

MEXICO

Itinerant Pedagogical Advisor

1. Aims

The Itinerant Pedagogical Advisor (API¹) promotes the improvement of the learning environment through:

- Pedagogical actions that improve or enhance the performance of primary-level students with higher academic lag, in order to improve their learning,
- advisory for teachers to strengthen the processes happening in the classroom, and
- promote parents' participation in the educational process, to improve school performance.

The API performs educational intervention actions to improve learning for children of Primary Rural and Indigenous Community found at a disadvantage in school performance, also advise the teachers to strengthen learning processes in the classroom, involving the active and collaborative participation of parents.

2. Leadership and Partners

Conafe² heads the API strategy since its implementation in the 2008-2009 school year, at primary schools of Community Education, located in rural and indigenous areas. In the 2011-2012 school year Conafe coordinated with the Ministries of Education from 16 states of the Republic the extension of this strategy in general education services with similar contexts.

A good example of partnership took place in the state of Yucatan, which was articulated in the Comprehensive Strategy for the Improvement of Educational Achievement (EIMLE³), with the API, because both seek an impact on educational attainment reported in the national assessment ENLACE. The coordination of both strategies focused on actions to improve educational outcomes related to retention, learning and educational trajectories, in consequence to ensure a significant increase on learning outcomes.

¹ Because of its original name: Asesor Pedagógico Itinerante

² National Council for the Improvement of Education.

³ Because of its original name: Estrategia Integral para la Mejora del Logro Educativo

To do so, it relied on the development of actions that address the learning needs through personalized tutoring to students with higher academic lag.

3. Strategies and activities

As an outcome of monitoring and evaluation of the strategy, the general objective was restated for each school year, retaining the essence of the strategy: in 2008-2009 the emphasis was on advice of Community Instructors⁴; in 2009-2010 the emphasis was focused on improvement of children's learning; in 2010-2011, the intervention focused on primary education according to the results obtained in the learning of children, which showed that the greatest impact was on this level.

4. Context

The following are the key factors that have helped maintain this strategy:

- The learning outcomes have improved since API was implemented in 2009-2010.
- From the beginning, economic resources were allocated to operate a greater number of API.
- Redirecting resources allocated to other projects that did not demonstrate a significant impact on learning improvement.
- Focus on schools that have the major drawback has been relevant for API success.

5. Resources

The project has been funded mainly from budgetary resources allocated to Conafe. APIs main operating expense is for training of advisors, design and development of educational and teaching materials, payment of financial support to advisors, as well as operational and impact assessment.

It should be noted that the project includes direct costs that do not impact significantly on other items of expenditure. Conafe's operating structure is used to implement the actions of API which significantly reduces its budget impact.

⁴ The title of teachers in Conafe's Community Education is Community Instructor

6. Development over Time

The following table shows the evolution of the project in 4 years it has been operating:

	School year				
	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012 Community API	2011-2012 Compensatory API ⁵
States	1	11	14	14	14
API	102	222	554	687	2,128
Schools	206	478	1,139	1,374	4,231
Students	1,380	6,343	15,279	13,950	78,668

Due to its good operational implementation and as it has shown improvement in students' learning outcomes, the project has increased substantially over the course of 4 years.

7. Evidence of effectiveness and efficiency

7.1 Improvement of learning

Qualitative

- Students have overcome the difficulties involved in reading comprehension and writing; also have strengthened their mathematical skills. There are documented case studies where students significantly improve their academic performance, self-esteem and social interaction, which confirm the general trend of improved performance in learning outcomes observed in the quantitative results.
- As a result of parents' awareness of the importance of education for their children, they have increase support for education, which reflects in study habits of children, lower absenteeism and higher class participation.

Quantitative

- In the 2008-2009 ENLACE⁶, at Language (Spanish), the schools with API have a lower percentage of students in *insufficient*: from 31.7% in 2008 to 22.6% in 2009. As for the elementary level increased from 51.7% in 2008 to 41.4% in 2009. These reductions resulted in a greater number of students with good and excellent evaluation levels.

⁵ Compensatory API are inserted into the mainstream education system, operated by the states through the education authorities.

⁶ ENLACE shows students results in four levels: insufficient, elementary, good and excellent

- In Mathematics, students from primary went from 37.9% at insufficient level in 2008 to 19.2% in 2009, while elementary level decreased from 44.9% in 2008 to 39.1% in 2009, showing a significant growth in the good level: from 16.5 % to 33.0%.
- The 2009-2010 school year showed a considerable increase in the scores at the end of the school year for elementary students in both Spanish and Math, from 19% to 35%. The students improved their performance to exceed 54% correct answers at all levels and reach 85% at level 1.
- The trend toward improved grade averages in schools addressed by the strategy can be seen when comparing them over time. For the eleven states that participated in the 2009-2010 school year, in Spanish there is a positive variation of 1.35 compared with 0.30 of services without API, in mathematics there is a positive variation of 1.7 in comparison with the negative variation of 0.12 of the services without API.
- Regarding the fourteen states that participated in the 2010-2011 school year, the trend is consistent, in Spanish there was a positive 0.17 change compared to the negative variation of 0.05 of services without API, in mathematics there is a positive 0.28 variation in schools with API and of 0.31 in services without API.
- The results of ENLACE, the grade point averages, and the outcomes of the diagnostic evaluation and the strategy itself, show a positive trend in improving learning achievement of students in Spanish and mathematics, even more in states with two years of implementation.

7.2 Changes brought to the Learning Environment

The Itinerant Pedagogical Advisor has succeeded in promoting learning situations and environments by establishing a significant relationship between subjects, life experiences and school program as part of its intervention activities. Also promotes students, instructors, parents and community, knowledge building skills through activities and actions that help them to appropriate tools to support independent learning, self-regulation, as well as personal and social development.

Furthermore, an additional achievement is the indirect improvement of learning for students that do not receive personalized advice. This is because the community instructor implements the strategies and recommendations provided by the Advisor to work with all students, highlighting the dynamic effect of group learning allowing shared achievement.

It has also been successful in promoting the exchange of experiences among peers, making it possible to update all the fields of educational intervention.

By leveraging collaborative work he promotes personal, professional and institutional development. Educational counseling at school, transforms isolated innovation experiences on a possibility of institutional innovation.

The Itinerant Pedagogical Advisor helps community instructors to organize sequenced activities, educational planning and teaching. API has led to the use and making of teaching materials and mastery of content; also have improved interpersonal relationships and motivation in their work.

On the other hand, the general opinion of parents is that the API has benefited the community because they participate more actively in children's education; their children get more attention and have noticed an improvement in their children's learning from the presence of API in the community.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the results of the educational intervention and implementation experiences, have confirmed the practical application of the pedagogical principles raised by the international project, Innovative Learning Environments (ILE).

8. Success Factors

One of the key success factors is the holistic approach of the API intervention in the learning environment of schools: working with students, strengthening teacher training and promoting the participation of parents.

API's profile also has been a key element to properly perform the educational intervention. With a professional degree, shows expertise and/or knowledge in elementary or secondary education, initiative, dedication to service, and responsible attitude towards technical and pedagogical updating; willing to identify and address the specific requirements of the beneficiaries of the strategy, to solve and output processes of change and improvement of educational services.

Another relevant factor is the design and development of teaching materials and training provided to API for the implementation of both diagnostic evaluation and learning activities tool-box.

The Adviser has also strengthened the operation of services with high defection presented by community instructors and also for its itinerant character is seen as a vehicle that provides feedback between the two schools that are advised.

Definitely a strategic element is the support offered by the educational authorities of all levels: federal, state, educational institutions and technical teams to consolidate its operation.

During the implementation of the project there have been adjustments and changes to constantly improve the strategy:

- Strengthened awareness campaigns for the candidates, so as to enable advisors commit to their work.
- A methodological sequence for intervention in the three areas has been incorporated into the API Tutorial, to improve their training.
- The profile was defined, giving priority to graduates of careers related to education and experienced in primary and secondary education.
- Design of an operation and planning tool-box to guide the activities of the API, in its advisory, training support and relationships with teachers.

9. Tensions and impediments

The population addressed by the API lives in communities of high poverty and social lag. Therefore, a major obstacle lies in the conditions of nutrition, health and social value of education. It also affects, in some cases, the considerable absenteeism and low learning outcomes according to age.

As part of the Community Education context, teachers have a high dropout and rotation rate. The lack of experience that some community instructors have also makes it very difficult to fulfill their planning class, use the materials properly and implement teaching strategies according to educational models.

Parents are a key element in the education of their children, therefore the indifference and apathy towards school activities of some becomes a serious obstacle. The community context can also lead to conflicts that affect the activities of schools.

10. Sources

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