

SUMMARY

Beginning with the 2000 school year, Bolivia's Ministry of Education, within the framework of the Education Reform Program, introduced some actions aimed at improving the quality of teachers' training, such as the conversion of "Escuelas Normales" (Teachers' Schools) into "Institutos Normales Superiores" (Superior Teachers' Institutes), their adjoining to university programs and the application of competence based curricula.

This thesis is focused on the research of themes which have had an impact on the development of students' general competencies, as a result of the use of renovated curricula. The universe was made of 752 students who completed undergraduate teachers training in twelve Bolivian teachers' schools, called Institutos Normales Superiores by the end of 2003.

Surveys were used to interview school administrators, teachers and students. Also a competency test structured on the basis of: the scenarios where teachers will perform, mental process used by the students when approaching the subject matter, and innovative contents for the new curricula, was given to these subjects.

When students were tested on their achievements, a psychometric analysis was conducted, followed by a factorial analysis, using the main component and the Varimax rotation methodologies. This was done in order to obtain item groupings that could show the greatest variances, resulting in three directional structures to be understood as the types of competencies achieved by the students. The "context related" competencies provide a profile of rural students who direct their teachers training towards the community and cherish their linguistic and cultural diversity. Students with competencies "aimed at innovation" concentrate on their role as teachers, highlighting the importance of research, and are critical of the deficiencies in the training they received. Finally, students with "technical and instrumental" competencies focus on classroom work and curricular improvement. ANOVA's analysis for one factor and the multi-variable MLG, allow the identification of students and trainers profiles, as well as institutional conditions significantly connected to the types of competencies identified.

Therefore, a recommendation is made for the creation of a teachers' system intended to follow up and evaluate, in an articulated fashion, the development of competencies during the training process and while in service. Also, there is a need to establish control features and teachers' guidance for those who graduate with a low level of competency. This, in order to ensure good classroom performance and to introduce the evaluation of competencies, using indicators such as educational scenarios, subject matter and modules, as well as to improve teachers' stability at the institutes for at least one generation of newly trained teachers.