

Co-Teaching Between Primary and Special Education Teachers: Critical Incidents in Collaborative Practice in Educational Integration Projects

Coenseñanza entre docentes de educación general básica y educadoras diferenciales: incidentes críticos de la práctica colaborativa en proyectos de integración educativa

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Abstract

This study investigates the critical incidents that cited by special education and basic education teachers regarding co-teaching work in the classroom within the framework of the school integration program. In terms of methodology, a qualitative approach was used with a descriptive scope for a sample of 15 basic general education teachers and 15 special education teachers, who responded to a guideline for the analysis of critical incidents. The analysis focused on reported incidents and was carried out by means of an analysis of intra- and inter-group content. The results are divided into four categories of critical incidents, namely: teaching strategies, learning assessments, disciplinary measures, and effective presence. Although these results are present in the existing literature, we conclude that there is a need to avoid individualizing problems, but instead to analyze them within a comprehensive framework in which a social dynamic fosters the conditions for them to emerge. Future research is thus necessary regarding public policy and its frameworks for co-teaching, in addition to focusing on the situated interaction of educational actors as a way of approaching conflicts.

Keywords: co-teaching, critical incidents, inclusive education.

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Resumen

La presente investigación indagó en los incidentes críticos que emergen de las voces de educadoras diferenciales y de docentes de educación general básica respecto del trabajo de coenseñanza en el aula, en el marco del programa de integración escolar. Metodológicamente, se recurrió a un enfoque cualitativo con un alcance descriptivo para una muestra conformada por 15 docentes de educación general básica y 15 educadoras de educación diferencial, quienes respondieron una pauta de incidentes críticos. El análisis se focalizó en aquellos incidentes reportados y se llevó a cabo por medio de un análisis de contenido intra e intergrupo. Los resultados dan cuenta de cuatro categorías de incidentes críticos: estrategias de enseñanza, procesos de evaluación de aprendizaje, medidas disciplinarias y presencia efectiva. Si bien estos resultados se encuentran presentes en la bibliografía existente, se concluye la necesidad de no individualizar las problemáticas, sino de analizarlas dentro de un marco comprensivo, donde una dinámica social propicia las condiciones para que estas emerjan. De tal modo, son necesarias futuras investigaciones respecto de la política pública y los marcos para la coenseñanza, para focalizar en la interacción situada de los actores educativos como forma de abordaje de los conflictos.

Palabras clave: coenseñanza, educación inclusiva, incidentes críticos.

Introduction

In recent years, attention to diversity has been an emerging theme in Latin American education systems (Echeita & Ainscow, 2011). Particularly in Chile, over the last 10 years, standards have been established that promote attention to diversity, with the objective of attempting to solve the problem of discrimination at school (Infante, Matus, & Vizcarra, 2011). In this context, the Chilean state has proposed the school integration program (hereinafter PIE, by the Spanish acronym) as a strategy focused on supporting the presence, learning, and participation of students identified as having special educational needs (SEN) (Ministerio de Educación de Chile, Mineduc, 2012). The objective of this initiative is to provide support to this group in the context of the normal classroom by means of the participation of a specialist teacher, who works together with the usual teacher (Arredondo, González, & Salazar, 2013).

In this context, Decree N° 170 (2009) and Decree N° 83 (2015) emphasize the various different components in order to establish an inclusive policy. The first of these addresses the guidelines for collaborative work between a classroom teacher and a specialist teacher in the space of a regular classroom, in order to create a more enriched and transformative educational process. Meanwhile, the second of these decrees addresses the diversification of teaching and the curricular adaptations for preschool and primary education, based on the implementation of collaborative work strategies between teachers (Mineduc, 2017).

However, at the basis of this policy is a compensatory type of approach centered on the deficit of the subject, being limited to seeking more appropriate methodologies for teaching and learning in the classroom (Peña, 2013), a feature that characterizes the Chilean reform in a paradigmatic hybridity (Ramos, 2013). Therefore, despite their declared inclusivity, in practice these mechanisms have functioned as hindrances to an approach that seeks to combat actions and structures that threaten inclusive values, reproducing dynamics of exclusion (Escudero & Martínez, 2011) and individualization of the problems of the students who are labeled as having SEN (López, Julio, Pérez, Morales, & Rojas, 2014).

Similarly, with the entrance of special education teachers into the territory of the regular classroom, day-to-day difficulties occur that do not have simple or standardized solutions (Alarcón, Alegría, & Cisternas, 2016). In this respect, the evidence shows that there is strong leadership from the general teacher in the classroom, while special education teachers are relegated to auxiliary tasks, depending on the needs of the general education system (Marfán, Castillo, González, & Ferreira, 2013; Rodríguez & Ossa, 2014).

However, although there are numerous studies that criticize the weaknesses of initial teacher training on issues related to collaboration and attention to diversity (Chitiyo, 2017; Cook & Friend, 1995; Marfán et al., 2013; Rodríguez, 2014; Rytivaara & Kershner, 2012; Urbina, Basualto, Durán, & Miranda, 2017), the particular incidents that cause discomfort, disruption, or problems in the professionals who carry out collaborative work are unknown. In other words, it is essential to investigate the critical incidents that emerge in the dynamics of co-teaching work in the regular classroom, since they are events that exceed a certain emotional threshold in the teacher, destabilizing their identity, and conflicting their duties (Valdés & Monereo, 2012).

For these reasons, this paper examines a classification of critical incidents that are mentioned by special education and basic general education teachers regarding co-teaching work in the classroom, within the framework of the PIE. This is aimed at contributing, from the perspective of the actors involved (Long, 2007), to the generation of immersion in the worlds of life, cultures, and approaches that emerge when carrying out co-teaching, which is relevant in order to glean lessons on how to focus professional development in these areas.

Theoretical Framework

Co-teaching

Conceptually, co-teaching involves shared work between different teachers with the aim of achieving common objectives (Cook & Friend, 1995), which is done through shared responsibilities in the planning, teaching, and assessment of the class group in a symmetrical manner (Chitiyo, 2017; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008). This way of working has proven to be useful to improve the reflective practices of the teachers involved, thanks to the dynamic and collaborative interactions that it generates (Carambo & Stickney, 2009; Soslau, Gallo-Fox, & Scantlebury, 2019); in addition to providing opportunities to access the curriculum and the participation of those students who have greater difficulties (Murawski & Bernhardt, 2016).

However, co-teaching on its own is not a guarantee of good results, as it is subject to a series of contextual factors that affect its implementation (Villa et al., 2008), such as the experience of the teachers, the number of classes they have conducted with different colleagues during the day, the number of hours they share with each other, and the time they work together (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2016; Stefanidis, King-Sears, & Brawand, 2018).

Likewise, the scant support of managers (Sinclair et al., 2019), the lack of training in co-teaching methodologies (Faraclas, 2018), the shortage of time and space for planning, and isolated pedagogical work are factors that interfere in achieving their objectives (Guise, Habib, Thiessen, & Robbins, 2017; Rodríguez, 2014).

On the other hand, as Hoppey and Mickelson (2017) state, one of the most important points to guarantee the objectives of co-teaching is teamwork between the two types of teachers. Regarding this point, it is essential for such work to have explicit guidelines regarding the distribution of functions (Embury & Dinnesen, 2013), since the work requires that the teachers put into practice the ability to combine their differences of thinking towards a common goal (Shin, Lee, & McKenna, 2016). In practice, this could prevent the subject teacher from assuming the role of providing content taught to the class, while the specialist educator is relegated to the role of support and assistance in the classroom (Friend, 2008).

In the case of Chile in particular, based on the regulation of co-education in the context of development of the PIE, it has been intended that this would be a strategy to provide inclusive support for children who are generally excluded from the school system due to their poor results, so it is presented as work that is focused on improving learning according to the goals set by the school system (Peña, 2013).

Research on the implementation of co-teaching in the country produces a crude diagnosis. Firstly, it indicates that the work done between teachers lacks structured planning, where work meetings take place in informal contexts—despite having time allocated to these tasks—which leads to a serious lack of coordination in the approaches (Marfán et al., 2013; Urbina et al., 2017). In addition, a reductionist notion of co-teaching is maintained, where this is understood simple as support for the regular teacher from the specialist teacher, which reduces their scope of activity and possibilities of support (Rodríguez, 2014; Rodríguez & Ossa, 2014).

Critical incidents

In contexts of professional action—as in this case of co-teaching—a series of disruptive events often occur in which two or more subjects experience problematic or potentially conflictive occurrences, which are studied under the definition of *critical incidents* (Ramos, Maya, & Holgado, 2011).

A critical incident is thus understood to be an unexpected and destabilizing event that takes place due to a surprising and challenging situation, which disrupts the recipient (Mastro & Monereo, 2014), requiring a rapid, instinctive, and innovative response (Almendro & Costa, 2006) with which the professional and interpersonal skills of the subjects are put into play (Monereo & Monte, 2011).

These characteristics have led, for example, to research into critical incidents becoming more visible in the fields of improvement and reflection in the health area (Almendro & Costa, 2006; Noreña & Cibal, 2008; Yáñez, López- Mena, & Reyes, 2011), as well as in the continuous training of education professionals (Badilla, Ramírez, Rizo, & Rojas, 2014) and in teaching teams (Bilbao & Monereo, 2011; Nail, Gajardo, & Muñoz, 2012).

Specifically in the case of teachers, it is noted that critical incidents unbalance the teacher's way of acting, breaking down the way they represent themselves and enabling an opportunity for change, but for this to happen, the professional has to admit that what happened is an incident that has occurred in a conflictive scenario and for which he or she has no effective solution (Monereo, 2010). Therefore, as this is a symptom that reveals the tensions related to professional work, it also makes it possible to address the needs of teachers (Valdés & Monereo, 2012), as one of the principal tools for reflection on what happens in the classroom (Fernández, Elórtogui, & Medina, 2003).

In this context, critical incidents acknowledged by teachers are often characterized by:

- difficulties in adhering to what has been planned;
- managing to get students to take part in classes and be involved in group work (Bilbao & Monereo, 2011);
- the lack of pedagogical knowledge to work with students belonging to the PIE; and
- the typical difficulties in the management of inclusive classrooms (Valdés & Monereo, 2012).

Unfortunately, there is a paucity of literature focusing on the critical incidents that take place in co-teaching processes. This is why the research done by Kain (1997) stands out. He describes the conditions that promote collaborative work between teachers, such as time, training, and organizational support, as being key, while arguing that the conditions that discourage it include pressures to “cover” the curriculum and apply tests, the traditions of monitoring and teaching in separate subjects, and lack of support for collaboration.

Methodological aspects

This study entailed a qualitative approach with a descriptive scope. The sample consisted of 15 basic general education teachers (hereinafter BGET) and 15 special education teachers (SET). Both groups were selected by means of intentional sampling focused on teachers who co-teach in the subjects of Language or Mathematics in the first or second cycle at four municipal educational institutions included in the PIE in a district of the Valparaíso Region of Chile. The teachers taking part in the study were an average of 33 years old and were mostly female ($n = 26$), while the male participants were all basic education teachers ($n = 4$). It should be noted that the teachers did not necessarily form co-teaching pairs with each other.

As regards information production techniques, each teacher was personally contacted to coordinate a first meeting in which the objective of the research and its ethical framework were explained, before subsequently providing the guidelines to record critical incidents (Nail et al., 2012), which had to be completed in writing within one month of registration. Two incidents were requested for each teacher, but a total of 40 critical incidents were obtained, 21 from the SET and 19 from the BGET. Subsequently, once the guidelines were collected, the information was entered into an analysis matrix, considering the six components of the guidelines: description of the incident, emotions aroused, professional performance, results of the performance, dilemmas, and case teaching.

The material produced from the description of the incident was subjected to a qualitative content analysis using an inductive approach (Arbelález & Onrubia, 2014; Díaz, 2018), which implies that emerging groups were formed, based on the units of meaning found in each of the critical incidents reported by the participants, which made it possible to systematize the set of critical incidents (Cáceres, 2003).

In operational terms, two members of the research group independently proceeded to analyze the material by generating codes for each of the critical incidents reported, which were later grouped and ranked in categories that reveal the globality and particularity of co-teaching dynamics. Then, both codes were subjected to a triangulation process as a rigorous strategy to ensure the stability of the data and categories (Noreña, Alcaraz-Moreno, Rojas, & Rebolledo-Malpica, 2012; Varela & Vives, 2016).

In terms of the ethical aspects, informed consents were given to all the participants. These documents explained the objectives of the research, the procedures, and the voluntary nature of their participation, as well as the costs and benefits of participating. Similarly, we guaranteed that their personal information would be safeguarded, which was taken into account during the analysis and presentation of the results in order to ensure the anonymity of the participants.

Results

Below we present the emerging categories of critical incidents differentiated according to the educational context in which the co-teaching process was affected within the framework of the PIE. As a consequence, the categories in question corresponded to teaching strategies, learning assessment processes, disciplinary measures, and effective presence.

Teaching strategies

This category refers to incidents between the BGET and the SET that involved teaching content considered relevant for their classes, focusing on the agreements they reached in this respect and the pedagogical practices with which they were carried out.

In the incidents reported by the BGET, they stress that there are persistent events in which the SETs openly disapprove in front of the class of the explicit details and contents presented by the basic general education teachers. This occurs in corrections made to class activities, undermining and producing ambivalence in the ways in which the teaching-learning processes are conducted:

During a Mathematics class, the children were working in pairs (tutors) and a student (the partner of a child attended by the professional) corrected his partner saying: "Francisco remembers that the teacher tells us to do the numbers correctly from high to low and she shows him the 9," for which the professional reprimands him saying: "It doesn't matter how Francisco does the numbers, it's not your problem (BGET-P13).

In the same vein, the BGET often report incidents in which the SET openly disparage the class dynamics and undermine them in front of students as a form of questioning:

During a Language class, with PIE support in the classroom, a class was being given on nouns. The activity consisted of brainstorming. When the PIE teacher was asked to intervene to clarify the concepts, the teacher said: "Sorry I wasn't listening, because this class is so boring." All in front of the students. I ignored the comment and continued with the class (BGET-P13).

Likewise, this kind of practice by the SETs is usually framed in terms of how a dynamic has developed in which they read their role within the space of the classroom. In this respect, the BGET complain that the SET have a dismissive attitude regarding the activities that take place during classes, which is reflected in an indifference to the schedule and setting of the class, creating factors that interfere in the students' attention.

I recall being in classes and after the bell rang the two PIE teachers (temporary and permanent) came in at the same time, talking and making noise. After the class started, they sat at the back of the room, drinking coffee and one of them sat there for the whole class without helping the children or even walking around the room. They began to talk about personal topics and didn't pay attention to the class and interrupted (BGET-P2).

On the other hand, the SET report that there is a marked lack of knowledge about their duties and possibilities for action within the space of the regular classroom on the part of the BGET. This situation results in the establishment of certain hierarchies between the two types of teachers, where the former are relegated to a role of technical assistance in minor and routine tasks, while the latter acquire the hegemony of the educational space, which enables them to determine the teaching strategies. This is why the SET indicate that the BGET order them to carry out minor tasks, as shown in the following example:

The 1st grade teacher had a concept that was divorced from reality regarding the role of my position. She asked me to glue guides, cut out material (SET-P4).

Along the same lines, the experience of the SET is undermined by the BGET because the agreements reached in relation to the design of collaborative pedagogical strategies are generally not valued. In this sense, the basic general teachers establish themselves as subjects who hold the hegemony of the space and carry out the activities they consider relevant, without prior consultation with the SET.

During collaborative work, it was agreed to reinforce the diphones, since some students confuse them, affecting their reading fluency; these will be articulated with the corresponding learning objective of the class, so it was agreed to create a guide, which the subject teacher would prepare. When the day comes, I enter the classroom and the teacher is doing another activity, with another guide (not the one agreed), not doing what was suggested and requested in terms of collaborative work (SET-P2).

Assessment of learning

The second category of incidents is related to both the forms and the basis of the assessment process for the students, a situation that reveals the juxtaposition between two different paradigms to address the students' evaluative situation.

In this regard, in the incidents reported by the BGET, the practice of accompanying the SET during the assessments is frequently mentioned as a conflictive situation for the assessment itself, since it is considered to be an obstacle to the acquisition of certain skills and abilities by the students.

I remember an occasion when the students had to answer a test. For some time they have been asked to be able to read instructions and respond autonomously. But the students asked the teacher to tell them what they had to do and, in addition, they asked if their answer was correct or not (BGET-P3).

Similarly, situations with similar characteristics are reported by the SET as conflictive, considering that the BGET think that support practices should not be applied in the evaluative situation, since this interferes with the academic performance of the students.

On Monday morning in the first grade of basic education in the Mathematics Education class, the supervising teacher asks me to take late tests for two students in the integration program, so I proceed to take them outside the common classroom at the request of that teacher. After giving the tests to the students, I give them to the teacher, taking into account the suggestions made in the planning. The teacher reviews the tests and tells the UTP [Technical-Pedagogical Unit] manager that the grades obtained by the students do not correspond, as they do not reflect the students' poor performance, suggesting that the PIE teacher helped with the test (SET-P7).

Finally, the conflict is manifested in how the BGET do not accept the suggestions made by the SET when carrying out the respective adaptations to the assessments of students with difficulties, with the BGET ultimately deciding the type of assessment to be applied to the students:

On Tuesday in the eighth grade Mathematics class, the children have a test on powers. With the teacher we agreed to carry out differentiated assessment of two children and I gave him suggestions. However, he gave the same assessments to all the students, ignoring what had been agreed (SET-P14).

Disciplinary measures

The third type of critical incident in the classrooms is reported mainly by the BGET regarding differences when establishing frameworks to maintain discipline in the classroom. In this regard, they usually report that the SET exceed their authority when correcting students, to the point of interrupting classes and ignoring the authority of the BGET in the regular classroom space.

Disciplinary measures

While I was finishing my class after a week and a half of leave, the PIE teacher (temporary) suddenly came in to reprimand my students for the "noise" and also about the "disorder", without previously consulting whether I needed cooperation or if I was bothered by her interruption. She also asked why they were so undisciplined and disorderly if they had behaved well with the replacement teacher (BGET-P2).

Likewise, the BGET said that the techniques applied by the SET when disciplining the students were ineffective and were not focused on identifying needs or modifying behavior, which resulted in difficulties in maintaining the group order of the class.

During the class one of the students with SEN has concentration and behavior problems, disrupting the normal progression of the class, in addition to requesting exclusive attention from the specialist teacher. The specialist teacher, seeing that the student was requesting her attention, responded: "If you don't calm down, we won't be able to work," without using any methodologies or identifying the student's needs. The student did not show change in behavior during the entire class, disturbing his classmates and refusing to accept the help of the Language teacher, saying that he only wanted the help of the specialist teacher (BGET-P9).

Effective presence

Finally, the fourth analytical category is related to how present the teachers are in the classroom, a situation that refers not only to physical presence, but also to whether the minimum conditions necessary for effective participation in teaching-learning processes are provided based on co-teaching.

This is how the SET initially reported incidents referring to the temporary arrangement that was assigned to them, both to them and to the BGET, by the management team of the schools. Within this framework, they first reported conflictive situations in which the BGET had to attend to other classes or other tasks without prior notice, which led to the SET taking over the class group without having had the chance to prepare the class or any material.

The Language class begins, the minutes pass and the teacher doesn't arrive. I wait a few more minutes and the children ask about her. I tell them that we will start the class by reviewing the previous activity that there wasn't time to correct. After half an hour, the general inspector arrives and tells me that the teacher was sent by the principal to tidy the library and therefore won't be coming to classes (SET-P11).

In the same vein, the SET also reported that they had to replace other teaching professionals without prior notice. For them, this type of situation resulted in the urgent necessity to improvise classes and activities, because there was no time to prepare. Furthermore, this had implications for the teaching-learning processes of the students, which were the exclusive responsibility of the management team.

Often, because of a lack of teachers, whether due to leave, administrative days, meetings, or other things, I have to take care of courses, having to take classes in any subject without having prepared material and certainly not having done any planning, since they are generally unexpected (SET-P2).

On the other hand, the BGET reported incidents related to the willingness of the SET to participate in classes, which is characterized both by non-compliance with the times designated for the class and by a lack of compliance with the tasks established to carry them out.

Once, when I was teaching the students the pronouns using examples and visual material, there was a knock on the door. I went to open it and it was the special needs teacher, who arrived 35 minutes after the class started. Then the students began to stand up from their places, stopped working and lost all the concentration they had achieved for the 35 minutes of the class during which they had been working (BGET-P7).

On Thursday I gave her my planning and she tells me that, as a modification, she will make a PPT for the course. On the Monday when the class is scheduled to take place, I installed the projector and waited for her. As she didn't turn up at the classroom I went to look for her to ask for the PPT on a pen drive. She replied that she hadn't done it because she had forgotten (BGET-P1).

In this setting, the BGET interpret this kind of situation as a lack of motivation that can have different focuses, for example, in personal or professional processes related to the way in which they have had to join in with a task with new characteristics.

Last year it was clear to me that the teacher should go to work in the classroom, but personal conflicts apparently discouraged the teacher from fulfilling her schedule (BGET-P3).

Discussion and Conclusions

The challenges posed by educational inclusion involve a transversal task related to teaching practice and professional development, calling for the reconstruction and transformation of basic notions related to collaboration and co-teaching processes. This research demonstrated in the reality studied—and based on the critical incidents—the incipient level of these processes and the need to address them to improve the response of educational institutions to diversity.

The investigation carried out in this study offers some interesting parameters to consider, bearing in mind the search for conflicting interfaces or points, from the perspective of the actors (Long, 2007).

In this vein, although based on public policies—with Decree N° 170 (2009) and Decree N° 83 (2015)—and on the field of research (Carambo & Stickney, 2009; Murawski & Bernhardt, 2016; Soslau et al., 2019) emphasis has been placed on co-teaching as a strategic activity for processes of teacher reflection, the results presented above reveal that this methodology, by itself, is no guarantee of optimal execution and it is subject to a broad range of contextual factors (Villa et al., 2008).

As previously observed, the incidents presented show weaknesses in the accomplishment of collaborative work between the two types of teachers, where this was identified as one of the most significant factors for meeting the objectives of co-teaching (Hoppey & Mickelson, 2017). This affects the way in which teachers manage to integrate the different visions that cohabit in the classroom (Shin et al., 2016) and results in the SET moving towards a support role, a situation that has been widely reported in the national and international literature (Friend, 2008; Rodríguez, 2014; Rodríguez & Ossa, 2014).

Thus, the tendency is revealed to reproduce pedagogical work as a task that is carried out in isolation, which creates barriers to creating partnerships between the BGET and the SET (Guisse et al., 2017; Rodríguez, 2014). As Faraclas (2018) states, this is also due to a lack of training in collaborative methodologies (Chitiyo, 2017; Cook & Friend, 1995; Marfán et al., 2013; Rodríguez, 2014; Rytivaara & Kershner, 2012; Urbina et al., 2017).

However, as we were able to observe in the last example presented, the critical incidents in co-teaching are not only reduced to the interaction between BGET and SET, but also involve problems related to educational management and teacher support, a situation that has been highlighted by Sinclair et al. (2019) and which can be extended as a criticism of the way in which this public policy has been implemented in the country (Escudero & Martínez, 2011; López et al., 2014; Peña, 2013; Ramos, 2013).

In this regard, the dynamics revealed should be understood more as the effect of the implementation of a public policy than as an individualization of the incidents in the figures of the BGET and SET. With this, it is possible to analyze the phenomenon at the classroom level and at the school level where this dispute takes place, which produces transversal dynamics that can be seen as mutual professional disregard and non-compliance with professional duties (Figure 1).

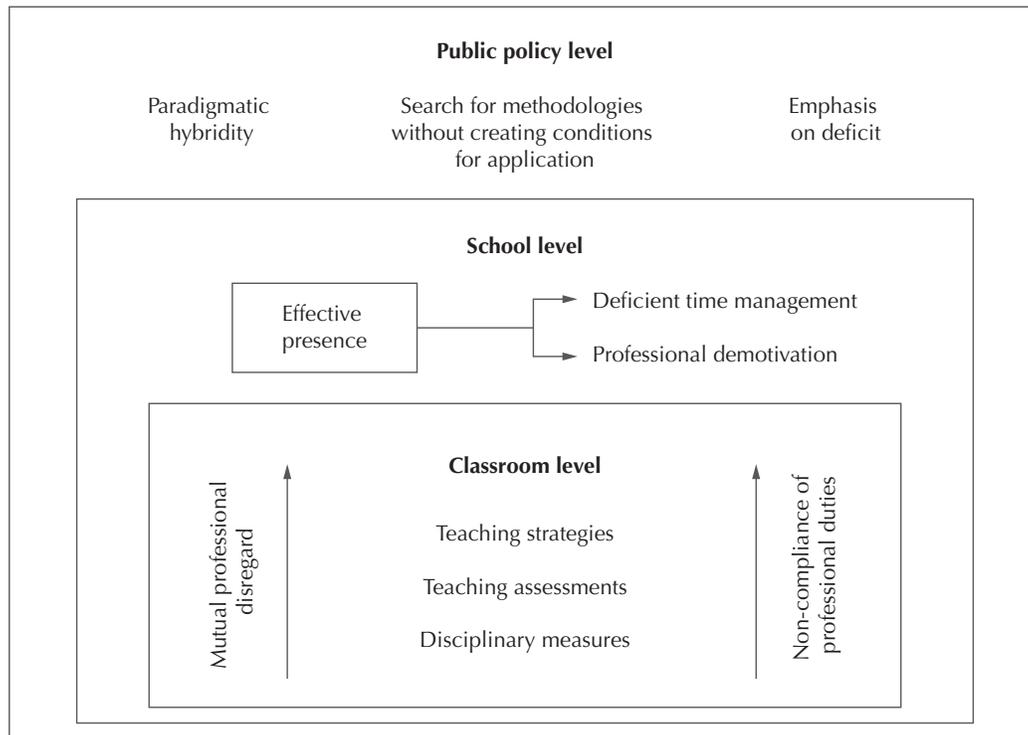


Figure 1. Comprehensive scheme of the co-teaching dynamic.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

From this perspective, firstly, processes of disregard for the other emerge, where the SET, for example, report feeling that their support, suggestions, and actively joining the classroom experience is dismissed and, in some way, scorned by the BGET, who coordinate all of these aspects in advance and determine whether what has been agreed will be carried out in the classroom, demonstrating superiority and control over the contingencies that occur in the territory of the classroom. Similarly, the BGET declare that the SET do not carry out their duties correctly and even hinder the processes in the classroom.

Considering this, we can infer that two conservation strategies are evident (Bourdieu, 2011) that act in parallel in this dynamic. The first of these takes place from the perspective of the BGET, who, being a "native" of the classroom, uses mechanisms to exclude the SET as an "immigrant" in their territory, thereby reinforcing the authority of the former regarding the curricular frameworks, planning, and assessments, among other important pedagogical processes.

In this context, the BGET demand the assimilation of the SET into the dominant culture, seeking to have them renounce their own nature (in this case, the pedagogical approaches, notion of diversity, etc., that stimulate them professionally) so that they adopt the official culture of the classroom society that welcomes them, generating

a view of the professional difference as problematic and threatening (Solé, Parella, Alarcón, Bergalli, & Gibert, 2000). It is thus that, in this framework of differences regarding the pedagogical roles, an asymmetric and dominant professional relationship prevails on the part of the BGET.

However, at the same time, the SET also deploy conservation strategies, since they are forced to leave their traditional territory of action to join one in which they are rejected. Their actions thus operate as a kind of passive resistance to the modifications that are required by the public policy framework and which are manifested in practices that hinder the functions of the BGET, as a way of expressing their discomfort.

This behavior leads to the reporting of critical incidents associated with professional irresponsibility that are attributed mutually—failure to show up, lateness, and leaving the classroom—which has been articulated according to the idea of effective presence. However, the conflictive situations that underlie these incidents are mediated by the limitations that, at the school level, occur in the everyday activities of educational institutions. For example, the times for collaboration between teachers are not yet sufficient, which can be observed in the critical incidents related to leaving the classroom, implying the need to provide replacements due to the lack of teaching staff, which in many cases limits the achievement of collaboration dynamics in the classroom.

Similarly, we can see a doubly overwhelmed classroom teacher: on the one hand, they must respond every day to the demand for results and, on the other, they must attend to diversity with all of their burdens and the administrative functions they have to carry out. These findings are consistent with those of Kain (1997), Rodríguez and Ossa (2014), and Urbina et al. (2017), where time and institutional management emerge as the main barriers to the development of co-teaching.

From another perspective, although the reports from the BGET and the SET do not allow a comprehensive framework to be established for the dynamics at a public policy level, it should be noted that they reflect paradigmatic hybridity (Ramos, 2013). Indeed, as efforts have focused rather on identifying deficits and seeking appropriate teaching and learning methodologies in the classroom—neglecting work to create the necessary conditions for real inclusion (Peña, 2013)—this has repercussions in terms of how the SETs often feel frustrated at the lack of acknowledgement of their work in the classroom and a disregard for the BGETs for not perceiving results, along with the limited availability of materials to carry out their tasks. (Poblete-Christie, López, & Muñoz, 2019).

In this regard, as stated previously, public policies end up operating as hindrances to the inclusive process itself in practice (Escudero & Martínez, 2011). This reveals the need, in future research, to focus on the particular scope and limitations of Decree N° 170 and Decree N° 83 in practice and how the bases are established to facilitate or hinder the development of co-teaching in the classroom.

Finally, as regards the incidents presented, the results show that there is generation of various struggles between the actors involved and they seek to position the others within their own comprehensive frameworks of educational work. Therefore, as Long (2007) points out, it is essential to emphasize and understand the processes of social interaction and the struggles for the control of relationships and resources, in order to seek a negotiation of meanings.

These classroom conflicts (Chitiyo, 2017) invite us to look in greater detail at this cultural dispute that emerges in co-teaching processes, considering the perspective of the actors regarding the phenomenon of collaboration. In this regard, it is important to promote professional cultures that allow reflection and problematization of the practice itself, in a context where this fact is in itself transformative and countercultural (Figuroa, Soto, & Sciolla, 2016). From this perspective, the study of critical incidents related to co-teaching provides a formative and constructive approach, adapted to the needs and the professional context, which calls for re-situating collaboration in a reflexive manner, addressing the teaching identities that are put into play and promoting professional recognition and enrichment (Monereo & Monte, 2011).

On the other hand, the reflective approach to critical incidents—considering the diversity of worlds, of life, and the positions of the teachers—constitutes a tool to approach, in an open and responsible dialogue, the local gambits that allow the articulation between curricular approaches and policies referring to diversity based collaboration to be resolved (at least partially). This aim is expressed in the collaborative work between these actors and refers to the key concepts expressed in pedagogical strategies, evaluative approaches, and notions about discipline or school coexistence.

It is also relevant to retrieve the co-constructed nature of co-teaching, by promoting the practice of sharing pedagogical expectations and conceptual negotiation and expanding the scope of collaboration to create variations in each co-teaching pair (Rytivaara, Pulkkinen & De Bruin, 2019). This inevitably leads to consideration between one and the other, since this is a step towards inclusion and educational quality (Figueroa & Muñoz, 2014), by enabling the integration of differences in pursuit of a common goal (Shin et al., 2016) through the critical examination of their own conceptions regarding educational change (Figueroa, Soto, & Yáñez-Urbina, 2019).

Finally, following Assael (2013), the notion of intercultural dialogue seems to contribute to the meeting of different ways of processing difference, appealing to a dialogical professionalism (Figueroa, pending publication) that promotes the construction of new professional relationships based on the “between”, based on recognition, trust, collaboration, and co-construction of knowledge.

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