

The Roles in The Lived Curriculum of the Teacher Trainer Within the Framework of The 2022 Reform

Dra. Claudia Isabel Quintero Maldonado, Dr. Manuel Salvador Romero Navarro, M.C. Margarito Martínez Solís

Benemérita Escuela Normal Urbana "Prof. Domingo Carballo Félix

Benemérita Escuela Normal Urbana "Prof. Domingo Carballo Félix

Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, Unidad 03 A

Abstract

This paper is an excerpt from a project by a research group at a teacher training college in Baja California Sur. It seeks to understand, from an educational critical perspective, how the role of the teacher-trainer manifests itself in the lived curriculum and its relationship to the approaches of the 2022 curriculum linked to the New Mexican School (NEM). The objective is to analyze the roles played by the teacher-trainer within the framework of the 2022 reform in the teacher training college.

Within the culture of teacher training, the teacher-trainer cannot limit themselves to reproducing disciplinary knowledge but must question its origin, legitimacy, and relevance in diverse sociocultural contexts. Nevertheless, teacher education culture has been centered on the idea of prioritizing teaching as the essence of the trainer's role, leaving research and dissemination on the back burner as complementary parts of the substantive areas of the teacher training institution. Within this logic, students' opinions highlight the relevance of the trainer's role in the lived curriculum.

Keywords: Experienced curriculum, role of the educator, 2022 reform, educator's awareness.

1. Introduction

Initial teacher education in Mexico, within teacher training colleges, is undergoing a period of profound transformation as a result of the educational initiative promoted by the New Mexican School (NEM). Above all, this is because the approach advocates an education centered on social justice, inclusion, critical thinking, and community engagement.

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In this context, the role of the teacher educator—especially in teacher training colleges—takes on strategic importance, as their responsibilities extend beyond merely conveying content to seeking ways to understand, interpret, and transform reality.

Thus, the concept of the lived curriculum in teacher education takes on central importance within the framework of contemporary educational policy in Mexico, particularly based on the principles of the NEM. This approach not only challenges the formal structures of the curriculum but also places at the center the concrete experience of the individual who teaches and learns—in this case, the teacher-trainer at teacher training colleges. Analyzing the lived curriculum implies recognizing that teacher education is not limited to what is prescribed in study plans and programs, but rather takes shape at the intersection of practices, meanings, contexts, and subjectivities.

From a theoretical perspective, the lived curriculum can be understood as that dimension of the curriculum constructed through the everyday experiences of educational actors. Gimeno Sacristán (2007) argues that the curriculum is not a static entity; rather, it is a social practice that is recreated through educational action. In this sense, the teacher-educator, drawing on the core disciplines of the teacher training college as a higher education institution, is not merely an executor of a prescribed curriculum; rather, they play roles linked to a subject that interprets, reinterprets, and transforms content based on its context and interactions with student teachers.

This idea is complemented by the contributions of William Pinar (2014), who, drawing on curriculum theory, proposes understanding the curriculum as an intellectual autobiography of the individual. For the teacher educator, like any higher education instructor, this means that their practice is shaped by their personal history, pedagogical beliefs, professional experiences, and ethical-political stance. Consequently, the lived curriculum becomes a narrative in constant construction, where the teacher reflects on their own development and that of their students. This is from a theoretical standpoint; however, in teacher training colleges, this level of practice has rarely been achieved, because teaching has traditionally been the privileged activity as the substantive area. This has led to an attempt to analyze how the curriculum is implemented in teacher training colleges, the roles assumed and assigned, and the responsibilities undertaken when working in higher education—especially at this time when the 2022 teacher training curriculum is linked to the NEM's approach as a national educational project.

2. Research Problem

Teacher education has been undergoing a reform since 2022, stemming from the New Mexican School (NEM); consequently, its approach is also humanistic, critical, and community-oriented. This approach has, of course, generated a different vision of teacher education, leading to a crisis arising from tensions between traditional teaching and neoliberal ideology, with a perspective that is, above all, critical of reality and the political system.

Curricular flexibility in this context refers to the ability of teacher educators to design courses within the curriculum; to some extent, this has allowed teacher-training institutions to contribute to teacher education, although ideologies contrary to critical rationality may continue to be perpetuated because breaking with the habitus (Bourdieu, 1995) appears to be a complex task.

From this perspective, to continue the research process on teacher education and its relationship to the lived curriculum—from which the academic processes experienced in the teacher training college are analyzed—this study is grounded in Eisner's (1998) critical educational epistemology, in which the author asserts that:

If knowledge can be considered the art of appreciation, criticism can be conceived as the art of revelation. The basic function of the critic is educational. By "educational" I mean providing the material through which perception is heightened and understanding deepened. To do this, the critic must be capable of performing the function of an expert. (p. 106).

From this perspective, the students' opinions provide a realistic picture, as their assessments of the instructor's work, their teaching practices in relation to the 2022 curriculum, and their connection to the NEM are reflected in the responses gathered from semi-structured interviews conducted with a group of eighth-semester students. These students have been chosen as key informants because they are part of the first cohort of the 2022 curriculum for the Bachelor's Degree in Primary Education.

The comments are analyzed in an attempt to uncover certain meanings, although, to some extent, the subjectivity of the authors of this study is present, even though we have sought to set aside certain biases characteristic of the school culture of the teacher training college; this is to avoid contaminating the research, but those of us who have developed this narrative are inevitably teacher educators within the context being analyzed.

The research question was formulated as follows: What roles does the teacher educator play within the lived curriculum in the context of the 2022 teacher education reform?

3. Research Objectives

To advance the research process, the research objectives derived from a broader study have been adopted as a reference. That study investigates the lived curriculum of teacher educators in light of the course design resulting from the curriculum flexibility process. Following this logic, the following objectives are pursued:

General objective:

To analyze the roles played by the teacher-trainer within the lived curriculum in the context of the 2022 teacher education reform.

Specific objectives:

- Develop a narrative centered on conceptions of the roles played by the teacher-trainer in their professional practice.
- Analyze students' opinions regarding the teacher-trainer's performance in the execution of their practice within the teacher training college.

4. Literature Review

In the context of the New Mexican School, the lived curriculum takes on special importance by emphasizing principles such as social justice, inclusion, critical interculturalism, and community engagement. These principles engage with critical pedagogy, particularly with the ideas of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970), who argues that education must be a process of consciousness-raising that enables individuals to critically interpret reality in order to transform it. From this perspective, the teacher educator not only transmits knowledge but also creates

conditions for future teachers to develop a critical perspective on their social and educational context.

Likewise, the lived curriculum is linked to Stenhouse's (1991) notion of "curriculum in action." The author posits the existence of a curriculum validated in practice and not merely in its theoretical formulation. In teacher training colleges, one might consider that the teacher-trainer constructs the curriculum through situated pedagogical strategies, dialogues with students, and action-research processes. Thus, teaching practice becomes a space for the production of pedagogical knowledge; however, based on the analyses conducted, the trainer's role is essentially that of a reproducer of the prescribed curriculum from a practical-utilitarian perspective.

From a humanistic perspective, authors such as Carl R. Rogers (1982) emphasize the importance of meaningful experiences and a person-centered educational relationship. In this sense, the teacher-trainer's lived curriculum is oriented toward building learning environments where students' individuality is recognized, autonomy is promoted, and holistic development is fostered. This is consistent with the principles of the NEM, which seek to train teachers committed to the well-being and dignity of individuals.

On the other hand, the notion of lived curriculum can also be analyzed from the category of "hidden curriculum" (Jackson, 2001), understood as the set of values, norms, and practices that are implicitly transmitted in the school. The author points out that everyday school experience (routines, interactions, implicit norms) constitutes a fundamental part of learning. In this vein, the teacher-trainer, through their daily actions, models forms of relationship, attitudes, and ethical stances that influence the training of future teachers. In this sense, their practice is not only intended to convey content but rather embodies a specific worldview and vision of education, even though this may not be immediately apparent in the teacher training college.

Within the framework of the NEM, the teacher-trainer's lived curriculum takes on a political dimension, as it is oriented toward social transformation and the creation of a more equitable education system. This implies that teacher-trainers must adopt a critical stance toward structural inequalities and promote educational practices that recognize the country's cultural and social diversity. The teacher training college, as a space for initial teacher education, thus becomes a key setting for the development of educators committed to their reality.

In the Mexican context, this reflection becomes even more relevant when considering the legacy of the coloniality of knowledge, a concept developed by Aníbal Quijano (2000), who notes that educational systems have historically served as instruments for imposing Eurocentric forms of knowledge. This knowledge has traditionally been replicated by teacher educators in teacher training colleges; however, fostering epistemic awareness in teacher educators implies, therefore, recognizing these power structures and opening spaces for community, indigenous, and popular knowledge, in line with the principles of the NEM.

From this perspective, epistemic awareness is linked to the notion of transformative praxis proposed by Paulo Freire (2002b). For Freire, the educator must see themselves as a critical subject who reflects on their practice and acts to transform reality. In this sense, and in line with the NEM, the teacher educator not only teaches how to teach but also trains teachers capable of problematizing their context, questioning inequalities, and constructing situated pedagogical alternatives. Epistemic consciousness, therefore, is not an isolated individual attribute but an ethical and political practice.

In the same vein, within the framework of the NEM, this consciousness translates into the need to articulate pedagogical knowledge with community contexts. For Joseph J. Schwab (1970), the curriculum ceases to be a closed set of content and becomes a situated construction, where the teacher in training learns to engage in dialogue with their environment. Here, the concept of the lived curriculum takes on relevance, emphasizing everyday experience as a space for the production of knowledge. The teacher-educator, with epistemic awareness, is capable of recognizing that knowledge is not limited to the classroom or to books, but rather emerges from social, cultural, and historical interaction—an aspiration of critical teacher educators in teacher training colleges.

On the other hand, teacher education requires a critical review of one's own teaching practices. Epistemic awareness involves asking: What knowledge do I prioritize? From which theoretical frameworks do I teach? Which voices are excluded? What kind of learner am I shaping? These questions could enable teacher educators to avoid the uncritical reproduction of pedagogical models and to embrace more inclusive, dialogic, and context-sensitive approaches.

Based on these reflections, in institutional terms, teacher training colleges face the challenge of training teachers with a solid theoretical foundation and a deep social awareness. This requires trainers capable of developing an epistemic awareness that allows them to articulate theory and practice, academic knowledge and community wisdom, pedagogical tradition and educational innovation. It is not just a matter of updating content, but of transforming the ways of knowing and teaching.

Finally, it is worth considering how the epistemic awareness of teacher educators in teacher training colleges should be a key element for the effective implementation of the NEM. This awareness implies a critical stance toward knowledge, an ethical commitment to social transformation, and an openness to diverse forms of knowledge. Training teachers with these characteristics not only contributes to improving educational quality but also strengthens the role of education as a tool for justice, equity, and emancipation.

Reflection on the critical consciousness of teacher educators in teacher training colleges, within the framework of the NEM, can be firmly grounded in two major traditions: critical pedagogy and the humanistic paradigm. Both agree on placing the individual at the center of the educational process, but differ in their emphases: the former underscores the political dimension of knowledge, while the latter highlights its holistic, ethical, and self-actualizing dimensions. The articulation of both perspectives allows us to understand epistemic consciousness as a reflective, critical, and humanizing capacity of the teacher-trainer.

5. Analysis of research

The theoretical foundation developed in the previous section provides insight into the thinking of some authors regarding the teacher-trainer's practice, that is, from the perspective of the lived curriculum. Furthermore, it seeks to explain the possibilities available to the teacher-trainer as an active agent in their practice or as a mere reproducer of a cultural arbitrary, as expressed by Bourdieu and Passeron (1996).

The opinions of teacher-training college students are highly significant because they experience the instructor's teaching practices on a daily basis. It is through these experiences that they acquire the knowledge needed to become teachers; whether they do so with an uncritical or

critical mindset depends on the content itself and on the practical interactions facilitated by the instructor. Below, we present the opinions of eighth-semester students in the Bachelor of Arts in Primary Education program.

The Official Curriculum as Unquestionable or Open to Critical Analysis

The traditional culture of teacher training within the teacher training college has been consolidated through the reproduction of the formal curriculum's content. Classroom discourse centers primarily on the teacher-trainer, but there are also extremes where interaction seems to be absent because classes focus on student presentations with little input from those trainers who are not very committed to the theoretical foundation prescribed in the study programs. Some comments regarding the trainer's use of the curriculum are:

It is presented as a document that we must learn, analyze, and apply, but this is often done without sufficiently questioning the assumptions, omissions, and limitations it contains. There is no encouragement for a deep critical analysis of its epistemological assumptions or of how it translates into concrete classroom actions. (Student A, personal communication, March 2026).

On some occasions, teachers mention that these activities (some of which the group does not like) are mandated by the program and must therefore be carried out, which contradicts (lacks consistency with what is required for teaching practice in elementary school) the discourse they present in the classroom. (Student B, personal communication, March 2026).

The ideas expressed by these students refer first to the uncritical implementation of a curriculum, to the reproduction of study programs without questioning their content. This leads to a lack of questioning about the content because critical thinking is not developed. This occurs because we teacher educators do not promote analysis from a critical perspective, much less adopt an epistemic awareness, as this is likely absent from the mindset of those of us who are teacher educators at the teacher training college.

For Student B, some instructors simply regurgitate the curriculum content because they view implementing the curriculum as an obligation; this sense of duty is likely part of what the instructor considers to be part of their professional ethics. The problem arises when this content is implemented without being reviewed to determine whether it contributes to student learning or how it does so. In a way, students can compare what they learn with its practical significance, because too much emphasis is placed on these practices in elementary school.

From my experience, the curriculum is not presented as something rigid or unquestionable. While acknowledging its importance as a regulatory framework, it is approached as a document that must be interpreted and contextualized. I have also been encouraged to critically analyze the content, asking ourselves how to adapt it to the students' real needs and what adjustments could be made depending on the context. (Student D, personal communication, March 2026).

No, they treat it as open to critical analysis because it responds to a historical, social, and cultural context, allowing it to be enriched through teaching experience. (Student C, personal communication, March 2026).

These comments seem to contrast with the previous ones, because here they assume that teacher educators work with the curriculum as a flexible document, making adjustments to it rather than implementing it uncritically. In this vein, the teacher educator can be understood as a critical agent who reflects on their own practice, rather than merely a professional; indeed, there are teacher educators who go beyond reflection and encourage critical thinking among students; this

surely allows for progress in the logic of the NEM, from its critical perspective, because it is no longer about uncritically replicating a curriculum, but rather putting consciousness into action—perhaps not reaching the status of epistemology, but certainly that of criticism.

Student C's comment also revolves around the possibility of reflecting on the curriculum, especially because it is possible to rethink academic content from the practice itself; for although study programs are part of a prescribed curriculum, the NEM and the 2022 teacher training reform propose curricular flexibility, where the curriculum is not rigid, allowing for the possibility of engaging in criticism of the formal curriculum.

Traditional vs. Reflective Teaching Practices

Reflecting on one's own teaching practice is perhaps not such an easy task, as it inevitably begins with self-criticism. This is not common among teachers at teacher training colleges, as they rarely review their own practices to rethink their methods and seek to improve them. At least that is the impression among the teachers themselves, because we assume that working with adult students is not the same as working with children. "We work with adult students; they have to accept what is given to them in their training process; they have no reason to question my work," said a teacher during her analysis of the activity conducted at the teacher training college.

Examples of student comments:

Yes, this happens frequently. Although traditional teaching is criticized, many training activities continue to reproduce traditional classroom structures, rote assessments, and lengthy presentations. This limits students' ability to truly internalize innovative pedagogical models. (Student C, personal communication, March 2026).

Sometimes we all do things without thinking or analyzing them, and I think that if we see a certain activity or strategy working for a teacher, we bring it into the classroom, even if it's not always the best option. (Student D, personal communication, March 2026).

It appears that teachers, in their remarks during teaching practicums, strongly criticize traditional teaching methods; in fact, this criticism is even incorporated into the content of some courses. In contrast, the practicums are precisely that: a continuum of traditionalism—that is, an uncritical activity centered on discourse as mere verbalism with little substance, or even without discourse at all, since the division of topics and student presentations also appear to be a strategy employed by various teacher trainers.

Certainly, teacher education students replicate these practices in elementary schools, whether as students or even after graduating from the teacher training college and assuming their role as teachers. This reproduction occurs unconsciously, but in the opinion of Student D, the dependent link occurs consciously in activities or strategies implemented by a trainer who created a positive working environment in the teacher training college classroom. Ultimately, in both cases, they refer to traditional practices with little room for reflection—that is, uncritical ones.

Sometimes these practices can become traditional without any reflection; however, in most cases, traditional practices are always analyzed from the perspective of various authors and the current curriculum. (Student B, personal communication, March 2026).

Many teacher educators see themselves as agents of social transformation, as they believe their work directly impacts the training of future teachers who will work with different communities; however, they most commonly employ traditional practices. (Student A, personal communication, March 2026).

Traditional pedagogical practices are sometimes observed, such as lecture-style classes or assessments focused on memorization. (Student E, personal communication, March 2026).

In these comments, one can find a consensus on how teacher educators carry out traditional practices; there are glimpses of other types of activities among some educators, perhaps a certain reflection on content that lends itself to such approaches.

Given these views expressed by the students, it is impossible to envision teacher educators with a critical mindset—the very attitude we often seek to instill in students through our discourse. It is not possible to have a critical consciousness, much less to develop an epistemic consciousness, because we have already established a teacher-training culture centered on traditional practices and the lack of diversification of those practices; rather, it involves a way of doing things that is uncritical and merely reproduces the way we ourselves learned to be teachers.

Attitudes of Teacher Educators Toward Students

This section seeks to analyze the attitudes adopted by teacher educators regarding student performance and certain forms of student behavior in relation to the educator's practice, its theoretical foundation, and the interactions that occur in the classroom—that is, the work of being a teacher in the teacher training college.

This leads to an analysis of the role of the teacher-trainer, in their characteristic form as a human being, as a political actor, and as a person in general. Here, otherness plays an essential role because the bond with the other or others largely—or perhaps entirely—determines the identity of the human being and, consequently, of the students as future teachers.

Most teachers foster respectful dialogue and seek ways for both sides to benefit, ensuring that course requirements are met while also addressing the group's needs and concerns. This is precisely why it is so important for teachers to build a positive relationship and a conducive learning environment with their students. (Student E, personal communication, March 2026).

When a student expresses disagreement or proposes a different perspective, the teacher usually seizes the opportunity to foster academic debate, always within the bounds of respect. They do not dismiss opinions; on the contrary, they ask for arguments and supporting evidence. This strengthens our critical thinking skills, as it teaches us that questioning does not mean confronting, but rather delving deeper into the analysis. (Student C, personal communication, March 2026).

In these comments, one can see how students feel the respect shown by their instructors during academic activities in the classroom. It appears that the teacher-training culture is imbued with a certain humanism that has been consolidated with the arrival of the 2022 curriculum and the NEM; this is what one might conclude because it contrasts with the 2018 curriculum, whose competency-based approach placed individual differences and the struggle to be the best at the center of the teaching-learning process—in essence, that is what was promoted.

At the teacher training college, the classroom atmosphere is positive, even though the institution itself is fragmented (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2000). Generally speaking, interpersonal relationships between teachers and students are good, and there is mutual respect between the teacher-trainers and the students. The learning environment created by the teacher-trainer appears to be positive, which leads students to speak highly of their teachers; however, there are exceptions who seem to generalize their less-than-flattering opinions within class groups.

These conflicting views can spark debate and disagreements, which are essential for intellectual growth. This is encouraged by the instructors to foster a critical mindset; it appears that the teachers here clearly convey to students the importance of being critical while respecting the opinions of their peers. Argumentation and reasoning are crucial, provided they are grounded in the necessary conceptual frameworks to engage in effective debate and avoid reducing discourse to mere empiricism, which relies solely on common sense. Other comments:

Although the official curriculum is presented as a fundamental guide for teaching practice, some teachers encourage its critical analysis, recognizing that educational policies respond to specific historical, social, and political contexts; however, there is not always a well-founded debate, and at times more critical analysis is needed. (Student B, personal communication, March 2026).

Generally, there is openness to answering questions and debating, but sometimes the responses are more defensive than reflective, which can discourage deep questioning. An environment is created where participation is encouraged, but arguments are not always explored in depth, nor are assumptions critically challenged. (Student A, personal communication, March 2026).

These comments highlight the benefits of democratic work for teacher education faculty: the opportunity they have to express their ideas thanks to the attitudes of their instructors, whose practices promote debate and dialogue. However, it seems that criticism needs to be more specific in the sense of delving deeper into academic content and transcending common sense, because a lack of complex ideas and well-founded expressions is commonly observed among teachers, as Jackson (2001) noted in his book **Life in the Classroom**, originally published in 1968.

It is important that, in teacher training programs, instructors adopt a critical stance so that they, in turn, can foster critical thinking. It is unlikely that the practices of teacher educators will be linked to epistemic awareness, because teacher education culture focuses heavily on ideas derived from common sense—ideas grounded in experience. Even in the classroom, theory may be absent and experience the center of the debate; indeed, the idea that “practice makes perfect” is widely promoted.

6. Conclusion

In the context of the NEM, the integration of critical pedagogy and the humanist paradigm translates into teacher training that seeks a balance between social transformation and the holistic development of the individual. The teacher-trainer's critical consciousness, if present, could become a unifying axis that allows for the questioning of established knowledge, the recognition of epistemological diversity, and the promotion of critical, fairer, more inclusive, and meaningful educational practices.

In this vein, fostering critical awareness from these perspectives implies understanding that the teacher-educator is not merely a transmitter of content, but a reflective individual who constructs, deconstructs, and reconstructs knowledge in dialogue with their context and with others. In teacher training colleges, this takes on crucial importance, as the training of teachers capable of responding critically to contemporary educational challenges and of putting the principles of the NEM into practice will depend on this awareness.

The teacher-educator's lived curriculum in teacher training colleges, within the framework of the NEM, is a complex construction that integrates theoretical, practical, and ethical-political dimensions. Far from being a simple implementation of the official curriculum, it constitutes a

dynamic process of interpretation and re-signification that takes shape in everyday experience. Recovering this perspective allows us to recognize the teacher-trainer as an active agent in the construction of pedagogical knowledge and in the transformation of education, in line with the principles of critical, humanistic, and contextualized teacher education.

Hence the need to critically examine their awareness in an epistemological sense—understood as the capacity for reflection on the foundations, limits, implications, and orientations of the knowledge they teach and produce. Moreover, as Zemelman (2011) aptly puts it, this awareness has no content.

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