# University Teaching and Teleworking in Chile: Emerging Challenges

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| ARTICLE INFO | ABSTRACT |
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| | This work is part of a research project that explores the dynamics between work and education, with a focus on the transformations of teaching work. Its main objective was to analyze the new teaching subjectivities that emerged in higher education as a result of teleworking. The study was framed in two key events that profoundly impacted the national university system: the social outbreak of October 2019 in Chile and the confinement due to the pandemic between March 2020 and August 2023, periods that transformed academic work.<br><br>A qualitative methodological approach was adopted, using semi-structured interviews and focus groups with professors from three national universities, carried out between 2022 and 2023. This method made it possible to analyze individual and collective perceptions about teleworking and its implications in the teaching-learning process.<br><br>Among the findings identified, flexibility in time management and the development of digital skills stood out. However, limitations were also identified, such as increased workload, emotional exhaustion, problems in maintaining effective interaction with students, and technological inequalities that affected access and teacher performance.<br><br>Teleworking has transformed pedagogical and work dynamics, showing both benefits and challenges that need to be addressed. The results highlight the need for institutional policies that promote a balance between digital and face-to-face teaching, guaranteeing sustainable conditions for educational quality and teacher well-being in future scenarios of uncertainty.<br><br>**Keywords:** teleworking; pandemic; virtual university teaching. Digital platforms |

## Introduction

In recent years, the work of teachers in higher education has undergone profound transformations, particularly influenced by the social and health context. Two key events have been decisive in this process: the social outbreak in Chile, which occurred in October 2019, and the COVID-19 pandemic that began in March 2020. These events not only challenged the traditional structures of the education system, but also led to the massive adoption of teleworking as the predominant modality for teaching-learning. According to previous studies, the pandemic forced institutions to develop adaptation strategies that, although they managed to guarantee educational continuity, also showed gaps in infrastructure and teacher training.

The COVID-19 pandemic marked a turning point in higher education by forcing an abrupt transition to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). This change transformed teachers' work dynamics, posed significant challenges for teaching (Watermeyer, 2021), and generated new tensions in terms of flexibility, workload, and emotional well-being of teachers. According to Raveh Morad and Shacham (2023), many teachers faced medium levels of stress due to technological challenges, lack of clear boundaries between work and personal life, and insufficient perception of professional reward. However, a significant increase in teachers' technological competencies and greater confidence in the implementation of new pedagogical methodologies were also observed. This progress, according to Raveh, et

al. (2023), shows the transformative potential of ERT in educational practices. Despite the challenges inherent in the transition, such as stress and work overload, ERT enabled teachers to develop essential technological and pedagogical skills to address the challenges of contemporary education. This process has not only helped to overcome the difficulties of confinement, but has also laid the foundations for a lasting evolution in the field of education.

These skills were crucial for the transition to a hybrid model, which combines elements of face-to-face and digital teaching, considered by many experts to be the future of higher education. However, the sustainability of this model depends on institutional policies that prioritize teacher well-being and guarantee an equitable distribution of resources, as Cicha, et al. (2021) point out.

## Object of study

The object of study of this work is to analyze the perceptions of teachers regarding the transformations experienced, in relation to the integration of educational technologies and the adaptation of teaching methodologies. It also seeks to examine how these perceptions influence their pedagogical practices within a context of prolonged uncertainty, marked by the challenges of virtuality and changes in teaching-learning dynamics. As Sum & Oancea (2022) indicates, institutional support and training opportunities play a fundamental role in turning the challenges of the pandemic into opportunities for sustainable improvement. This analysis is crucial to understanding not only the immediate effects of ERT, but also its long-term impact on the design and implementation of education policies that balance technological and human needs.

## Research Problem

This study seeks **to understand how the labor and pedagogical transformations, derived from emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, together with other sociostructural events, such as the social outbreak in Chile in 2019, have impacted on teaching subjectivities in the field of higher** education. In particular, it seeks to identify the perceptions of university teachers regarding teleworking and its impact on the teaching-learning process, considering the implications of workload, stress, (Benites, 2024), the development of technological competencies, and the adaptation of pedagogical practices to contexts of prolonged uncertainty.

This problem emerges from the recognition that the abrupt transition to non-face-to-face teaching modalities evidenced structural inequalities and generated significant challenges, both in technological and emotional terms, which altered the work and pedagogical dynamics of the university system. Area-Moreira (2022). It also raises the need to analyse how these experiences can influence the design of educational policies and teaching models that balance digital demands with teacher well-being, Zempoalteca, González & Guzmán, (2023).

## Research Question

This study is guided by the exploration of **how university teachers perceive the transformations that occurred in their pedagogical practices and working conditions during the implementation of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT).** In addition, it seeks to analyze the implications of these perceptions for the design of sustainable educational policies in the field of higher education. In this context, it is intended to analyze teachers' subjectivities, that is, the individual and collective experiences that influence their way of interpreting teleworking and the challenges it represented. Similarly, the effects of ERT on the teaching-learning process are examined, identifying both the difficulties faced and the opportunities for pedagogical innovation that arose.

It also addresses the impact of these dynamics on teachers' working conditions, highlighting how workload, stress, and technological inequalities transformed their performance during this critical period. Finally, it seeks to link these perceptions with practical recommendations for the design of institutional policies aimed at promoting an adequate balance between digital and face-to-face teaching modalities, ensuring both educational quality and teacher well-being in future scenarios marked by uncertainty.

## Background

With the outbreak of SARS-CoV-2, Chile declared a 'Health Alert', adopting strict measures to contain the spread of the virus (Ministry of Health, Chile, 2020). Among them, the government established mandatory confinement for the entire population, made official by a decree published in the Official Gazette. These restrictions forced an abrupt restructuring of labor dynamics, directly affecting the academic and administrative staff of higher education

institutions. In this context, "the headquarters detected the need to implement a system of control of objectives, which implied restructuring workloads, while the teams had to adapt their activities to the teleworking format" (Sapién Piñón & Salcido, 2024, p.125). This transition marked a significant change in pedagogical management and practice, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges associated with the virtualization of work.

**Labor and pedagogical transformations**: during the pandemic, teleworking was established as a crucial tool in higher education. However, this transition was sudden and massive, leading to significant challenges in the organization of academic activities. Teachers faced the need to adapt their pedagogical practices and manage their time autonomously, simultaneously facing work and family demands. (Acevedo, et alt. 2021). This context also evidenced inequalities in terms of access to technology and connectivity.

**Impact on teaching subjectivity**: teleworking generated varied effects among academics. On the one hand, some managed to regulate their time better, while others experienced isolation that affected their psychological well-being. The dynamics of interaction and collaboration typical of face-to-face spaces were reduced, which affected the construction of work and academic relationships. In educational institutions, teleworking became the most adopted modality during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ribeiro, Scorsolini, & Barcellos, 2021).

**Opportunities and challenges for higher education:** Claudia Mora highlights the need to consider "the diverse experiences of academic teleworking, linked to personal and family realities" (cited by Undurraga, Simbürger & Mora, 2021, p. 17). During the pandemic, teleworking allowed academic continuity, but it also evidenced challenges such as the need to redesign curricula and strengthen technical support to guarantee educational quality. These aspects underscore the importance of rethinking pedagogical strategies towards a more inclusive and sustainable model.

**Post-pandemic reflections:** Merchan (2021), Ordorika (2020), and Giannini (2020) (cited by Lira and Peredo, 2022) highlight that education during the pandemic became a significant example of the use of teleworking in higher education. While acknowledging that teleworking is not a completely new paradigm, they stress that, following the impact of Covid-19, its implementation has been widely extended in the substantive processes of higher education institutions. This change has transformed both labor and pedagogical dynamics, highlighting both challenges and opportunities for the future of the education sector.

**Theoretical foundation**

**Progress towards digital skills in university environments**

Currently, the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has had a great impact on global economic processes, to the point of affirming that we are living in the fourth industrial revolution (Schwab, 2016). In addition, the incorporation of these technologies has had a significant impact on most social and work processes, both locally and globally. However, this influence manifests itself unevenly, depending on the capacities to access these tools and the skills necessary to effectively integrate into a digital society.

For Girona, Guàrdia, & Mas, (2018), the higher education system has not been exempt from the technological impact. In this context, differences are evident in the capacities for the use of technologies, even in the midst of a growing process of automation in intellectual work. This phenomenon develops in increasingly ubiquitous and delocalized environments for the production of knowledge and training. However, this does not imply the predominance of exclusively online universities, but rather a digital transformation that affects, to a greater extent, those institutions that have maintained a face-to-face model for centuries (Barro, 2018).

Since long before the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the modernization and digitalization of the university system have been promoted by both public and private structures. This process has generated the formulation of lines of action that include the improvement of equipment and infrastructure, the development of digital learning environments, and the training of academic and administrative staff in digital skills. (Prendes, Gutiérrez & Martínez, 2018). These initiatives seek to expand educational resources and strengthen the institutional response to the challenges of a society in constant transformation

In this context, the development of digital teaching competencies acquires a central value, which requires the acquisition of a set of competencies to learn, integrate, work and innovate in the current university context (Ocaña, Valenzuela & Morillo, 2020).

**The challenges of using technologies in times of confinement**

The social outbreak of October 2019 in Chile coincided with the second academic semester, which forced universities to abruptly suspend face-to-face classes and adopt digital platforms to guarantee academic continuity. Although teachers were already using technological tools such as virtual libraries, the transition to Virtual Teaching and Learning Spaces (VLEs) and learning management systems (LMS) represented an unprecedented challenge (Alonso et al., 2022). This change implied not only the use of new platforms, but also the adaptation to teaching dynamics such as personalized tutoring and online classes, in a context of political and social uncertainty.

The incorporation of Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) in universities marked a milestone in the integration of digital technologies in higher education, expanding access to knowledge and fostering new learning dynamics (Czerkawski & Lyman, 2021). However, its adoption faced challenges, such as a lack of technical knowledge among teachers and students, and limitations in technological infrastructure.

Despite these difficulties, the massive use of digital tools, such as forums, collaborative platforms, Artificial Intelligence applications, and videoconferencing tools (Zoom, Google Meet, Jitsi Meet), was normalized and transformed the dynamics of interaction and learning in higher education (Henderson & Selwyn, 2020). These technologies not only ensured academic continuity during the crisis, but also laid the foundations for a broader educational transformation.

What seemed like a momentary event between October and December 2019 became the prelude to a deeper transformation with the massive incorporation of digital tools in universities. This transformation was accelerated by the confinement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which in Chile led to the suspension of face-to-face classes in March 2020, coinciding with the beginning of the academic year. This abrupt change, which lasted for at least a year and a half, marked a turning point in traditional educational processes, driving the transition to remote teaching.

As Rocha and Fuentes (2021) point out, during this period academic purposes were maintained within the framework of the right to education, although with adaptations marked by methodological improvisation and the disciplining of university actors, in response to the demands of supervision and accreditation. At the same time, the Chilean school system experienced a similar virtualization, initially characterized by online classes with high student absence due to the lack of equipment and "black screens". It was not until mid-2020 that curricular prioritization was formalized, with documents issued by the Curriculum and Evaluation Unit of the Ministry of Education.

Both the social outbreak and the pandemic revealed the inequalities of the education system and the improvisations in its response. In this context, challenges arose for the teaching work, such as the lack of internet connection, student demotivation in synchronous classes, the difficulty in separating work and personal life, and academic improvisation due to the lack of clear guidelines (Villalobos, Romero, Araya, & Marió, 2021). However, positive aspects were also highlighted, such as greater collaboration between teachers, resilience in performance, a better understanding of the socioeconomic needs of students and the massive use of Virtual Teaching and Learning Spaces (VLEs).

**Work Methodology**

The methodology used is based on a pragmatic paradigm that integrates elements of the humanistic-interpretative perspective, focusing on the understanding of reality from the perspective of the subjects involved in the study, following an inductive logic. In addition, a socio-critical perspective is adopted, given that the phenomenon under analysis is historical and dialectical, which opens the possibility of proposing changes. The approach is qualitative, and the methodological design combines phenomenological research, which enhances the description and interpretation of reality based on the opinions of the participants, with an autobiographical narrative design, which collects experiences relevant to the objective and period previously described. Regarding the techniques for collecting information, semi-structured interviews were used, both group and panel, as well as discussion groups, in which the participants exchanged and legitimized general criteria proposed by the researchers.

The categories of analysis used for the data processing included Initial Teacher Training, teleworking and legal regulations. Eleven subcategories were derived from these categories, which were analyzed through significant occurrence relationships, based on interviews and discussion groups.

The university institutions participating in this research were the Metropolitan University of Education Sciences (Department of Basic Education), the Academy of Christian Humanism University (Faculty of Social Sciences and

Education) and the University of Playa Ancha (Faculty of Education Sciences). The sample was non-probabilistic and intentional, with participants selected according to criteria such as: performing teaching functions in Initial Teacher Training, having a contractual relationship at the time of application of the techniques, belonging to different age groups within their institution, and having taught at university before and during confinement. The sample included four teachers from each institution, and the anonymity of the participants was guaranteed in the informed consents

## Results

**Conditions of university teaching during confinement**

The universities analyzed already had LMS platforms before the social outbreak of 2019 and the pandemic of 2020, used for academic management, such as student registration and evaluations. Some teachers had previous experience with online courses and videoconferencing tools, used in national and international collaborations. However, the events of late 2019 and, especially, since March 2020, accelerated the use of these platforms and forced an abrupt change in teaching strategies to ensure the continuity of classes in a remote teaching context. Before, the mastery of digital tools was mainly required of academic authorities; With the pandemic, all faculty and students had to adapt quickly. 70% of those interviewed indicated that this was their first professional experience with platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet.

Among the main challenges mentioned by the interviewees are the initial lack of knowledge of how these platforms work, the improvisation to take advantage of their potential, the lack of digital skills in part of the teaching staff and the perception that students, due to their generational familiarity with ICTs, would have fewer difficulties in using them. On this last point, the interviewee E2U1 summarizes the experience by pointing out that:

"(...) *on one occasion I talked online with a student who did not handle basic things of technology, such as Word and I realized that it is not really true that all young people are digital natives, and that we should relate to them from that perspective*"

30% of the teachers interviewed acknowledged that, although their undergraduate students were familiar with basic technologies such as the internet, Office tools and social networks, many lacked essential digital skills to adapt to academic requirements in a context of confinement. This challenged the idea that all young people are "digital natives" and highlighted the need for pedagogical strategies that consider different levels of digital literacy.

In addition, teachers agreed that the availability of resources and adequate environmental conditions for online teaching was another key challenge. In the three universities analyzed (two state and one private), relevant problems occurred, especially in the initial phase, which affected the teaching-learning process. These difficulties are summarized in the following table:

**Table 1:** *Academic and Student Challenges in Initial Teacher Training during Confinement.*

| Subcategory | Relevant actor | Problem for the development of Initial Teacher Training |
|---|---|---|
| Connectivity | Students | It was detected that students did not have internet connectivity at home or with limitations on their mobile devices, which forced universities to speed up and massify connectivity scholarships. |
| Residence | Students | Some students register their residence in cities other than where the university campuses are located, which translates into temporary stays in lodging for the duration of their FID. This problem increased the lack of connectivity or access to digital devices. |
| Technological devices | Students | In some cases, the absence of technological devices for academic use was detected. This prompted universities to lend notebooks or laptops. |
| Privacy | Academics and students | 60% of the teachers interviewed indicated the difficulty of having a private environment in their homes for the exercise of teaching. In the same way, the interviewees admit that this factor can explain the phenomenon of "black" screens by their students. |

| Service Delivery | Academic | All the teachers participating in the sample suggest that during the long period of confinement they had to assume additional economic costs in the educational process. From paying for internet to replacing technological devices. |
|---|---|---|

A detail of this phenomenon can be seen in the opinion of the interviewee E3U1, who points out:

*"What happened to me was to realize that the home began to fulfill all the functions at the same time: working, raising, cooking, etc. The home was transformed into everything and in the same place, all in a few square meters, because everyone was in the house and it also turned out to be my means of production. I feel that this was collapsing the space."*

In this context of overload of the home as a space for study and work, another recurring phenomenon in online classes became evident: the presence of students with their cameras off, known as black screens. However, few teachers interpreted this as a lack of respect for themselves or their peers, but instead attributed it to the environmental conditions in the students' homes.

An illustrative testimony about this situation is the account of the interviewee E1U2:

*"A student during an online class told me that her grandmother sent me a lot of greetings. So I asked her, what did her grandmother have to do with me? And she told me that her grandmother was waiting for class in the living room, the only place with relative calm in the home, and she enjoyed understanding what a university class was like because she had never gone to university. I understood how multi-causal can explain the cameras off, you see?"*

This testimony shows that the absence of cameras on was not only due to disinterest, but also to multiple factors, such as the lack of adequate spaces in homes or intergenerational coexistence in learning environments.

Paradoxically, this situation allowed teachers to better understand the realities of their students, as E4U2 interviewee puts it:

*"It allowed us to get to know our students better, by entering, in quotation marks, their homes or their personal stories. Like when they tell me: teacher, I couldn't connect yesterday because six people live here and we have to share the computer equipment. (...) Many teachers said: now I know the drama that my student has."*

During confinement, uncertainty led each teacher to implement individual solutions to the challenges of online teaching.

A key aspect was the recording of classes. During the social crisis of 2019, some universities offered virtual classes, but without considering their registration, since it was assumed that students would retrieve the material on their own. 50% of the interviewees indicated that it was common to delegate to them the responsibility for access to content.

Starting in March 2020, with the pandemic and the prolongation of online classes, universities implemented measures to safeguard the training process, including guidance to teachers on the storage of their classes, due to the difficulties of students to share notes in quarantine.

Between March and April 2020, provisional regulations were drawn up with student participation and authorities, establishing connectivity scholarships, access to technological equipment, limits on the duration of sessions and the obligation to record classes. According to the interviewee E2U2, these measures responded to the need to ensure educational continuity in exceptional conditions.

*"At the beginning there was no obligation to record the classes for those students who were not in a certain online session, but we all understood that in the long run this was necessary so as not to further harm a teaching-learning process that is already questioned in several aspects."*

### Teleworking and Zoomization during Confinement

The first massive trial of online teaching occurred after the social outbreak of 2019. Although there was no ban on access to universities, the August-December semester ended mainly with virtual classes and exams. The social upheaval displaced universities from the political and social debate, functioning mainly in administrative and research tasks (Rocha & Fuentes, 2021b).

This period marked the beginning of "zoomization" (Estrella, 2020), encouraging the use of digital platforms to continue teaching. However, it was with the pandemic and confinement, starting in March 2020, that online teaching became mandatory and reached its maximum expansion in universities and colleges nationwide. According to the interviewee E1U1, this transition to teleworking occurred abruptly and unavoidably.

*"I had never had teleworking experience prior to the pandemic, it was the first time and it was horrible because of all the pre-existing conditions, the pandemic, the social revolt, the economic crisis, etc. I have been teaching here at this university for eight years, but it was the first time that I did classes through teleworking It was not only doing one class, but complete courses for several semesters. My big problem was assuming the planning of classes as if we were in person, which led to an initial failure of that experience. I had to learn along the way."*

In this sense, the results of the interviews reflect that one of the main problems identified in the period studied was the low use of MOOC platforms before the social outbreak and the pandemic. Although these platforms were known in the university environment, they had rarely been used by teachers. At the same time, the adaptation of teachers to these technologies, together with the connectivity conditions of the student body, brought with it a series of difficulties. Among them, the variations in the schedules of online classes and the pressure to achieve the learning outcomes established in the subject programs stand out.

This adaptation process, although initially complex, was accompanied by a majority of opinions from the interviewees who agreed that, after confinement, the experience of platforming, zooming or teleworking brought with it a new opportunity for teaching.

The table below presents the key findings from this section of the research.

**Table 2:** *Teaching Challenges Related to Telework in Initial Training*

| Subcategory | Relevant actor | Virtual teaching in Initial Training |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Previous experience* | Academics and students | Half of the teachers indicated that they had no previous experience in the use of MOOCs and although such platforms were available in the respective institutions, they had not been used. Only use is recorded on official platforms for uploading grades and study materials. It is noted that this was also common among the student body. |
| *Platform Mastery* | Academic | The majority of the interviewees indicated that the use of Zoom, Google Meet or other similar ones was an initial stage of trial and error. It was only a few months after the pandemic confinement that there was a mastery at the user level facilitated by courses and workshops that the same institutions offered to the teaching staff. |
| *Lesson planning* | Academic | The teachers who were part of the interviews pointed out that there was an initial distance between the planning and objectives of the online classes with the results observable in practice. This led to a readjustment of the learning objectives and the expected results in the students during the process. The subject programs underwent variations, especially due to the prioritization of content and changes in the forms of evaluation. |
| *Results* | Academic | All the interviewees point out that, despite the difficulties observed in the process, there was resilience or adaptation to the changes during confinement, and a quarter of them point out that such trial-and-error experiences were essential for the development of digital skills that are applied to this day in their universities. |

Regarding the importance of technology in university functions, both during and after confinement, the interviewee E4U2 points out:

*"There are two sins that can be committed with technology: the first is to deify it with all that that means, and the second is not to use it."*

However, most of the interviewees stress the importance of resuming face-to-face teaching in Initial Teacher Training in universities, a situation that began to be implemented gradually from the last months of 2021 and definitively in March 2022, after the summer vacations, which in the Chilean case occur between January and February. One reason for favoring face-to-face attendance can be deduced from the opinion of the interviewee E2U3:

*"We have to see the context and the focus towards which our work is historically directed. We do this with young people who require body skills, essential for the development of the professional capable of working in a school classroom. The development of competencies, thinking and skills involves forming people with integrity in the disciplinary and pedagogical training. These subjects need to move, touch, smell, feel, dance, run, get excited, interact physically. So, the sum of confinement and technologies, sometimes they do not contribute much to that."*

Evidence of the importance of this opinion is reflected in the mental deterioration that many university students began to manifest when they returned to face-to-face learning, especially those who entered the higher education system from the school world and who spent more than two years in teleworking or telestudying conditions during their adolescence. This repercussion, according to our interviewees, is linked to some experiences lived during intermediate or professional internships in Initial Teacher Training, particularly in future classroom teachers. An example of this is expressed in the opinion of the interviewee E3U1, who points out:

*"It was difficult to measure the negative impact of confinement on the school system and on the practical training of future teachers, until the return to face-to-face learning, when in the first semester of 2022 intermediate and professional internships were to be carried out in person in schools again. There, those of us who act as tutors of the practices, and the practitioners themselves, were able to measure totally unbalanced schoolchildren, with totally uncontrolled parents, with a lot of violence in the environment, with children who for two years made it difficult to form habits or social skills. The atmosphere was dense and the teachers were mistreated."*

All the interviewees linked to teaching in the area of internships and didactics in their respective Pedagogy careers agree that, during the stage of teleworking due to confinement, one of the most significant challenges was the planning of student internships. The key question was: how to carry out these practices in a context where they also had to be carried out through teleworking? Interviewee E3U3 expresses the following:

*"As of March 16, 2020, we had all the students installed in the internships in the school system, about 300 interns in our career, and the following week, we had to invent a new way of doing internships because of the confinement. It was a creative process, but very challenging as well as stressful, as we depended on new, unprecedented conditions. Many times educational establishments did not understand how a teacher from that high school or school could supervise and evaluate an intern online. But this stage was also a virtue, it was necessary to recognize ourselves more humanly among the colleagues in the internship area, to see all the capacities that each one had to tutor students in a particular context, to hold periodic meetings to leave nothing to chance, to create things in the midst of adversity. And that was very positive."*

On the other hand, another aspect that most of the interviewees pointed out refers to the "loss" of academic autonomy, mainly due to the fact that, during the confinement, institutions gave instructions to prioritize content and limit the duration of online classes. The undergraduate teaching system generally works in person with blocks of two pedagogical hours of 45 minutes or 1.5 chronological hours. In most cases, it was recommended not to do such long classes, thinking about the economic cost of connectivity and the fatigue of spending so many hours a day in front of a screen. However, although it is not the mainstay of this research, it should be noted that the "loss" of teaching autonomy in the classroom has also been partly due to certain standardizations imposed in the mandatory accreditation processes that Pedagogy careers have in Chile. The interviewee E4U2 points out:

*"The context of the pandemic put in check precisely the issue of freedom or autonomy, because it was urgently necessary to resolve issues of content and competencies to be evaluated, for which institutional criteria were used that I did not necessarily share. We had to continue with the training process without stopping, despite the confinement, connectivity problems, or lack of technological experience. However, everything was standardized.*

*We sought to simplify the problem by avoiding going out of the mold, since, otherwise, you could be judged in a bad way by the students and the authorities.*"

## Teleworking and the regulations for its implementation

One of the key aspects of this research is the analysis of the regulations related to teleworking, especially during confinement and the subsequent expansion of this modality in universities, the public sector and private companies. In Chile, Law No. 21,220, enacted in 2020, amended the Labor Code to regulate remote work and telework. However, as early as 1996, ILO Convention No. 177 defined telework as "work performed at home or in other places chosen by the worker, outside the employer's premises, for remuneration, for the purpose of producing a product or providing a service according to the employer's specifications" (ILO,  2022, p. 14).

Although teleworking was already an established practice in some sectors, such as analysts and computer scientists, it was the pandemic that accelerated its implementation, especially in collaborative areas such as education. According to Occupational Psychologist C. Díaz, in an interview with journalist M. Tapia (2022), teleworking, although already present, represented a major challenge in the educational field, where collaborative tasks and direct interaction with students were essential.

During the confinement, not all teachers of Initial Teacher Training in the universities participating in this study were aware of the relevant regulations. E4U3 interviewee said:

*"The truth is that I did not know the national and institutional regulations on this matter during the confinement stage. We had to trust that the institutional guidelines would not violate our labor rights. That is why many universities, after the pandemic, began to create their own regulations in line with national laws."*

Despite the lack of regulatory clarity in certain aspects, criticism arose about how teleworking was implemented in the teaching field. The interviewee E1U1 highlighted:

*"After the social revolt of 2019 and at the beginning of the pandemic, the academic calendars were modified, which directly impacted my contractual relationship with the university, which is for fees. The restructuring of the payments affected both my financial stability and my personal and family life."*

In conclusion, the relationship between teleworking and legal regulations during confinement turned out to be a complex issue, with advances and challenges identified by the interviewees. The experiences shared reflect both the efforts to adapt to the new regulations and the difficulties arising from the implementation of these regulations in the educational context, as can be seen in Table 3

**Table 3:** *Relationship between Teleworking and Legal Regulations during Confinement*

| *Subcategory* | *Relevant actor* | *Teleworking and legal regulations* |
|---|---|---|
| *Existence of rules* | Academics and students | In the universities there were no internal rules on the operation of online teaching and how to establish teleworking for teachers. This meant that provisional regulations were issued with the prior agreement of authorities, academics and students. |
| *Work overload* | Academic | Ignorance of the rules meant that some academics pointed out that they ended up working more hours at home than their previous face-to-face experiences. |

A survey on remote work in public employment during COVID-19, conducted in November 2020, involved 86 public services in Chile and 24,760 civil servants. The results revealed that the majority of the surveyed employees (81%) were working remotely at the time of the study. In addition, 89% of those who were working remotely expressed a desire to continue working this way at least some of the time after the pandemic. However, 41% said they felt more distracted working remotely than in person. On the other hand, 73% of respondents indicated that they were willing to work beyond the end of the day to finish pending tasks or perform additional tasks to those initially assigned. Finally, 30% stated that they were unable to find a balance between their personal and work lives (Schuster & Mayo, 2021).

The responses of the academics considered in the research of this article are not far from the results mentioned. As previously stated, 40% of those interviewed indicate that the experience of teleworking, with its ups and downs, has allowed the development of new digital skills. In this sense, the interviewee E1U3 believes that videoconferences and online classes are more useful in contexts of large intercontinental distances:

*"(...) for long intercontinental distances, it is not as effective in the local context, where more face-to-face attendance is required. It is necessary that in initial teacher training there are spaces for physical encounter. However, in certain circumstances, recent experience has helped us to realize that it is possible, in the face of an emergency, to develop online classes provisionally."*

In short, all the interviewees agree that, when clear rules are established on teleworking regulations, teaching and academic activity, in general, becomes more comfortable and reliable.

## Conclusions

The article emphasizes that the discursive interrelations on the so-called New Forms of Work (NFT) at the Higher Education level, which have been considered in the interviews with professors from three Chilean universities, point towards the critical assessment of academic work, evidencing devices that are at times alienating, controlling, adapting, and resisting.  related to digitalization processes at a particularly anomalous moment in the history of traditional universities.

Perhaps the most appropriate synthesis is found in what was pointed out by the interviewee E3U2, when he states that virtual work

"*It's like a presence-absence.*"

On the one hand, there were -well or half- the technological devices and institutional support to carry out the teaching tasks, as well as the people or actors of the academic exercise (teachers and students), but there were dialogic elements that, in a self-critical way, the participants of this work maintained to be in debt. Fluid communication, typical of face-to-face teaching, was not always the keynote in the teaching-learning process during teaching teleworking in times of confinement.

A word map that reflects the main perceptions and concerns during the two years of confinement can be summarized as:



In the current transformations of university academic work, the analysis of the continuity or deepening of performative rationalities, already present in the Economics of Education and in Higher Education in particular, is essential to understand the resistances or acceptances that the academic world links with hegemonic discursive practices. The world of work is made up of three inseparable dimensions of life: activity, rituality and leisure. When these human actions are separated from one moment to the next, there is a risk of constituting a fragmented human being, provoking, in extreme cases, an alienated work. Teleworking impacts not only on the formation of subjectivities but also on a cultural restructuring that resignifies the role of work in society and in the development of people.

Hence, although it is thought that writing a scientific article on a topic that occurred between the end of 2019 and the end of 2021 is to re-scrutinize reflections that are known to all, it is still transcendental for the resignification of academic work today and in the near future. Thus, the proposed discussion allows us to delve into the characterization of the different phases or historical stages of the relationship between work and education.

In summary, we can say that:

*First*, the ERT evidenced structural inequalities within the higher education system. These inequalities, such as unequal access to technological resources and lack of adequate infrastructure, affected both teacher performance and students' learning experiences (Cicha et al., 2021b). In addition, research such as that by Watermeyer et al. (2021b) documents how teleworking exacerbated stress and workload, generating tensions between work demands and personal well-being.

*Second*, despite the challenges, opportunities for pedagogical innovation also emerged. Teachers had to quickly adapt their teaching approaches, which fostered the development of new digital competencies and pedagogical methodologies. According to Raveh, morad & Shcham (2023b), these skills were not only essential for navigating the lockdown period, but also have the potential to lastingly transform higher education.

*Third*, the working conditions under the ERT revealed changes in teachers' subjectivities, which are fundamental to understanding the way in which teachers perceive and face the new labor realities. These changes are relevant for designing institutional policies that respond to their needs and concerns, ensuring both the sustainability of pedagogical practices and their emotional well-being (Sum & Oancea, 2022).

Therefore, the research problem seeks to understand not only the immediate challenges of ERT, but also its long-term impact on the pedagogical practices and working conditions of university faculty. This makes it possible to articulate policy proposals and strategies that balance technological and human demands, promoting a more inclusive and resilient educational model in the face of future crisis scenarios.

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