

Social Representations of Teacher Identity in Special Education in Chile

Representaciones sociales sobre la identidad docente en Educación Especial en Chile

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to analyze social representations of teacher identity in future special education teachers in Chile, with a focus on their implications for role construction and the challenges of initial teacher education. The research employed a biographical methodology and interpretive approach aimed at gaining insight into a sample of 19 preservice special education students from five Chilean universities. Information was collected through biographical interviews examined using grounded theory. The results show that social representations of teacher identity are rooted in an association of the image of teachers with teacher characteristics and roles, and the process of constructing these social representations begins at school and is influenced by initial teacher education. These results provide relevant information for understanding how teacher identity is constructed and for developing strategies to strengthen it during initial teacher education.

Keywords: identity, social representations, special education teachers, special education

Resumen

El objetivo de esta investigación fue analizar las representaciones sociales sobre la identidad docente en futuros profesores de Educación Especial en Chile, atendiendo las implicancias en la construcción de su rol y los desafíos de la formación inicial docente. Se utilizó un enfoque comprensivo-interpretativo, con un método biográfico, en una muestra de 19 estudiantes de formación inicial en Educación Especial de cinco universidades chilenas. La información se recogió a través de entrevistas biográficas examinadas con el método de Teoría Fundamentada. Los resultados indican que las representaciones sociales en torno a la identidad docente se basan en la asociación de la imagen del profesorado con sus características y roles, y que la construcción de éstas es un proceso que inicia en la etapa escolar —en el cual la formación inicial docente actúa como moduladora—. Estos resultados brindan información relevante para comprender cómo se construye la identidad docente y permiten crear estrategias para desarrollarla durante la formación inicial del profesorado.

Palabras clave: identidad, representaciones sociales, docente especializado, educación especial



I. Introduction

Teacher identity can be defined as a construct that brings together professional and work identity, through work activity from which teachers gain knowledge, develop beliefs about their work, and adopt characteristic traits of their profession (Cantón & Tardif, 2018).

While “society forms representations of teaching work, viewing it differently to that of other professionals” (Cantón & Tardif, 2018, p. 78), professional identity refers to the way in which individuals identify and define themselves through their occupation or career and is made up of a set of characteristics, skills, values, interests, and objectives that determine how individuals view themselves and relate to others in the workplace. Having a well-defined professional identity can be beneficial in building a successful and fulfilling career, making it possible to align personal and professional goals and make decisions that help to accomplish them in the long term (Cavazos et al., 2020).

From a life-span theory perspective (Super, 1980), professional identity is developed over time through a combination of personal and environmental factors. This process is determined by each individual’s experiences, values, and aspirations, as well as by social and cultural factors in the surrounding context (Tomlinson & Jackson, 2021).

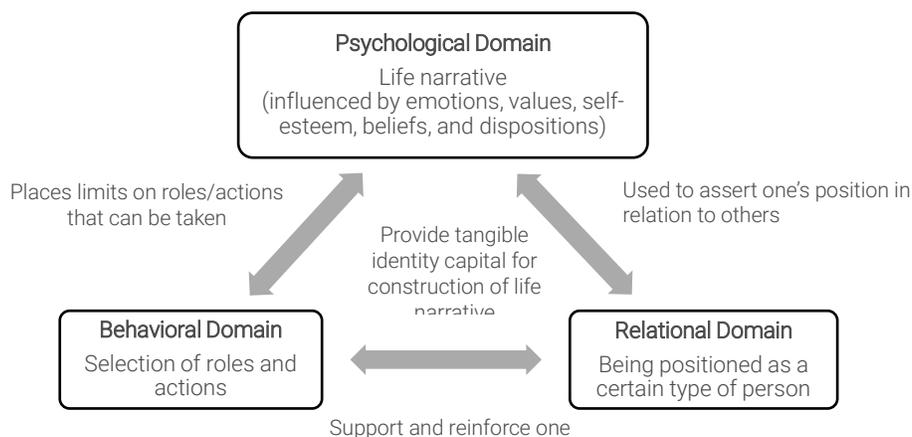
Work identity, on the other hand, is the way in which individuals perceive themselves in relation to their work and the role they play in the workplace. This includes the attitudes, beliefs, and values they adopt with respect to their work and their career, and the purpose and meaning they acquire (Brown & Lent, 2019). According to Tejada-Fernández (2018), work identity is the approach workers take towards their own work, which is linked to their performance in a given job. This approach is influenced by changes in the work environment and by experiences of work. In the case of teachers, it is believed that their work history and the distinctive nature of the teaching profession have an impact on the formation of a distinct identity: teacher identity.

Chen (2019) and Day (2018) have explored the factors that constitute and influence teacher identity, such as beliefs, emotions, and attitudes. Beliefs are associated with the way in which teachers view their work and the relationships they develop as a result of their professional life, which includes a feeling of efficacy regarding the fulfillment of their professional goals (Granziera & Perera, 2019). Emotions provide an evaluative-affective component (positive or negative) to their professional practice, which is linked to the value attached to their career choice (Day, 2018). Lastly, attitudes are oriented toward cognitive and affective components, which are reflected in the way teachers cope with the demands of work, which include the political and social responsibilities of teaching work (Alliaud, 2018; Ruohotie-Lyhty et al., 2021).

This research adopts the perspective of the Identity Triangle Model proposed by Dugas (2021), which conceptualizes teacher identity as a process of interaction between three domains: the psychological, the behavioral, and the relational (see Figure 1). The *psychological* domain focuses on the life history narrated by future teachers; the *behavioral* domain includes roles and actions associated with professional practice; and the *relational* domain refers to the position adopted with respect to others, and others’ perceptions of oneself and what it means to be recognized as a teacher (Dugas, 2021).



Figure 1. Identity Triangle Model



Note: Adapted from Dugas (2021).

This model is based on the growing consensus in the literature that the main function of teacher identity is to integrate life experiences to imbue them with a sense of coherence and unity, which is reflected in a narrative that serves as a foundation for teacher identity (Dugas, 2021).

Rostami et al. (2021) maintain that teacher identity plays an important role in understanding teachers' professional development, while other studies (Dugas, 2021; Suarez & McGrath, 2022) have viewed teachers' professional identity as a key factor in understanding motivation, self-efficacy, self-image, effectiveness, and the ability to retain teachers.

Understanding the role played by teacher identity in teachers' professional experiences is important and relevant, particularly at a time when the attractiveness of the teaching profession and teacher retention have become a core focus of public policy in a number of countries (Alexander et al., 2020; Unesco, 2016). In Chile, reports have pointed to a decline in student enrollment in pedagogy (between -10.4% and -13.8%) and in degree programs in science, like biology, chemistry, and physics. Pedagogy in special education programs have not been left untouched by this phenomenon: statistics indicate a 7.5% fall in student enrollment in this field in Chile (Consejo Nacional de Educación, 2022).

Estimates of teacher attrition suggest that an average of 8,200 teachers leave the classroom each year (4.1%). This data points to a projected shortfall of 26,273 teachers by 2025 (Elige Educar, 2021). Although official figures on attrition do not include special education, the data suggests that special education will experience a similar shortage of teachers to other specialties (Elige Educar, 2021). A lack of special education teachers would have a grave impact on the ability to serve children and youth with special educational needs, given the absence of teachers with the training to design and effectively implement individualized support programs (Scott et al., 2021).

Despite evidence on the characteristics of special education teachers, the demands of their profession, high rates of teacher attrition, and the proven importance of teacher identity in addressing this reality, the construction of teacher identity during initial teacher training in special education remains underexplored (Alnahdi & Schwab, 2021; Billingsley et al., 2020).

This study seeks to answer the following question: what social representations of teacher identity do future special education teachers have? Moscovici (1979) defines social representations (SRs) as an organized corpus of knowledge thanks to which it becomes



possible to understand the physical and social reality. They constitute frames of reference that bring coherence to the world, making it possible to explain and interpret the relationships and facts of reality, providing sense and meaning to the referent being represented (Jodelet, 1986). These forms of knowledge serve to shape behaviors and communication between individuals by organizing their experiences cognitively and affectively (Jodelet, 1986; Moscovici, 1979).

Social representations are meanings jointly constructed from social interactions; they are practical knowledge that is socially elaborated and acquired through experience, communication, and education, and enable a model of thinking about the world that equips each individual to integrate into society, constituting complex systems that are constructed and conveyed primarily through language (Gutiérrez-Vidrio, 2023; Jodelet, 2019). Indeed, language is used to construct discourse to explain the subjective processes that underlie the representations, making it possible to symbolize the acts and meanings shared by members of a given social group (Enríquez, 2016; Rateau & Lo Mónaco, 2013).

In the case of future teachers, SRs of teaching constitute a theory developed in their initial teacher education and in the spaces where they rehearse their future role, with a frame of reference made up of information, attitudes, images, notions, and beliefs that influence the meanings attributed to their identity as teachers (Peña et al., 2019; Vecina-Merchante & San Román-Gago, 2021).

According to Gutiérrez-Vidrio (2023), the theoretical proposal of SRs in education captures a vision of the world that members of the education community share and use as a frame of reference to operate and position themselves in society. Various studies on teachers (Magaña, 2015; Paulino, 2012; Vecina-Merchante & San Román-Gago, 2021) have linked SRs to teachers' professional identity, which they define as "a key lens for understanding the subjective construction of social reality, insofar as the relationship with the world is developed through an individual's multiple memberships" (Magaña, 2015, p. 146).

Knowledge of future special education teachers' SRs of teacher identity may help in understanding how they develop their professional identity during their initial education, how they see their professional role, and how they present themselves in their profession, with the understanding that the manner in which they view their identity will influence their performance, commitment, and intention to remain in the profession (Chen et al., 2020).

This information may be helpful to generate strategies to support the development of teacher identity during teacher training, providing input for policymakers in education to develop support mechanisms to help teachers meet the demands of their profession successfully (Rushton & Reiss, 2020).

II. Method

This study employed the sociogenetic model of SRs (Moscovici, 1979) and Jodelet's (1986) perspective was adopted to perform a descriptive analysis. Based on this model, SRs are viewed as systems of meaning that reflect the relationship that individuals and social groups have with their environment (Rateau & Lo Mónaco, 2013). This approach was chosen based on the importance it attaches to understanding how representations emerge. According to Jodelet (1986), representations are formed "from our experiences and from the information, knowledge, and models of thought transmitted through tradition, education, and social communication" (p. 473). A narrative biographical method, defined as a reconstruction of the past and images of the future intended to provide the person with a certain degree of unity, purpose, and meaning (González-Giraldo, 2019; Syaripudin & Apandi, 2022), was used.



This approach provides insight into people's worlds through their history, actions, circumstances, relationships, and meanings (Rodríguez & Covarrubias-Papahiu, 2021) in order to identify their SRs.

Participants. Critical case sampling was employed, which involves selecting cases in which the experiences or processes under study are particularly clear (Patton, 2002). A total of 19 special education students (89.5% female) participated, from five Chilean universities (from different regions) that grant a bachelor's degree in education with a professional qualification as a special education teacher. Participants ranged from 19 to 32 years of age and were between their second and eighth semester of initial training. A description of the participants is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Sociodemographic details of participants

Participant	Age	Sex	Semester	Region
Camila	21	F	8 th	Biobío
Karen	19	F	2 nd	Biobío
Mónica	22	F	8 th	Metropolitan
Carolina	23	F	8 th	Metropolitan
Natalia	22	F	8 th	Metropolitan
Rocío	21	F	8 th	Biobío
Nicole	21	F	6 th	Biobío
Merry	21	F	8 th	Los Lagos
Bárbara	20	F	6 th	Biobío
Paulina	20	F	6 th	Valparaíso
Rosa	28	F	2 nd	Biobío
Valentina	32	F	8 th	Los Lagos
José	21	M	6 th	Valparaíso
Franco	21	M	4 th	Magallanes
Fabiola	21	F	8 th	Biobío
Viviana	21	F	8 th	Biobío
Scarlett	26	F	8 th	Biobío
Carla	21	F	8 th	Biobío
Bianca	22	F	8 th	Biobío

Note: The participants' names were changed to maintain anonymity. Participants were also given the option of "non-binary" for their sex, which no participants selected.

Instrument. Biographical interviews were used, following a script that was open-ended and ordered chronologically. The script included retrospective and prospective questions focusing on the domains of the professional self, understood as the way in which participants view themselves as teachers, and on subjective educational theories, understood to mean a personal system of knowledge and beliefs that serves as the framework for future teachers' SRs and guides their interpretation and action in relation to their teacher identity (Kelchtermans, 1999). This is what Moriña (2017) refers to as a single biographical account, which, depending on its depth, constitutes a micro life history. In terms of scope, it is a thematic narrative, told in the first person. The thematic script with the guiding questions is given in Table 2.



Table 2. Thematic script for biographical interviews

Stage	Guiding questions
Primary education	What was your time in school like? What sort of relationship did you have with your teachers?
Secondary education	What was your view of your teachers? Would you say there was a memorable teacher in your life?
Initial teacher education	What led you to study this degree program? What tools from your initial education have helped you to become a teacher? How do you see yourself as a teacher? What does teacher identity mean to you? What events in your life have shaped your personality as a teacher?
Professional future (Prospective questions)	What do you want to be like as a teacher? How would you like to be recognized for your work? What is your commitment to society? What type of teacher do you want to be?

Note: Some questions were merged or omitted depending on the flow of conversation.

Analysis. A processual approach to SRs was adopted for this analysis, based on a hermeneutic and dialectical perspective. The analysis focused on diversity and significant aspects of social representation construction, with an emphasis on the sociohistorical associations of the object represented, its definition and distinctive characteristics (Banchs, 2000). This was achieved through grounded theory, generating theory from the information gathered, which describes actions, interactions, and social processes (Restrepo-Ochoa, 2013). The information was analyzed using the method described by Charmaz (2006). First, the transcriptions were reviewed, and initial coding was performed by word, by line and by segment, independently by each of the three researchers working on the analysis. Second, the data was grouped by similarity and importance, establishing categories that facilitated interpretation, analysis, and sense-making (Strauss & Corbin, 2012). This second stage was carried out over three days of discussion, during which the categories identified by each researcher were compared. Only categories that were directly linked to the research objective were retained, and subcategories were included in each case. The “teamwork” feature of MAXQDA analysis software, version 2020, was used for this process.

Procedure. Contact with prospective participants began once certification was obtained from the sponsoring university’s ethics committee. An invitation was sent out via a formal e-mail to students of pedagogy in special education in 12 Chilean universities that met the inclusion criteria – that is, they granted a bachelor’s degree in education with a professional qualification as a special education teacher. A favorable response was received from students in five universities. The interviews were performed in November and December 2021 via a digital platform, after informed consent was obtained. The interviews were transcribed and anonymized. Then the transcriptions were sent to the participants, allowing them to make corrections, additions, or clarifications in order to meet the quality criterion of credibility and authenticity of the information (Flick et al., 2018).

III. Results

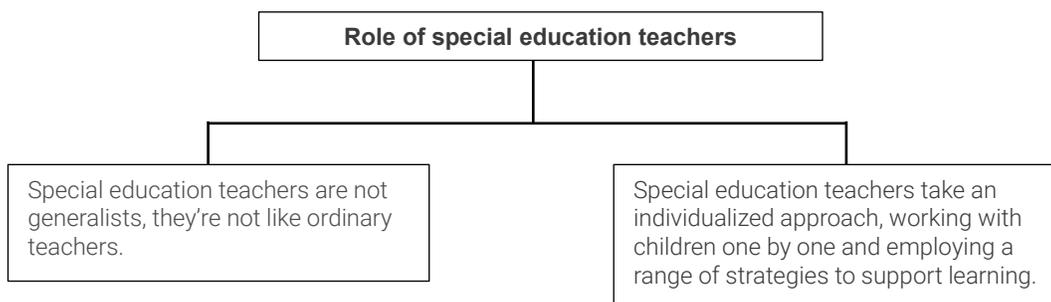
The results are presented in two sections. The first examines SRs of teacher identity and includes the subcategories Role of Special Education Teachers and Ontopolitical Meaning of Teacher Identity. The second section focuses on the sources of the construction of SRs of teacher identity, which are subdivided into Experiences of School, Memorable Teachers, and Experiences During Initial Teacher Education.



3.1 Social representations of teacher identity

The concept of teacher identity appears closely linked to the figure of the students, indicating that the identity of special education teachers can only be understood in relation to their students (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Role of Special Education Teachers subcategory



In this regard, Bárbara remarks:

The teacher's role is more tailored to each child. The teacher has to be more adaptive than in general education, where teachers cover the full course. So special education teachers work on a child-by-child basis, they don't focus on the group but on each child individually, considering what's best for them. A special education teacher plays a key role in the classroom because not all kids learn the same way and sometimes teachers forget that.

There is a clearly a strong ontopolitical component in teacher identity, with teacher identity in special education being deeply rooted in the political dimension of teaching practice (Figure 3). Mónica's opinion reaffirms this:

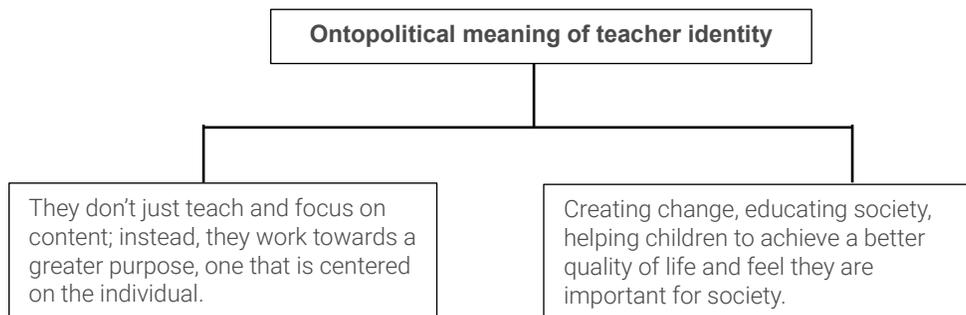
Creating change, because my understanding of this career was that it enabled an approach to teaching based on diversity and equality. And that was basically it. I said, "Right, I can create change here, that's what I'm going to do." That was it, at the beginning.

Similarly, Rocío says that the ontopolitical meaning of teaching work helps to maintain her sense of vocation:

You can't live your life hating the system. We're all aware of its flaws, but if you feed on that, your vocation will be gone by tomorrow. But if you devote yourself to changing lives, you can change the children's experiences. That's motivating.

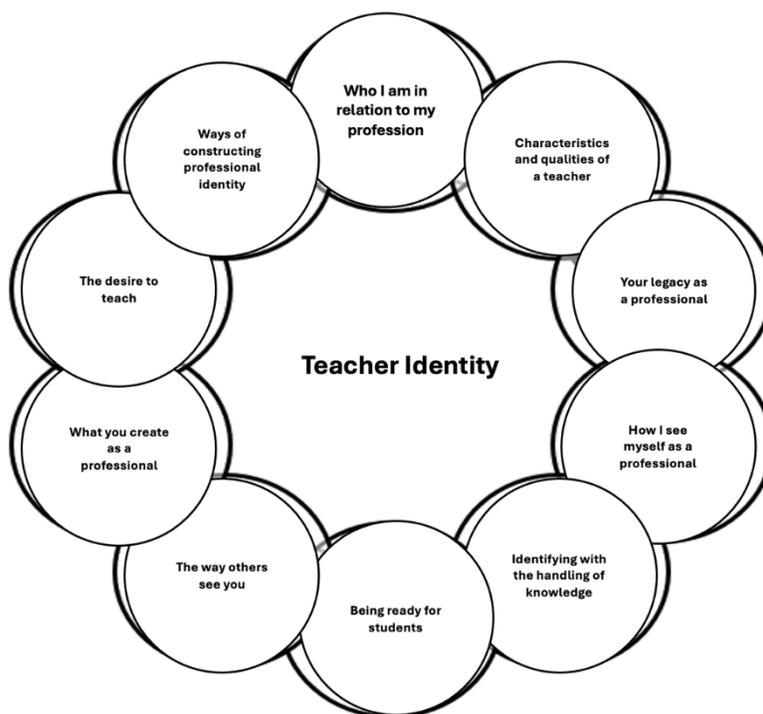


Figure 3. Ontopolitical Meaning of Teacher Identity subcategory



Teacher identity is defined as individual characteristics, qualities, personality traits, and forms of interaction in relation to the profession, which is associated with the motivation to teach in special education. Figure 4 shows the SRs of teacher identity in prospective special education teachers.

Figure 4. Social representations of teacher identity



SRs of teacher identity view the professional self as the way in which each individual builds an identity as a teacher through teaching practice, the characteristics they develop and their motivation to teach, which translates into the way in which a teacher is perceived professionally by others. In this sense, Paulina says:

It's about how I construct my identity as a teacher. It's about how my characteristics and qualities... how I construct my identity and deconstruct my identity, too, because it's a two-way process. I construct my identity, but there are also situations that are



deconstructing, and I have to reconstruct myself. So I believe it's that. Identity, for me, is how I see myself and how others see me in my role as a teacher.

At the same time, Franco stresses the role of the motivation to teach as a key pillar of identity:

I see it as a person, a teacher, feeling that they identify with the handling of knowledge and a desire to teach. With a desire to see people with a need that I can fulfill by teaching them. I think that's what teacher identity is: a desire to teach, to educate, to pass on the knowledge that one has gained over time.

3.2 Sources of construction of SRs of teacher identity

The narratives reveal various sources from which teacher identity is constructed. In particular, experiences of school, relationships with memorable teachers, and experiences during initial teacher education contribute to constructing social representations of teacher identity among special education teachers.

Experiences of school motivate the desire to teach and influence the kind of teacher that individuals aspire to become. Experiences in preschool and primary education are deeply entrenched in memory, but it is not until secondary school that a sense of vocation and the motivation to choose a teaching career emerge.

In school, continual interaction with different teachers provides a catalog of characteristics, behaviors, and styles of interaction for those who will later go into teaching. Similarly, taking on teaching roles during childhood and adolescence, whether inside or outside of school, helps to discover a desire to teach and the satisfaction that teaching brings (Figure 5). This is clear from Merry's experience:

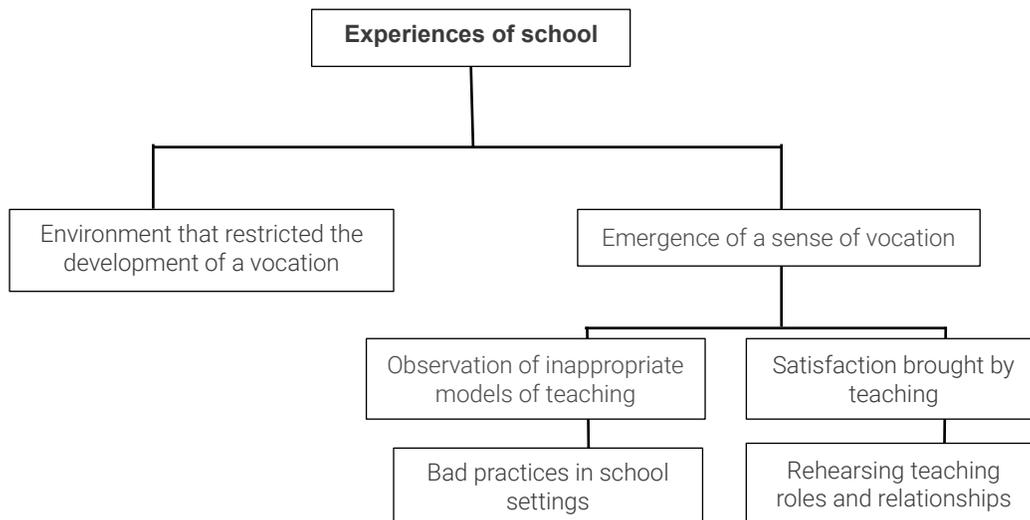
In my class there was a boy who had Asperger's and I always sat next to him, because I used to sit at the front, so they put me in charge of him because he listened to me, but not to the teachers. I always liked helping those who couldn't understand or had problems. That was when I began to realize I enjoyed teaching, but I still didn't know what exactly.

Similarly, Paulina says:

I think another important thing is that I go to church, and at church we have Bible classes and we teach the little kids. Getting involved from a young age and wanting to teach and become a Bible teacher, that also has a strong influence – and also, really, I was teaching before I wanted to become a special education teacher. So I think that was very significant.



Figure 5. Experiences of School subcategory



Mónica's testimony helps to understand how experiences in school and observing teaching models and the different ways schools operate form the basis for a more profound analysis of education and the teaching profession:

I went to a government-subsidized private school that belonged to a congregation of Franciscan sisters. It was somewhat conservative and within what little scope the teachers had, it wasn't like they had a particularly critical spirit or wanted to change things in the school. I felt it was a bit corrupt, with a heavy workload and many bad practices, perhaps... where they had a culture of sharing their opinions of students' lives and viewing them through a label. So I didn't like that and I felt things could be done differently.

Memorable teachers (see Figure 6) encompass a vast spectrum of relationships with teacher figures, ranging from family members who teach in different areas to college professors during initial teacher education. In this regard, Mónica recounts:

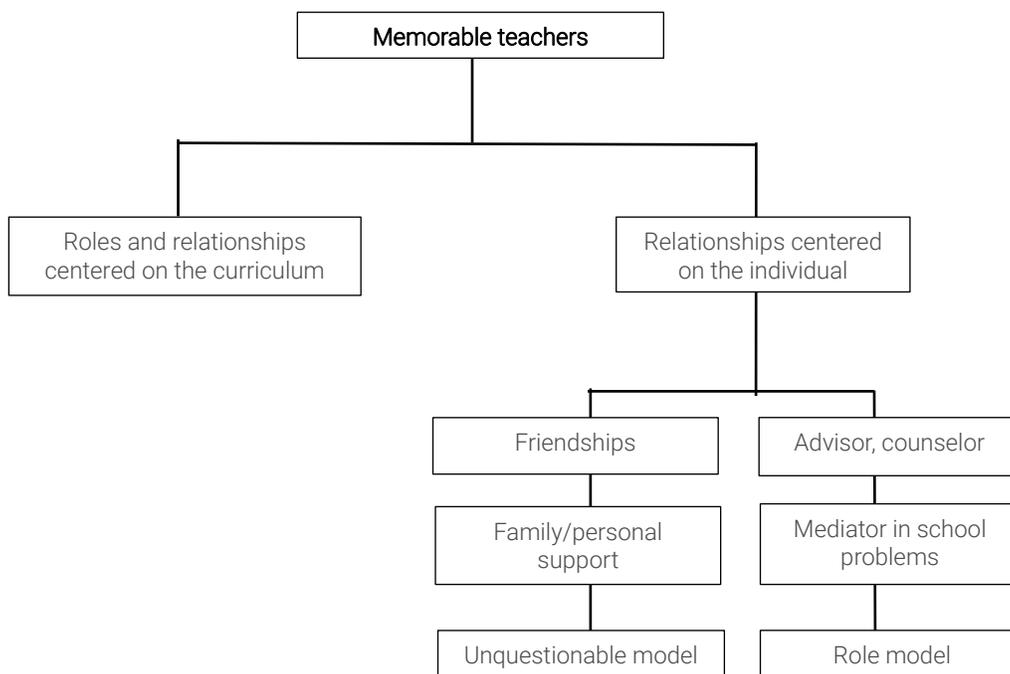
Yes, I remember I had a history teacher in eighth grade in basic education; we all have some kind of story with a history teacher. She took it upon herself to build a closer relationship with us as students, she chatted with us; the interactions in her classes were always more evenly balanced, it wasn't like, "I'm the teacher here and I'll be the one doing the talking." And we were the same, I mean, it was the time of the student movement, so we felt she listened to us, which was cool.

Meanwhile, Merry focuses on her initial teacher education experiences:

On this course, I've had different teachers, each with their own personality. We know some teachers are difficult, others are easier to talk to, and others are real sweethearts. But I always looked up to those who were labeled as difficult. It isn't that they are difficult, but they speak the truth, they say, "If you're late to work, you'll be fired, so you must get to class on time." And sometimes they were very strict in assessments, which is why the others called them "difficult." I think that was when I began to learn properly, with the "difficult" teachers, whom I loved because they taught me to always be in touch with the reality of school life.



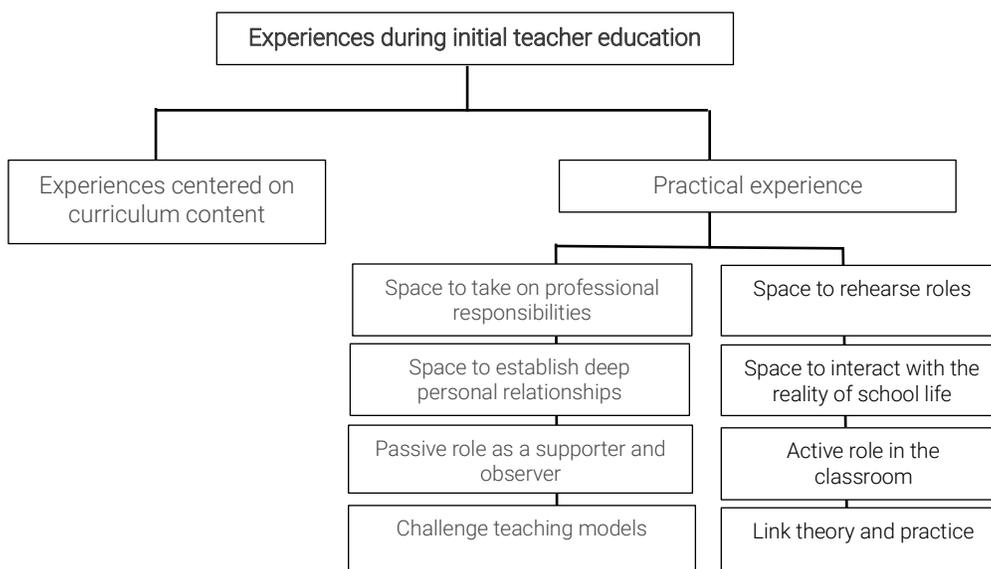
Figure 6. Memorable Teachers subcategory



3.3 Initial teacher education

Experiences during initial teacher education constitute a source for the development of SRs of teacher identity and the construction of one's own teacher identity. The narratives showed how practical experience plays a significant role in these processes at all levels. Experiences in initial teacher education make up the central axis of meaning (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Experiences During Initial Teacher Education subcategory





The importance of practicums is clear in Bárbara's testimony:

I learned a lot through my practicums: a lot about what I want to do as a teacher, and what I don't want to do or don't want to become as a teacher, because in the practicums you get to see everything.

Practical experience is useful to observe models of behavior and the ways in which professional relationships are formed. Mentor teachers are one external factor that can play a significant role in influencing how future teachers perceive their roles and what they are capable of achieving with the tools and opportunities available in their working environment. Similarly, future teachers' relationship with their mentor and the mentor's models of interaction have the potential to motivate them to continue with their teaching career and shape their perception of their own teaching abilities (Izadinia, 2018).

All these aspects make it all the more important to highlight experiences like the following:

In my practicums, I'd say that I've never been well received by teachers or by the school. But I feel that has helped me to learn as a teacher and know how to respond to critical situations that may arise, because there have been times during practicums that I have not known how to respond to a threat, abusive behavior, or simply being told you're a student teacher and no use at all.

Merry, on the other hand, says:

I always treat my practicums as if I were actually working, so seeing myself that way and in that frame of mind, I'd like to be one of those teachers whom students remember forever, and for them to say, "That teacher helped me to better myself."

The importance of opportunities for practice during initial teacher education is clear in the testimonies shared by participants. Teaching practicums bring out aspects both of teachers' own identities and of representations of teacher identity in special education. Rehearsing roles, relationships, and professional behavior facilitates awareness of teachers' professional self and helps to reaffirm their self-image and build a prospective teacher identity.

IV. Discussion and conclusions

This research aimed to explore SRs of teacher identity and their construction among future special education teachers, through a qualitative approach based on a narrative biographical method. Using a processual approach to SRs, this provided insight into the sources of construction of SRs of teacher identity, while also creating a prospective view of teacher identity.

The construction of a teacher identity is driven by educational trajectories, reaffirming the idea that teacher identities are developed as part of a dialogical, relational, and historical process (Rodríguez & Covarrubias-Papahui, 2021; Schellings et al., 2021). During this process, SRs are formed regarding special education teachers and their role. Social interaction in school settings results in the construction of an identity based on the appropriation of shared meanings, symbols, and behaviors, and ultimately, the construction of SRs that become part of one's own repertoire, thus achieving assimilation of social identity (Rodríguez & Covarrubias-Papahui, 2021). In this sense, the schooling process acts as a vehicle that mobilizes and transmits SRs through the curriculum (San Román et al., 2015).



Memorable teachers have been defined as those who provide good teaching, feel a calling to help others, and are dedicated and passionate. Memorability is determined based on a complex interweaving of the personal and professional spheres (Moscoso & Pesantez, 2022). Our results have demonstrated that, to a certain extent, memorable teachers have influenced how future special education teachers represent their profession and how they hope to practice it, even when they teach a different subject; memorable teachers provide a role model, a benchmark against which they can evaluate their own teaching performance. The testimonies clearly illustrate a desire to become memorable teachers who leave a lasting impression on their students' lives.

The role of special education teachers has been described as challenging and highly emotionally demanding, factors that contribute to high levels of stress and early attrition (Billingsley et al., 2020; Stark & Koslouski, 2021). Other studies have described effective special education teachers as those who take on an active role and provide explicit, systematic instruction, deploying diverse pedagogical methods to satisfy the needs of each student (Jones et al., 2022; Morris-Mathews et al., 2021). These characteristics are reflected in the SRs of teacher identity of prospective special education teachers and are consistent with other teachers' social representation of educational inclusion as an activity that requires specialized training. Teachers who lack this training may experience a high emotional burden, which is further strained by the implementation of inclusion policies where teachers act as key links (Gutiérrez & Martínez, 2020).

Notable is the ontopolitical component of teacher identity that is attributed to the role of special education teachers. This has been defined as the position taken in relation to others and teaching work, which means comparing the image others have of me with my own personal narrative as a certain type of teacher (Dugas, 2021). Special education teachers define themselves as different to others, citing their social commitment and specialized knowledge of teaching students with special educational needs (Palacios et al., 2019; Rostami et al., 2021). Peña et al. (2019) define teaching as "a complex, multidimensional, and subjective social activity that involves multiple practices in the teaching-learning process that go beyond the classroom and school setting" (p. 220). Indeed, the findings of this study point to a representation of an idealized teacher identity that transcends the school environment to influence students' lives. This may be explained by findings by Vecina-Merchante and San Román-Gago (2021), who identify a duality between the ideal and actual roles of teachers in teacher discourse, which oscillates between the professional and social expectations of teachers and what teachers actually do. Based on these authors' own classification, the role of special education teachers could be described as one of openness to life (*aperturismo vital*) (Vecina-Merchante & San Román-Gago, 2021), as these teachers believe their role goes beyond the academic sphere, seeking to generate changes that promote holistic student development. This idealized view of the profession may be eclipsed during the very first years of professional practice given the strain caused by the transition from college life to working life, which, added to the constant social demands made of teachers, may bring about a change in the way they represent their role and therefore also their identity as teachers (Vecina et al., 2017).

This research has highlighted the importance of examining the training process of special education teachers, with a focus on the development of their teacher identity across all dimensions. Emphasis is placed on the influence of SRs of their identity as teachers, which are shaped dynamically through social interaction in different SR contexts over the course of the teacher's life (Magaña, 2015). This study concurs that SRs affect teachers and their practice, as well as their relationship with students (San Román et al., 2015), thus becoming a roadmap for educational practice in times of constant change in the educational and social system (Vecina et al., 2017).



While these results are useful, consideration should be given to the limitations of this research, particularly with respect to the study of contextual and pedagogical factors that may contribute to the formation of SRs of teaching. Future research should consider including new sources of information and stakeholders, such as teacher education curricula, teacher trainer discourse, and the voices of students, in multivariate analyses that provide a better understanding of the process and structure of SRs surrounding special education teachers.

Translation: Joshua Parker

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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