

Mexico (CONAFE)

Itinerant pedagogical advisors for the Community Courses

The Pedagogical Advisors programme focuses on schools with very low performance in highly marginalized small rural communities. Pedagogical advisors are university graduates in Pedagogy or Education who alternate between two community schools throughout the school year, providing advice to the community instructors (young people without professional teacher education who teach for a limited period of time in small marginalized rural communities), offering individual assistance to students with low performance, and promoting parent participation in education. The advisors employ diagnostic instruments to identify students with special needs, monitor and coach the community instructors, and give recommendations to be followed up by the next instructor.

Main focus of innovation: LEARNERS, TEACHERS

Other keywords: equity

General Information

Name of the ILE: Itinerant pedagogical advisors for the Community Courses

Location/Address: Puebla and Tabasco, Mexico.

Website: <http://www.conafe.gob.mx/gxpbackend/hgxpp001.aspx?5,75,598,P,S,0,MNU;E;217;8;MNU;>

ILE submitted by: National Council for the Promotion of Education

Rationale

Why do you suggest that it should be included in the project? How does it respond to 21st century learning challenges?

The itinerant pedagogical advisor project (API) is a pedagogical action that offers educative attention to the students with low academic performance from the most vulnerable locations of the country. On one hand, the pedagogical advisor promotes with the community instructors and parents' effective advising practices so they can support the students learning process; on the other, they give learning strategies and pertinent activities to the primary and high school students who present learning difficulties in Spanish (Language) and Mathematics.

The effective advice assistance improves the learning outcomes since it offers "more practical exercises, more activity, and variety. More individualized help, more questioning, a simple vocabulary, more support, more relevant examples, better motivation and self-criticism, more immediate feedback and acknowledgments, more opportunities, more ideas inside the learning (metacognition) and more self regulations and finally more understanding of the learning process" (Topping, 2000:7-8) .

The advise assistance is planned from a diagnose evaluation, with the purpose of identifying the Spanish and Mathematics contents where students need more support to improve their learning outcomes. The diagnose tests contemplates a selection of the content that conform the present plan and programs which are organized in the following outlines:

- Spanish (Language): Reading comprehension, writing expression and language reflection
- Mathematics: arithmetic, algebra, geometry, presentation and information treatment and probability

The API applies this instrument early at the school year to accurately identify the students who have fallen behind the most and the most difficult contents to learn for them. It is clear that at a higher social marginalization condition there is a lower learning outcome (Gladwell, 2008). This situation supposes that schools have not been able to satisfy these children's needs; therefore it has not been possible to teach the skills they require (Gladwell, 2008). In that way, the research outcomes (Walberg, 2000) demonstrate that the advice assistance may be effective since in some countries there will be never enough qualify teachers. In fact knowledge increases so fast that even in develop countries students cannot depend on teachers only.

An effective consultancy has to be planed, structured and carefully supervised. The main goal of the API project is to give clarity to the advisory about how they can help the school community.

Evidence

Is there any evidence or indications showing that this initiative achieves the outcomes that it is aiming at?

Conafe has implemented an exploratory phase of the API project in Guerrero during the 2008-2009 school years to promote educative equity in order to improve learning among children with lowest school performance living in communities with high and very high marginalization conditions. The evaluation results are the following:

1. It is an innovative initiative in order to help students who fall behind.
2. API provides a triple reinforcement: advises the community instructor with pedagogical strategies; offers individual assistance to students with low academic performance and; promotes parents participation.
3. Advised students showed an improvement in their Spanish (Language) and Mathematics' results.
4. Improvement in reading comprehension, self esteem and concern about their academic future.

Experience shows that from the efforts promoted by the API between community instructors, parents and students are favourable factors to re-insert students with the lowest academic performance lowering the lag behind levels.

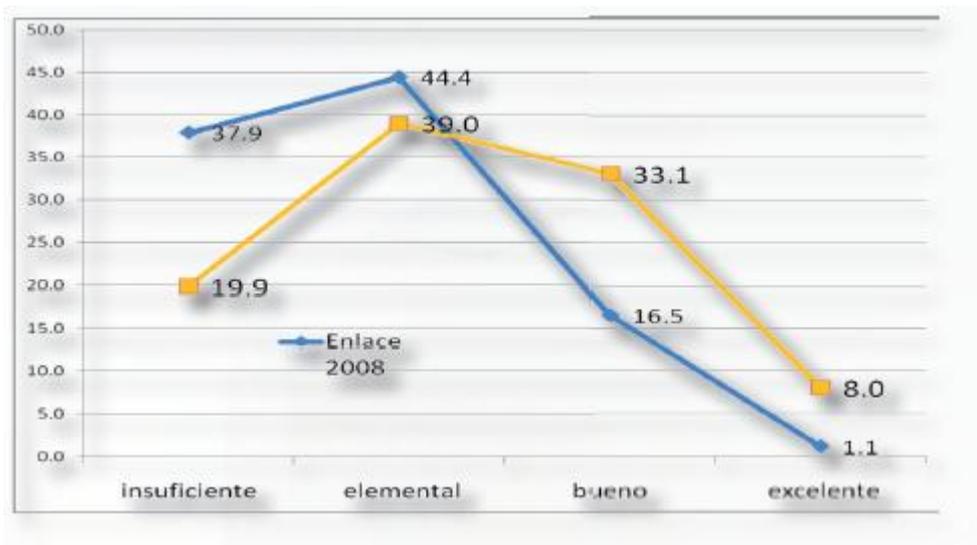
One of strongest evidence of the API's impact were the students' results in the 2009 National Evaluation of Academic Performance in School Centers (ENLACE) on Spanish and Mathematics. The following charts illustrate a comparison between 2009 and 2008 results¹:

Community Primary

In Spanish, the students' percentage for the "unsatisfactory level" decreases from 33.7% to 22.6%. As for the "elemental level" it went from 51.7% to 41.4%. These declinations translated into a higher number of students in "good level" and "excellent level".



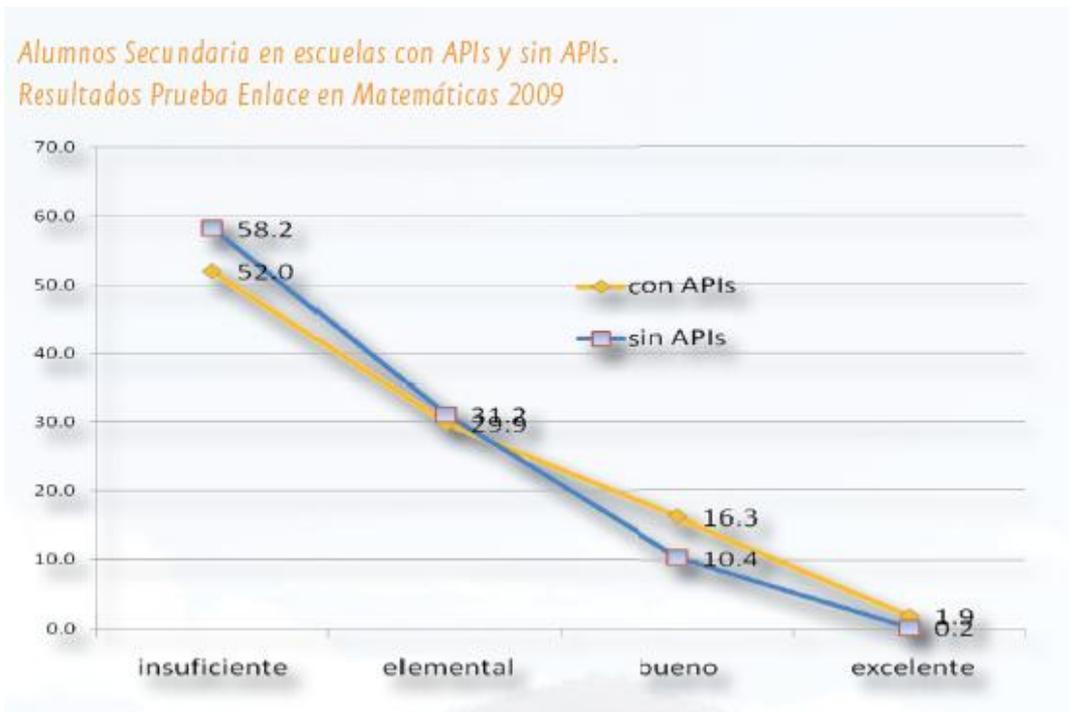
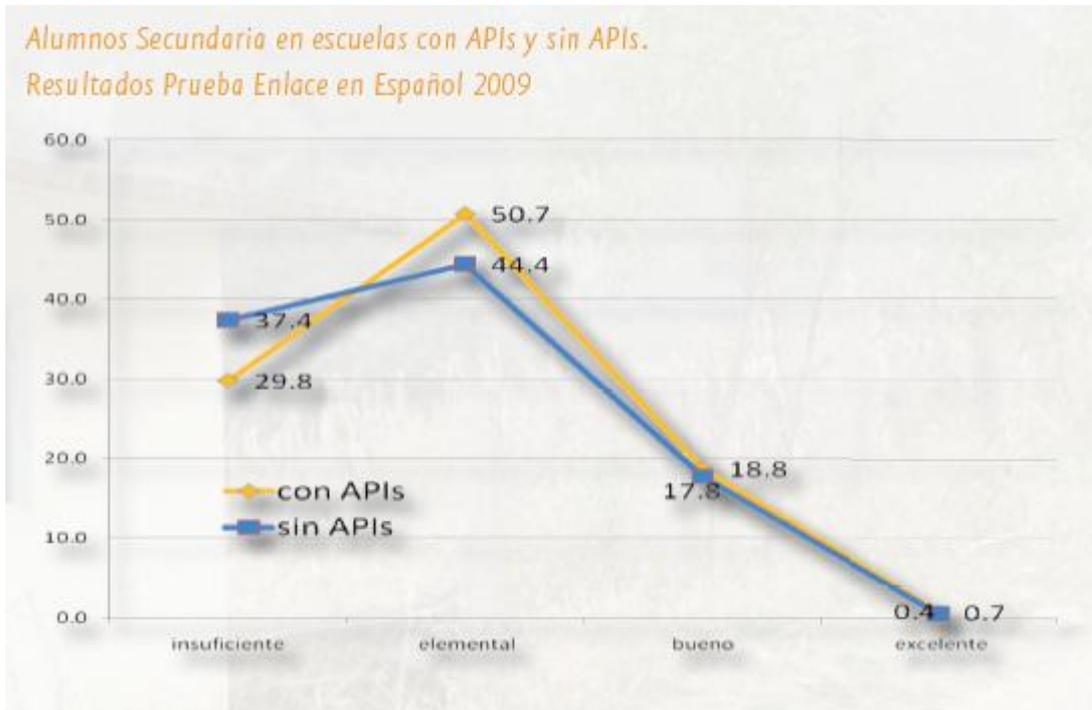
In Mathematics, the students from "unsatisfactory level" decreased from 37.9% to 19.2%, the "elemental level" declined from 44.9% to 39.1%, the percentage of students from "good level" grew from 16.5% to 33.0%.



¹ Results Evaluation, Itinerant Pedagogical Advisory school year 2008-2009, Guerrero state.

Community High school

In Spanish there was a declination of 7.6% of students in “unsatisfactory level” in schools with API in relation with schools without them. For the same level in Mathematics, schools with API achieved 52%, whereas schools without them obtained a 58%.



Learning Aims / Intended Learning Outcomes of the ILE

What are the core learning aims and which knowledge, skills or attitudes are to be acquired? (These may include outcomes related to learners' social, interpersonal, or meta-cognitive development)

- Improve learning performance of students living in marginalized rural or indigenous communities, with low academic performance through advice assistance at group and individual level.
- Have an effect on the students learning processes so they can achieve the required competences and skills for each grade.
- Have a positive influence on students' achievement to give them the tools to continue their studies.

Learners

Which group(s) of learners is it aiming at? Who is eligible to take part? How many learners are there? What are their ages?

The project will be a study case of 8 students from two states:

- Two Community Primary students from Puebla and two from Tabasco.
- Two Community High school students from Puebla and two from Tabasco.

The Communities for the cases will be selected among the schools with the lowest 2009 ENLACE results.

Facilitators

Who are the teachers/facilitators? Who are the leaders? What are their professional backgrounds? What are their roles?

The pre-requisites for being an API are:

- To be a National Pedagogic University graduate or from any other Teaching school (Physics, Biology, Spanish, etc.).
- Have been a Community Instructor (preferably).
- To write a motivation letter for becoming an API.

Itinerant Pedagogic Advisory

The API works at the community center to directly support students with specific needs so that they may overcome their learning performance; learners are selected from a diagnose evaluation. API's involvement aims to optimize cooperative work among the concerned educative agents, and increase students' academic progress.

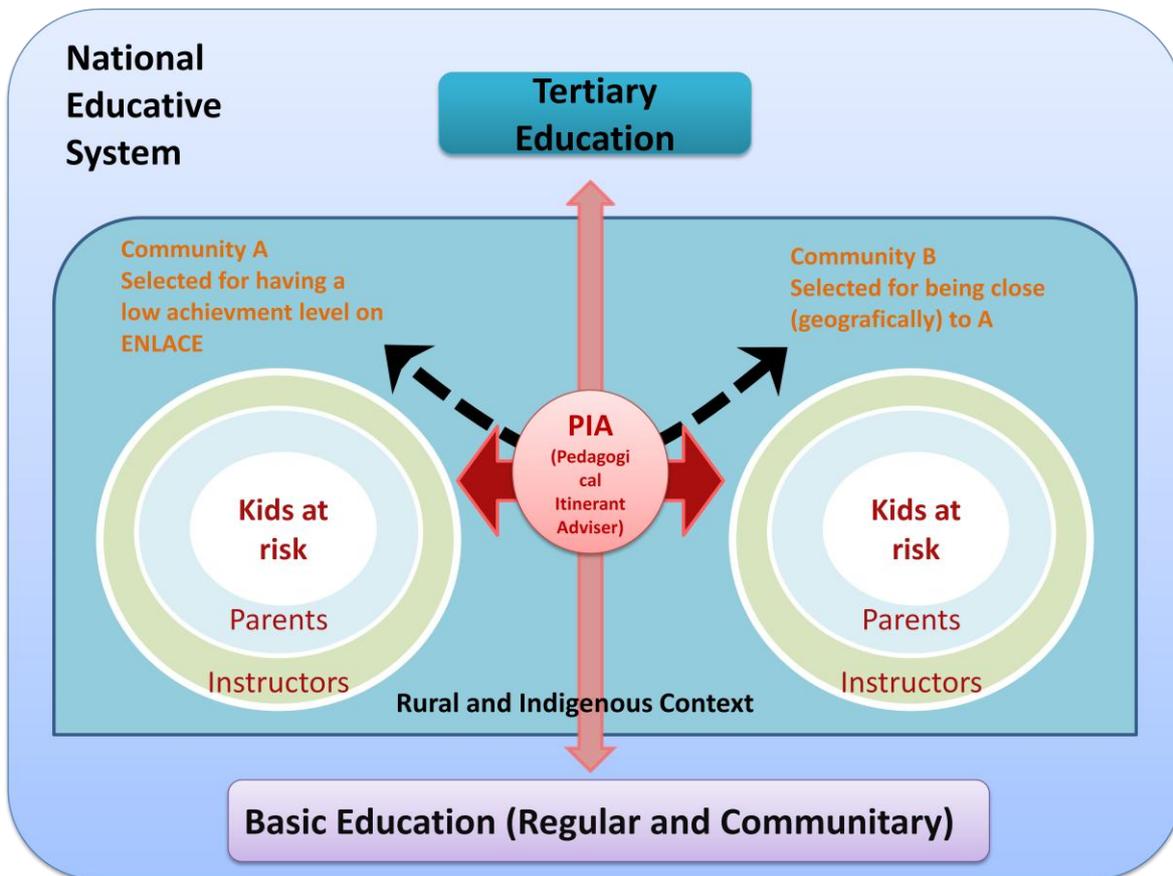
API's Functions and activities:

1. To attend class in order to: watch on going sessions, register observations, identify pedagogic or didactic aspects to advice the community instructor and apply the diagnose evaluation.
2. Meet with the community instructor to work on improvement strategies based on his observations.
3. Develop a Bimonthly Intervention Pedagogic Program that gathers all the planned strategies and present it to the Training Tutor.
4. Strengthen the correct employment of didactic material.
5. Guide and promote the elaboration of appropriate didactic material with participation of instructors and parents.
6. Help the community instructor to identify children with special educative needs and to guide parents to search for adequate assistance.
7. To Develop systematic assessments to the advised groups and students in order to adjust his interventions

8. To submit a recommendation report per student to the APEC at the end of the school year, so that it can be followed up by next the community instructor.
9. To present a bimonthly report about his pedagogic advice that helps to enrich the tutorship meetings as well as the monitoring and project evaluation.
10. To write a final report that includes conclusion, recommendations, and study cases.

Organization of the ILE

How is learning organised? How do learners and facilitators interact? What kind of pedagogy do they follow? What curriculum is used?



The project has an integral character which includes three lines of action:

1. To attend in an individualized way 8 students (in average) from the assigned group that have the highest academic lag
2. To support the community instructors so they can improve their teaching performance and the relationship with the parents
3. To promote parents collaboration in their children education

Furthermore, this project has a positive influence on API's formation since in the future they will join the work force as teachers in the National Education System with more practice and experience. The pedagogic strategies are designed to strengthen the primary and high school students' performance, particularly in the Spanish (Language) and Mathematics subjects. The contents are focused on the key elements in which the current programs are organized.

The subject contents are focused:

- Focalized attention to the specific student learning problems which detected through a diagnose instrument
- Learning processes and competency development
- Spanish (Language) and Mathematics teaching strategies
- Learning motivation activities

The advisers have a guide where is described their functions, theoretical aspects for the pedagogical intervention and a tool box where suggestions to design individual or group intervention strategies are given. The activities are organized by blocks levels for the primary schools and by grades for the high schools.

In relation to the work with parents the APIS have a manual called: “Family and school: To create a better future”.

Learning Context

In which context does learning take place? What does the physical learning environment look like? Are community resources used to facilitate learning and how?

The project takes place at Conafe’s community schools where the students take their lessons during the school year. These communities are located in marginalized rural areas with less than 100 inhabitants who are characterized by the poor social and education conditions they live in.

In order that the community service operates accurately one condition has to be achieved, that the communities’ residents participate in the projects and school tasks in different ways. In the parents’ case, it is necessary that they organize and legally constitute the Association for the Promotion of Community Education (APEC) who is in charge of organizing and monitoring all the educative figures who are involved at Conafe’s services. Particularly for the API’s project, the APEC gives food and accommodation to the advisors.

History of ILE

Who initiated it? For what reasons was it started and with what purpose? Have these changed since?

In congruence with Conafe’s long tradition of promoting innovative initiatives in the educational field the API’s project was developed. The fundament that gives meaning to this program lies on the equity principle and in the analysis of other countries experiences that demonstrated that concrete approaches towards learning problems can improve learning and teaching processes in the classrooms.

Particularly in the Finnish educative model the creation of the advisory pedagogic agents has proved to have a positive effects on students’ that have academic problems since with an individualized attention that solves specific difficulties and to restore them to their groups reducing this way the impact of the educational problems.

Taking into account this experience Conafe adapted the project to the community schools needs and integrates to his functions the instructors and parents work with the intention of unify efforts of all participants: students, instructors and parents.

In order to reinforce Conafe’s educative model it was implemented the pilot phase of API’s project in the Guerrero state during the 2008-2009 school year with good results, not only because it was confirm the importance of working in collaboration with the parents and instructors but also because it allows us to make the necessary adjustments to extend these actions to other country states.

Learning Outcomes

What are the learning outcomes achieved by the ILE, including academic, social, interpersonal and meta-cognitive outcomes? How is learning assessed?

The project will attempt to achieve the following results:

- To decrease the educational lag that prevails in primary and high school students.
- To influence teachers graduate training who will labour in the National Educational System in the future.
- To improve learning quality through educative practices that respond to the children's necessities and characteristics.
- To promote educative equity
- To promote work team between the community instructor, the advisor and the parents in order to support children's education.

Documentation describing or evaluating the ILE

Is there documentation on this learning environment? Is there a website? Films? Research reports or evaluations? Other forms of documentation? (please supply references or links)

- Normative Guidelines and Itinerant Pedagogical Advisory Operating Project
- Results evaluation, Itinerant Pedagogical Advisory, school year 2008-2009 Guerrero state Project Results Inform of Summer Community Tutors Project, 2009
- Journal Alas, Year 2 No. 18, December 2009

<http://www.conafe.gob.mx/mportal7/acompaname/guia-api.pdf>

Other information you consider to be relevant to describe the ILE

There is an evidence video that shows API's work in Guerrero.

Since the 2008-2009 school year the project has expanded in 11 states, and for the 2010-2011 school year the project is going to grow to the Education Ministry regular education system with the financial support of the World Bank.