

Teaching in preschool during the pandemic: interactions between teacher, students, families and screens

Enseñar en preescolar durante la pandemia: interacciones entre profesora, alumnos, familias y pantallas

<http://dx.doi.org/10.32870/Ap.v11n2.1518>

Blanca Araceli Rodríguez Hernández*
Nadia Sarahí Ruiz Reyna**

ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper was to analyze the teaching practice of a preschool teacher in a private school in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, based on the dimensions of effective and represented work. From the analysis of the instructions and the simple self-confrontation, axes of analysis were identified that allowed an approach to the main challenges that the teacher faced with the online education developed during the pandemic by covid-19. The results of the work placed at the center of the discussion the teacher's challenges and concerns about the ways of teaching online literacy, the relationships with the students' families when working from home, and the interaction with technology in the virtual classroom. Taken together, the findings broaden the picture of teaching practices during social distancing and contribute to the empirical knowledge of this object of study as a result of the impact generated by the pandemic.

RESUMEN

El objetivo del presente trabajo fue investigar la práctica docente de una profesora de preescolar en una escuela privada de San Luis Potosí, México, a partir de las dimensiones de trabajo efectivo y representado. Con ayuda del análisis de las consignas y de la autoconfrontación simple se identificaron ejes de análisis que permitieron realizar un acercamiento a los principales retos que la profesora enfrentó con la educación en línea desarrollada durante la pandemia por la covid-19. Los resultados del trabajo pusieron en el centro de la discusión los retos y preocupaciones de la educadora en torno a las formas de enseñar a leer y escribir en línea, las relaciones con las familias de los alumnos al trabajar desde casa y la interacción con la tecnología en el aula virtual. En conjunto, los hallazgos permiten ampliar el panorama sobre las prácticas docentes durante el distanciamiento social y contribuyen al conocimiento empírico de este objeto de estudio a raíz del impacto que generó la pandemia.

Keywords

Analysis of teaching practice; simple self-confrontation; preschool education; Spanish teaching; covid-19.

Palabras clave

Análisis de la práctica docente; autoconfrontación simple; educación preescolar; enseñanza del español; covid-19.

Received: December 09, 2021
Accepted: June 30, 2022
Online Published:
September 30, 2022

* Doctora en Pedagogía por la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Profesora investigadora de la Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, México. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8876-7502>. Correo electrónico: araceli.rodriguez@uaslp.mx

** Egresada de la Licenciatura en Psicopedagogía por la Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, México. Consultora independiente. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4720-142X>. Correo electrónico: nadiasarahiruizreyna5s@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

In April 2019, Mexico determined the closure of educational institutions due to the arrival of the covid-19 pandemic. Regarding basic education, in order to give continuity to the educational processes, the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) implemented the Learn at Home program, which consisted of teaching classes through television, radio and internet, as well as the provision of an activity booklet for students that took the current curriculum as a reference. In addition to these institutional alternatives, it has been documented that public school teachers developed other actions to continue teaching (Rodríguez and Servín, 2022), among these we can mention: the creation of their own teaching materials, the use of WhatsApp to send and receive homework and face-to-face visits to schools.

Likewise, research in this regard highlights the complexity faced by teachers when teaching during the pandemic due to the lack of technological devices, access to the Internet and the limited mastery of skills for the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), which would allow interaction among colleagues or with students and their families (GómezNashiki and Quijada-Lovatón, 2021; Rodríguez and Servín, 2022; Rodríguez *et al.*, 2021).

Privately funded basic education institutions developed their own strategies to continue with classes, such as the use of technological resources and the Internet, which complemented or substituted face-to-face teaching. It is likely that these decisions were due to the characteristics of the population served by the schools, i.e., students with access to ICTs and connectivity at home that allows them to participate in online teaching.

The particularities of the public and private school contexts, outlined previously, allow us to assume that both students and teachers faced different challenges during homeschooling. This paper focuses on one of these contexts: the online teaching practice of a teacher working in a private preschool. From her practice, the Spanish classes of a third grade group are analyzed through observations in the virtual classroom and dialogues with the teacher about her own work.

Based on the background review, we consider that the private school environment is a setting that has been little explored in research on teaching practices during the pandemic, so this paper aims to contribute to the panorama of teaching in the context of uncertainty represented by the abrupt arrival of home schooling in Mexican basic education. In addition to the above, we argue that it is relevant to analyze teaching practice under these conditions for theoretical and practical reasons that are set forth below. In principle, the objects of knowledge (language in this case) are mediated by social purposes, interests and motivations, so that

the nature of teaching practice is affected by changes and transformations in society.

Consequently, different authors agree that the covid-19 pandemic accelerated the transformation of teaching practices (Gazzo, 2020; Valencia, 2020; García, 2021; Azañedo-Alcántara, 2021; Dussel, 2020) because teachers had to hastily look for alternatives to maintain interaction with students. One of these changes was the adaptation to new forms of communication, both synchronous and asynchronous, through different technological tools. Thus, it is important to know how reading and writing are taught at the initial level of schooling, with children who still do not have autonomous access to digital media, even though they have them at home.

The second justifying reason for the relevance of our work is of practical origin. According to Ruiz-Bikandi (2007), like other professions, the teaching task is carried out with the support of automated and largely unaware mechanisms that generate economy of effort. This automated action must be subjected to reflection so that the teacher can transform it (Bourdieu, 1991) and, in a didactic sense, improve teaching practices.

THE STUDY OF TEACHING PRACTICES DURING THE PANDEMIC

Teachers are burdened with responsibilities, tasks and functions that, to a large extent, are attributed to the school (Ruiz-Bikandi, 2007). These demands increase and are accentuated in periods of social change, such as those brought about by the massification of technology and the Internet. On the other hand, the training that teachers receive does not always prepare them to successfully fulfill all the responsibilities that fall upon them.

In the emergency context resulting from the pandemic, social and health conditions have an impact on the school and on the responsibilities attributed to teachers. Unlike other changes in which it may take years before the effect on the school is felt, the consequences of covid-19 were immediate. Due to the urgent nature of social distancing to prevent the spread of the virus, face-to-face education was radically affected. The impact was such that those interested in educational issues have begun to explore the practices of teachers within the framework of the new social demands and in different school contexts. In what follows, we report on studies carried out in basic education in this regard; in addition, we describe the results of research focused on higher education which, later on, will allow us to contrast the findings of this analysis.

In order to address the studies focused on basic education, two groups are presented: those that focus on initial literacy processes and those that take up the use of technology. In the first group it is possible to locate three

works. Chamberlain *et al.* (2020) analyze the interactions generated between teachers and students in the new school contexts that emerge from the confinement of classrooms in the United States, and identified that teachers developed recontextualized literacy practices according to the new communicative spaces; however, they focused primarily on the area of reading and put writing on the back burner.

Another work shows the review of teaching materials used in initial literacy during the pandemic in the province of Buenos Aires, where Hoz, Wallace and Heredia (2021) analyze the contents involved in the initial literacy process in the first stage of primary schooling. The results show that the proposals are designed for children who do not yet conceive the relationship between writing and the sound pattern of speech or who are beginning to understand their link; the authors consider this condition a limitation because it leaves aside reading proposals for children who make more adjusted anticipations.

Finally, Cervantes and Rojas (2021) recover the experiences of Mexican teachers of first cycle of primary education regarding the knowledge, practices and adaptations implied in the initial literacy processes in times of the pandemic; their results show that teachers made adaptations for the construction of favorable environments in initial literacy; they also point out that the solidarity of families was a key point to face the difficulties derived from the new conditions of teaching children at these ages.

In the second group of works focused on the use of technologies, two studies were identified. Gómez-Nashiki and Quijada-Lovatón (2021) analyze the actions of Mexican teachers to provide continuity to student learning activities during the health contingency. Through video-call interviews, the authors identified that teachers reconceptualized their practice to adapt to the new context, used technological tools to teach content and to communicate with students, and designed instructional resources to provide socioemotional support to families.

In a study carried out in Colombia, Naycir and Zúñiga (2020) analyzed teaching practice in primary education to describe the impact of technological mediation and determine the innovative strategies used by teachers to ensure learning. With a quantitative approach and from an online questionnaire, they identified that most teachers take into account the pedagogical models to be developed, apply creative activities for students and manage assertive relationships with the class; likewise, they concluded that parents have become pillars for their children's learning.

When observing the research that examines teaching practice in higher education, it was found that one of the main data collection instruments was the online questionnaire, framed according to the different methodologies that the works obey. Quantitative studies focused on analyzing teaching skills and habits around technologies (Martín *et al.*,

2020) and identified that Internet access has been the main strength for the successful transition from face-to-face education to virtual classes, since all teachers had connectivity. Other studies, also quantitative, identified the main problems experienced by teachers: logistical, technological, pedagogical and socio-affective (Sánchez *et al.*, 2020), as well as their support needs: technological, didactic, availability of digital resources and improvement of institutional processes.

The qualitative studies accompanied the questionnaires with other tools such as forums. Villafuerte *et al.* (2020) identified that reading circles and forums were the most successful teaching activities for teachers. In another work, Anaya and Rojano (2020) determined that the stresses and emotions most frequently mentioned by the participants were: stress, worries and work overload, which led them to reorganize their daily lives to adjust and address the situation of confinement.

Literature review allows us to identify two things: the focus of the works is to a greater extent higher education and the methodological tool most used is the online questionnaire. This tendency leaves other educational levels in the background such as those at the beginning of schooling, where processes such as the teaching of reading and writing are developed in their first stages. In addition, the methodological approach most commonly used in the research referred to prioritizes the study of discourse on practice, but does not allow us to explore its concreteness, i.e., what happens in the classroom. This paper aims to contribute to this aspect by focusing on preschool education, a level that has been scarcely explored, using a qualitative approach based on the analysis of classes and the teacher's perspective on her own work.

TEACHING WORK AND THE PROCESSES OF SIMPLE SELF-CONFRONTATION

This research has socio-discursive interactionism (SDI) as its theoretical referent (Bronckart, 2007). This perspective analyzes language, thought and human activity based on the theoretical postulates of developmental psychology -following Vigotsky's contributions- and linguistics -from authors such as Saussure, Voloshinov and Coseriu- (Rodríguez, 2021). Its interest is to consolidate the didactics of languages by focusing on the three vertices of the didactic triangle: teacher, student and teaching content. In this sense, one of the lines of research developed by the SDI is the study of teaching work.

For SDI, the teacher's work is limited to teaching. Therefore, analyzing it represents an irreplaceable way to delimit the problems that the teacher is focused on and, in turn, to jointly build the shared assumptions of the profession with the ultimate goal of transforming practice (Ruiz-Bikandi, 2007). Bronckart (2007) proposes three dimensions of analysis: prescribed, effective and represented work. The first one accounts for the

prescriptions or norms that guide the work of teachers. In the case of Mexican basic education, much of the prescribed work is located in the curriculum, subject programs and textbooks. Although the latter are addressed to students, different ethnographic research has documented that they are an important source of consultation and orientation for teachers.

The actual work, on the other hand, constitutes what actually happens in the classroom; in other words, what happens between the teacher and the students during teaching. Finally, represented work refers to the beliefs that teachers construct about their own work. In this research we focus on the analysis of two dimensions: effective and represented work. We consider that their study intertwines the teacher's thinking about his or her work with what is actually done in the classroom, which, from our point of view, is the most important aspect, strengthens the analysis of practices by giving content to the teacher's reflection.

Methodologically, one of the ways to access the analysis of work dimensions is the study of teaching instructions. Riestra (2008) proposes working with the instructions that teachers use during their classes. For this author, the instructions are dialogic links that allow communication between teacher and students, so that through them it is possible to analyze the interactions that take place in the classroom around specific contents. It is relevant to point out that the works based on Riestra's contributions focus on classroom interactions; however, this research will concentrate on classes developed in a virtual classroom.

On the other hand, to access the work represented, Ruiz-Bikandi (2007) and Ruiz-Bikandi and Camps (2007) use simple self-confrontation as a methodological tool that makes it possible to investigate the teacher's thinking about his or her own practice. Self-confrontation consists of a dialogue between the teacher and the researcher around the recording of what happened in class. For the teacher, this procedure offers the possibility of thinking about his/her practice without the weight of the activity, and facilitates dialogue with others based on what he/she does while teaching.

Self-confrontation has been used in continuous training processes and in research that studies teaching practice (Plazaola, Ruiz-Bikandi, & Iriondo, 2018). In both cases it is a tool that returns the study and theorization about their own reality to teachers (Ruiz-Bikandi & Camps, 2007).

In this article, simple self-confrontation is used to explore a teacher's reflections on her online work with a group of third grade preschoolers while teaching reading and writing. The dialogue between the teacher and the researcher is based on the study of the teaching instructions she developed during the online classes, which allows us to refine the analysis of the teaching practice. We consider that this methodological approach

enriches the understanding of the teaching work by taking into account both what happened in the classroom and the interpretation of the person who carried it out.

VIRTUAL, ONLINE OR DISTANCE EDUCATION?

During the confinement caused by covid-19, teaching has required skills to use technological techniques and processes to continue with classes; however, the development of these skills was not planned by institutions, teachers or students, but emerged during the emergency. These attempts to integrate technologies to continue the teaching practice interrupted by social distancing led to terms such as virtual education, distance education or online education being used as synonyms, since they have the integration of technology into the educational environment in common; however, the literature establishes distinctions between these concepts. In this section we delimit the forms of interaction with technology that were implemented in the virtual observation classroom.

For Ibáñez (2020), virtual education implies teaching in an asynchronous manner, in which teachers and students do not coincide in their work schedules, which allows for flexible times. In this context, the teacher becomes an agent that shares consultation and work materials through digital platforms such as Edmodo, Schoology or e-mail. Once the activities have been completed, students must upload them for review and, subsequently, access feedback on their work.

Distance education conceives forms of mixed interaction, because it alternates face-to-face and virtual spaces that may vary depending on the educational institution that applies the model (Ibáñez, 2020). Finally, online education involves synchronous digital interaction (Ibáñez, 2020), where the schedules of the teacher and students must be consistent to develop classes. The role of the teacher in this mode is to accompany and assist students in their learning process within the virtual classroom. The teacher participating in this research developed this last work mode as an emerging alternative to continue with the school cycle.

METHODOLOGY

The research was of a qualitative nature (Hernández *et al.*, 2014, p. 7) and followed a non-experimental, transectional and descriptive design (Batthyány and Cabrera, 2011), which allowed recording, classifying and analyzing various components of the research phenomenon identified as teaching practice. The following research questions were posed: how are third grade preschoolers taught to read and write online? And, what are the effects of the online teaching mode on the practices of a preschool teacher?

The school where the research was conducted is a private preschool located on the outskirts of the city of San Luis Potosi, Mexico. The school has kindergarten, preschool and elementary school levels. The school's educational proposal emphasizes the importance of free play, the relationship with nature, experimentation and learning in freedom and community. Its philosophy focuses mainly on being an educational community. According to school statistics for the 2020-2021 school year, most of the population is of medium and medium-high economic level.

As for the participants, the teacher is a recent entry into the teaching service, she studied a Bachelor's Degree in Psycho-pedagogy with emphasis in Language, and has two years of service in the same institution, time in which she has attended third grade of preschool. For the period studied, her group of students was divided in two: an on-site subgroup attending the institution and an online subgroup; the latter is of interest for the research and comprised eleven students (six girls and five boys between five and six years of age).

RESEARCH ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

The research was organized in two phases. The first one involved the observation of synchronous classes to record and register the interactions between the teacher and the students. Due to the peculiarities of the teaching medium (a virtual classroom), digital ethnography techniques were used for data collection. This digital ethnography is an approach to classroom work in a world that is strongly related to technologies (Pink et al., 2016).

Eleven Spanish classes taught on Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the months of October to December 2020 were observed and recorded. The sessions were conducted on the free version of the Zoom platform, with a duration ranging from 35 to 60 minutes depending on the activity of the day and the number of students connected. In each session, the platform performed an automatic cutoff at 40 minutes, which meant that students rejoined the class with the help of their caregivers.

One of the authors was in charge of entering the virtual classroom to observe and record the audio of the classes, where, due to the nature of the approach to digital ethnography, her presence had to go unnoticed by the participants. In the first session, the teacher introduced the observer and, subsequently, her presence was evident again in none of the classes. The observer did not intervene in the development of the sessions, she remained connected with the microphone and camera off, and rejoined after the automatic termination of the session.

A total of ten hours of audio were recorded. Once the sessions were transcribed, the material was read to identify excerpts from the class

where, in accordance with the research questions, aspects related to the ways of teaching reading and writing in the virtual mode and the effects of online teaching in the classes were observed. These fragments were marked with colors for their selection and arrangement. For the recordings made in both moments of data collection, we had the written authorization of the participants (parents in the case of the students and the teacher). An important element for the analysis of the class transcripts was the identification of the instructions. Riestra (2018 and 2010) defines them as an instrument that organizes and evaluates the task, in addition to allowing the orientation of the class.

The author distinguishes between two types of prompts: in the strict sense, defined as "segments of the texts that define and initiate the activity produced by the class" (2008, p. 111); and, in the broad sense, which are "verbal productions of the teachers in the development of the class, which frame and comment on the slogans in the strict sense" (p. 111). Table 1 shows an example of the analysis of prompts in class transcripts.

Tabla 1. Análisis de las consignas del trabajo efectivo

CONSIGNAS EN SENTIDO ESTRICTO	CONSIGNAS EN SENTIDO AMPLIO
MA: Bueno, vamos a tomar lista. Voy a apagar los micrófonos y lo va a prender el que yo le diga. Todos con su lista en la mano	RE: Yo quiero tomar lista. MA: Vamos a ver quién va a tomar lista. Espérenme un segundito, dejen que la proyecte. Ahí va, me dicen cuando la vean. ¿Ahí la ven? Todos los demás la tienen que tener ahí en su mano. Ya va a ser de los últimos días de tomar lista, amigos, porque ya vamos a acabar este bloque de material. Hoy me va a ayudar a tomar lista... Vamos a ver, alguien que empiece con la letra erre. ¿Quién será? Rebeca, prende tu micrófono.

Fuente: elaboración propia.

Nota: para las transcripciones del estudio se utilizó el siguiente código: MA: maestra, XX (dos letras mayúsculas): iniciales del alumno, ND: niño desconocido, Ac: acompañante del alumno, xxx: fragmentos lectura, ... (puntos suspensivos): señalan pausas, xxx: audio inteligible y se agregaron acotaciones entre paréntesis para describir.

The second methodological phase is related to the processes of simple self-confrontation, where one of the authors and the group teacher organized meetings to discuss the work actually done in the virtual classroom and recorded in the class transcripts. Self-confrontations were carried out at a time close to the class observation with the intention of keeping what happened in the session in the teacher's memory in some way.

In total, four self-confrontations were carried out, accumulating three hours and eight minutes of recording. The meetings were conducted using the Zoom platform, which was chosen because it was free to access, as well as being similar to the teacher and facilitating the audio and video recording of the session. Before the self-confrontations, the colored marks selected in the transcripts (first phase of the research) were reviewed to narrow down the topics to be addressed with the teacher. Four themes were formed (see Table 2), and for each one, questions were formulated with the objective of creating spaces for reflection so that the teacher could externalize her work represented around the ways of teaching reading and writing, as well as the effects of online teaching.

During self-confrontations, a dialogue took place between the interviewer and the teacher about the aspects of her practice identified previously. In the first session, the teacher was welcomed and the main objective of the activity was explained, as well as the instructions that should be followed to facilitate the development of the session. Subsequently, we proceeded to discuss the aspects identified (see Table 2). In all the meetings, the teacher made any comments she considered necessary to explain or elaborate on a situation of interest to her. The audios of these self-confrontations were transcribed and reviewed to identify the teacher's responses that would allow a better understanding of the probing questions.

Tabla 2. Ejes de análisis preliminares y preguntas de autoconfrontación

TEMA 1: LAS FAMILIAS
¿Cómo describe la relación con las familias a partir de la enseñanza en línea?
¿Cómo impacta la intervención de las familias en el desarrollo de las clases?
¿Ha realizado alguna actividad para contravenir lo que observa sobre la intervención de las familias durante las clases?
TEMA 2: LA ENSEÑANZA DE LA ALFABETIZACIÓN INICIAL
¿Qué es lo que considera más importante en la enseñanza de la lectura y la escritura?, ¿hubo algún cambio en ello a partir de la enseñanza en línea?
¿Qué actividades utiliza para fomentar el aprendizaje de la lectura durante la enseñanza en línea?
¿Hay alguna actividad en específico que considere que fue la que más contribuyó al proceso de alfabetización durante la enseñanza en línea?
¿Cómo le ha funcionado que los alumnos copien las palabras de sus pantallas?
¿Realiza algún seguimiento al aprendizaje de los niños durante esas clases virtuales?
¿Cómo identifica que el grupo que está en línea está aprendiendo?
TEMA 3: LA PLANEACIÓN DE LAS CLASES EN LA MODALIDAD EN LÍNEA
¿Cómo planeaba sus clases para la educación presencial en el área de lengua antes de la pandemia?
¿Cómo ha cambiado ese proceso de planeación para sus clases ahora en la enseñanza en línea?
¿Cómo da solución a las dificultades que identifica en clase?
TEMA 4: PROSPECTIVAS SOBRE LA PRÁCTICA
¿Identifica algún aporte de la educación en línea a la enseñanza de la lengua?
¿Modificaría algo en la forma de enseñar a leer y escribir durante la educación en línea?
¿Cuáles fueron los mayores retos enfrentados durante la educación en línea?
¿Ha pensado en alguna alternativa para solucionar las dificultades que se han presentado al enseñar en línea?
¿Qué efecto ha tenido en las clases el corte que Zoom realiza a los 40 minutos?
Además de la integración de la tecnología, ¿hubo algo más en las prácticas de enseñanza que mejoró a partir de la virtualidad?

Fuente: elaboración propia.

Two sets of data were assessed as part of the corpus: a) the teaching prompts identified in the class transcripts and b) the marks made in the transcripts of the self-confrontations. For the analysis of information, an inductive procedure was used, based on the repeated reading of both sets of texts with the intention of making a cross-check between what was obtained from the work effectively developed in the virtual classroom and what the teacher said about her work.

As a result of this triangulation, five categories were identified that were reviewed and adjusted: teacher-student-family interactions, teaching the alphabetic principle, adjustments in class planning, use of technology in teaching, and perspectives on teaching practice. The first four categories

describe the themes taken up by the participants in the self-confrontation, and which we can define as part of the interests and concerns around effective work in the virtual classroom; while the last category points out what, from the teacher's perspective, represents the possibilities for transforming her practice.

RESULTS

The description of the categories of analysis is presented below. For each one, fragments of the actual work and of the work represented are used to illustrate the interpretations.

Teacher-student-family interactions

This category presents the participation of families during the virtual sessions and their impact on the development of the classes. In the actual work, it was identified that the students' companions, generally parents, intervened in the session; that is, the accompaniment went beyond the support with the use of mobile devices because they gave the answers to the children or helped them to obtain them. These situations were alien to the teacher who, from the experience of classroom practice, had not been exposed to the direct participation of the families in the development of the classes. Fragments a), b), c) and d) show the interactions between families and the school. In the first fragments the accompanying persons take part by supporting the students and, sometimes, giving them the answers; in the last fragment we see how a complicated family situation affected a student and, consequently, the development of the class.

a) MA: How many are there? Count. Everybody, help me count the S's you see. Ac (whispering to her son): Here there are two, and then here... TA: It's just that there are two on one line, look (to his companion). MA: Two, these two?¹

b) MA: Hey, handsome! Let's see, which letter is the blue one, Bruno? BO: It's an /s/ MA: What happens if you put together... that /s/ with... What is this one? BO: I don't know. Ac (to his son): Yes, you do. BO: The /e/... The /i/

c) MA: Okay, so this /s/ ese with the /o/ how does it sound, Renata? Ac (to her daughter): /so/. REN: /so/.

d) MA: Good morning, Jade, how are you, beautiful? Let's see, turn on your microphone, honey. Ac (to her daughter): She's talking to you. MA: Are you sad? Ac (to her daughter): Answer her. MA: Are you sad, beautiful? Why are you sad?... Do you want to tell us? No? Okay. Do you want us to send you a hug? Yes? We all send big hugs to Jade, everybody, big, big, big hugs. Open your arms and hug Jade, and let's send Jade a kiss too, and whatever can we do to help

you with, beautiful, let us know, and we're here for you. Do you want to tell us anything?... You don't?

JA (crying): Yes.

MA: Yes, what do you want to tell us, honey?

JA: It's that my mom scolded me.

In the self-confrontation, the teacher explains that the school calls itself an "educational community" and, in this sense, promotes a high level of family participation in their children's learning; however, this has been transformed by the virtual classes, since the companions are present in classroom interactions. According to the teacher, this is not always positive for the classroom dynamics. Excerpts I and II illustrate these statements.

I) The father always answers for him, that is, he answers for him; he goes ahead. In other words, it's a father who does not follow instructions. But if I say "let's go together", they are always ahead and I feel that it does not benefit the student because he is not paying attention to me. In other words, he is attentive to what the father is telling him. I feel that his dad intervenes a lot and doesn't let me follow up.

II) Parents have this unconscious way of always trying to answer or to make the children look good in front of the class. So, they always end up telling them how it is, but I realize when the child really says it and when it is the dad who is next to them, because the child unconsciously tells you later. Obviously I hear that it is not a direct production of the child, but that the father is the one who is telling them.

Teaching the alphabetic principle

In preschool, and specifically in third grade, the concern of teachers and families about learning the alphabetic principle of the writing system is accentuated. This group of students finished second grade and started third grade at a distance, which increased this concern. This category encompasses the teaching of initial literacy online. For this purpose, the reflections on the teaching activities that were most observed in the sessions are recovered: working with syllables and the use of rhyme. Fragments e) and f) illustrate the above.

e) MA: I'm going to read you this part and you tell me who hears a rhyme, okay? This gentleman will be 'me'; he's going to take care of you. *iCalladas! Me voy, me voy, siéntense ya y sean muy educadas.* (Quiet, I'm going, I'm going, sit down now and be very courteous). Who heard the rhyme? Raise your hand if you hear the

rhyme I said. Let's see, Emilio, turn on your microphone... Look carefully, handsome, turn it on over there, it's a red microphone... Did you see where, Emilio?... No, we can't hear you, Emilio, but it says: *¡Calladas! Me voy, me voy, siéntense ya y sean muy educadas*. (Quiet, I'm leaving, I'm leaving, sit down now and be very courteous). What rhymes with *Calladas*? Who knows what rhymes with "*calladas*"?... Who?

REB: Rebecca.

BO: *Calladas* (quiet)

f) MA: Let's go back again, Rebecca, can you turn on your microphone (talking to the family member accompanying her)? We said the /s/ with the /i/, how does that sound?

REB: /si/

MA: Yes. Can you think of a word that starts with /si/?

REB: /Sopa/.

Ac (to her daughter): No, one with /si/.

REB: /Silla/.

MA: Let's see, let's see which one comes up here. What is this, Rebecca?

REB: Whistle (silbato).

MA: And /silbato/ starts with /si/?

REB: /Silbato/, yes, and so does /silla/.

When the teacher was asked about working with syllables, she explained that the teaching methodologies promoted by the school are based on the models of Reggio Emilia, Waldorf and the School Reading Training (SRT) program. These prioritize learning by discovery and phonological awareness; however, the online mode has led her to include other types of activities that she considers foreign to the proposals promoted in these models. In the self-confrontation, the teacher describes that she chose to retake these strategies, with which she does not feel comfortable, in order to adjust to online teaching. In fragment III, she explains how she bases her teaching of the alphabetic principle under regular face-to-face conditions; while fragments IV and V illustrate her dissatisfaction with the activities for teaching online.

III) Phonological awareness is the basis and is developed from rhymes and songs... that is, rhymes are my first step. Then follows syllabic awareness and the last step is phonemic awareness. So they like rhymes a lot and that's what the program first suggests you start identifying.

IV) I would not have given them the syllable sheet; I really don't like it. I would have done it from a story and in that story look for the words or give them books so they could try to look for, for example, words that begin with /sa/, locate them visually or find drawings of words with /sa/, such as /sapo/ or /sombbrero/; or go page by page, so to speak. I would have done it from a book.

V) They (the children who are in line) already located many letters and at the beginning we sent them an alphabet with images. I also use a lot, as a reference, the /m/ for *mariposa* (butterfly), the /n/ for *nariz* (nose). So, we also use it online, but in class (with the children who are in the classroom) we are using what it is, that is, in this class I am using the Waldorf model to teach the letters.

Adjustments in planning

This category describes the adjustments to planning based on attending to two groups of students: those who are in the face-to-face model and those who attend online. In excerpt VI, the teacher describes the planning of activities for the section of the group that attends face-to-face and the adaptations for those who are online. Although it is the same activity, she cannot follow up with those who are at home because a considerable part of the process is left to the persons who are with the children.

VI) Tomorrow we are going to look for words all over the school... That have the capital /L/ and the lower case /l/. They are detectives of the /L/ (referring to the students who are in the face-to-face mode). Then I put them to do a story or we are going to do the library catalog. So, I feel that with those things they are motivated and it makes a lot more sense to them. Unfortunately, I leave it aside with those who are in Zoom, that is, I will connect tomorrow, I will see the detectives, but I can no longer follow up (the virtual group) as I do in the classroom; therefore, it is a lot of work for the parents.

In addition to the above, the adjustments for online teaching take the participation of families into account in the teaching process, as well as the reduction of didactic time involved in online teaching (fragment VII).

VII) Well, I have to think that this is not a very complicated thing for the parents and I think that it has become traditional (teaching), something which was not before. For example, seeing the syllables

of /la/, /le/, /li/, /lo/, /lu/, is really something that we were not doing. That is, it is not that we are against it, but it was done from a story, for example; it was not done in an isolated way as it is being done now, but because of the situation (referring to the health crisis) I think we cannot be there next to the children to see their processes. We really have to make it as accessible as possible for the parents and also because of time. In virtual mode, it is one hour of work, and in face-to-face you can take more time. It is very limited.

Challenges of the virtual mode

The challenges mentioned by the teacher are linked to the relationship between the children of the ages she teaches and technology. In particular, she refers to the time they spend in front of the screen and their attention. Fragment g) illustrates one of the complications that children face with the use of technology.

g) MA: Bruno, can you turn on your microphone? Can you tell me, Bruno, what is the name of this part of the book? Do you remember the name of this part of the book? The what...? The /por.../

BO: /Portada/ (Cover).

MA: The cover, very good, handsome. And what's on the cover, what do you see on the cover?

BO: One... Some animals.

MA: Some animals. And what else? What do you think these letters on the cover say? What's the name? What else does the cover say? Whose name? Let's see, do you want someone else to help you? Who wants to help Bruno find out what else is on the cover? Let's see, Blue, can you tell me what else is on the cover? It didn't turn on, honey, can you turn it on again? There it is, what else is on the cover?

In excerpt VIII, it is stated that the duration of the sessions is short, but cannot be extended for the safety of the students. Faced with the choice between extending the class time or keeping it, she opts to leave it that way in order to favor the well-being of the children. Fragment IX alludes to the difficulties of capturing students' attention in virtual sessions, especially when they face challenges derived from the use of technology that they have not yet mastered, such as using the microphone.

VIII) Nor can we ask for more time for children on the computer, because it is not healthy. And what we want, more than learning, is for them to be psychologically and emotionally well. So, the fact

that they learn online is something secondary. In other words, face-to-face is very different. That is why in Zoom I am interested in knowing how they are doing and sometimes I talk to them and they tell me, more than really (knowing that) they are learning the contents, because I know that it is really very difficult and even more so for them.

IX) (There is) the fact that the children have to wait their turn to participate and that many times some take longer than others, obviously they get bored because the interest is not the same, that is, it is not the same to be in front of a screen than to have live material, for example.

Above all, that is the challenge, to keep them focused within the time and motivated. Regarding the evaluation of face-to-face and virtual classes, the teacher emphasized her preference for face-to-face classes due to the age of the students and the characteristics of the teaching activities (fragment X).

X) No, nothing like face-to-face. I think it is very general, virtually I cannot see if they are really understanding me or if, apart from copying, they are having another process such as decoding the sound of the letters. But now I really hope that parents are supporting them, I know that there are several children in virtual education who can already write their name, but I don't think it is only because I have put it on the screen, I think it goes beyond that.

Prospects of teaching practice

This axis describes the teacher's reflections on the improvement of her teaching practice. These arose at different times from the question: "Is there anything you would like to improve in this class? Within these reflections, the contributions of the online mode to her practice stand out: the use of digital tools (fragment XI) and the effect of virtuality on students (fragment XII). In addition, she assumes that she is satisfied with the teaching activities, even though they may be considered traditional, since it is necessary due to the classroom conditions they live in (fragment XIII).

XI) Well, more than anything else, the resources, that is, this allows you to give them resources that are attractive to them. For example, I have been using a game with the letters of the alphabet that I found and I project them, so that is another resource, because it is fun for them to play a video game where they help a girl to reach a Mayan route. Three options appear on the screen and (the children) have to choose the sound of the letter. Then I tell them "let's see, which of these three is letter /a/? Then they write them on a piece of paper and show it to me, so I use it to reinforce.

XII) I think that taking turns in the dialogue has made them more patient, and above all, they have learned to listen. Yes, above all, listening to others and waiting for their turn to speak, I think this part of the technology has also helped.

XIII) Obviously I am open to new things, but at least I would not modify that of sending traditional things like syllables and all that, but I know that for the time being it is not possible (to do other activities) unless it is face-to-face.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this research was to analyze the teaching practice of a preschool teacher during the online education period from classroom observation and simple self-confrontation. The results show the teacher's concerns when teaching reading and writing to children between five and six years old. These are related to the new forms of interaction generated by the forced adoption of a teaching mode for which none of the actors in the educational process were prepared. We highlight three of these forms of interaction between the teacher and: a) the families, b) the students and c) the object of teaching.

In the relationship with the families, the intervention of the fathers or mothers who accompanied the children during the synchronous sessions abruptly broke with the more traditional forms of interaction between these actors and the classroom. The usual ways of involving families in schools were disrupted when parents became direct participants in classroom interactions, something that does not happen in face-to-face education. The teacher experienced this irruption as a negative element in her relationship with student learning, as it made her practice more complex.

The findings of the research reviewed show that, during the pandemic, families served as a means of communication between teachers and students (Gómez-Nashiki and Quijada-Lovatón, 2021) and indicate that their solidarity represented an important support in the educational processes during the health crisis (Cervantes and Rojas, 2021). However, the works do not analyze the relationships between these actors during synchronous education, this is understandable because these are limited to a private sphere and difficult to access for research.

At a younger age, children require the accompaniment of adults during synchronous classes as support for the use of technology; this situation generates challenges in the forms of interaction that are necessary to understand the teaching practices in the initial levels of basic schooling during home schooling. Regarding the relationship with students, online education has made the monitoring processes that teachers usually carry out more complex. The didactic time that is developed in the face-to-face

school days, of four or five hours, was reduced to sessions of 40 or 50 minutes, which forced the teacher to leave part of the teaching activities in the hands of the families. In this way, the teacher planned her classes with the parents' possibilities of developing them in mind.

Likewise, the new forms of interaction also evidenced teacher concerns for the psychological and emotional well-being of the students. This teacher solidarity pushed the learning of the alphabetic principle to the background and, as shown by other works with higher education teachers (Sánchez *et al.*, 2020), put the attention on the emotional aspect as a main concern.

Finally, the relationship with the object of teaching, in this case written language, was modified by changing the means of interaction with students, reducing teaching time and including families in the educational process. In accordance with the findings of research in basic and higher education (Martín *et al.*, 2020; Gómez-Nashiki and Quijada-Lovatón, 2021), online teaching introduced technology as a didactic tool; however, it also led them to use what they know to teach in an unfamiliar context.

That is, the analysis suggests that traditional literacy teaching strategies became a useful tool for the teacher when facing the uncertainty of the new teaching context. Chamberlain *et al.* (2020) identified recontextualized literacy practices according to the new communicative spaces and, in this paper, it is observed how the teacher recontextualized traditional reading and writing teaching strategies, which she would not take up again in the face-to-face mode, but which were an adequate alternative in the new teaching context.

This research focused its attention on an educational context that, from our point of view, has been little explored. Unlike a large part of the public and private institutions in the country, the families of private preschools belong to an upper middle economic class and have the technological tools and connectivity at home necessary to give continuity to education during the pandemic, but this access is not sufficient for the success of online education since new relationships are established between the participants in the educational process that make the development of classes more complex.

The results of this work reveal how online education imposed by the health crisis reconfigured the relationships between the elements of the didactic system and introduced others with greater force, such as the environment and families. The automated and non-conscious mechanisms that support the teaching practice (Ruiz-Bikandi, 2007) of the teacher were disrupted by these reconfigurations and by the abrupt transformation of her work scenario. Self-confrontation shows how the teacher's automated actions in teaching reading and writing are transformed by using strategies more adjusted to the new educational scenario that consider elements that were

not previously taken into account, such as the use of technology, the availability of family time, and traditional teaching strategies.

CONCLUSIONS

This research reveals how the conditions imposed by the online education mode derived from the social distancing due to the covid-19 give rise to changes in the forms of interaction between the elements of the didactic system. From the point of view of the teaching work, it is possible to notice the presence of two mediators in the interaction processes usually identified between teacher, students and content: the screens and the students' companions while taking the class at a distance. In particular, at the preschool level and in the teaching of writing, class observation and self-confrontation made it possible to analyze the effective and represented work of a teacher, which led to the analysis of her practice. The teacher experienced the irruption of the new conditions in her virtual classroom and identified important aspects that made it possible to understand her work. Although all these changes have brought tensions in school, family, social and economic spheres that have had an impact on teachers' work, they also represent a possibility to rethink practices within the context of the new social scenarios.

Anaya Herrera, N. y Rojano Tovar, C. R. (2020). *Tensiones y emociones de la práctica docente en tiempos del Covid 19* (tesis de maestría). Universidad de La Costa: Barranquilla.

Azañedo-Alcántara, V. A. (2021). El desempeño docente antes y durante la pandemia. *Polo del conocimiento*, 6(4), 841-860.
<https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7927019>

Bourdieu, P. (1991). *El sentido práctico*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores.

Cervantes Holguín, E. y Rojas Santos, B. A. (2021). Alfabetización inicial en tiempos de covid-19. Retos de la docencia a distancia. *Ciencia y Educación*, 5(3), 61-78. <https://doi.org/10.22206/cyed.2021.v5i3.pp61-78>

Dussel, I. (2020). La formación docente y los desafíos de la pandemia. *Revista EFI*. DGES, 6(10), 11-25. <http://dges-cba.edu.ar/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Dussel.pdf>

Gazzo, M. F. (2020). La educación en tiempos del covid-19: nuevas prácticas docentes, ¿nuevos estudiantes? *Red Sociales. Revista del Departamento de Ciencias Sociales*, 7(2), 58-63. <http://ri.unlu.edu.ar/xmlui/handle/rediunlu/750>

Gómez-Nashiki, A. y Quijada-Lovatón, K. (2021). Buenas prácticas de docentes de educación básica durante la pandemia covid-19. *Revista Innova Educación*, 3(4), 7-27. <https://doi.org/10.35622/j.rie.2021.04.001>

Hernández Sampieri, R.; Fernández Collado, C. y Baptista Lucio, M. P. (2014). *Metodología de la investigación*. McGraw-Hill Interamericana.

Hoz, G.; Wallace, Y. y Heredia, E. (2021). Alfabetizar a distancia en el inicio de la escuela primaria. Un análisis de propuestas publicadas por la provincia de Buenos

Aires en Argentina. *Revista Iberoamericana de Tecnología en Educación y Educación en Tecnología*, (28), 282-293. <https://teyet-revista.info.unlp.edu.ar/TEyET/article/view/1554>

Ibáñez, F. (20 de noviembre de 2020). Educación en línea, virtual, a distancia y remota de emergencia, ¿cuáles son sus características y diferencias? *Tecnológico de Monterrey: Instituto para el Futuro de la Educación, Observatorio*. <https://observatorio.tec.mx/edu-news/diferencias-educacion-online-virtual-a-distancia-remota>

Martín, J.; Gutiérrez, E. A.; Cruz Bigliani, J. y Rocchietti, R. (2020). Nuestras prácticas docentes en tiempo de pandemia. *Revista de enseñanza de la física*, 32(extra), 233-240. <https://revistas.unc.edu.ar/index.php/revistaEF/article/view/30999>

Naycir Flóres, F. C. y Zúñiga Sanjuán, I. M. (2020). *Práctica docente en tiempos del covid-19* (tesis de maestría). Universidad de La Costa, Barranquilla. <https://repositorio.cuc.edu.co/bitstream/handle/11323/7497/PR%C3%81CTICA%20DOCENTE%20EN%20TIEMPOS%20DEL%20COVID%2019.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Pink, S.; Horst, H.; Postill, J.; Hjorth, L.; Lewis, T. y Tacchi, J. (2016). *Etnografía digital: principios y práctica*. Ediciones Morata S. L.

Plazaola Giger, I.; Ruiz Bikandi, U. e Iriondo Arana, I. (2018). Análisis de la propia actividad en el Practicum: una experiencia formativa. *Revista Complutense de Educación*, 29(4), 1169-1183. <https://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/RCED/article/view/54890/4564456548254>

Riestra, D. (2008). *Las consignas de enseñanza de la lengua. Un análisis desde el interaccionismo socio-discursivo*. Miño y Dávila.

Riestra, D. (2010). *El trabajo docente en la enseñanza de la lengua: los textos y el análisis entre los géneros y los tipos de discurso*. Argentina: Editorial FFyL, UNCuyo.

Rodríguez Hernández, B. A. (2021). Enseñar español en la escuela primaria: autoconfrontación y análisis de la práctica. *Sinéctica, Revista Electrónica de Educación*, (57), 1-18. [https://doi.org/10.31391/S2007-7033\(2021\)0057-005](https://doi.org/10.31391/S2007-7033(2021)0057-005)

Rodríguez Hernández, B. A. y Servín Calvillo, O. O. (2022). Prácticas docentes en primarias rurales y urbano-marginadas durante la pandemia por covid-19. *Diálogos sobre educación*, 25(13). <https://doi.org/10.32870/dse.voi25.1118>

Rodríguez Hernández, B. A.; Galán Jiménez, J. S.; Servín Calvillo, O. O. (2021). Representaciones de los profesores de primarias rurales y urbano-marginadas sobre su trabajo durante el confinamiento por covid-19. *Revista Brasileira de Educação do Campo*, 6, e9057. <https://zenodo.org/record/5791980#.Yvryv3bMLIU>

Ruiz-Bikandi, U. (2007). La autoobservación en clase de lengua como mecanismo colectivo de formación. El discurso protector. *Cultura y Educación*, 19(2), 165-181. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1174/113564007780961624>

Ruiz-Bikandi, U. y Camps, A. (2007). Corrientes en investigación educativa y formación del profesorado: una visión de conjunto. *Cultura y Educación*, 19(2), 105-122. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1174/113564007780961606>

Sánchez Mendiola, M.; Martínez Hernández, A. M. P.; Torres Carrasco, R.; Agüero Servín, M. M.; Hernández Romo, A. K.; Benavides Lara, M. A.; Rendón Cazales, V. J. y Jaimes Vergara, C. A. (2020). Retos educativos durante la pandemia de covid-19: una encuesta a profesores de la UNAM. *Revista Digital Universitaria*, 21(3), 1-24. <http://doi.org/10.22201/codeic.16076079e.2020.v21n3.a12>

Valencia Rodríguez, W. A. (2020). Mirada a las prácticas educativas y pedagógicas en tiempos de pandemia. *REDPPI. Red de prácticas pedagógicas investigativas*, 1-15. <https://www.uco.edu.co/REDPPI/BiblioRedppi/MIRADA%20A%20LAS%20PR%C3%81CTICAS%20EDUCATIVAS%20Y%20PEDAG%C3%93GICAS%20EN%20TIEMPOS%20DE%20PANDEMIA.pdf>

Villafuerte Holguín, J. S.; Bello Piguave, J. E.; Pantaleón Cevallos, Y. y Bermello Vidal, J. O. (2020). Rol de los docentes ante la crisis del covid-19, una mirada desde el enfoque humano. *Revista electrónica formación y calidad educativa*, 8(1), 134-150. <http://refcale.uleam.edu.ec/index.php/refcale/article/view/3214/1986>



HOW TO CITE

Rodríguez Hernández, Blanca Araceli y Ruiz Reyna, Nadia Sarahí. (2022). Enseñar en preescolar durante la pandemia: interacciones entre profesora, alumnos, familias y pantallas. *Apertura*, 14(2), pp. 146-163. <http://dx.doi.org/10.32870/Ap.v14n2.2182>

