

Teachers’ closeness of professional relationship and its role in learning perception after reciprocal peer observation

Closeness of professional relationship between teachers is understood as the degree of emotional and interpersonal connection, trust, and collaboration that exists between teachers in an educational environment. It involves working together effectively and sharing constructive conversations for improvement (Milatz et al., 2015).

Reciprocal peer observation (RPO) involves pairs of teachers with similar experience who agree to observe pedagogical aspects of their teaching and offer constructive feedback for reflection and improvement (Duran et al., 2021).



The study analyzes closeness of professional relationships in RPO

- Q1.** When teachers take part in RPO, is there an increase in their perceived closeness of professional relationship with their partner? If so, what elements do teachers attribute this increase to?
- Q2.** Does perceived closeness of professional relationship influence teacher perception of learning after RPO?

364
teachers



43.13%
Compulsory
Secondary
Education

30.50%
Primary ed.

15.39%
Post-comp. ed.

10.99%
Preschool

158 teachers from the Balearic Islands and 206 from Catalonia participated, grouped into 182 pairs.

Data collection on closeness of professional relationship included:



Pretest-posttest questionnaire
Other in the Self Scale (IOS, Gächter et al., 2015)



Virtual group interview
61 teachers participated in 4 groups of between 14-17 teachers



Final questionnaire (PeOPLE)
Perception of learning after RPO (6 Likert-scale questions 1-4)

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Question 1: Increase in professional closeness between teachers

The perception of professional closeness with the colleague increases significantly in those teachers who had a low or medium initial level of closeness. In those who already had a high initial level of closeness, it is maintained.

The increase is independent of age, gender, years of experience, years at the school, previous experience in PO, and the perception of time offered by the school, but it seems to be affected by the educational stage.

Teachers attribute this increase in professional closeness to feedback exchange, knowledge sharing, the creation of a personal bond, and mutual aid.

Question 2: The role of professional closeness in teachers’ learning

Teachers’ perception of learning after the intervention is very high.

The perception of learning is independent of age, gender, years of experience, years at the school, educational stage, and previous experience in PO, but it seems to be affected by the perception of time offered by the school.

The final level of professional closeness influences learning perception: the higher the final closeness, the higher the learning perception. The results even suggest that a high initial closeness may be slightly less beneficial for learning.

Methodological contributions	Empirical contributions
1) Use of a validated single-item scale from social psychology that may be easy to use for systematic data collection about teacher interpersonal relationships.	1) There is a very significant increase in the closeness of professional relationship thanks to RPO, after a single cycle of implementation.
2) Validation of a questionnaire to assess teacher learning perception after RPO or other collaborative practices.	2) Rather than initial closeness as a prerequisite, it is final closeness which significantly affects teacher learning perception.
3) Use of group interviews to involve participants in the interpretation of the findings.	3) The relevance of schools offering the necessary time for RPO.

RPO becomes a structured procedure to help to meet the learning needs of teachers.

