Teacher Professional Development in Rural Colombia and Honduras: An Accompaniment Approach for Everyday Teacher Agency

by

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Abstract

This dissertation studies how an on-site mentoring approach to in-service teacher professional development called 'accompaniment' was used, in rural areas of Colombia and Honduras, to build teachers' sense of agency, linked to a locally relevant knowledge base. In multiple local sites in each country, the case study organizations implemented an innovative alternative education system known as the Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial (Tutorial Learning System or SAT in Spanish) or the related Preparation for Social Action (PSA) program. This qualitative research looked at how these organizations conceptualized and practiced teacher accompaniment in each setting, emphasizing the relationships between mentors and teachers, to understand whether and how these rural teachers developed a sense of agency regarding their teaching decisions. The study is based on over 100 interviews with teachers, mentors, and support or leadership staff in the Colombian and Honduran organizations, complemented by analysis of program documentation provided by the organizations. These case studies, whose data collection took place during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, also examine how the organizations' approaches to accompaniment responded and endured in the face of the escalated risks and uncertainty of this pandemic situation. This research provides insights into the value of a supportive relationship between teacher and mentor as part of teachers' professional development. It also shows the possibility of collective forms of teacher accompaniment mentorship. It also shows ways in which reflection, both individual and collective, can be encouraged through the use of accompaniment mentoring and tools (for example reflection notebooks) to assist teachers in thinking through ways to improve their teaching practices. The importance of supportive, teacher-centered and learning-driven environments, including elements of organizational culture, in fostering agency in rural teachers is also examined. Teacher accompaniment environments were explored in connection to the aims of the educational programs themselves, in particular their purpose of rural development and that students become "promoters of community well-being." This research contributes to the

understanding of reflective, formative mentoring (accompaniment) practices for paving the path of teacher professional development.

Key words: teacher professional development, reflection, agency, mentorship, teaching practices, Latin America, Colombia, Honduras, rural schools, international comparative education

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List of Terms (In Order of Appearance)

SAT – Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial (Tutorial Learning System)
PSA – Preparation for Social Action
FUNDAEC – Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanza de las Ciencias (Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences)
Bayan – Bayan Foundation
NYU – New York University
TIPPS – Teacher Instructional Practices and Processes System
UC Berkeley – University of California, Berkeley

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Chapter 1:
Introduction

Any educational process requires one or more knowledgeable individuals who can help others in their own paths of learning. This individual, [who is] well-respected in various cultures and in formal schooling settings, is known as a teacher. Teachers are responsible for the transmission of formal knowledge and skills as well as "ways of being" to succeeding generations. Any knowledge transmission process is embedded in a distinct educational system, each with aims and goals. Even though teachers are part of a system, they also have varying degrees of agency which they exercise in their every-day acts of teaching.

The teacher, as an agent embedded in an educational system, is the central figure in this dissertation, attending to their own long-term process of professional development. Teachers do not come to the profession as blank slates, and (as agents) are constantly interacting with the curriculum they teach and live. The need for teachers' agentic, locally relevant knowledge to be part of their training and learning, and understanding teachers' process of making pedagogical choices, are necessary considerations for any educational process of teacher development.

In the same way that teachers can be mentors to their students, they also need help and mentoring along their careers to learn about *how* to teach well. The "art of teaching" is difficult to transmit, and often challenging to describe as well. Yet, learning how to teach is essential to the teaching profession. Some elements of teaching can only be taught or seen in practice. For this reason, much teacher professional development scholarship and programming consider the teacher's school environment to be crucial. Scholars and educators have come up with different ways of working with teachers on site to support their professional learning. Unfortunately, many of these site-based teacher development efforts have been limited to pre-service practicum, supervision, and monitoring. These approaches often minimize, or do not consider, the importance of teachers' own agency and local knowledge in their learning processes.

This dissertation develops case studies of two educational organizations created by FUNDAEC, each working in rural regions of one Latin American country (Colombia or Honduras). Each case study presents and analyzes how a local organization has interpreted and implemented 'accompaniment' mentoring for teacher professional development, in and around their teaching contexts with students, to support teachers to improve their teaching while also nurturing their

sense of agency. These organizations use a particular educational curriculum developed for rural areas, the Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial (SAT) and its derivative, the Preparation for Social Action (PSA) program. The teacher mentoring approach under discussion in this thesis research is linked to this same curriculum. The research considers teacher agency, their knowledge base, their pedagogical choices, and the ways teacher educators (on-site mentors) interact with these elements of teachers' agency in comparable rural organizations. This inquiry into how mentors 'accompany' and help various teachers to learn how to teach the SAT (and PSA) curriculum can shed some light on ways in which teacher development processes can be reconceived and rendered significant for the improvement of teaching.

Problem and Rationale

To ensure their students' learning, teachers' content knowledge and teaching practice competencies are essential. For this reason, the ability of teachers to teach (in general as well as in context specific aspects) has been a fundamental question with which academics and practitioners continue to grapple. Despite the contemporary tendency to globalize, standardize and homogenize education practices across the globe, which can be readily noted in the proliferation of international large-scale assessments and their increasing relevance in policy decisions, localized and contextually relevant responses to teachers' needs continue to be important. This dissertation is situated within the multiple existing contexts in which teachers interact with students in rural areas of the Global South, focusing on a unique way in which teacher professional development is conceived and enacted in rural Latin America.

This dissertation approaches the question of teacher professional development in the context of rural Latin America through an exploration of key components of accompaniment (and other) teacher professional development: mentorship, reflection, and the types of relationships that can help teachers to develop and improve their teaching practices through their careers. Site-based in-service mentoring of practicing teachers is a mode of delivery for professional development that is extremely relevant in dispersed rural village settings.

To illustrate how educators and mentors go about improving teaching practices through localized on-site teacher professional development, this dissertation explores two particular educational programs which have been designed for the rural populations of Latin America. Two case studies showcase the system of "accompaniment" as examples of ways in which teachers can be supported

in geographically dispersed environments and in their classrooms. The two case studies are located in Colombia under the Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanza de las Ciencias (FUNDAEC) and in Honduras under the Bayan Foundation.

In the early 1970's FUNDAEC in Colombia began to develop an alternative secondary education system known as the Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial (SAT), tailored specifically for rural areas. The SAT program is organized around a set of textbooks covering locally-relevant subject matter grouped into four main categories: science, math, language and processes of community life. Groups of students, normally living in close proximity, study the textbooks with the help of a teacher (the heart of this dissertation research, called a *tutor* within the program). This teacher plays a crucial role in bridging the concepts and information found in the planned curriculum with their students lived (rural) realities, and in engaging the students in meaningful interactions with their communities through community-based research, service projects and regular interactions with community members. The SAT program received formal accreditation from the Colombian Ministry of Education as an alternative equivalent to a secondary education and was also adopted by other organizations in Latin America, receiving accreditation by those Ministries of Education as well. One such organization that adopted SAT was Bayan in Honduras. In 2006 FUNDAEC also developed its Preparation for Social Action (PSA) program which follows the same overall structure as SAT but is of shorter duration and does not lead to a high school diploma. In this dissertation I will look at how the PSA program is enacted in Colombia (FUNDAEC) and the SAT program in Honduras (Bayan). Both of these organization and programs are explained in depth in Chapter 4.

Under FUNDAEC's overarching conceptual framework (which finds expression in its multiple programs), the purpose of education is ultimately for the students both to transform themselves and to participate in the transformation of their communities (FUNDAEC, 2005b). The SAT and PSA programs aim to help students become "active agents of change", and students (and teachers) are considered and encouraged to be "promoters of community well-being" (FUNDAEC, 2006).

Given their strong sense of purpose and emphasis on agency in and through education, the programs conceptualize teachers as themselves agents of change, as they become both part of and leaders of their students' processes of change. This conception of educational purpose requires any

teacher professional development to consider and to try to foster the teachers' (as well as students') sense of agency.

This way of conceiving the aim of any educational process informs both the SAT and PSA programs, the two programs explored in this dissertation. In addition, the ways teachers are trained and mentored are influenced by this same purpose – agentic promotion of community well-being – as teachers are expected to enact their educational programs' aims – both as part of the system and as intermediaries between the programs and the students. It is the purpose of this thesis research to shed light on this accompaniment-based, on-site teacher-learning support.

Research Questions

In these two case studies of accompaniment-based teacher professional development, the main research question of this dissertation addresses teacher agency, while the two subquestions address accompaniment and the relationship between mentors and teachers.

1. How does site-based accompaniment mentoring encourage or discourage teacher agency, in each context, as perceived by the participants?

   a) What does accompaniment mean and entail in each context, and how does this compare (and contrast) with the way each organization functions?

   b) What is the nature of the relationships between mentors and teachers, and how did these relationships develop over time in each context?

These questions are analyzed within each of the two case studies and compared across cases.

Positionality

This work is influenced by my own position with regards to the case study organizations. I consider myself as a research practitioner – someone who sees the value of research as it is connected to what teachers do in classrooms with their students. Within the larger system of education, the relationship and space of classrooms allows for transformation to occur, for both students and teachers. I understand the purpose of education as social change, as it relates to grassroots social and economic development, to improve the communities and livelihoods of people, particularly in rural areas. Education is the center of social change, which I understand as being fundamentally

connected to social justice, anti-oppression, and equity. These concerns inform how education emerges and develops. Rather than understanding one equity concern as priority, such as gender, I see each contributing and influencing to how people live and interact with each other. All equity concerns are integral to each other and embedded within society – to focus on one diminishes the interconnectedness and complexity of equity issues.

I worked in FUNDAEC between 2007 and 2018 and know the different programs it has offered during that period. I particularly know both the SAT and PSA programs in depth and the curriculum as I have worked on a number of aspects of the program. Additionally, I have conducted several training sessions and know the process of teacher professional development in depth. This means that in addition to knowing the program I also know a few of the mentors and teachers directly, as well as members of the organization. However, given the number of years which had passed between my working in FUNDAEC, when the interviews were conducted and the percentage of teachers interviewed, I can state that while I knew all the staff members, and a handful of mentors I did not personally know any of the teachers who made up the bulk of the interviews.

In addition to my knowledge of the programs and their implementation, I have carried out research related to both SAT/PSA in the past (Karlberg & Correa, 2016; Correa & Murphy-Graham, 2019). My MA thesis (Correa, 2015) looked at student agency, motivation and social change in the PSA program in one department of Colombia. Through qualitative research in one region in Colombia, I found that that two elements in the program were key in fostering student agency: reflection and service activities. These in turn had impact on students' motivation to learn and to interact in their communities. Being able to act in their local communities became both an end goal and a catalyst for agency at the same time. Having identified some of the elements of the program (and curriculum) which impacted student agency, I was left with the question of the important role that teachers play in the program and their role in fostering student agency. It is not enough to think of the program in terms of its curricular elements, but key to the success (or failure) of educational endeavors for teachers. Hence, this lingering question about the central role teachers have led to my PhD inquiry into teacher agency and teacher professional development. Thus, I entered this PhD research aware that the role of the teacher could not be underestimated when looking at student motivation and agency.

My relationship with the organization implementing SAT in Honduras, called Bayan, is farther removed, as I have not worked with them directly in the past. However, having been part of the network of organizations which implement SAT and/or PSA, I have some working knowledge of how Bayan is structured and operates and know a few of their key staff members. Another limit in my interactions with Bayan for this dissertation as I used interview data that had been collected previously, accessed through a Data Transfer Agreement (see chapter 3).

My positionality, then, is that I am both internal and external to both organizations, to different degrees. I had some "insider" perspective which allowed me to frame the research questions, gain access to both organizations, and understand the contexts to which the programs responded in creating their teacher professional development. Yet, being internal also meant that my prior roles might have caused participants to feel guarded regarding what they wanted to share with me for this research, or even to feel evaluated. Having understood my insider/outsider positionality allowed me to try and navigate instances when these lines became blurred.

Another strength that contributed to my being able to carry out this research is the fact that I know the language (Spanish) and I am originally from Colombia. I was able to converse with teachers and mentors in their own language and could culturally relate to them. Knowing the structure of the organizations, and their teacher development processes, permitted me to delve into why and how the enacted mentoring relationships might or might not be useful for these rural teachers' professional development, including their sense of agency. Further, my knowledge of the curriculum and organizational aspects, as well as academic background and theory, allowed me to grapple deeply with the research questions in the context of these two ongoing educational programs.

Thesis organization

This dissertation is organized in three sections. The first (Chapters 1-4) contextualizes the research, the second (Chapters 5-7) focuses on the findings in each case study site, and the third (Chapter 8) discusses and concludes the research.

Chapter 2 is a review of the existing research literature on teacher professional development (TPD), with an emphasis on which aspects of said efforts seem to contribute to successful TPD efforts. This foundation is followed by a discussion of the three main concepts which frame this

dissertation: agency, mentorship, and reflection. Agency is explored as the expression of the teachers' ability to make decision about their teaching practices and looked at through an ecological model (Priestly et al., 2015)). Mentorship is the basis for the relationship between teachers and their mentors and reflection is the way in which mentors encourage teachers to think about their teaching practices and to improve these. The chapter concludes with synthesis of a framework for analysis based on these concepts.

Chapter 3 describes a qualitative interview method based on a series of over 100 interviews carried out with mentors and teachers in Colombia and Honduras. The chapter begins by situating the research in the arena of comparative education case studies after reviewing previous methodological choices which were made by others trying to answer similar research questions. It also describes what data was collected within each case study and how that that was carried out.

To further illuminate the context of the dissertation, Chapter 4 explores the context of rural education and the educational contexts of Colombia and Honduras a necessary background to understand both the international landscape of rural education and the specific needs and opportunities of rural education in the two study sites. This chapter also describes in depth the two programs being explored: the Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial (SAT) and the Preparation for Social Action (PSA), in their Honduran and Colombian organizational contexts.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 contain the core findings of my research. Chapter 5 focuses on answering two research questions: what accompaniment is, and the characteristics of the relationships between mentors and teachers, as understood and articulated by teachers and teacher development mentors. The findings demonstrate how intertwined these two questions were: *what* is being described with *how* it is being carried out. This chapter finds that accompaniment is described as a supportive system, where the mentor serves as a guide to the teachers and which helps them on their path of development as teachers. Closely linked to these ideas, Chapter 6 delves into the relationships between teachers and mentors in both sites. If finds many similarities in both case sites where trust and friendship are considered to be essential for accompaniment to take place. Trust is something which is built over time and trust between the mentor and teachers is both manifested and built through feedback mechanisms. The types of relationships are also compared to the more prevalent notion of supervision in the Honduras case and explored in the context of the organizational culture in Colombia. Lastly, Chapter 7 addresses the evidence for teachers' sense of agency, as it relates

to their process of professional development, in each case study site. These ideas are explored through three main areas: the educational environment in both sites understood broadly to include both the organizations and the curriculum; the use of reflection as a practical-evaluative mechanism that teachers use to make changes to their own actions; and how their understanding of the future (projective element) is expressed by the teachers in their own actions and in their actions through their student's.

Finally, Chapter 8 discusses all findings (across Chapters 5-7) in relation to the literature review, conceptual framework, and rural Latin American education context. All three research questions are revisited and potential avenues for further research are explored.

Chapter 2:
Finding Ways to Improve Teaching Practices in Rural Latin America: On-Site Mentorship

To answer my overarching questions of how an accompaniment approach to teacher professional development mentorship might encourage or discourage rural teachers' agency, I now turn my attention to the existing literature on teacher development, including pre-service and in service support. I argue that by looking at the process of teacher professional development more broadly, and considering it as a path of development for teachers, existing practices (such as practicum teaching) can be extended and be used at different stages and in various forms and variations. Hence, I begin my review by describing conceptions of teacher professional development and the different tools and mechanisms that have been found useful when trying to help teachers learn about teaching (moving from novice to experienced teachers) and how to improve their teaching practices.

After exploring the wider landscape of teacher professional development, I look more closely at what agency is, and what can potentially enhance or hinder its emergence. I also have chosen to look at two concepts which can be used to foster agency and explore characteristics of an accompaniment approach: mentorship and reflection. To these ends, I explore the wider literature of teacher development to tease out how teachers develop agency throughout the course of their careers through a comparative lens of the two countries key to this dissertation: Colombia and Honduras.

To situate the research in the context of the two case studies, I begin by addressing existing teaching practices in Latin America and some of the pressing issues teachers face in the Latin American context. This is followed by an examination of current practices in teacher education and supports for teacher development in pre-service and in-service teachers. For pre-service teachers, I focus on practicum and field visits intended to help student-teachers learn how to become teachers. For in-service teacher professional development, I look at literature exploring how practicing teachers continue to improve their teaching practices throughout their careers.

The chapter then looks at literature on three interrelated concepts which constitute cornerstones of the theoretical framework for analysis: agency, mentorship, and reflection. Agency – teachers' capability and confidence in their ability to make good decisions – is an important characteristic in professional development. Mentors and mentoring are types of support structure and relationship which can help teachers to improve their teaching practices through meaningful interactions. Reflection processes and prompts are both a tool that mentors may use to help teachers improve, and a way for teachers themselves to exercise their sense of agency through their own thought process and choices while teaching. I use these three concepts to guide a layered analysis of the data. They do not follow a linear nor a unidirectional path, but rather serve as both elements and benchmarks of what accompaniment could potentially offer teacher PD.

The Teacher and Teaching Practices

As one of the main actors in any education process, teachers have been an important subject of inquiry in education research. Within the broad topic of teachers and teaching, three framing areas are most relevant to this dissertation: teachers' identities; how teachers learn to teach; and how teachers' can improve their teaching practices (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013; Malewski & Phillion, 2009).

A useful starting point on the question of *what* teachers need to learn and *how* to help them learn about both *becoming* and continuing *being* teachers is to articulate the different types of knowledge that teachers require in their profession. Shulman (1987), based on his research in USA schools, theorizes various categories of teachers' knowledge which include: content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge (the connection between knowledge about a specific subject and how to teach it), knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts and aims. Presumably teachers enter their profession with different levels of each of these types of knowledge. Teacher education efforts (including pre-service and in-service professional development programming) take different approaches to these categories. Some may intend to help prepare teachers on all fronts, while others may emphasize fewer of these knowledge types. Shulman (1987) suggests focusing on teachers' understanding of subject matter content and what he termed "pedagogical content knowledge". This list is useful in analyzing teacher development endeavors in terms of what teacher development efforts might include or lack. However, Shulman's analysis of the different types of

knowledge teachers needs lacks a temporal aspect which shows how such categories are developed over time or through the different stages of teachers' development.

The issue of temporality gathers particular significance when consider teachers trajectory and development journey. A snapshot of teachers at a given moment in time (particular at the beginning or advanced stages of their career) look very different and while it can be easier to determine that a novice teacher needs to slowly become an experienced teacher, how to do that (how to get from point A to point B) is not yet understood. Much of what is known in the literature is about what makes a teacher experienced, what a good teacher looks like, or the areas that teachers need enhance. However, the question of movement across the spectrum continues to be elusive.

For example, in recent years there has been greater awareness that learners are heterogenous, and even more importantly, that diverse populations of learners have specific needs that teachers need to understand. The valuable work conducted by Ladson-Billings (1995, 2014) on *culturally relevant pedagogy* shows how students are greatly affected by their teachers' understandings of their backgrounds and cultures. Helping teachers improving their teaching practices through learning about and applying culturally relevant pedagogy (Will, 2022; McCready et al 2011) in an example of concrete things that teachers often lack and need to improve. The extension Ladson-Billings' work, primarily highlighting the experiences of Black and Brown children and teachers in urban centers of the United States, has found relevance in an increasingly globalized and multicultural world where teachers and students come from varied backgrounds, such as multicultural or multilingual education research (Gagné et al, 2017). This type of research, persuasively illustrate the need for teachers to understand and integrate student identities and contexts in their teaching practices. However, even in this example, considering the movement of teachers to learn how to be more culturally responsive, while acknowledging teachers own trajectories and an ever increasingly globalized and interconnected world would require further research.

In summary, there are two main questions which this section addresses: what teachers need to be effective teachers, and what teachers need to know about their students to be able to teach them in relevant ways. The first of these questions has benefited from the categorization of types of teacher learning and knowledge which was pioneered by Shulman (1987). Even though this categorization is not complete, it permits further research to look into each of these categories and for teacher

learning to be thought of in a holistic manner. Culturally relevant pedagogy, as introduced by Ladson-Billings (1995), brings to the forefront the unconscious biases that teachers might have when teaching, and how understanding the cultural context from which students come from, and being able to teach to that context.

In the following section I will introduce the notion of context further, this time as it relates to the context of the Global South and Latin American in particular. In this exploration, the context is only of the students, but of the wider issues teachers face in particular contextually bound circumstances.

Education and Teaching in the Latin American Context

While it is impossible to address all the teaching practices which are used in Latin America and this would only lead to generalizing an entire region's teaching practices, in very broad strokes I place the teaching literature in the Latin American context in the face of two large contributions that it has made to the world of teacher education and research. The first of these are the ideas presented by Paulo Freire and his theories about replacing banking education with student-centered problem-posing education that can lead to *conscientization* (Freire, 2020) and secondly those of Participatory Action Research espoused by Orland Fals Borda.

To begin, Freire's work highlights the importance of conscientization especially for learners who feel the effects of oppressive social systems. In the Latin American context, his work on literacy and anti-oppressive education, take on meaning on a region with a widespread a colonial legacy. That legacy has been evident in the ways in which teachers have been required to work in 'banking education systems and the tensions that arise when they are expected to share power with their students. While this analysis is quite brief, they are mentioned as they relate to teachers who contribute to social transformation in their communities and enact their sense of agency through the work they do with their students.

In Colombia, many of Freire's ideas were central in the work of Orlando Fals Borda who is credited as setting the scholarly and pedagogical foundations for what is now known as Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Lomeli & Rappaport, 2017). The value of PAR is the inclusion of the voice of other actions (in this case teachers) in research methodology. Even though PAR was not used as

the methodology in this dissertation the contributions of PAR to worldwide research methods is an example of how contextually bound research can contribute to and be used in global contexts.

Teaching and teacher development in Colombia and Honduras is marked by a shared colonial history, by social movements which have swept across the region at different moments in history (liberation theology, youth movements, the rise and fall of dictatorships, tensions between far-right and far-left groups, social unrest caused by social inequities which have led to the rise of organized guerilla groups and their opposed paramilitary counterparts, etc.), and with efforts to improve the quality and reach of education across the region. While Chapter Four will delve in depth into the specific contexts of Colombia and Honduras, and in particular the challenges and opportunities of teaching (and teaching practices) in a rural context, here I broadly introduce the teaching profession in these two countries.

*Colombi*a

The body of research literature on teachers and their opportunities and challenges in Colombia is vast. The field of teachers and teaching development has evolved over time to reflect the nation building efforts after its independence from colonial Spain, to industrialization, to contemporary concerns of internal migration, displacement, and violence. This section will overview the large trends in teaching and the teaching learning literature in Colombia from the early 1900s. This overview highlights the lack of literature which require attention to be drawn from urban centers and urban issues.

While a full overview of the evolution of teacher training programs, including pre and in service teacher development, is beyond the scope of this dissertation, the importance of education for the formation of national identity was expressed in an expansion of such a system and a greater demand for teachers. In the first half of the XX Century Colombia saw an increase of 1000% in the demand for "Escuela Normal Superior" (Superior Normal Schools), to train teachers in their last years of high school as teachers (Sandoval, 1986). These teachers were still in high school while learning to become teachers, demonstrating a need for teachers in general across the country (and as a response to the issue of coverage in an educational system). This increased demand led to the creation of pedagogical universities and bachelor's degrees in Education, as well as to a transition from a religious Catholic education to a more secular curriculum (Soto Arango et al, 2017), moving into more professionalized and standardized teacher education programs.

The emphasis on, and the rapid expansion of the coverage of education in the first part of the century (particularly in primary education), paved the way for new national conversations around the importance of the quality of education. This conversation opened the door to several innovations in education, primarily geared towards rural schooling in the late 1970's and 1980's. For example, Escuela Nueva, an innovative pedagogical model, was designed to ensure quality education in rural areas (and other marginalized sectors of society) and to reduce inequity and injustice (Luschei & Soto-Pena, 2019; Sarmiento & Colbert, 2017; Colbert et al, 2018; Forero-Pineda et al, 2006) at the primary level. Escuela Nueva was considered 'new' because of its flexible, student-centered multigrade classroom pedagogies. Another program, the Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial (SAT) (Arbab et al, 1988; Correa & Valcarcel, 1995; Perfetti et al, 2001), focused on secondary rural education. It was considered innovative both in its mode of delivery (decentralized, based on local teachers), as well as its curriculum which integrated different areas of knowledge (such as math, science, language, etc.) and spoke to the rural reality of the students (both in the content and its application). The need for SAT teachers to be fully equipped with relevant local knowledge to teach in rural areas led to the creation of the Centro de Bienestar Rural (University Center for Rural Well-Being), which offered a degree in rural education for pre-service teachers (Arbab, 1995). This rural university mainly trained individuals from rural communities who wanted to return to live and work in those communities as teachers. Both programs have addressed recurring challenges around scalability and accessing hard-to-reach communities (Colbert & Arboleda, 2016), which have led to great emphasis on the role of the teacher and the teacher's buy-in to the programs' objectives.

In more recent decades, less emphasis has been placed on rural and urban differences (and needs) for their own sake, but rather Colombian educators have tried to address the effects of displacement and migration on schools and teachers (Rodriguez et al, 2022; Vega & Bajaj, 2016). This has mean that the specific needs of rural or indigenous teachers, in their own context, for example, have (especially in recent decades) been overshadowed by issues of internal displacement, violence, and peace internally and by global trends such as exam-oriented standardization practices and neoliberal economic pressure. Questions of rural education for their own sake have become of secondary importance to how to teach these same populations (who have now been displaced) in urban settings. I will explore these ideas even further in Chapter Four.

The move to thinking about how to teach displaced, marginalized and vulnerable students in increasingly large urban centers has led, schools and teachers to increasingly introduce community-based pedagogies (Farrell, et al, 2017; Rincon-Gallardo & Elmore, 2012) and introduce programs which encourage citizenship education and *convivencia* in urban settings (Luschei, 2016). One such example, was a study which looked at how teachers were learning to bridge the cultural gaps between teachers and students in urban settings such as Bogotá where, teachers deal with an influx of domestic and international and migrants (Sharkey et al, 2016), echoing the need for a deeper understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy for teachers with little exposure to this reality of students' lives.

In the last decade, research and teaching practices have shifted yet again, taking into account a need for "peace education" after the signage of a peace agreement and one of the main insurgent groups (the FARC) in 2016. Research in this area has dealt with issues of the need to teach for peace (Morales & Gebre, 2021; Bickmore et al, 2017; Gomez-Suarez, 2017; Diazgranados et al, 2014; Nieto & Luna, 2013; Jaramillo & Mesa, 2009; Chaux et al, 2008; Chaux, 2007) as well as the development of curriculum for peace and training teachers in aspects of peace pedagogy (Nieto Sachica, 2022).

The response by teachers and researchers to the particular issues that schools have faced over the last century, as explored briefly in this section, has mirrored many of the social challenges which the country has faced and show the deep connection between public issues (and debates) and schooling. However, regardless of the intention to be responsive to student's needs, two main issues continue to exist: the importance of teaching for and to rural areas of the country for their own right (and not as a byproduct of urban policy); and the need to improve teacher training and development to improve student outcomes in general and not in a haphazard approach which jumps from one pressing issue to another. This dissertation aims at contributing to the generation of knowledge in both of those long-standing issues in the literature on teacher professional development in Colombia.

Honduras

In the Honduran context some of the pressing issues that teachers face today include assumed cultural and linguistic homogeneity, gendered inequity, violence, immigration and oppression.

Research which addresses some of those current issues have looked at how teachers navigated the country's reversion to a clientelist way of government bureaucracy during the post-coup period in Honduras (Levy, 2022; Levy, 2019). For teachers, this reversion has meant needing to learn how to navigate the whims of local politicians, act out a new identify as agents of the state, all while carrying out regular school functions.

Other research has focused on youth emigration out of Honduras along with increased school dropout rates, impacted school funding to the point of threatening the continuation of educational provision across different communities (Bellino & Gluckman, 2022). While in the global north the vision plastered on television screens was that of a "caravan of migrants" which was moving north from a number of Central American nations, the national impact of decimated rural school systems on youths' aspiration and the country's future workforce has yet to be fully understood.

The relationship between gender, education and agency is also very relevant in the Honduran context. Even though arguments have been made that equate agency with increased gender parity, the relationship is not a simple one. Gender norms and beliefs are not only an individual trait but are embedded in societal norms and standards. Hence assuming that increased agency will automatically lead to girl's empowerment reduces the effect that societal norms have on individual action. As a study in Malawi and Bangladesh showed that despite efforts to tackle gender parity in school's programs directed towards gender equality, gender norms mostly mirrored those dominant in the broader society (Chisamya et al, 2012). This underscores the connection between what happens in society and in schools. The interplay between gender, education and agency has also been studied in the Honduran context. One study carried out in Honduras looked at girls' exercise of agency in the face of child marriage pressures and the role of teachers and schools in helping girls to exercise said agency (Murphy-Graham & Leal, 2015). Another study, McCleary (2016), also showed how some youth in Honduras use their sense of agency to dismantle or resist traditional gender norms.

Other areas of research for education in Honduras have focused on different language or cultural groups, often historical in nature. Kleyn (2010) has tried to tease out local and regional differences among the multiple indigenous groups in the country. Some of this work resists the narrative of homogeneity and Spanish as the only language in Latin America and foregrounded the experiences and "cultural mismatch" of ethnic groups such as the Garifuna in Honduras (ibid). Pockets of

ethnic groups exist in most Latin American countries but are not often found in the most dominant literature. Each of these pockets have their own languages and questions around bilingual education (and the lack of teachers who are bilingual and bicultural). Including dimensions of indigeneity and bilingualism in the mainstream teacher training literature is often lacking and these themes are not part of the dominant conversation on teachers.

Need for Further Research

Improving teaching practices in rural Latin America can be linked to helping teachers develop different types of knowledge, including subject matter expertise, pedagogical capabilities as well as their knowledge of their students' backgrounds.

Even though across the region, each country has their own education system and ways to train teachers, there has been a push in and beyond the Latin American region to standardize and professionalize teaching standards (Boeskens et al, 2020; Sachs, 2003). Teachers in public-school systems are part of a national scaffolding system which may quantify and ostensibly measure their achievements (sometimes linked to their pay) (Britton & Propper, 2016). Despite the advances to teaching practices, the region is still lacking specific attention to the training and professional development support of teachers for rural areas. Rural areas have their own characteristics which include geographic constraints, distances between villages, multigrade classrooms, the questionable relevance of subject matters to people's livelihoods, and/or multiple languages being spoken in addition to Spanish. For the most part, teacher education innovation and scholarship has focused on teachers in urban centers and rural teachers have been left to adapt what they learn to their local realities.

The above brief review of literature on teachers and teaching in Colombia and Honduras gives a historical overview of the evolution of teachers and teaching (Colombia) and some key themes which are present in the existing literature (Honduras). Some of these themes included the interplay between educational coverage and quality of education; education in and for conflict (and post conflict zones); the professionalization of education; gender, agency and education; migration; and the political context, among others. A deeper review on rural education in each of these two countries is explored in Chapter Four complements this section. This dissertation research seeks to contribute to these themes aforementioned themes, while focusing on forwarding understanding

how rural teachers can continue their professional development through a site-based and locally relevant teacher professional development (mentoring) practice.

Supporting Teachers On-Site on Their Learning Paths

At the heart of this dissertation is the question of how to help teachers learn how to teach and how to improve their teaching practices. Given that teachers and students' come from diverse cultural settings and contexts, the answer to such questions are not devoid of context. Since the two cases in this study are situated in Latin America, it was necessary to first understand the existing questions in teacher development in that regional context. However, the research is not only interested in teachers and teaching in a broad manner, but it also explores the possibilities of *on-site* mentoring efforts (accompaniment) to help teachers to work with others in concrete ways to explore and address their own needs as teachers, regardless of their level of experience. To further understand why the response to training teachers in the Latin America was, in the two cases in this study, related to on-site mentoring it is necessary to initially explore the literature about on-site teacher follow up as well as the importance of teacher development.

A few key ideas are useful when thinking of the ways in which teachers learn. One such concept is that of an "apprenticeship of observation" first introduced by Lortie (1975) in the early 1970's which popularized the idea that teachers are heavily influenced by their own experience as students and often replicate in those experiences in their teaching practices. However, reducing teacher learning to observation is simplistic. Teachers do not enter their profession as blank slates; all teachers have had previous experience (good or bad) with teachers and educational systems before choosing that profession. Hence, learning to becoming teachers entails moving away from evolving from the "naïve notions" of what teaching looks like (Westrick & Morris, 2016), which teachers pick up informally thought their lives. While this might occur in other professions, the ubiquity of teaching is that all who enter the profession have certain preconceptions about what constitutes good or bad teaching, as they have all been students in their lives.

Therefore, having a strong knowledge of the self is important in teachers' learning. The "possible selves' theory," introduced by Markus and Nurius (1986), explores the notion that being aware of multiple possibilities of selves has been useful in becoming increasingly aware of previous educational experiences and think about who they want to be as future teachers. I argue that the

long-term transformational journey between learner and teacher requires self-awareness (achieved through reflection and experience) and mentorship (Hamman et al, 2013), or what Davis et al. (2023) refer to as "reflecting on becoming". A "future self" orientation to teacher development is important motivation directing a teacher's development path (Hamman et al, 2010).

To explore the ways in which teachers can improve, and how systems can be implemented to improve teaching practices across the board (and moving beyond distinct characteristics of exceptional teachers), this dissertation aims to understand the ways in which teachers can be helped to learn. I contend that such teaching/learning can best occur in practice and through experience.

To this end I first turn my attention to the literature about *on-site* efforts to help teachers learn both in practice and in experience. These on-site moments can be conceptualized as both spaces and moments in time where teachers are able to work with others in concrete ways to explore their own needs as teachers, regardless of their level of experience.

On-site teacher learning occurs during teacher training and while teachers are working. Pre-service or initial teacher education focuses on student-teachers (or new or novice teachers). The most relevant part of the initial teacher education literature for this dissertation research is the school-site-based practicum and field experience and the ways it may be supervised or mentored. In-service professional development focuses on experienced working teachers, usually in their school workplaces, who may or may not have previously received pre-service professional training. In this section I will explore both the follow-up pre-service teachers receive while they are starting out in their profession, and the life-long support they require as they continue to develop professionally. Each of these two categories of teacher education and development help to address the question of how teachers learn and improve their teaching practices.

Pre-Service Support

One core aspect of pre-service teacher education is student teaching, composed of practicums, internships, and fieldwork (Rakes et al, 2020). The value and impact of these immersive practical learning experiences for student-teachers has been vastly studied (Cooper & Nesmith, 2013; Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Britzman, 1991). Multiple studies have focused on the factors that have helped novice teachers benefit from their practicum experience. These factors have included the development of teacher identity (Rakes et al, 2020); in-the-moment feedback by the collaborating-

teacher (Gelfuso & Dennis, 2014; Sayeski & Paulsen, 2012); and the content and emotional support that student-teachers require (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Izadinia, 2015). Literature focusing on pre-service teacher support explores what a collaborative teaching environment means, and the various interventions, direction and feedback that are useful in relation to novice teachers' practicum experience.

In the North American context, there are three types of actors who actively participate in these practicum placements: the supervisor (usually from the University where the novice is being trained), the novice teacher (who is being trained), and the collaborating or mentor teacher (experienced teacher who oversees the classroom where the novice teacher practices their craft). While university or teachers' colleges may have different specific setups to work with novice teachers, these supervisory roles impact the relationship between the student teacher and the mentor teacher.

Highly functioning educational systems in Finland, Singapore, Japan, and Germany emphasize pedagogical training and content knowledge as a mechanism for attracting and retaining qualified teachers (Darling-Hamond, 2005). This has meant the expansion of practicum and field experience for teachers in the pre-service phase of their training. Some research focuses on the roles of each of these three types of actors (Valencia et al, 2009), while the relationship between the novice teacher and the collaborating teacher has been the focus of multiple studies. and is the specific relationship that is at the heart of this thesis research. As explored in previous sections, this argument begins with the that the ideas that teachers learn through observation (Lortie, 1975); that teachers require to understand multiple aspects of knowledge (Shulman, 1987) and in particular pedagogical content knowledge. I argue that on-site learning is an essential element for both observations to take place and for teacher to practice their teaching skills on-site under the guide of a more experienced teacher. Furthermore, the novice teachers on-site learning partly depends on the novice teachers experience during their practicum placement and, primarily on the type of mentor teacher.

There appears to be a consensus among multiple studies that what occurs inside the classroom, in terms of the relationship between the student-teacher and collaborating-teacher and in the feedback process, are essential for the student-teachers' learning process. It is not enough to simply put novice and experience teachers together and expect the novice teacher to automatically improve

their teaching practices. Beck and Kosnik (2002, 2014) found that Canadian student teachers said they wanted both a friendly environment and emotional support, which they felt was manifested in being treated as a peer by the collaborating mentor-teacher, including being given specific tasks and responsibilities to carry out in the (mentor's) classroom. The student-teachers in the study expressed a need for a balance between a given structure in which they can learn to be teachers and the freedom to try to teach and make mistakes along the way. Sayeski and Paulson (2012) additionally found that the practices which student teachers found useful from their collaborating mentor teachers included mutual engagement in advance planning (knowing what was going to happen in class); sharing of resources; constructive, specific, and multi-modal feedback; modeling effective teaching practices, and increased confidence when trusted and treated as an equal. In addition, Ferrier-Kerr (2009) found that student teachers and collaborating mentor teachers derived benefit from the practicum experience when it was viewed as a "reciprocal commitment to each other's development and professional learning" (p. 790). As the vast majority of the literature on both practicum and novice and mentor teacher relationships have been carried out in the North American context there is a need to understand such relationships in other contexts. This dissertation aims to fill the evident gap in recognizing the distinct environments where such teacher mentoring interaction takes place (rural Latin America) and the locally relevant knowledge that both the novice teacher and collaborating teacher bring to their interactions with one another and with their students.

Another important teacher learning dynamic is the use of reflection. Gelfuso and Dennis (2014) describe the reflection support structures that student teachers might need to improve their teaching practices. Gelfuso and Dennis (2014) explore types of artifacts that act as valuable tools for student teacher reflection, such as journals. Yet, this leads to additional questions around who could help these novice teachers in using such artifacts. For instance, journaling might depend on each collaborative teacher during a placement, or university programs could implement it. Furthermore, how could ideas for fostering reflection and reflective learning be applied not only to pre-service teachers but also to in-service teachers? While tools such as journals may be useful in most contexts, as they are feasible to implement, teachers would require specific knowledge or professional development to incorporate the tool into their reflexive learning process. Journaling also allows for the onus of the reflection to be done after the fact and with the hindsight of time.

Hence thinking of ways in which such tools would work in each specific context and introducing such initiatives in a system-wide approach would require further exploration.

The use of tools, such as reflection support structures can help teachers on what they did or happened in class but also about their own agency in such interactions. Additionally, higher levels of consciousness can help teachers avoid a series of "pitfalls" (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985). The first is a "familiarity pitfall," in which novice teachers may believe that because they are familiar with classroom experience (having been students) and assume that they already 'know' about teachers' work. Therefore, novice teachers may not approach situations with an open mind or realizing that they need to learn new things (about aspects of teaching that were invisible to them as students). Any teacher, regardless of their level of experience, has participated in some sort of educational process and, therefore, may approach teaching and the classroom, as a space that they already know about. This pitfall applies especially to novice teachers who might not have had a university education before becoming teachers, whose prior primary or secondary education experiences have given them preconceived notions of what a classroom should look like and what teachers are expected to do. Hence, novice teachers can easily assume they know what teaching entails. Second, Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1985) describe a "two-worlds pitfall," where novice teachers may be taught different things in their university-based classes than they experience in their school-based field experience practicum, without necessarily developing the skills to compare and connect the two. Even in situations where these two 'worlds' of university and school placement are not so distinct teachers may face a lack of support when they try to connect theoretical understandings (that they may be learning in university) to practice (how to enact and get ideas across to their own students). The third and last teacher learning pitfall described by Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1985) is what they call "cross-purposes." While the main purpose of classrooms is to teach students, it is a different, and perhaps undeveloped, than using classrooms to train teachers. Collaborating mentor teachers may not have the time, and in some cases the know-how, to simultaneously teach their own students while mentoring student-teachers. The person who plays the role of mentor, the more experienced teacher, is thus responsible for two distinct functions simultaneously: teaching their students and being a mentor to a novice teacher.

Even though these pitfalls were identified several decades ago, they continue to be relevant today given that the structures that surround them have not substantially changed. In other words, the

tendency to approach school teaching with an unwarranted assumption of familiarity continues, since prospective teachers have been students themselves, in classrooms that are primarily set up to teach students rather than for teacher education. The 'two-worlds pitfall,' in contrast, could depend on the type of education novice teachers are receiving, the support structures that their universities (or training institutes) have set up for practice and follow-up. Additionally, this pitfall may be more relevant in contexts where teachers are being educated in universities. This dissertation will provide a way to explore different ways in which teachers can be educated and supported outside the traditional university setting, placing an emphasis on on-site learning and avoiding the cross-purposes pitfall (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985).

While practicum placements are part of how novice teachers are enabled to learn about both becoming teachers and improving (or trying out) their teaching practices, these are situated in the broader structure of how teachers are trained in certain contexts. These principles about what occurs in the classroom between a novice teacher and an experienced teacher can be applied (cautiously) to other contexts. What is most relevant for this dissertation is to investigate organizational exemplars in which 1) teachers learn in action, on site in the context of work with students, and 2) they learn with the support and in conjunction with a more experienced teacher-mentor by their side. How that teacher action is organized, and the characteristics of that support, could potentially make a difference in the quality of the learning experience that novice teachers receive. This dissertation explores the nuances of how such 'in the field' experiences were structured in two sets of rural Latin American contexts, and how the relationship between the teachers and their mentors seemed to contribute to or to hinder teachers' development of agency in and around their teaching practices.

In-service Support and Teacher Professional Development

Once teachers begin working, the learning support they receive is mostly called professional development. A working definition of teacher professional development (TPD) from Avalos (2011) is "teachers learning, learning how to learn, and transferring their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students' growth" (p. 10). Teacher professional development, then, is the supporting environment and structures that support or hinder teachers continued learning in their profession and how teachers apply those learnings to their teaching practices for the benefit of their students. There is a distinction between TPD and teacher training – the two are not synonymous.

TPD can be understood as a wider process of professional growth, while teacher training can be useful tools in helping teachers learn. Training emphasizes short term and immediate goals, whereas development is focuses on general growth of a professional, rather than on a specific job (Castro Garces & Martinez Granada, 2016). Trainings, then, are usually self-contained spaces that have a clear beginning and end, while TPD is broader and has more diffused boundaries. An even more holistic approach is Linda Hammond Darling's (2010, 2017a) work defining teacher development is as a system. Darling-Hamond (2010, 2017a) defines teacher development systems as a range of policies, recruitment of qualified individuals, professional development, evaluation, career development, and retention over time. At the heart of this system is an empowered teacher with the ability to make autonomous decisions about their teaching practices (Darling-Hammond et al, 2017). Given that TPD can be the lifelong process of teachers learning, some examples of what researchers have studied include how and why teachers learn (Butler et al. 2004); when teacher development begins (Bautista & Ortega-Ruiz, 2015); how experience plays a role in how a teacher learns (Postholm, 2012); and the difference between teachers' learning during pre-service versus during the rest of their career (Wermke, 2011).

In addition to these broader questions, some literature has focused on the qualities that teachers themselves possess and how their own personal and professional characteristics affect their learning. For example, based on a review of ten years of publications on the subject of teacher professional development, Avalos (2011) argues that the cumulative research indicates that teaching and TPD require cognitive and emotional involvement, a capacity and willingness to examine one's convictions, beliefs and biases, and being able open to finding alternatives for improvement and change and making the effort to bring those changes into the teaching practice (Avalos, 2011). These key elements she identifies through the literature can help define the qualities and characteristics that teachers need to have for their own development. In other words, even though these characteristics of a teacher can be taught and cultivated, they are also intrinsic to teachers and, therefore, their own agentic self plays a crucial role in their path of development. Additionally, individual teachers can react differently to the same TPD, and for some, TPD spaces can be emotionally challenging, which could be one of the factors influencing those teachers' acceptance or rejection of new teaching methods (Scott & Sutton, 2009; Thomson & Turner, 2019). If teachers might feel that their professional identity is being questioned by TPD mentors or that they are being told that they have not been teaching properly, this too could affect those

teachers' attitudes toward the professional development. Furthermore, teacher particularities can also be manifested in teachers' openness to participate in a TPD process and to change the ways they teach might be motivated by their desire to advance in their careers. Both intrinsic and extrinsic incentives for participating in TPD could impact teachers' willingness to take part and ultimately to apply what they had studied to their teaching practice (Avidov-Ungar, 2016)

The above examples illustrate why teacher professional development is a complex endeavor. Rather than prescriptive in nature, TPD need to consider individual teacher characteristics and be more tailored to the particular stages, teachers might find themselves at. Teachers, as agents, have considerable say in specific contexts in what they choose to listen to and to incorporate long term in their teaching practice. Professional development, then, is not unidirectional and not a strictly-defined series of steps that would always work in the same manner in different school contexts, community contexts, or among various individual teachers.

In addition to various aspects of their geographic and institutional contexts, teachers also have a moral compass which may guide their work and their sense of fulfillment in their profession. The PD teachers receive is connected to both moral purpose and job satisfaction. Hargraves (1998) explored how "the emotions of teaching, their nature and form, are also shaped by the moral purposes of those who teach, and the extent to which the conditions of teachers' work permit them to fulfill those purposes" (p. 323). I argue in this dissertation that are not blank slates as they enter the profession (or the classroom). Instead, how teachers understand their moral purposes, as an extension of their life experiences both in and out of the classroom, impacts what they take away from professional development experiences.

Teachers' professional development is frequently influenced by *pedagogical solitude* (Hargreaves, 2000) of teaching and how the isolation of teaching interacts with a teachers' innate characteristics. Since teaching often occurs behind "closed doors", teachers may feel isolated or alone in their practice (Bills, Giles & Rogers, 2016). In addition to the solitary nature of teachers' work, Ghousseini et al. (2022,) borrowing the notion of the "fourth wall" from theater, describe the performative nature of teaching. Teachers do not necessarily know what is happening in other classrooms – how, for example, other teachers are explaining a certain concept or engaging their students more generally. This feeling of isolation can make it difficult for teachers to continue to advance and learn, other than through their own ability to learn from their personal experiences.

While this solitude presumably is more present in certain contexts compared to others, in mainstream Western schooling, for the most part, the teacher is often alone with a group of students. Teacher isolation in the PSA program in Colombia and the SAT program in Honduras is multifaceted as teachers are in the classroom by themselves but are, arguably, embedded in an accompaniment structure which helps address such isolation. I will explore the structure, which affects teachers' sense of isolation, of both programs more in Chapter 4. Furthermore, this idea of isolation opens an avenue of research to understand how the ability to reflect (given the perceived aims of TPD and the teachers' own characteristics) is affected given the inherent isolation in the teaching profession.

Another aspect to consider when looking at TPD is the role of context. After a review of four countries (Australia, Singapore, Finland, and Hong Kong) with recent TPD reforms, Bautista and Ortega-Ruiz (2015) conclude that "to be successful, professional development must be seen as a process, not an event, and it needs to provide teachers with specific, concrete and practical ideas that directly relate to the day-to-day operation of their classrooms" (p. 245). They argue that TPD needs to be understood situationally, contextually, and ecologically, including micro and meso realms. In contrast to most existing literature that has only focused on macro factors, micro factors connect the teachers' own abilities, the specific need (type of learning) that teachers might have, and their specific context. I argue, however, that Bautista and Ortega-Ruiz' (2015) argument is limited due to the focus on Western and highly industrialized settings. Understanding what aspects of their findings can be applied universally versus what might work in well-established education systems would require further inquiry. Teacher's contexts – the location (urban v. rural), community, and educational systems – impacts both the type of TPD and the significance teachers import to any development they receive.

Hence, contextualizing TPD in their reality means understanding the types of realities teachers face in their day to day lives as people and as professionals. For example, rural schools usually have a smaller population and limited breadth of programming in comparison to urban schools (Forero-Pineda, et al, 2006). Without enough children of a given age to make up a full class, multi-grade classrooms are a common occurrence (Forero-Pineda, et al, 2006). Rural schools are often important community institutions, given rural areas tend to have a lower density of public institutions as urban areas (Forero-Pineda, et al, 2006). The political system and cultural values in a teacher's community is another important factor. In post-Soviet Union Tajikistan and

Kyrgyzstan, Shamatov and Niyozov (2006) show how teachers' perceptions of their profession status, the moral values placed on the teaching "trade" as a profession, and the economic hardships teachers face are influenced by a changing social environment. form of teacher support would have to consider the political system, cultural values, and the transitions societies might be going through. Large cultural, political, and economic shifts in the context that teachers teach in have significant impacts on multiple areas of teachers' lives. How a teacher embodies their position as a community member as well as a member of the overall social fabric of the place the school exists within, shows that the professional and the personal cannot be separate when it comes to successful teacher development.

Possibilities for TPD

Even though, in the literature in general and in this section in particular, teachers' educational journey has been divided into pre-service and in-service, these categories reflect the break between teacher education and introduction into the teaching profession, rather than end point to their learning needs as teachers. To think of these two categories as entirely separate limits the potential possibilities of teacher support and professional development throughout their careers. The distinction between pre- and in-service is important and necessary for both research and practical reasons (accreditation, further professional degrees, etc.); however, viewing teachers' trajectory and development more broadly allows elements and lessons from practicum placements to be considered in further teacher PD. Specifically, notions of on-site mentorship and a collaborative and mentoring relationship between more experienced and novice teachers can be used throughout a teachers career to continuously improve their teaching practices.

The literature reviewed points to some specific and important lessons about how practicum placements can help or hinder on-site learning experiences. For example, understanding that a supporting relationship between a novice teacher and collaborating-teaching requires certain qualities such as respect and openness are important to acknowledge. In addition, novice teachers value open communication with their collaborating-teacher which includes both general and specific feedback. Novice teachers also appreciate a flexible and balanced approach which allows them to know the structure of the class, when and how to come in (teach), and the space to experience and try to teach and even make mistakes in the classroom. In short, to practice teaching. In addition to this practice, there are several pitfalls in which novice teachers (and their

collaborating-teachers) might easily fall into as well. Chief among these is using the classroom space (and the teachers time) to both teach their students as well as the novice teacher, places two simultaneous responsibilities on the teachers' shoulders which might not allow for a successful practicum experience for student teachers? Further research on ways around how helping novice teachers carry out reflection (and learn how to so) as a way to avoid such pitfalls, is warranted.

Furthermore, some of the TPD literature reviewed points to the fact that, certain aspects of TPD need to be taken into account for it to be useful to teachers. Thought needs to go into the emotions teachers might associate with TPD, including if teachers feel judged or evaluated, if they feel overwhelmed, how open they are to change, and their posture to their own growth. The usefulness of TPD can be impacted by teacher's feelings and it is something to be cognizant about. In addition to teachers' feelings, it is also important to consider the context of any TPD to understand both the practical and cultural implications. This dissertation, then, seeks to analyze how lessons and limitations of pre-service practicum literature could potentially be used to address specific concerns of in-service TPD. I take this up in Chapters Five, Six and Seven by exploring the process of accompaniment.

The connections between these notions are illustrated in the figure below:

Figure 1: *Accompaniment and the Path of Professional Development*
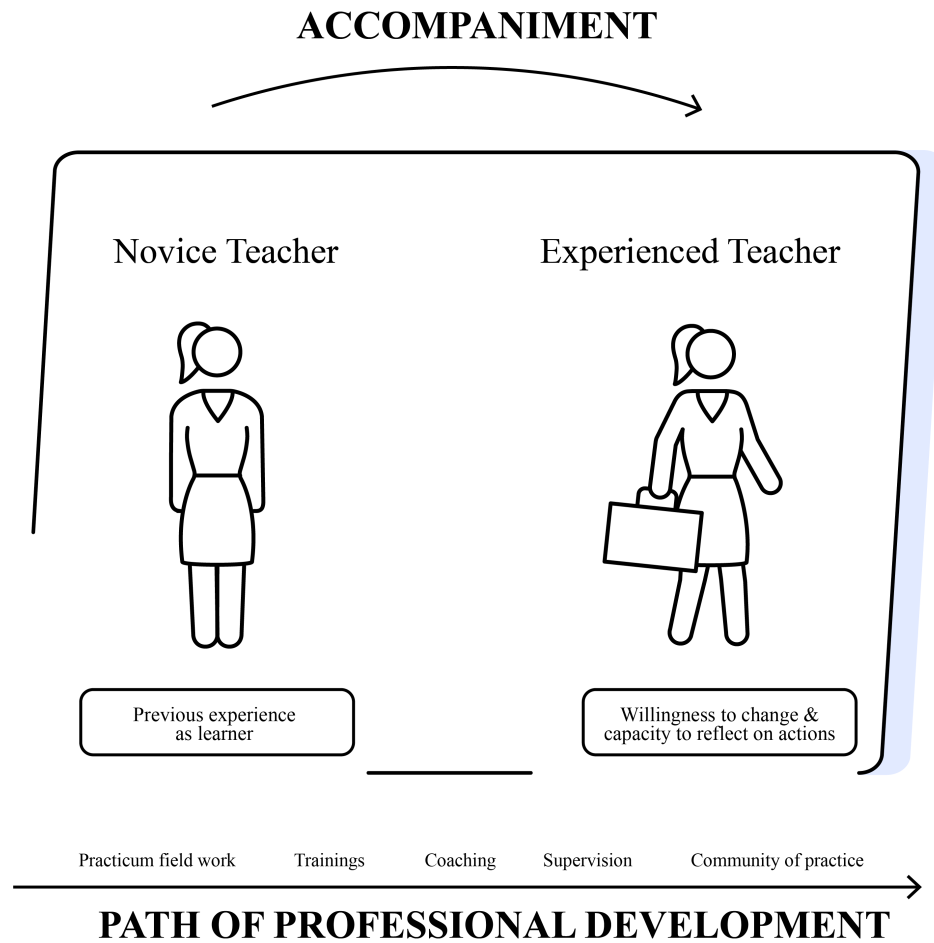
The path of professional development has been explored in the literature in different lights: practicum, trainings, coaching, supervision and communities of practice. All of these potential aspects which impact said path of development help a teacher advance from the novice to experienced teacher stage and also depends on a number of internal factors and willingness to change and learning intrinsic to each teacher. I am not arguing that these necessarily follow a sequential order, but rather that they are examples of types of strategies used in teacher PD. Any of these strategies (and any combination of them) can be used to help teachers advance on that path. What this dissertation sets out to explore is whether an accompaniment approach can also be an alternative manner in which teachers can be helped on their path of development.

Teachers' Sense of Agency

Teachers' feelings and previous life experiences play a crucial role on their professional development path. Teachers' identity, how they learn, and their relationship with others also interact with formal (and non-formal) efforts of TPD. Given the active interaction between teachers and any program designed to help them improve their teaching practices, I argue that it is necessary to understand teachers' sense of agency. Teachers have their own sense of self and are making small and large autonomous decisions in their daily teaching practice. They sometimes have time to think about those decisions, and sometimes those decisions are made almost automatically. Experience and reflection both play a role in how teachers make decisions and how quickly they reach conclusions or take action. Accompaniment, the way of working with teachers to help them improve their teaching practices, can be understood as a way to help teachers develop their own autonomous self, and therefore, their sense of agency. Therefore, accompaniment can be framed in the its role for the development of teachers' agency. Furthermore, in this context fostering agency is understood as helping teachers acquire skills to teach better and more importantly, to inform their choices in their daily practice, needs to be a cornerstone of this dissertation.

While the importance of augmenting teachers' sense of agency is true in all contexts, it takes on particular meaning for teachers in rural areas, whose contributions are often times overlooked or diminished. Rural teachers have a rich tapestry of knowledge gleaned from their own experiences in their communities and their understanding of their students' lives. Asking rural teachers to conform to standards or approaches to teacher PD created for other parts of the world diminishes the work rural teachers do. The challenge of rural teacher PD, then, is to support teacher development without squelching teacher agency. Teachers are constantly making important decisions such as how to teach a lesson, how to explain a certain idea, how to deal with students, how to teach to a heterogenous group, how to maintain a group motivated or how to evaluate if students are understanding. Some of these decisions are made before a class begins (and are sometimes outside of the teacher's control) and are part of a larger school wide policy, curriculum, or educational system. In their day-to-day practice, teachers have to interact with a wider system and set of decisions that have been provided for them in the context of their own classroom. Their agency comes into play when they make independent and well-informed decisions by acting on their previous knowledge with a clear, defined purpose for the future. When teachers do not have agency, and even worse when it has been forcefully taken from them, they do not have the ability to make decisions about their own teaching practices. Teachers' can simply follow the motions

and not respond to the actual needs of students at a moment in time. Part of the role of the teacher is to be able to adapt and respond to how and when to explain certain ideas and concepts to students. Teacher agency allows them to adapt and respond on their own and based on their experience, without being dependent on others. Lack of agency can potentially lead to disempowered teachers. Hence, the question of how TPD can help *foster* agency in teachers is a crucial one.

Research on the intersection between agency and education examines multiple parts of the educational spectrum. Some efforts have studied the intersection between educational programs and students' agency (Correa & Murphy-Graham, 2019). Other scholars have theorized the need for programs to acknowledge teacher's agency by enabling their increased participation in decision making processes – a concrete way of integrating teachers' local knowledge and expertise into the educational process (Ravitch et al., 2017). In practical terms, Cardenas' (2017) study in Mexico, shows how democratic citizen education (including training for teachers) can help improve teachers' teaching practices by fostering both students' and teachers' sense of agency in the teachers. Both students' and teachers' sense of agency are important for fostering long term social change (Robinson-Pant, 2023). Even though this dissertation does not focus on student agency, the close relationship between teachers and students assumes that teacher agency, as it relates to improved teaching practices, would have a direct impact on student's learning (and potentially their agency as well).

Another line of scholarship examines the importance of contextualizing youths' agency in relation to their circumstances (Bajaj, 2009). DeJaeghere et al. (2016) examined education for agency among youth in formal and non-formal educational settings. They argue that non-formal education generally offers more leeway and space (compared to most formal education) for critical reflection which allows for new alternatives of social practices to be explored. DeJaeghere (2018) also found that in rural Tanzania girls' aspirations and agency increased when given a chance at (formal) secondary education. Aspirations being understood as being oriented towards the persons future well-being and agency as socially situated habitus also oriented towards the future. The dialectic relationship between these two notions, DeJaeghere (2018) argues, can both be informed and also contradictory (or against) cultural norms. The interplay between social norms, context and agency is, then, an area of potential future research.

In Chapter 4 I explore contextualization in both the Colombian and Honduran context, and in both formal and non-formal education examples, such as the SAT and PSA programs. In addition, these examples seem to indicate that fostering student agency is an important aspect of some education endeavors, and that expanding such agency also requires a parallel expansion in the teachers' own agency as well. Given the centrality the notion of agency to this thesis, next section explores the evolution of the concept of agency and its centrality to rural education.

Theoretical Conceptions of Agency

 In their definition of agency, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) move away from earlier conceptions and

> begin to reconceptualize agency as a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment) (p. 963)

The authors define a "chordal triad of agency" which is made up of three different elements: an iterational element, a projective element, and a practical-evaluative element. For Emirbayer and Mische (1998), the three elements which make up agency each have a key role to play, independently and in relation to each other. In addition, Emirbayer and Mische contribute to the conceptualization of agency through their categorization of the self, meaning the person who is engaged in developing and exercising said agency. They view the self "not as a metaphysical substance or entity… but rather as a dialogical structure, itself thoroughly relational" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 974). This conception of self as dialogic and relational is particularly relevant to the relational aspects of teacher professional development, a key element in the analytical framework for this dissertation (see Chapter Seven).

Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) theorization is the basis for the ecological conception of agency (Priestly et al., 2015). Mark Priestly, Gert Biesta, and Sarah Robinson argue that if agency (in general) can be described as vague, teacher agency has even less specificity. It requires further theoretical elaboration and empirical research. For Priestly et al. (2015), teachers' agency has most commonly been described either as a variable, as a capacity, or as a phenomenon – each of which limits the exploration of the concept. As an alternative, they propose what they call an "ecological

conception of agency: here, agency is more than an innate capacity or characteristic of a given individual, but rather it is an emergent phenomenon in a context" (Priestly et al, 2015, p. 19). Agency is achieved "through the interplay of personal capacities and the resources, affordances and constraints of the environment by means of which individuals act" (Priestly et al., 2015p. 19). This conception helps the theory of agency move beyond individual characteristics (for example, some people have agency, others do not), and focuses attention on the interaction between said individual and their environment (both positive and constraining).

In this conception, termed *ecological* because of its emphasis on the interaction of individuals with their social environments, agency is an emergent phenomenon, which arises through the (ecological) conditions in which and through which it is enacted. Agency, then, can emerge through its exercise and use contexts. This ecological understanding of agency shifts the focus to the quality of individuals' engagement with their environment. In turn, this explains how an individual can show agency to overcome their social constraints, but also may not always be able to overcome their social constraints, thus, to display agency. This demonstrates how a person's display of agency is dependent on interactions with the environment. Furthermore, this conception of agency also differentiates agency from action, and argues that agency implies intentionality and therefore choice. Thus, intentionality, the exercise of will within environmental constraints, is a key element in the enactment of agency.

While individual action is relevant to agency, Priestly et al argue that understanding agency as a finite individual trait is individualistic and implies people either have (possess) agency or do not have agency, or that some people might be more capable of agency than others. As an alternative, Priestly et al propose that agency be understood as emerging from the interaction of an individual's 'capacity' with the environmental 'conditions' that surround all individuals. In other words, individual traits and capabilities interact with and come up against environmental conditions.

Priestly et al. (2015) suggest that agency is both relational, "how humans operate by means of their social and material environments" and temporal, "as agency is rooted in past experiences, oriented to the future and located in the contingencies of the present" (p. 20). In a category of agency they call practical-evaluative, Priestly et al. (2015) incorporate cultural, structural, and material aspects of agency with relational and temporal dimensions. Figure 1 summarizes how

iterational and projective elements impact practical-evaluative conceptions of agency into an ecological model of agency.

The *iterational* dimension includes personal capacity (skills and knowledge) and professional and personal beliefs and values. The *projective* dimension refers to the aspirations (and fears) teachers might hold for the short- and long-term future. These aspirations are rooted in teachers' prior experience and may include interests in students' well-being or learning, keeping order in the classroom, and progression in the teaching profession. The movement between the iterational and projective dimensions illustrates temporality, and the interaction between and the practical-evaluative dimension (as expressed by the arrows pointing towards the middle of the diagram) express the relational aspect. In addition, in their model, the *practical-evaluative* dimensions of the teachers' work refer to the daily environment where teachers find themselves and the daily decisions they make. These decisions don't always afford teachers the time to think about what they are doing or to talk with a colleague. Examples include conflicting or contradictory pressures that teachers might find in their work and the types of relationships that teachers find in their schools.

Therefore, we can ask whether fostering teacher agency help bridge the gap between the individual needs of teachers when engaging in TPD and the current models of TPD? Teachers regularly exercise their agency in their daily classroom practices and pedagogical choices. Are there possibilities for mentoring relationships to support TPD that builds from these daily teacher practices? In the next section, I explore the centrality of using mentoring relationships that elicit reflection in such an exploration.

Coaching and mentorship

The literature on practicums and teacher PD reviewed above highlights the importance of a supportive relationship between the student-teacher and collaborating (mentor) teacher. To try and understand the type of relationship, which is conducive to teacher learning and development, the literature points towards two overlapping roles: coaches and mentors. Given the centrality of the relationship between the novice teacher and the experienced person who is helping them improve their teaching practices, this section will explore research on both coaching and mentoring relationships, as a basis for analysis in future chapters of the relationships between teachers within the PSA and SAT programs and their mentors.

While coaches have been a staple in areas of endeavor such as sports, the last decades have seen a proliferation of coaching in diverse fields. Coaches can be found in the business world (Kurz, et al., 2017), and in the field of personal and professional development, where "life coaches" help individuals make decisions about their lives. It is not surprising, then, that coaching has also found its way into the educational sphere. Coaches are juxtaposed with traditional teaching supervision. Given that supervisory visits to classrooms can often be hierarchical, punitive, and evaluative, often eroding (rather than supporting) teacher confidence, coaching is an alternative to traditional models of teacher follow up (Bradford & Braaten, 2018; Shaked, 2018). Coaching is a response to hierarchical and punitive difficulties in teacher supervision, by emphasizing relatively horizontal relationships between teachers and mentors (Teemant et al., 2011). Even though there are examples where useful and accurate feedback from by a credible evaluator can be useful for professional growth (Cherasaro et al., 2016), supervision is not positively viewed in education.

 Teaching coaching has often been limited to specific and concrete aspects of teaching. Because coaches cannot look at everything at the same time, they often focus their attention on skills teachers need to develop (Coogle et al 2015), such as behavioral management skills, improving instructional delivery and student engagement (Blazar & Kraft, 2015). Some examples of coaching approaches include helping teachers learn a particular technique (Artman-Meeker et al., 2014) or strategies for working with special needs students (McLeod, Kim & Resua, 2019, Baggerman et al 2015; Coogle et al 2015). Coaching has yet to be applied as a method for developing competencies in to teaching practices more widely.

Feedback from coaching falls into two main categories: immediate and delayed performance (Coogle et al., 2015; Artman-Meeker et al., 2014). Since coaching is based on a process of feedback between individuals, its effect can often be attributed to the source of the feedback, the message being transmitted, and how the receiver (teacher) is positioned to receive it (Licklider, 1995). Hanno (2022) also explored different coaching styles and the different moments feedback was provided to improve teaching practices. All these examples highlight that even though there might be value in having someone with more experience work with teachers, the role that they assume, the way they carry out their visits and the type of feedback they give (and the way it is given) are key aspects to successful coaching and need to be considered before assuming coaching as a blanket approach to TPD. I will explore the role of feedback in Chapter Six as it relates to the relationship between mentor and teacher. But feedback, primarily, is at the heart of the

conversation between the coach and who they are coaching and understanding that feedback is also an indicator of the relationship these two individuals have.

Characteristics of the relationships between coaches and their mentees create the foundation for a successful experience. For example, characteristics of a successful coaching relationship include:

> predictability and reliability; hygiene of factors such as time, place and confidentiality; coach shows respect and understanding for the complexity of the mentees experience; showing empathy; authentic and genuine interaction while sharing experience freely; respect towards the mentee; courtesy, empathy and tact (Bluckert, 2005, p. 337).

Trust, then, is an important aspect of any coaching relationship, as regards integrity and competence. The mentee or person being coached needs to be able to trust the integrity of the coach in that they will respect sensitive or confidential information which could have an impact on a person's life. Also, the mentee needs to be confident in the experience and expertise of the coach, so they are willing to listen to their opinions and assessment of given situations. However, not everyone will respond to the same sort of coaching or communication approach (Bluckert, 2005).

Relationships are also the building blocks of larger structure, such as those of organizations. I will examine some characteristics of the organizational culture of accompaniment in Chapter Five. The interplay between coaching and organizational culture has also been studied in some contexts. Megginson & Clutterbuck (2006) described four progressive stages through which coaching can become an integral and natural part of an organization: nascent, tactical, strategic, and embedded. These stages are extremely precise, to the point which, and in real life, most organizations do not fall into one category perfectly. Nevertheless, these stages serve as reminders that, while organizations (as well as individuals and relationships) evolve over time, institutions can demonstrate elements of a category at a given time. The two categories I use in the analysis in Chapter Six are the *strategic* stage and the embedded stage. In strategic, "coaching is being implemented in the organization, but mostly in formal spaces which are followed, monitored, and evaluated. People (managers) are trained in how to coach others (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 2006, p. 232)". In the *embedded* stage

> people at [different] levels of the organization are engaged in coaching. It is something which happens both formally and informally. Coaching is part of the structure and culture of the organization and people are not afraid of having difficult conversations about sensitive issues (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 2006, p. 233).

In addition to helping understand what current stage the two organizations in the study are currently embodying these categories suggests that coaching is not necessarily natural occurring practices in an organization. However, coaching can be actively cultivated and made part of the 'normal' way of doing things over time.

Some aspects of coaching literature have much to contribute to the accompaniment approach which will be described in Chapters Five and Six. Chief among these, cultivating horizontal relationships between coaches and mentees, the types of feedback given to help individuals improve, and using coaching to move beyond an individual interaction to be part of an organization structure are all elements which I explore further. In addition, coaching can be less hierarchy-driven and less evaluative than supervision.

However, coaching addresses a narrow scope of topics and primarily emphasizes skills or techniques. Coaching literature does not seem to consider teacher agency in a profound way. The frame in which coaching is mostly used in the literature is limited rather to show how coaches are thinking of concrete and specific ways to help teachers. Yet there is a lack of exploration in the literature about the teacher's own agency and decision making in the interaction. While this could be a gap in the existing literature, it can also be seen as a missing element in coaching as a way of working. Given these limitations I suggest that using the complementary concept of mentorship in conjunction with coaching can deepen interaction and nurture teacher agency during TPD. While I will use the term mentor to refer to the person who carries out those mentoring functions in the process of accompaniment described in Chapter 5, the coaching literature explored in this section provides useful insight into how mentors and mentees can relate to one another and the different strategies that coaches use to motivate their charges. However, I have chosen to use mentorship to frame this research as it goes beyond skill development and includes wider aspects of both the career and personal characteristics of the mentee, which ultimately fostering agency. In short, mentorship takes on a more holistic approach to working with others.

To begin an exploration on why I focus on mentorship rather than coaching, it is worthwhile noting that mentorship has its philosophical roots in the notion of apprenticeship, such as in the Middle Ages how various trades were learnt through a period of apprenticeship. This means that mentorship is based on the idea that a more experience individual can pass on knowledge, skills of the trade and general know-how to a less experience individual. This combination of certain concepts but also practical skills echo the previous sections on the different types of knowledge teachers need to acquire as they move from novice to experienced teachers. Mullen and Klimaitis (2021) define mentoring as:

> Mentoring pairs, a senior and junior colleague (i.e., mentoring dyad) in a support-based 'intense relationships' that guides mentees (i.e., protégés) through 'career advancement and psychosocial development'. The career-related function enhances professional performance and improvement, whereas the psychosocial-related function addresses psychological and social-environmental issues (p. 21).

In this definition, mentoring is a comprehensive approach where the mentees' career and their psychosocial well-being are considered. Instead of focusing on goals, like coaching, mentoring views the mentee's development holistically. While there is variation across professional fields and social-environmental issues, combining mentorship and with career and psychosocial functions is a useful starting off point. Coaching plays a role in career function, but is more contained and directed than mentoring. As will be explored in Chapter Six, the mentors in the two cases in the research demonstrate friendship as a cornerstone in the psychosocial functions. While mentoring can seem like a positive relationship which can help the mentee further develop their career and psychosocial well-being, it would be wrong to assume that a) all mentoring relationships are always successful; or b) a mentoring relationship is fruitful from the beginning. Kram (1983) and Mullen and Klimaitis (2021) describe mentoring relationships as a dynamic process that proceeds in phases, including initiation, cultivation, separation, and, ultimately, redefinition. It is important to be cognizant of the life cycle of mentoring relationships to consider how programs which are based on these types of relationships train (or don't train) mentors in helping them learn how to work with others. This implies that the recognition of the stage and need of others is a particular skill that mentors need to develop and that mentoring relationship will not always look

the same. The degrees to which the progression of the relationships is present in the two cases in this study will be further explored in Chapter 5.

Regarding other factors which can contribute to success (or lack thereof) in educational mentoring relationships, Mullen (2016) argues that mentors need to be highly motivated themselves. Additionally, mentors must holistically consider and modify the mentoring relationship in relation to each mentee's psychological and social context goals and needs, not only to achieve narrow career advancement goals. For the mentee, they should seek out mentors instead of leaving relationship formation to chance, be fully committed to the learning experience, be reliable, trustworthy, curious, and self-directed, process advice, ask questions and for clarifications, and do not act overly needy or dependent. Therefore, the relationship requires certain inputs and effort from both the mentor and mentee. While what is required of each of them is different, this suggests that mentoring relationships are not entirely unilateral but are, rather, dialogical. The evolution of traditional to alternative mentoring approaches is an attempt to address the role both mentors and mentees play.

Mullen (2016) categorized mentoring relationships into six distinct modes of working. She described *traditional mentoring* as one-way learning where the mentee is assumed to be the only learner, while the mentor is the teacher. It is a hierarchical relationship, as there is a senior (mentor) expected to be active, and a subordinate (mentee) who could be passive. Traditional mentoring has been criticized for perpetuating the status quo and failing to take into consideration the mutual learning and support which can occur. Issues of power, authority, and dominance may often be undervalued or dismissed. Often this type of mentoring does not consider cross-cultural, gender, or racialized relationships and has implicitly excluded certain groups from its benefits.

In response to many of these issues, *alternative mentoring* approaches seek to understand, unpack, and reverse the problematic use of power and authority in traditional mentoring. Mullen (2016) has categorized the most common types of alternative mentoring into formal mentoring, informal mentoring, diverse mentoring, electronic mentoring (or e-mentoring), co-mentoring (collaborative or peer mentoring), group mentoring, multiple-level co-mentoring, and cultural mentoring. Out of these alternative categories, the two are the most relevant to the research are collaborative mentoring and multiple-level co-mentoring. The first of these "brings together two individuals in a mutually beneficial reciprocal learning relationship. While there might be differences between

the pairs (in status, knowledge, expertise, etc.) they may share goals, aspirations, ethics, and values" (Mullen, 2016, p. 134). Multiple-level co-mentoring

> is based on many principles of co-mentoring, extended across an entire organization. For example, in the context of a school, co-mentoring might occur at administration, staff, teachers and student levels so its effects could be felt across the entire organization (Mullen, 2016, p. 135).

Communal mentorship, which is both circular and multi-directional, has potential for Indigenous communities in Canada but requires further research (Ferguson et al., 2021). Some of these ideas are explored in Chapters Five and Six through *reciprocal learning relationship*, where both the teacher and the mentor bring important previous knowledge to share. The relationship is more horizontal than hierarchical and group mentoring is also explored within a wider organizational setting.

In addition to mentoring as a function that individuals carry out, it is important to note that mentoring approaches can also be organized into formal mentoring *programs*. Some of these include peer mentoring programs (Ferguson et al., 2021), buddy mentoring (Simpson et al., 2022), "big brother/big sister" type of mentoring (Herrera et al., 2023), and professional mentoring programs (Kutsyuruba, 2012). The value of these types of mentoring programs is their emphasis on larger system wide questions, such as teacher retention, attrition, well-being, motivation, specific content knowledge (such as STEM education) and general induction programs into the profession (Yabas & Boyaci, 2022; Briscoe, 2019; Katsyuruba, 2012; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). This places the emphasis on how the programs can be structured, the allotment of time, and how they fit into other program objects and, therefore, go beyond specific mentor/mentee relationships. Some of these studies focus on attrition during a specific period of a teacher's career (i.e., 5 years after graduation) (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009) which is a useful way of zeroing in on during critical periods of teacher's professional development. Instituting mentoring into in-service TPD requires further thought due to the changing needs a teacher might have over the course of their career. Other research focused on introducing practical and pedagogical elements to student-teachers' learning experience (Schader et al., 2016) and helping teachers improve their teaching practice. Many of these studies, then, are focused on taking snapshots of a teacher at a point in time of their professional development. These snapshots of teacher needs at specific times

are valuable, but can also be limiting when not placed into the longer timeline of a teacher's professional trajectory. More research on how teachers' lives and careers impact what mentoring approaches would be most suitable needs further exploration.

Some of these studies have identified the impact and benefit of mentoring programs for teacher professional development. For example, one such study found that mentors derived the greatest benefit in the opportunity to reflect while mentees derived benefit from improving their classroom practices and learning more about the classroom, school and assessment practices (Mathur et al., 2013). Another found that despite some tensions between mentors and mentees a program aimed to help new teachers in STEM education increased in both content knowledge and improved their pedagogical practices (Sibanda & Amin, 2021). Yet another study (Simpson et al., 2005), found that a well-organized mentorship program was useful in training special education teachers in rural Wyoming to overcome the challenges of a sparsely populated state and few credentialed special education teachers.

Mentoring is one approach to pairs of individuals working together. My argument here is that fostering mentoring relationships, to help people advance their careers while attending to psychosocial needs, is an improvement on traditional methods of supervision or evaluation for teacher development. Mentoring approaches take a longer view on the time frame needed for individuals to improve their skills and knowledge, which helps address the lack of temporal considerations in traditional teacher PD.

Teacher Reflection on Teaching Practice

While agency is what teachers might exhibit, and the mentoring relationship is the way such agency is cultivated, reflection is the process by which teachers may, in a cognitively active manner, interpret and internalize ideas and make them their own. In this dissertation, I argue that reflection and reflexivity are crucial elements of the model of accompaniment PD I explore through my research.

Donald Schon (1983, 2017) made an important contribution to notions of the teacher as reflective practitioner. Schon (2017) argued that a crisis of "technical rationality" was "embedded in the institutional context of professional life [in USA schools at the time], implicit in … the normative

curricula of professional education" (p. 26). Reflexive practice, he argued, could counteract automatization tendencies. Furthermore, reflexivity was an inherent trait of teaching.

Schon (1983) theorized that people's everyday actions are usually informed by intuition. "Our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowing is in our action" (Schon, 2017, p. 49). Over time, a practitioner can 'know' certain things (and how to do them) without necessarily being able to articulate an accurate description of what they are doing or why they are doing it. Sometimes, however, teachers are also thinking consciously about what they are doing while in the middle of the action. They might be asking themselves questions about why they are doing something, or how it is going, or how others are responding to their actions - '*reflection-in-action.*' Schon (2017) argues that such reflective thinking is "central to the 'art' of how practitioners deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict" (p. 50).

One challenge, after practitioners after repetition or routine has set in, is that the teacher (or other professional) can be drawn into patterns of error, or can become bored, rigid, or suffer from burn out. Schon (2017) argues that it is through the process of reflection that a practitioner "can surface and criticize the tacit understandings...around the repetitive experiences of a specialized practice and can make new sense of the situations of uncertainty or uniqueness which he [*sic*] may allow himself [*sic*] to experience" (p. 61). Such reflections, Schon (2017) argues, support practitioners to re-examine

> tacit norms … which underlie a judgement, or on the strategies and theories implicit in a pattern of behavior…, on the feeling for a situation which has led him [*sic*] to adopt a particular course of action, or the way in which he has formed a problem he is trying to solve, or on the role has constructed for himself within a larger institutional context (p. 62).

Teachers actively participating in their profession through reflection is a critical idea in this dissertation, both on its own and as it relates to agency. According to Schon (2017), the reflective practitioner is a conscious actor and, as I will argue later, reflection is closely linked to action. While the context of Schon's research and my own are vastly different, the act of reflecting is a universal one.

The importance of Schon's (1983, 2017) theory of reflection to the field of education is born out in the number of theoretical and empirical work his concepts have spawned. For example, Brookfield (1995) used '*reflection-for-action*' to examine what may enable a teacher to make a deliberate shift from tacit commitments and constructs to become a critically reflective teacher and question their way of thinking and deeply held implicit assumptions and how things have come to be as they are.

McLaren (2017) described four types of reflection prompts or lenses that "serve to reveal personal assumptions and frameworks that lead teachers to understand more about their own practice and why they 'operate' as they do" (p.183). These lenses are a) autobiographical; b) student and learner voice; c) colleagues experiences; and d) continuous scholarly research and inquiry. Building on reflection-for-action, Gillies (2016) considered "thoughtful action" (professional judgment) as a basis for rejecting "technical rationalism" assumptions that teaching can be reduced to simple formulas that can be learnt and replicated. It also brings to the forefront the idea that teachers need to develop a nuanced sense of judgment and to develop their own ability to teach. In sum, these theoretical perspectives view teacher professional development as a continuous process in which reflection is a crucial element of moving from novice to expert teacher.

Reflection is not an easily standardized process. Critiques towards reflective practice point out that the reflective practitioner concept is imprecise: it does not specify what the teacher practitioner should be reflecting on, the tools or processes that can be used to *facilitate* such reflection, or *how* different approaches to reflection could lead to different outcomes. When reflection is not done well (for instance, by novices) it can be superficial or indistinguishable from self-evaluation. Gillies (2016) suggests that Hannah Arendt's (1989) concepts of judgement and the capacity for "enlarged thought" can be useful in responding to some of these critiques. He argues that

> learners…need opportunities to practice making judgements. As with all sound pedagogical practice, this needs to be enacted in a graduated way, so that the scenarios in which judgement is exercised develop from the basic and relatively inconsequential to the more complex and more significant (Gillies, 2016, p. 155).

Learning to reflect occurs gradually where individuals can begin with simple steps and advance to more complex processes. I argue that mentoring teachers on reflective practice is essential to the long-term development of teachers. Specifically, I explore how accompaniment can used to

develop such abilities in both novice and advanced teachers. Reflective practice develops through interactions with other people and with a particular environment. In the two case studies in the research, contextual factors, such as the rural nature of the programs, the organizations themselves, the philosophy of the programs, and the organizational culture, all influence practitioners' capacity for reflection. These contextual factors will be explored in depth in Chapter Four.

Positioning reflection as useful for individuals and embedding it within training and development of teachers is crucial for the framework of the dissertation. Reflection can facilitate professional development throughout the stages teachers go through (ex. novice, advanced beginner, competent performer, proficient, and expert). Peter Tarrant (2013), a key contributor to the field, argues that continuous learning through reflection is a fundamental to healthy professionalism and development throughout a teachers' career. In contrast, having the time to reflect may be seen as a luxury, if educational leaders believe that teachers do not have the time to reflect on what happened in class in a systematic manner (Tarrant, 2013). Systematic reflection requires a certain degree of openness (distance from one's singular viewpoint) in being able to take a step back and try to look at things more objectively. As experience develops over time, teachers are constantly reflecting and changing things in the moment without the need to stop. They are able to think as they go. This ability to adjust quickly, and somewhat "unconsciously" is one characteristic of experienced teachers. However, if adjustments to a teachers' practice or pedagogical approach are made without thinking deeply about them, is it true reflection, or is possible that the reflection is happening so quickly that it is almost automatic? Regardless of how reflection it is occurring there seems to be a need to pause and consciously taking the time to take stock of what happened.

In this same vein, where it would be easy to assume that any type of reflection is useful, Tarrant (2013) further argues that reflection is not always the appropriate approach, or even useful, to teacher professional development. The concept of professional monologue (Tarrant, 2013) completements reflection, as it supports teacher reflectivity without difficulties created by hierarchical power structures embedded in education. Some reflection, such as that initiated by managers, can be threatening. Professional review meetings, while seeking to encourage reflection in the staff, are also about evaluating teachers' performance. Under such conditions (hierarchical, evaluative or performative), the teacher involved might feel judged and uncomfortable with truly sharing their thoughts. Tarrant (2013) defined professional monologue as

a situation where one person can articulate their reflections, out loud to a sympathetic, non-judgmental audience, as if they were talking to themselves… without an agenda. This monologue would be an opportunity to reflect, without fear of interruption or contradiction (p. 38-39).

Professional monologue takes reflection from the personal realm to something that can be done with others. I argue that mentors can facilitate a non-threatening reflection process and support the transition of reflection from an individual process to a communal one.

Tarrant's (2013) concepts apply to the dissertation in three ways: 1) connecting reflection to a systematic process of teacher development.; 2) distinguishing amongst different types of reflection and their usefulness in a particular situation, including knowing what to reflect on and how to do it; and 3) that reflection can also be done with someone else, potentially a mentor, and that this process of reflecting aloud with a colleague is a type of professional monologue. These three ideas are key in helping connect the inner workings of reflection to a process of accompaniment between mentor and mentee, as explored in this dissertation.

Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) attempt to explain the reflection process in a series of steps. They developed an 'onion model of reflection' where teachers cyclically reflect on mission, identity, beliefs, competencies, behavior, and interaction with the environment. Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) argue that mission and identity constitute the crucial "core" of reflection, where teachers can develop a set of "*core qualities*" including creativity, self-confidence, kindness, perseverance, fairness, and courage. Furthermore, the authors recommend that teacher training and development supervisors or mentors help teachers learn to reflect at all levels, moving beyond superficiality and acknowledging the necessity of reflection to teachers A valid critique of this model is its similarity to therapy, but mentors are not trained therapists and are not able to support mentees when reflections on core elements of a person's identity are trigging. I argue that an onion model of reflection is still a useful theoretical model to understand the depth and types of reflection mentors could support teachers in.

Reflection, as a tool of teacher professional development, can both develop over time and be cyclical. Different levels of reflection exist, allowing for the development of relationships over time that support delving deeper into a variety of subjects, or for a variety of conversations at different levels of depth. A mentor could choose (or circumstances could indicate) that the most

appropriate subject of conversation is one about behavior, for example, at a given time. This does not mean that all subsequent conversations will be at that level, but it also does not preclude that later that subject might be explored again in greater depth.

As explored in this section, much of the prior literature has focused on individual (personal, even isolated) reflection. To build upon and add to this body of work, this dissertation explores reflection in the context of teacher PD to stimulate and support contextually grounded reflection. In this case, what is being argued is that a mentor is the figure which can help a teacher reflect on their teaching practices. This contextually grounded reflection would be in line with the 'ecological model of agency,' as I am arguing that both agency and reflection need to take context into account. In Chapter Five and Six, I explore how the notions of agency, mentorship and reflection take on different meanings when put in the context of an educational program. It is not enough, then, to consider these concepts at the individual level. Rather these three notions are explored as interrelated components of and lenses through which a particular way of working with teachers can be examined and understood. In subsequent chapters, I present accompaniment as a mode of operation for understanding agency, mentorship, and reflection at both the individual and system level in TPD.

Conclusions

As I have explored in this chapter, the capacity for teachers to continue their professional development throughout their careers is crucial to the quality of education a program is able to offers. Most of the support teachers receive has traditionally been divided into two broad categories: pre-service and in-service where a cutoff point (graduation or accreditation) acts as a divider between the two.

Dividing teacher education into pre- and in-service is useful as an organizational tool. Teachers at different career stages require different types of knowledge, training or follow-up. However, this separation can also be limiting and therefore thinking more broadly about a teachers' path of development is needed. One clear result of this division of thinking of pre-service versus in-service teachers is the containment of more on-site teacher development to the early stages of a novice teacher. Therefore, thinking of on-site accompaniment as a part of a teachers' professional development is a way of bridging these two moments of a teacher's life. Taking context into consideration is necessary when thinking of teacher PD as a system. Things such as geography,

teachers' background, students' context are a few contextual elements which are needed when considering how to improve teaching practices in a sustainable and systemwide manner.

To glean insights from what an on-site follow up or TPD might look like, or might need to include, I have also introduced three interlinked cornerstone concepts: teacher agency, mentorship, and reflection. Agency, and in particular the *ecological model of agency* (Priestly et al 2015), frames the teacher as an active agent making choices in their interactions with students. In this model the teacher is not seen as a passive actor but as an agent who can influence their students and their environment, as well as being influenced in turn by their environment. Indicators of this concept will help to discern how and whether the environments and structures for working with teachers in the educational programs of PSA and SAT may be conducive to these teachers' development of agency. In addition, the research is examining how and whether the iterational, projective and practical-evaluative elements of agency may be fostered systematically in these programs. Second, I consider reflection and reflexivity to be a tool for teachers to become more aware of their own actions, to make pedagogical choices, and ultimately to exercise their agency. I will apply Korthagen and Vasalos' (2005) "onion model" to examine how profoundly the teachers reflect, and how this approach to professional development may help participating teachers to become reflective practitioners.

Lastly, I use the lens of reflection, understood both as '*reflection-after-action*' as well as '*reflect-in-action*' (Schon, 2017), to understand different mechanisms in which a mentor can help a teacher learn how to think constructively about their work and how to improve it. By examining the role of the mentor, I argue that reflection is not necessarily a solitary action but can be done with someone else who has more experience, focused on certain aspects of the teacher's work and possibly reflective of their stage of professional development. The different types of mentoring relationships explored by Mullen (2016) and the phases of how a mentoring relationship (Karm, 1983) may be built over time, enable my analysis of the mentor/teacher relationship, which is explored in later chapters.

What this dissertation aims to do, is to use all three concepts in an interrelated way and not simply as independent ideas. That is to say, mentoring and mentorship not only for the sake of personal development but for system wide teacher professional development. Reflection not simply as something which can be useful, but as a fundamental tool which can be fostered through individual

and collective spaces as a way to foster agency. And agency for the purpose of improving teacher practices through teachers' improved ability to make agentic decisions in the classroom where they are, for the most part, operating alone.

Figure 2: *Agency, Reflexivity & Mentorship*
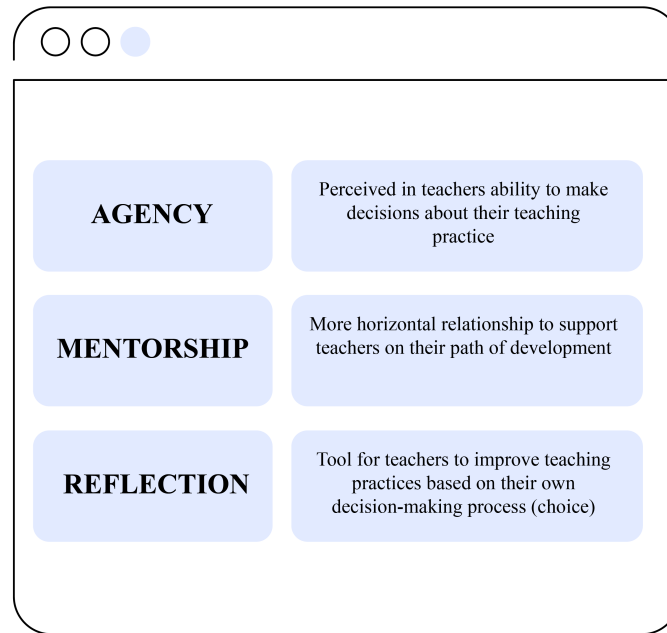
Based on the review in the previous sections, I frame reflection as a tool for helping to improve teaching practices, mentorship as a particular type of horizontal relationship and agency as teacher increased ability to make autonomous decisions about their teaching practices. Hence, both tools and relationships are necessary to develop teacher agency.

However, my theoretical framework does not assume that accompaniment is it the sum of these three notions, nor is it equivalent to all three, but accompaniment does have aspects of each, and they are all necessary to help illustrate what happens in the day-to-day interactions in the two countries' NGO sites examined in this dissertation. Each of the three concepts of agency, reflection and mentoring interact to provide a particular lens with which to understand the conceptions behind accompaniment, how it works in action and whether it is a useful way of thinking of teacher professional development. Given the fact that accompaniment is the name given to a certain way of conceiving of a different way of working with teachers' long term, I use each of these three terms help explain, delineate, and analyze accompaniment. In addition to these three concepts there

are also actors who are involved in the process: teachers, mentors, and students, all of whom are embedded in a particular context as well.

In the proceeding chapter, I will explore the methodological choices that I made to understand the interplay between said concepts.

Chapter 3:
Methodology

The aim of the present chapter is to describe the methodological underpinnings and design of this research, the process of data collection, and how the data were analyzed to generate the findings that will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

This research is situated in two countries in Latin America: Colombia and Honduras. In each of these countries I have chosen a local NGOs, FUNDAEC (based in Colombia) and Bayan Foundation (based in Honduras). While details about both organizations and the local context will be explored further in Chapter Four, both organizations use the same educational curriculum, developed for secondary-aged youth in rural areas by FUNDAEC in the 1970s. These two organizations (and the localities where they deliver the program) are the two sites for the two comparative case studies I will present.

My research is organized around one overarching research question and two sub-questions, which aim at understanding the way each organization has addressed continued development of its teachers in their own contexts. As each organization uses an on-site teacher mentoring approach to teacher development known as accompaniment, my aim is to understand what accompaniment is in each context.

1) How does site-based accompaniment mentoring (as enacted in each context) encourage or discourage teacher agency, in each context, as perceived by the participants?

   a) What does accompaniment mean and entail in each context, and how does this compare (and contrast) with the way each organization functions?

   b) What is the nature of the dyad relationship between mentors and teachers, and how has this relationship developed over time in each context?

To operationalize these questions, this chapter explores the selection of the methodological approach, how the research was designed, describes the data collection process, explores the data analysis which took place and concludes with some methodological reflections.

Methodological Approach

I begin my methodological exploration by reviewing the methods employed in existing published research in teacher professional development, especially in comparative international contexts.

Some approaches have been quantitative, administering questionnaires across schools and/or countries (Wermke, 2011). Other research has involved longitudinal impact evaluations (McEwan et al., 2015). Yet others have chosen a qualitative approach, such as interviewing groups of teachers in one school (Avidov-Ungar, 2015). A recent comprehensive study of the PSA curriculum for teacher training employed a randomized control trial (Ashraf, Banerjee & Nourani, 2021). While these approaches have been quite useful in studying the impact of a teacher professional development program, they require multi-member research teams as well as sophisticated methods of analysis to try and determine causal effects. As my aim is not to understand the program per say, but rather the relationship between mentor and teacher, such approaches are not conducive to the densely descriptive data needed to inform my question.

In methodological choices situated in the realm of qualitative methods, there are various examples of using case studies to delve into the nature of the relationship between two teachers or how individual teachers were able to change their teaching practices over time. One study, for example, focused on observing what two individuals do as they participate in planning, executing, and reflecting on classes together (Ben-Peretz et al., 2018). Another looked at how one person changed their teaching practices through coaching sessions before and after their lessons (Baggerman, 2015). Yet another case studies used recordings to analyze the interactions of a set of dyads (teacher/coach) and their perceived and actual change in teaching behavior (Heineke, 2013). In a series produced by the Brookings Institution on educational program, a single case study has be used to show how an overarching question can be used in multiple case studies to scale up professional development aimed at improving teacher practices (Cruz, Kwauk & Robinson, 2016). Case studies, then, are an appropriate approach to delve into the details of what individuals said, did, and interacted with others.

Using a case study approach seems to be a useful one when trying to look at specific details of a situation, relationship, or organization. The lessons they offer are contextualized, yet detailed enough to shed light relevant to scholarship and teaching in other contexts. Case studies, therefore, allow understandings of a particular question in depth, and for more general takeaways to be applicable in other scenarios. Additionally, it is possible to use case studies for multi-site research

and for comparison across contexts. Given my own goals of understanding the details of accompaniment and teacher/mentor relationships, as well as being able to compare across two countries, I decided to approach my research using a case study methodology. The case studies of two comparable accompaniment-based teacher development programs used qualitative methods and participant interviews to delve into a contemporary phenomenon within two contexts (Yin, 1992, 2003).

One of my research questions seeks to understand the culture of the organizations in question, and qualitative methods are useful to describe, analyze, and interpret a "culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time" (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 474). This approach allows research to look at how groups (multiple individuals, in this instance teachers and mentors, who interact on a regular basis) may be representative of a comparable larger population, such as rural-based teachers without formal pre-service training, working in alternative educational settings (like PSA and SAT) in Latin America (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The assumption here is that the groups I studied share some elements such as culture, which does not imply that everyone in the group is the same, only that they share enough characteristics for me to group them together analytically. However, given the COVID restrictions (which both affected the organizations' own functioning during the time the research was conducted and the ethical limitations of how I could interact with human subjects in person), I was restricted to using interviews and documents as my only source of understanding the organizational culture rather than being able to also complement the data with classroom observation. In this research, the methodological choice was affected by what was possible, not only by what was ideal.

Ecological validity was of foremost importance in making this case study research as useful and cogent as possible. While ecological validity questions "the extent to which behavior observed in one context is generalizable to another" (Crossley & Vulliamy, 1984, p. 198), it does not question the validity of the ethnographic information as valuable descriptive insights into a process of teacher professional development. Findings from case study are often can be rather rich, because they are able to consider a wide array of variables and to use multiple techniques to carry out the research. Ethnographic case studies can describe a process such as teacher PD in its natural setting during a given time. At the same time, rich sources of evidence sources also leads to complexity in case studies (Yin, 2013), such as considering the roles of multiple types of actors potentially involved in a process (NGO's, governments, community members, mentors, teachers, etc.). The

curriculum itself can also be seen as an actor, meriting its own contextual analysis as well. This is particularly important in educational innovations where a variety of contextual factors have played a role in the creation of said innovation. Further, case studies that take place in rural Latin America, such as the two in this dissertation, are rooted in a certain colonial legacy and rural reality. In an increasingly globalized world, where models and attitudes exogenous to the region have been increasingly adopted, rich description of social context is a necessary tool for any meaningful case study analysis.

Research Design

A defining characteristic of the case study methodology used for this dissertation was designing it to be international and comparative. The two organizations which I had chosen were situated in the Global South and shared several characteristics which would allow for a comparative study. Chief among these was the fact that they both used the same educational curriculum, despite being based in different locations. In addition to using the same curriculum, both organizations shared a common set of understandings about the purpose of education, the role of the teacher, and how students learn, among other elements. Both organizations worked with secondary aged youth in rural areas of their respective countries, even though SAT in Honduras was situated in the realm of formal education, while PSA in Colombia in non-formal (or non-degree conferring education). Lastly, while the structures of the two organizations are not the same, they are relatively comparable and suitable for cross-context comparative analysis, especially when considering the functions that people carry out instead of their formal job titles. Both organizations were situated in Latin America, with a shared common language (Spanish), cultural characteristics, and colonial legacy. Clear in this the research design required enough similarities and distinct differences between the organizations to focus on certain aspects of comparison, without attributing any differences found to fundamental differences between both sites. It is also important to note that the PSA and SAT programs exist in other countries and are implemented in other organizations, hence the distinctions of, for example, the PSA program as it is carried out by FUNDAEC in Colombia versus the SAT program as it is carried out by Bayan in Honduras are important.

In very simple terms, the comparison I conducted examines three different levels: country, organization (NGO) and program, summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1: *Levels of comparison*

Country	Colombia	Honduras
Organization	FUNDAEC	Bayan
Program	PSA	SAT

Thus, similarities and differences in country, organization, and program were addressed. The particularities of each case were analyzed accordingly. As an initial step, I investigated and mapped the organizational structures of both FUNDAEC and Bayan to understand how mentors worked with teachers, how mentors were distributed thought the organization structure (numbers geography, ratio of mentors to teachers, etc.), and the different terminology which was used to describe the mentors in each context. This mapping led to two main decisions: a primary focus on the dyad of teacher and mentor and a subsequent focus on the administrative staff (leaders) in each organization. (See Appendix C and D for organizational chart of each organization).

Since the two organizations examined in this research use different terms to describe their accompaniment structure, which goes beyond only the mentor and teacher but also includes higher levels of the organizational structure (regions, national, etc.), I decided to make central to my study the dyad as the teacher and the person who directly worked with them, regardless of their title. In Colombia, that person who is in direct (mentoring) contact with the teacher is known as a 'coordinator' while in Honduras they are known as an 'advisor'. This differing terminology to describe this mentoring role implies that FUNDAEC's PSA focused its attention on the coordination or organizing aspects of the teacher professional development work, while Bayan's SAT emphasized an advising role. To make the analysis comparable, but to also and focus on the mentoring function that both coordinators and advisors carry out, I chose the term *mentor* to describe both sets of individuals. This decision was informed by the literature on mentoring (and coaching) and I settled on this term as the one which mostly closely described what these teacher development resource people did in their daily work with teachers in each organization (See Chapter 2 for more information). While they are not called mentors in FUNDAEC or Bayan, the function that they perform (and that I am interested in understanding, in dialogue with other scholarship in the field) was that of mentorship. Using the term mentor does not relay all the different things these individuals might do in their work (for example, administrative or financial tasks). My interest was not in their title but in the way their role *functioned*, namely as a mentor, and I understood this this function is primarily as a dyadic one.

After having determined the broad characteristics of the research, I then concentrated on choosing qualitative methods of analysis. Given the COVID restrictions at the time of research design (which were still be in place when the data were collected) it was clear that the methods available to me were interviews and document analysis. The inclusion of face-to-face interactions with teachers and mentors, as well as participating in regular classroom practices was discarded early on as they were not feasible during the data collection phase.

For the interviews in Colombia, I focused on dyads composed of mentors and teachers who worked together. This was in line with the existing mentorship literature which, for the most part, looks at the mentor/mentee relationship as a one-on-one relationship. It would have been possible to also interview groups of teachers working together, or a mentor with a group of teachers, but I limited the scope of this research to focus on the dyadic relationship between mentor and teacher as that relationship is ultimately at the heart of accompaniment.

My research design defined the criteria for sample size for the study as well as the geographic distribution (regions) of teachers and mentors. The first selection criterion was the need for a high representation of the teachers in the total samples, as ultimately accompaniment is supposed to affect teaching practices, and therefore their learning is the main topic of inquiry. I decided to interview one mentor for every three teachers. As a mentor works with more than one teacher (an average of 10 teachers per mentor), the 3:1 ratio was calculated to capture more than one teacher per mentor and to allow for regional variability (that is, to capture the work of multiple mentors in multiple locations, rather than more teachers per mentor but fewer mentors). Since an important research question in this project is about the relationship between the mentor and the teacher, I tried to ensure inclusion of plenty of mentors and corresponding teacher-mentor relationships while sampling interviewees. That is, for each mentor interviewed, three of the teachers they worked with were interviewed, to ensure that the sample included both parties in plenty of working pairs, and to investigate how each party (teacher or mentor) perceived the nature of the same working relationships.

An additional consideration was the geographical constraints of the rural nature of the programs in both sites affecting the accessibility of mentors and teachers. These geographical constraints were more salient in Honduras, where interviews were carried out in person and required coordinating transportation to remote areas had to be coordinated. In the case in Colombia, these

constraints were ameliorated by holding the interviews virtually (a change due to the COVID pandemic). Geography was also taken into account in designing having sample representation across regions in both sites to capture differences or similarities among organizational cultures across the different regions where each organization operates.

In Honduras, SAT centers (and their corresponding teachers and mentors) had been previously chosen to participate in an ongoing research project being led ty the University of California Berkely and NYU according to three main selection criteria: 1) education centers whose advisors had received a "satisfactory" review in their work evaluations; 2) education centers who had students in 7th and 8th grade; 3) relative closeness of the centers so they could be visited in geographical clusters and were not too remote for interviewers to access. In addition, one replacement center was identified per department (region or state within Honduras), in case data collection at one of the original centers fell through. The larger project which had set these parameters is discussed in the Data Collection section in this chapter.

In addition to the interviews, a second element of my research design was to include document analysis of teacher training documents and foundational documents produced by the organizations which explain the conceptual roots of the programs. The main purpose of this document analysis was to gain insights into the organizational point of view of the conception of teacher professional development and accompaniment in "official" descriptions. These documents were specifically related to trying to understand RQ1 (what accompaniment is) and RQ 1.1 (organizational structure/culture).

Since I could not physically be present in each organization to find these documents, I needed to come up with a list of criteria of what I was looking for to request my contact people in each organization to find, acquire and send the documents to me. Generally, the list was comprised of documents used by the organizations to either train teachers; used by teachers and staff to study essential program information; and documents which could be considered explicatory of the organization's accompaniment approach. I left criteria for choosing documents open at the selection stage to encourage the organizations to share what was available without them feeling that what I was looking for was too narrow and therefore did not exist. As part of what I was looking for was the organizations own 'voice', not only as how it was explained by staff members or teachers, having a wider net of documents was beneficial.

Research was not carried out simultaneously – the Honduras data was collected initially (March 2020) and the Colombian data was collected afterwards (March through April 2021). This allowed for the Colombian data collection process to be informed (and improved) by lessons learnt from the Honduran data, including the refinement of the research questions. It afforded me the opportunity to improve the interview questions in Colombia as well as to enter the sessions with the teachers and mentors with better distilled ideas. The limitations of this order were, clearly, that the Honduras data was not afforded this level of forethought.

To conduct comparative research, I first had to define some criteria. Chief among these is the "frame of reference" which refers to the context of what is to be compared and contrasted. For this dissertation, my frame of reference is the overarching framework which has been developed by FUNDAEC and which both the PSA and SAT program follow. Furthermore, the grounds for comparison between the two programs rest on similarities and differences between the programs, the organizations, or the contexts of the two cases. Hence, comparison could occur at all three levels: programmatic, organizational, and contextual. I designed my research design to understand in a more nuanced way how accompaniment could take place across programs, organizations and contexts, to present a more comprehensive picture of teacher PD generally. Lastly, I chose to compare cases on a "point-by-point" structure, where I present one set of data followed by the other. I chose this type of structure to ensure that each element is treated distinctly and the nuances of both similarities and differences are better explored.

Data Collection

I will now proceed to share the way in which data was collected in both sites. Throughout the dissertation I begin describing the PSA in Colombia case study and follow with the SAT in Honduras case study. I chose this way of presenting the data for two main reasons. First, the PSA program is shorter in duration and is not degree conferring, and could therefore be considered less complex. Secondly, given that the curriculum of both programs was created by FUNDAEC I choose to present that organization as it is the originator of both programs.

FUNDAEC (PSA), Colombia

The PSA program in Colombia was, at the time of data collection, being run in five regions: three units on the Caribbean Coast, one in the center of Colombia, and one in the southwest of Colombia. Each of these regions differ geographically and in ethnically diversity. In one part of the Caribbean

coast there is a large Afro-Colombian population, and in another there is a large indigenous population, specifically defendants of the Zenú people. The Southwest region is relatively mixed/mestizo population. Coastal and inland geographies vary by primary types of economic activity (tourism, handicrafts and cattle, petroleum extraction, agriculture, and small businesses) and degrees of rurality or urbanization. Despite these differences, the curriculum, methodology, and structure of the delivery of the program do not differ among the units. I designed this research sampling to see whether interviewees' responses in the different regions were different, given these variations. For this reason, I decided to focus on three regions: two units one the Caribbean Coast, one primarily comprised of an indigenous population, the other made up mostly of Afro-Colombians; and one unit in the city of Cali, an urban center of more than three million people and the home to FUNDAEC's offices. As it turned out, I did not find marked regional differences in the data collected. In addition, when participants referred to culture in their interviews, they were speaking mostly about the organizational culture and not the culture of the region. While this will be discussed in future chapters, it is important to note that the potential for regional variations was accounted for in the research design.

The interviews in Colombia were carried out between March and May 2021, ranging in length between 45 minutes to one and a half hours, conducted virtually (over Zoom), and recorded with the participants' permission. The staff at FUNDAEC set up and helped to organize the interviews, to ensure that the desired sample character and size was reached in each region. Given that interviews had to be conducted online, staff members also helped to ensure that the time slots and invitations to the interviews were properly shared. A point person, designated by FUNDAEC, supported my logistical needs, and with their help we set up a timeframe for carrying out the interviews that avoided holidays, training and meeting times, and the work time of both the staff and the interviewees. For these reasons, I blocked off a period of two months to carry out the interviewees intensively. For some interviews, teachers and mentors chose to connect to the internet in their homes, on their phones, while others choose to go to their local FUNDAEC offices to use the organizations' computers and internet connections. This decision was left to each interviewee given their circumstances and knowledge of best internet connections and connectivity stability.

The last few weeks of interviews were affected by the national general strike in Colombia, which began on 28 April 2021 and lasted for several months. The end dates vary depending on how each

city lived the strike but the strike was officially declared finalized in December 2021. Given that the interviewees were virtual and did not require individuals to leave their homes, people were not put in harm's way by interview appointments. However, the last set of interviews had to be spaced out more sparsely than planned in response to the security concerns raised by the political instability of the country during that period.

The following chart (see Table 2) describes the population size of each interviewee category and the sample size of collected interviews:

Table 2: *Interview sample size (Colombia)*

Interviewees	Approximate Population Size	Collected Sample size
Higher-level administrative staff (members of board, director, and national coordination staff)	27	4
Zonal coordinators	8	-
Mentors (Unit coordinators)	13	9
Mentee Teachers (Teachers)	96	23
Total	**144[1]**	**36**

As regards the gender distribution, there were roughly twice as many females represented in this participant sample than males, with a higher percentage of teachers being female and a higher percentage of higher-level administrative staff being male (summarized in Table....). Mentors were almost equally distributed in terms of gender. I was unable to access the gender distribution of the entire organization, and so cannot ascertain to what degree these distributions in the sample were comparable to those in the entire organization.

Table 3: *Gender distribution interviews (Colombia)*

Interviewees	Male	Female

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[1] Statistical data shared by FUNDAEC, July 2020, for the purpose of defining the sample population

Higher level administrative staff (members of board, director, and national coordination staff)	3	1
Mentors (Unit coordinators)	4	5
Mentees/Teachers (Teachers)	4	19
Total	**11**	**25**

The regional distribution and variation of the interviews is described in the following chart. The sample size was distributed across the three selected regions of the country; however, the sample size also corresponds to the size of the program in each of these regions. Therefore, the number of teachers and mentors from each area correlates with total number of staff from which to take a sample. For example, a sample size of five mentors in Cordoba and Sucre is roughly 90% of the total number of mentors in that region, while in Cali one mentor is the equivalent of 100% of the population. So, while the sample distribution (in terms of total numbers) works nationally, the actual numerical distribution regionally is not evenly distributed, even though it is distributed evenly in terms of percentages (see Table 4)

Table 4: *Regional distribution of interviews (Colombia)*

Interviewees	National Offices	Cordoba & Sucre	Bolivar	Cali
Higher level administrative staff in organization (members of board, director, and national coordination staff)	4			
Mentors/Coaches (Unit coordinators)		5	3	1
Mentees/Trainees (Teachers)		14	7	2
Total	**4**	**19**	**10**	**3**

After the initial interviews, I held follow up interviews. While all of my participants agreed to a second interview, I did not follow up with the second round. Once I had completed the data analysis, I decided that follow-up interviews were not necessary, as the data collected was expansive enough to answer my research questions. Further information from participants, while interesting, would expand the scope of the research instead of helping narrow down specifics about accompaniment and teacher professional development practices. As such, one round of interviews was carried out with each of the 36 interviewees.

In addition to the interviews, I received a range of documents from FUNDAEC for my documental analysis. Some of these documents were conceptual, around accompaniment itself or about teacher professional development and the use of training in that process. The conceptual documents were longer (approximately 15-20 pages in length) and I categorized them as official program documents. Other documents were more administrative, usually were one or two pages developed to help mentors work with teachers. In addition, I reviewed all the documents teachers or mentors referred in the interviews. Since these documents were explicitly mentioned as being something the teacher or mentored worked with or had found useful, I was able to ask the organization to provide said document by name. Most of these documents were an introduction to training teachers or about the reflection notebook (explained in Chapter 6). Table 5. lists examples of documents reviewed.

Table 5: *Types of documents reviewed*

Document Type
Teacher training guides
Conceptual papers regarding accompaniment
Forms provided by organization to coordinators and teachers to help with follow up and feedback processes

This means that the documents received and included in this study went through the filter (and potential bias) of a staff member, rather than a direct physical archive retrieval performed by me as the researcher operating on site. However, since I was also able to ask for some documents specifically, based on what documents had been mentioned in the interviews, I was able to get copies of some documents which maybe would not have been shared, but which teachers and mentors found useful in their day-to-day activities.

Ultimately, the documents were mostly useful in that they helped to contextualize the teachers' and mentors' interview responses within each organization's institutional perspective. They did not allow for an in-depth discourse analysis or a mapping of the evolution of certain thoughts or ideas but did allow for me to have a comparison between the organizational point of view and what the teachers and mentors shared. This meant, in some cases, that there was a clear repetition (or internalization) of certain ideas that contributed to an organizational point of view, and it was important to identify the source of some of those ideas.

Bayan (SAT), Honduras

The second organization for the collection of data was Bayan, located in Honduras. While I will explore the background and context of Bayan in Chapter 4, it is important to note here that the organization was spread out geographically across the country and has a structure of mentors and teachers which implement the program in rural areas of the country. This mean that the program was extremely widespread which meant the selection criteria had to very clear in order to have a representative sample across the country. However, my own interaction with Bayan was not a direct one as it was mediated by an existing relationship and project between Bayan and the University of California, Berkely and New York University (NYU) as part of a larger project which had begun in 2019. This mean that, even though I know what the selection criteria and process of data selection was in Honduras, I was not actively involved in either.

The data collection in Honduras was done in the context of an ongoing project aimed at helping the Bayan organization to improve its teachers' instructional practices. In short, those practices were expected to improve through the introduction of an observation tool (worksheet) known as known as Teacher Instructional Practices and Processes System (TIPPS)©. As part of that project, and to give an initial qualitative overview of the process of teacher development and accompaniment in the organization, a first round of interviews had been conducted by other researchers in Honduras in March 2020, in person and on-site. Those interviews had been transcribed (into Spanish) and uploaded to an analysis website (Deedoose) by the UC Berkeley team.

I was given access to this data through a Data Transfer Agreement (DTA) between the University of Toronto and the University of California, Berkeley (where the data is stored), after a stringent review by the Office of Innovation and Partnerships at the University of Toronto. The agreement

stipulates that, while not owning the data, I had access to anonymized data (sets of interview transcripts in Spanish) which had already been uploaded into the data management software Deedoose by the UC Berkley team.

The Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Francisco Morazán was the local partner of the team at UC Berkeley and NYU, and their team oversaw carrying out much of the data collection (sampling and interviews). Members of the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Francisco Morazán team were trained in the TIPPS protocol by the UC Berkely/NYU research team. They were also trained to carry out the baseline open-ended interviews with teachers (tutors) and mentors (advisors), based on an interview guide developed by the UC Berkeley/NYU team. Between March 8 and 12, 2020, the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Francisco Morazán team carried out these initial interviews, just before Honduras entered lockdown and schools were closed temporarily. This data was the only evidence to be collected, before COVID-19 restrictions caused other aspects of that project to be put on hold indefinitely.

The data to which I was given access is the result of this initial data collection. Interviews with teachers and mentors were conducted and transcribed in the original language (Spanish), by the UPNFM team. The Honduras data set includes 61 interviews with teachers and 15 interviews with mentors. These participants were in nine departments in various rural areas of Honduras (Atlántida, Colón, Comayagua, Intibucá, La Paz, Lempira, Ocotepeque, Santa Bárbara, and Yoro), as summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: *Interview sample size (Honduras)*

Interviewees	Approximate Population Size	Sample collected by UC Berkley/UPNFM
Higher level administrative staff in organization (Members of board, director and national coordination staff)	10	
Field coordinators	37	
Mentors/Coaches (Advisors)	41	15

Mentees/Trainees (Teachers)	490	61
Total number of interviews	**578[2]**	**76**

I was unable to receive any documents from Bayan in Honduras despite multiple efforts and attempts to reach out to the organization. As the only avenue which was open for me to get access to documents was with the approval of the organization and through them, the fact that I received no response to my multiple requests did not permit me to include documental analysis in Honduras.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data from each case study organization in three distinct steps, based on the number of interviews and the comparative nature of the study. Each step is described below.

Step 1

Once the Colombian interviews were carried out, I transcribed them (in Spanish) and uploaded to the software Deedoose for coding. Parallel to this work, I was granted access to the Honduran interviews that had been previously transcribed and uploaded to Deedoose by the NYU/UC Berkley team. Based on the Data Transfer Agreement, I was given access to anonymized, transcriptions of the interviews in Deedoose. As such, it made sense for me to upload the Colombian data to the same software, to analyze both data sets using the same platform to ensure consistency. To further ensure consistency, I derived and used the same analytical codes for both data sets.

The initial list of codes sorted and compiled six main categories of information: 1) codes related to the SAT or PSA programs (what it did, how it worked, how it was understood and/or explained by teachers, mentors, and leadership staff); 2) codes describing accompaniment; 3) codes about the roles and functions of teachers and mentors; 4) codes about relationships (between teachers and students, teachers with mentors, both teachers and mentors with members of the community and the organization, etc.); 5) codes related to agency (including towards future growth and learning); and 6) COVID-related codes. When designing the interview questions I wanted to clearly separate the data which referred to COVID and which was the "normal" operating practices

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[2] Statistical data shared by Bayan, December 2019 (at the time of sample size selection)

of the teachers and mentors. Given that the pandemic was a particular circumstance, data about COVID response could potentially show the ways accompaniment was used in such a particular moment in time. However, as the pandemic or COVID response was not the main purpose of this dissertation, it was also necessary to capture the normal organizational procedures. For example, teachers could not visit the students in their homes, have community meetings, or meet with other teachers. These types of meetings and interactions, explored in Chapter Six and are essential to accompaniment but none of these spaces were possible during the heaviest COVID restrictions. Hence, identifying what modes of operation were related to COVID, which were standard accompaniment practices, was important for my research as it allowed me to see both how accompaniment usually worked and how it was (or was not) adaptable in other conditions.

Step 2

Step 2 was an initial descriptive analysis which began to draw out themes within each organization case (and each time segment, i.e., before and during COVID19 restrictions). Once I had coded all the collected interviews, I decided to analyze the data by breaking it down into four discrete chunks of information: 1) Colombian accompaniment data; 2) Colombian impact of COVID data; 3) Honduran accompaniment data; and 4) Honduran impact of COVID data.

I organized interview questions by categories (general questions, questions about teaching, questions concerning teacher professional development, questions about the pandemic and closing questions) to easily analyze data in these four distinct categories (see Appendix G, H and I for full interview guides).

I downloaded and organized interview excerpts from each of the four categories into an excel spreadsheet. Each spreadsheet had sheets representing different subcodes, so that each subcode could easily be identified and excerpts analyzed for content, frequency, and overlap. Once the spreadsheets were populated, I then created four documents corresponding to each spreadsheet. As I analyzed each category and its subcodes, I wrote four descriptive analytical memos grouping subcodes, wider code categories, and information pertaining to each research question. At the time, the excerpts continued to be in Spanish (language of the interviews), to maintain the original language for as long as possible to keep the meaning intact, while the analysis was written in English. These four documents were a first-level analysis of the raw interview excepts, organized by subcodes, and associated with my research questions.

Step 3

Step 3 introduced deeper analysis of the data as well as comparative study between the two cases. Using the two documents I had produced for each case in Step 2, I conducted second-degree analysis and comparison simultaneously across cases. I compared the Colombian (PSA) data document to the Honduran (SAT) data document and similarly compared the Colombian COVID impact document to the Honduran COVID document. To do this, I created two additional documents (charts) in Excel where I identified the similarities and differences between cases. This comparison included identifying which codes were present across the two organizations and which were only present in one. This exercise allowed me to quickly visualize what was salient in each case and what was only present in one.

I further scrutinized each country document and identified points of comparison with elements of my theoretical framework, namely questions about agency (past, present, and future projections), mentorship, and reflexivity (reviewed in Chapter 2). At this point, I translated a selection of the transcript excerpts from Spanish to English and then had another bilingual speaker doublecheck these translations for retention of meaning. These excerpts were chosen based on how complete they were, or how many themes they contained. Since I was not going to be able to choose all excerpts to translate, these were chosen as representative of the wider data set. For example, in earlier stages of analysis I had kept four to five excerpts which were saying similar things in Spanish as examples for one idea, whereas at this stage, I ultimately decided which excerpt showcased a more nuanced understanding of an issue or brought together more than one idea and subsequently translated and retained just that one. Keeping the excerpts in Spanish up until this stage allowed the original meaning and each interviewee's "voice" to be maintained as along as possible in my meaning-making process. This enabled me to focus my analysis on the original meaning and not on the interpretation of meaning derived from translation.

As mentioned previously, the analytical iterations that I carried out did not highlight any significant regional variations within each country, despite the regionally sensitive way the interview samples were identified and carried out. The implications of this lack of evident differences (a finding in and of itself), will be further discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Given these results, I decided to conduct my comparative analysis only between the two organizations in Honduras and Colombia and not within each case.

Step 4

At this stage, I began to incorporate the documents gathered from each organization. From the Colombian documents, I was able to map out similar ideas from the documents and the interviews. This meant that I first identified the main concepts that teachers and mentors shared (and which were present across more than 50% of the interviews) and then tried to find those concepts in the documents. I did not delve into the documents for their own sake but rather as both a confirmation of what the teachers and mentors said, and to trace the origin of those ideas.

I then included the comparison between the documents and the interviews within the case studies. I made it explicit in the write up and analysis that ideas and concepts from the interviews that were reflected in the documents only came from Colombia. Since I could not compare documents across case studies, the document analysis served to enhance what the teachers and mentors in Colombia said and to show either consistency and contrast with their perspective and the organizational voice.

Methodological Reflections

As with any research, there is a degree of difference between the proposed research design and what took place. In addition, this research had the challenge of taking place in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had implications for the way the research, and particularly interviews, were carried out. However, thankfully, the research design anticipated COVID limitations from the beginning.

I venture to state that the strengths of the research include the possibility afforded to me to analyze a large sample of interviews (over 100 total), including multiple sites in each of two case study organizations, because I was given access to the data collected by the UC Berkeley/NYU team in Honduras. Being able to analyze so many interviews gave me more data for each case study as well as the ability to compare across cases. Even though initially I had expected to find regional variations within each case, these were either not present or not teased out by the tools I developed. Therefore, comparison was mostly across the two organizations and not within each case site.

Other strengths of the research included my personal knowledge of the programs which allowed me to tease out some subtilties in the teachers and mentor's responses and understand the background of the curriculum of both PSA and SAT programs. In the interviews carried out in

Colombia, this also meant being able to ask to follow up questions. But in both situations, I knew enough about the structure and functioning of each organization to be able to follow what the teachers and mentors were referring to in the interviews.

Choosing a comparative case study methodology was also a strength of the research. Being able to compare two cases which had enough points in common (curriculum, accompaniment approach, shared framework) and differences (non-formal education versus formal education, different countries) enriched the description of accompaniment to showcase the overall approach, while respecting organizational differences.

On the other hand, the research design also had limitations. For example, my access to a large dataset of existing interview transcripts also meant that I did not carry out all interviews myself and could not ask follow-up questions when relevant themes came up in interviews with Honduras mentors and teachers. Although I included regional variation in the samples, these did not produce evidence of any significant differences by region. This within-country similarity could potentially be due to a strong organizational culture across each country context, or potentially, somehow the sample and the interview questions were not sufficient to fully capture differences. Additional questions regarding potential regional variations could have been included in the interviews, or additional steps could have been taken in the selection of mentor/teacher dyad interview participants in each location.

In terms of my own previous knowledge of the two programs, there is always a risk of having mentors and teachers answer questions in a way that they anticipate would be "pleasing" to the interviewer. Various steps were taken to mitigate this limitation including not knowing any of the teachers being interviewed in Colombia and using unidentifiable data in Honduras. However, the possibility of such bias in interview responses is always present and could have had the effect of reducing visibility of inter-regional variations within each case.

Two additional methodological design choices are also present in this study. The first was to maintain both mentors' and teachers' anonymity, in a wide sampling, versus having chosen to focus on specific (less variable) mentor/teacher dyads. I chose to interview many teachers and mentors across each organization, but a different choice could have been made to follow fewer dyads (per organization) in more depth and just focus on their interactions. This depth could have afforded more insights into the dyad relationship, but the reduced breadth might have lost

information about the culture of accompaniment across each case. Also, the document analysis was greatly dependent on, and limited by, whether the organizations made documents available to me. If more documents had been made available, a more robust document analysis could have taken place.

There were, of course, obvious methodological limitations posed by the pandemic health restrictions in place at the time of data collection in Colombia. Namely, the interviews for the Colombia PSA case were all carried out over Zoom. This meant that the selection of interviewees and interview times had to be carefully made in advance, and sometimes interviews required technological support from staff members (where feasible). While all interviews were one-on-one, meaning no other people were present during the meetings, other individuals may have been present in offices nearby. Whether or not they were within earshot of the conversation is unknown to me. The limitation then was that they could be overheard and this possibly impacted their response to speak well of the organization. However, this limitation was offset by the fact that these workplace internet connections were more stable than were the internet connections for the interviews I conducted with people at home. The home interviews were limited by poor internet connections which sometimes meant dropped calls and therefore a disruption in the flow of the interview. Approximately 50% of those interviewed were home and 50% connected through local offices. I therefore had to choose between two less than ideal situations, each with its own limitations.

A benefit of working in an online environment was that it was possible to hold interviews with teachers and mentors in five distinct regions of Colombia. Working in an online environment made it possible to hold interviews with teachers and mentors in five distinct regions of Colombia, rather than limiting the number of sites because of costs and logistics. However, this virtual engagement did not allow for participant observation to be naturally introduced into the case study research, as I had originally planned. There were no informal or "in-between" spaces where I could interact with the interviewees, observe, and thereby gain deeper understanding of the work. For example, I had hoped to sit in on (observe) some conversations between mentors and teachers, but this was not possible without my physical presence on site. It would have been possible to talk with both of them at the same time, but not to hear their feedback conversation after a class for example. Thus, the spontaneous and informal interactions that often happen in fieldwork were replaced by pre-planned and programmed interviews. The findings presented in subsequent

chapters, especially on the collective nature of accompaniment in Colombia (see Chapter 5), would have been enriched by such additional observations and visits to these collective spaces where teachers and mentors interact and reflect together. In Honduras, the benefits of a large sample size of interviews conducted in person and on site, offsets the benefits that could have emerged from my having conducted the interviews myself.

Perhaps the greatest consideration of this research fieldwork, undertaken during the COVID pandemic conditions, is the fact that the interview conversations moved between what had been done in the past (which was pre-COVID), what was being done now (which in Colombia turned out to be during COVID) and what might be done or how things would return to 'normal' (potentially post-COVID).This was particularly present in the interviews in Colombia as both teachers and mentors often used phrases such as "this is what we used to do", or "this is how we did it then". There was a very strong sense of what was normal and the uncertainty of whether that normal was ever going to return. This was clearly not the case in any of the Honduran data as the interviews were conducted pre-COVID and the only reality that the teachers and mentors knew was the one they were living in.

The nostalgia of the past, especially combined with the uncertainty of the future, could potentially tinge their recollections with wishful thinking for the past, for a pre-pandemic freedom of being able to move about freely. For this reason, in Colombia it was necessary to separate the interviews into two, pre-COVID and during COVID. This was an attempt to acknowledge that I was aware that we were talking about two distinct time periods and that we would talk about both and eased the expectations to include past and present actions at the same time. In the conversations around COVID this meant including questions about how they were working under pandemic conditions. These questions also attempted to determine if and how a culture of accompaniment was or was not identified by the teachers and mentors, and how it differed from the past. The data about how they were presently working, and the characteristics of the relationships between mentors and teachers in addressing the COVID emergency, were a useful comparison to what they would share about the (pre-COVID) "past".

Lastly, it is important to consider, as it pertains to the collection of the Colombian data, my insider/outsider positionality. As mentioned in the introduction (Chapter 1), I had worked in the Colombian organization (FUNDAEC) prior to embarking on my PhD, although I had been outside

of the organization for approximately five years. Still, this had some implications for my data collection and analysis. On the one hand, I was knowledgeable about the different regions of the country and the associated organization sites, and understood the geographical distribution of teachers and mentors. I also was well versed in the organizational discourse, which helped me explain my research needs to each set of staff, leading to speedy responses that helped define the sample populations, as well as ease and institutional support in organizing the interview timetable. The challenge, on the other hand, was my having to either interview teachers or mentors whom I personally knew well or who knew me, or who might have thought I had a certain position or played a certain role in the organization. Thankfully, I ended up being acquainted with two mentors. I mostly knew the leadership staff who had the context knowledge to understand my role and the type of research I was conducting. Some individual interviewees asked me about my affiliation with the organization and I explained how I had worked there in the past, which was satisfactory to the participants.

Conclusions

This comparative case study design looks beyond static conceptions of culture to avoid limitations of choice that can "bind" a case study (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2018). Particularly, the research took into consideration the fluidity of boundaries between schooling, which occurs inside a classroom, and community interactions, especially how these fluid boundaries played out in each organization in each country. Rather than a set unit of analysis, I took up the concept of culture as a fluid interaction between the organizations' formal description of their work, the teacher and mentors' description of what takes place, and the adaptations of said responses during a time of change and upheaval, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lastly, this research focused on two of Bartlett and Vavrus' (2018) three suggested axes of comparison: the horizontal and transversal axes. The horizontal axis means that I explored two country sites and multiple regions within each country. The transversal axis means that I examined teachers' and mentors' work in Colombia (not Honduras) at three points in time: pre-pandemic recollections, during pandemic actions, and expectations for post-pandemic. I did not explore the vertical axis, which would have entailed placing each teacher and organizational site in relation to the macro (e.g. educational policies) as well as micro levels due to the already-large scope of the dissertation. This limitation leaves space for future research.

Given my decision to compare two cases, the (vertical) context of each of these cases and the (transversal) historical context in time when the research was carried out, the steps taken to collect and analyze the data were congruent with my research objectives. Despite inevitable methodological limitations (pandemic, sampling, limited access to documents, etc.), the choices made to structure and carry out the interviews across multiple rural areas in two country/organization sites produced robust findings that will be presented in future chapters.

The possibility which was afforded to me by doing a comparative case study allowed for the analysis (and conclusions) to be more robust. Being able to look at two different cases meant that all the findings could not be attributed to only one organization or a particular set of circumstances which could only exist in one configuration. Rather the wide scope of the research meant that I could extrapolate some of the findings across case sites. This will be discussed more in depth in Chapter Seven. In addition, even though I was able to focus on the relationship between teacher and mentor, this relationship was multiplied across sites and across people so that it was not just one relationship which was being analyzed, but rather a sum of relationships.

This research explored the theme of teacher professional development in the context of rural Latin America. It looked at a particular secondary education program and curriculum and how the organizations delivered both non-formal and formal (degree conferring) programming. Given the need to balance the broader theme in such specific and expansive contextual considerations, case study methodology was the best choice to fully capture the nuances of both the research questions and the context where they were explored.

Chapter 4:
The Challenges and Opportunities Provided by Rural Education in Two Latin American Countries

Before turning our attention to the findings of this dissertation it is worthwhile to explore the contexts of the two case studies which make up the focus of this research. In this chapter, I contextualize the case studies, giving rich texture to the data analysis that follows in Chapter Five, Six, and Seven. There are three levels of context which will be discussed in this chapter. First, I present the context of rural education to better understand its challenges and opportunities. Next, I present the education systems of Colombia and Honduras. Finally, I describe the two connected but distinct programs that are offered by the two related NGOs being studied in Colombia and Honduras – the Preparation for Social Action (PSA) program, and the Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial (SAT).

Rural Education

Rural education is the physical context for the case studies in this dissertation. For the purposes of this research, I use the term *rural education* to refer to areas that are not densely populated, where individuals live far away from each other and from the next town or village, and areas where individuals have difficulty accessing resources available in urban areas.

Rural contexts generally share a set of characteristics which can make schooling difficult. Existing literature on rural education shows some common themes and concerns across rural realities. For example, one study reviewing rural education between 1909 and 2015 in the United Sates found that the most prevalent issues of concern to rural educators were: a) school improvement processes; b) school-community relationships; c) teacher recruitment, retention, and training; and d) youth achievement, aspirations, and retention in schools (Biddle & Azano, 2016). While these issues can be found in urban schools as well, they have unique implications in the rural context. Students face challenges such as long, and often unsafe, distances to the nearest schools. Schools might lack basic infrastructure, or the existing infrastructure is not sufficient for the number of students who attend. There is also, often, difficulty in attracting and retaining teachers. These challenges often are made more complex by poverty, gender, and armed conflict which are often more prevalent in rural areas in general (Biddle & Azaro, 2016; Roberts & Green, 2013; Reid, 2015). National policies primarily focus on challenges in urban schools, to the detriment of rural sectors of a given country (Beckman & Gallo, 2015). A common tendency of thought and policy is the assumption

that one model of education is effective across all contexts. It is common to adapt existing national or international curricula only marginally to rural contexts. However, it is also true that countries such as Colombia and Honduras, the focus of this study, have created policy environments which foster education programs for rural areas, such as PSA in Colombia and SAT in Honduras.

One challenge that rural education faces is the constant threat of transnational as well as rural-to-urban migration. Migration (including forced migration or displacement of populations) affects countries internally, but also manifests internationally through "brain drain" movement of skilled workers from countries in the periphery to the core (Wallerstein, 1979). Studies have shown varied and often contradictory effects of (rural-to-urban) migration on schooling, highlighting the complexity of the issue. For example, a longitudinal national study in the US, a generation ago, suggested that students were more likely to remain in their rural communities if they had received vocational education (relevant to rural life) rather than a strictly academic education (Huang et al, 1997). Other influential policy discourses, similarly, stress the importance of access for all to vocationally relevant knowledge for "self-reliance" (Nyerere, 1967). In a Global South context, a study of children of farmers in the Philippines found a widely held view of life "improvement" as moving out of rural areas through international migration: education was viewed as the path to achieve such mobility (Manalo Iv & van de Fliert, 2013). To potentially mitigate rural to urban migration, some countries have turned to promoting the perceived value of rural life, and in particular agricultural work. A study in Kenya shows that a growing number of youth university graduates, who discovered that there were few prospective formal (waged) job offerings, were forced to return to their rural hometowns and their parents' agricultural work to make a living. In response, the Kenyan government began rebranding agriculture as an entrepreneurial effort, referred to as agro-business, to avoid the stigma of rural work being seen as backward (Muthoni Mawaura, 2017). These examples illustrate the connection that rural areas have with the land and with agriculture as a livelihood, in tension with notions of mobility in a globalized context that may become disconnected from agricultural production.

Rural areas are closely connected to their immediate surroundings, such as land, environment, and livelihoods. While globalization can break the connection between communities and the physical environments people live in, rural education can help bridge the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge. In the case of the programs which are the basis of this study, the fact that they were created specifically for rural areas is an essential characteristic in helping students to

feel a sense of purpose and motivation, as they can see the impact of change on their communities through their actions (Correa & Murphy-Graham, 2019). This impact can be seen through changes to both their physical environment and to the quality of the relationships in their communities. The fact that the materials speak directly to the rural areas is crucial to helping students envision the types of actions they can undertake.

Perceptions of rural life impact the desirability to work in rural areas, and the need for national policies that address the gaps in knowledge and pedagogy to prepare and recruit teachers for rural education. Regarding teacher recruitment, retention, and training, one Australian study found that rural areas had been negatively stereotyped in dominant discourse (such as education, access to health and upward mobility opportunities). Rural areas are explained in opposition to a desirable "cosmopolitan" outlook which places importance on implicitly urban global perspectives, economic advancement, and global mobility. An unintended effect of these stereotypes has been that rural educators and contexts have been viewed as backward, difficult, and in need of restructuring in a paternalistic attitude towards rural areas (Roberts & Green, 2013). This misguided view has contributed to difficulty attracting qualified teachers to these "undesirable" areas to work in their countries. Additionally, in Australia, roughly 50% of all students in rural schools were aboriginal (Reid, 2015), and often urban-trained teachers lacked the knowledge or skills to work with Indigenous populations. Australia passed a policy to attract international teachers (who could be even less knowledgeable about the rural reality of a country to which they are newcomers) to alleviate the shortage of rural teachers (Reid, 2015). Another study set in Australia found that additional barriers to teachers choosing rural work settings included the cost associated with distance from their homes of origin, their unfamiliarity with rural lifestyle, and their fear of not having access to certain resources to which they were accustomed (White & Kline, 2012). This research showed that teachers need to be educated specifically to work and live in rural areas, particularly if they are not from there originally. As I explore below, addressing similar challenges in Colombia and Honduras was the genesis of the two teacher development cases in this dissertation.

There are few examples of programs which have been created or designed specifically for rural populations. One of the most salient and well-known examples of educational programs designed for rural areas is Escuela Nueva, based and designed in Colombia, initially in primary education. Created in the mid-1970s, the program had expanded to cover over 20,000 schools (or two thirds

of rural primary schools in the country) by the end of the 1980s, and has been exported to over 16 countries across the world. Escuela Nueva has received multiple prizes and international recognition (Gustafsson-Wright & McGivney, 2014) and has been positively evaluated multiple times (McEwan, 2008). Escuela Nueva emphasizes active participation and collaboration among students in multi-grade classrooms. Teachers are seen as mentors or guides. Textbooks and other pedagogical workbooks have been developed to help students have a hands-on experience (Forero-Pineda, et al, 2006). The program's adaptation of "Learning Circles," small groups of students who work remotely but are connected to a "Mother School," has also been shown useful in the context of Education for Emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic (Cerdan, et al, 2020). The fact that Escuela Nueva was developed in Colombia and supported by the government as an alternative approach to primary education in rural areas makes this evidence particularly relevant to this dissertation.

Another method for addressing rural education challenges is technology, in particular virtual learning. Examples of such initiatives include the establishment of a "media center" hosted by the State Ministry of Education in the Amazonas State in Brazil which allowed students to connect to virtual classes with a lecturing teacher (Cruz, Kwauk & Robinson, 2016). In the United States, distance education is enhanced using a hybrid model of an online teacher with a local facilitator. such hybrid pedagogies helped to counteract the higher dropout rates that can exist in distance education (del a Varre, et al., 2010). However, these efforts depend upon people having access to the necessary infrastructure and equipment to allow them to take advantage of these efforts. The importance of internet infrastructure and connectivity has taken on new greater weight after the COVID pandemic. While there has been worldwide learning about the use of online tools to enhance education these have been heavily skewed to the urban North where the necessary infrastructure exists. Rather in rural areas interruptions in education due to COVID for rural areas have been disproportionately negative, leading to the loss of months or years of schooling and a widening gap in education outcomes between rural and urban areas (de Lima et al, 2020; Tadesse & Muluye, 2020). Even though the pandemic was an extreme situation, it shone light on the importance of having programs geared to the needs of rural communities and their educational contexts.

Other approaches to improving rural education that have shown promise are engagement education and community schools. Engagement education has four main components: 1) focused on the local

community; 2) project based with a driving question pushing the project forward; 3) driven by the principle of people as the community's greatest asset; and 4) democratically oriented. One study of engagement education in rural Appalachia (USA) found that participating students experienced personal growth, increased their understanding of the importance of giving back to the community, built relationships across generations, understood the transformative power they had as an example for others, fostered community pride, and developed local knowledge (Casapulla & Hess, 2016). Therefore, situating educational efforts in the contexts of rural students, and connecting curricular content with tangible aspects of their rural community, made a difference in the students' learning process.

Similarly, community schools have been implemented in multiple contexts in multiple ways. A report (Rural Schools and Community Trust, 2010) on rural community schools across the United States found that these schools were seen as the centers of their communities (and in many instances the largest source of local employment). Many of these schools had expanded their scope to offer a variety of local services such as health and dental care, family resource centers, pre-school, day care, and kindergarten; thus, the schools had become resources for the families living in these rural areas. The study further found that "community schools can help to improve teaching quality by bringing community-based expertise and indigenous knowledge into the teaching and learning experience." (Rural Schools and Community Trust, 2010, p. 28). Therefore, the particular role that communities (and community ties and relationships) play in education for rural areas seems to be crucial to addressing challenges in rural areas and, at the same time, underrepresented in the deficit mentality literature surrounding rural education.

The characteristics of rural education can be illustrated in the following manner:

Figure 3: *Characteristics of Rural Education*

- Rural livelihoods
  (economic conditions)

- Geography
  (accesibility)

- Population density

RURAL EDUCATION

- Gender norms and
  cultural values

- Community
  relationships

- Teacher training
  and retention

- Culturally relevant
  curriculum

- Globalization trends
  (migration)
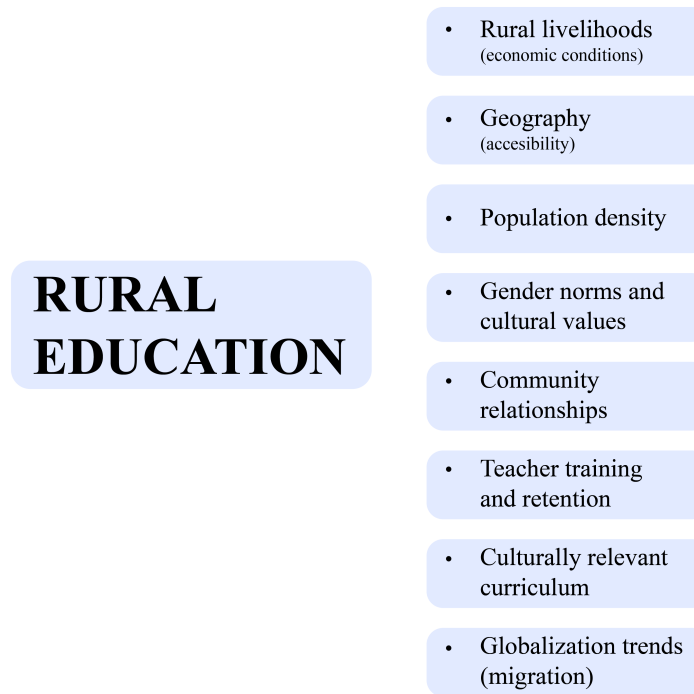
In summary, rural education programs face challenges from inappropriate urban focus in curriculum as well as the challenges concerning the training and availability of teachers who can teach to the rural reality. Responses to the first challenge include curricular adaptations for rural settings, the introduction of online tools and resources, adding elements to make curriculum content more pertinent to a rural reality or the creation of entire programs geared towards rural populations. Responses to challenges concerning teachers include efforts to change perceptions of rural life and the value of rural livelihoods as well as policy changes.

Rural Education in Colombia and Honduras

Colombia and Honduras are in Latin America and share certain similarities as well as differences. Primarily, both countries share a colonial past which has informed part of their current patterns of life, including land distribution, internal migration, and large social inequalities. Colombia is the larger of the two both in terms of land and population (roughly 50 million Colombians versus nine million people living in Honduras). There are differences in political organization, but they both have distinct geographic regions (coastal versus interior) with diverse ethnic configurations. In Colombia the population of mestizos is roughly 87%, Afro-Colombians make up 6.5% and various Indigenous groups around 4% (DANE, 2018), compared to Honduras (90% mestizo, 2% Afro-

Honduran and 7% Indigenous) (INE, 2020). These population proportions look different in various departments across both countries. Hence, regional differences and particularities are important when describing each country. Both Colombia and Honduras have unequal distributions of wealth, represented by Gini coefficients of around 50 (World Bank, 2020). The average income per capita in Colombia is roughly twice that of Honduras ($16,000 versus $8,000). Some of the main economic activities in Colombia include exports of petroleum, agricultural products (coffee being the most famous), cattle, and domestic goods, as well as having national industries such as tourism, transportation, financial systems, and telecommunications. Honduras' economy, on the other hand, has fewer national industries and relies more on agriculture (coffee and bananas), and dependence on the USA as a center for *maquiladoras* (factories employing low-paid labor for export), and receiving remittance from Hondurans living abroad. Colombia is currently classified as an upper-middle income country and Honduras as a low-middle income country (World Bank, 2020a; World Bank, 2020b).

In terms of education indicators, Colombia has maintained an average of 75% net enrollment for secondary education, with these numbers being a bit higher for females than for males. Honduras has average enrolment rates of 42% in secondary education. In 2018, Honduras spent 22% of its total national expenditure on education, while Colombia spent closer to 16% (UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2020a; UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2020b).

Since the 1960's the population living in rural areas has been decreasing markedly in both contexts. Currently, 18.8% of the population in Colombia live in rural areas (World Bank, 2020a), while in Honduras, it is 42% (World Bank, 2020b). Rurality is often correlated with (though not necessarily caused by) certain social issues.

In Colombia, over the recent decades of armed conflict, rural areas have been hit harder by violence perpetrated by guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, and State military and police forces. These patterns of violence have caused internal displacement and exacerbated migration to urban centers (Albuja & Ceballos, 2010). In the large areas of agricultural land, the production of drugs on agricultural soil has also impacted the livelihoods of rural dwellers (Lyons, 2016). Other social issues prevalent in rural areas include disputed and/or inadequate access to land, environmental vulnerabilities, and inadequate access to sanitation, potable water, and health care. Often these challenges are also associated with racial and ethnic differences, as Indigenous groups and Afro-Colombians tend to

have less access to national resources than mestizos. After the signing of Colombia's peace accords in 2016, the National Ministry of Education created *Plan Especial de Educación Rural* (PEER) and conducted a needs analysis which found rural education was a crucial area for conflict recovery plans. The various national actors working in rural education included national universities (such as Universidad de los Andes), International organizations (UNICEF, UNDP, and many non-governmental organizations), national educational associations (Corpoeducacón, Coreducar, and Educapaz), and business organizations (e.g. National Coffee Growers Association).

In Honduras, migration (both emigrations out of Honduras and internal rural-to-urban movements), poverty, criminal (gang) violence, and environmental vulnerability are highly correlated with rural municipalities.

To address rural educational needs, Colombia has implemented several strategies. As described previously, the rural education initiative Escuela Nueva has existed in Colombia since the 1980s, and the rural-oriented SAT program (which I will explore further below) since the 1970s. Additionally, the Colombian Ministry of Education created a range of programs for vulnerable groups, including rural populations. The Ministry created a category of educational programs called "flexible models for learning" to provide alternative educational delivery models with greater choice for learning modalities and curriculum foci (MEN, 2022). Some examples of "flexible models" offerings include Challenges for Giants (*Retos para Gigantes*) and Special Academic Support (*Apoyo Académico Especial*), programs aimed at helping students from Grades 1 to 5 make up classes that they have missed due to illness. Escuela Nueva, because of its focus on multiple-grade classrooms in primary school, is also categorized as a flexible model. Other examples include "*Posprimaria*" (Beyond primary school) aimed at increasing enrollment or engagement in rural secondary education, and Rural Alternative Schools, which reintegrate ex-combatants from Colombia's armed conflict into rural society. While there is range of flexible programs for rural populations, it is not appropriate to group them together with other vulnerable populations such as displaced or marginalized groups as it focuses on violence as the overarching characteristic, rather than rurality.

 Some key issues which continue to plague rural areas in Honduras include low levels of literacy, low pre-school enrollment, high levels of grade repetition, and school attrition. Beginning in 1996, Honduras sought to improve access to education by creating boarding schools. Called Centers for

Basic Education, these schools offered primary and middle education up to the ninth grade. The Honduran government has also tried to address these issues using the radio, including a program called "*Maestro en Casa*," which uses radio to help adults finish their primary education in remote communities, and "*EDUCATODOS*" which uses radio and cassette tapes to help people between the ages of 10- and 35-years old finish their primary education. Honduras also created "*La Escuela Activa y Participativa*," loosely based on the principles of *Escuela Nueva*, encouraging child-centered pedagogies, and involving families and communities in children's educational processes.

Much more could be said about rural education in both Colombia and Honduras. For context in this dissertation, however, it is most important to note that both countries continue to have significant rural populations and corresponding national education policies and programs attempting to address the rural reality. Rural populations are faced with converging situations such as drug trafficking or civil unrest in Colombia and migration and climate change repercussions in Honduras. In each country, the convergence of social factors and rural education is an important consideration for rural education.

FUNDAEC: A Case of Rural Education

FUNDEC is a Colombian NGO that was founded in Cali, Colombia in 1974 by a group of interdisciplinary university faculty who were concerned with the educational attainment and social economic development of the rural areas surrounding Cali. The area had been previously owned by small-scale farmers of African descent, had turned into an area characterized by large sugar cane plantations and sugar refineries which had decimated the farming practices in the area.

The organization, which considers itself to be

> "… Baha'i-inspired" (rather than -based) holds certain principles as central to its ideology… The educational endeavors thus designated do not include religious instruction. ... Nor is the object of study individual and social codes 'inspired' by the teachings of the Faith – a Baha'i version of moral education. 'Inspiration' in this case refers to the framework of thought and action within which educational experience unfolds, a framework that, as already mentioned, is to be continually elaborated and refined (Farid-Arbab, 2016, p. 5).

The importance of this inspiration is that at the heart of the FUNDAEC framework is a guiding principle of "moral empowerment" that is based on two central tenants of the Baha'i Faith: a belief in the oneness of humanity and a conception of human society as collectively going through stages of development, analogous to the phases in the life of a human being (childhood, adolescence, and maturity). Moral empowerment implies an inherent process of transformation in how humans interact with each other and their environment. For Farid-Arbab (2016), these two central tenets

> …created in the minds of the founders of FUNDAEC the conception of a telos: a twofold moral purpose of personal transformation – the becoming imbued with new virtues and powers, new moralities, new capacities – and of the transformation of society. The aim of the educational process set in motion was thus expressed as the empowerment of the individual to assume responsibility for developing those virtues and powers required of her as a member of a human race now entering its age of maturity, on the one hand, and of consciously contributing to organic change in the structures of society, on the other" (p. 8).

FUNDAEC's framework, and consequently, their educational programs, is conceived as pursuing a "two-fold moral purpose" of personal and social transformation. The educational programing meets this dual purpose by helping individuals to develop intellectually and put what they have learnt to use for the betterment of society. Other elements of FUNDAEC's framework include conceptions of essential relationships, of power and political empowerment, of both the subjects and objects of understanding, and of capabilities as an organizing tool for creating complementarity and integration in knowledge.

Operating under these principles, FUNDAEC began to carry out research in the rural areas outside of Cali to understand the various processes of rural community life, including education, health, agriculture, manufacturing, and local economies. The purpose of their research was to identify what people were already doing in their daily lives based on their local knowledge, and by infusing "modern" knowledge into these processes, to help individuals become active agents of developmental change in their communities.

FUNDAEC's attempt to organize and improve what people were already doing in their communities slowly began to be written into short courses and modules. This ultimately led to writing over 80 textbooks in the areas of science, math, language, and processes of community life. While initially the program was not degree conferring, it slowly began to grow in various

regions in Colombia through a decentralized mode of instruction lead by local teachers trained by FUNDAEC. Ultimately the Ministry of Education formally recognized FUNDAEC as a degree-conferring "educational innovation" for rural populations (Resolution No 2393, March 1989). Known as the Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial, SAT expanded through Colombia and other Latin American countries including Honduras, Ecuador, Brazil, and Nicaragua. Elements in the SAT curriculum and its system of delivery were designed specifically to address the rural reality in Colombia, and were subsequently applied to rural areas in other countries. As a response to the challenge of trying to find the appropriate system for delivery of the curriculum across rural distances, FUNDAEC incorporated (and in some cases designed) these characteristics in its programs:

Figure 4: *Main Actors of the PSA and SAT programs*
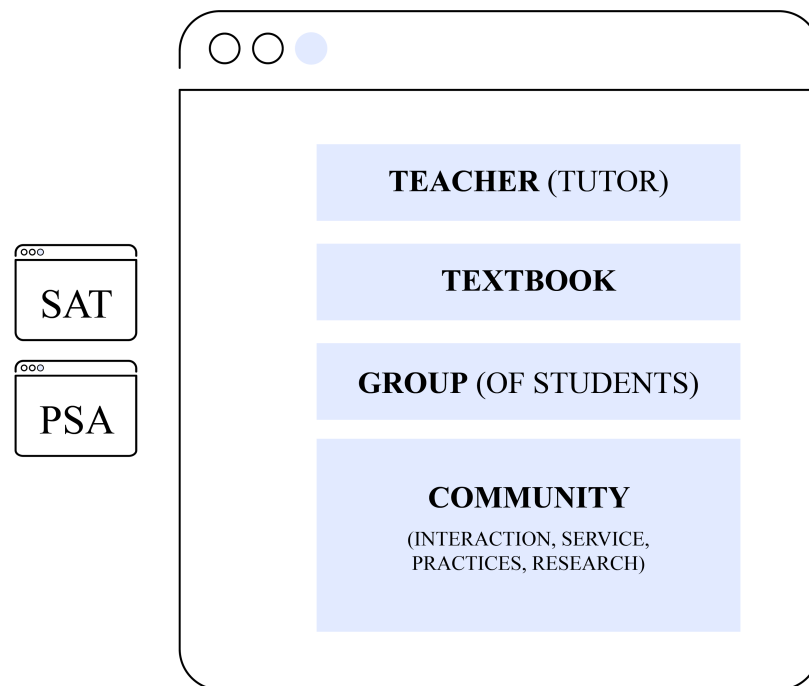
These, and other elements are explored in depth below.

a) *The textbook* – FUNDAEC decided early on to organize its SAT program through a series of educational materials known as *textbooks*. FUNDAEC organized this curriculum around the concept of capability which it defined as encompassing the development of abilities, qualities, skills, concepts, and information (Correa & de Valcarcel, 1995). These capabilities are further organized into textbooks in four curricular areas: mathematics, science, language, and

processes of community life. The textbooks, then, are a key tool for organizing the sphere of capabilities into lessons. Students are expected to own the books, which they can write in and keep for further reference. The textbook guides students through practices, experiments, research activities, service activities, and reflections. The policy that students own the books and can take them home was a response to the scarcity of educational materials in rural areas. It allows students to have tangible resources that they can use later in life as well as while they are SAT students.

b) *Service as an operational axis* – Service to the community plays a dual role in the program. On the one hand, it helps to organize all the curriculum's disciplinary themes around an action-oriented approach. On the other, it allows the students to put in practice what they are learning and to apply abstract concepts to concrete actions. In practical terms it means that the program is action heavy and emphasizes interaction with others (e.g. family members, local institutions, and community members). Previous research (Correa & Murphy-Graham, 2019) found that one of the results of this focus in the program has been an increased sense of agency in the students. As students were able to see how education could have an impact on their immediate lives, and when they began to experience the ways in which their actions could lead to social change, their motivation to study as well as their sense of agency increased, manifested in an increased confidence in their ability to act (Correa & Murphy-Graham, 2019). Additionally, the conception of service in the curriculums is closely tied to the rural reality of the students.

c) *Capabilities* – FUNDAEC defines a capability as a "developed capacity to think and act in a particular sphere of activity and according to an explicit purpose," and "refer[s] to complex spheres of thought and action." Therefore, according to Farid-Arbab (2016),

> a capability is not something a student either has or does not have; [rather] it is developed progressively as one acquires a set of interrelated skills and abilities, assimilates the necessary information, advances in the understanding of relevant concepts, and acquires certain attitudes, habits, and spiritual qualities (p. 266).

and where it is ultimately utilized "mostly as a heuristic device, a way of thinking about educational objectives and content, a strategy to organize elements of a curriculum according to a specific overall aim" (p. 266). This means that students are expected to

advance in broad categories of learning, for which knowledge is one of the inputs necessary.

For example, in mathematics, the capability to "classify" things, that is to understand them in groups that share common characteristics, is one of the essential ways in which humans operate. This capability is taught through the classification of the animal, mineral and vegetable kingdoms as well as through exploration of genus, species, etc. within each (FUNDAEC, 2005). In the area of service to the community, the capability to design and cultivate certain plots that are suitable for the ecological, social, and cultural conditions of the micro-region (appropriate agricultural practices) is nurtured. Also, students become able to facilitate informal educational activities with small groups of children and to converse with parents on issues related to the education of young children. In science, the capabilities include making organized observations of phenomena, of seeking patterns in data so gathered, of designing experiments to test a hypothesis, and of creating models within a theoretical structure. Lastly, in language, some of the capabilities to be developed include describing the world around oneself, formulating ideas and expressing them clearly, reading the literature of relevant fields at proficient levels of comprehension, and depicting events and processes in their historical contexts. This integration of capabilities (and subject matter) occurs throughout the FUNDAEC curriculum.

FUNDAEC has further classified their capability goals into three broad categories: those related to the moral dimensions of a path of service the students embark on, those that have direct bearing on the acts of service which give practical expression to the aims of any of given program, and the ones associated with the intellectual heritage of humanity (Farid-Arbab, 2016, p. 273). Additionally, FUNDAEC theorizes that capabilities need to be of a "right size" to be "included among the objectives of an educational program, knowing that the objective would never be the definite acquisition of a given capability, but advancing in it" (Farid-Arbab, 2016, p. 267). This curriculum organizing tool allows FUNDAEC to integrate different areas of knowledge and to help the students develop some concrete skills that transcend the boundaries placed by traditional ways of dividing information and organizing schooling.

These capabilities are therefore organized in four main areas, illustrated below:

Figure 5: *Capabilities to be fostered in the PSA and SAT curriculum*
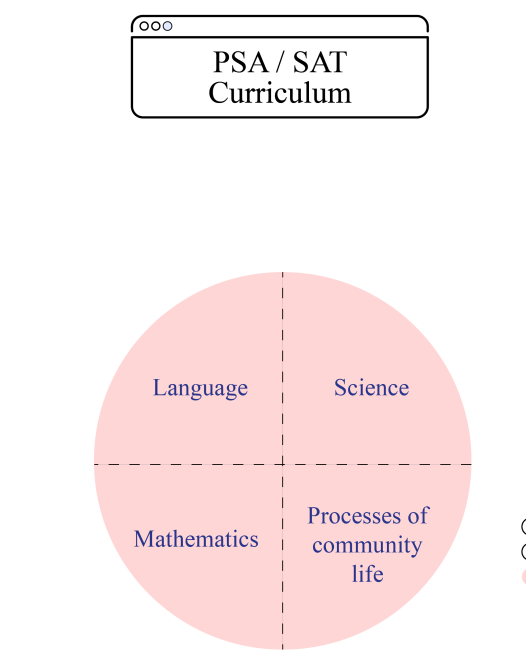
d) *The SAT group* – Envisioned to be an integral component of the program, the group usually has between 10-15 students. Although students are typically of different ages, each group goes through the textbook together and, ideally, stays together for the duration of the program. The program has a duration of six years (roughly the equivalent of 6th to 11th grade – most Latin American countries only go up to grade 11). The size of the group is dependent on the community where it is based and the size of the rural population, so that students would not need to leave their rural communities to access their education. Unlike a formal school class, which revolves around the school or the teacher, the SAT group is expected to have their own identity and to have flexibility which does not require a school building but can meet in other community or home spaces.

e) *Tutorial system* – Teachers in the SAT program are called tutors. They are envisioned to be from the same community and to become trained in the use of the SAT curriculum so that students need not leave their communities in search of a school, because teachers are found within their own context. Each teacher works with one group of students, ideally remaining with them through all three levels of the program. Teachers also facilitate the curriculum and guide students through the textbooks.

While in FUNDAEC's theory tutors do not need to have been teachers prior to receiving training in the program curriculum, in places where the program is formally accredited by the government, teachers are part of the public school system (including receiving salaries from the government). In those settings, teachers need to go through their country's official teacher accreditation process (at teacher's colleges or universities. This difference – between teachers who need to be accredited (professionalized) and teachers who are just trained in the nonformal program's curriculum – is one of the key distinctions between the SAT (accredited) and PSA (non-accredited) programs which will be discussed later.

f) *Contextualized knowledge* – One of the biggest concerns that FUNDAEC had when it began was how to ensure that the curriculum was written with the rural student in mind, using examples and exercises relevant to the rural context. For example, experiments are designed to be done without a fully equipped lab. Research is to be carried out through having conversations with community members. Students are asked to get to know their reality and are not expected to leave the area. The FUNDAEC curriculum, then, is place-based and locally contextualized. Service to the community is the axis around which the curriculum revolves, and interactions with the community occur through acts of service which SAT groups routinely carry out.

g) *Follow up system* – To cover large geographic areas with groups in difficult to reach and dispersed locations, FUNDAEC began to use a follow up method in which designated coordinators visited the teachers on site to help with their professional development and general questions. Teachers, then, are not expected to cover large territories, but to focus on their own communities and villages. In contrast, the coordinator moves around and can share experiences and lessons learnt throughout a given region. This follow up system became the basis for the model of accompaniment as teacher professional development, which is the focus of this dissertation research and will be discussed at length in Chapters Five and Six.

While this is not a comprehensive list of characteristics of the SAT program, it outlines some salient aspects of the SAT curriculum and its conceptual framework.

The SAT program was successful as an innovative rural education model reaching over 300,000 students in Colombia alone (Kwauk & Robinson, 2016). Several evaluations praised different elements of the program, including its method of delivery and expansion (Kwak & Robinson,

2016), its high-quality indicators for rural youth as compared to other educational options (McEwan et al., 2015) and student response and engagement (Perfetti et al., 2001). Despite these contributions in addressing issues of rural education, the program has also encountered several challenges to its continued expansion. Paradoxically, since the SAT program is acknowledged as an alternative model of rural education and as part of the national "catalogue" of programs offered to the rural areas, it has had to submit to certain national regulations. Since SAT was not initially designed to become a secondary education program per se, but rather to be a catalyst for rural development, it differs from traditional national conceptions of schooling. For example, there are always questions as regards the way subject matters are organized or about the number of hours students' study. This ongoing debate, as well as a wave of other educational programs for rural populations, led to a boxing in of the program into a particular niche of rural adult non-traditional education within Colombia. As a response to the essential question of how to train teachers for rural areas, and how to address issues of "teacher sorting" (Luschei & Jeong, 2018) where more qualified teachers go to schools more economic resources (with the addition of these being concentrated in urban areas), FUNDAEC created the Centro Universitario de Bienestar Rural in 1990 (Correa & de Valcarcel, 1995). The university also helped teachers learn specifically about how to use the SAT curriculum and its corresponding pedagogy. This University was fully accredited by the Ministry of Education of Colombia and graduates received a teaching degree according to national guidelines and curricular expectations. Graduates were equipped to work in both private and public institutions but were additionally able to master the SAT curriculum and to be attentive to the issues of rural communities. While the University offered several other degrees, its primary purpose was training teachers who would work in rural areas of Colombia. To meet these goals, the University organized its teaching degree around four lines of action: the development of action, reflection, and investigation capabilities; service to the community capabilities; the evaluation of the learning (follow up on learning and progress), and the development of teaching guides for SAT teachers (CUBR, 2007, p.14-15). In addition to these strands, students were expected to study and later teach the SAT curriculum. The University was in operation for over 20 years and received students from Colombia as well as other countries in Latin America. It was able to graduate over 2,000 students who currently work as educators in private and public institutions within and outside of Colombia. Despite best efforts, the University fell prey to the politics of school reform on both a national and global scale. As mentioned above, Colombia's history of armed conflict – drug lords, guerilla, and paramilitary conflict over rural

territory (Beneviste & McEwan, 2000) disrupted the University's operations. At the same time, competition for government funding negatively impacted the institution, a small rural university trying to serve a particularly under-recognized and often marginalized population. When Colombia modeled its tertiary education off systems in Western industrialized countries, it created pressure to adhere to so-called international standards, resulting in closing small universities and pressuring existing institutions to meet a standardized list of requirements. This meant that, by 2006, FUNDAEC decided to close the University for the time being. This shift meant a change in the direction of the organization, to include more non-formal educational programs that allow for greater degrees of flexibility than those under formal educational structures.

Cognizant of the often-frustrating limitations placed on its innovative projects, FUNDAEC decided to continue offering the (formalized) SAT program in Colombia but also to offer a nonformal derivative of the program in a non-degree conferring manner. This led to the creation of the Preparation for Social Action (PSA) program (FUNDAEC, 2006) which the first 2 years of the SAT curriculum and is the same as SAT except in its length and degree conferring status. Similarly, the SAT program and its books, currently translated into English and French, have been used by a few organizations in Africa, East Asia, and the Pacific.

In summary, FUNDAEC developed the SAT program in response to challenges they found facing the rural education sector in Colombia. The program grew over time and was adopted by other countries. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the SAT program is that it is degree conferring, and its teachers are part of the public school system. However, also FUNDAEC decided to package the first two years of the SAT program into a non-degree conferring PSA program. While each program has its own specifications – in particular, that teachers require teaching certification from the government in SAT, whereas anyone can be trained as a teacher for PSA – both programs share the same core curriculum textbooks as well as the same conceptual framework of the purpose of education.

Research Sites: FUNDAEC's PSA in Colombia and Bayan's *SAT in Honduras*

To study and compare how teacher professional development is carried out in the context of both the SAT and PSA programs, I selected two organizations as sites for this study. The first of these is the PSA program offered by FUNDAEC in Colombia. It was important to include FUNDAEC in this study, as the originator of both programs and the central organization that owns the

curriculum. As a comparison, I chose to study the SAT program in Honduras as offered by the Bayan Foundation, as this is the organization and country which currently has the largest number of SAT students. Both organizations are registered NGOs with respective governments, structured with a Board of Directors and Executive Directors in charge of the day-to-day management. While both organizations also carry out other programs, for this research I am focusing my attention on the way the SAT and PSA programs are enacted within each organization. These two sites will illuminate different facets of accompaniment professional development of teachers.

In the case of the PSA program in Colombia, FUNDAEC is currently using an administrative unit organization consisting of 10-15 PSA groups with their corresponding teachers. Such a unit can have from 150-200 active students enrolled at a time, located in a few nearby communities or even in one small city (less geographically dispersed). One coordinator follows these PSA groups, with the help of one or two active teachers who concurrently lead their own PSA groups. This unit model, manageable for a coordinator, is the basis for expansion of the program in Colombia. Each unit is expected to have a regular cycle of activities within a year. For example, PSA groups across a unit can come together in student gatherings every six months, and trainings and meetings with teachers also occur within a unit on a regular basis (FUNDAEC, 2017).

For Bayan's SAT program, their system of teacher follow-up is determined by the number of departments (provinces) in which they are currently working. At the moment, Bayan and the SAT program can be found in nine out of the eighteen departments in Honduras, in a total of 156 communities. The Bayan organization delivering the (non-formal) SAT program in Honduras has a national director and national administrative support staff. Bayan has one person in charge of each of the four main regions in Honduras. In turn, each of these regions has roughly six field coordinators who each work with an average of ten mentors. Each of these mentors then works directly with the SAT program teachers.

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to contextualize the case study research sites of this dissertation in relation to rural education, specifically in Colombia and Honduras, and to introduce the organizations and educational programs which are the core of this study. The rural education presents both difficult issues as well as promising curricular or programmatic responses. Furthermore, countries in Latin America, as part of the global south, face their own challenges and

responses to rural education. Rural education intersects with other pressing issues, such as peacebuilding in Colombia and migration and natural disasters in Honduras. In this context, then, the programs designed by FUNDAEC can be understood as an attempt to address pressing questions relevant to rural populations differently in each national context.

Figure 6: *Similarities and Differences in the PSA and SAT programs*
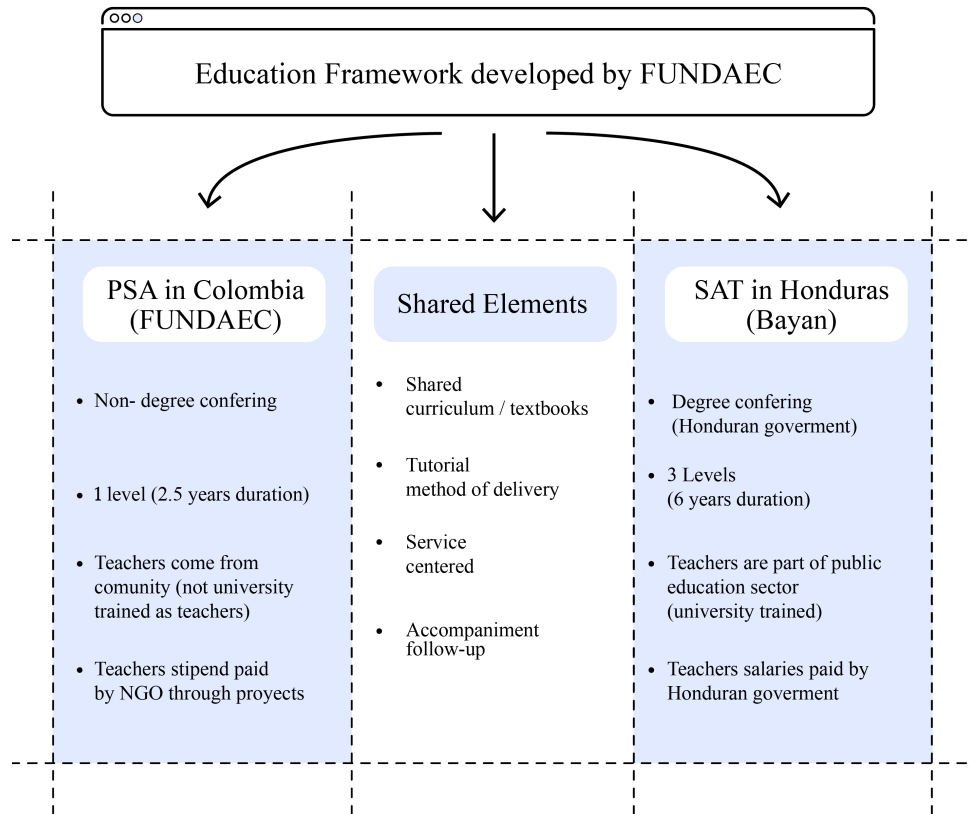
The similarities in the two programs that FUNDAEC created (PSA and SAT) are the response to the needs of rural populations in the Global South. Some of the elements of the program are more universal (the curriculum, the use of capabilities, etc.), while others are specific to country context, educational systems and the specific goals of each implementing organization.

The implications of these similarities and differences in the way that teacher professional learning has been approached in both country settings is the reason why a comparative case study was chosen as a way of answering the research questions of this dissertation. Additionally, the conceptual underpinnings of FUNDAEC's PSA and SAT programs, as well as their curricular

design and intersecting strands of action, pose interesting opportunities for teacher learning, to be explored and expounded in the following three chapters.

Chapter 5:
Accompaniment: Embarking on a Joint Path of Learning

As expressed in previous chapters, the core concern of this thesis is to describe and analyze the on-site professional development process known as accompaniment, carried out with practicing in-service (novice and experienced) teachers in the PSA program in Colombia and the SAT program in Honduras. My aim in this chapter is to show what accompaniment is, how it is carried out, what its characteristics are, and if there are any key lessons which can be learnt from this unique approach to teacher professional development. This chapter addresses one of the first elements in my conceptual framework: mentorship, analyzed through the literature presented in Chapter 2. Some of these key ideas include the supportive role that mentors played in the mentees' development, the fundamental role of trust in mentor/mentee relationships, and the horizontal nature these relationships in these "accompaniment" case study sites.

The chapter begins with some interviewees' general conceptions of accompaniment and then presents and compares each of the two cases. How accompaniment is described, then the spaces where accompaniment takes place (and what it looks like in each space). The chapter concludes with a broader discussion of these cases showcasing similarities and differences in how accompaniment for teacher development was conceived and carried out within each of the two organizations, beginning with the role of the mentor as a supportive guide helping the teacher on their path of development, and accompaniment's similarities and differences to supervision. The chapter shows the multiple and diverse spaces for accompaniment in both cases — beyond on-site classroom visits where mentors and teachers to interacted outside of direct teaching in classrooms.

Conceptions of Accompaniment

As discussed in Chapter 2, accompaniment is a lesser-known way of fostering teacher development (Avalos, 2011; Bautista and Ortega-Ruiz, 2015; Castro Garces & Martinez Granada, 2016). I further argue that accompaniment includes elements of mentorship (such as cultivating relationships, career and psychosocial elements, and teacher-mentor dialogue, but accompaniment's scope is much more expansive.

In both the PSA (Colombia) and SAT (Honduras) programs, accompaniment was conceived a response to challenges of maintaining the quality of a rural educational program as it grew and extended within a country or across national boundaries. Both programs conceived of

accompaniment as employing a "tutorial" method, centered around each teacher and group of students and not around a physical school or a classroom space. This tutorial system, as a mode of delivery, allows for groups of students to exist in geographically dispersed areas without the need for building an entire school. This decentralized tutorial modality had been an important feature of both the PSA and the SAT programs that had permitted the growth of the program within each organization and to other organizations and countries across the Global South (Kwuak & Robinson, 2016)

One existing concern with decentralized programs such as PSA and SAT is the need to ensure the quality of the program and the adherence to a curriculum. Supporting teachers in their professional improvement, with this goal in mind, is one of the main aims of accompaniment approaches to teacher development. One national level staff member explained how accompaniment processes are designed to maintain program quality.

> An important idea is that [our] programs are carried out with quality…the program has been able to develop a very organized structure where one of its main elements is that people in that structure can accompany others to be better and more efficient in what they do… This is the reason for the important connection between trainings and the accompaniment process. Because accompaniment implies that we are [not only training, but] also helping some people who are in the existing structure… And accompaniment means that I walk with that person. I am by their side in many of the things they do. I observe the way they work and together we can make that work better… So, accompaniment implies working alongside the other person. It implies training them so they can do their job better and it also implies a constant conversation. (Staff #3C)

This staff member in the PSA (Colombia) organization described the two essential aspects of teacher professional development: first trainings, then accompaniment. The organization uses the plural "trainings" to refer to a sequence of several trainings which take the teachers through the entire (pupils') curriculum. In training spaces, teachers are brought together to go through the curriculum, to clarify doubts about the content they will be expected to teach their pupils, and to learn how to teach the content and the pedagogy of the PSA program. Trainings vary by organization but are normally one or two-week long events focusing on content review. Teachers

are expected to read and go through the content multiple times, and to deepen their levels of understanding over time (Correa & Varcarcel, 1995).

However, as the organization leader explained above, trainings alone were not sufficient to ensure the quality of the PSA and SAT programs. Thus, a process of mentors accompanying teachers was added. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to present the elements of trainings – in this study, the focus is on one unique approach to the continuous development of teachers: accompaniment. After teachers have been trained in the content and curriculum, accompaniment is a support system as they learn about their function and role as teachers. As this leader mentioned, accompaniment involves teachers having a "constant conversation" with an experienced mentor who is "working alongside" them with the same pupils, families, and curriculum content. Hence, accompaniment requires dialogue, a mutually supportive environment, and a common goal.

In addition to confirming these aspects of teacher accompaniment, interviewees suggested certain qualities or factors entailed by accompaniment. Accompaniment was not simply a checklist of things that a teacher needed to do, but *ways of being*. As one teacher explained, accompaniment was continuous, and required certain attitudes:

> Well accompaniment is something constant. …. To carry it out one needs to have love for one's job and for one's study. It is to be *pendiente* [watching out for someone, having their back]. It is being creative. It is being a good person. It is being respectful. Anyone can accompany someone else but not anyone can do it with love. (Teacher #13C)

According to this teacher, then, engaging in accompaniment means to love helping people, to want to help others, and to look out for them. To a degree, accompaniment can be described as an attitude and way of working with others. In comparison with mentorship, participants did not describe accompaniment as a specific type of program, nor as limited to the interplay between mentor and mentee, but as a broader approach to working with others in general.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will elaborate what teacher accompaniment for professional development meant, according to interviewees especially teachers and mentors. The data generated in the two project sites, PSA in Colombia, and SAT in Honduras, highlight slightly different ways in which accompaniment can be carried out and understood.

PSA in Colombia[3]

Several of the teacher interviewees in Colombia repeated that they understood the *act* of accompanying a teacher as an act of guidance. Guidance often implies that one person (with more experience or knowledge) can help another (with less experience or knowledge) by showing them how to do something. Guiding teaching practice implies shedding light on certain questions, scenarios or situations that can arise. The following two short quotes typify some of the ways teachers described accompaniment as guidance include:

> Accompaniment is like that **guide**. It is having someone there who can help you when you have a difficulty. It is having someone who serves as a **guide**. (Teacher #2C[4])
>
> Accompaniment, I would say, implies more than going to accompany someone. It means to **guide**. To **guide** or to teach others about how to do things, and for them, ultimately, to become empowered, that is for them to be protagonists of their spiritual and intellectual development. So, I would say accompaniment is to **guide**. (Teacher #12C)

Thus, in the PSA approach to accompaniment teacher development, the main function of a mentor is to guide a teacher. This implies that the person doing the guiding knows where they are going, has more experience, or has tools at their disposal which allow them to "see" more clearly or more fully. In previous chapters, I argued that the "path" of teacher development can be a way to understand how teachers may progress from novice to experienced. This path need not be not something that a teacher walks alone but rather they may benefit from a guide who can show them the way and support them. The references to the mentor as a guide by the teacher interviewees is congruent with this notion of a teacher development path. Implicit in the idea of a guide is the possibility that a guide knows the path, has walked that portion of it before, and can show others were to step, where certain pitfalls might be or where to focus attention. It also implies that direct

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[3] As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Colombian data comes from 23 teachers, 13 mentors and 4 organizational staff which were interviewed. They are representative of five regions in the country and are 30.5% male and 69.5% female.
[4] The letter "C" after excerpts refers to Colombian interviews, while the letter "H" indicates interviews conducted in Honduras

action is required for the teacher and mentor to walk that path together. Guiding does not occur from afar or in the abstract, but in the concrete day-to-day interactions between mentor and mentee.

Other teachers expanded this notion of guidance in accompaniment.

> For me it is to **guide** in the process, whether it is one of my fellow teachers or students. It is to accompany them in the process of difficulties or to know if they need **support**. It is not necessarily about one talking or saying everything, but to feel supported, to not feel alone, to know one can count on the people around you…Because sometimes you just need that person who is just next to you, who by being besides you motivates you, who gives you confidence. Because sometimes having that person there, you know that if you feel like you are falling you have the trust to know that your *compañero* is going to be there to help you. (Teacher #14C)

In this teacher's explanation, accompaniment includes support as well as guidance, enhanced by certain feelings and attitudes. Thus, accompaniment implies a teacher not being (or feeling) alone in a profession which is often described as "solitary" (Hargraves, 2000). Feeling accompanied can, in this teacher's view, lead a teacher to have a sense of confidence in their abilities and comfort in knowing that there is someone who can support them – a *compañero*, or partner.

Teachers expressed their feeling that someone was there for them. *Pendiente,* roughly translated, means the feeling that someone is watching out for you, is aware of you, or has "got your back". It means knowing that someone is thinking about you and cares about your well-being. One teacher explained it this way:

> The word accompaniment to me means 'being there'. Being *pendiente*, making sure that each one of your steps, of your successes are even better than the one before. To be there helping you find solutions to problems. To be there when you are depressed when participants don't come to class. For there to be a brotherhood. That we feel that we are truly accompanied, that we have that help. (Teacher #7C)

This teacher expressed the importance of having mentors' support when they encountered problems in their work as teachers, to help find solutions to classroom issues such as low pupil participation. When faced with challenging situations, either inside or outside of the class, teachers

expressed the need to confer with someone. Accompaniment, then, is supportive mentorship that may generate feelings of support and confidence.

These teachers' interpretations of accompaniment are echoed by mentors and administrative staff as well. For example, one mentor described their role as a supportive guide.

> The word accompaniment means to be able to be supportive. A support for the teacher… To help resolve certain challenges… it also has an element of wanting to learn together. But also, for us to be able to share with them some of our own knowledge. When one says one is going to accompany a teacher it means [belief] in their potential, in their capabilities but also their weaknesses. And that is the point. That they might not be so strong in one area, and we must help them with that. We need to be a guide… so they can improve as individuals, but also as those resources who want the well-being of their community… [Accompaniment] means a lot of things: to be a guide, to be a friend, to be that person who is supporting them in that process of development. (Mentor #4C)

The supportive accompaniment guide, as described above, also wants to learn alongside the teacher. The mentor noted that they do not presume to know all the answers or to tell the teacher what is "correct," but rather to facilitate discovery of those answers together. The teacher can also search independently for solutions to their own problems. Seeing the potential in the teacher and helping them to reach it their potential is significant to this mentor's description of accompaniment. The notion of accompaniment as supporting guidance was expounded upon by a staff member of the organization. Using the metaphor of a path, they explain, people can walk together:

> Whether it be a teacher, a mentor, or a colleague that we are accompanying in an educational process… I see it as also participating in different activities or events, to be in certain [student] groups, to try and resolve difficulties together. And then being able to reflect on those difficulties. To learn from it, to find the best solution and being able to incorporate what was learnt. I see it as two friends that are walking together, that are trying to grow together and are learning together. (Staff #2C)

As noted above, this staff member described their organization's educational "path" in various ways. A path of service that students and teachers walk on as they interact through service projects

with their communities; a path of development that teachers are embarked on; and a path of learning from novice to experienced teachers. All of these notions imply movement, growth, progression and advancement. Furthermore, these teachers do not embark alone: they are on that path with a mentor, guide, or supportive friend.

In summary, in the PSA experience in Colombia, accompaniment was expressed primarily as mutual support, of individuals helping each other in their challenges and learning together to address those difficulties or questions through a process of shared reflection for growth and learning. In the research literature, mentoring is often described as having an initial phase, an intense mentoring phase, and then a winding down. For teachers and mentors in PSA, however, accompaniment does not taper off. Accompaniment, when seen as an ongoing learning path, shows how mentoring (or guidance) will not necessarily look the same all the time, but it does not have an end.

SAT in Honduras[5]

Similarly to PSA in Colombia, Honduran teachers and mentors in the SAT program described accompaniment as a teacher knowing that someone "has your back." When struggling, teachers described having a person (mentor) who could help them to identify and think through situations when they were not doing things well. Interviewees described mentors as telling them to "think again" or to "think about it differently, and that helps [them] reflect about it". Accompaniment was described with words such as "help", "support," "guide," and "orient."

One teacher described accompaniment as support.

> Accompaniment is, in one word, support. A mutual support. A support which we really get from the person who at that time is accompanying us. Because accompaniment helps us to grow and helps us see our strengths and weaknesses to improve. (Teacher #39H)

According to this interviewee, accompaniment was a process of support by a mentor to the teacher to help the teacher to improve their work performance. It also implied that the person doing the accompanying (the mentor) had the teacher's best interest at heart, could see both their strengths

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[5] The data from Honduras comes from 76 interviews conducted with 61 teachers and 15 mentors.

and weaknesses, and could think of ways of helping the teacher to overcome certain challenges they might be facing.

The interviewees describe a broad variety of things with which a mentor could help a teacher. A mentor elaborated on some of the types of accompaniment support they might provide to a teacher:

> It means to do everything. First, we are friends with the teachers and sometimes even become their psychologists because sometimes the teachers have issues, and they can't unburden themselves at home...Sometimes we talk with them, other times we even give classes. We have had to bring the snacks to the center, we have had to help with the textbooks. Sometimes we need to help the students, find them a sponsor who can pay for their education because they live in areas of extreme poverty. So sometimes they come to us and ask for help. …. We look for help where we can find it, sometimes the mayor's office. Sometimes we are doctors. One time I was in a (teaching-learning) center and a girl had her first menstruation…Sometimes we have had to be parents as well. I have had students say, "please come to this meeting with me to represent my parent because they can't" ... And sometimes we have to be psychologists to the parents, because they need someone to talk to and sometimes they are the ones with the problem, not the student… All of this is part of the job, but we like it. (Mentor #1H)

As this mentor described it, a mentor supported the teacher (and the students) by being their friend, by acting as a sounding board and a counselor, by offering parental guidance, or by helping students, parents, or teachers to solve practical and financial problems. While not everything this mentor describes could be considered teacher professional development, this quote illustrates their perspective that to accompany a teacher implies being involved in various aspects of their working and community lives, wearing multiple hats. This vision of accompaniment clearly goes beyond the definitions found in mentoring literature, as it indicates involvement in various aspects of both teachers' and students' lives. Accompaniment goes beyond only a mentor and a mentee and moves into a general collaborative approach to working with others. This description of accompaniment shows it occurring in different instances, with different people, and manifesting in various ways, by being part of the community in its entirety.

Several teachers noted that accompaniment was a holistic approach: a mentor accompanied not only in the professional and personal lives of the teacher but "the whole system" made up of

parents, students, and the community. Recognizing accompaniment beyond the realm of teacher professional development, viewing the SAT program as part of the rural community and the mentor as part of that wider ecosystem.

Accompaniment, then, is part of the way mentors follow and participate in the work of teachers, to supplement and support their initial professional teacher development training. It can be challenging to continue to work with teachers over time in dispersed rural areas. The mentor's work of accompaniment in these case study sites was wider than the roles specified in most teacher professional development, including accompanying the program as a whole and its multiple interactions with the community. The SAT program, from the outset, has been conceived as an integral part of the community (Correa & Valcarcel, 1995). Ideally, SAT teachers come from and live in the same communities as their students, which helps both in logistical concerns and to make the program part of the ways of life in the communities. Some teachers remarked that they were often friends, neighbors, or even family with their teachers, embedded in the fabric of the life of the community. Hence, these notions which were espoused by teachers and mentors are not only present in the interview data but also triangulated by the organization's view and framework.

Accompaniment Compared to Supervision

While the general descriptions of accompaniment covered above were quite similar for PSA in Colombia and SAT in Honduras, in the Honduras interviews, teachers frequently defined accompaniment in comparison or in contrast to a notion of supervision. This repetition of the word supervision may suggest that in Honduras mentors fulfilled a role which was close to supervision. However, it is also possible that supervision was the closest concept or term that teachers had in their repertoires for describing what accompaniment mentors did. Additionally, since the majority of the SAT teachers in the Honduras sites had been trained as teachers in universities, which do not focus on rural education specifically, and many of the Honduras teacher participants had worked in the "traditional" education sector before working with the SAT program, supervisory relationships were their point of reference in ways that did not arise in the Colombia interviews.

Here are a few examples of the varied ways SAT teachers expressed their understanding of accompaniment in relation to supervision (emphasis added).

> Accompaniment is when… it's when they come to **supervise** you. It is the same! Well, but accompaniment is more pedagogical. The word changes. It has more to do with coming to

accompany you, to see how you are giving a class, to see what methodology you are implementing with the students, to see if you are encouraging participation. (Teacher #8H)

Well accompaniment to me is to really visit you and to see how we are working, how we are giving class, how are doing regarding service to the community. So, accompaniment is that, to accompany you in the different areas of the education process. It is not like a **supervision** because a **supervision** is something more extensive…When a mentor comes it is like just another colleague from the system, a friend, not a person who comes to pressure or affect the class. Of course, they might suggest things in some parts, but one thinks it is okay. But since they suggest, then it is more a friendship relationship so there is no problem. (Teacher #27H)

In these interview excerpts, it is apparent that these Honduran teachers' point of reference for thinking about their relationship with a mentor was that of supervision. Supervision is the default relationship which exists (especially in formal school settings) when one person has more knowledge or experience than the other. Hence, SAT Honduras teachers compared and contrasted what they were experiencing in accompaniment mentoring visits with what they might have previously experienced (as teachers or students in formal schooling). It is interesting to note that this particular teacher referred to the same mentor as either accompanying or supervising their teaching of the class, depending on what that mentor did during class. Apparently, the way the mentor chose to visit, and their posture, could differentiate the visit between accompaniment or supervisory activity.

Teachers suggested that, if a mentor could become part of the class and not present as an outsider, then that behavior was accompaniment. If that same mentor-visitor focused on filling out certain forms, then the teacher interviewees considered that supervision. The visitor being an insider versus an outsider could shift the teacher's perception of being either accompanied or supervised (this is elaborated on in Chapter 6).

The teacher's perception of what the mentor was doing partly went beyond what the mentor may actually have done: the teacher's interpretation influenced by their existing knowledge and life experiences. This tenuous distinction is exemplified in the following excerpt, where a teacher could be describing gentle supervision, or accompaniment.

> It is a space where the mentor comes and sits with us… he helps us see what aspects we are going to talk about, or what aspects he is going to look at, what he is going to accompany. Then he shares [the ficha], then he meets with our students. Then he stays for the entire class and participates just like another student. And at the end he stays, and we meet, not to scold us, but rather to reflect together about some aspects that we need to improve. (Teacher #46H)

For this teacher, what the mentor has done during their visit has been accompaniment, not supervision, because the mentor and teacher sat together; the mentor shared what they were thinking about (not sitting back and observing distantly). The mentor was integrated into the classroom dynamic and stayed with the teacher at the end to reflect together on the class. These all influenced the teacher's perception of what was happening during the visit.

Even though 95% of all teacher interviewees expressed positive perspectives about the accompaniment they had received, roughly 5% of interviewees did consider the mentoring process they had received to be close to supervision, or even to be unnecessary. Sometimes a teacher felt that they didn't need the mentor helping them, or that the type of accompaniment they received did not adequately reflect the teacher's feelings of mastery over certain skills. At that point, for these few interviewees, the mentor's classroom visit felt more like supervision than anything else. For example:

> The relationship with the mentor is good, and it is fine for them to come here and everything... but we don't need a mentor. At this stage we don't need someone who comes to review our plans, or who is observing our class all day, because we already know what we need to do, everyone knows their jobs and we don't need someone on top of us. Or maybe it is just us that we don't have the need to ask for help, maybe others do, but we don't need as much help, or at least that is our point of view. (Teacher #60H)

In this instance, the teacher was clearly at odds with their mentor. Did this reflect an issue with accompaniment as an approach, or was there a personal problem between the teacher and the mentor? Was the mentor doing too many basic things with a teacher who felt that they already had enough experience? Did this individual teacher prefer to work more independently? Whatever the reasons, this teacher's discomfort with this mentor's visit suggests that (to be welcome)

accompaniment must eschew formulaic approaches and evolve alongside each teacher's needs, to avoid falling into more traditional supervisory ways of operating.

Administrative questions can feel "supervisory" and be another point of potential contention between teacher and mentor. In the SAT's formally accredited school program, students were expected to be evaluated by teachers and to receive grades. Student attendance rates were also assessed. Various administrative tools were in place to ensure mentor visits were taking place and to keep track of what was happening in the student groups or with teachers. While administration was not a main component in the accompaniment processes, it was often described by both teachers and mentors as being present in their relationships. A mentor described some of the administrative matters they must look for when visiting teachers:

> The meaning of the word accompaniment for us is a meeting where they identify that the administrative issues are okay, that the information and data is up to date. . . [In one instance] the teacher because they were taking care of a certain number of students was not paying too much attention to the administrative part. It is [the mentor's role] to keep records, to know what is happening because we also need quantitative data, to give grades. So, it is mostly for those things, but it requires time… So, for example, reviewing the students' textbooks, how they answered the questions, what exercises they did, they can't do it quickly with 30 students. So, I always tell them take home a few books a day and that way the students can also see that you are keep records of what they are doing. (Mentor #7H)

As this mentor described, the type of information that teachers and mentors were required to gather was an important part of the tasks that the mentor needs to carry out. If the administrative portion of the work became predominant, a mentor was perceived as carrying out a more supervisory role. In Honduras, mentors visited the teachers' classes with an observational tool, known as a *ficha*, designed to help mentors identify certain aspects of the teacher's work. Mentors filled out a *ficha* during or after a visit. In interviews, some teachers expressed that the presence of such a document made the conversation with the mentors more formal and in some instances, evaluative. Some teachers describe the *ficha* simply as a record of what had happened in class, while others described it as a way for them (and their mentor) to have a defined list of commitments to work on until the next meeting. Other teachers referred to the *ficha* in more suspicious tones. A minority of teachers

noted that having something written down, even if it was administrative, had a connotation of supervisory evaluation. Some teachers expressed their discomfort if they believed that the *ficha* assessments went into their permanent record. The seriousness of the mentor's critical observations being written down was exemplified by one teacher:

> Maybe if it was only verbal, that if it happens again then it will be written down… it should be that way because we have seen consequences for what they write down. It has happened that …it goes to other bosses and then other bosses. And then if they ask us what happened, well we can't say much because it has been written down. (Teacher #61H)

The impression that the mentor's observation *ficha* went into their permanent record and could be used to assign punitive measures clearly made these teachers uncomfortable. However, other teachers referred to the use of a *ficha* as a way in which mentors offered "suggestions". Somehow, this seemed to reflect a softer interpretation of the interaction, and to not imply that mentors' suggestions were automatically to be incorporated (as in supervision). It seems that mentors could use the *ficha* to facilitate having a substantive conversation with the teacher about their teaching and making sure they both remembered what they had agreed upon. However, the tenuous line between a conversation with suggestions and an evaluative meeting with repercussions was crossed in some teachers' understanding of the mentor's role in SAT Honduras.

The Honduran teachers' interviews described some nuances of what accompaniment was, in theory and practice, through their comparisons with supervision and evaluation. In this light, the role of administrative tools such as the *ficha* used in Honduras was also seen by some interviewed teachers as the introduction of supervision and evaluation into the process of accompaniment in the day-to-day lives of teachers and mentors.

The way supervision vis-à-vis mentoring came up in the SAT context can be rooted in differences between the PSA and SAT programs. PSA in Colombia is non-degree conferring and is not required to follow directives from the Ministry of Education. SAT, on the other hand, does confer degrees and must follow Ministry directives. The teachers interviewed in the PSA program came, for the most part, from the rural communities where they held their program and were not certified professional teachers. Some of them were younger or had different professions, and only worked with PSA as part of a community development initiative. SAT teachers, in contrast, had been formally trained in the national Honduran system for teacher training and their salaries were paid

by the national public school system. Therefore, the regulations and strictures present in SAT in Honduras were much more stringent than those placed on PSA in Colombia. Several Honduran interviewees' references and comparisons of accompaniment to supervision, then, were at least partly responses to the teachers' experiences in the traditional Honduran public school system before entering the SAT program as well as the potential effects a more formal (or regulated) school system might have on the types of relationships mentors and teachers might establish.

Discussion

In response to the main research question in this dissertation, how site-based accompaniment mentoring encourage or discourage teacher agency, this chapter explored how teachers and mentors in each case study site described accompaniment. The following visual illustrates the similarities and differences found across these two sets of data and how these compare to the mentorship literature.

Figure 7: *Accompaniment mentorship in PSA and SAT*
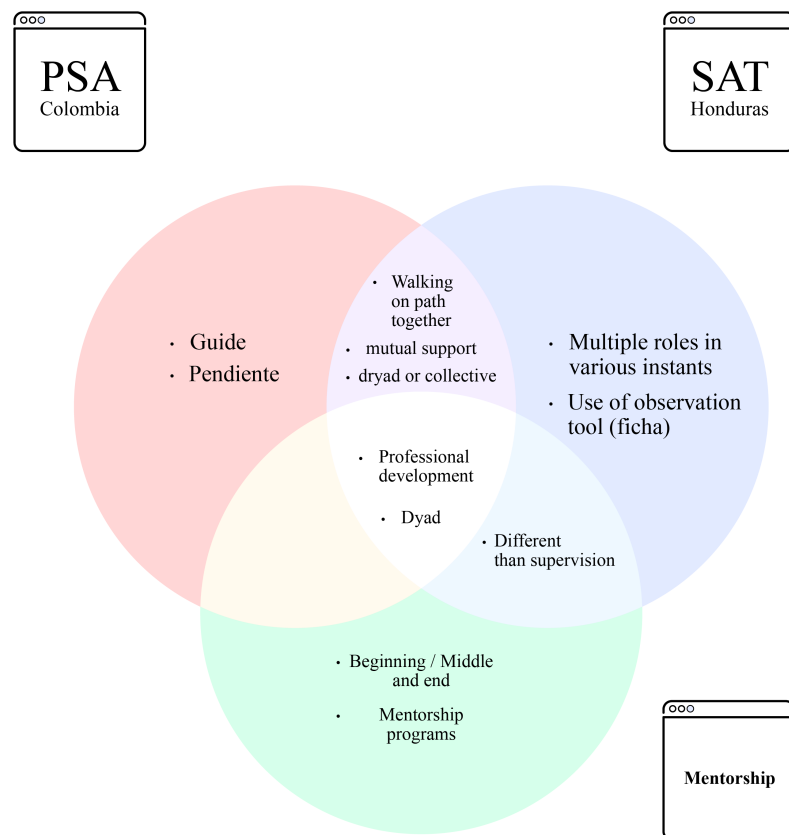
In PSA in Colombia, accompaniment was described by the mentor as both being a guide and being "pendiente" for the teachers. In Honduras, accompaniment was presented as multiple roles in a variety of instances involving the teacher, student, and family members. Accompaniment was compared and contrasted to traditional supervisory functions that were present in the (Honduran) public school system. For teacher and mentor interviewees in both cases, accompaniment could be likened to walking on a path together (teacher, mentor, and others), providing mutual support and growth for all of those involved.

Accompaniment and mentoring shared some similarities as approaches to teacher professional development, when the dyad of teacher and mentor were found at the heart of a mentoring conversation. However, in the literature I reviewed, mentoring was less likened to a continuous path and instead had more discreet instances of beginning, middle and end. This finite implication of mentoring is different from the long-term possibilities in accompaniment along an ongoing "path" of teacher (and community) development.

The literature in Chapter 2 lists three levels of mentorship: programmatic, organizational, and contextual. Many of the differences between PSA and SAT's approaches to accompaniment occurred at a contextual and programmatic level. The most salient difference was the ever-present reference to supervision by interviewees in SAT Honduras, which is consistent with the formal nature of the SAT program in the Honduran context, where SAT teachers compared what they experienced in SAT with what they had previously lived in their teaching (and/or student) experiences in the public-school sector. Furthermore, as also discussed in Chapter Two, the idea of an "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 2020) plays a significant role in teachers and mentors real (or perceived) equation of accompaniment with supervision as it is the closest thing they have observed in their past and where they can "fit" accompaniment.

Spaces Where Accompaniment Occurs

In addition to describing what accompaniment is, both sets of data included multiple references to the spaces where accompaniment took place. In this section, I have characterized the spaces where teachers and mentors regularly met, interacted, and exchanged knowledge. Among the most noteworthy spaces interviewees mentioned were class visits, home visits, service activities

(including community interactions); and additional spaces such as teacher meetings (in the case of PSA in Colombia).

PSA in Colombia

The three main spaces for accompaniment, that were mentioned by teachers and mentors alike in the PSA program in Colombia, were class visits, home visits, service activities, and teacher meetings. Each of these is described in the subsequent subsections.

Class Visits

Class visits were mentioned as the most frequent places where teachers and mentors met. Like more traditional mentoring, coaching and supervisory models, these class or student group visits occurred when a group of students is studying with a teacher in a class setting. Even though they were the most common type of mentor-teacher visit described, they were also the most varied. These visits focused on content (how a teacher was teaching a particular subject matter), on pedagogy (how a teacher fosters class participation), on experiments (or other hands-on components of classroom pedagogy), or on student attrition from the classroom. Visits were either unannounced or programed – sometimes even requested by the teachers themselves. The mentoring visits evolved over time in response to a teacher's level of experience.

As one mentor shared, while there was a general sense of what might be the content of a class visit, these visits were also flexible enough to respond to the needs of a student group (class) and a teacher at a given moment in time.

> One of the main tasks of the [mentor] are these types of [class] visits, because without these visits how would one even carry out accompaniment? In addition, each group [of students] is very different. So, it necessary to share opinions with the teachers about what to do, maybe in terms of the activities they are carrying out, how to focus what they are doing… often it is not enough for the teacher to tell you later what is happening… because there is nothing like direct observation. It helps us understand what is happening, how the participants are interacting with the textbooks, with what topics they might be having more challenges and it also helps us in teacher trainings later. (Mentor #7C)

These class visits, then, were an opportunity for the mentor to see "with their own eyes" what was happening on the ground: how a teacher was teaching and what challenges they might be having.

As teachers and mentors also met outside of class, mentors might have heard from a teacher about a situation or question, but it is during the visit that they were able to witness it themselves. Class visits were an opportunity for the mentors to also gauge the type of questions or challenges that other teachers might have, and to get ideas on how to follow up with teachers outside of the classroom or how what they saw might feed into formal spaces like trainings.

However, mentors often had some previous ideas in mind when they went to visit a teacher. Mentors looked for a variety of things during a visit in addition to being aware of what the teacher was teaching in class. Some mentors, then, saw their role as ensuring that the student groups were advancing and understanding the material taught. Others observed a teacher's teaching style and their attitudes towards their students. Or they evaluated the previous trainings (which the mentors mostly carried out) and observed the changes in the students over time as a measure of the teacher's work. These observations indicated that there was mentor judgment, and potentially evaluation, involved.

This underlying sense of evaluation, while also blended with notions of being supportive or helpful, made teachers nervous (as occurred with many of the teacher interviewees in Honduras). Even though there was no reference to being "evaluated" (in using that exact phrase), many teachers referred to feeling "nervous" when receiving a visit from their mentor at the beginning of their teaching experience. At the same time, these teachers also recognized these as "normal" feelings around being observed. And yet (in noticeable contrast to the interviewees in Honduras), all PSA Colombia teacher respondents who mentioned feeling nervous initially also talked about the evolution of their feelings and how they gradually had come to see value in, and sometimes even to request, these types of mentoring visits to their classrooms. This did not mean that the evaluative nature of the visit disappeared, but from some teachers' perspectives, evaluation was overshadowed by the value of the accompaniment interaction.

For example, one teacher described a mentor's visits to their class as a crucial element of their lifelong development as a person as well as a teacher. They recognized their mentor's experience, and showed awareness that their own strengths might be different from those of their mentor.

> What is valuable about these visits is that I feel that he is helping me so I can develop my capacities. Because my own strengths and that of the [mentor] are not the same. Because he has been in the program for a long time, and I am just starting out. When he is with me

in class, I feel more confident. If I make a mistake, he helps me. I feel more motivated to continue, to learn, for the participants to think about their future. Not only to finish but the idea is to continue advancing. So, when I see him and he takes such interest in me to grow as a person, that I can develop both materially and spiritually. (Teacher #8C)

While this positive assessment of a mentor's visit did not negate the feelings of nervousness, there was a consensus among the teachers in the dataset about the importance and value of mentor visits. Many teachers interviewed had grown to see the usefulness of accompaniment visits by mentors.

Teachers expressed that they did achieve improvement in their teaching practice from their mentor's visits. For example, one teacher described how they had seen the curriculum during their training and were now being asked to teach that curriculum to a class. This teacher (#14C) described how they had become accustomed to certain teaching patterns. Yet when their mentor visited and demonstrated a different way of teaching or explaining things, that gave them new teaching ideas to try themselves. This teacher saw this infusion of a new way of teaching as beneficial for their student's as well as for themselves.

Direct interaction between a mentor and students helped lessen feelings of isolation (or disconnect) that rural teachers or groups of students might have felt. One mentor (#8C) described connections with local students and teachers as a way of feeling connected to a larger program and to other groups of student's and students in their vicinity. While the PSA program does include other aspects to encouraging connections between pupils and the larger program (such as student group gatherings every six months), the mentors' visits also served as a connector between teachers, student groups, and students.

In short, while there was an evaluative component in mentors' visits, teachers told me that they had overcome feelings of nervousness over time as they became aware of the visits' contributions to their own (teacher) and students' development. Mentors saw class visits as an opportunity to observe the teachers in action and to get to know the students directly. Teachers benefited from receiving support in-class and resolving issues on the ground. Both teachers and students, additionally, gained a sense of belonging to a larger program through the mentors' visits.

Home Visits, Service Projects, and Community Activities

Another salient space where mentors and teachers interacted was during home visits. These visits occurred regularly between the teacher and the families of the students, and sometimes a mentor went with a teacher on their visits. Visits were a way to get to know the parents, to understand where students were coming from, and to encourage families to support the PSA program. Less frequently, these visits arose from a teacher's need to address a challenging situation which might be occurring in class. The mentor was usually present for these problem-solving conversations.

Visits did not follow a predetermined schedule, but it was not uncommon to find off-hand mentions that "we talked with the parents", or "we visited the parents" in the interview data. Most of these mentions suggested that, as teachers gained experience, these "regular" visits to pupils' homes became part of their day-to-day activities and required less support from the mentor. However, there were times when the teacher reached out to the mentor (or vice versa) for help in conducting home visits. One mentor described how a teacher had needed such support, in in the context of a longer comment about student participation:

> One time a teacher came to my house almost crying because she was saying that two students were not participating, they weren't responding in the way she expected… and she didn't know what to do so she was thinking of stopping the [student learning] group… She told me she had talked with the parents, she had visited them to no avail, so she was thinking of quitting… So, one of the results of our conversation was for both of us to go visit the parents. To go to their house and invite them to a meeting. Of having a conversation with them. To explore with them [the parents] about what the program does and how it contributes to their [children's] education. So, we made a list of themes like that that we wanted to talk to them about… and then we went on the visit. (Mentor #4C)

Such problem-solving visits and conversations with parents were not easy to have and this teacher was feeling dejected and considering leaving her position. When the teacher turned to her mentor, she received support to address these difficulties. More importantly, the mentor and the teacher carried out this home visit together. In this example, the exploration of the issue, the reflecting on together, and planning next steps together were all part of the accompaniment process. The mentor's guidance and support were apparent in day-to-day activities and in steps taken jointly. The teacher had tried different solutions to a problem with the tools at their disposal but had reached an impasse. The mentor had more tools to draw upon (knowledge, years in the program,

etc.). By calling on the mentors' experience as external support, the teacher was able to increase their repertoire of professional abilities.

Additional Support Spaces

Colombian interviewees, albeit less frequently than classroom visits, mentioned another type of visits, connected to service projects or community activities. Instead of community visits or service projects, the Colombian interviews featured other formal meeting spaces as integral places for mentors and teachers to interact. These weekly meetings, unique to PSA in Colombia, were called *Refuerzo y Avance* (Strengthening and Progress meetings). These were small meetings between a mentor and a group of teachers on a weekly basis where they reviewed what had happened in the previous week, went over the content to be taught the following week, clarified doubts teachers might have, and made their weekly lesson plans. These meetings might occur with all the teachers in one locality or, if there are too many, could be broken down into smaller meetings. The purpose was to both strengthen the teachers' understanding of the PSA subject matter and prepare them to teach it, as well as have an eye on the progress and rhythm of study of the teachers' pupil groups.

Both teachers and mentors mentioned these weekly meetings as important moments to see each other, and where mentors were able to address issues from their individual classroom visits in a more general manner. This space, then, moved beyond the one-on-one nature of accompaniment and introduced a more collective accompaniment that including interactions between teachers.

These meetings were described by one administrative staff member as a space for evaluation, reflection, and planning:

> [O]ne such space is the R & A [*Refuerzo y Avance*] meetings where teachers come together, meet and plan what they will do that week. The [mentor] is very aware of that plan and after they evaluate together the teacher also states what their specific needs are and what type of help, they might need… the [mentor] can take this plan and respond to what the teacher expressed. They can say the teacher said this so this means I should go and help them with this difficulty… Or from there they can meet individually with the teacher and see how together they can solve or learn about a challenge. That is all done in these meetings, it is there where the [mentor] identifies what the teacher needs and according to that can accompany the teacher. Whether it be in their [student] group, or during a community meeting. (Staff #1C)

These meetings, then, were a space where accompaniment could take place in a collective manner, an opportunity for the mentor to hear what the teachers were going through and to understand what support they might need in the coming week. This collective accompaniment process was geared to specific questions or upcoming events and responded to a set of teachers' weekly changes. Because they occurred on a weekly basis they also served as a planning space for teachers and mentors.

These meetings were consistently cited by interviewees (in all roles) as a crucial space for teacher/mentor interaction. Roughly 80% of all teachers interviewed, as well as 50% of mentors, mentioned these meetings. In addition, documents outlining the PSA program described these teacher-mentor group meetings as an element of the program, reinforcing the impression that they were implemented consistently across the regions as part of the program's day-to-day operations. These meetings moved accompaniment mentoring away from individual dyadic spaces into the territory of collective learning. The existence of these type of spaces also gave the mentor the choice to decide which issues they might want to address (which they identified in classroom or community visits) in an individual manner with each teacher or collectively with a group of teachers. Thus, these experiences suggest that teacher accompaniment for professional development can also be a facilitated group learning process.

SAT in Honduras

In Honduras, the most frequently mentioned spaces for mentor-teacher interaction were class visits, home visits, and service activities.

Class Visits

In the Honduran data, the most common and ubiquitous interaction space between mentors and teachers was class visits. Mentors visited teachers during lessons and participated in those lessons. In Honduras, class visits were a formal aspect of what mentors did and involved an observation tool created for this purpose. The formal nature of the visit was enforced by what mentors looked for during their time in the teacher's class. Teachers mentioned that when visiting the classroom, mentors reviewed the students' textbooks, evaluated evidence of the "SAT methodology" in the teacher's practice, and filled out the *ficha* (discussed previously).

> Well, he visits me once a month for the whole session. He sees if we are meeting the SAT methodology. If the students are sitting in a circle, if we are doing the agricultural practices, if we are doing the experiments in science. Then he fills out a [form] *ficha* and at the end we sign it to say that he has visited, and we have talked. (Teacher #2H)

This description suggests a regularity to the mentor's visit, to key aspects a mentor was looking for (how students sat, the pedagogy that teachers used), and how both formalized the visit by signing the *ficha*. All teachers and mentors mentioned the idea of a "SAT methodology". When asked to elaborate on what this methodology consisted of, one mentor shared a checklist of things they look for:

> One of the characteristics is that the students are sitting in a circle. That the [teacher] should be checking what the students are writing in their books. That when the [teacher] is explaining something it is not as if he is dictating a class but rather makes the students feel in an agreeable environment, that the student feels trust. Another thing we verify is that the [teacher] can ensure that the students can participate, even the shy ones. The SAT [teacher] needs to ensure that each of them can express their ideas, every student. (Mentor #4H)

In this description, there are tangible and intangible (perceptual and attitudinal) things listed as part of the "SAT methodology". More difficult to explain or to assess was the type of environment teachers and mentors are creating for their students' learning.

Mentors attributed formality to the visits by noting their level of preparation for them. Seventy percent of mentors interviewed shared they would arrive knowing, based on the teaching plan, what each teacher's class would be studying and would have familiarized themselves with some of the common issues which might arise in teaching that subject. They were aware of where the class was in the SAT curriculum, so that when they arrived to a class, they quickly oriented themselves in the lesson. The mentors shared that when making their own weekly visit plans, they organized them around several factors and goals, such as ensuring regular visits to all teachers, extra consideration for new teachers or student groups, the support needed for some complex activities or content, or a request from a teacher themself for in-class support.

For example, one mentor explained how they developed a plan of action.

> [The teachers] tell me about the activities they will have during the month. So, in my plan I write down to visit the center… so when I go, I know what they are working on. I also prepare before going to work with them. I join them in where they are and see if the [teacher] is explaining that lesson well, for example, if its agriculture if they are preparing the land properly. (Mentor #1H)

In n 75% of the interviews, mentors and teachers reported requesting support to teach part of the content or to answer students' questions. The ways in which mentors were asked to support teachers varied. In some situations, they co-taught the class, while in others they offered suggestions. For example, one teacher explained what a mentor had shared with them:

> He suggests that we use materials, didactic resources which are often simply… he might say "use this cd and make it spin to make a prism… those are strategies he knows… he gave me that example and now I have something I can apply in class with the students." (Teacher #54H)

This example illustrates how having a person with more experience in class helped teachers in very concrete and simple ways to make the content more understandable for students.

In other instances, teachers struggled to explain a concept to students or even explained a concept erroneously. In these more delicate situations, mentors decided to step in and help the teachers, but were mindful to use caution and to not overstep boundaries that caused the teacher to lose face in front of their students. As one mentor explains:

> Since I become a student in class sometimes [during the visit], I ask questions, like, "can you please explain this, because I was thinking in this other way". So, he understands, he realizes that maybe he is wrong or is going in the wrong direction… so like that so you don't take away the teachers' authority in class. (Mentor #1H)

Subject matter comprehension is essential to a teacher's ability to teach. In the SAT program, subjects are normally covered in specific trainings. After the training has concluded, it is assumed that teachers both understand the subject matters studied and can explain it to their students. However, as illustrated by this example, during visits, mentors sometimes witnessed whether a teacher has fully understood a concept, and if they were able to transmit that understanding to others. When the mentor identified that a teacher had explained something erroneously, they must

decide how to intervene. They can do nothing and allow a subject to be misunderstood, they can jump in and correct the teacher which might embarrass or undermine the teacher in front of their students, or they can ask leading questions as a signal to the teacher that the current direction is not correct. In this scenario, the mentor makes two judgments: the accuracy of the content being taught and how to intervene in the situation.

The scenario quoted above was resolved by the mentor using leading questions during the teacher's class, but other situations might arise during these visits which are even more complex and may demand that the mentor take more decisive steps to support the teacher. Often, these more complex situations had to do with the pedagogy the teacher is using or how they are interacting with the students. If the mentor did not want the teacher to feel belittled, they would decide on the spot the best way to intervene. Mentors, then, were also making pedagogical choices in terms of their interventions as these classroom visits occurred.

For example, one mentor shared that he often had to visit a novice teacher, to help him make the transition from working with children to adolescents and to help him learn how to manage the student group:

> I had a case where we had a new [teacher] so at the beginning, we had a lot of visits. We looked at some aspects of discipline and treatment with the students. Because with a child if you reprimand them a second later, they are hugging you again, but not so with the youth. They need a different type of treatment…. So many times, we talk about this in the reflections in the textbooks themselves… and slowly they reflect upon what they are reading. (Mentor #9H)

In this example, the mentor explained that the teacher's experience had mostly been working with young children, who had responded differently than adolescent youth, and therefore the teacher needed help in changing their teaching style. This illustrated how certain crucial aspects of teaching can only be seen in the actual teaching practice and explored based on a shared experience. This example also explored the nuances of teaching to different age groups and that teachers needed to know how to teach to their targeted audience. In this example the teacher was working with a new age group of students and had to re-learn (or un-learn) certain teaching practices. Teacher professional development should consider teacher needs when switching the

age of student's' they are working with (grades or children v. adolescents) or different types of curricula.

In another instance, a mentor interpreted that a teacher they were visiting had been having difficulties in their interactions with the students. The mentor observed that some students were not participating during class and decided to intervene by co-teaching during the class.

> I had a [teacher] once who was not able to elicit participation from all the students… so we began to have a conversation, the students and the [teacher]…. At the end being able to have a conversation all of us together helped all of us, the students, [teacher] and me. (Mentor #7H)

This intervention was quite direct way for the mentor to choose to address the problem of limited student participation: she sat down with the teacher and students to talk together about the perceived issue. Once again, the mentor was evaluating the pedagogy they were seeing during the class and exercising their judgment about the way to intervene. Hence, accompaniment is not only about being supportive in an abstract way, but also involves an evaluation of what the teacher might need and the exercise of the mentor's judgment calls on when and how to best intervene.

 Close to 60% of the teachers interviewed expressed that they had had, at the beginning of their interactions, felt "nervous" or "uncomfortable" when the mentor visited. However, over time, these teachers also shared how the mentors slowly gained their trust and their nervousness decreased. For example, one teacher explained how they felt at the time of the interview.

> It is calm. I know he is not going to embarrass me in front of the students. He is very polite. I like it when he comes to accompany me. Sometimes it is me who asks him to participate so that the students don't get nervous. He always shares his point of view, since he knows all the subjects then he can give his point of view. He can even teach us things we don't know. I really like it when he comes to visit. (Teacher #55H)

While the data collected in this study did not cover a long period of time, nor follow teachers and mentors through the development of their relationships, retrospectively close to 90% of teachers who mentioned that they had felt initially nervous with their mentors' visits, also shared that those feelings had decreased over time. Although not definitive, these examples suggest a frequent

increase in trust between mentors and teachers and a decrease in teachers' negative feelings associated with evaluation or observation.

In Honduras, the complexity of issues that could arise in class visits were illustrated through the examples shared above. Class visits by a mentor implied a use of judgment, interpreted as evaluative, and caused nervousness among the teachers.

Home Visits, Service Projects, and Community Activities

Home visits were an integral component of the SAT program and were mentioned by both teachers and mentors as spaces where these two actors interacted, and ultimately, where accompaniment took place. A mentor explained that these visits were essential in getting to know the reality of the home life of the students, what challenges they might face, and to answer parents' questions regarding their child's education.

> When one goes to visit one sees the physical conditions in which people live. We see the calamities that they sometimes must go through, and we see if they have the desire [will] for their children to be in an educational process. (Mentor #2H)

The understanding of students' home lives impacted the teacher's ability to fully grasp why they may be having challenges. Even though, as explained in Chapter 4, teachers typically came the same communities as their students, getting to know the student's home life through a visit enhanced their understanding of their students. In addition to seeing the family, one teacher referred to the visits as a crucial time of bonding and getting to know the mentor.

> We see the [mentor] during visits. Sometimes he comes every other week, other times every week… other times we see him during trainings (because they are the ones who plan the training), sometimes they accompany us during family visits, and they have even gone with us to register the students. In our own education center, we have students who come from 8 different communities, and as I have mentioned we have students who walk three hours to get to the center and we also go there to get to know their [the students] reality. And two [mentors] have accompanied us a couple of times to those communities. Communities where we must leave here at 6am and don't get back until 10pm. So sometimes we do those tours. And then we have a chance to share with the [mentor] in that context as well. (Teacher #46H)

Visiting communities and families were opportunities, then, for teachers and mentors to bond and to get to know each other outside of the confines of the classroom and enable outside of "work" topics to also be covered. In addition to the importance of the visits to the community and the families, somehow the "in-between" spaces of traveling together, eating together and just spending time was equally important for the teacher and mentor dyad.

One byproduct of these home visits was that the mentors described developing their own independent relationships with the students, as well as with the teachers. Thus, the mentors often directly knew how students fared at home or in the classroom, and students could also turn to a mentor directly, without necessarily going through their teacher.

In addition to home visits, mentors also interacted with the community at large. This meant knowing what was happening around the program context, but it also reflected being able to support the teacher in multiple aspects of their teaching including beyond the classroom. One mentor explained their work as being involved in community life.

> Well, we are field mentors. This means we accompany the teacher; we participate in all activities; we visit the parents with them… we talk with the students, and they tell me about their needs and their difficulties. The teacher talks with me, I have good communication with various parents and with the educational authorities. We organize activities in where various SAT centers participate, we currently even have a soccer tournament where all the students participate in! (Mentor #7H)

While seemingly unrelated to their teacher mentoring work in the classroom, this mentor mentioned that they were participating in a soccer tournament in the community. This demonstrated the mentor's understanding of the centrality of soccer in a small rural community. Furthermore, by participating in these informal spaces, this mentor was becoming integrated with everyday community life. Whether or not it was important for the teacher's teaching practices, these community interactions are part of the larger conception of the SAT program as community based, and whose students are envisioned to become "promoters of community well-being" (see Chapter 4). Therefore, these instances of mentor/community interactions can be seen as ways in which the mentor supports the teacher to learn about the community aspects of the program and not just its curriculum content.

The existence of accompaniment spaces outside of the classroom apparently allowed for conversations between the mentors and teachers to take place outside of the formal classroom space and, extended the accompaniment beyond the teacher/mentor dyad to include family and community members as well. These types of spaces are not directly connected with the teachers' teaching practices inside of the class setting. However, learning how to interact with the family and community were additional skills which teachers need to develop to fulfil the program's multiple objectives, thus part of the teacher's professional development in terms of the purpose of SAT.

Discussion

In both the PSA program in Colombia and the SAT program in Honduras teachers and mentors interacted inside and outside the classroom. The traditional classroom visits paralleled other types of in-school visits, such as those described in pre-service practicum field visits in Chapter Two. However, the additional spaces outside of the classroom in both programs were unique to the literature on teacher professional development. These outside spaces were a direct reflection of the structure and nature of both programs (community-based, rural education). For example, interactions with the community through service, practice and research activities were all part of the textbooks in both PSA and SAT. Hence, the fact that the interactions between teacher and mentor also occurred in these spaces reflected the programs' conceptualization. The community involvement and interactions were also identified and explored in the documents which were analyzed, indicating that these spaces have been conceived at a programmatic level and are not just the result of a few teachers of mentors choosing to have said spaces. The role of the organizational culture will be explored in Chapter 6.

These spaces for interactions are illustrated in the following visual:

Figure 8: *Spaces for Mentor and Teacher interaction*

TEACHER

- Classroom visits
- One on one conversations
- Service activities
- Home visits
- Informal spaces

MENTOR

GROUP OF TEACHERS

- Group meetings
- Trainings
- Informal spaces
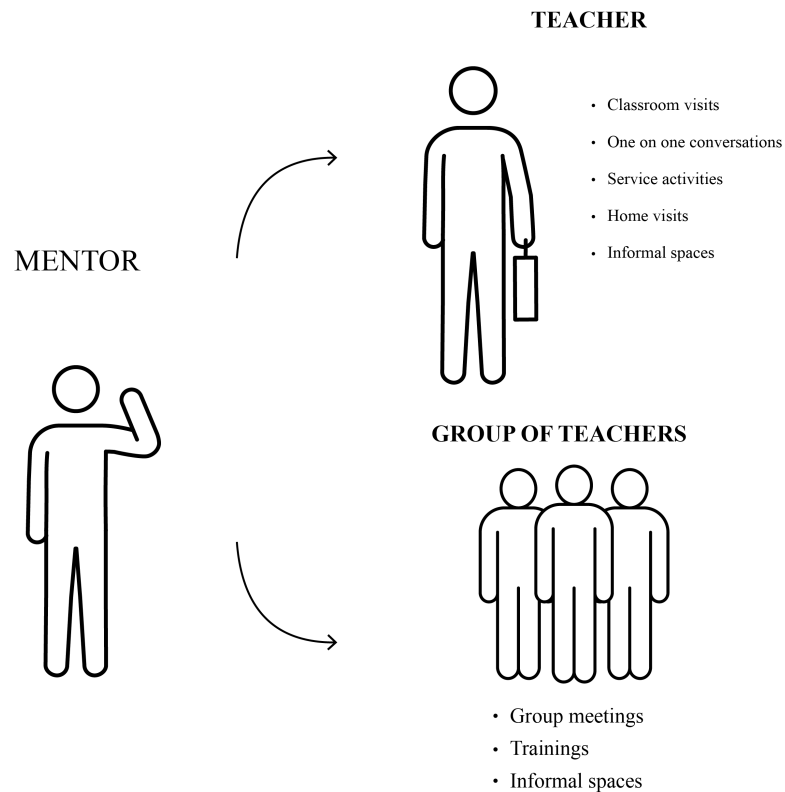
Accompaniment, it seems, can occur through one-on-one interactions between the teacher and the mentor, but can equally occur in a more collective manner when a mentor met with a group of teachers. This is especially true when there are clear and distinct spaces where groups of teachers come together, as is the case in PSA in Colombia. While neither teachers nor mentors mentioned it in any of the interviews, follow up information gathered in SAT in Honduras mentioned that the organization also has "teacher centers" were teachers regularly come together, although they were paused during the pandemic. Teachers and mentors in PSA in Colombia and SAT in Honduras mostly hold similar views of visits. In both cases, teachers mentioned feeling nervous with the visits at the beginning but slowly became more comfortable with them, even looking forward to them or requesting them. The element of trust, developed over time, are explored further in Chapter 6.

I argue that that accompaniment means a more expansive set of roles than mentoring (or traditional teacher professional development or practicum placements). The fact that teacher/mentor interactions in both programs take place beyond the classroom and school walls is unquestionably a singular element in both cases.

Conclusion

This chapter explains, based on interviews carried out in Colombia and Honduras and documents reviewed in Colombia, how accompaniment can be understood and enacted as an alternative manner of carrying out mentoring and mutual support for the purpose of teacher professional development, and the various spaces and activities through which this process was carried out. This chapter specifically begins to address the RQ2, understanding what accompaniment is and what it entails. The data presented here describes what accompaniment means to both teachers and mentors and how it occurs through the multiple spaces where teachers and mentors interact.

The Colombian (PSA) case shows accompaniment as a particular type of support and guidance that mentors offered to teachers. In Honduras, participants similarly expressed understanding of accompaniment as support, but also clearly described accompaniment as related to supervision. One plausible contributing factor to having mentors act somewhat like supervisors was SAT's institutional status as a formal (degree conferring) program employing university-trained teachers. More stringent expectations may have been placed on teachers in Honduras than in Colombia. As those Honduran students were "earning" a degree, there was a sense that teacher mentoring must be rigorous and tightly organized (for instance by the *ficha* record system). This formality was also present in the type of contractual employee relationship that Honduran SAT teachers had with the public school system. Similarly to the expectation of students, there was a sense that teachers who received public funds should be monitored and held to strict professional standards. While none of these elements were expressed in the interviews, the surrounding societal beliefs that may equate formality with rigor or meeting certain standards could have inadvertently been made manifest in teacher interviewees' references to supervision as it related to accompaniment in the case of SAT in Honduras.

Another significant difference between PSA in Colombia (FUNDAEC organization) and SAT in Honduras (Bayan organization) were the spaces where interactions between mentors and teachers happened. In Colombia, the PSA program created additional spaces for teachers and mentors to meet weekly in groups for refresher teacher professional development seemed to be a key component of the Colombia PSA program, covering content, weekly planning, and teaching strategies related to the subject matter teachers taught. These collective teacher professional development spaces were missing from all the Honduran interviews, where there was a greater sense of dyadic relations and formality in the mentor visits to teachers' classes — even though

similar spaces, known as "centers," were mentioned in follow-up interviews there. In Colombian interviews, teachers placed high importance and value on their weekly group meetings, while in Honduras what was mentioned most frequently were the mentors' visits to individual classrooms.

While this thesis set out to examine accompaniment as something which occurs between two individuals (the mentor and the teacher), the case of Colombia also points to potential areas of interest for future research on the collective aspects of accompaniment for teacher professional development. Exploring the role that communities of practice play in mutual support (within a framework of accompaniment) also could be a potential area of future research.

Chapter 6:
Relationships: The Importance of Trust and Friendship

After having addressed how accompaniment was described by teachers, mentors, and administrative staff in the Colombia PSA and Honduras SAT sites, I now turn my attention to another key aspect of the accompaniment process: the characteristics of the relationships between mentors and teachers. Conceptually, this chapter continues to engage with the mentorship literature, but adds an additional element of the conceptual framework for analysis: reflection. Some of these key ideas include Schon's (1983) notion of *reflection-in-action*, Brookfield's (1995) *reflection-for-action*, and Gillies (2016) *thoughtful action* or professional judgment, as all of which allude to the connection between reflection and the action (in this case teaching practices) that then affect what happens in the classroom. These notions of reflection as it relates to action are supported by other scholarship about how reflection actually takes place and its relation to professional development (Tarrant, 2013) including the onion model of reflection (Korthagen and Vasalos, 2005) which considers the multiple levels at which reflection can occur as well as the identity and characteristics of the person who is reflecting.

This chapter shows that the quality of an accompaniment professional development process depends on relationships between mentor and teacher. To this end, this chapter delves into the nature of that relationship by exploring the characteristics of the relationships between mentors and teachers, and mentors' use of feedback with teachers to explore changes together. Following the structure of the previous chapter, I will alternate analyzing each element in the cases of PSA in Colombia and SAT in Honduras.

Relationship characteristics

One key aspect of the accompaniment process was that, while it did happen in a physical space (for example through visits or meetings), it was enacted in an ongoing conversation between the mentor and the teacher, evolving over time. These conversations were based on a relationship of trust between these individuals. Mullen and Klimaitis (2021; Mullen, 2016) look at mentoring relationships, between a mentor and a mentee, as one-on-one relationships. In the structure of the organizations I studied, mentors worked with more than one teacher and teachers worked together: my analyses describe patterns among types of individuals (roles) and not two specific persons. My analysis identifies the patterns of general characteristics which were present across most

interviews. Thus, these are broadly achievable characteristics, not specific to any one special or highly motivated mentor or teacher. To explore the inner workings of accompaniment relationships between mentors and mentee teachers, I look at how these relationships were described by interviewees in each case study site.

PSA in Colombia

Friendship was the most commonly used word teachers and mentors in the PSA program in Colombia used to describe their relationship, even though they were describing a working relationship. This builds on the findings in the previous chapter where accompaniment was seen as a guide or a support. Joining these descriptive words, I argue that teachers and mentors think of their professional relationship as *guiding friendship*.

Some teachers and mentors described what the friendship looked like as empathetic or understanding. Colloquially, this trying to understand what the teacher was going through was described by a few teachers and mentors as, "putting themselves in our shoes." Around 90% of the mentors interviewed in Colombia had been teachers in the past: their ability to put themselves in the teachers' shoes was a reflection of mentors' awareness of the types of challenges teachers went through and consequent ability to help teachers by drawing from their own personal experience. Using the metaphor of teacher development as a path explored in Chapter Five, mentors were further ahead on the path as they had already walked it. Therefore, accompaniment mentorship implies guiding the teacher, based on past experience.

One characteristic of a relationship based on friendship is the ease and horizontality in communication. One way in which this was expressed was by a teacher:

> I would describe this relationship as friendship. Because they are always there, they never leave us alone. They are always visiting. A friend, a compañero, because the mentor does not feel superior to us. We can express our ideas. They don't come to the meetings with an ego. So, it's like you are talking with a brother, getting to know each other, making jokes. It's not like they come, and everyone is silent because they arrived. (Teacher #8C)

This particular teacher considered the relationship to be one of friendship because they did not feel alone, they felt supported, and they counted on their mentor. They expressed their ideas freely without fear of judgment because of the level of horizontality (that is, a minimal sense of hierarchy)

in the relationship. Interviewees' use of the word friendship in the Colombia PSA case, encompassed a range of attitudes and feelings and manifested in a typically comfortable reception of the mentor when they arrived for the class visit.

Relationships between mentors and teachers can be horizontal to different degrees. In a traditional mentoring relationship, when one person knows more than the other, complete horizontality would be impossible as levels of experience and knowledge weighed more on the side of the mentor. In the context of accompaniment in Colombia PSA, horizontality did not imply equal knowledge or experience, but rather an equal value and status treatment of what each —teacher and mentor— were bringing to the conversation. This horizontality allowed for varying levels of experience and for a mentor to serve as a guide without taking on a position of superiority over the teachers.

Many teachers and mentors described a feeling of mutual support and cooperation where both the teacher and mentor had valuable insights to the shared learning experience. The sense of having a concrete thing they were learning about together (the program), to which each contributed from their own perspective, generated feelings of both contributing to their shared experience. Mutual support and cooperation were an expression of a fairly horizontal relationship. Another teacher explained it in the following manner:

> [The accompaniment relationship] is more like solidarity. It is not so much about coordination but of cooperation. It is necessary to become united, to cooperate… for me there needs to be equality, respect, unity and above everything else there needs to be cooperation and looking for solutions together. (Teacher #7C)

Horizontality, here, arose through the mentor and teacher cooperating and working together to find solutions in support of the shared purpose of helping students learn. The word 'friendship', then, in the context of the relationship between teacher and mentor implied respect, boundaries, and knowing what could be said when or in what space, reflecting a degree of horizontality, cooperation, and common purpose.

Similar ways of explaining the relationship were also expressed by the mentors. For example, one mentor described this friendly relationship with teachers they worked with:

> It is a friendship but within its limits… there is respect, respect, and trust. Because, more than just their mentor, I am their friend. I don't want them to see me as a boss but another

friend. That they feel that I am not there to reprimand them or to be the authority, but I am there to accompany them. And I am not the only one in charge of the 'unit', it is the cadre of teachers. Because if they falter, I will also falter. (Mentor #3C)

In addition to working together with teachers to solve issues, this mentor viewed the successes or failures of the entire set of teachers as reflecting her own success or failure as a mentor. The shared vision of why a mentoring relationship existed was crucial for mutual support to take place. In this same vein, another mentor, who described their relationship with teachers as a "brotherhood," shared some practical ways in which the friendship between mentor and teacher manifested. This included calling each other and talking about their lives in general as well as about work-related issues they were having. The lines between personal and professional lives were somewhat blurred.

These selected excerpts do not represent a full picture of what friendship between a teacher and mentor looked like. There was also an acknowledgment, especially among mentors interviewed, that even though there was a friendship, they also had a job to do. However, the fact that the relationship was built on a shared purpose and mutual support made that "job" easier. That job sometimes required a mentor to have difficult conversations with teachers, parents, or students, and make hard decisions regarding the teachers. This indicates that the mentor did have a certain degree of authority over the teacher. They occasionally had to tell or suggest actions for teachers, and they had input into whether a teacher would be asked to leave the program.

Well, the [mentor] can come with certain authority... At the beginning the teacher might say 'I must do what the [mentor] says because he has the authority', but as they advance in the program, we can give them that trust so they can express themselves, their difficulties and know we are not going to criticize them or reprimand them. (Mentor #4C)

The complex balance between friendship, respect, authority and trust was heightened by the fact that teachers and mentors generally lived in the same rural community and were bound by other community ties. One mentor described how, even though they knew the teachers as neighbors before entering the program, their relationship had evolved within the PSA program.

Before maybe we were neighbors and people you would see around, but now it is more like a group of friends. So much so that during the pandemic some of the teachers lost income and other teachers would help them with groceries. ... So, establishing a relationship of

friendship with the teachers ... is not about being authoritarian and saying, 'it doesn't matter that you don't have food, you have to give your class and that's it.' No, the fact that we are teachers and [mentors], that we are part of the structure of the program, it's a relationship of mutual support. And if one doesn't understand that, one shouldn't be in the program… because this is more than a job. It is a community effort that tries to strengthen the capacity of the teachers. (Mentor #7C)

As this mentor excerpt exemplifies, friendship and mutual support were closely related to community ties and life interactions which also occurred outside of the classroom. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the ties of friendship and understanding extended to helping ensure that all teachers had food for their families. Mutual support, in this case, went beyond the classroom walls. Friendship between mentors and mentee teachers was both expressed and built both inside and outside of classroom or content related interactions.

This phenomenon of intersecting school and local rural communities and social aspects outside of the classroom walls was evident in the interviews. For example, one female mentor shared that she considered the group of teachers she worked with (all female as well) as friends.

I visit them every week, I write to them and ask if they need anything… we don't only talk about the program when we have a meeting or a gathering. For example, sometimes we go with all the girls [teachers] to the park on Saturday or Sunday and eat an ice cream. We talk about our personal lives. So, if we talk about the [teachers' classes], it is in a natural way since we have that trust… So having those extra spaces helped us develop that trust and now we have a strong foundation" (Mentor #1C)

In this case, friendship went beyond the classroom and the lines between work and community life were blurred in the teacher/mentor relationship with social interactions. Gendered social norms were also evident in the way mentors and teachers talked about community spaces. The above mentor's example clearly shows how a group of women related to each other by spending time together and sharing their personal lives. Male mentors used examples of playing sports together, particularly soccer. Hence, expressions of friendships differed according to culturally relevant social norms. Mentors and teachers were not assigned by gender in the program; these examples simply illustrate how gendered cultural expectations sometimes influenced the types of conversations or activities in which mentors and teachers engaged.

In summary, accompaniment in the Colombia PSA case reflected a type of organizational culture where people working in a certain environment became likely to incorporate normative community behavior in their own work. Teachers who saw their relationships with their mentors as friendship, where hierarchy was not front and center, were likely to have similarly relatively horizontal and warm relationships with their students. As with mentors, teachers being from the same community as the students was another factor influencing these relationships. Some teachers knew their students from other settings. They could be neighbors, know their parents, or be part of an extended family. Teachers explained these potentially blurred boundaries between what happened inside versus outside of the classroom as strengths of the PSA program. They argued that both they and their students knew how to relate to each other in these different domains.

Two other aspects of teacher-mentor relationships, salient in the interviews, were respect as the foundation of teacher-mentor relationships and the establishment of trust in teacher relationships with their students. Teachers and mentors alike referred to building trust *over time* as an important aspect of being able to talk about issues or questions which might arise in the classroom. One teacher said that, at the beginning of the relationship, they did not yet trust the mentor who visited their classroom, but that, by the time of the interview, they had become more comfortable and looked forward to mentor visits as learning opportunities.

> Previously maybe there was a certain degree of fear because I did not know what the mentor was coming to do. Now it has changed a bit and there is more trust. We know each other better; I know how the whole thing works; there is more empathy between the teacher and mentor. (Teacher #2C)

As presented in Chapter 5, mentors and teachers considered accompaniment to be a long-term process. There was an acknowledgement that developing trust took time and could not be imposed on teacher-mentor dyads.

The teacher and mentor interviews showed that trust manifested as teachers felt more comfortable, over time, to share their questions, concerns, or opinions with mentors. Another way trust manifested was in how teachers asked for help from their mentors. One mentor shared that when they visited a classroom, they did not try to impose their expertise on the teacher or students, but that they were keenly aware of when the teacher needed help, even when they asked for it in non-verbal ways. They believed that this respect for the teachers' authority in turn helped to build trust.

I usually don't interrupt them because I think that is terrible: that scenario where you don't understand and here, I come and explain. That is not the right way to do it, but I have seen it in many other spaces … What normally happens is that the teacher looks at me, or says please, so they give me that space to step in and speak. Sometimes they fall silent, or they are afraid of speaking, so what I do to help them is to help [prompt] them by sharing an example… as graphic as possible, and it often helps the teacher to also find themselves again… But after I intervene then I give them the space to keep going. I tell them 'The class is yours, so you continue'. (Mentor#7C)

This mentor knew to step away and give the class "back" to the teacher after helping. They claimed that they did not take over the entire class or make the teacher feel as though they were incapable. They offered short and immediate support to help smooth over a bump on the road, but then went back into their supporting role. Actively passing leadership back and forth between the teacher and the mentor in the classroom, interviewees suggested, helped the teachers to develop trust in the mentors. It also may have helped students to realize that, while the mentor might know more than their teacher, the teachers deserved respect and help authority over the classroom. While these ideas will be explored more in depth in a subsequent section on feedback, this mentor's perspective illustrates how trust was established over time and what it looked like in classroom settings.

In conclusion, the interviews with the PSA teachers and mentors in Colombia characterized the teacher/mentor relationship as one of friendship, implying working together towards a shared goal. in the relationship was described as a horizontal interaction between teacher and mentor which took into account experience and expertise but was marked by respect and trust. It was a friendship built over time and expressed inside and outside of the classroom. It was also a relationship which extended to the students and their families, bound to the communities and rural reality of the teachers and mentors.

Organizational Relationships

The relationships between mentors and teachers were part of a larger organizational culture, in part a reflection of the cues taken from the organizational environment. Here, I will briefly share some elements of said organizational culture in the context of FUNDAEC, which is the implementing organization of PSA in Colombia. Some of these ideas will be explored further in Chapter Seven.

The most salient organizational characteristics were: a) a disciplined culture towards learning; b) horizontality in organizational relationships; c) open and consultative dialogue; and d) trust.

For the first characteristic, one mentor described the organizational culture as one of disciplined culture towards learning.

> It is flexible but not totally flexible...It is flexible in that it allows each unit and each culture to have the idiosyncrasies that are part of the communities...[T]here is that ability to be flexible in their framework which helps us develop…[T]here always exists a culture of accompaniment, or feedback in that process, a culture of investigation...It is a culture of learning in action. No one is born knowing everything and we need to learn, to helping spread knowledge in action, and that is what motivates us as an organizational culture. (Mentor #6C)

This mentor identified crucial aspects, including discipline, of individual staff members wanting to learn together and in action, flexibility, and a degree of horizontality in relationships. The culture the mentor described (and was a part of) influenced the ways that they associated with the teachers. Mentors are both recipients of such an organizational culture and replicators of it. The underlying assumption is that that mentors may recreate what they themselves have experienced. I checked this assumption against the consistency of what mentors and staff mentioned as well as the documents reviewed.

Second, the horizontality of relationships between mentor and teacher was also described as part of the overall culture of the organization itself. Another mentor elaborated this ethic of horizontality:

> We could say that the culture in general in FUNDAEC is not focused on working in a vertical manner…not like one of those organizations where they have their marching orders and those on top and in charge of those in the bottom. No, not in FUNDAEC. It is different because here we all work together. For example, a member of a zonal team can help a PSA group, or a teacher can also help a [mentor] in some of their work. We all help each other and complement each other. It is an environment of brotherhood. (Mentor #8C)

While FUNDAEC made certain decisions nationally, this and other mentors communicated that locally-based decision-making processes also occurred. One staff member described the

combination of national and local decision-making as cooperative, supportive and encouraging of others success.

> [We don't have] a traditional hierarchical structure...[O]bviously many decisions are made at a national level. But these are not authoritative decisions that, because the national team decided, everyone must follow. And that is part of the organizational culture. Because we also see each other as a team, a big team that is helping advance the program...Part of the culture is...continuous cooperation, a mutual support between us. We are glad about the successes of others. That is part of our organizational culture. And that in turn has to do with the level of capacity of others. That if they are supposedly 'below' us, they should also advance in their ability to make decisions or make them based on consultation and an understanding of their reality…[B]ecause the development of other levels is what we are trying to achieve. More independence. Being able to make good decisions at all levels. (Staff #3C)

The hierarchical relationship between rural localities and national authority in Colombia was clearly defined. However, the FUNDAEC organization left space for a degree of fluidity in who had agentic influence in collective decisions.

Thirdly, FUNDAEC endeavored to implement an open dialogue process throughout the organization. While the documents and interviews analyzed for this thesis do not automatically imply that all interactions were conducted in such a manner, they demonstrated a vision and ideal of consultation, as described by a leadership staff member.

> One of the things I observe in FUNDAEC which is unique is that...thinking one person is better than another doesn't exist…Of course, we have functions and responsibilities, but we can also consult openly. We are not embarrassed or afraid. You can talk with others with a degree of frankness and sincerity…We can all make mistakes, but you own them and find solutions, through consultation…And when we consult, we do it honestly. We are not trying to hide things when they aren't going well. And I think all of this has permeated the places where the organization is working. (Staff #2C)

This staff member's opinion was that the organization had created an open environment where individuals did not fear being penalized for making mistakes or for not knowing the answers to things.

The existence and combination of these characteristics helped create a particular environment to which new people slowly lean into. For example, another teacher described how distrustful he was of the organization at the beginning, how he slowly warmed up to it as he began to see the differences with other programs, and slowly began to trust the organization.

> I really did not think I was going to find such a wonderful program. Especially here in the Guajira where there is so much corruption. I really was distrustful. When I started out, I was surprised...But slowly I began to be curious...I began to investigate the organization, and I was surprised that it had been working for over 40 years in other countries, in Colombia. And so, I began as a participant of the program and slowly as time went on, I fell in love with the program. (Teacher #12C)

The trust that this participant began to have in the organization led them to finish the program as a student and, at the time of the interviews, to continue to work with the organization as a teacher. This teacher recognized the FUNDAEC organizational environment as different from others they had known in the past.

While it is not possible, within the scope of this thesis research, to substantiate a causal relationship between the work environment described and the organizational culture, several interviews make clear interviewees' view that FUNDAEC's environment and culture did influence how they viewed and carried out their work. The organizational culture of accompaniment was an important way in which mentors and teachers learned not only the mechanics but also the spirit of how to do their work.

SAT in Honduras

Teachers and mentors' interviews in the SAT program in Honduras used a myriad of descriptive words to describe the nature of the teacher-mentor relationship. Both teachers and mentors used the following phrases: fraternal, friendship, unity, communication, commitment, learning, mutual help, company, harmony, respect, humility, *compañeros*, working together, consultation, family, partners, teamwork, efficiency, and brotherhood. These words were used across interviews but

none were significantly used more than other words. Emphasized by roughly three-quarters of mentors and teachers, however, was the element of trust. I argue, on this basis, that trust was the most salient and crucial characteristic of a healthy mentor/teacher relationship in SAT.

Trust required time to be established. In interviews, mentors described how they were actively generating confidence in the teachers to do their job, and to foster trust between the teacher and the students as well as between themselves as mentors and the teachers. This implied both the mentor having confidence in the teachers' ability to do their job and the teachers' confidence in their own ability to teach. The fact that teachers' self-confidence reportedly increased is an indicator that they were not belittled by the mentor and that their self-confidence had been actively encouraged. One mentor highlighted that they viewed it as part of the responsibilities of the mentor to help foster a trusting environment in which a teacher would feel comfortable to share questions and difficulties.

> I think it is crucial to be able to deal with certain situations the disposition that the teacher might have, or the open mind to accept that they might have areas they need to work on. So, primarily trust or consultation with the teacher...Because there have been some teachers who have had difficulties regarding the content, or discipline, or getting along with other teachers or the families…so we must talk in a trustful environment. Not with a desire to judge or criticize but to help the compañero strengthen those weaknesses, to find a solution together. (Mentor #10H)

This mentor viewed a trustful environment as one that created the conditions necessary for teachers to express themselves and to get the type of help they required. The creation of such an environment was not one-sided but required work from both parties. Hence, trust was more than personal or relational characteristics – trust was embedded in the entire workplace environment.

The trust a teacher had in their mentor manifested when teachers asked for help from their mentors in front of their students as well as outside of class. One mentor described a teacher who, while preparing for their class, realized that there was a particular area that they did not fully grasp enough to feel comfortable explaining it to students.

> I have a group of teachers who for some reason don't understand a certain concept, so they call me, and they ask me...I try to meet with them earlier to go over the theme…But not all

> teachers have that ability to recognize that they have a need, but it does help that they know we are there to support them, so they need to have that trust in us…I am always there, trying to generate that trust. (Mentor #7H)

As this mentor described, for a teacher to reach out to their mentor before class to ask questions implied that they trusted the mentor enough to share their vulnerabilities. First, the teacher recognized that they had a question. Secondly, they had enough trust in their mentor to show them that they had a question. Depending on the way in which the mentor responded to the teacher's request, trust increased or decreased over time. In this instance, the teacher's vulnerability to acknowledge they needed help, and their openness to request support, are indicators of trust in their mentor's responsiveness and ability to support them.

The analogy of mentors and teachers being part of a "family" was also commonly voiced by both teachers and mentors in Honduras. In these two illustrative examples, a teacher and a mentor expressed this notion.

> Unity and friendship in our work, but that does not mean that we overreach. We do have a structure. The work part we treat as such, but we have friendship and unity and we have always tried that in SAT we are like the 'SAT family.' (Teacher #24H)

> In SAT we see each other as one family. We meet and we don't have competition between us, no one is trying to be higher than the others, we see each other as family. We come to a meeting and the first thing we do is joke, we make up a game to make the meeting warmer, we hug each other because we love each other like family. (Teacher #29H, similar narrative expressed by Teachers #24H and 18H)

The notion of being a "SAT family," expressed by both teachers and mentors, implies working together for a common purpose, supporting each other, rather than competing. If the only people who had mentioned family feeling had been staff members, this could be seen as window dressing. However, since several people who worked there in different roles expressed this perspective, it constitutes more robust evidence that such an environment existed. In Honduras, both mentors and teachers spoke consistently of having (and building) a trusting and family-type relationship as the key factor in accompaniment professional development.

Discussion

the interviews carried out in Colombia and Honduras described mentor-teacher relationships in similar ways. Mainly, teachers and mentors across the two organizations emphasized trust as an essential characteristic of a teacher/mentor relationship and the foundation on which friendship could eventually be built upon. However, trust was not something which appeared automatically: it was consciously worked for. This meant that trust was built over time, mentors took conscious and specific steps to build that trust, and it slowly took root in classroom interactions where teachers became increasingly comfortable with the mentors' presence during their teaching.

Interviewees in both case study sites also described the relationships as based on friendship, mutual support, cooperation and respect. However, the nuances of what that implied were more explicit in the Colombian data than the Honduran data. This could potentially be a reflection of how the data was collected, which will be explored more in depth in Chapter Eight.

In Honduras, the overarching phrase used to describe the mentor-teacher relationship was family. This word meant strong bonds of comradeship and friendship, while failing to tease out tease out what being part of a family meant or how it manifested in practice. Families can be potentially supportive or oppressive, they can be functional or dysfunctional, and they can be characterized by healthy or unhealthy relationships. A nuanced analysis is not possible in the context of this interview data, but the reference to family seemed to express strong bonds and a close relationship.

The relationship characteristics which were mentioned across both case studies are summarized in the following figure.

Figure 9: *Teacher and Mentor Relationship Characteristics*
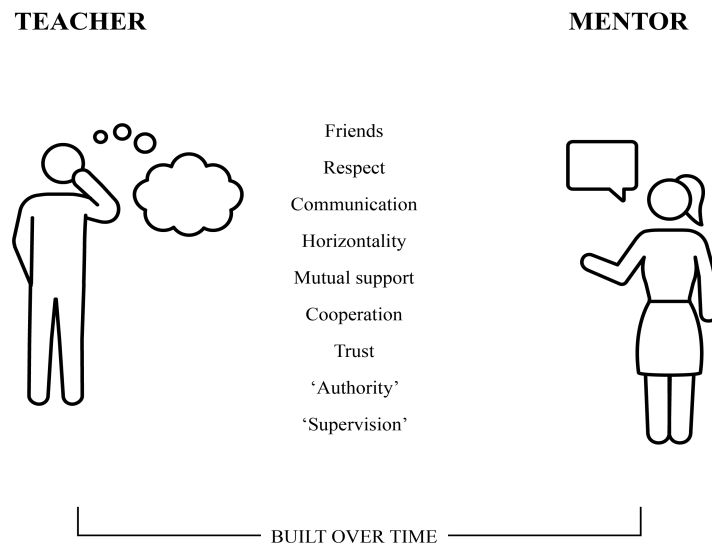
In the mentoring literature explored in Chapter 2, a mentoring relationship is described as fulfilling the psychosocial and career needs of the mentees (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). However, this characterization can tend to be one sided (only focusing on the mentee) and lacks the mutual or reciprocal aspects of the accompaniment mentoring relationships described in this study. Friendship, mutual support, and camaraderie are all terms for a relationship which felt mutually beneficial and enriching to teachers and mentors. Understanding how mentoring relationships also benefit the mentor requires further inquiry in future work about accompaniment. Connecting mentoring relationships to a path of development also challenges current literature's descriptions of such relationships having distinct beginning, middle and end stages.

Feedback

In addition to asking teachers and mentors to describe their relationships, I analyzed conversations they described having occurred between the two, looking for what they spoke to each other about and where the conversations were carried out. This allowed me to not only take what teachers and mentors said at face value but to look more closely at their interactions. One crucial content of such conversations is the feedback teachers received from their mentors. Feedback conversations reported in interviews provided an opportunity to analyze the practices of mentoring relationships. Furthermore, I explored whether and how, during this feedback process, *reflection-on-action* came into play, through two concepts: mentoring and reflection. This idea of reflection-on-action differs,

but builds on, the previous notions I explored which were *reflection-in-action* (Schon,1983), *reflection-for-action* Brookfield's (1995), and *thoughtful action* (Gillies (2016). Reflection-on-action, as carried out in the accompaniment process, happens on what teachers did in the classroom and potentially inducing feedback. Feedback was also a potential area of misunderstanding or tension. Focusing on feedback allowed for a snapshot of some of the hard conversations mentors needed to have with teachers.

PSA in Colombia

The excerpts which inform this section are either teachers or mentors telling their stories of feedback meetings from their perspectives. These narratives illuminate different types of feedback given to teachers by the mentors and, more importantly, that the feedback was possible as it was built on a trusting relationship between teacher and mentor.

Some types of feedback mentors provided teachers with had to do with subject matter, either the PSA curriculum itself or how it was being taught. Other types of mentor feedback might offer examples of ways to involve community leaders in acts of service the students carried out, how to carry out an experiment (science, math or agricultural), or how to interact with community members through curriculum-sanctioned activities. Other feedback used certain documents produced by the organization(s) to enhance teachers' understanding of the purpose of the program, the functions a teacher carried out, or how the program was structured.

> Some mentor feedback to teachers specifically noted needed improvements in their teaching methods or in their understanding of the curriculum subject matter. Some teachers share these types of experiences. When I was just starting out with a group [of students], we study different textbooks... But when we started, I made a mistake because I started giving the students addition and subtraction exercises right away and I didn't realize that they didn't even know how to add or subtract. So, [the mentor] told me, before you begin studying a text you need to give an introduction, you need to know what students know before jumping in. (Teacher #8C)

This teacher viewed becoming aware of what students knew before entering a new subject lesson as crucial in developing their expertise. The mentor's feedback did not indicate that the teacher was completely wrong, but the teacher felt that a simple correction had made a big difference to

their practice. Another teacher also shared an instance of having a mentor point out the importance of using a variety of different pedagogical strategies while teaching a certain subject. Being able to recognize that different subjects required different ways of teaching was helpful to this teacher (Teacher #3C). These types of feedback were very subject matter and pedagogy centered and were easily resolved but were given in the context of a trusting relationship.

The community-based nature of the program, along with low exit costs, meant it was easy for students to enroll or to leave the program at any moment. At the beginning of the program, mentors and teachers emphasized keeping students interested in continuing the program. Hence, another type of feedback mentors shared was concerned with strategies aimed at student retention.

> When I started by group [of students], I had a lot of difficulties about how to keep the group together. There were students who wanted to leave, others were not motivated. So, my mentor said, 'try these strategies, see how it goes and then let me know.' So, I begin to incorporate those strategies that she gave me and then we reflect together on them. And yes, they have been of great help, and what she says adds value to my group. (Teacher #2C)

A mentor's support helped with student retention and motivation. This support came in the form of practical suggestions and strategies of how to encourage students to remain in the program. However, the teacher also mentions that the mentor did not just give them the suggestions and leave it, but rather that they reflection together on action, after putting these strategies in place, to see whether they met their intended purpose. In this way, feedback was used as the basis for an on-going conversation and not as an end in itself.

The feedback conversations that mentors and teachers reported on ranged from conceptual to practical concerns, from student group dynamics to pedagogical choices, to personal concerns in the teachers' or students' lives. Regardless of the topic, what was crucial in these interactions was that the teachers reported not feeling alone, that they had someone to turn to with their questions and to talk things through with. Therefore, while the content of the feedback was important, more important was the reported mitigation of pedagogical solitude (Hargraves, 1998). They were able to voice their concerns, hear suggestions, and reflect with an external party on their actions.

The fact that reflection-on-action had taken place meant that teachers were not viewed or treated as just passive recipients of feedback but as active in a didactic conversation with their mentors.

We might have things to improve but we don't see them ourselves. But someone else might see them. And I like to be told. Because if I am not told then how I am supposed to improve? (Teacher #23C)

Teachers had contrasting responses to feedback. One reported feeling bad when given feedback, while simultaneously appreciating it and knowing that it would make them a better teacher:

I feel a little, when they correct me, well I feel a little bad. But I also feel good because it is to improve. Because when they tell you something it is for your improvement…but maybe if it was a reprimand then I would feel bad. But even then, I would still have to think that it is to do better with my group, to improve daily. (Teacher #5C)

This teacher made a clear distinction between what they considered to be a reprimand and what they perceived as a suggestion. Criticism, whether constructive or otherwise, implied an outsider giving opinions and suggestions about what a teacher was doing. This teacher did not describe the mentor as not understanding their experience.

Often, mentors opted to share their feedback with the teachers after class or in other spaces. When they did choose to intervene immediately in a class, this was most often related to teachers' representations of content that might be causing confusion in the students' understanding. Mentors in the Colombian PSA organization gave teachers collective as well as individual feedback. In facilitating groups of teachers, mentors sometimes decided that feedback would be useful to more than one person, or that a soft (indirect) approach would best suit the teacher.

Sometimes in the spaces we have, when we need to give some feedback and it can help the entire group...I try to give certain recommendations and say things in a general way. Sometimes I know the same issues is present in a few [teachers' classes]. But other times, [the feedback needed] might be a very specific topic, an issue with a given student, so that is something I will try and do individually. Especially after class when everyone has left. I also try to use the 'reflection notebook...[b]ecause they should be asking themselves questions about their own process, they should be autonomous…[S]o I think using the reflection notebook is a very important type of feedback for them. (Mentor #7C)

Mentors, then, decided to use collective or individual feedback, and to use classrooms or other spaces which might have a more "formal" tone such as reflection meetings or trainings. Mentors

sometimes chose to use or to prepare certain documents, to remind teachers of previously discussed themes. Another tool which mentors used were "reflection notebooks" which will be addressed later in the chapter. The friendly relationship, built on trust as explored in the previous section, was crucial in the way feedback was given by the mentors and also perceived and internalized by the teachers.

Primarily, mentors' feedback was described in terms of its goal to improve teaching practices. This might include feedback on specific content or curriculum management, pedagogical choices, clarifying certain concepts, how to discipline students, or encouraging student participation. Furthermore, mentors could choose to give feedback in a direct manner (one-on-one) or to share it in a more general way when groups of teachers were together. Additionally, certain organizational documents were tools mentors relied on when giving feedback, as they could either refer to it later or study it again with a group of teachers to deepen or refresh understanding of certain ideas.

SAT in Honduras

Feedback evidence in the SAT program in Honduras revolved around two main themes: when feedback was given and how it was received. In contrast to those in the PSA program in Colombia, 80% of mentors interviewed in Honduras talked about the "before", "during" and "after" parts of an accompaniment visit to a teacher's class. The repetitive use of these phrases by multiple mentors indicated a standardized way mentors were supposed act when they visited a classroom.

Despite their articulation of those three clear moments when they were to provide feedback, mentors said they struggled to choose which time was appropriate to deliver feedback.

> In class we must...be careful to not make the teacher look bad in front their students. It might happen that a teacher is talking about a given subject, but they are wrong, or they have misinterpreted the concept. So, the first thing we need to have is prudence before we intervene. Maybe we won't even talk about it in class directly because we simply observe. But if it is the case that the teacher is wrong in some concept then we might have to intervene…so that the teacher can have some feedback about that specific idea they were explaining at that moment. (Mentor #4H)

In this illustrative example, the mentor showed both wisdom and self-awareness about how their help might be perceived. They were aware that the teacher needed support and would benefit from receiving concrete feedback. Students also required clarity, and mentor feedback was necessary to make sure that the teacher's approach would have no detrimental effect on students' learning. However, mentors showed degrees of restraint by weighing possible options instead of jumping in to give that feedback right away. This excerpt exemplifies the thought process mentors went through as they visited a classroom. Their respect for the teachers' feelings and the students' perception of the teacher's knowledge played into their decision-making process. In addition to the important question of when the feedback is given, a great deal depends on how teachers receive said feedback. Since there are two people (at least) involved in a feedback conversation, a mentor must think carefully about how to give the feedback.

In Honduran interviews, the teachers clarified their use of the word feedback. When asked how mentors gave feedback, close to 50% of teachers began by stating something to the effect of, "well it's really not feedback, it is more a suggestion." Teachers used the Spanish word "retroalimentación," which means the recipient of feedback was doing something wrong which needed to be corrected. This pervasive clarification could also indicate that mentors reframing feedback as suggestions left room for the teacher to decide what to do with the information, and thus, to retain their teaching autonomy, thus their sense of agency.

Feedback for professional development needs to have a formative purpose and to be deemed useful by the people both receiving and giving it. Among the themes mentioned in mentors' and teachers' interviews were questions about how teachers could better interact with the students or their parents, how to manage student group dynamics, how to ensure all students were challenged, how to lesson plan more effectively, how to carry out productive activities, and didactic or strategic suggestions for how to teach or explain concepts. As one mentor put it:

> Well, that [choice about what feedback to give] is really going to depend on the [student] group and the community… their strengths are different, and their needs are different. We do it depending on the needs of each [student] group, of each community. (Mentor #5H)

Thus, feedback was extremely specific to a content theme, mentor, teacher, local contextual circumstances, and the level of urgency (whether a teaching issue had to be addressed immediately). The mentors' awareness of all these circumstances, including themselves, was

essential in their feedback patterns. Mentors' ability to give appropriate and timely feedback was dependent on their own ability to reflect on their actions and to recognize and exercise choices in all scenarios. This ties to the teachers' (and mentors') increased sense of agency, their ability to make decisions.

Discussion

Mentor-teacher feedback is one category of conversations that occur in the teacher-mentor relationship. Feedback was understood by interviewees as having specific characteristics such as trying to help the teacher improve concrete teaching practices and that it occurs on a regular basis. Teachers and mentors mentioned these conversations were difficult to have as they could have an evaluative connotation. While mentors were careful to deliver feedback at times and places that did not disrupt the teachers' authority, teachers mentioned that the relationships they had with mentors changed the way feedback was received. Feedback, therefore, was illustrative of the existing relationship between teacher and mentor. A relationship built on distrust and superiority painted feedback in a certain light, while a relationship built on friendship offered flexibility in the reception and delivery of feedback. The attitudes of those who received feedback indicated the level of trust and comfort between teachers and mentors.

On the other hand, the mentors' self-awareness of the impact of their feedback and choosing how to carry it out in a constructive way can be an indicator of mentor reflexivity. While mentors did not directly state that they were reflecting on their own actions, their description of the ways in which they choose to give feedback to the teachers indicates a level of self-awareness in terms of how feedback could negatively or positively affect the teachers. Choosing what to say, when to say it, and in the company of whom to say it (for example, not in front of the students to cause the teacher embarrassment) are all examples of self-awareness about mentors' own actions. This capability went beyond being able to identify how the teacher actions would affect the students to include as well how their own actions would affect the teachers.

Conclusions

This chapter addresses the main research question on accompaniment and teacher agency by zeroing in on the relationship characteristics between mentors and teachers in the two case studies, a key component in accompaniment. In an increasingly automated world where there is little time to foster relationships, the chapter emphasizes the centrality of strong bonds of friendship and trust

between teachers and mentors. Not least, the trust between teachers and mentors is explored through feedback type conversations and interactions between the two.

In Colombia (PSA), teachers and mentors spoke of how they interacted and saw each other outside of normal "work" contexts, building friendship over time. The wide range of topics teachers and mentors conversed about, and the social settings where they saw each other, helped to strengthen those bonds of friendship. The lack of formality in the Colombian program supported developing friendships in mentoring relationships. Perhaps because the PSA program did not confer a degree, friendship was seen as especially feasible in that context. In contrast, the mentor and teacher interviews in Honduras suggested the development of trust as the most crucial underlying characteristic for an accompaniment mentoring relationship. In contrast to the Colombian case, the SAT program in Honduras was degree conferring and as such could be interpreted as having stricter stakes in students' performance (as measured by indicators such as assessment scores or attrition rates). In the PSA program in Colombia, in contrast, the program was geared holistically towards helping students becoming promoters of community well-being (Chapter 4). While becoming a well-being promoter is valuable in its own right, it does not imply the same external or standardized validation as a student receiving (or not receiving) their high school diploma, which seemed to confer a greater level of formality to the relationship between mentor and teacher in Honduras. While the relationships were described as cordial there (as well as in Colombia), teachers and mentors emphasized trust as crucial instead of the presumption of friendship. In short, the Honduras SAT mentors and teachers described a more distant relationship in contrast to the mentor-teacher relationships in Colombia PSA. Trust, in the Honduran case, was something which did not exist from the beginning, but which (at least sometimes, according to interviewees) was built over time. Mentors showed awareness that they needed to make efforts to build and earn that trust with the teachers, for instance, by not embarrassing or belittling the teachers, despite their formal status.

An indirect indicator (and cause) of the type of relationship between mentor and teacher is the way the feedback process occurs. To become better teachers, teachers needed to receive feedback on how they were doing and how to improve. Since these feedback "suggestions" reflected a point of disagreement or even could generate a feeling in a teacher of being attacked, the way these interactions were carried out, according to the narratives of mentors and teachers in interviews, were indicative of the type of accompaniment relationship they achieved. In both Colombia and

Honduras, the evidence from a large number of interviews shows that, while not always smooth or perfect, mentors and teachers were able to give and receive meaningful feedback without being derailed by defensiveness. In both Colombia and Honduras, teachers became willing to receive feedback from their mentors over time as they advanced in the program, as the mentors showed that they were trustworthy and that their comments could be received as suggestions rather than as commands.

Unfortunately, the Honduras interviews (conducted earlier and by other scholars) did not speak directly to the organizational culture, beyond the somewhat vague notion of there being a 'SAT family'. Because I did not conduct those interviews myself, I could not follow up on those instances where this subject might have been addressed. However, the Colombian interview data on the organizational culture and environment, in which I was able to ask follow-up questions, sheds some light on how the types of accompaniment relationships encouraged reflected a conscious effort to maintain a was more horizontal than vertical mode of operation. Mentors and teachers in Colombia PSA shared the feeling that their work was contributing to a larger purpose of community development. This is manifested in what interviewees described as an open dialogue towards learning, shared with others. Additionally, the PSA environment was described as both flexible and disciplined and as having an open and consultative decision-making process. The reported perspectives of staff members and mentors were substantiated by the simple fact that teachers did not indicate a desire to leave the organization. As one teacher shared, it seemed that FUNDAEC (Colombia) had a degree of coherence between what they said and what they carried out, which increased the teachers' trust in the organization over time.

In summary, accompaniment professional development required and implied certain qualities and attitudes which ultimately led (according to interviewees) to building friendship and trust over time. These characteristics were manifested in the interactions between mentors and teachers, as expressed through feedback processes, and expressed in the organizational culture in FUNDAEC (PSA) Colombia.

Chapter 7:
Accompaniment, Professional Learning, and Teacher Agency

After having explored the elements of accompaniment in teacher professional development, and the characteristics of relationships between teachers and mentors, I now turn my attention to how this accompaniment approach enhanced teachers' potential to exercise agency. Building on Chapters Five and Six, here I explore how mentorship and reflection seemed to help enhance PSA and SAT teachers' agency. Furthermore, the evidence I have collected shows that the teachers in these case study locations expressed agency in different ways.

As discussed in Chapter 2, I am applying here the *ecological theory of agency* (Priestly, et al., 2015) to consider how the capacity to exercise agency responds to the environmental conditions in which a person (or a set of people, such as teachers in a PSA or SAT program) is situated. In keeping with this theory, I argue that agency is not an inherent trait present in some individuals but lacking in others. Rather, agency emerges through the interaction between an individual's capacity to act (which has been affected by their past, their future projections, and their present) and their environmental conditions. Agency can emerge in all people, collectively as well as individually, through exercise and use in practice, much like a muscle that can be developed over time. Agency thrives when cultivated in a nurturing environment.

Based on this ecological conception of agency, my analysis emphasizes the importance of individual intentionality, considering existing environmental affordances and constraints. Hence, the teachers' exercise of agency in the PSA (Colombia) and the SAT (Honduras) programs took different shapes and manifested in various ways, depending on both the environmental contexts *and* the ways each teacher intentionally interacted with their context. The organizational context is expressed in the conceptual underpinnings of the curriculum in both programs as well as in the organizational cultures in each case. Thus, this chapter places the relationship between teacher and mentor into the wider context of each program and organization, in order to understand how accompaniment characteristics and relationships are not just particular to select teachers or mentors, but part of a larger framework.

The practical-evaluative element in ecological agency primarily deals with the present. This concerns decisions people make on the spot, even when they might not have time to plan them or to talk with others about them. As explored in Chapter 6, the decisions in this practical-evaluative

element were described in interviews by both teachers and mentors. Teachers needed to make decisions about their teaching practices in their daily classrooms and these decisions were based on how the students responded to the teacher, how the teachers interpreted the student's responses, and their ability to reflect-on-action (on the spot) about what was happening in order to modify their own behavior. Mentors also required this practical-evaluative element in their decisions to give feedback to the teachers (what type, when, how, how directly, etc.) and how and when to interact with teachers during and beyond their classroom visits (Chapter 5). In this chapter, I will further expand on the practical-evaluative element present in teacher-student and teacher-mentor interaction.

As explored in Chapter 5, the mentors' process of encouraging and guiding teacher reflection in accompaniment learning, related to the concepts of *reflection-in-action* (Schon, 1983) and *reflection-for-action* (Brookfield,1995), connects the present-tense element of agency with the projective expression of agency (both practical-evaluative), as a mentor facilitates reflection on action mostly after the fact. I argue here that the reflection emphasis in both case studies is conducive to teachers' learning *how* to make present decisions to impact their projected future — hence, connecting the present with the projected future. Reflection, then, is not only conducted for the sake of thinking, but also for changing present and future behavior. This agency is expressed by both changes in teaching practices (teachers own behavior), and teachers' expectations about the behavior of their students (external projections).

Following the same structure as preceding chapters, I present selected elements of this analysis for each program case study, followed by a short comparative discussion between cases. The first of these themes is an exploration of the environment where teachers work as the ecological context for the teachers' expression and development of agency. Next, I describe the role that reflection played in the teacher/mentor interaction as an expression of the practical-evaluative (present moment) dimension of agency. Last, I analyze the projective elements of agency, connecting teachers' (and mentors') present actions with the future intentions they envision and express, embedded within their organizational cultures. In short, I explore how accompaniment approaches to teacher professional development use mentoring relationships and reflection as the main ways to foster greater agency in teachers, arguing that agency is expressed through the teachers' own actions and their hopes for the future of their students.

Educational environment

An ecological conception of agency emphasizes how the environment influences any individual's creation and expression of agency. Understanding the contexts of the PSA program in Colombia and the SAT program in Honduras, then, is necessary for conceptualizing the contexts in which of these two programs operated. As explained in Chapters Three and Four, the two programs share many conceptual elements, and the curricula for both programs were developed by FUNDAEC in Colombia. However, they are also two distinct programs with clear differences. Chief among the distinction between the two cases is the formal (and degree conferring) status of SAT. Holding a degree-conferring status embeds the SAT program in in a national regulatory landscape: it needs to fulfil the national education requirements to be considered equivalent to secondary school. In this comparative research project, a key aspect of the SAT environment is its embeddedness in the Honduran formal educational landscape. In contrast, by not being degree-conferring, the PSA program in Colombia is more adaptable to local contexts and circumstances and is less constrained by national education regulations.

This section explores the similarities and differences in how each program was conceived, what they emphasize, and how they were interpreted by the main actors in this dissertation: teachers and mentors. Here, I rely heavily on the organizational documents as a source of an official and organization-wide point of view. Central to these conceptions is a particular understanding of the purpose of education, toward which teachers align their actions.

PSA in Colombia

A key component of the educational environment of the PSA was its emphasis on participants being/ becoming "promoter[s] of community well-being". As its defining purpose, the PSA program wished to develop students' identity as promoters of well-being in their communities. Centered around the principle of service to others, promoters of community well-being were expected to use their knowledge for the improvement of their environment.

The promoter of community well-being (FUNDAEC, 2006) document focuses on the promoter: who they are, what they can do, and the role of education in developing their capabilities. This document presents human agency as a core part of its organizational purpose framework. I argue that, from its conceptual roots (Arbab et al, 1988), FUNDAEC intended to create an environment conducive to developing PSA teachers' agency. Interviews with teachers and mentors for this

thesis research substantiated PSA's agency-building environment. Some of the elements which are conducive to agency are its reflection-encouraging environment and spaces, the openness to dialogue, and a growth mindset.

As explained above, I theorize that the environment for agency (crucial in this ecological conception) embodies the interplay between underlying conceptions that guide the educational endeavor and the understanding and enacting of those concepts by various actors (PSA staff, mentors and teachers). This environment is simultaneously the conceptual environment encapsulated in guiding documents (the world of ideas), the organizational environment (organizational culture), the interpersonal interactions (in particular, mentor-teacher relationships), the classroom setting (teacher-student interactions and teaching practices), and the interactions with the community (service or research activities carried out by the groups of students). The feedback loops among these different layers of understanding and interaction all play a role in either fostering or hindering teacher agency. What I attempt to do in this chapter is to distil each of these elements on its own, and at the same time to show how the sum and interplay of all elements creates (or does not create) an agency-fostering environment for teachers in this accompaniment environment.

FUNDAEC (2014) has promoted a type of education rooted in the goal of enabling individuals to do two complementary activities: continue to grow as individuals and contribute to the well-being of their communities.

> The kind of education on which we are focusing is mainly concerned with enabling individuals to pursue their own intellectual and spiritual growth and to contribute to the well-being of their communities. A vital element of the conceptual framework we are exploring here is that attending to one's own growth and contributing to the betterment of society are inseparable parts of a twofold moral purpose and that it is impossible to develop either capacity without paying due attention to the other. (p. 4)

The goal of the FUNDAEC educational program is to create conditions in which individuals (students, but also teachers) can grow and learn and simultaneously for those individuals to be given the necessary tools to engage with others in contributing to a common goal to help their community. If the program meets its purpose, then individual agency is enhanced. Within this conceptualization, it is not possible to claim (nor to substantiate) that increased individual agency

automatically leads to increased collective agency. However, in FUNDAEC, the individual and collective are seen as two interrelated parts of the whole, and the development of agency of the sum of individuals working towards a social and collective goal also supports the development of collective agency.

Creating an environment for collective expression of agency is supported by the way FUNDAEC translates the purpose of education into an identity for its students. FUNDAEC described as a distinctive characteristic of their programming their students' active and influential (agentic) role as "promoters of community well-being,". A FUNDAEC document elaborates the idea that students set out to become a promoter by the time they finish the PSA program (represented in the certificate they receive), and that along the way during their program, they also become promoters of community well-being "in action." This means that becoming a promoter is both the ultimate goal of the program, and what the students do throughout their studies. The teachers who work with the students on this path, therefore, are also promoters of community well-being (or become so) as they help their students to carry out particular acts of service. The same foundational document (FUNDAEC, 2014) describes the promoter in the following terms:

> At the outset, we should remind ourselves that the term "promoter of community well-being" does not refer to a profession. Whether he or she studies the texts of PSA before undertaking postsecondary education, does both simultaneously, or becomes a participant in PSA after being already engaged in a trade or profession, the promoter needs proficiency in some area of human activity through which it is possible to earn a living. In any given locality, there are numerous individuals serving their communities in diverse ways: students, teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, social workers, farmers, and many others. What the program seeks is to help such motivated individuals to acquire, in addition to the knowledge and abilities they possess, or in the case of students they will later acquire in their specific fields, a deeper understanding of a set of concepts and to enhance certain qualities, attitudes, and skills that will enable them to serve their communities more effectively and thus promote the well-being of their people. This includes the ability to integrate knowledge from various fields relevant to the challenges they must meet in order to act on their social reality. (p. 1)

As illustrated in this document excerpt, FUNDAEC's leaders argue that anybody, in a range of professions and at any stage in their education, can become a promoter of community well-being, through taking on an ethical commitment to serving their communities. The PSA program aims to equip these individuals with concepts, qualities, attitudes, and skills in the wider purpose of helping them to serve their communities and community development effectively. The two most emphasized ethical qualities were love for fellow community members and a commitment to fostering a culture of learning in their environment.

This same introductory document (FUNDAEC, 2014) outline the kind of promoter of well-being the program sought to nurture:

> The promoter is never an outsider to the community, bringing it packages of solutions from one or another source. He or she walks humbly a path of service, and every act of service on that path is imbued with the kind of love that bestows patience to persevere in one's efforts and confers strength to face challenges…. Nurturing a culture of learning is always on the promoter's mind. Within such a culture, participation in social and economic development activity goes beyond planning and execution and involves the population in the generation and application of knowledge. (FUNDAEC, 2014, p.10)

Thus, the PSA program envisions that a promoter of community well-being – that is, a PSA participant – should love and remain a member of their local home community. Further, the program conceived promoting community well-being as helping their community to learn and to improve. The PSA program claims in its promotional documents that it practices as an organization both values: learning and community participation.

The vision set forth by the organization's framing documents expresses what the PSA program is seeking to achieve, in terms of the type of individual it seeks to help develop. Here, I argue that— as many of those "promoter" characteristics are part of what I defined as agency—the program seeks to develop agency in their students. By implication and extension, these framing documents set the tone for the overarching purpose of the work and agency of the teachers and mentors. The question pertaining to the mentors and teachers enacting the program is: how are those goals of agency development supposed to be reached?

FUNDAEC frames one key approach to ensuring that the programs educational goals are met as the participatory and consultative creation of nurturing learning environments.

> Although the methods we use will have to vary according to the purpose of each particular activity, the ... overall approach must be one of learning, according to which individuals and institutions together learn about the nature of innumerable, often small, interconnected changes that ... together constitute transformation, and about how to affect them. [PSA activities] entail study, action, and reflection on action. The entire process is governed by the principle of consultation. (FUNDAEC, 2014, p.14)

The PSA program encourages its participants to approach their service to the community by trying to learn through their (collective) action and through a robust reflection process.

By defining PSA teachers' work as helping their students to become promoters of community well-being, FUNDAEC's PSA program envisions itself as a distinct environment for those teachers' own professional learning. Clearly, the PSA program aims to foster in its students the desire for and belief in the possibility of community-based change (Correa & Murphy-Graham, 2015). I argue in this chapter that teachers themselves, as they get to know PSA's program content and try to foster agency in their students, became embodiments of this same kind of agency for promoting community well-being. This does not mean that teachers are, nor need to be, perfect exemplars. I theorize that, through the process of accompanying their students' development of qualities, understandings, skills, and attitudes for bringing about change (as well as in their work with mentors and teachers colleagues, as described in Chapters Five and Six), teachers' own agency is in turn also developed by the PSA program.

The organization's framework is echoed in this teacher's own description of the PSA program's purpose:

> The PSA program seeks to train youth so that they can develop certain capabilities, abilities and attitudes and they can become those promoters of community well-being. It also means developing in them that dual moral purpose, between being and doing, and finding balance between the spiritual and the material...through acts of service. Which begins more simply at first and becomes more complex as the program goes on...what we try and do is to train youth who want to become those true active agents in their communities. The kind of

person who seeks out their own development...That wants to continue learning. And that all of what they learn they can also share with others through acts of…disinterested service…So, one of the principal objectives is to develop in the youth that mentality of change. (Teacher #1C)

For this teacher, a PSA participant (student) should become interested in being an active agent of change in their community and in learning and growing to do so. What was poignant was the way this teacher echoed what FUNDAEC described as the purpose of the program and the envisioned role of the educational program participants as promoters of community well-being. This teacher's perspective was representative of several other PSA teachers' perspectives: I chose this quotation because of its elaborate description, but these ideas were present across interviews.

The environment where PSA teachers and mentors worked, according to the documents used for internal training purposes, should value and want to help form individuals who, regardless of their profession, were looking to make their communities better. PSA organizational leaders and teachers expected participants initially to carry out simple acts of service which were intended to help them develop into promoters of community well-being. Having an accompaniment process which considered the long-term development of the teachers allowed for the creation of a nurturing environment, which in turn appeared to encourage agency. The PSA curriculum and organizational framework encouraged agency in its students and, concurrently, also in their teachers and mentors.

While there is a similarity between the documents written by FUNDAEC (see also Chapter 4) and what teachers or mentors expressed, a critic could argue that interviewees were merely repeating a rhetoric that they knew was expected of them by their employer. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to do a detailed discourse analysis of teachers' words and the organizational documents, so for the purposes of this thesis research I take the teachers' words at face value. I acknowledge that their understanding of the program comes from a defined source, but the consistency across teachers and mentors' description of what the program could accomplish is also an indicator of the program embodying and moving beyond that shared discourse. Both interviewees and program documents consistently and clearly framed their purpose in PSA as education for community transformation, through the exercise and development of individual agency in supportive contexts. My main argument here, is that the organizational rhetoric about the purpose of the program (as expressed in the vision of the promoter of community well-being)

is one expression of ecological agency in the organization. Ultimately the teachers and mentors became both reproducers of this learning environment and influenced by that same environment.

SAT in Honduras

I now turn my attention to how the context in Honduras contributed to ecological agency (as articulated by Priestly et al., 2015). As I was unable to secure any organizational documents from Honduras (as explained in Chapter 3), so the data presented in these sections is entirely based on the interviews.

Teachers and mentors most commonly referred to the environment in Honduras as conforming to a "SAT methodology". While at first glance the concept of "methodology" has nothing to do with environment; however, it became clear that what teachers and mentors were referring to was not the particular teaching methodology (or pedagogy) of the program, but rather to the way the entire program was designed and functioned in the Honduras case. Understanding what teachers and mentors meant by "SAT methodology" became central to understanding the operationalization of the SAT program in Honduras, and ultimately understanding how specific aspects of the program made up an ecological context of agency. Several interviewees mentioned that the SAT program had an "outward" orientation towards the community, and that SAT used an action and reflection methodology where "first we investigate a theme in the classroom, then we go and we act on it, and later we come back to the classroom and reflect on that action". This relationship between the SAT curriculum, action, and reflection was emphasized throughout the interviews and in multiple contexts.

One of the specific aspects that interviewees identified as part of the SAT methodology was the community-based group dynamic of the program. This was mentioned both in terms of how the teachers worked with their students and how the program was part of each local community context. The phrase 'SAT methodology' was also used to describe the textbooks and pedagogical aspects (such as reflections, service activities and research activities) embedded in the SAT curriculum. These comments often cited the essential use of reflection, the connection between the program and students' lives, and how the teacher is expected to relate to and build upon local knowledge. The curriculum emphasized local context, providing teachers the space to ensure that their teaching was referring to the local rural environment.

SAT intended to develop agency (Murphy-Graham, 2012; Honeyman, 2010; Correa & Valcarcel, 1998) in students by supporting students' capabilities and through SAT's pedagogical approach to knowledge building. Like the notion of the promoter of community well-being explored in the Colombia section, these two aspects support the program's purpose of developing the student's ability to engage in their community through action.

Often teachers referred to the importance of recognizing and supporting the individual development of each of their students. They explained how both the teacher and the student were capable and were learning together. They said the classes were not a lecture but a conversation between teacher and students, that often also included the family or others in the community:

> Well, [in] the SAT methodology, [we] see the student as a person who already has competencies...The only thing one must do is to help them...search for the strengths they already have and then to strengthen them. So, the methodology is geared for that, to guide the student. That is why we are even called not teachers but tutors. Because we are a person who orients, who clarifies doubts, a person who creates the space so the student can be developed and can look for solutions themselves. In other words, for them to be participants in their own education. (Teacher #29H)

Often teachers mentioned that in the SAT program the group of students were in a process of building knowledge together. Everyone could share their opinion and could build their understanding together based on what they shared, on the readings, and what was in the textbooks. This meant that often classes were discussion-based, and students could share their opinions and questions with each other. In addition, many of the students' SAT learning exercises included a large research component which meant going out to the community and talking with people who had expertise developed through years of practice. These pedagogical practices were partially aimed at showing to the students that people in the community also possessed knowledge and had something of value to share. This means that teachers showed students that there were several sources of knowledge to which they could turn. As one teacher explained:

> Given our methodology we try to help the student discover. So initially it is about exploration, exploring the knowledge he already has and to try to help them study about what they want to gain with it…so slowly they begin to understand what a concept means, slowly, and the concept is also being strengthened until at the end we reach a consensus

about the definition. It is not a rigid definition and maybe can lack a more sophisticated language, but it is a definition that he [the student] understands without needed to focus on the rigidity, it is not something he has to memorize but more importantly that he understands the meaning. (Teacher #15H)

As one mentor explained, the SAT program understood action purposes as connected to acquisition of knowledge purposes and vice versa. Neither knowledge was valued for its own sake (it had to serve a purpose), and action also needed to be based on a sound understanding of previous actions (captured in the cumulative knowledge which people have organized into subject areas or disciplines). SAT understood the relationship between theorizing and action as the development of agency. Theory gives the students the conceptual framework in which they can act, and action means taking concrete steps to interact and influence the student's surroundings. Neither one can exist without the other and both are needed for purposeful action.

Well, the difference lies that in the university and in other places where I have been in what is important is knowledge in the sense of how much math do you know, how much science do you know. But not in SAT. In SAT, what is important is, do I have knowledge? What am I going to use it for? How is it going to help me? What am I going to do with it? Who am I going to help with this knowledge I have? How am I going to use this knowledge for the benefit of humanity? So that is the difference. SAT always looks for the benefit of all. In the traditional school what matters is how much knowledge you have and often we forget about the talents a person might have. (Mentor #5H)

This mentor saw SAT as both helping individuals begin to think of ways of approaching knowledge differently and encouraging people to put that knowledge in service to others. In this conception, agency is fed by both increasing knowledge and increasing action. It is not necessarily important whether that agency begins with action or if it begins with knowledge, but both need to be present and together support agency development.

In summary, it seems that the two most salient aspects of the "SAT methodology" expressed by interviewed teachers and mentors were the emphasis on helping students' to develop capabilities and an approach to knowledge generation, diffusion, and application. Note that the use of the world "methodology" in this context did not substantiate the actual ways in which student groups worked or how teachers taught. Rather methodology referred to certain underlying conceptions (and the

framework) of the SAT program's approach to education. It was in a collaborative inquiry-learning environment that teachers began to explore their sense (and their students' sense) of agency, framed in relation to service to others.

Discussion

The environment of the PSA and SAT programs was been shaped by the organization's official statements (as presented in documents which were used to explain and explore core elements) and how teachers and mentors explained that environment. Due to their differing positions in relation to formal degree-conferral, the two programs are distinct, not entirely similar. Nevertheless, both case studies shed light on the type and characteristics of the environment in both the PSA program in Colombia and the SAT program in Honduras.

In Colombia there was a clear vision, reflected in organizational documents as well as interviews, about the purpose of education and of the PSA – shaping the identity of those who learn and work in the program into promoters of community well-being. The promoter (learner), as conceived in the PSA documents, had an identity as an *agent of change* from the start of the program. An intention for students (and teachers and mentors) to become such agents was a direct result of the aims of the educational program. Therefore, the generation of agency is inherently present in PSA ecosystems.

In Honduras the expression of "SAT methodology" described the program's environment. This environment created a culture that influenced the teachers' and mentors' work and how they identified in relation to their work. Teachers and mentors referred to two themes: emphasis on developing students' capabilities and the approach to the generation, application, and diffusion of knowledge.

These findings suggest that, alone, an expanded mentorship approach, as explored in the previous two chapters, would not automatically lead to an increase in (student or teacher) agency. Rather, I find that development and enactment of agency is affected by both the contextual and conceptual environments of each of the two programs.

In sum, it would be simplistic to say that accompaniment professional development automatically leads to agency. Rather, this thesis research presents a more nuanced understanding of the underpinnings behind the educational programs' aims. The operationalization of the programs'

aims and goals through an accompaniment approach can lead to the generation of agency, but I make no claims of a simple lineal or direct causal equation. Rather, accompaniment professional development is built around trusting relationships which are developed over time, of an enabling environment which encourages people, and of a service-oriented curriculum which encourages and breaks down into actionable pieces how to go about taking small steps towards improving their surroundings. This section shows that the environment in which teachers and mentors operate, understood in terms of the enacted conceptual underpinnings of both programs, apparently influenced how accompaniment professional learning was conceived and carried out and ultimately how agency may have been fostered. The following two sections will look at other factors that influence expression (practice) of agency.

Reflection as Practical-Evaluative and Projective Expression of Agency

Reflection can help bridge the gap between "ideal" (projective theory and intention) and practical action. Helping to bridge that gap means, in some ways, connecting those conceptual elements described in the previous section (such as approaches to knowledge and the learner as a promoter of community well-being), with actions (the focus of my next section). Reflection is the tool by which concepts are internalized, understood, and executed by students, teachers, mentors, and the program as a whole.

PSA in Colombia

Reflection, in Colombia's PSA program, occurred both individually and collectively through the accompaniment process, including feedback dialogue with a mentor. In this case, the Colombian teachers and mentors used tools such as additional documents, meetings, the curriculum content texts, and the reflection notebook (see Chapter 5) to guide and enhance teachers' reflection process. The reflection process could be triggered by an event, person, textbook, or document.

Finding ways to encourage teacher reflection, then, was one of the of the essential tasks mentors carried out when meeting with teachers. Finding strategies to do so was mentioned by mentors as an important aspect of accompanying teachers (Chapter 5). PSA mentors mentioned eliciting and encouraging reflection by using prompting questions in reflection conversations.

> So, when I sit and reflect with them, I ask a series of questions which can help in that reflection process and for them to also [continue to] develop...Because I think that after a

> class or a meeting, it is necessary for one to reflect. What went well, what did not, what else do I need to learn…So, asking them questions like, 'how do you think the participants felt?', or 'you have these practices next class, do you feel prepared?' (Mentor #3C)

Here, the mentor says they had helped the teacher to zero in on specific issues or difficulties, so that the teacher could learn to pose questions and to reach conclusions on their own. The mentor did not necessarily point out what the teacher had done right or wrong in the classroom but rather used guiding questions to help the teacher to remember and think about the class they had taught. Each question helped the teacher to zero in on a particular aspect of the class – student engagement and participation, teacher preparedness, successful teaching strategies, and areas to improve. This exercise in posing reflection questions helped to elicit and guide their practical-evaluative reasoning, to possibly have an impact on decisions the teacher might make about their teaching practices in the future.

Reflection is such an integral part of the PSA program that teachers and mentors had weekly meetings to reflect together about their progress and to address together questions about their teaching. These meetings sparked collective reflection among teachers (see also Chapter 5). The time and space allocated in the program for collective reflection generated an environment of reflection as part of the ecology of agency in PSA.

Various documents were also used by mentors to spark reflection by (and with) the teachers. Some of these documents were prepared by the organization itself, following pre-identified curricular themes. In addition, the *reflection notebook* was another type of documenting tool to which mentors and teachers often referred in interviews.

An introductory document titled "The Reflection Notebook", used during the initial preservice training of teachers, describes it as a mechanism for continuous reflection, and highlights the central importance in PSA of mentors helping teachers to become more reflexive about their teaching.

> The reflection notebook is a tool where the educator writes in a regular manner to continuously learn about their experiences. It can be used to write down observations about interactions they have had with students, think of different questions which they might have, reflect about situations which they have faced, or explore different strategies they

might want to use [in class]. There is not one way to use it, it is something that every educator uses according to their circumstances and particular emphasis. (FUNDAEC, 2005, p. 1)

As this training document described, the reflection notebook was a flexible tool to help teachers think about their pedagogical choices. Three similar documents were also used during initial trainings when teachers first entered the program, to further teach teachers and mentors how to take advantage of this tool. Mentors' and teachers' frequent mentions of the notebook suggest that it was a tool which they used recurrently.

For example, one mentor explained that they had found ways to explain subject-matter or other pedagogical themes to students by following examples of teaching-learning experiences that they had gleaned from reviewing teachers' (and their own) reflection notebooks.

In general, I always use an experience to explain something. In our meetings we review the reflection notebook, and we can often find a similar experience in the notebooks to the one I might have shared earlier. So, I can lean on these tools.

Another mentor discussed the connection between reflection (thinking reflexively) and action (changes in behavior).

Before becoming a [mentor] and coming into the program I was very passive. It was as if 'if I do it is okay, but if I don't know it, it is also ok. If I study it's good, but if I don't it's fine.' But when you begin to study these materials and one understands that one cannot be a passive person but rather an active one, that you constantly must reflect about everything one is doing…analyzing how to improve…looking back a few years, I have really changed a lot. (Mentor #5C)

This mentor reported their own developmental change, from feeling 'passive' to feeling 'active,' reflecting a degree of ownership for the impact of her own actions. This suggests that this mentor's use of reflection had helped to bridge thoughts and action and thus to develop their agency.

According to the ecological theory of agency (Priestly et al., 2015), a person reaches a vision of a future goal through present decision-making processes. What I argue, based on the data collected in my two case studies, is that reflection can be used as a connecting step between that goal vision

and the daily decision-making process. In short, interviewees believed that guided (post-episode) reflection had contributed to individual teachers' learning to connect their past selves with their future goals. Individuals would not change their life trajectories on the spur of the moment nor in a linear fashion. Rather, the teachers' internal and verbalized (oral or written) grappling with experiences, aided by a mentor with certain tools, may have helped them to learn and to slowly reach their individual and collective projected goals. This was manifested by teachers' and mentors' expressions of how their lives had changed since being in the program and how other possible futures hinted at different life trajectories.

SAT in Honduras

In Honduras, reflection was mostly referenced by interviewees as an intrinsic part of the curriculum (specific exercises, etc.) and as the conversation that teachers and mentors had during the accompaniment process. Interviewees referred to reflection prompts in the SAT textbooks as being an integral part of the SAT methodology and curriculum. One teacher shared a representative example of reflection during accompaniment.

> Well for me the SAT methodology includes 3 aspects: SAT puts into practice what is action within a classroom, after the action we have a stage which we call reflection where the explain their ideas, and then we come to the reflections which are more conclusions about what we are talking about. The methodology is very good because it helps the student go from the words to the action and that is constructs learning. It helps the student become part of the knowledge so they themselves can construct it. (Teacher #11H)

As described by this teacher, reflection prompts and processes were part of the SAT curriculum content but went beyond asking reflection questions. The teacher viewed the reflection conversations as the way students constructed their own learning and internalized what they are studying. Reflections helped learners to take knowledge back and forth from the abstract to the concrete, from the general to the particular, and from theory to action.

Another teacher even stated that she saw these reflections, and the SAT reflective learning spaces, as having led to transformation.

> For me, I would describe SAT as transformation. Because I have acquired a lot of abilities and competencies which I did not have before. And I think that as a person I have improved.

Sometimes I analyze the program and I am surprised about how SAT not only transforms the students but also adults, us [teachers] who come to the program with different methodologies or different thoughts. But when we get to know the methodology of the system and the reflections which are in it, because in all classes we have space for reflection with the students, and I think that these spaces not only help the student but also the [teacher]. And that is what I describe as transformation. (Teacher #46H)

In addition to these reflection exercises identified in the SAT curriculum, interviewees saw reflection as part of the feedback process between mentors and teachers, that could be considered and incorporated into the teaching practice. For example, one teacher stated that it was necessary to reflect with another person, because it was very difficult to look at oneself in an objective manner.

I think it is important because sometimes we need someone else to tell us where we are failing… sometimes it is difficult for us to self-evaluate, but when others tell us "You can do this", or "use this strategy…" and that is what [a mentor] does. They guide us in this educational process from start to end. They are always there, orienting us, guiding us, and if he doesn't have the answer then between the two of us finding the solution. (Teacher #24H)

Reflection mostly arose in the Honduras interview data when teachers referred to reflection as a part of the SAT curriculum, and how mentors helped teachers to reflect on their work. However, there was no expression of additional tools or spaces used for reflection. Neither mentors nor teachers named the observation tool (*ficha)* mentors used to work with teachers after a class visit (see Chapter Five) as a tool for reflection. Rather, the *ficha* was used to give feedback, and, as teachers perceived it, to evaluate their teaching.

Discussion

Reflection processes helped teachers to develop agency, by helping them to internalize and to translate into practice key ideas from mentors' feedback. Reflection is the way the inner workings of teachers' thought process can be understood. Because reflection is an internal act, it is not always easy to pinpoint the causality or interaction between ideas and action, but what teacher and mentor interviews expressed was that through reflection they were able to have an increased

consciousness about their actions and were able to modify their teaching practices. Additionally, these two cases demonstrate that reflection can also be carried out with others and can be taught.

This section shows that reflection is something which can be encouraged and nurtured through a mentoring relationship for the purpose of improving teaching practices. These guided reflections on action are ways in which teachers can be supported to take ownership of their own teaching decisions and to, over time, be able to carry them out in-action in the middle of their teaching practice. Moving from a novice to experienced teacher would imply an ability to reflect more quickly on the ground and to modify teaching practices in the midst of teaching a lesson.

As exemplified in the PSA program in Colombia, some spaces (i.e. teacher meetings, mentor-teacher formal and informal meetings) and tools (i.e. reflection notebooks) encouraged reflection. Additionally, the curriculum of both programs had built-in opportunities for reflection. For example, each lesson had distinct sections - discussion, research, practices, and reflection. While not all lessons had all sections, a reflection section was included in all lessons. These sections are specifically geared to helping students (and teachers) to bridge the gap between the theory of what is being studied in the textbooks with its practical implications in local contexts using reflection questions. Reflection exercises also help students to think about their own lives. For example, in one of the first books in the curriculum, *Properties*, students are asked to look at the physical properties of objects (space, mass, volume, shape, etc.). Later in the book, they are asked to look at the "properties" of human beings. This ultimately leads to a series of reflection exercises on the intrinsic characteristics of all human beings, their similarities and differences, and the nature of multiple prejudices which are prevalent today. As the teacher guides the students through the exercises, the textbook directs them to also participate in these reflection exercises.

Lastly, the entire feedback process (see also Chapter Six) is the way in which reflection is embedded in accompaniment and which, in practical terms, helps teachers learn how to reflect on their actions and, hopefully, to change their teaching practices where necessary. Interviewees believed that reflection had helped teachers learn about their classroom teaching practices. Changing or adjusting these teaching practices over time was supported through accompaniment professional development. When mentors engaged in the feedback process (see Chapter Six), they were able to guide the teachers to think about their actions. This was the way that mentors used

accompaniment processes to (try to) affect change in the daily pedagogical choices that teachers made.

Action Towards the Future

The experiences shared by teachers and mentors about the actions they took to address and change their surroundings (communities' and their students' potential futures) suggest another key element of ecological agency: SAT and PSA teachers' and mentors' intentionality in creating a future of well-being for their students and their communities. The teachers' desire to help others improve their current lives and contribute to improving communities' futures expressed the projective element of agency. Both teachers and mentors assessed the possible futures to which they could contribute by analyzing the possibilities and constraints they or their students faced, and then took intentional steps towards projected goals of rural community-based development. These actions, and how the future was conceived, are explored in both the PSA and SAT programs.

PSA in Colombia

In the interviews carried out with the PSA program in Colombia, teachers and mentors mostly desired a projected future full of change and improvement in their communities. Ultimately these goals can be expressed in terms of rural development but in the short run include specific projects of improving early childhood education, ensuring food security and crop diversity, increasing local production of goods and supporting public health initiatives, among others. Teachers thought about how they could enact change individually and encouraged their students to act for community improvement in multiple areas through the service activities and projects in the curriculum. Some of these projects were born out of textbooks, such as malaria sensitization campaigns, the creation of diversified high-efficiency agricultural plots, or solid waste management. However, other projects the students developed themselves, based on the needs and opportunities they identified in their own surroundings.

Teachers' desire to see change in their communities was a crucial prerequisite for fostering their own as well as their students' necessary agency for action. For example, one teacher shared how they wanted to keep helping their community by helping others to achieve in education.

> Well, continuing to help my community...I can study different concepts that people don't know and then replicate them in my community. Because my community is one where the

> great majority do not have access to higher education…So, we need to advance as a community, to feel well, to keep working together as a community. (Teacher #13C)

This teacher understood education and community development as linked through the pursuit of higher education. Pursuing post-secondary education could benefit other community members through the access to global advances in areas such as health or agriculture. Here the teacher is referring to their own education and agency and to the immediate effect their actions might have. As their own education attainment increased, they believed that their ability to have greater impact on others also increased.

Another teacher understood action as motivating students and youth to cultivate their own happiness.

> What motivates me to keep working in PSA is to help youth become promoters of community well-being. For them to arise and serve their communities, that they can be the owners of their dreams…because the idea is that if they fall down ten thousand times, they can also stand up ten thousand times…that they study and serve their communities…'what do I want to do?' and 'for what purpose?' are questions that we should be asking ourselves daily and projecting ourselves towards the future…I want them to feel happy, to be able to transform themselves and their community" (Teacher #8C)

This teacher's projected vision was twofold. On the one hand it impacted her own actions and decisions. On the other, her vision was put into practice by passing it on to her students. She saw her ability to motivate and equip her own students to confidently contribute to their communities as their vision in action through others. As she saw her students developing future plans for their communities, she experienced a feedback loop - she saw how she could have an impact in the future through her students, and therefore, her own work took on additional projective purpose. At a third level, the planned and enacted PSA and SAT curriculum was also constructed to leverage greater community involvement, agency, and personal growth and development in teachers and students through helping develop promoters of community well-being. Therefore, three levels are in place: curricular framework, teachers' vision and their own actions, and the actions of the students.

The ideas of ownership, agency, and being 'active' participants were intertwined in teachers' statements about the purpose of the PSA program and what becoming a promoter of community well-being entailed. The connection between teachers' increased awareness of their own power and ability to enact change in their environment is part of what PSA intended promoters of community well-being to do. The change that teachers perceived in themselves and their students confirmed the significance of the work they carried out.

> [We]e start growing as people and then you want to show up. I used to ask myself before getting to know the program, like any ignorant person, how can I possibly serve my community? I can't serve, I don't have any money. If I don't have kilos of rice to give to someone then how can I help them? That used to be my perspective. But now I know that...I can contribute to the development of my community through education, and education is the basis for everything. (Teacher #16C)

For this teacher, once he had begun to serve others, he began to see that he could affect change. Having the knowledge of power and possibilities had changed him, in his view, from a passive actor to an active agent.

Teachers in the Colombia PSA program, echoing PSA's official mission and training documents, described factors that had affected their sense of agency — or, as they described it, of being/becoming active agents (promoters) of change. Two factors stand out: the centrality of an ethic of service, which led some teachers to feel an active part of their community and to believe that change was possible; and teachers' sense of hope that their actions could contribute to the lives of their students and to the betterment of their surroundings.

The projective dimension of agency, in this situation, was closely linked with actions that teachers took in the present. Those actions closely intertwined with teachers' daily work, were channeled into the changes they saw in their students and were geared towards a projected improved future. The teaching profession has a projective element built in, given that teachers teach succeeding generations. What the PSA and SAT teachers and mentors interviewed contribute is a hopeful projected future in socially and economically marginalized rural areas, seen through their students' (and their own) developing sense of agency.

SAT in Honduras

In Honduras, the forward-thinking vision and projection was defined in terms of the teacher's own permanence in the SAT program. Teachers spoke of their love of the SAT program and their desire to continue working within the SAT system. When thinking of their future and where they would like to continue to work, the teachers consistently (100% of all responses) mentioned that they saw themselves working with SAT. This was true even where individuals said they had had the opportunity to go elsewhere, which also might have meant an increase in their salary.

Honduran teachers mentioned that their commitment to the SAT program was because they loved their students, as well as their own growth and learning in the program. Some teachers mentioned that the program was a "special opportunity" which had come to the rural areas, and of which they hoped students would take advantage. Teachers said that FUNDAEC's creation of the program specifically for rural areas was a "blessing".

One teacher explained:

> Every year I have been here has only been an opportunity to learn. As a [teacher] I have learnt from my students, from their parents, from my co-workers. I wish I had a photographic memory to remember everything I have learnt…But I love my job. I love everything I do; I love the work I do in the community…not everything is always good, there are things to improve but for the most part I have been well, especially with my students. They are a source of joy for me. And the fact that their parents have confided in me to lend me their children so I can teach them, I am happy, I love it. (Teacher #55H)

Another aspect teachers highlighted was SAT's emphasis on service to the community, including the connections which they were able to have with communities because of the program. Teachers and mentors suggested that the program had helped to bring unity between students, families, and community.

> [SAT was] innovative because it allows for participation from parents, students, the community, and the [teachers]… it's a combination of learning, everyone is learning: the [teacher], the student, the parents, and the community. That is why we are a learning community. (Mentor #7H)

Another mentor shared that, despite SAT having a "bad" reputation in the community for being work that demanded a lot of the teachers, they were happy in their job.

> There are people who say I don't work with SAT because you have a lot of work there. I have heard that type of comments. But we say, 'what do you mean you have to work a lot here?' If we only do what needs to be done. We always ask ourselves why they have that perception. We know we are hired full time, our salary is that of a full-time teacher, so we are hired full time. But we are also [teachers] or [mentors] no matter where we are. So, it is different because we learn how to be of service to others. Service is one of the primary capabilities of SAT and we also learn about it. How to be of service to the community, how to prefer your brother before yourself. All of that is fundamental, it is something important and that we should give to the community. So, I often think that is one of the differences, that we really learn to give ourselves to the community. (Mentor #6H)

As this mentor shared, teachers and mentors committed to working with the SAT program long term, but even more than that, they were committed to their communities. The well-being of the community was ingrained in this mentor's description of their future with the program. Additionally, they are aware that that type of commitment is not one that everyone will have (or even want to have), but it is a choice that they have made and have, therefore, exercised their sense of agency in their current actions but also into their projected future. This view was shared by several mentors interviewed.

This same commitment was also found in teachers' interviews with many teachers commenting that despite multiple opportunities to leave the program for better pay they continued to stay with the program because of their "closeness to the community" and because they "like how SAT teaches [and] how the students learn." Teachers chose to stay in SAT despite having other offers, hence showing agency in where they decided to spend their time and energy.

This level of teacher commitment (and of choice) was also demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic and was key in the program being able to survive and adapt to these new circumstances. According to the national guidelines, teachers were not expected to continue interacting with their students and the assumption was that once schools closed teachers would stay in their homes and await further instructions. However, SAT teachers had an opposite reaction. One national staff member explained the difficulties they had faced during the pandemic and how teachers were the key in making sure the program continued to function:

I think there is a really committed team in SAT and that is a resource that Bayan needs to continue to take care because they are quite committed to their students, with the communities. And despite the risks they would go and do their jobs. So, I think that they did fulfill their role. The mentors were also there accompanying the process, aware of the needs of the [teachers], of the students. And similarly, we also coordinated the distribution of the materials in schools. Just right now they are going house by house taking the textbooks to each of their students. And that is just a reflection of the level of commitment that they have. (Staff #1H)

This staff member shared how the program had only been able to continue during the COVID-19 pandemic thanks to teachers' strong commitment and willingness to take personal risk. The dedication shown by the teachers and mentors had allowed for students continued learning despite the challenges faced during the pandemic. Teachers' creativity and desire to keep advancing and learning, including taking on extra training to use technological tools, was essential for the program.

Mentors and teachers staying with the program long-term, and teachers being dedicated to ensuring their students continued learning during the pandemic are solid indicators that teachers were exercising projective elements of agency in the SAT program. Beyond or instead of describing their students' futures, teachers and mentors spoke about how they themselves made decisions about where they chose to work and how they chose to spend their time. Teachers' choices were examples of agency enacted.

Discussion

The projective element of agency was expressed in different ways in the PSA program in Colombia compared with the SAT program in Honduras. For the PSA teachers, the acted-upon future was mostly expressed through their own actions and interactions with their communities and by helping their student's' become promoters of community well-being. SAT teachers' projective agency was expressed in their commitment to stay in the SAT program (particularly when more lucrative or less effort-requiring jobs were available to them) and their collective efforts to ensure their students kept studying during the pandemic. These examples share common characteristics of expressing hopefulness towards the future and a strong belief in education in general.

Agency is strongly connected to the belief that actions in the present can affect change into the future (Correa, 2015; Correa & Murphy-Graham, 2019): relative certainty that one can make a difference apparently leads to further agency. This belief can be a strong motivator for further action (ibid) and can lead to a positive feedback loop. Among PSA and SAT teachers, it can be expressed through their own lives and as well through their impact on the lives of their students. The relationships that teachers built with students reflected the organizational cultures of accompaniment in both case study sites, in which the close and supportive mentoring provided by teachers to students and community members echoed the mentoring they received from mentors. What these two cases show is the interdependence of agency and action. Action (an expression of agency) can take on different forms and can be expressed through both teacher and student actions. Taking steps towards effecting change in their own lives and that of their communities, is conducive to greater teacher agency. Hence, action leads to increased agency and increased agency leads to more refined and concerted action.

 While teacher-student relationship is beyond the scope of this dissertation, the interdependence of relationship characteristics (as explored in Chapter 6) in multiple levels in the two case studies provide a solid foundation for investigating such claims.

Conclusion

This chapter showed how the PSA program in Colombia and the SAT program in Honduras fostered a sense of agency in their rural teachers and the ways in which such agency was expressed. Analyzing the data through the ecological theory of agency (Priestly et al., 2015), this chapter explored how PSA and SAT created work environments (and contexts) for teachers and mentors that were important to their sense of agency.

The ecological conception of agency was substantiated through three categories of evidence: 1) how education was framed in teacher and mentor interviews; 2) reflections linking teachers' actions with their projected future (practical-evaluative); and 3) how concrete action was expressed by many teachers' commitment to remain in the SAT program long term. In PSA Colombia, organizational documents contributed to the framing of education. In Colombia I focused on the teachers' action as expressed through their work with their students. In contrast, in SAT Honduras I focused on teachers' own projected future with the program.

In the first category regarding the framing of education, both the PSA program in Colombia and the SAT program in Honduras used the same FUNDAEC curriculum (operationalized via textbooks). However, as explained in Chapter Four, the Colombia PSA program was shorter in duration and used only the first "level" of that curriculum. Also in Colombia PSA, the teachers and mentors emphasized the identity of students as promoters of community well-being. As students in PSA did not receive a high school diploma, their participation was motivated by a desired to be active members and agents of change in their community. FUNDAEC's organizational documents emphasized the program's focus on community well-being that was mirrored in the interviews with teachers and mentors.

The Honduras SAT program, on the other hand, was degree conferring, and as such teachers and mentors were quite clear (and consistent) about the various components of the program. Teachers emphasized students' capabilities and co-developing knowledge from multiple sources as key elements in their engagement in the program. Thus, while the two programs had a shared curriculum to some degree, one organization (PSA) emphasized the identity of the student as a promoter of community well-being, while the other (SAT) emphasized capabilities and knowledge that were more oriented toward formal schooling and assessment.

Reflection, embedded in both organizations' processes through the curriculum, teaching, and mentoring practices, supported teachers' and students' pursuit of future goals. Taking advantage of these incorporated reflections was the emphasis in Honduras. In contrast, in Colombia, tools, such as the reflection notebook, supported teachers' and mentors' ability to reflect.

Figure 10: *Themes of teacher reflection*
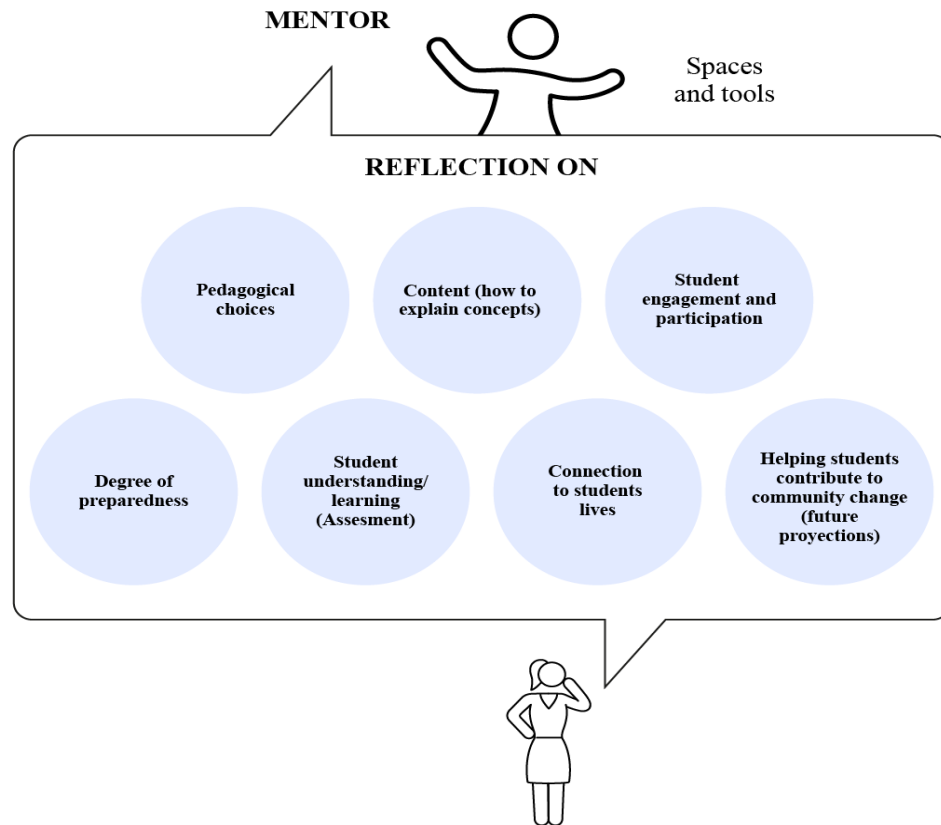
This chapter examined various forms of teachers' agentic action in the present day which would affect and inform the teachers' (and sometimes students') future decisions. In PSA Colombia, action was expressed through service and through the belief in the possibility of future change in their communities and in their students. These notions were very much in line with Priestly et al.'s (2015) projective element of agency. Teachers believed that they affected the future through the impact they could have in their students' lives. In the case of SAT Honduras, teachers' action (and vision of the future) was manifested as commitment to the SAT program for the long term. Here, the action was not necessarily focused externally on the students, but rather internally on the teachers themselves. Teachers mentioned that they had received offers to work elsewhere but chose to remain in SAT because of their commitment to the program. Their sense of commitment was also shown during the COVID-19 pandemic by the extraordinary support they provided the students during that difficult period.

In summary, this chapter organized the analysis around three elements of agency: iterational, projective and practical-evaluative. I argue that the context and environment of each organization

was expressed in the purpose of the programs. In these scenarios, fostering student agency also constituted teachers' own expression of agency. Reflection, which was built into the FUNDAEC curriculum for students as well as the accompaniment mentoring process, was a tool for teachers to reflect on where they were and where they wanted to go, linking the present with the future. Lastly, I showed that a teacher's sense of agency was both expressed through action and led to action. Together, these sections point towards the idea that ultimately, even though agency is often described as an individual characteristic (in interaction with their environment), fostering it in others was highly influenced by the organizational culture as well as the community environment. In sum, PSA Colombia and SAT Honduras having purposes linked to the development of agency, having tools which allowed agency to be fostered, and having structures in place which encouraged such development were all essential elements to encourage agency in teachers as part of their accompaniment-based professional development.

Figure 11: *Accompaniment and Agency*
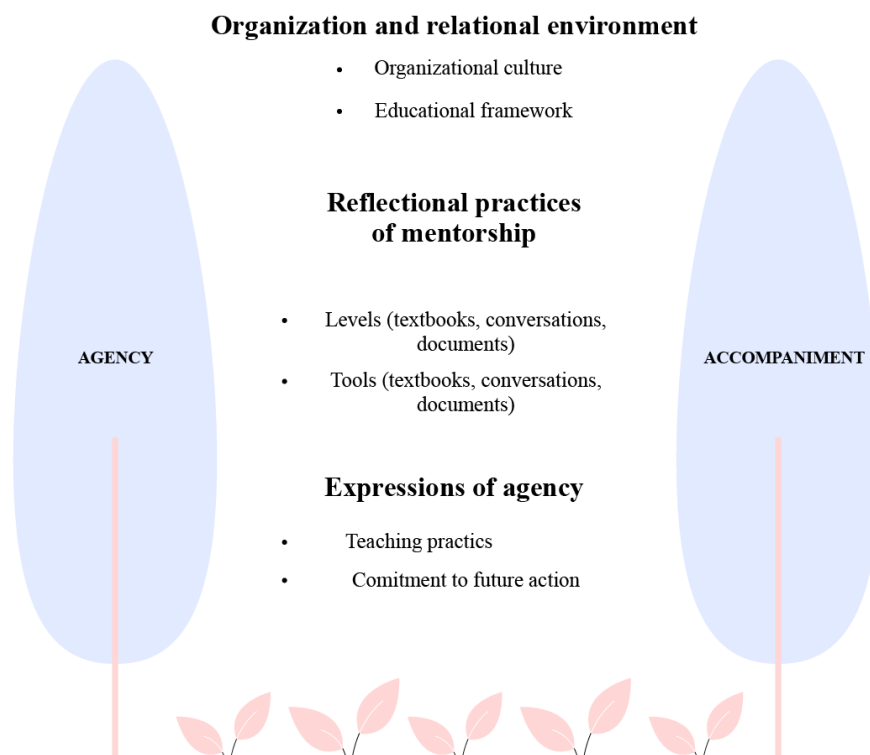
Chapter 8:
Discussion & Conclusions

This research set out to explore the accompaniment approach to teacher professional development used by two organizations situated in the Global South working with youth in rural areas of Colombia and Honduras. The research was guided by one main research questions and two secondary questions:

1) How does site-based accompaniment mentoring (as enacted in each context) encourage or discourage teacher agency, in each context, as perceived by the participants?

   a) What does accompaniment mean and entail in each context, and how does this compare (and contrast) with the way each organization functions?

   b) What is the nature of the dyad relationship between mentors and teachers, and how has this relationship developed over time in each context?

Findings in response to these research questions were presented in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. In this final chapter I will summarize and discuss the main findings and their significance, share some scholarly and practical implications and recommendations, and reflect on the chosen methodology.

Key findings

To make sense of my findings, I used an analytical framework made up of three concepts: mentorship, reflection, and agency. These concepts, explored in depth in Chapter 2, are also closely related to each of the research questions mentioned above. These three concepts are an interrelated lenses through which accompaniment can be viewed. As such, I discuss the research questions and the related concepts in tandem.

Mentoring

The focus of this dissertation is how mentorship and mentors worked with the teachers in two comparable rural education programs: PSA in Colombia and SAT in Honduras. As previously discussed, (see Chapter 4), these mentors carry out several functions in the program: coordination, administrative and evaluative among others. While being aware of these other functions, I decided

to focus my attention on the role of these individuals play as mentors to the teachers and have analyzed their actions based on this function. That is to say that the accompaniment process is not a mentoring program, not are "mentors" only mentors, but they also have other roles which they carry out in the program. However, I choose to focus on the mentoring functions and relationship they carry out with the teachers; therefore, the emphasis of my findings is on the way mentoring (as an action) can play a role in teacher professional development.

One key finding was that teachers often referred to the accompaniment process as on where they felt that someone had their back, that they were not alone in their effort to teach and had support. This echoes the idea found in literature on mentorship relationships, that "… one of the great values of having a coach can be the experience of someone really being there for you and encouraging you to believe in yourself and achieve your goals" (Bluckert, 2005, p. 340). The idea of feeling supported is a simple one; however, what teachers expressed was the need to feel supported (rather than supervised or evaluated), is not always easy to carry out.

In Colombia, teachers expressed their perception of feeling supported by reporting an underlying sense of friendship between teachers and mentors. This friendship was present across teacher and mentor interviews and was manifested inside and outside working hours. Teachers and mentors alike spoke of instances where they would meet outside of their work to talk or to simply "hang out". A related idea, given that friendships are, for the most part, horizontal, that was also present in the findings (especially in Colombia) was the importance given by both teachers and mentors of the horizontality (rather than hierarchy) and respectful nature of their relationships.

An important challenge which friendship with teachers could cause, is the possibility of tension for mentors when they needed to have difficult conversations with teachers about their work (teaching style, participation, etc.). Mullen and Klimaitis (2021) found that "when mentors try to connect in a peer-to-peer like friendship, their efforts to model and influence behavior may be compromised. Feelings of intimacy, attraction, and sexual desire – not uncommon in adult mentoring relationships – are exploitative if left unmanaged" (p. 22). Friendship was an important basis for a mentoring relationship that necessitated maintaining certain limits. Despite the possibility for friction, the teachers and mentors reiterated that the friendship was able to continue as it was marked by "respect", with respect serving as a demarcation line for those limits. It is therefore important to not assume that any mentoring relationship will automatically be conducive

to teacher development, and the pitfalls of these relationships also need to be acknowledged in order to avoid them as much as possible. In a similar light, I am not arguing that friendship is always the best type of relationship, but that it does have a role to play in teacher professional development.

In contrast, mentorship in the Honduran case was more likened to supervision and evaluation. Whether it was to show similarities or differences, teachers compared the mentors' accompaniment style to supervision. While the teachers did not say that the mentors were constantly supervisory, there was a perceived tendency by the teachers to assume that supervision was the norm, particularly as they had already been part of the formal education sector where supervision was pervasive and was the only point of comparison for these teachers.

One marked difference between Colombia and Honduras is the level of formality in the two cases and how that formality impacted the relationships between teachers and mentors. In Colombia, the PSA program is not degree conferring and does not need to conform to certain constraints which are natural in the official national public school system. For example, teachers are not expected to give grades, students are not expected to sit for national standardized exams and teachers do not have any additional incentives (economic or otherwise) for their students to "do well" in certain exams. In Honduras, on the other hand, the SAT program is considered an alternative (and equivalent) to the national public high school. Teachers might feel pressure for their students to perform in standard exams. While the pressure, or non-pressure, that teachers might have felt was beyond the scope of this research, the difference between how teachers perceived the relationship with their mentor was apparent in the teacher interviews.

Teacher mentoring literature points to different levels of 'intensity' (Karcher & Hansen, 2014) in mentoring relationships, which may change over time. This implies relationships are not always the same and that the time mentors and teachers spend together, or the type of conversations or activities that they do together, will not be static across the duration of the relationship. Gender (of the teacher and the mentor) might also influence a teacher/mentor relationship with males, for example, spending more time on sports activities together. It could be possible, then, that the amount or quality of mentorship might vary according to gender, shared interests or opportunities to bond outside of the classroom.

The variability and evolution of a teacher/mentor relationship can be noted in both cases as the degree of mentoring (as captured by the regularity of visits a teacher might receive) was varied in the teachers' recollections. For example, when teachers started new student groups or were new to the program, they felt the need to receive more regular follow-up. However, as teachers' levels of comfort went up, the type of accompaniment they needed evolved and the frequency of visits they wanted also varied. The findings (especially in Honduras) pointed to moments where teachers stopped wanting close follow up and help having mastered a given task. Challenges of how much mentoring was needed, or the style of feedback in mentoring relationships (such as the ones presented in Chapter 5) could be related to different understandings, on the side of the teacher or mentor, of the level of intensity the relationship required, particularly in different moments in the teachers' development path. Additionally, a misdiagnosis on the part of the mentors, or rather a lack of the same understanding between mentors and teachers, on what the teachers needed could lead to friction between mentors and teachers and an underuse of the possibilities of having a mentoring relationship.

Mentoring needs to move past rigid structures to become fluid, dynamic and organic. As Mullen and Klimaitis (2021) point out,

> targets of dissatisfaction are dysfunctionality in power hierarchies, rigid lines of role and function, and constraints on diversity and difference. Fluid, creative, and adaptive thoughts and behaviors would be modeled on organic, dynamic structures. Mentoring as a living organism is an alternative metaphor for envisioning mentoring relationships as part of a complex social web and as dynamic configurations that transform and have the power to modernize norms and practices" (p. 24).

While neither of the two cases can be called entirely fluid or organic models, there are glimpses of an openness to try new things and for relationships to evolve over time. Given that the programs have a defined curriculum (and in the case of Honduras, a degree attached to it), do not permit for a fully fluid model, but the response of the program to having student groups where there is a population student's (rather than establishing a central location where everyone needs to reach like in the traditional school model), allows for certain flexibility and evolution over time. The willingness of mentors to spend more/less time with teachers over time is also an indicator of this flexibility.

This research contributes to the existing literature by exploring how elements of a mentoring relationship can be used for teacher professional development. While a mentoring relationship may not be fully free of the introduction of supervisory elements given the formality of an education system, it is possible to infuse mentoring aspects into the on-site accompaniment of teachers. Since the purpose of the mentoring relationship is to help teachers develop their abilities, and it can be modified to where teachers are located on their development path. Hence, mentoring for accompaniment purposes, can lead to more reflective and agentic teachers.

Reflection

The second of my triad of concepts which helped analyze the findings in this dissertation is that of reflection and reflexivity. One of the arguments presented in this dissertation is that reflection can be used as a tool to generate agency in teachers as part of their professional development. As teachers are increasingly more capable to think about their current actions, reflect upon them and make modifications for their future actions (and projected goals), they are increasingly able to exercise their agency. Reflection can be used as a tool to elicit such agency. In the context of this dissertation, that iterative process of reflection, then, is ideally associated with the teachers' own teaching practices and the improvement of these practices.

Reflection requires continuous concerted efforts to be effective (Gillies,2016; Korthagen and Vasalos, 2005). Often, tools supporting teacher reflection are described in the literature. For example, the use of 'learning journals' as a tool for helping the process of reflection has been well studied. McLaren (2017) explained that the learning journal

> can provide a tool to encourage increased self-awareness through the ability to theorize about the nature of experiences and encounters and make the author more explicitly aware of the choices and decisions they themselves are empowered to make…. The intention is that learning journals provide scaffolding for the teacher to reflect on their own development in the context in which she/he is operating. (p.185)

In the Colombia PSA site, mentors and teachers used the "reflection notebook" as a tool to elicit and teach reflection. Teachers wrote in the notebook while teaching, and used it to refer to when meeting with mentors. Mentors also kept their own reflection notebooks. In Honduras, reflection was present in the teachers and mentors' conversations but was not assisted by an additional tool.

In Honduras, teachers also referred to the reflection exercises which are part of the textbooks as an additional way in which the ability to reflect was encouraged in the SAT program.

Reflection was clearly valued in both case studies and each one showed purposeful effort to encourage reflection in the teachers. Ripamonti et al. (2018) found that reflexivity can be encouraged, sustained, and maintained through different learning strategies. However, what these strategies are and how to help teach reflection is an area which requires further study. As found in the literature on reflection (Chapter Two), while the value of reflection is generally acknowledged, there is less of a consensus about how to go about it. These cases showed that reflection, while ultimately individual, can be encouraged by a mentor. This encouragement can occur during one-on-one meetings after class, with the use of tools such as reflection notebook (Colombia) or the creation of spaces for collective reflection with a group of teachers (Colombia). The examples at both sites indicate ways to develop the capacity for reflection in teacher professional development, but more research is required to fully flesh out possible tools and strategies for reflexivity.

In his analysis of reflective practice and professional development, Tarrant (2013) mentions three ideas which seem to be present in the findings. The first is the notion of *continuous learning* as one of the defining characteristics of professional practice. For there to be professional development there needs to be continuous learning. In both Colombia and Honduras, a growth-minded mentality was present, where teachers and mentors alike spoke about their notions of growth and advancement. This was mostly manifest in their description of their own abilities as teachers and their improvement in this area. There was reference for both teachers and mentors to their growth as integral people. Chapter Seven discussed how, growth mindset was present in the organizational culture in Colombia. This was present in the holistic view of the teachers' development path and the emphasis on their growth.

Tarrant (2013) believes that reflection (or a reflective practice) is perceived as a luxury which not everyone can afford, and it is dismissed because of its time intensity. Often, reflection falls prey to the competition from different resources or initiatives on teachers' time. However, in the two cases studied here, time for reflection (and mentorship) is built into the educational system and the mode of delivery of the programs which removes the question of time from the teachers and mentors' individual decision-making process and creates the time for it at a programmatic level. The luxury of time is decided programmatically and the burden of choosing what to allocate time

to, is not on the mentors and teachers' shoulders. Tarrant's (2013) third idea is that systematic reflection requires a degree of objectivity about what happened in class. While Tarrant does not address how that objectivity can be achieved the two cases in this dissertation shed some light on objectivity. Teachers and mentors in both cases shared that having a mentor with them to ask them questions about their class and help them think through their teaching practices supported them in taking a step back from their own immersion in the experience. While the findings did not address the importance of objectivity head on, it does begin to address the question of what the presence of a mentor, who asked directed questions of the teachers, provide for objectivity in reflective teacher practices and how that presence provides opportunities for teacher professional development. Chief among those insights is the value of having an additional person to help seek objectivity and who is thinking about the teachers' path of development as well. Furthermore, the institutionalization of these objectives allows for progress for teachers.

Tonna et al. (2017) and Svojanovsky (2017) articulate the relationship between teacher mentoring and reflection as empowering. For example, Tonna et al. (2017) describe

> …reflective mentoring models [that aim at promoting] … critical reflection based on a developmental approach towards mentoring, rather than a judgmental one. [Models] also must challenge traditional hierarchical relationships and involve a commitment to collaborative, co-produced, inquiry-oriented approaches towards mentoring. (p. 222).

Classifying mentoring relationships as "reflecting mentoring model[s]" opens the door for accompaniment to be included as a type of mentoring model. Accompaniment can serve as a bridge for mentoring and reflection and as a contribution to both. Similarly, Svojanovsky (2017) describes the differences between what they categorize as an advisor/instructor versus an 'encourager of reflection,' describing the second as

> empowering the mentee to learn from their own practice and give direction to their own learning…. [some] specific supervisory skills that stimulate student reflection, for example: summarizing feeling (showing empathy), showing genuineness or helping make things explicit (giving feedback, summarizing inconsistencies, utilizing the here and now). (p. 339)

This type of encouragement shows up in both PSA in Colombia and SAT in Honduras in the types of feedback that mentors give, in the non-intrusive manner in which most mentors visit the teachers in and outside of the classroom, and the general preoccupation for the teachers' well-being and development. In turn, this encouragement, leads to teacher motivation and in feeling supported in their teaching practices.

Given these potential new explorations in the literature around reflective mentoring models or mentors who are encouragers of reflection, I argue that the accompaniment process described in both cases are reflecting mentoring models.

Agency

Mentoring and reflection, in this dissertation, are tied to the improvement of teaching practices and of teacher agency. To understand the element of agency, this dissertation used the ecological model of agency as its basis for analysis. One key idea in this model of agency is that the environment plays an important role in the creation (or non-creation) of agency, namely that certain environments are more agency enabling with others being more disabling. In the ecological model, agency is conceived as *emerging* from the interaction between individuals' capacity and environmental conditions. Agency is not an inherent trait that some possess - rather, it can emerge in all people through its exercise and use. This dissertation found that the PSA and SAT framing documents and curricula was itself part of the environment, as they lay down the framework within which teachers and mentors work. The curriculum sets the environment for the type of discussions groups of students will have, what type of activities they will carry out, and the type of relationship they have with the community as well. By encouraging service-centered activities and a close relationship with the community, the textbooks set the expectations for the program's environment. Likewise, the conception of the PSA and SAT student's (and the graduates of the program) as promoters of community well-being (particularly in PSA), also create certain expectations, which in turn affect the environment that is created to reach those expectations. Furthermore, the organizational culture itself, explored in Chapter Seven for FUNDAEC (Colombia), also shed light on the fact that the existing organizational environment does foster a sense of agency in those who worked there.

The ecological model of agency has three elements which were introduced in Chapter 2: the iterational, projective and practical-evaluative element. The *iterational* element states that past

patterns of thought and action (habitual aspect) influence agency. This element also includes personal capacity (skills and knowledge), professional and personal beliefs and values. In the case of both PSA and SAT this element is manifested in what teachers come into the program knowing and having been trained in, in addition to their own personal characteristics. The differences of formal training between SAT and PSA teachers given the need for professional teachers to participate in the public education system (SAT) was manifested in different ways in which agency was exercised in both case sites.

The *projective* element refers to how individuals see themselves in the future, the possibility of different trajectories once action has taken place. This element can include themes such as interest in students' well-being or learning, keeping order in the classroom or moving ahead in their profession, how individuals see themselves in the future, and the possibility of different trajectories once action has taken place. This element was interpreted in the findings as a desire to help others as expressed by teachers and mentors. Additionally, the fact that they see the program as something which they can do to contribute to the betterment of their communities and their motivation to continue in the program long term, even when other (and often better paying) offers were received was found especially in the Honduran case site.

Lastly, the *practical-evaluative element* of the model considers the judgments individuals make in the moment to reach a future projection. These include the daily decisions teachers make and that they do not have time to think or talk about with someone else. Practical-evaluative influences on agency came up through program emphasis on reflection as well as how teachers and mentors describe the future and how they see the work they are currently undertaking as contributing to the betterment of their environments.

Accompaniment can be understood as both fostering agency and also as a byproduct of having increased agency. As teachers are visited and accompanied on site they slowly gain more confidence in their teaching practices as well as being shown in action and in a supportive manner, how to improve their teaching practices. Furthermore, teachers are helped to learn how to reflect on their teaching practices which is something which they can do on their own and can improve over time. As they begin to reflect regularly, and internalize reflection in their work, they are able to take further ownership of their own teaching practices while also improving these. The type of accompaniment (and the degree to which it happens), can also help foster agency over time. While

this study was not longitudinal and could therefore not fully address the temporal aspects of agency, there are some insights to how the type of accompaniment mentors chooses to focus on at a particular moment in a teachers' development path is reflective of their particular needs at that moment. Hence, accompaniment over time does not assume an existence (or non-existence) of agency, but rather a slow and increased development over time and which might manifest in different ways.

Viewed as part of a positive feedback loop, having more agency can also lead to better accompaniment. For example, mentors were able to accompany the teachers more effectively because of their own sense of agency. Their ability to reflect was greater as they were not only thinking about their own reflection but also about how to teach others how to reflect. Furthermore, the system of accompaniment in which they operate assumes that they are agentic actors who can make autonomous decisions about how to be mentors and how to accompany others, which then translates into teachers who are also conceived as agents and students who are re-imaged as promoters of community well-being and agents of change.

Policy and Practical Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings above, I offer the following policy and practical implications and recommendations.

In terms of different programs for teacher professional development, this research suggests that accompaniment can be a flexible professional development approach, responsive to various teachers' needs at any given moment. When knowing what teachers need (and when they require such support) mentors can tailor the professional development of teachers. This would imply that in practical terms, establishing ways of conducting teacher professional development which are both structured enough to have a series of steps, but flexible enough to respond to teachers' current questions, would be of benefit for teachers' long term.

However, to make accompaniment more useful, particularly at a policy level, further questions would need to be explored. For example, one of the main complaints of Honduran teachers was mentor's focusing their visit on talking about skills the teacher felt they had already mastered. It is important to differentiate between novice and more experienced teachers and to begin to determine what type of accompaniment (or what themes) different levels of teachers might require.

This does not necessarily imply a prescriptive or linear formula for accompaniment, but an acknowledgement of development over time if it is a strategy to be used for teacher development. Teachers would need to feel they are developing. Maintaining a certain degree of flexibility, but with more established "levels," would be useful.

Similarly, as explored in the finding sections reflection seems to be a crucial area to continue to develop. This would be useful both practically (for the organizations themselves) but also as a further contribution to the literature around the subject of how to teach and cultivate the capacity to reflect in others, particularly in teachers. More information about what steps are involved in teaching reflection would be beneficial.

Lastly, this dissertation also shows, in practical terms, that teaching does not have to be a totally "solitary" profession. Being able to share with other teachers (and with mentors) what the teacher is struggling with (or what they are doing well), helps demystify the act of teaching. This has, of course, being explored in the literature in the context of learning communities. Through accompaniment it is also possible to get to know what is happening in other contexts, how others teach and receive feedback. These interactions between teachers and their mentors, as well as the idea of feeling supported, all contribute to moving away from the idea of teaching as a solitary practice.

Methodological Reflections

Any research carried out during the height of the global COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020 to March 2022) is, of course, subject to certain particularities which arise from that moment in history which affected all aspects of human action and research, and clearly scholarly work was not exempt. The disruption of schooling and access to education impacted educational systems across the world, and the Global South faced its own additional challenges. It is currently estimated that 24 million learners from pre-primary to university left the formal educations system during the pandemic (UNESCO, 2020) and many of them are not expected to be able to re-enter formal systems, and those who do enter face significant gaps in their years of schooling.

In the realm of research, methods for collecting data had to be altered and modified to respond to necessary precautions to ensure public health, and national, regional, or institutional policies had to be considered when defining research methodologies. Thankfully, this process of data collection

pertaining to this dissertation begun in the "middle" of the pandemic and the research was designed with COVID restrictions and limitations in mind. While this, of course, limited what was possible to do (and consequently achieve), it was part of the limitations of the study from the beginning and were not modifications that were made along the way. At the same time, COVID afforded the research certain flexibility and made it possible to increase the scope of the research. Some methodological limitations and strengths in relation to the pandemic include:

- The pandemic afforded me the possibility of increasing the number of potential sites where data could be collected in the Colombian context. Five distinct regions in the country were chosen and teachers and mentors were interviewed across the country. This afforded me the possibility of analyzing the data for the potential regional variations across these regions. While these variations were not significant (or at least were not present in the data), the ability to have a sample of teachers and mentors across the country was made possible through the affordances of technological tools. Traveling to five regions in Colombia would have been extremely expensive and cost prohibitive given the scope of the study.

- Interviews were conducted between April and June 2021 which meant that all the people interviewed were already familiar with different technological tools and had found relatively stable ways of communicating. For example, individuals who maybe at the beginning of the pandemic did not know how to use Zoom or did not have adequate spaces in their homes to work or did not have enough data on their phones to support online conversations, had already solved these issues before the data collection began. This also meant that interviewees had had enough time to reflect on their early experience with the pandemic, their response, and the institutions response. This degree of time allowed for certain distance from the crucial beginning steps of the pandemic response and for interviewees to have the benefit of reflection.

- The selection process of interviewees was influenced by an organizational filter as interviewees had to be set up before time, people needed to be contacted and interview times had to be formally scheduled. In a conversation with FUNDAEC I was able to share the parameters for the interviews (regional variations, number of interviewees, number of teachers, number of mentors, etc.) but, ultimately, there was an element of selection when

interviews were set up. However, given the large sample size in each region a variety of level of experience and expertise in teachers and mentors was achieved.

- Similarly, some interviews had to take place in local offices to ensure that teachers were able to get online. Not all teachers had stable internet connections or devices which support programs such as Zoom, so it was decided that spaces in local offices would be set up for them to connect on office computers. While these connection spaces were set up to be confidential and for interviewees to speak freely, it might be possible that other individuals were nearby or listening in or walking by which could have inhibited a interviewees response. While no cases of such interruptions were witnessed or shared with me, the potential for these existing was present given the set up.

- Given the formality of the interviews because of the technological limitations, there was little to on space for informal interactions to take place, or for other conversations to take place in the "in-between" spaces which naturally occur when one is physical present in a space. There was a clear starting and ending point for all interviews and rapport could not be built before or after these spaces.

- While initially contemplated in the research design, it was not possible to have participant observation spaces virtually. The organization was moving from online to in-person meetings during my data collection phase and meetings which had been regular and scheduled were just being re-organized and gaining momentum. While participant observation in general terms was not crucial to this research, I think that the research would have greatly benefited from being able to participate and include my participation in one-on-one meetings between mentors and teachers. Understanding how feedback was given and processed as well witnessing the content of the conversations firsthand, would have been useful additional data.

- One aspect on my positionality, which was discussed in previous chapters, was related to the fact that I had worked in FUNDAEC previously. This insider knowledge of the program and how things were structured was beneficial in that I understood the context from where the interviewees were coming from, I could understand the references they made to certain aspects of the curriculum or elements of the program and could also ask follow-up questions for clarification on key questions. One concern which was raised from the

beginning, and which was important to be aware of, was the possibility of me being seen as a person in a position of authority (or from the institution itself) and therefore receiving answers which were tailored to what participants thought I "wanted" to hear or silencing themselves. While this is always a possibility, the reality as that I knew less than 10% of those interviewed personally. Enough time had passed since my working in FUNDAEC and the time of the interviews for all the teachers to be new.

Areas of Potential Future Research

My research was conditioned by three key aspects: the chosen research methodology, the sites, and the data which I was able to collect. Each of those are delineated by a series of strengths and limitations which, together, influenced the results of this dissertation.

Regarding the chosen research methodology, which I will discuss in depth in the next section, my research was able to go in depth into each of the two case studies given the qualitative nature of the work, namely through interviews. Given the constraints placed on my research by the pandemic, the type of interviews and the way these were conducted (online), it was the best possible scenario under the circumstances. However, given other normal circumstances (non-pandemic), the research would have been greatly enhanced by participant observation. This observation would have been useful in understanding better the teacher/mentor dynamic (the type of conversations they have and their interactions). It would have also helped in observing teacher/teacher interactions and how accompaniment looks like beyond the relationship between two individuals. This is an area to clearly explore further both in terms of the methodology as well as additional research questions around collective accompaniment relationships.

In terms of the two sites, these were chosen given their similarities and differences to help paint a wider picture of what accompaniment entails. In that regard, the two sites were chosen correctly and are a strength of this research. Given that no regional variations between the sites became apparent in the research, in future projects, it would be good to explore different ways in which such regional variations could be teased out further before assuming that no regional variation is the norm.

Lastly, the data that was collected was comprehensive, given the constraints of data collection during the COVID-19 quarantine period when site visits were impossible. The sum of my own

interviews and those to which I was given access to mean that I was able to analyze and compare over 100 interviews with teachers, mentors, and organizational leadership staff. Given the scope of this research, the size of the data set was enough and could not have been increased. In addition, I analyzed a selection official program documents including training materials in the PSA Colombia case. However, the lack of access to more program documents, especially in the Honduran site, is something which limited some in-depth analysis of Bayan (SAT Honduras), and further comparison between the two sites. Accessing more program documents, to both explore the existing research questions and deepen the framework behind the work of the organizations, would be an area of future research.

In addition, the research left questions around certain themes which would be good to explore further. Originally this project was designed to delve into the dyadic relationship between mentor and teacher. This meant that all emphasis was placed on their interactions, conversations, relationship etc. Yet, in the findings (most notably present in the data from Colombia) there were mentions of "group mentorship" or group interactions. While exploring this further fell outside of the scope of the original research this could potentially be an area for further research. Understanding that processes of accompaniment can occur in a group setting, that teachers can also carry out mentoring functions amongst themselves and that the notion of a community of learning and practice can be felt among a group of teachers, would all be potential themes of further exploration. In addition, being able to listen to post-lesson conversations between mentors and teachers would be an area that might provide further insights into the dynamics of their interactions as well as the content of said interactions. However, this was particularly impossible to do during the pandemic.

Furthermore, this dissertation would have also been enriched by more detailed information about teacher's trajectory. While no data was compiled on the age of the teachers, prior experience and age of the teachers would merit further research to better compare teachers in both programs. This would mean longitudinal or follow up component in the research over a set period of time. In addition, it is possible that given their degree of experience with a formal program, teachers in Honduras have experienced supervision in other instances (and other jobs) and use it as a sounding board to what they experience in SAT. However, these claims are not definitive given the limited biographical data on teachers in the two cases.

Final conclusions

This dissertation described and characterized the process of accompaniment as carried out by two organizations in Colombia and Honduras in relation to the educational programs they implement. To further understand the process, and the contributions it can make to the field of professional development, accompaniment was also analyzed in terms of the characteristics of the relationships between teachers and mentors and whether it helped foster a sense of agency in the teachers of the programs.

I situated this research in a particular literature and in relation to a few questions. Namely, the research is situated in the wider literature and question of teacher professional development. As explored in Chapter Two, I chose to understand TPD as a path of development, where two questions are central: how to help teachers move along that path and the role that agency plays in their progression along that path.

By defining TPD in this manner I also centered this dissertation around one actor in the educational process: the teacher. While once again, many questions can arise around that teacher, I looked at the literature with three main questions in mind regarding the teacher: 1) who they are; 2) how teachers learn about being and becoming teachers; and 3) how teachers improve in their teaching practices over time.

Regarding the first question, some crucial concepts informed my understanding of *who* teachers are. These concepts were organized with the help of Shulman's (1987) explanation of the different categories of teacher knowledge which include content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, curriculum, learners, and ant their characteristics and the education context and aim. Given the importance of both the learners characteristics and the educational context I explored the rural context of teachers and teaching, the Latin American landscape (with special emphasis on Colombia and Honduras as the two sites), and the two programs which were used in both case sites (PSA in Colombia and SAT in Honduras). Furthermore, I assumed that teachers were already potential agents of change, but they could possibly exercise and develop that agency further in themselves and I had questions about such agency could be expressed and also encouraged in the teachers, and consequently how such agency would affect their teaching practices and ultimately their student's.

As for the question on how teachers learn about becoming teachers the literature review highlighted three theories which helped frame this question. The first of these was the notion of an "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975), which stresses the value of being present and observing to learn about becoming a teacher. The second was the notion of "possible selves theory" (Markus and Nurius, 1986) which allows for the possibility of teacher thinking of themselves in multiple trajectories and therefore being able to change. Lastly, the idea of a "future self" orientation (Hamman et al, 2010) introduces the idea of a forward projection and a vision towards the future for which teachers can work. These notions of how teachers learn was the basis for answering the third question of how teachers can improve over time, which in turn ties back to the idea of a path of development.

The literature on practicum learning and novice teachers proved to be extremely useful in exploring the question of how teachers improve in their teaching practices. This literature stressed the importance of the development of a teacher identity, the role of a feedback process which helps teacher learn from their mistakes and the value of content and emotional support that teachers require as they learn about teaching. Furthermore, the centrality of relationships, particularly between a novice and more experienced teacher and how that reciprocal relationship where commitment towards teacher development (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009) was apparent in the literature. The use of reflection as a tool to help teachers improve over time was highlighted.

When looking at accompaniment in the context of this literature and the possibilities of teacher professional development guided by the three central questions of who teachers are, how they learn and how they improve over time the research contributes to the discussion.

Table 7: *Dissertation findings in the context of existing literature*

Questions	Findings
Who are teachers (their identities)	Teachers can be conceived as active actors, as agents of change, who can be helped to learn how to exercise their sense of **agency** further. While they come into the teaching practice their own particular experiences and qualities and openness and **willingness to learn** and **grow** are crucial quality. This willingness to grow can be encouraged through feedback and a reflection process

How do teachers learn	Teachers can learn through an on-site experience using a mentorship-based approach. The importance of having an on-site follow up is in line with the idea of "community-based pedagogies" (Ferrel et al, 2017) and "Convivencia" (Luschei, 2016), which are particularly valuable in the Latin American context. The experience of **accompaniment** as one such way of structuring a **mentoring approach** is a contribution of the PSA and SAT programs.
How do teachers improve over time	Helping teachers **reflect on action** both individually and collectively and with the use of various tools and spaces for reflection are ways in which the two case studies show that teachers can improve over time.

In addition to the conversation between these findings and the literature, the research found that accompaniment can be described, in the simplest terms, as an example of reflective mentoring where novice teachers feel supported and helped by more experienced mentors. For this to happen a series of spaces are needed and these vary by country site. For example, in Colombia weekly meetings were instituted for a group of teachers working together and these were spaces which allowed for teacher/mentor interactions. In Honduras, on the other hand, visits to the families weighed more heavily as important spaces for those interactions to occur.

Because a mentor will not always be present in all spaces with a teacher, and because the aim is their own development, there is an emphasis in both sites to help the teachers reflect about their teaching practices and improve these on their own terms. Helping teachers learn how to reflect on their own is a capacity which mentors strived to help develop in teachers. While the importance of reflection as present in both sites, the steps that a mentor might take to help that capacity develop were not addressed. There were examples of certain tools which were found helpful, as was the case of the *reflection notebook* in Colombia. Other attempts to help teachers reflect, for example the *ficha* in Honduras, were received with more mixed results as it was also seen as an evaluative tool, showing that tools, while useful, can potentially carry positive or negative connotations.

This dissertation also found that while accompaniment can be described, it is not enough to think of it as a checklist of things to carry out, but also depends greatly on the quality and the type of relationships between teachers and mentors. Value was placed by interviews on relationships of friendship, of mutual support and of companionship. These relationships supported the value placed on accompaniment as a way for teachers not to feel alone in their profession.

Feedback was also discussed as an example of a type of conversation that occurs between the teacher and mentor and how the quality of the relationship allows for feedback to take place in ways which can help the teacher improve, while at the same time not feeling defensive about their teaching practice. Among these findings was the notion that teachers responded best to the feedback when it was viewed as suggestions that mentors were giving them and not as something that they felt had to do, but rather had the choice (or even agency) to implement those suggestions.

The characteristics of the teacher/mentor relationship was also analyzed at the level of the organization by identifying some of the characteristics present in the organizational culture. It was not possible to do so in the Honduran site but in Colombia the existence of a posture of learning and growth as well as constant dialogue and horizontal relationships were all identifying as contributing to a *culture of accompaniment* across the organization and not only in the teacher/mentor dyad.

Lastly, this dissertation also found that the way education was conceived in both the SAT and PSA programs, particularly around their goal to enable teachers and their students to be promoters of community well-being, contributed to the interviewed teachers' own sense of agency in both case study sites. Teachers and mentors demonstrated remarkable commitment to their students and student groups, which took on additional challenge during the pandemic. Teachers in both sites showed how their dedication to the betterment of their communities contributed to their own increased sense of agency.

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Appendices

Appendix A:
PSA Curriculum (Colombia)

Texts at the "Promoters of Community Well-Being" Level

Year 1	Year 2
Language Capabilities Text: Dawn of Civilization Unit 1: Transition to Agriculture Unit 2: Sumer Text: Primary Elements of Descriptions Unit 1: Properties Unit 2: Systems and Processes **Mathematical Capabilities** Text: Basic Arithmetic Unit 1: Classification Unit 2: Making Numerical Statements Unit 3: Addition and Subtraction Unit 4: Multiplication and Division **Scientific Capabilities** Text: Matter Unit 1: The Heating and Cooling of Matter Unit 2: Growth of a Plant **Technological Capabilities** Text: Food Production on Small Farms Unit 1: Planting crops Unit 2: Diversified High-Efficiency Plots **Service to the Community Capabilities** Text: Nurturing Young Minds Unit 1: To Describe the World Unit 2: Expression and Behavior	**Language Capabilities** Text: Ancient Civilizations Unit 1: N/A Unit 2: N/A Text: The Intent of a Description Unit 1: Context Unit 2: Experience **Mathematical Capabilities** Text: Arithmetic in Application Unit 1: Fractions and Percentages Unit 2: Quantifying Information **Scientific Capabilities** Text: Energy Unit 1: Transformation and Transfer of Energy Unit 2: Photosynthesis **Technological Capabilities** Text: Secondary Production Unit 1: Food processing Unit 2: Tools **Service to the Community Capabilities** Text: Promoting a Healthy Environment Unit 1: Environmental Issues Unit 2: Ecosystems

(Preparation for Social Action, FUNDAEC, 2006)

Appendix B:
SAT Curriculum (Honduras)

Level 1 (Grades 6 & 7)

"Promoter of Community Well-Being" Level

Grado	Bloque	TEXTO	UNIDAD
GRADO SEXTO	1	-Elementos Primarios de las Descripciones -Aritmética Básica -Formando Mentes Jóvenes	-Propiedades -Clasificación -Describiendo el Mundo
	2	-Producción de Alimentos en Pequeñas Parcelas -Aritmética Básica -La Materia	-Sembrando Cultivos -Enunciados Numéricos -Calentamiento y Enfriamiento de la Materia
	3	-Elementos Primarios de las Descripciones -Aritmética Básica -Promoviendo un Ambiente Sano	-Sistemas y Procesos -Suma y Resta -Temas Medioambientales
	4	-Los Albores de la Civilización -Aritmética Básica -La Materia	-Transición a la Agricultura -Multiplicación y División -Crecimiento de las Plantas
GRADO SÉPTIMO	5	-Promoviendo un Ambiente Sano - La Aritmética y sus Aplicaciones -Producción de Alimentos en Pequeñas Parcelas	-Ecosistemas -Fracciones y Porcentajes -Lotes Diversificados Altamente Eficientes
	6	-Formando Mentes Jóvenes -Los Albores de la Civilización -La Energía	-La Expresión y el Comportamiento -Sumeria -Transformación y Transferencia de la Energía
	7	-Salud Familiar -La Intención en la Descripción -La Aritmética y sus Aplicaciones	-Salud y Enfermedad -El Contexto -Cuantificación de la Información

	8	-Salud Familiar	-Las Dimensiones Sociales de la Salud Familiar
			-El Mundo Interior
		-La Intención en la Descripción	
			-Fotosíntesis
		-La Energía	

Level 2 (Grades 8 & 9)

"Practical" Level

	PERIODO ACADÉMICO	TEXTOS	UNIDADES
GRADO OCTAVO	1	Variables 1 Lecturas 1	Números, Expresiones y Ecuac. Conozcamos la Realidad del Mundo
	2	Variables 2 y 3 Materiales y Procesos Servicio 1	Polinomios 1 y 2 Maderas El Proceso Productivo
	3	El Espacio y sus Element. Utilización Trabajo y Energ. Tecnología 1 Lecturas 2	Puntos, Curvas y Superficies El Movimiento (1) Conozcamos Nuestros Recurs. Conozcamos la Realidad Mund.
	4	Utilización Trabajo y Energ El Espacio y sus Element. Materiales y Procesos Tecnología 2	El Movimiento (2) Ángulos Metales Manejo de Diversidad Especies
GRADO NOVENO	1	Variables 4 Utilización Trabajo y Energ. Servicio 2 Lecturas 3	Destrez. Algeb.en Vida Rural Concepto de Fuerza (1) Manejo del Dinero Conozcamos la Realidad Mund
	2	Utilización Trabajo y Energ. Utilización Trabajo y Energ. El Espacio y sus Elementos	Concepto de Fuerza (2) Trabajo y Energía Triángulos
	3	Utilización Trabajo y Energ. Tecnología 3 Descripciones 2	Máquinas Preserv. Nuestros Rec. Genéticos y Proyecto Organiz. Datos Desc. Sist.Proc.

4	El Espacio y sus Elementos Materiales y Procesos Descripciones 3	Medidas del Espacio Materiales de Construcción Relaciones

Level 3 (Grades 10 & 11)

"High School" Level

	PERIODO ACADÉMICO	TEXTOS	UNIDADES
GRADO DÉCIMO	1	Variables y sus Relac.1 Un discurso de Acción social	Funciones Polinómicas Conceptos básicos
	2	Variables y sus Relac. 2 Tecnología 1 Lecturas	Rapidez de Cambio (1) Sistemas Sosten. de Pn. Camp. Mundo de Sofía (1)
	3	Variables y sus Relac. 2 Variables y sus Relac. 3 Lecturas	Rapidez de Cambio (2) Funciones Expon. y Logarítm(1) Taller de Lectura y Escritura Mundo de Sofía (2)
	4	Tecnología 2 Variables y sus Relac. 3 Lecturas	Agroindustria Rural Funciones Expon. y Logarítm(2) Mundo de Sofía (3)
GRADO ONCE	1	Variables y sus Relac. 4 Tecnología 3 Lecturas	Funciones Trigonométricas (1) Fuentes Alternas de Energía Mundo de Sofía (4)
	2	Variables y sus Relac. 4 Electromag. y Com. Masiva Un discurso de Acción social Lecturas 4	Funciones Trigonométricas (2) Ondas Electromagnéticas (1) Educación El Mundo de Sofía (5)
	3	Electromag. y Com. Masiva Descripciones Un discurso de Acción social Lecturas	Ondas Electromagnéticas (2) El Lenguaje Científico (1) Educación (2) El Mundo de Sofía (6)

| 4 | Electromag. y Com. Masiva
Descripciones | Radio
El Lenguaje Científico (2) |

Appendix C:
Organizational Chart FUNDAEC (Colombia)

FUNDAEC - ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

CONSULTATIVE BODY - - - - - - **BOARDS OF DIRECTORS**

- - - - - - - - **AUDITING**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COORDINATION

PROGRAMS COORDINATION TEAM

ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE   **GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**   **BUSINESS UNIT**

CONSULTATIVE SPACE

SUPPORT TEAM   **GENERAL SERVICES**

TUTORIAL LEARNING SYSTEM (SAT)

Central team

National coordinator

PREPARATION FOR SOCIAL ACTION (PSA)

Central team

Regional coordination teams:

Costa Caribe Central zone

Costa Caribe Southern zone

Centro Region

Occidente Region

Unit Coordinators

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY LEADERS

Central team

Regional coordination teams:

Costa Caribe Southern zone

Costa Caribe Central zone

Cauca

Guajira

NATURE FOREST PROJECT

Team

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Team

ONLINE COURSES

Appendix D:
Organizational Chart Bayan (Honduras)

BAYAN INDIGENOUS SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASOCIATION

BAYAN ORGANIGRAM 2023

BOARD OF MEMBERS (13)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (5)

ASSISTANT — EXECUTIVE DIRECTION — ADVISORY COMMITTEE (4)

LINK WITH SE CAMPUS M.D.C.

STRATEGIC ADVISORY — FINANCIAL ADVISORY INTERNAL AUDIT

PROGRAMME OFFICER

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION & HR

DATABASE & COMMUNICATION (ITC)

MONITORING & EVALUATION

CONCIERGE

ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT

NATIONAL COORDINATOR ASSISTANT

NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF THE TUTORIAL LEARNING SYSTEM (SAT)

ACCOUNTANT ASSISTANT

COORDINATION OF HOLISTIC EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

COMMUNITY BANK COORDINATOR

ADMINISTRA-TIVE TECHNI-CAL ASSISTANT NORTH AND NORTHEAST AREA

ADMIN. TECH. ASSIST. CENTRAL AREA

ADMIN. TECH. ASSIST. WESTERN AREA

CLEANING & MAINTENANCE

ASSISTANT

BANK TECHNICIAN

SECURITY GUARD

WESTERN AREA COORDINATOR

CENTRAL AREA COORDINATOR

NORTH AREA COORDINATOR

NORTHEASTERN AREA COORDINATOR

FIELD COORDINATORS BY DEPARTMENT (12)

FIELD CONSULTANTS (39)

TUTORS (483)

COLLABORATORS ON THE BAYAN ASSOCIATION'S PAYROLL

STAFF PAID BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Appendix E:
Excerpt from Teacher Training Guide

(FUNDAEC)

Text: Primary Elements of Descriptions
Conceptual and Practical Guide for Tutors

After many years of training people as tutors of the Tutorial Learning System (SAT), FUNDAEC decided to undertake the task of systematizing the learning in an instrument that could be useful to the large number of institutions that are now working with SAT and PSA programs, or that use texts produced by FUNDAEC in some of their educational programs. It was felt that the best way to do this would be to write complementary material for each "text," a Conceptual and Practical Guide for Tutors. In addition to guiding tutor candidates' study of the contents of each unit of the text, the guides explore concepts that should be understood, and activities and qualities that should be developed in order to become an effective tutor. This guide for the Primary Elements of Descriptions text is a result of that effort and we hope that it will be useful for training SAT and PSA tutor candidates.

It is clear that a tutor-training course cannot be limited only to studying units of the "text," even if complementary material is included. It is also essential to provide teaching and learning opportunities so that tutor candidates can polish their skills and expand their knowledge during the training process. For this reason, in addition to carrying out the activities proposed in the guide, trainees need to participate in regular gatherings with other tutors where they can share the practical experience obtained while teaching the text and analyze it in the light of the concepts that are studied in the guide. This collective learning is a fundamental part of the tutor training process.

The conceptual and practical guide consists of several sections. The first section called *Study and Analysis of Content* is to help the tutor candidate with a first reading of the units of the text. This reading includes a detailed study of the content of the units, doing all the proposed exercises and, if possible, carrying out the practical activities that are included. Several activities are proposed and the participants in the training should carry them out in their entirety. The objective of this first reading of the text is to become familiar with the content of each of its units.

The second section entitled *Capabilities the Text Seeks to Develop* encourages the participants to read the units again, and highlights the way in which the different lessons, exercises, and practices help the students develop one or more capabilities. It clearly identifies concepts that are explored, information that is given, and the way in which the attitudes and qualities of a given capability can be fostered.

The units are read a third time in the *Elements of Pedagogy* section. The activities proposed in this section are to identify and describe how the presentation of the themes, exercises, and practices in the units relate to certain pedagogical principles, and how they are consistent with each other. Finally, the activities in the section, *Conceptual Framework of the Text,* help the participants analyze the text and identify the relationship between the themes in the units and the conceptual

framework, the role played by knowledge, the nature of human beings, the purpose of education, etc.

Subsequent sections refer to other general aspects that help develop the capability to be a good tutor. One section is for reflecting on the qualities a tutor must strive to acquire, another to the practices proposed in the text and their importance for educating the students, and another to how the students' learning can be evaluated. Finally, since a good tutor should have a deeper and wider knowledge of the material that is to be taught, complementary readings, and exercises are provided to expand upon certain themes and analyze them in more detail.

I.   Study and Analysis of Content

Activity 1
Read the unit "Properties" and do all the exercises. As you do this, note the exercises or themes that you would like to bring for discussion with your classmates to increase understanding or clarify any difficulties. One way to do this is to write down your questions or comments beside the appropriate paragraphs or exercises as you work on them.

Activity 2
Describe the content of the entire "Properties" unit in terms of the concepts and themes it explores, following the example provided for the first few lessons:

Lesson 1: Shape

Concept of the shapes of things. Differentiation of things by shape and size. Description of things based on their shapes. Names of regular figures. Making regular figures. Shape of a cube, square, sphere, cylinder, pyramid. Different uses of the word shape. Sentences that express exact shapes. The concept of precision. Dimensions of things. Representation of three-dimensional objects in two dimensions. Diverse uses of the word dimension. Reflection on the spiritual dimension of existence.

Appendix F:
Excerpts from Reflection Notebook Training Documents

(FUNDAEC)

Preparation for Social Action: Tutor Training – Block 1
The Reflection Notebook

One of the most important ways of continually improving the quality of the education you offer to your students is to ask yourself questions, analyze your experiences, and reflect on how you can personally improve some aspect of your actions. You may even want to keep a special notebook that is reserved particularly for these kinds of reflections, which you review from time to time. . have chosen to call this tool a "reflection notebook".

What is a Reflection Notebook?
The reflection notebook is a tool in which an educator can write regularly in order to continually learn from his or her experiences. It can be used to: record observations he or she has made of interactions with students, think about worries or concerns that have arisen, reflect on the causes of the situations with which he or she has been confronted, and explore possible new directions for his or her efforts. There is no single way for this tool to be used – it is something that each educator shapes according to his or her particular circumstances and approach. .

To help you get a sense of the value of using a reflection notebook, you may wish to read the following comments made by a few educators about their first experiences using this tool, and discuss the questions that follow.

"…this notebook is *important*. **Maybe we did this before, but in our minds… It's good, as a teacher, to reflect on the fact that each day we have to study, strive to build our own capacities, the responsibility we have towards our students, the humility to admit when we don't know something and need to go in order to investigate. . students will see this as something beautiful, this humility. We . what we can correct, improve … understanding better the case of each person… The notebook has helped me to change a lot this year. One ha. lot of ideas, but they don't always translate into action with the students… The notebook helps someone think about different things that you can do with your students."**

"Reflecting about what one is doing, yes, it makes a difference. We had these concerns before, but not this space to think about "how did it go". . o, I feel that you learn more – you become more coherent in what you are doing. You. alize sometimes that when something bad has happened, it's not always the fault of the students – maybe it's what I did, I needed to prepare myself better. At the. ginning, I used to ask "but *why* are we writing?" [The collaborator I was working with] said that as we write, we will learn about why... One shoul. now the true purpose – I'm writing to help myself. And we shoul. eel free to express what we want to… it should be spontaneous, not by obligation. One learns thro. experience about its purpose."

> **"The reflection notebook helps you to systematize what you are carrying out in practice, what you are learning, and how to apply it. It's a record of experiences… It's like a tool that helps us with many things, to systematize our experiences, measure one's own learning and the learning of the students. . notebook is something that constantly reminds you about what you want to do, what is important… The notebook helped me a lot to see which things I could do to overcome some difficulties, and see which things I had already tried. And. so to see which of the things that occurred to me to try, in reality were working… The notebook had an impact on my work. I was . rning about how to learn, I guess!"**
>
> *Questions for Discussion:*
> - Which of the comments that you read above caught your attention? Why?
>
>
> - How can the act of using a reflection notebook help you with your work?
>
>
> - What kinds of things can you write about in your reflection notebook?

As you regularly write about what you see, experience, and plan for your class, a number of questions will likely arise based on these experiences. Such questions serve to orient your thinking in your reflection notebook you think about them in your notebook for longer periods of time, such as over the course of several weeks or months, you may notice learning in yourself and improvement in your teaching. The following are a few questions you may find useful to think about in your reflection notebook in terms of your class's study of the "Properties", "Classification", and "The Heating and Cooling of Matter" units:

- *Have there been any times when the students have had particular difficulty understanding what the text said, or my explanations? What can I, as a tutor, do to improve the way I guide the students when they have difficulty understanding?*

- *Throughout the "Properties" unit, students study about different principles and qualities that help people interact with one another in a positive way. As a tutor, I want to help students translate what they are studying into action, by striving to practice these qualities in their interactions with each other and in their service to the broader community. What can I do to promote the development of these spiritual qualities and their application within my study group?*

- *How can I promote in my students the curiosity and personal motivation to investigate and discover more about the world around them? As we study these units and those that follow, are these qualities growing in them?*

Appendix G:
Interview Guide for Teachers in the PSA Program

Elaborated December 2020

Interview guide for teacher

Hello. Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much accepting to have this interview with me today. This interview will be used in a confidential and anonymous manner and the information you share with us will be used only for research purposes. You are free not to answer any question you do not feel comfortable with or ask to withdraw from the interview at any moment. Neither the information you share with me or the desire not to share information will have any adverse consequences on your job. Once the interview is finalized you can also let me know a month from today if you wish me to delete the data from the interview as well. Do you agree to be interviewed?

The purpose of the research you are agreeing to be part of is to help us understand a bit more about the PSA program, specifically about teaching and the relationship between mentors and teachers. The interview has 4 sections. The first will be some general questions, the second section is about teaching itself and the third more closely related to the follow up you receive. The fourth section addresses some questions related to the response the program has had to COVID-19.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In addition to agreeing to do this interview with me do I have permission to record the interview?

Thank you.

As I mentioned the following questions are more general and will help us understand a bit more about the PSA program itself.

General questions

1. How did you first learn about the PSA program and how long have you been working with it as a teacher?

2. How would you describe the PSA program to someone who does not know the program? What are some of its primary objectives?

3. What are the particular things you do which you would say are part of a "PSA methodology"?

4. Which of these do you use the most? Which of these have been most useful to you as a teacher?

Let us now turn to a series of questions around teaching.

Questions on teaching

1. How would you describe the work you do as a teacher with your PSA group? What would a "normal" class day look like?

2. Tell me about what you do with your students on a regular basis

3. Does your relationship (ways of treating) differ between students? How?

4. Do you feel comfortable with these relationships (these ways of interacting)?

5. Is there anything you would like to change about your interactions?

6. What are your own strengths as a teacher?

7. What are some of the ways you have improved as a teacher?

8. What has made it easier or harder to improve?

9. What are some of the strategies which you use during class to help your students better grasp a concept?

10. How do you decide (choose) which strategy to use while giving a class?

We are now going to go on to the third part of the interview. These are questions related to the process of accompaniment towards the teachers and their relationship with their mentors.

Questions about professional development

How would you describe the process of becoming a teacher (including training) which you have received with PSA?

1. What are the steps you have needed to take on this journey?

2. How would you describe the functions a mentor carries out?

3. What do they do?

4. When do you see your mentor? In what instances? (Meetings, trainings, on site visits, etc.)

5. What words would you use to describe your relationship with your mentor?

6. [If they use the word "accompaniment"] What does accompaniment mean to you?

7. How important or valuable is it to you for your mentor to visit you on site during class?

8. [if they are important] Why are they important?

9. How often does your mentor visit you and what do they do during the visit? Can you please describe what happens?

10. How do you feel when your mentor visits you and observes the class?

11. After class, is it common for the mentor to give you feedback?

12. Once you receive feedback what do you with this information?

13. Have you noticed whether said feedback has an effect over your actions and attitudes?

14. Has the feedback helped you become a better teacher?

To help us wrap up, how useful do you find the feedback which you receive during and after a visit from your mentor and can you give us some examples of types of feedback you have received in the past.

[Optional section, time permitting] As we all know, the current moment in history which we are living in is unprecedented for us. It is, most likely, the first time we have had a crisis like this one and we have all had to adapt and respond to it. The following are some questions related to COVID-19 and the response you and the organization have had to it in helping students continue to advance in meeting their educational goals.

COVID-19 related questions

1. How has your work changed or been affected during the pandemic?

2. In what ways have you been able to (or not) be in contact with your students?

3. What opportunities (or new ways of thinking) has the pandemic offered you as a teacher/tutor which you had not considered previously?

4. Have you received follow up and accompaniment by the organization for which you work?

5. [if they have] In what ways has this follow up helped you respond to new needs of the students and your role as their teacher?

Closing questions

As you know this interview is confidential so if there are any suggestions you might have to how the organization can improve their implementation of PSA and would like to share with us please do so.

1. How would you describe the organizational culture within the organization?

2. Who and how are decisions made in the organization?

3. How are decisions carried out?

4. Who gets consulted when conflict arises?

5. What is it that motivates you to continue to work with PSA?

Thank you very much for agreeing to patriciate in this interview. Surely, everything you have shared with us will be of great help. As I mentioned, the information which will be collected will be kept confidential and will help us understand the status of PSA in the country better. Once again thank you for your time.

Appendix H:
Interview Guide for Mentors in the PSA Program

Elaborated December 2020

Interview guide for mentors

Hello. Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much accepting to have this interview with me today. This interview will be used in a confidential and anonymous manner and the information you share with us will be used only for research purposes. You are free not to answer any question you do not feel comfortable with or ask to withdraw from the interview at any moment. Neither the information you share with me or the desire not to share information will have any adverse consequences on your job. Once the interview is finalized you can also let me know a month from today if you wish me to delete the data from the interview as well. Do you agree to be interviewed?

The purpose of the research you are agreeing to be part of is to help us understand a bit more about the PSA program, specifically about teaching and the relationship between mentors and teachers. The interview has 3 sections. The first will be some general questions, the second section is about the follow up work you carry out with the teachers. The third section addresses some questions related to the response the program has had to COVID-19.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In addition to agreeing to do this interview with me do I have permission to record the interview?

Thank you.

As I mentioned the following questions are more general and will help us understand a bit more about the PSA program itself.

General questions

1. How did you first learn about the PSA program and how long have you been working with it as a mentor?

2. How would you describe the PSA program to someone who does not know the program? What are some of its primary objectives?

3. What are the particular things you do which you would say are part of a "PSA methodology"?

4. Which of these do you use the most? Which of these have been most useful to you?

We are now going to go on to the second part of the interview. These are questions related to the process of accompaniment towards the teachers and their relationship with their mentors as part of a process of professional development.

Questions about professional development

1. How would you describe the process of becoming a mentor (including training) which you have received with PSA?

2. What are the steps you have needed to take on this journey?

3. What are some of the ways you have improved as a mentor?

4. What has made it easier or harder to improve?

5. How would you describe the work you do as a mentor? What would a "normal" day look like?

6. What words would you use to describe your relationship with the teachers you work with?

7. [If they use the word "accompaniment"] What does accompaniment mean to you?

8. How often does you visit teachers and what do they do during the visit? Can you please describe what happens?

9. What do you look for when you are observing a class being taught by a teacher?

10. Do you use any tools which might help you in this observation?

11. How do the tutors feel about your visit (are they nervous, comfortable, etc.) and if nervous how do you help put them at ease?

12. What do you do if you notice that a teacher is having difficulty in teaching a part of the class? How do you help them?

13. What are the ways (mechanisms) in which you give the teacher feedback?

14. How do you decide what you want to give the teacher feedback on?

15. What do you do if a teacher does not appreciate the feedback you are giving them?

16. Do you, as a mentor, receive feedback from others (colleagues, higher ups) and do you incorporate that feedback into your own work?

17. Can you think of some cases (without using names) in which you think you have helped a teacher do their work more effectively?

18. How about when you haven't been able to help the teacher?

19. Besides on-site visits what are some other spaces in which you interact with the teachers and how useful and/or important do you find these spaces?

20. How would you describe the organizational culture within the organization?

21. Who and how are decisions made in the organization?

22. How are decisions carried out?

23. Who gets consulted when conflict arises?

[Optional section, time permitting] As we all know, the current moment in history which we are living in is unprecedented for us. It is, most likely, the first time we have had a crisis like this one and we have all had to adapt and respond to it. The following are some questions related to COVID-19 and the response you and the organization have had to it in helping students and teachers continue to advance in meeting their educational goals.

COVID-19 related questions

1. How has your work changed or been affected during the pandemic?

2. In what ways have you been able to (or not) be in contact with the teachers you work with?

3. What opportunities (or new ways of thinking) has the pandemic offered you as a mentor which you had not considered previously?

4. Have you received follow up and accompaniment by the organization for which you work?

5. [if they have] In what ways has this follow up helped you respond to new needs of the teachers and your own as a mentor?

Closing questions

As you know this interview is confidential so if there are any suggestions you might have to how the organization can improve their implementation of PSA and would like to share with us please do so.

1. What is it that motivates you to continue to work with PSA?

Thank you very much for agreeing to patriciate in this interview. Surely, everything you have shared with us will be of great help. As I mentioned, the information which will be collected will be kept confidential and will help us understand the status of PSA in the country better. Once again thank you for your time.

Appendix I:
Interview Guide for Administrators/Staff in the PSA Program

Elaborated December 2020

Interview guide for administrators and staff

Hello. Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much accepting to have this interview with me today. This interview will be used in a confidential and anonymous manner and the information you share with us will be used only for research purposes. You are free not to answer any question you do not feel comfortable with or ask to withdraw from the interview at any moment. Neither the information you share with me or the desire not to share information will have any adverse consequences on your job. Once the interview is finalized you can also let me know a month from today if you wish me to delete the data from the interview as well. Do you agree to be interviewed?

The purpose of the research you are agreeing to be part of is to help us understand a bit more about the PSA program, specifically about teaching and the relationship between mentors and teachers. The interview has 2 sections. The first will be about the follow up work regarding teachers in the PSA program and the second section addresses the response the program has had to COVID-19.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

In addition to agreeing to do this interview with me do I have permission to record the interview?

Thank you.

As I mentioned the following questions are more general and will help us understand a bit more about the PSA program itself.

2. How long have you been working with FUNDAEC? How long have you been working with the PSA program?

3. How would you describe the PSA program to someone who does not know the program? What are some of its primary objectives?

4. What are the particular things you do which you would say are part of a "PSA methodology"?

5. What is the role of the teacher in the program?

6. What do they do?

7. What is the role of the mentor in the program?

8. What do they do?

9. What is important about their work?

10. What does accompaniment mean to you?

11. What are the practical ways in which accompaniment is exercised in the organization?

12. What is the purpose of accompaniment?

13. Can you please describe the training process which teachers and mentors receive to work with the organization? What are its elements?

14. How would you describe the organizational culture within the organization?

15. Who and how are decisions made in the organization?

16. How are decisions carried out?

17. Who gets consulted when conflict arises?

[Optional section, time permitting] As we all know, the current moment in history which we are living in is unprecedented for us. It is, most likely, the first time we have had a crisis like this one and we have all had to adapt and respond to it. The following are some questions related to COVID-19 and the response you and the organization have had to it in helping students, teachers and mentors continue to advance in meeting their educational goals.

COVID-19 related questions

1. How has your work changed or been affected during the pandemic?

2. In what ways have you been able to (or not) be in contact with the teachers and mentors you work with?

3. What opportunities (or new ways of thinking) has the pandemic offered the organization about its way of working which had not considered previously?

Thank you very much for agreeing to patriciate in this interview. Surely, everything you have shared with us will be of great help. As I mentioned, the information which will be collected will be kept confidential and will help us understand the status of PSA in the country better. Once again thank you for your time.