RESEARCH ARTICLES

Diagnostic Assessment for Students who Enroll in Pedagogical Programs in Chilean State Universities: Social Representations about Teaching Professional Performance

Evaluación diagnóstica a nuevos estudiantes de carreras pedagógicas en Universidades Chilenas del Estado: representaciones sociales sobre el ejercicio profesional docente

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Summary

This descriptive and interpretative study accounts for results of representations regarding teaching profession which students of initial teaching training report in seven state chilean Higher Education institutions. This study arises from the updating of the national education quality assurance system in which the obligation to apply a diagnostic test is established. For such a purpose, the study population was composed by 1836 students from 2019 cohort of pedagogical programs from this national universities. A Likert - like scale instrument was applied. Numerical descriptive and inferential methods were applied to analyze the information. Generally concluding, common representations are revealed a professional performance regardless of the sex; it suggests that the evaluated subjects shape a clearly modeled professional identity before starting their Initial Teaching Training.

Keywords: Diagnostic National Assessment; Social Representations about Teaching Profession; Teaching Professional Performance.

Resumen

Este estudio es de tipo descriptivo e interpretativo y da cuenta de los resultados de las representaciones sobre la profesión docente – con énfasis en el ejercicio profesional docente - que auto-reportan alumnos que ingresan a la Formación Inicial de profesores, en siete instituciones chilenas de Educación Superior estatales. Este estudio surge a partir de la actualización del sistema nacional de aseguramiento de la calidad de la educación, en donde se establece la obligatoriedad de aplicar test de evaluación diagnóstica. Para tal efecto la población estudio estuvo conformada por 1836 estudiantes de la cohorte 2019, pertenecientes a carreras de Pedagogía de estas Universidades del país. Se aplicó un instrumento escala tipo Likert. Para realizar el análisis de la información se aplicaron métodos descriptivos numéricos e inferenciales. En sus principales conclusiones, se devela representaciones comunes en dimensiones sobre ejercicio profesional docente, independiente del sexo, de lo que se desprende que los sujetos evaluados conforman una identidad profesional claramente modelada antes de comenzar su Formación Inicial Docente.

Palabras clave: Evaluación Nacional Diagnóstica; Representaciones sociales; Ejercicio profesional docente.

Introduction

The relationship established between the quality of education and the quality of teaching has been widely supported by the specialized literature in the last 25 years, authors such as Contreras (1985), Barber and Mourshed (2008), Vaillant (2014), Hirmas (2014), Marcelo (2016), Ruffinelli (2017), Medina (2018) and Cabezas et al. As a result, many policies were developed in Latin America for job stability, training and improvement of in-service teachers (Sandoval, 2009). Chile also took an active part in proposals to improve the quality of education, focusing on the quality of teacher performance. Some of the actions carried out in relation to teachers were the creation of the Teacher Status Law, the allocation of awards for excellence and incentives for improvement inside and outside the country (Sandoval, 2009).

Thus, in the 1990s, international organizations such as the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), among others, introduced the concept of quality as a guiding principle for education policies in the continent (Reimers, 2000). Quality, plus equity and efficiency, were the guiding framework for all education reforms. Thus, the study of the factors that favor it guided the debate, fundamentally, towards the revision of educational

processes and the professional skills of educators (Álvarez & Ruiz Casares, 1997; Pavié, 2011). Today, there is a general consensus that in all the internal factors in educational centers that affect learning and school performance, the most relevant is that of the teacher, not in terms of evaluations, levels, resources or school leadership, but rather the quality of the teacher (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2014; CNA, 2018).

Despite the evident progress made in this area, quality and equity in education, in much of the continent, "continue to be purposes and still do not fully constitute a solution, given that the efforts made have not fully served to guarantee sustained educational development" (Vaillant, 2005). The evidence that supports this is the repositioning of the discussion on quality that is imposed with emphasis on the Chilean government agenda, after the student movements of 2006 and 2011, respectively. The resistance caused by the mobilizations forced the discussion of the concepts that constitute education from the political, economic and educational points of view, questioning the concept of quality that was being built so far (Sanchez, 2013). In this context, various aspects were addressed, such as the creation of supervisory bodies, the evaluation of the school management system and especially the monitoring of teaching, once again placing teachers at the centre of the discussion.

In the last decade, the concern of the State of Chile in matters referring to teaching took the form of two lines of action: (I) monitoring the suitability of practising teachers; and (II) the relevance of teacher training paths. Within the first line of action, the Teacher Evaluation implemented in 2005 was joined by the enactment of the New Teacher Career in 2016, which emphasizes the professionalization of practising teachers. The law arises from the felt need to value teaching and the strategic nature of this profession, through policies that favour working conditions and professional development in accordance with the scope of the task (Ruffinelli, 2017).

Within the actions intended to improve the training processes of future teachers, one of the tasks being implemented is the National Assessment (END), prescribed in the revision of the law on the National System of Quality Assurance in Education (Ministry of Education of Chile - MINEDUC-, 2006). Updated May 29, 2018). It is expected that teacher training institutions will implement assessments at the beginning and end of the training process, in order to collect information to improve both training processes and the curriculum. To complement the above, there must be a unified and integrated public policy that provides clear guidelines for the IDF with the medium-term purpose of designing training programs that are consistent with these guidelines and that consider the relevant subjects for this implementation (Medina, 2018; Cabezas et al., 2019).

It is considered appropriate to consider that in the case of pedagogies, Initial Teacher Training (ITF) only partially eradicates the representations and beliefs that teachers in training construct in their twelve years of previous and compulsory schooling. Whenever practices and behaviors are based on the representations and beliefs that give them meaning (Banchs, 1986), the time spent in university appears to be too short to reconstruct or re-signify such representations, which are based on previous school experiences.

The specialized literature shows that there is a tendency for teachers to perform with teaching practices very similar to those with which they learned and/or were trained, and which are directly related to the notion of being a teacher that they have developed throughout their lives (Pozo, 2009 and 2014; Russell, 2014). The experience of the school has a marked mark in the representations with which the new students enter the careers of pedagogy and they have demonstrated to be persistent in time despite the efforts in the university formation processes. Consequently, it is determined that the process of becoming a teacher begins before entering the IDF, in a stage prior to university, where a series of experiences are experienced that demarcate the idea of what it means to be a teacher (Britzman, 2003; Caine & Steeves, 2009; CNA. 2018).

However, individuals are also active agents of their beliefs and representations. The above, by involving their thinking in epistemological processes that facilitate them to stop reproducing their symbolic social environment in a mechanical and habitual way, they perform on their reality, redefining such representations. In accordance with the above, in the Chilean context it is interesting to investigate the representations with which new students enter teaching careers, overcoming the procedure that many times means the standardized tests in which national policies have paid special attention. Thus, identifying student representations gives us the possibility of anticipating certain teaching practices, as well as adjusting training trajectories by generating spaces for reconstructing, reflecting, and re-conceptualizing the implicit beliefs of teachers in training. This text proposes to advance in this direction, investigating the representations about teaching, assessments, and opinions related to their profession at the time of entering the study of some pedagogy. Special attention is given to the idea of professional teaching practice as a determining element in the choice of a teaching career and the permanence in the teaching practice itself (Ávalos, 2014; Ruffinelli, 2017).

In accordance with the above, the main objective of this article is to identify, describe and compare the representations of the teaching profession that have been developed by students who enter to study teaching careers, specifically in the context of the teaching practice of seven regional state universities in the country.

Reference framework on representations of the teaching profession

In the field of sociology the discussion regarding the relationship between the collective and the individual, as dialogue and dispute of the symbolic fields to which thought refers, begins with Durkheim's postulates (1895, 1987) that incorporate social interaction as determinant of the experiences of the subject and his understanding of the world. The social context, for the author, is exposed to processes of collective interpretation that construct representations that determine the subjects and their way of conceiving those contexts.

Based on Durkheim's postulates, Berger and Luckmann defined society as a human product, which in intersubjectivity becomes an objective reality, with defined structures and limits. These structures determine the subjectivity and the form in which the subjects are developed in it: "society is an objective reality, man is a social product" (Berger & Luckmann, 1993, p.61). Although the concept of Social Representations (SR) was coined by Moscovici in 1962, to refer to the social thought from a constructivist perspective, it was later to the readings of Berger and Luckmann that developed the idea of SR, like "an organized corpus of knowledge and one of the psychic activities thanks to which men make intelligible the physical and social reality, integrate themselves in a group or in a daily relation of interchanges, release the powers of their imagination" (Moscovici, 1979, p.18). The author's investigative interests were the social construction of reality and how people construct and are constructed within the common sense (Araya, 2002, p.13). He assigns to common sense the category of social thought, with structures and hierarchies qualitatively comparable to any other form of knowledge, (Moscovici, 1998; Abric, 2001).

Jodelet complements Moscovici's postulates, approaching common sense as spontaneous knowledge, usually conceived in opposition to scientific thought, but with the capacity to structure practices and daily experiences of the subjects: "this knowledge is constituted from our experiences, but also from the information, knowledge and models of thought that we receive and transmit through tradition, education and social communication. In this way, this knowledge is in many ways socially elaborated and shared" (Jodelet, 1986, p. 473).

Within SR we distinguish three dimensions: (I) attitude, (II) information and (III) field of representation (Moscovici, 1979). (I) Attitude refers to the positive or negative orientation of a representation. It corresponds to the affective dimension that classifies material and social reality in a symbolic way, favourably or unfavourably (Mora, 2002); (II) Information refers to the

amount and organization of knowledge of a person or social group about a certain object or situation. This dimension recognizes the classification of certain concepts in prejudices or stereotypes linked to the previous attitudinal dimension (Araya, 2002); (3).The field of representation constitutes the hierarchical structure that organizes attitudes and information. It includes the set of opinions, images, beliefs, experiences and values present in the same social representation, organized in a figurative scheme built in the process of objectification. This scheme confers meaning to the other elements present in the field of representation (Araya, 2002, p.41).

To explore the social representations has a practical sense, concurrent to the construction of a common reality of a social set (Jodelet, 1986). It implies the access to a mental gallery of hierarchical and structured representations that corresponds to a certain group of belonging (Dominguez, 2001). In the area of education, social representations have special relevance insofar as they favour and reproduce a certain teaching model, built on the experiences and interactions of the subjects in their school careers and daily experiences, allowing them to anticipate their professional performance (Kaplan, 1997). In other words, IDF programs have a major responsibility since they are the first step that gives access to professional development for teachers (Vaillant, 2014).

In coherence with the above, this work aims to access the social representations about the teaching profession, of the subjects who enter to study pedagogy, built within what we usually call common sense. It explores the attitude dimension, in order to reconstruct dispositions and evaluations conferred to the profession. It also explores the information dimension in order to investigate the social knowledge that subjects have grasped in their social context, with respect to teaching. In this way, to advance in the reconstruction of the interpretation of the field of representation of the profession they have chosen to study (Abric, 2001).

Regarding initial teacher training in Chile

Today, the country is experiencing an intense discussion about the New Teaching Career Bill that has placed emphasis on aspects such as initial training, the professional teaching career, induction into the teaching profession (Sánchez, 2013; Ruffinelli, 2017 and Medina, 2018), the system of salaries and contracts (Craig, 2016), or the conditions for teacher performance and the transition itself to the new system.

In this context, a considerable number of disciplines and areas converge that increase the complexity of the discussion at the time of making the exercise of responding to why there is a need to continually rethink teacher training. It is a complex problem since studying teacher training implies understanding in a complementary way, especially for the development of professional teacher competence (Pavié, 2011), the different training models, the territory where it takes place, the constantly changing school culture, the initial teacher training, the continuous training, the teacher's identity, the teacher's exit profiles and their respective competences, the insertion in the information society, the efficient use of new technologies, etc. Along with this, one should consider the increase in social demands on teachers; the distance between the demands on teachers and the working conditions they have; changes in the student-teacher relationship, etc. We are, then, faced with a complex environment from which teacher training is regulated, among other things. In addition to the above, Montero (2001) indicates that many of the "problems" that arise in teacher training are persistent over time and have been determined quite previously by various authors:

"... the teaching profession does not have a codified body of shared knowledge and skills, a shared culture. The absence of this body of shared knowledge -one of the marks of the professions- questions the relevance of using the term profession for teaching. The consideration of practical experience as the most important source of acquisition of

knowledge and skills -a situation that configures vulgar technical or artisanal knowledge but never scientific knowledge, the basis of professional knowledge- has led for a long time to the irrelevance of training for the academic community and for teachers themselves" (Montero, 2001, p.87).

Based on what has been expressed, he then considers that teacher training should be understood as training for the teaching profession. In this regard, we also add that since the 1980s there has been a concern to investigate if there really is a professional characteristic in teachers and how this professionalism can be channeled and/or developed from their initial training. Thus, authors such as Marcelo (2016) or Gimeno Sacristán (1982) - just to name a few - have been concerned with channelling their research on this nuance, pointing out the following:

"... the preparation and professional emancipation of teachers in order to critically, reflectively, and effectively develop a teaching style that promotes meaningful learning in students and achieves innovative thought-action, working in teams with colleagues to develop a common educational project" (Gimeno Sacristán, 1982, p.87).

The concept of training is more closely linked to formal approaches to teaching processes that make possible the preparation, training, or improvement of teachers for their professional development or improvement from the beginning of their careers. These processes and actions are developed principally in institutionalized contexts, which we refer to generically when we speak of the field of training. This statement is endorsed by Moral when he points out that "... without entering into the controversy over which is the most appropriate training model, the current educational challenges demonstrate the urgent need for teacher training programs adjusted to reality" (Moral, 2010, p.21). In this way, it can be stated that Initial Teacher Training (ITP) is understood as that theoretical-practical scheme that serves as a reference for the conduct of the formation process and can be transferred to other contexts. This concept calls for a scheme that contains the structure of the programs, understood as the organization of different areas that make up the training process (Sánchez, 2013; Marcelo, 2016). Thus, we can see that in most OECD countries the IDF considers a mixture between theoretical content (discipline), learning methods (pedagogical knowledge) and practical experience; together with these elements such as the development of research skills are also considered (Pavié, 2011).

About the teaching profession

The professional practice of teaching, or teaching professionalism, moves between the understanding of teaching as an art and teaching as an acquired skill. Núñez (2001) relates professional practice with professional identity, and identifies four ways of understanding it, according to the historical phases through which teachers have passed in Chile. In the first phase, and associated with the role of the church in education, the teaching profession is associated with an apostolate linked to a set of moral virtues. In a second phase, with the emergence of the teaching state, the education professional is similar to the public servant, framed in state structures. In the phase of the massification of teaching, the professional practice of teaching acquires a more technical character, based on the acquisition and development of easily attainable professional teaching skills. The last period refers to the existence of a distinctive knowledge base of teachers, which would characterize their professionalism. (Ávalos, 2001 and 2014). Thus, a discussion is established based on:

"...regarding what a teacher knows and should know, what basic knowledge he/she should possess, how he/she updates and uses it, under what conditions, how to strengthen the mastery of this corpus of fundamental knowledge and how to strengthen good teaching practices" (Latorre, 2006, p.60).

The above implies that professionalization will depend on political, historical, and cultural decisions that signify and condition training programs, their orientations, purposes, and contents (Marcelo, 2016; Muñoz, González & Rodríguez, 2018). Given that professional practice

is related to the mastery of knowledge that will underpin their work performance, it is necessary to investigate the representations about what the professional practice of future teachers is (Vélaz de Medrano C. & Vaillant, 2009; Muñoz, López & Alonso, 2017). Although professionalization implies the appropriation of knowledge acquired in the training path, it may be influenced by the representations that students have built in previous stages. Initial Teacher Training (IDF) should provide spaces for reflection, updating and re-conceptualisation of knowledge and teaching skills, for their future exercise in the new and current social and cultural contexts (García, Domínguez & Del Toro Valencia, 2018).

On the other hand, the countries that have tried to specify the features that define the professional practice of teaching have agreed on several elements that are common to them and that are considered basic when rethinking the pedagogical and professional training of teachers. An example of the above is based on the principle of imitation of "best practices" and benchmarking, that is, the premise that what gives good results in one organization will also give good results in another. Thus, the most classic conceptions of what constitutes professional teaching practice point to the following characteristics (Pavié, 2011; Correa, 2011; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2014; Ruffinelli, 2014; Marcelo, 2016; Jerez, Orsini & Hasbún, 2016; CNA, 2018 and Cabezas et al.): I) Mastery of a specific or specialized set of contents, experience and professional language of a specialty or discipline as an essential requirement for the development of specific teaching skills. Only in this way is it possible to carry out the processes of didactic transposition in accordance with the previous knowledge of the students and the educational project of the centers where the teaching practice is carried out; II) sharing common standards of practice and working together with other professionals to solve complex cases; III) the recognition of the greater autonomy of educational centers and the appropriation of the design and planning of the educational process by teachers, generates the need for competences linked to work management, pedagogical leadership and teamwork; IV) The professional character of the teacher is in the recognition of his/her right to examine the problems or demands of his/her field of work; V) students value more the way in which the teacher transmits knowledge and facilitates learning, however, this facilitation requires also disciplinary and professional competences; (VI) the changing context in which teaching takes place, the organization of work, the demands of those for whom training is intended and of educational establishments, makes it necessary to develop skills related to teaching professionalism; and (VII) the professional practice of teaching requires continuous adaptation and new elements in the course of teaching practice, as a result of changes occurring on almost all fronts: social demands, new curricula, students changing from one context to another, new technologies, etc.

Considering the above, one should also take into account elements that the literature in relation to the context of the profession and the practice of teaching in the sense that education systems are still slow to generate appropriate structures to meet the new demands. In Latin America, including Chile and poor countries in other regions, abandonment of the career is less frequent to the extent that there are no better alternative job opportunities, but the low level of those entering teaching, together with the above, the teachers studied tend to feel greater satisfaction when their work is recognized and appreciated, and there are good relations between colleagues (Sánchez, 2013; Ruffinelli, 2014; Rosso, & Alcalá, 2016; Marcelo, 2016; Jarauta, 2017).

Method

As Taylor and Bogdan (1990) point out, what defines the methodology is both the way in which the problems are focused and the way in which the answers are sought. Therefore, in coherence with the objectives of the study, the design of the present investigation is of a descriptive-interpretative type, since it aims to characterize the representations of the subjects (objects of the investigation) and to achieve an interpretation of them from the theoretical assumptions adopted in the investigation. In other words, interpretative archetypes of the representations of the actors involved were elaborated for the formulation of interpretative hypotheses (Goetz, and LeCompte,

1988; Eisner, 1998; Latorre, Del Rincón & Amal. 1997; Neiman & Quaranta, 2006). From a temporal point of view, the study was of a transversal nature, given that the information was collected only once from all the students enrolled in the first year of any of the University's Pedagogy courses, who responded at the same time using computerized supports. The consultation was carried out during the month of April 2018, following the protocol of informed consent and confidentiality of information (Meo, 2010), in coherence with the institutional policy in this regard.

Population and sample

The target population corresponded to first year students of pedagogical careers enrolled in 2019 in seven State Universities of Chile, which were classified in Macrozone North, North Center, South Center, Macrozone South and Macrozone Southern. A probability sample was considered for each Macrozona, taking into account the criteria of the size of the target population of each of them, a margin of error of 5%, heterogeneity of 50% and a confidence level of 95%. According to the enrollment reported to the Higher Education Information Service (SIES), with a cut-off date of April 30, 2019, the enrollment population registered in Professional Careers with a Bachelor's Degree in Teaching Careers, in the seven universities considered for the study was 2218 students, so the total sample reached was 1836, which is equivalent to 82.8% of first-year students enrolled in teaching careers, this can be seen in Table 1, which shows the detail by Macrozone. In the case of the North Macrozone, after April 30th more students have been enrolled, so the percentage of coverage is higher than the initial population.

Table 1

Population and shows obtained

Macrozone	Population 30 of april 2019	Sample determined	Final sample obtained	Percentage of representation
Macrozone North	498	217	502	100.8%
Macrozone North Center	793	259	712	89.8%
Macrozone South Center	473	212	232	49.0%
South Macrozone	368	188	309	84.0%
Southern Macrozone	86	70	81	94.2%
Total Macrozonas	2218	946	1836	82.8%

Note: Own elaboration. For the Macrozone North pot, after April 30th, more students were enrolled.

Instrument

In line with the objectives of the study, the researchers designed a Likert-type scale instrument called "Scales of Representations of the Teaching Profession". It consisted of six dimensions and a total of 51 items that were segmented into six dimensions: Vocational, professional and economic development, educational policies, professional practice, self-image and social prestige, and teacher training. For the Professional Practice dimension, the ten associated items are shown in table 2. For the present study, the focus will be on the Professional Practice dimension, since subsequent works will specifically address the analysis of the other dimensions of this study.

Table 2

Table specifications Scale representations on the profession teacher.

Dimension	Scales
Vocational	8
Professional development and economic	8
Educational Policies	9
Profesional excercise	10
self-Imagen and Social Prestige	8
Teacher training	8
Total ítems	51

Note: Own elaboration.

The scale presents a set of propositions or statements for each dimension, with staggered categories ranging from unfavorable to favorable (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree, No Topic information). When answering, the subjects evaluated should graduate their response, placing themselves somewhere on the scale according to their own representations at the level of information and assessment. Therefore, each statement provides data on the dimension evaluated. In this case, the frequency of the answers of the scales that contemplate each dimension allows identifying the trend on it. The response time of the instrument is approximately 45 minutes.

For the purposes of the study, the instrument was subjected to content validation and statistical validation during 2017. Academics from the Universities of Playa Ancha and Bío-Bío participated in the content validation as expert judges. For the statistical validation, the Alpha Cronbach coefficient (0.82) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin coefficient (0.87) were calculated on a sample of 1,789 students enrolled in first-year pedagogical courses at universities in the country's states (Authors 2017). In the present study, the Alpha Cronbach (0.90) and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (0.902) are recalculated, based on 1836 subjects from different Universities, obtaining similar results to 2017 and 2018, which allows us to infer that the instrument has a robustness and internal consistency over time; therefore it is possible to sustain that the information obtained is reliable for the effects of the present study.

A second part of the instrument was focused on determining the concepts that students considered about the teaching profession, in which they should rank in order of preference the categories presented in the two questions, the first focused on the main knowledge that a teacher should know for the adequate exercise of his/her profession and the second question in which the main skills that a teacher should have for the adequate exercise of his/her profession.

Variables

The number of variables that make up the instrument is a total of 51, for the professional exercise dimension there are a total of 10 items, which can be seen in table 3. The variables are categorical of ordinal type, measured in Likert scale, which correspond to; Totally disagree, Disagree, No information on the subject, Agree and Totally agree.

Table 3

Ítems de la Dimensión Ejercicio Profesional

ítem	Questions
ítem 26	Professor is responsible to motivate students in the process education learning in the classroom.
ítem 27	Professor represents the authority of society in the classroom.
ítem 28	A professor transmits knowledge of society in the classroom.
ítem 29	A professor communicates cultural knowlegde in the classroom.
ítem 30	Planning is one of the main functions/tasks of teachers in the school system.
ítem 31	Qualifying is one of the main functions of teachers in the school system.
ítem 32	The teacher must be a model of conduct and values in the school and the classroom for his or her students.
ítem 33	The teacher is a model of wisdom and knowledge in the school and the classroom for his/her students.
ítem 34	The teacher should consider the family, society, the peer group and the media as a source or reference for optimizing learning.
Ítem 35	The teacher should have high cognitive and personality skills for the development of the teaching profession

Note: Own elaboration.

Information analysis procedures

Given that the instrument for collecting information responds to a Likert type scale, in order to reveal the representations about the teaching profession that have been constructed by students who enter to study one of the careers of Pedagogy, it presupposes that there are no correct or incorrect answers in relation to the object of study. Consistently, descriptive numerical methods (percentages, frequencies, etc.) were used in order to facilitate the identification of the dominant trend or representations. Specifically, for such purposes, the answers marked by the subjects were grouped into: positive answers (Agree and Strongly Agree), neutral answers (No information on the subject) and negative answers (Strongly Disagree and Strongly Disagree).

SPSS Software version 21 was used for data analysis. The methods used correspond to descriptive and inferential statistics. According to the classification of the variables, which correspond to categorical ordinal and nominal variables, it is not possible within the descriptive statistics to use the statistics as mean, standard deviation, among others, so it focuses on the frequencies of distribution of the responses obtained. On the other hand, in terms of inferential statistics, the non-parametric Mann Whitney and Kruskal Wallis U tests were used, in order to establish significant differences in the analyses performed (Gorgas, Cardiel & Zamorano, 2011). It should be taken into consideration that: the universities were grouped according to geographical Macrozone, which in the end are North Macrozone, North Central, South Central, South Macrozone and Southern Macrozone.

### Results: characterization of the sample

Below are the results of the general characterization of the student teachers who answered the questionnaire. In general terms, out of a total of 1836 students of education that entered in 2019 in seven universities throughout Chile, 61.3% (1125) were women and 37.3% (684) were men, only 1.5% (27) preferred not to answer. With regard to the origin of the students, 56% (1029) stated that they came from a municipal establishment, 40.6% (746) from private subsidized establishments and only 3.3% (61) from private paid establishments. According to the area where the establishments were located, 89.6% (1645) indicate that their establishment was in the urban area and 10.4% (191) in the rural area.

With regard to the entrance route used by students to enter an educational career, 85% (1561) entered under the Normal or Regular Admission route (PSU), followed by 4.4% (64) who entered through the Educational Talent program. On the other hand, 80.8% (1501) applied for the career in first preference and 12% (220) in second preference, only 7.2% (115) applied in another preference. When analyzing income, 17.3% (318) and 17.5% (321) of the students stated that their family group had a gross income between $255,001 and $320,000 and $320,001 and $435,000 respectively. 1.2% (22) of the sample mentions having disability problems. 24.7% (454) state that they consider themselves to belong to an indigenous or native people. 98.7% (1813) of the students declared that they were Chilean nationals. In addition, 40.7 per cent (748) of students stated that they had a family member who had been or was an educator.

Of the 10 items that make up the professional teaching practice dimension, 8 of them have more than 90% agree that teachers are responsible for motivating their students in the classroom teaching process, that they should transmit knowledge of society and cultural knowledge in class, that planning is one of the main tasks, and that teachers should be role models, values, wisdom, and knowledge in the school and in the classroom for their students, that teachers should consider the family, society, the peer group, and the media as sources or references for optimizing learning, and finally that they should have high cognitive and personality skills for the development of the teaching profession.

In the other two questions associated with the dimension, the positive assessment reaches 76.9% in which the teacher represents the authority of society in a classroom, and 56.9% in whether the qualifications are one of the principal functions of the teacher.

In the other two questions associated with the dimension, their positive evaluation reaches 76.9% in which the teacher represents the authority of society in a classroom, and 56.9% in whether grades are one of the main functions of the teacher, the distribution of responses can be seen in Figure 1.
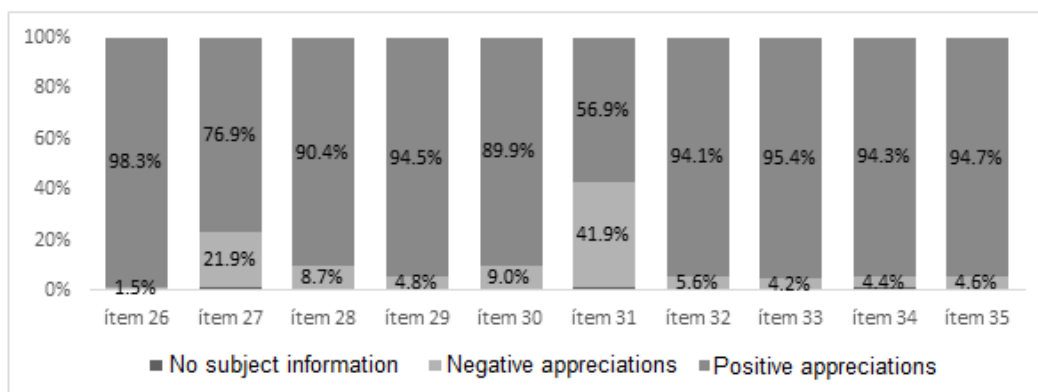
Figure 1: Distribution of responses from the professional exercise dimension by item

When determining whether there are significant differences in response distributions between men and women, only two items in the dimension show significant differences in the distribution of responses, so that in the option of whether the teacher is responsible for motivating his or her students in the process of teaching and learning in the classroom, men and women maintain a difference in the distribution of responses ($p<0.001$) and that the teacher should be a model of behaviour and values in the school and the classroom for their students ($p<0.001$), the distribution of responses for each item can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Representations by gender in the teaching exercise dimension

Ítem	Women			Mens		
	No subject information	Negative appreciations	Positive appreciations	No subject information	Negative appreciations	Positive appreciations
ítem 26	0,0%	1,0%	99,0%	0.4%	2.3%	97.2%
ítem 27	1,0%	20.9%	78.1%	1.6%	22.5%	75.9%
ítem 28	1.1%	8.9%	90,0%	0.6%	8.3%	91.1%
ítem 29	0.7%	4.4%	94.8%	0.6%	5.4%	94,0%
ítem 30	1.1%	9.9%	89.1%	0.9%	7.7%	91.4%
ítem 31	1.2%	40.7%	58.1%	1.5%	43.1%	55.4%
ítem 32	0.2%	4,0%	95.8%	0.4%	7.3%	92.3%
ítem 33	0.5%	3.4%	96.1%	0.3%	4.7%	95,0%
ítem 34	1.4%	3.6%	95,0%	1.2%	5.4%	93.4%
ítem 35	0.8%	4.1%	95.1%	0.7%	5.4%	93.9%

Note: Own elaboration

Results for Macrozone

When analyzing the results by Macrozone, it is relevant to mention that in item 27, on whether the teacher represents the authority of society in a classroom, in the Northern Zone 13% disagree with this statement, 27.7% in the North Central Macrozone, 22.8% in the South Central Macrozone, 22.3% in the South Macrozone and 22% in the Southern, which can be seen in table 5. In this same item four significant differences were detected when comparing Macrozones, which presented significant differences at 5% in the distribution of responses, which correspond to the North Macrozone with North Central (p<.0.001); North with South Central (p<.0.001); North Macrozone with South Macrozone (p<.0.001); North with Southern (p<.0.001).

Table 5

Represented by Macrozone in the teaching exercise dimension, all values are expressed in percentages

Ítem	Macrozone North			Macrozone Center North			Macrozone Center South			Macrozone South			Macrozone Southern		
	S/i	-	+	S/i	-	+	S/i	-	+	S/i	-	+	S/i	-	+
26	0.0	1.0	99.0	0.1	1.4	98.5	0.4	1.7	97.8	0,0	2.3	97.7	1.2	2.5	96.3
27	0.2	12.9	86.9	1.7	27.7	70.6	0.4	22.8	76.7	2.3	22.3	75.4	2.5	22.2	75.3
28	1.0	7.2	91.8	0.7	9.0	90.3	1.7	11.6	86.6	0.6	7.8	91.6	0.0	11.1	88.9
29	0.8	3.4	95.8	0.8	5.2	94.0	0.4	8.6	90.9	0.3	3.9	95.8	0.0	3.7	96.3
30	0.8	4.8	94.4	0.6	9.8	89.6	2.6	10.8	86.6	1.6	12.9	85.4	0.0	8.6	91.4
31	1.2	31.9	66.9	0.8	50.4	48.7	2.2	47.4	50.4	1.6	37.2	61.2	1.2	30.9	67.9
32	0.0	3.8	96.2	0.3	6.7	93.0	0.4	5.6	94.0	0.3	7.1	92.6	1.2	1.2	97.5
33	0.0	3.4	96.6	0.6	3.8	95.6	0.9	6.5	92.7	0.6	5.8	93.5	0.0	0.0	100,0
34	1.2	4.4	94.4	1,0	3.5	95.5	1.7	5.2	93.1	2.3	7.1	90.6	0.0	0.0	100.0
35	0.2	4.4	95.4	1.3	3.9	94.8	1.7	7.3	90.9	0.0	4.2	95.8	0.0	4.9	95.1

Note: Own elaboration. S/I corresponds to no information on the subject, - negative responses and + positive responses.

In item 31 on whether grades are one of the main functions of the teacher, in the Northern Zone 32% of students disagree with this statement, 50.4% in the North Central Macrozone, 47.4% in the South Central Macrozone, 37.2% in the South Macrozone and 30.9% in the Austral. In this same item six significant differences were detected when comparing Macrozones, which presented significant differences at 5% in the response distribution corresponding to the North Central Macrozone with the North Central (p<0.001); North with South Center (p<.001); North Central Macrozone with South Macrozone (p<.001); North Central with Austral (p<.001); South Central with South Macrozone (p<.001) and South Central with Southern Macrozone (p=.007). Although other differences were detected in the distribution of responses, those that presented a notoriously different behavior from the rest of the items were in item 27 on whether the teacher represents the authority of society in a classroom and in item 31 on whether grades are one of the main functions of the teacher, in table 6 the meanings obtained by each pair of comparison between Macrozones can be observed.

Table 6

Significance of the Kruskal-Wallis test comparing Macrozones.

Ítem	North-Center North	North-Center South	North-South	North-Southern	Center North-Center South	Center North-South	Center North-Southern	Center South-South	Center Sur-Southern	South-Southern
26	.408	.206	0.14	0.051	0.53	0.424	0.16	0.937	0.445	0.458
27	0.000	0.001	0.00	0.005	0.062	0.142	0.414	0.64	0.732	0.979
28	0.375	0.028	0.91	0.399	0.108	0.52	0.701	0.061	0.572	0.463
29	0.157	0.009	0.99	0.831	0.119	0.234	0.388	0.022	0.119	0.835
30	0.003	0.000	0.00	0.293	0.184	0.052	0.613	0.731	0.242	0.154
31	0.000	0.000	0.09	0.867	0.791	0.000	0.001	0.013	0.007	0.265
32	0.016	0.169	0.02	0.57	0.608	0.81	0.124	0.525	0.219	0.11
33	0.385	0.017	0.04	0.093	0.074	0.155	0.056	0.694	0.012	0.019
34	0.392	0.48	0.03	0.03	0.147	0.002	0.052	0.301	0.015	0.004
35	0.600	0.016	0.79	0.89	0.035	0.478	0.902	0.02	0.231	0.774

Note: Own elaboration.

Results by Type of Establishment

In determining the results of professional practice by type of establishment, the same behavior is detected as well as on a global level, by gender and by Macrozone, which is around item 27 and 28 results that can be seen in table 7. Therefore, on whether the teacher represents the authority of society in a classroom, 21.4% of students from municipal establishments disagree with this statement, 21.2% of those from subsidized establishments and 37.7% of students from paid private establishments disagree. In this same statement, two significant differences were detected when comparing types of establishments, which presented significant differences at 5% in the distribution of response, which corresponded to buying public establishments with subsidized ones (p=.0.013) and subsidized establishments with paid individuals (p=.0.008).

Table 7

Representations by Type of Establishment in the Teaching Practice Dimension

	Municipal			Subsidized			Paid		
	S/I	**-**	**+**	**S/I**	**-**	**+**	**S/I**	**-**	**+**
Ítem 26	0.3%	1.9%	97.9%	0.1%	1.4%	98.5%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
Ítem 27	1.5%	21.4%	77.1%	1.2%	21.3%	77.6%	0,0%	37.7%	62.3%
Ítem 28	0.7%	8.8%	90.5%	1.1%	8.1%	90.9%	0,0%	18,0%	82,0%
Ítem 29	0.7%	4.7%	94.6%	0.7%	4.5%	94.8%	0,0%	13.1%	86.9%
Ítem 30	1.3%	9.8%	88.9%	0.8%	8.8%	90.4%	1.6%	3.3%	95.1%
Ítem 31	1.6%	37.4%	61,0%	1.1%	44.8%	54.1%	0,0%	47.5%	52.5%
Ítem 32	0.4%	4.3%	95.3%	0.2%	6.7%	93.1%	0,0%	3.3%	96.7%
Ítem 33	0.7%	4.6%	94.8%	0.3%	3.9%	95.8%	0,0%	4.9%	95.1%
Ítem 34	1.3%	4.2%	94.5%	1.4%	4.6%	94.1%	0,0%	4.9%	95.1%
Ítem 35	0.8%	4.2%	95,0%	0.8%	4.8%	94.5%	0,0%	6.6%	93.4%

Note: Own elaboration. S/I corresponds to no information on the subject, - negative responses and + positive responses*.*

Regarding whether grades are one of the main functions of the teacher, associated with item 31, 37.4% of students coming from municipal establishments disagree with this statement, 44.8% of those coming from subsidized establishments and 47.5% of students coming from paid private establishments do not agree. In this same statement, only a significant difference was detected when comparing types of establishments, in this case the difference in the distribution of responses was presented by students from public establishments with private subsidized establishments (p=.0.006). Although other differences were detected in the distribution of responses, which can be seen in table 8, those that presented a notoriously different behaviour from the rest of the items were about whether the teacher represents the authority of society in a classroom and whether grades are one of the main functions of the teacher.

Table 8

Significances of the Kruskal-Wallis test comparing types of establishments

	Public - Public Subsidized	Private Subsidized	Private
ítem 26	0.274	0.248	0.343
ítem 27	0.79	0.013	0.008
ítem 28	0.807	0.037	0.025
ítem 29	0.845	0.015	0.009
ítem 30	0.289	0.139	0.233
ítem 31	0.006	0.236	0.86
ítem 32	0.055	0.609	0.271
ítem 33	0.293	0.908	0.784
ítem 34	0.703	0.832	0.728
ítem 35	0.594	0.598	0.75

Note: Own elaboration

Results of the concept hierarchy

According to the concept hierarchy, the questions were focused on the concepts that students consider about the teaching profession, they had to choose the preference for each category presented. In global terms, both categories and preferences are considered as response variables, so contingency tables were made considering percentages in rows and columns for a better description.

Table 9

Hierarchy of concepts regarding knowledge for proper exercise of the profession

	1•	2•	3•	4•	5•	6•	7•
Educational Psychology	44.2%	28.6%	15.3%	6.3%	3.1%	1.7%	0.8%
Sociology of Education	11.5%	28.9%	26.4%	18.9%	8.9%	4.6%	0.8%
Philosophy and Ethics	12,0%	16,0%	24.4%	22.6%	14.3%	9.5%	1.1%
Didactics	15.4%	15.6%	20.3%	27.1%	16.1%	4.6%	0.9%
Evaluation	2.9%	4.1%	6.4%	14.4%	33.7%	30.9%	7.6%
Curriculum	8.2%	4.5%	5.3%	7.3%	19.6%	44.3%	10.8%
Other. Which one?	5.8%	2.2%	2,0%	3.4%	4.3%	4.3%	78,0%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Own elaboration

When asked about what would be the main knowledge and skills that a teacher should have for the adequate exercise of his/her profession, 44.2% mentioned Educational Psychology, which can be seen in Table 9 as a first preference in terms of knowledge and 32.2% believe that hearing is the first preference, which can be seen in Table 10 as a skill that a teacher should have for the adequate exercise of his/her profession.

Table 10

Concept hierarchy regarding skills for proper exercise of profession

	1•	2•	3•	4•	5•	6•	7•
Hear	32.2%	29.1%	23,0%	10.9%	3.4%	1.1%	0.2%
Empathy	23.4%	25.2%	18.8%	21.6%	8.3%	2.2%	0.5%
To motivate	24.5%	21.9%	26.4%	18.7%	6.5%	1.5%	0.5%
Talk	9.4%	17.8%	23.2%	34,0%	13.1%	2.2%	0.2%
To write	2.6%	1.8%	3.3%	7,0%	51.4%	29.2%	4.7%
Judge	1,0%	1.7%	1.7%	3.4%	11.9%	50.5%	29.8%
Other. Which one?	7.0%	2.4%	3.6%	4.3%	5.3%	13.3%	64.1%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Own elaboration

According to the hierarchy of concepts associated with the teaching exercise carried out by Macrozone, gender, type of establishment of origin of the students can be observed and determined that the behavior in first preference for each one of them is similar that in global terms, the percentages vary only small amounts. However, with the exception of the Macrozone South, in the question associated with what are the principal skills that a teacher should have in order to adequately exercise his or her profession, 30.7% chose Motivate and Not hearing as the rest of the Macrozones, the results by Macrozone, gender and type of establishment can be seen in Table 11.

Table 11

Summary of the hierarchy of concepts by Macrozone, gender and type of establishment

|		The main knowledge that a teacher must know for the proper exercise of his profession are. Educational Psychology	The main skills that a teacher must have for the proper exercise of their profession are. Hear
Macrozone	North Macrozone	46.8%	33.9%
	North Central Macrozone	43.4%	32.0%
	South Central Macrozone	43.1%	31.0%
	South Macrozone	41.7%	28.2% *
	Southern Macrozone	48.1%	42.0%
Gender	Man	41.2%	31.7%
	Woman	46.5%	32.6%
Type of establishment	Public	42.2%	32.7%
	Subsidized	45.6%	30.9%
	Paid out	45.9%	47.5%
Global Study		44.2%	32.2%

Note: Own elaboration

Discussion

This can be understood in terms of the teaching skills (Pavié, 2011) that are specific to the teacher as a socially recognized professional, and which are considered positive factors for the proper

practice of teaching. In this line, concepts-ideas such as: mastery of knowledge, knowledge (for teaching), values, motivation, among others, are highlighted. In particular, students who are beginning their initial training indicate in their open responses that teachers - in order to effectively exercise their profession - must have knowledge, skills, or tools for teaching in order to fulfill their function (which is to teach) adequately.

Among the arguments put forward are expressions such as: "having competencies to teach", "adequate training in teaching skills and knowledge of people, "who understand and know about diversity and inclusion" or "knowledge of motivating methodologies according to the subject to be dealt with in class". These expressions reaffirm the idea that in order to practice the profession one must have skills or knowledge. This would imply, on the one hand, having high cognitive and personality skills for the development of the teaching profession and, on the other, having a command of certain knowledge. In regard to the latter, the knowledge that appears in the hierarchy as the first priority is Educational Psychology (44.2%), with arguments such as "one must understand how to teach students", "if we do not know about their problems we do not know how to work" or "one must know about learning problems", "diversity is how we think and understand" (open answers). The other knowledge is the Sociology of Education (ranked second with 28.9%), which is supported by expressions such as "group work", "how to collaborate with others" and "how we organize ourselves to learn from each other", segments of which were documented in the open responses. In essence:
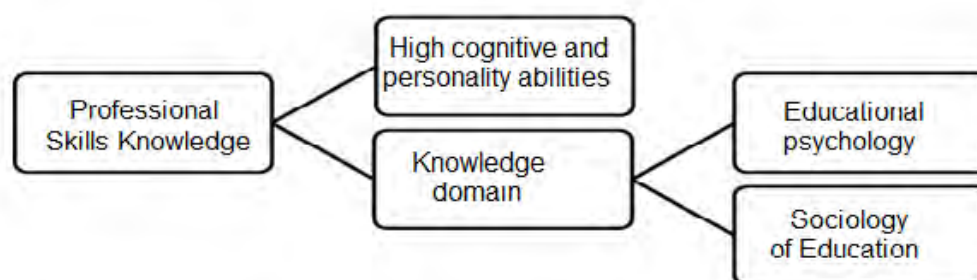
Figure 2: Representations of the Teaching Profession as Professional Skills-Knowledge

With regard to the conditions of the teaching profession; specifically, the concepts-ideas that contribute to this aspect refer to the purpose or (social) function of teaching and the social and material conditions of the practice of the teaching profession. Along these lines, central concepts arise such as students (those who should learn), reality, and justice. Specifically, it is clear that students who begin their initial training indicate that the teaching profession is related to teaching students. That is, there is a direct relation between teachings for student learning. Thus, one assumes that when the notion of "students" is codified, in an explicit and implicit manner one is alluding to the idea that they are the goal of the act of teaching; that is, that they learn what is taught. This translates socially into a purpose: the aim is for students to learn. Thus, and because of what has been stated up to this point, there is a latent requirement to continue exploring with this same level of depth the other dimensions proposed in the base instrument, expanding the coverage of this work with more universities that offer Initial Teacher Training (ITP) programs in a new investigation.

Conclusions

In general terms, the main purpose of this study has been to identify, describe, and compare the representations of the teaching profession made by students entering education careers, specifically in the context of the professional practice of teaching in seven regional state universities in the country.

In line with Moscovici's theoretical framework (1979), which states that representation is built around three dimensions (information, the field represented and attitude), this study attempts to investigate the non-specialized and common sense knowledge that future teachers have built at the beginning of their Initial Teacher Training (IDF). Considering the objectives of the research, special attention was given to working on two of the dimensions: information and assessment (attitude) regarding the teaching profession, under the premise that these ideas have been constructed in a natural way, and would be anchored attitudinally and cognitively before beginning to acquire and develop their knowledge and/or specialized or disciplinary knowledge.

In this context, having this information on representations is of special interest, given that it is the entry point for training institutions to construct and/or re-construct specialized knowledge (know-how) of the profession, under the assumption that this will allow them to guide the training of their graduates in future professional performance more pertinent to the needs of specialized knowledge, to new and ever-changing contexts, and to the demands of current policies on the teaching profession and the exercise of that profession.

This study first endorses a historical fact, since 61% of the total sample corresponds to women. Thus, the projection toward the teaching profession is that it will continue to have a strong female bias. In addition, 41% of the total population surveyed stated that they had a family member who had worked as a teacher. It is also considered important to take into account that more than half of the applicants for a teaching career come from a municipal establishment, which in this case corresponds to 56% of the sample and that 25% of this sample declares itself to belong to an original village.

An analysis of the results obtained among the universities under study also shows that the response trend in universities tends to be similar - with some exceptions - in the dimension of professional practice. The above is established insofar as it is observed that the universities declare to have a positive perception (more than 90%). Of the 10 items that make up the professional teaching practice dimension, 8 have more than 90% of positive perception. Of the remaining two, their positive assessment reaches 76.9% in item 27, on whether the teacher represents the authority of society in a classroom, and 56.9% (item 31) on whether qualifications are one of the main functions of the teacher. Taking these data into account, men and women respond very similarly in this dimension without significant differences.

With regard to the hierarchization of concepts, when asked about what would be the main knowledge and skills that a teacher should have for the adequate exercise of his/her profession, 44.2% mentioned Educational Psychology (see Table 8) as the first preference in terms of knowledge and 32.2% believed that listening (see Table 9) is a skill that the teacher should possess for the adequate exercise of his/her profession. According to this same hierarchy of concepts related to the professional practice of teaching carried out by Macrozona, gender, and type of establishment of origin of students, it can be observed and determined that the behavior in first preference for each one of them is similar to that in global terms; the percentages vary only in small amounts. However, with the exception of the Macrozone South, in the question associated with what are the principal skills that a teacher should have in order to adequately exercise his or her profession, 30.7% chose Motivate and not listen as the rest of the Macrozonas.

With regard to what is indicated in this section, it is considered relevant to insist that the social representations (SR) of the dimension called professional teaching practice addressed in this study are generally shared independently of the career that has been chosen to study. For this reason, it is important to note that, according to the data shown, the notion of professional practice begins well before the subject formally and systematically acquires ad hoc training for said professional practice.

For this reason, we believe it is important to take into consideration the design of an accompaniment and/or improvement plan that addresses the results obtained from this diagnosis as a whole for these teaching careers. Thus, from the moment he or she enters a training program

in Pedagogy, a process of "school enculturation" (Rosso & Alcalá, 2016) begins, based on which the future teacher re-constructs conceptions, representations and beliefs regarding what it means to be a good teacher and, furthermore, learns theories and constructs about didactics and the specialty selected for decision-making about what and how to teach in a classroom.

Likewise, based on the above, it is necessary to continue in-depth research that associates what Initial Teacher Training (IDF) provides as an opportunity for reflection and learning and, based on this, to establish a coherent and articulated link with the demands that are posed today by the professional practice of teaching and the ad hoc education policies of the IDF. It would also be pertinent to delay the increase in selectivity in regional universities and to strengthen the initial diagnostics of students and analyze whether the current instrument of the National Diagnostic Assessment is relevant and whether it provides relevant information for feedback and decision-making of Higher Education Institutions that train teachers in the country (Medina, 2018; Cabezas et al., 2019).

Finally, there is room here to urge the academic world of the IDF to rethink the work they do with future professors in terms of the role and/or function that they play in the training process of the latter. This is based on the fact that, together with the theoretical and disciplinary support provided in a specific pedagogical program, the academic and the future teacher must jointly design learning experiences that will enable this teacher-in-training to improve his or her professional teaching skills, learn and learn to teach through knowledge acquired and transformed for the practical action of this new education professional (Pavié, 2020). And finally, that in the accreditation processes established by the National Accreditation Commission (CNA) based on its criteria and guidelines, coherence and relevance are guaranteed in aspects such as:

I.   The training processes, the graduation profile and the pedagogical and disciplinary standards set by the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC).
II.   Formal collaboration agreements with educational centres for the implementation of early and professional practices.
III.   The accreditation processes supervised by the CNA ensure effective monitoring of the programs that train teachers both at the level of improvement plans within the same programs, as well as what is related to the follow-up of graduates from the respective pedagogical careers.

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