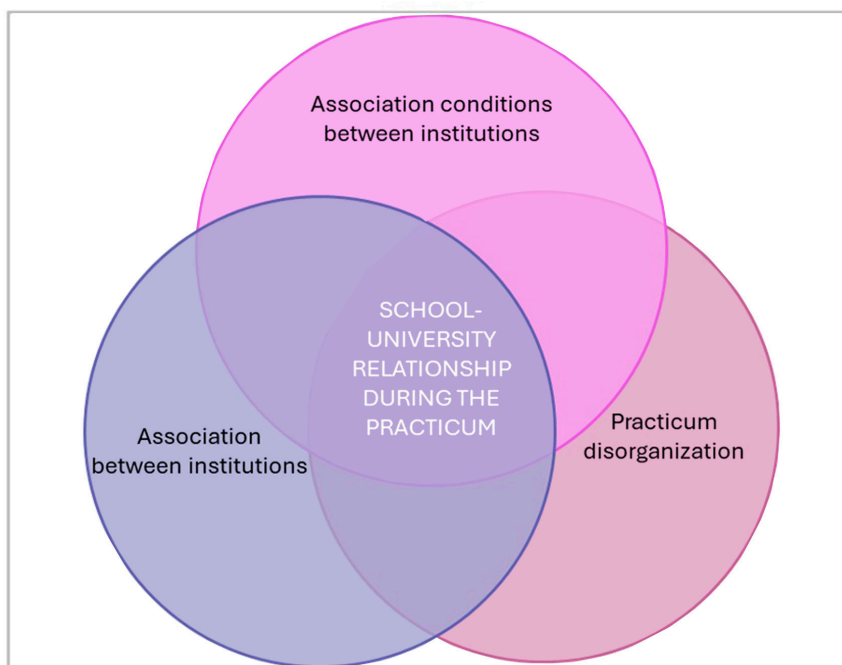| Interview Code	Interview Date	Years of Professional Experience (ranges)	Years of Experience as a Collaborator (ranges)
CASO1_C1	Oct-21	0 to 9	0 to 9
CASO1_C2	Oct-21	0 to 9	0 to 9
CASO1_C3	Oct-21	10 to 19	0 to 9
CASO1_C4	Dec-21	10 to 19	0 to 9
CASO1_C5	Nov-21	0 to 9	0 to 9
CASO1_C6	Nov-21	10 to 19	0 to 9
CASO1_C7	Sept-21	0 to 9	0 to 9
CASO2_C1	May-22	0 to 9	0 to 9
CASO2_C2	Nov-22	30 or more	10 to 19
CASO2_C3	Nov-22	10 to 19	0 to 9
CASO2_C4	Nov-22	30 or more	0 to 9

Source: Own elaboration.

Data analysis

Data was analyzed following some of the procedures of Grounded Theory, utilizing the three stages for coding (Saldaña, 2016), i.e., open, axial, and selective (Strauss; Corbin, 1998). For the analysis of the interviews, the program Nvivo Release v14.23 was used. In the first stage of coding, 28 codes were generated for case 1, and 30 codes for case 2. In the second stage, axial coding was performed. During this procedure, four categories were obtained. Finally, in the third stage of selective coding, the central category "School-university relationship during the Practicum" was identified, through which the categories are related (Gibbs, 2012).

Results

The results of the interviews conducted with collaborating teachers from the practice centers provided an initial approach to understand the school-university relationship during practical training for primary education majors at two Chilean universities. Regarding this relationship, three categories were distinguished, namely, conditions of the association, disorganization in the practicum, and association between institutions (Fig. 1).

Figure 1- Selective codification

Source: Own elaboration.

Conditions of the association between institutions

The category of conditions for the association between institutions includes the codes related to the commitments made by both schools and degree programs during practical training. It also reflects aspects of communication that would be important to consider in the collaborative work between institutions and the teacher trainers from both institutions. The following sections explain these elements.

The results reflect differences regarding the responsibilities assumed by the basic education pedagogy degree programs between case 1 and case 2. For the collaborating teachers in case 1, the fundamental responsibility of the degree program is to ensure that future teachers acquire disciplinary knowledge and skills for professional practice. Research in the area reaffirms this idea as a fundamental aspect of future teacher training (Van Velzen; Timmermans, 2014; White; Timmermans; Dickerson, 2022). Regarding this

acquisition of knowledge, teachers emphasize the importance of ensuring that these goals are met: "The degree program has to provide students with the skills, competencies, and learning needed for them to be capable of functioning effectively, so the role [of the degree program] is fundamental" (ENT06_CASO1_C6). However, for the collaborating teachers in case 2, there is confidence in the training that future teachers are receiving from the degree program, adding that the degree program's role lies especially in the responsibility of forming well-rounded teachers. The following quote reflects this:

> I believe that the main role of the degree program is, eh... to instill this commitment to pedagogy, this commitment to the human beings we are forming, to always understand that it is a comprehensive formative role, because it's not just about delivering the discipline I learned in my specialization (ENT08_CASO2_C1).

The accounts of the collaborating teachers in case 1 directly indicate that didactic and disciplinary training is one of the main elements of the degree program's responsibilities, without mentioning other formative features or elements of professional identity that might be relevant. This situation is indeed highlighted by the collaborators in case 2, where they have a broader perspective on the responsibilities of the pedagogy degree program in the training of future teachers.

Moreover, the collaborating teachers in both cases echo the commitments they face when receiving future teachers in their classrooms. Regarding these experiences, they describe the undeniable process of mentoring and training they undertake towards trainee teachers, revealing such actions as one of their main functions (Clarke; Winslade, 2019). Actions like providing feedback or modeling teaching are key aspects of this professional training (Vaillant; Marcelo, 2015). The following extracts from quotes mention these tasks:

> So, I conducted the classes and then they could see how their lesson plans were executed, how the class developed, what problems there were. Then, after each class, we stayed and talked. So, we talked about how the class went, any details (ENT01_CASO1_C1).

> I always say: 'Look, this is missing,' 'We could improve this in such a way,' and always being involved, because I believe, as I was saying, that... a student who becomes a good teacher must be aware that they can't do it alone, and especially not in these times (ENT09_CASO2_C2).

However, the data also presents challenges in managing the time dedicated to the role assumed by the collaborating teachers (Gutiérrez; Nailer, 2021). Considering this, it is legitimate to question whether these "new responsibilities" undertaken by these teachers are being considered by universities or schools as part of their professional performance and within the scope of their professional contracts.

A crucial element in the collaborative work between educational institutions that decide to engage in joint efforts is communication. Therefore, the interaction between university tutors and collaborating schoolteachers is one of the key aspects for quality learning during the practicum (Sarmiento-Márquez *et al.*, 2023). However, the data for

both case 1 and case 2 consistently highlight that during the development of practical experiences, communication between the collaborating teacher and the university tutor is occasional. The accounts suggest that once the degree program places future teachers in schools, there is little interaction with the teacher trainers, except in cases where difficulties arise that warrant communication with the degree program or the university. As noted by the collaborating teachers from both cases, the communication with university tutors is sporadic and only addresses specific situations:

> She [the university tutor] gave me her email, gave me her number in case of an important situation, and since then, I haven't heard anything else. I haven't talked to anyone else; I haven't received emails like, 'How are the kids doing? Do you want to comment on anything?' No. I haven't received anything, and in my personal case, eh, I haven't communicated with them either (ENT03_CASO1_C3).

> That part is colder; that part of the contact with the university is not as continuous. They only call me or come by on, eh, the occasions they need to come. The students tell me they are going to be supervised today...That part for me, eh... I think there should be a bit more contact (ENT11_CASO2_C4).

This lack of interaction between both teacher trainers could hinder successful relationships between institutions during the practicum (Green; Tindall-Ford; Eady, 2020; Jakhelln; Postholm, 2022), which complicates not only communication but also agreements and the learning that takes place during practical experiences. Additionally, the lack of communication in both cases poses the relationship between the two institutions under a Practice School model. In this model, communication between the parties is characterized by being infrequent in-person and primarily conducted through written means (Smith, 2016), indicating an occasional and utilitarian relationship between the institutions.

Disorganization of the practicum

The second category, disorganization of the practicum, details the difficulties faced by the university in its role as the institution responsible for overseeing and managing the practical experience of future primary education teachers. The accounts reflect the unregulated context in which practice is implemented in teacher training for primary education. For instance, there are limited decision-making levels by the degree program when selecting collaborating teachers during practical experiences. As a consequence of insufficient management, it is possible to perceive a sense of abandonment of the future teachers by the collaborating teachers.

As pointed out by Aguerrondo (2004) and Hobson *et al.* (2002, 2009), the importance of having practicing teachers with experience in their professional work is an undisputed issue for initial teacher training. However, how are collaborating teachers selected to support the professional training of future teachers? This remains an issue with several gaps in its procedure and selection criteria. Regarding this procedure, the data reflect

that it is still a hierarchical and unilateral process involving school administrators with little participation from university degree programs. According to the experiences of collaborating schoolteachers, it is a direct decision by their supervisors, who designate them to assume this role. The following accounts describe this process:

> Well, we were informed in a prior meeting, during the teachers' council meeting, to let us know, me and my colleagues, who were going to receive the trainee teachers. And they did it based on the availability of our classes for teacher training. At least that's how I found out (ENT10_CASO1_C5).

> Okay. Well, for an administrative matter, the university came to request, eh, these practicum placements, right? And the head of the technical unit assigned us the girls who were coming to do their practicum. They didn't ask us on that occasion (ENT10_CASO2_C3).

Likewise, the collaborators identify at least two criteria by which they are called to perform this role. The first is based on excellence criteria from the internal evaluation processes conducted by the school, and those who achieve high scores are considered for receiving trainee students.

> At the school, generally those of us teachers with high performance were assigned trainee students. So, we have a very intense teacher evaluation process at the school, which is both quantitative and qualitative. Therefore, teachers who score above 4.5 are the ones who can receive trainee students (ENT07_CASO1_C7).

Personal initiative to become a trainer is also mentioned in the accounts as an element considered when assuming this role. The following account illustrates this: "I heard that they needed schools, eh... where students doing their practicum could attend, right? So, this idea came to me as well because I thought, 'well, they are young people who are just starting out, who might bring other ideas'" (ENT11_CASO2_C4).

As derived from the accounts, the selection of collaborating teachers for the basic Pedagogy degree in these two cases is still an emerging issue that requires further investigation. The accounts show that their selection seems to be subordinated to the school administrations, with the interviewed teachers lacking clarity on the criteria for such selection. The results do not indicate a dialogue regarding the profile of these trainers with the university degree programs, a matter relevant for collaborative work in practical training (Andreasen, 2023; Gravett; Petersen; Ramsaroop, 2019; Mauri *et al.*, 2019). This reflects a valuable opportunity to consider in relation to the role and profiles required for the mentorship of trainee teachers in the school-university partnership during practical experiences.

Additionally, the procedure for informing collaborating teachers about the functions in which they should support future teachers shows different levels of development depending on the type of management carried out by the degree program (Andreasen, 2023; Gravett; Petersen; Ramsaroop, 2019). This marks an important milestone in the

clarity of the procedure required to mentor trainee teachers. For example, teachers in case 1 demonstrate some dissatisfaction with the procedures the degree program uses to communicate the role expected of them and the tasks they should perform during the practicum of the students they receive:

> Look, I have participated in many, many, many, eh, opportunities for mentoring practicum as a guiding teacher, and the truth is, eh, that it always happens the same way, I mean, it's like, they [the pedagogy students] have to tell you what they have to do. And I really feel that the process is super informal, I mean, there is no such thing as saying, 'you know what, teacher? Look, this is the guideline, eh, on which they will be evaluated, would you be so kind as to look at these aspects, strengthen them, see how they are doing?' There's nothing (ENT03_CASO1_C3).

In contrast, the experiences of the collaborating teachers in case 2 indicate a greater understanding of the tasks and protocols involved in receiving practicum students. The accounts show that there is a recurring procedure in making contact. The following account reflects this:

> So, I worked with two guiding teachers, and it was always, eh, the same procedure. The student says, 'I have to start the second semester.' The school will authorize it, and the university contacts us for all the necessary permissions, and then there are meetings for agreements, analysis, etcetera (ENT08_CASO2_C1).

For successful associations between schools and universities in initial teacher training, the construction of a relational space that fosters connections between teacher trainers – university tutors and the teachers at the practicum centers – is a significant element for the development of the practicum (Arhar *et al.*, 2013; Mauri *et al.*, 2019). Consequently, the analyzed data reveals differences between the cases studied, where one emphasizes reciprocity and the other a sense of abandonment. In case 1, the accounts show few points of association in the relationship between university tutors and collaborating teachers during the practical experiences. As a result, words like abandonment and loneliness are two of the adjectives used by collaborating teachers to describe their relationship with the university. Regarding this perception, the accounts reveal that the degree program has few or no instances of presence in the practicum centers once the future teachers are placed, which Gravett *et al.* (2019) define as the disappearance of the university in schools. This is expressed by the schoolteachers: "I felt like they were abandoned, like they were left here and then we come to pick them up later" (ENT01_CASO1_C1). This sense of loneliness in the relationships with university counterparts is not only perceived in terms of support for the trainee teachers but also in the guidance and support that collaborating teachers should have:

> Ehhh, I feel that the girls [students] were a bit too alone during the practicum process on the part of the university, from what I saw, not because they told me, but from what I saw. So just like I also felt little support from the university, but I have no problem doing my job anyway (ENT04_CASO1_C4).

However, in contrast to the loneliness expressed by the collaborating teachers in case 1, the teachers in case 2 indicate that both dialogue and the act of welcoming suggestions are two elements that characterize the type of relationship the degree program in case 2 maintains with the teachers at the practicum centers. Regarding these two elements, it is possible to distinguish that the university's willingness and the acceptance of the suggestions and opinions expressed by the collaborators reflect a recognition of joint work, an element that, according to authors like Kruger *et al.* (2009) and Bernay (2020), is key for developing reciprocal relationships. The collaborating teachers' quotes illustrate this: "So, in that sense, we can give opinions or our views, say, a suggestion, and the university accepts that" (ENT09_CASO2_C2); "Yes, yes, in fact, it was quite fluid, and the willingness they [the university tutors] have to always be... attentive to what they might need, or the guidance, they are always there" (ENT10_CASO2_C3).

Association between institutions: from real to ideal scenarios

The category of association between institutions provides details about the real conditions and proposes ideal conditions for collaborative work between the school and the degree program during practical experiences. Regarding this relationship from the perspective of the collaborating teachers, it highlights the description of real actions of association carried out during the development of practical experiences between the school and the university. Secondly, it outlines possible ideal scenarios of articulation for better development of practical training and the learning of trainee students.

Regarding elements of the real association experienced by the collaborating teachers with the degree programs, a perception stands out that positions the university as a knowledge-generating entity to the detriment of the professional knowledge that teaching in the classroom grants to the collaborating teachers. This is explained because, from the perceptions of the teachers at the practicum centers, the association between institutions is based on invitations to various continuous training and outreach activities, exclusively led by the university. Activities such as conferences, courses, and seminars are seen as actions for updating, in which they and their practicum centers are always considered. The following quotes reflect this type of work: "Because we are collaborators, we are always invited to events, meetings, talks, courses... free courses" (ENT09_CASO2_C2). This is reinforced by the following extract:

Yes. Look, there are invitations. When there are university activities, teachers are always invited. So, regarding seminars, some courses, workshops, all of that, always... The corporate email receives all the invitations from the university, and we are considered (ENT07_CASO1_C7).

These examples suggest that the notion of association resides in a utilitarian and short-term type of relationship. According to university-school partnership models, these perceptions merely place this type of relationship during the practicum at an initial level of association (Bernay *et al.*, 2020; Green; Tindall-Ford; Eady, 2020; Jones *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, the university is positioned exclusively as a knowledge generator, while the

experience of professional teaching practice and the knowledge gained from the daily practice of being a teacher are not considered by the collaborating teachers themselves as sources of knowledge and generators of professional knowledge. This could also indicate a lack of awareness of the formative role that collaborating teachers have in the initial training of primary school teachers.

The collaborating teachers universally present possible ideal scenarios for the articulation between the school and the university. The first pertains to access and use of university infrastructure as a central element of the relationship. Having open and organized spaces that allow school students to visit the university and use its facilities and laboratories is one of the most important characteristics that would make an active association between both institutions visible:

> I mean, you know what? The degree program is going to, eh, I don't know, I'm just making stuff up. The degree program is going to have an art exhibition. Would you be interested in bringing a class here? And that's university. That's community engagement. Because it gives public school students, who we know are often culturally deprived, eh, the possibility to access a different universe that they might not have access to for who knows how long, or maybe never (ENT03_CASO1_C3).

> For example, eh, visits that the children could make to the university… I went several times with my students to do experiments there, at [Name of the University]. So, it would be good to have more of that, more engagement where the children could go, or the university could come here (ENT11_CASO2_C4).

The need to use the physical spaces of the university as well as implementing its classrooms and laboratories, can also be understood as a sign of loyalty towards the practicum centers. This could also reveal the necessity for a bidirectional exchange of learning from the university space by the schools. This condition is one of the characteristics of schools at an intermediate level of association and commitment, where the learning of school members and university teachers is seen as a meeting space and a place for professional innovation (Bernay *et al.*, 2020; Kruger *et al.*, 2009).

Secondly, an ideal association should aim to create meeting spaces between the teacher trainers from both the degree program and the school. In particular, the results highlight that there are few or no instances of common spaces for agreement between the teacher trainers of the school and the degree program during the development of practical experiences. The importance of making shared agreements that generate mutual benefits for the actors is significant for the success of partnerships between both institutions (Smith, 2016; Kruger *et al.*, 2009; Bernay *et al.*, 2020). Participants from both case studies explain this need:

> For example, something very simple like… once a month, just like the academic community of the university, invite the teacher – with payment so that it doesn't become an additional expense. And invite this academic community of professional practices, for instance, where the classroom

teacher [collaborating teacher] can participate or establish strategies together with the university teachers (ENT07_CASO1_C7).

It would be ideal if, for example, when they call us or request this service of being a collaborating teacher, they call us for a training session and tell us: 'You know what? We expect this and that from these students,' so we can guide them better because sometimes we think we are doing well, but we are actually making mistakes along the way (ENT09_CASO2_C3).

Discussion and conclusions

The purpose of this research was to understand the school-university relationship during the practical training of pedagogy in basic education from the perspective of the collaborating teachers at practicum centers. The findings from this study highlight some significant challenges regarding the practicum in the initial teacher training. The first challenge identified in the study pertains to the evolving responsibilities that schools or practicum centers have assumed. These commitments have increasingly shifted towards schools due to changes or suggestions driven by international educational organizations (OECD, 2005, 2017) concerning the importance of a closer association between schools and pedagogy degree programs, as well as a greater presence of trainee teachers in schools during the practicum (Andreasen, 2023; White; Timmermans; Dickerson, 2022). However, the responsibilities that collaborating teachers, who receive the future teachers in their classrooms, have had to take on have created a certain duality in their role. This role should be focused on the teaching processes of their classroom students. However, over time, they have also had to assume responsibilities associated with the training process of future teachers, which was previously the exclusive responsibility of the university tutor (Daza; Gudmundsdottir; Lund, 2021).

Through the perception of the collaborating teachers, this study has also provided elements that allow for a deeper understanding of the relationship between the school and the university during practical experiences. One element that deserves attention is the sporadic communication between the two institutions along the practicum. This type of communication reflects that, despite schools often serving as practicum centers, there is no fluid dialogue between the institutions or between the teacher trainers. This reveals a considerable gap when considering reciprocal relationships between the school and the university in the practical training of primary education students. Moreover, the results indicate that it would depend exclusively on the management of the degree programs to establish closer contacts with the collaborating teachers to make them feel part of this formative process, still highlighting the supremacy of the university in this relationship.

Moreover, an aspect worth highlighting is the meaning of "collaboration" that collaborating teachers attribute to the joint work with primary education degree programs, emphasizing two forms – a real one, focusing on dissemination and training, and an ideal one, which poses unaddressed challenges. In this sense, schoolteachers point out that collaboration with universities still lacks formal or institutionalized spaces that allow them to participate in decisions about practical training. In line with this, Zeichner (2010, 2015)

proposes creating "*Third spaces*" as an instance that enables teachers to cross pedagogical and institutional boundaries to improve teacher training, promoting an egalitarian relationship between university academic knowledge and the practical knowledge held by practicing teachers (Andreasen, 2023). This association would be an interesting challenge in the university practical training of the universities that participated in the study and others that might be in similar associative conditions.

Furthermore, another challenge in the practical training of Chilean teachers seems to be the selection of the collaborating teacher from the school who will receive the trainee teacher. Data indicates that the choice of this teacher depends exclusively on the school administrative teams, with the pedagogy degree program having little influence on the decision. This reflects that there are few instances where both institutions (school and university) make agreements on the requirements and profiles for practical experiences. This situation positions the relationship between the two institutions at an initial or practice school level, characterized as a service provider (Smith, 2016). Therefore, the challenge is to have medium- and long-term vision and plan that supports coordinated work between both institutions. In this sense, educational policies or quality assurance for the accreditation of degree programs should place greater emphasis on the quality and projection of collaboration agreements established between training institutions and schools serving as practicum centers for trainee teachers.

Finally, it is worth noting that the perceptions collaborating teachers have in relation to their work with pedagogy degree programs reflect the still diverse reality with which practical training is managed and organized in Chile. Despite the country adopting progressive practices over the five-year training period, it still seems necessary to adjust certain processes so that both institutions can make agreements under a shared objective, establish the needs and expectations of both parties, and create spaces that foster dialogue and co-construction of practical training between both parties.

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Lady Sthefany Bastías BASTÍAS

Editor: Prof. Dr. Hugo Heredia Ponce

Lady Sthefany Bastías Bastías is PhD © in Human Sciences from the University of Talca (Chile). She has done teaching and applied research in several universities. She is a specialist in issues related to initial teacher training and practical training.