

# **Initial Development of English Language Teachers in Mexico**

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## **Abstract**

This research focuses on the analysis of the beliefs of pre-service Mexican student- teachers from a public university in central Mexico who have learned English as adolescents or young adults. Specifically, it examines their beliefs about teaching and about themselves as English teachers in different stages of initial professional development. The participants reflected on their experiences as English language learners, students, teaching practicum students and as first year teachers in a follow up study.

This thesis is composed of three studies that are linked by involving the same participants. The studies follow these participants through different stages in their initial development as teachers. The research is set within the qualitative research paradigm and draws on qualitative data and interpretive analysis. The data were retrieved using the following procedures: autobiographies, a focus group interview, journals, personal interviews and short narratives.

Responses to the following research questions emerged through the different stages of this thesis.

1. What initial beliefs do pre-service and beginning students hold about being a teacher?
2. Do these beliefs evolve or change during the initial stages of their teacher development?
3. Do their experiences during their initial stages of their development influence their beliefs?

There is little research on English language teacher beliefs in Mexico. It is considered that research in this area can contribute to the understanding of the processes of what English language teachers' beliefs are and how they evolve or develop over time and the influences that they may have on the actual teaching process. This research may contribute to bring to the attention of English language teacher preparation programs the necessity of providing opportunities for student-teachers to unpack their beliefs and reflect and view them in the light of the courses and their practice in order to create an understanding of the Mexican educational context of which they will be a part.

### **Statement of Candidate**

I hereby certify that the work in this thesis entitled “**Initial development of English Language teachers in Mexico**” has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been properly acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all the information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was endorsed by Macquarie University Ethics Committee, HE27APR2007.DO5135.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1. Introduction**

The process of globalization of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has greatly increased awareness in Mexico of the importance of learning English as a means for international communication. English has become a lingua-franca in all areas of communication, commerce and technology. The area of education is no exception and has lead to competitiveness among schools to deliver instruction that will cater to the need of the citizens of the new millennium. This imperative has also intensified the necessity for the professionalization of Mexican English language teachers.

During the past thirty years in Mexico, the demand for English language teachers has grown significantly and thus, the pressing need for programs that offer opportunities for professional preparation in the field. The never-ending journey of becoming a teacher, and in particular learning to operate in and teach English as a foreign language, in a country that is not English-speaking is as challenging and complex as the intrinsic characteristics of the language itself. A major stage in the professionalization of a teacher is the transition from teacher preparation to the first year of teaching. However, in Mexico studies in the area of pre-service and beginning teachers' experiences and beliefs about teaching are rare and especially so for English language teachers. Nevertheless, a body of studies carried out in various parts of the world in general education about pre-service and novice teachers' beliefs about teaching have shown that these teachers carry varied sets of beliefs even before they start their professional careers (Lortie, 1975; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992). These studies have also shown that there is a strong but complex relationship between beliefs and teachers' experiences of, reactions to and actions and behaviours in their particular teaching contexts. Similarly, according to Richards (1994), Borg (2003) and

others, the ideas and beliefs that language teachers in relation to what teaching is about have a considerable effect on their work.

The overarching purpose of this thesis is to explore the beliefs and experiences of pre-service, practicum and novice teachers as they transition over a period of one year from a teacher preparation program and into their respective initial school workplaces in the state of Puebla in central Mexico. More specifically, the student teachers who are the participants in this study were enrolled in the program offered by the institution where I work as a teacher educator. Thus, this research is focused on exploring an empirical issue of importance in the researcher's own workplace context.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the thesis and its general guiding research questions. In brief, it presents the main focal points of the research, the relevance of the research and its place within the research area. The general organization of the research which involves three linked studies (section 1.2) and an outline of the whole thesis chapter by chapter is presented (section 1.6).

### **1.1 Importance of the research**

As already stated, there is little research on English language teacher beliefs and experiences in Mexico. This situation is especially the case in relation to graduating pre-service and beginning teachers. Research in this area can contribute to greater understanding of the influences, processes and experiences through which a Mexican English language teacher's beliefs may be formed as well as how they evolve or develop over time. In addition, it is important to gain insights on the impact that these dimensions of a teacher's formation may have on the actual teaching process. Previous studies have suggested that prior perspectives of self and teaching may be difficult to change during the time that pre-service teachers are enrolled in their teacher preparation programs

(Hollingsworth, 1989; Knowles, 1992). It is nevertheless worth investigating what these perspectives might consist of and how they might evolve at the micro-level of a teacher's personal experiences as they proceed through this phase of their professionalization. Moreover, it is valuable to look at the continuities and connections between pre-service beliefs and experiences and those that occur in the subsequent phase of movement into the first year of teaching. This research focus may contribute to bringing to the attention of teacher preparation programs in the area of English language teaching how important aspects of student-teacher beliefs can be woven into the content and delivery of such programs. It may for example show in what areas or dimensions of beliefs and experience there is a need to provide opportunities for student-teachers to examine explore or unpack their existing beliefs, and to reflect on them. It may also illuminate how these dimensions can be taken up by teacher educators in the context of their experiences during curricular courses and teaching practice in order to create greater understanding of the Mexican educational context of which they will eventually become a part.

## **1.2 Research focus**

The relevance of this research to my professional life developed from work as a practicum teacher at an English language teaching program in a public university in central Mexico, the Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla (henceforth BUAP). The approach to this research also corresponds to the aims of a professional doctorate which strives for its candidates to investigate issues of interest or note which arise from their workplaces. The research is thus directly workplace linked as it is tied into and intended to investigate an issue of empirical value in a context of the training and preparation of Mexican teachers of English. As a practicum supervisor in a teacher preparation program with 25 of years of experience, I have found that two main issues have attracted my attention. The first is my regular observation through visits to student-teachers' practicum classrooms that despite the focus on contemporary teaching principles adopted and taught in the teacher training

program, the Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas (henceforth LEMO) (see Chapter two) the practicum students seem to adhere to practices that reflect the traditional ways they were taught English themselves. The second was my curiosity to understand more about the experiences of the students from the program after they graduate and obtain their first job, as this knowledge could potentially have implications for the development of the LEMO practicum. More specifically, I was interested in researching student-teachers' beliefs and the experiences that influenced these beliefs as they undergo the transition from student to novice teacher. Understanding more about the development of teachers' beliefs and experiences from the pre-practicum stage through the practicum stage to the end of their first year as teachers would allow for valuable professional insights.

This research consists of three separate small-scale, but linked studies. The studies are longitudinal since they were carried out over a period of one year and a half in order to follow the participants through the different stages of their initial development as teachers. These studies will be reported on individually in chapters five, six and seven and linkages between the studies will be pointed out where relevant. The first study (Chapter five) focuses mainly on the beliefs about teaching of four pre-practicum students. The data for this study were collected through autobiographies of their English language learning experiences and a focus group interview. The data were coded using an open coding of salient issues present in the autobiographies. The second study (chapter six) reports on the beliefs and experiences of three of these same student teachers during their practicum term. The student teachers' teaching journals and personal interviews were the sources of data for this study. The data were coded through open coding to identify salient categories and themes and axial coding was used for the recognition of more specific patterns present in the data. The third study (Chapter seven) reports on the beliefs and experiences of two of these individuals in their role as first year teachers, narrated after they had completed their

school year. These teachers' participation in all three studies allowed for understanding of their perspectives across the whole period of their emergence as new teachers.

### **1.3 Research questions**

The three major research questions for the studies in this thesis were aimed at investigating salient issues of relevance across the three interrelated studies, primarily the participants' beliefs. It must be noted that each of the separate studies also contains its own research questions, which are presented in the pertinent chapters (see section 5.1.2; 6.1.4 and 7.1.2). The first general research question (GRQ1) aimed to research the beliefs of pre-service student-teachers. The second general research question (GRQ2) sought to investigate what changes, if any, occurred in the participants' beliefs as they transitioned from being pre-service student-teachers, to practicum students, and then to first year teachers. The third general research question (GRQ3) sought to explore how the participants' experiences during the initial stages of their development influenced their beliefs. Thus, the following research questions were posed for the studies as a whole.

GRQ1. What initial beliefs do pre-service and beginning students hold about being a teacher?

GRQ2. Do these beliefs evolve or change during the initial stages of their teacher development?

GRQ3. Do their experiences during the initial stages of the participants' development influence their previously established beliefs?

In addressing these questions, this thesis examines a series of narrative accounts by the participants (autobiographies, focus group interviews, teaching journals, interviews and a narrative account of the first year of teaching of two participants) which were collected over approximately 20 months as the participants began teaching. The responses to these

research questions as they emerged throughout the three studies carried out for this thesis are discussed in detail in the last chapter (Chapter eight).

#### **1.4 Overview of research methods**

To approach the three major research questions and to address the research issues that were the purpose of the studies this thesis was positioned within an interpretist epistemology (Oliver, 2004) which investigates humans, their perspectives, and their experiences located within their social contexts. Thus, the research is set within the qualitative research paradigm that concerns itself with data that are not quantifiable (Holliday, 2002; Richards, 2003; Dörnyei 2007). A broad overview of the overall methodological parameters, approaches and design of the three studies is presented in chapter ten, while the more specific procedures arising from the overall methodological framework are located in chapter five, six and seven. The data in each study were collected using narrative accounts (Creswell, 2005, Clandinin, 2007) from the students such as autobiographies (Golombek, 2009; Bailey, 1996), a focus group interview (Dörnyei, 2007) reflexive teaching journals (Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, 2001), personal interviews (Richards, 2003) and narrative accounts of the participants' first year as English language teachers (Farrell, 2009). An interpretive content analysis (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber, 1998; Oliver, 2004) was carried out in order to identify the salient issues present in the data. A process of open coding and a more detailed analysis through axial coding (Richards, 2003) was carried out in studies two and three in order to identify more specific issues present in the data. The studies were designed to be longitudinal as they followed the participants through different and sequential stages in their initial development as teachers: as student- teachers, practicum students and as first year novices.

## **1.5 Thesis description and organization**

This thesis is developed over eight chapters. This first chapter establishes the broad purpose and nature of the research, the importance and contribution of the research, the nature of the structure and design of the three studies making up the research, the research questions, the methodological framework within which the research is conducted and the description and organization of the thesis in general. Chapter two accounts for the contextual background in which the research is located and must be understood and evaluated. In this chapter the macro-context of the language teaching situation in Mexico and the micro-context of the university and program location in which the participants studied are set out. Chapter three proposes a review of the relevant literature. This review considers the major conceptual and theoretical frameworks underpinning the three studies and the way they were carried out. Chapter four considers the aims of the research, the justification of the methodology and its limitations, the description of the participants and procedures for data collection, the analysis procedures and the ethical considerations that were important to take into account. Chapter five presents the first study carried out by the researcher. In this chapter the beliefs about teaching in general and English language teaching in particular held by the participants before they started their teaching practicum are analysed. The data for this study were collected through autobiographies and a focus group interview. Chapter six comprises the second study carried out for this thesis. This study took place after the participants had finished their teaching practicum and was carried out through the analysis of their teaching journals and a personal interview with each of the participants. Chapter seven consists of the third study carried out for this thesis. In this study the narrative accounts of two of the participants during their experiences as first year teachers were analysed and discussed. In the concluding chapter eight the findings for the three studies are recapitulated; the contribution of the research is discussed, the limitations of the research are also presented and the possibilities for further research are posed.



## **1.6 Summary**

This chapter presented an introduction to the research, its purpose and the overall questions that guided the studies. The thesis is comprised of three small-scale but linked studies, which followed participants over a period of time that was a major transition in their professional development aspiring teachers. In addition to the involvement of the same participants, the studies are also linked by a major focus on the beliefs and experiences of the individuals concerned. A further linkage is the qualitative and narrative basis of the methodological framework and the data that were collected and analysed for all three studies.

The overall structure of the thesis was presented with the aim of creating an understanding of the way in which this research is constructed and how the discussion of the research proceeds. Through the presentation of the research questions (section 1.5) the underlying threads which weave the three interrelated studies into a common perspective are presented and discussed. The following chapter (Chapter two) presents the contextual background that sets out details of where the studies took place, which are essential to the understanding of the research presented in this thesis.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

My interest in this thesis, as previously mentioned, is to investigate the construction of non-native pre-service and novice teachers' beliefs about teaching over a period of time in the beginning stages of their preparation as teachers. In this chapter, a description of the context for this study is presented. The first part of this chapter deals with the "macro-context" of English language teaching in Mexico and the development of professionalization programs for English language teachers. Then, the "micro-context" is described; including the background where the three studies that make up this thesis took place. It is relevant to know about the type of institution, the program and the students in order to understand the development of the studies and how participants' views are located in a particular context.

#### **2.2 Language teaching in Mexico: Macro context**

The Mexican education system is going through a process of reform and change in order to meet international educational standards. It has had to establish improvement in different fields in order to face up to the demands of the globalized world. One of the areas which has gained major importance is the teaching of the English language at all levels of education in order prepare individuals, in all areas of work, to have a functional use of the language. This demand for English language proficiency has resulted in Mexican universities developing professional teacher preparation programs.

In the 1980's, there was an awareness among language teachers in public universities of the lack of university programs that catered to the academic needs of language teachers in Mexico. Professional associations such as AMMLEX (Asociación Mexicana de Maestros

de Lenguas Extranjeras) and MEXTESOL (Asociación Mexicana de Maestros de Inglés), among others, were taking a stand about the need to develop programs within the Mexican universities in order to start degree programs in this field (Brenes, 1990, p. 81). This development has gone on for the past 25 years and today in Mexico there are 20 public universities which offer undergraduate degree programs in the teaching of English as a foreign language and nine of these institutions offer masters' programs in the teaching of English or applied linguistics (Ramirez, 2007). Public universities are government and state funded institutions and there is one in each of the 32 states which constitute the Mexican republic. The creation of these programs caters to the public demand for professionals in English language teaching so that they can be competitive nationally and internationally. Several private universities offer this career option as well.

The public university programs are not the only programs which offer degrees in the teaching of English. There also the Escuelas Normal Superior. These schools are government funded institutes of higher education which prepare teachers for secondary and "preparatoria" (tertiary) schools. These levels are the only levels where English is a compulsory course in the Mexican public school system at this time. Currently, at most private schools, English is taught from primary school onwards. There is, however, a project underway to incorporate the teaching of English at public primary school level in the near future (Encinas, Coordinator Masters Program in the Teaching of English Language Faculty-BUAP, personal communication February, 24th 2009). The preparation of English language teachers in these government schools which are administered by the Secretaría de Educación Pública- SEP (Ministry of Education) has been going on since 1945 and its programs have undergone numerous changes and updates since then (Orozco,1979). Besides the Escuelas Normal Superior, there are private language institutes which offer teacher training courses and programs for those instructors who teach English in language institutes or as free-lance teachers or tutors.

Since the creation of all these teacher training programs is fairly recent, the Mexican government through the Programa de Mejoramiento del Profesorado-PROMEP (Academic Improvement Program) has also focused on strengthening the academic infrastructure and qualifications of those teaching at the university level. It has supported its English language teachers and teacher educators at university level to attend Bachelors and Masters programs offered by British or US universities as full time students or through semi-present (University of Arkansas, USA, Columbia University, USA and Warwick, UK) and distance mode (King's College, and Aston University, UK) (Busseniers and Encinas, 2003). In addition it has offered scholarships for enrolment in doctorate programs (Christ Church Canterbury and Lancaster University, UK; Macquarie University, Australia and the University of Camagüey, Cuba). PROMEP also provides for financial support for teachers who want to continue with Masters degrees at the levels of Escuela Normal Superior at a national level. The scholarships which are awarded provide for tuition and expenses during the time they are in the program. In this way PROMEP is seeking to improve educational standards and to promote research among its teachers at all levels and areas of education.

In the following section, I describe the specific university institution within the overall context of the Mexican educational situation where the three studies in this thesis took place.

### **2.2.1 The institution, its nature and history: Micro context**

The BUAP is a public and autonomous university, the largest in the state of Puebla whose history dates back four centuries. Over this period, each of the names which the university has had, Colegio de la Compañía de Jesús de San Jerónimo (1578-1790), Colegio Carolino (1790-1820), Real Colegio del Espíritu Santo (1820-1821), Imperial Colegio (1821-1825), Colegio del Estado (1825-1937), Universidad de Puebla (1937-1956), Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (1956-1987), Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (1987 up

to date) represents the historical and political paths of service to society which the university has taken (Brenes,1990). The university has constantly been concerned with science and culture and is closely bound to meeting the best interests of Puebla and Mexico (BUAP, 2006). In Puebla State there are 20 universities of which the BUAP is the most important and it is the third university in size and importance in Mexico. “It is renowned for its academic quality, its programs, its institutional development and its integral vision in its development” (ANUIES, 2006- translated by M. Brenes). The BUAP has 55 career choices in 23 faculties. However, it does not have a School of Education, and therefore, the five programs which offer teaching components are offered by the faculties to which the particular program belongs. In the case of language teaching for example, teaching programs are offered by the Language Faculty at the BUAP.

As previously mentioned, the BUAP is a public university and it is the third largest university in the country. The students who attend the university are, in general, monolingual (Spanish) from low to middle socio-economic class. The students not only come from all over the state of Puebla, but also, from the neighbouring states of Tlaxcala, Morelos, Oaxaca, Hidalgo and the southern state of Chiapas.

Mexico, being a border country with the United States and looking forward towards acceptance from the international business and educational communities, has been under international educational evaluation. The international evaluations from institutions like UNESCO have been unfavourable to the Mexican educational system (Valdes, 2008). The recommendations from bodies such as UNESCO about development of the Mexican educational system towards an education which provides greater involvement of students, teachers and society alike, has moved the BUAP to analyze its educational quality and achievement . As a result at present, the BUAP is going through a period of philosophical and educational change and there is proposal for all of the faculties in the university to

revise their programs according to new educational and theoretical trends such as constructivist education, learning for life and the return to a more ethical and value-driven education. Accordingly, the BUAP has established a master plan for the university, which responds to national and international educational policies, called the Modelo Universitario Minerva (MUM). The educational theory which drives the MUM is socio-constructivism. The premise of this theory is, according to Glasersfeld (1989, p. 182), that “knowledge is not passively received but actively built up by the cognizing subject”. This concept stresses that the acquisition of knowledge of a given nature is achieved through the participation of the students in group activities which will lead them to construct an understanding of the topics which are being dealt with in class (Brunner, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1950). This is a movement away from passive teacher-centred classes and towards a more participative student involvement of students in their own education. The main characteristic of the MUM is that the plan calls for an academic preparation of all students which will help them become socially committed, critical and creative thinkers, and autonomous learners ([www.minerva.buap.mx](http://www.minerva.buap.mx)). For this reason, the educational programs which the BUAP offers at all levels have been revised in order to cater to the demands of the plan incorporating constructivist teaching methodologies along with the teaching of human values and ethics in all the programs and course syllabi in the University by the fall, 2009 term (BUAP, 2007, p. 42).

### **2.3 Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas**

The Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas (henceforth LEMO) within which the research studies in this thesis are conducted is an undergraduate program in the Language Faculty at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP) in Puebla, Mexico. The LEMO offers four career choices: 1) Teaching of French, 2) Translation French-Spanish, 3) Teaching of English and 4) Translation English-Spanish. The LEMO’s mission is “to train language specialization professionals who are highly proficient (French or English),

critical, and with a high sense of humanism and ethics” (PIFI, 2002, p. 4. Translated by M. Brenes). The LEMO aims to prepare professionals with solid theoretical-practical knowledge, thus, allowing for individual development in the areas of teaching or translation which enables its graduates to become incorporated into their field of work and to respond to the demands of the process of globalization” (PIFI 2.0, 2002, p. 4. Translated by M. Brenes).

### **2.3.1 History and nature of the program**

In 1984, the Faculty of Humanities (*Filosofía y Letras*) at BUAP opened a major in the teaching of foreign languages, the *Licenciatura en la Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras* (henceforth LELE). This was one of the first programs of its kind which catered to the professionalization of the teaching of French and English in Mexico. During the past twenty-four years, the program LELE (1984-1991) / LEMO (1992, 1995, and 2002) has provided the preparation of foreign language teachers. As of 1992, the program changed its name to *Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas* (LEMO) because the program would offer not only a major in teaching, but also, a major in translation of English or French (which actually opened in 1995).

In 1995, the LEMO which is a BA program, program left the Faculty of Humanities and joined the Language Department. Up to the year 1995, the Language Department had consisted of the CELE (Centro de Lenguas Extranjeras) where general language courses are taught to the university community, Seasonal Courses which are foreign language courses for children and adults offered to the general public and the TCU (Tronco Común Universitario) which teach the common core English and French courses which are compulsory courses for all the majors at the BUAP. The previously mentioned these programs along with the LEMO program became the Language School.

The LEMO program underwent a curricular evaluation and minor changes in its courses from general linguistics to more specialized courses in teaching and translation in 1995. Academic credit value was also added to each course following a general University policy which would provide for the possibility for Mexican students to participate in foreign exchange programs as well as for foreign students to study at the BUAP. In the year 2002, again with the objective of modernizing institutional policies, the university underwent new curricular changes and so did the LEMO program.

As well as offering pre-service courses (LEMO), in the year 2000, the Language School also began an open BA program for in-service English Language teachers (*Licenciatura Abierta en la Enseñanza del Inglés*). This three- year program caters to in-service English language teachers from Puebla and other states in the vicinity, as it is a one of a kind program for the region designed to strengthen the language teaching programs offered in Puebla. The teachers who study in this program have on-site sessions twice a month and distance components for each course. The aims of this program are quite different in terms of preparation from the LEMO program because these students already have English language proficiency and at least three years teaching experience. In the year 2005, the Language School opened a Master's program in the Teaching of English and became the Language Faculty (*Facultad de Lenguas*). This program responds to new national educational requirements that all teachers should have as a minimum a master's degree in their area of specialization in order to teach at tertiary and university level. While this study is concerned only with the pre-service program of the *Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas*, it is worth setting the context of the study within the range of programs offered by the Language Faculty in order to present the situation where this research takes place.



### **2.3.2 Structure of the LEMO Program**

The LEMO program, which is the setting for the studies in this thesis, is a five year pre-service teacher education program at the BUAP. The LEMO has four main areas: 1) Teaching of English 2) Teaching of French 3) Translation of English to Spanish 4) Translation of French to Spanish. The research conducted for this thesis is only concerned with students from the English language teaching area. Each area of the program consists of 56 courses. Of these courses, 12 are taught in Spanish (common courses for all the areas), 41 in English (or French according to the major). Four are additional foreign language courses (English for French majors or French for English majors) and there is one Latin course for teachers and two Latin courses for translators. The school year is divided into three quarters; spring, summer and fall terms. Students take an average of six courses per term (spring and fall). During summer, they may only take only two courses because the summer courses are intensive. The students have a curricular map (Appendix A) which suggests the order and requisites for their courses. The map also suggests which courses are offered during each term so that the students are able to make adequate choices regarding their courses in order to finish the program in the five years allotted.

The content courses in the program for students aiming to be English language teachers are taught in English and are concentrated in the following areas: a) language (there are eight English language courses because the program accepts students with little or no level of English language proficiency), literature and culture, b) linguistics (general linguistics and applied linguistics), c) teaching (didactics, methodology, evaluation, curriculum design, materials design and practicum courses), d) research and e) electives (not pre-established) which are offered according to the student's areas of interest. There are also 13 core courses during the first two terms in the program which are taught in Spanish while the students are learning English (Appendix A). The students are required to take all fifty-six courses and to pass the institutional TOEFL test with a minimum of 550 points. According

to institutional policies, which promote an increase in graduation indicators, students from all the career majors at the BUAP who have an 8.5 average or above may choose whether to write a thesis or not and students who have an 8.4 or lower average are required to write a thesis. The thesis is written in English and is presented and defended in English.

This research is focused on participants in the pre-practice term, the practice term and as first year teachers. The first practicum course Reflective Supervised Practice provides for practice in microteaching settings with peers. Students receive information about teaching skills for English language teachers and practice using these skills. The second practicum course called Professional Experience is a course where students actually go out and practice their teaching skills in actual classroom situations. During the teaching practicum the students are responsible for teaching two hours a week under supervised conditions with the guidance of a supervisor and the classroom mentor. Students are required to follow the general course outline of the mentor. Among the requirements for the course the students are expected to prepare their classes and present lesson plans and materials for each lesson which they teach. After they teach, they are required to keep a reflective journal about their daily teaching for commenting on with the supervisor in post teaching sessions. In study one; the students were in the Reflective Supervised Practice course. In study two, the students had finishes their Professional Experience Course.

### **2.3.3 Course syllabus, assessment, and evaluation practices**

At the LEMO, the syllabi for the courses are developed by groups of teachers with expertise in the topic area of the course. These syllabi are registered in the SEP (the national Ministry of Education) and can only be modified by 20% for the sake of updating content. The career programs and course syllabi can be modified or changed every five years according to government regulations. It is worth mentioning that the teachers at the BUAP are required to cover the topics in the course syllabus, but the means of instruction

and the assessment practices are up to the teacher's personal criteria. Thus, there are no pre-specified assessment procedures for the specific courses in the program. Assessment practices are usually determined by teachers who teach the same courses and agree on the type of assessment for the sake of unifying the criteria on a certain course. The assessment practices usually consist of tests, oral presentations on topics, classroom demonstrations, essays and term papers. Over the years, there have been attempts to implement departmental exams, particularly in the basic and intermediate English language courses; however, they have not been successful because the teachers are autonomous in their classrooms and they may choose another form of assessment besides the departmental exams. The students who are studying in the English language teaching program area usually take the Institutional TOEFL test in order to comply with requirements for teacher-practicum, graduation, scholarships or exchange programs. This accreditation of the language is a requirement at the LEMO, but in recent times many employers ask for this test as a requirement for job application.

Every term, the teachers are evaluated by the students by means of an institutional evaluation format which inquires about the teachers' teaching practices, classroom management skills, use of technology, evaluation criteria, punctuality and other personality traits. These evaluations are used in order to create awareness in the teachers about their strengths and areas which need improvement in their specific teaching situation. These evaluations are personal and handled individually and they do not have a direct implication on the work situation of the teacher. However, they are used as statistical markers of the teaching quality situation of the university as a whole.

#### **2.3.4 Teaching practicum**

One of the most significant courses in the development of beginning teachers is their teaching practicum course. The basic aim is for practicum students to have a more reflective approach to their teacher education (Schön, 1983; Wallace, 1991) in addition to a clinical mode of supervision of the teaching practicum process. Since 1999, the practicum teachers agreed to unify their criteria and to have a further organized supervision process which still holds today.

The structure of the process consists of a) pre observation session: students and supervisors meet to discuss lesson plans and materials to be used during teaching, b) the observation of the student while teaching, c) a post observation session : feedback is given on strengths and areas that need attention or development. For the observation of the class, the supervisor and mentor use an observation checklist that has been previously agreed upon by most of the practicum supervisors. (Appendix B). This observation checklist serves as a guide for mentors and supervisors to identify points for discussion in the post observation session. The checklist is also used as part of the evaluation criteria for the students' final grade. It is pertinent to comment that the use of the checklist is not compulsory by most of the supervisors and mentors find it helpful, as previously mentioned, for feedback sessions and part of the evaluation of the practicum students.

The student-teachers must find a place to do their practicum because the university does not have agreements with any of the educational institutions near the university or elsewhere. Arrangements for mentoring and supervision are carried out on a personal base among the student, the mentor and the supervisor. It must be pointed out that the groups in the LEMO are large 20-30 students; therefore, there are times when the supervisor must rely on video recordings of the practicum students in order to be able to observe them more frequently.

## **2.4 The student body and teachers**

The student body at the LEMO consists of 1,245 students. Of these students 1,084 are studying to become English language teachers, 69 students are preparing to be French language teachers, 60 students are training to become English-Spanish translators and 40 students are enrolled to be French-Spanish translators. Most of the students enter the LEMO with little or no knowledge of the target language (English or French). As previously mentioned the majority of the students are from middle to low income status families.

In relation to the LEMO teaching staff, there is a total of 103 teachers, and of these, 81 are teachers of English. The range of experience, which these teachers possess, spans five years to 30 years of teaching. All of the English language teachers have degrees in the teaching of English. The teachers of the English area at the LEMO have the following profile: two have a doctorate in Applied Linguistics, 43 a master's degree (TESOL, Applied Linguistics, Linguistics and Education) and the rest of the teachers (36) have BAs in the teaching of English, and most of them are pursuing graduate studies. At present, seven teachers are enrolled in doctorate programs in Applied Linguistics and three teachers are enrolled in a doctorate program in Education. Apart from teaching the language, these teachers also teach content courses through the medium of English (that is, courses which are not language courses e.g. semantics, language teaching methodology, history and evolution of the English language, testing, among others).

## **2.5 The alumni of the LEMO program**

As previously mentioned in Mexico and particularly in Puebla there is a great demand for English language teachers. Once students graduate, they must look individually for jobs. There are no institutional programs which provide for contracting new teachers with other institutions. Students from Puebla usually find jobs in Puebla and students from outside of

Puebla try to return to their hometowns to find a job. Nevertheless, teaching jobs are usually paid better in the city and this sometimes causes students to stay in Puebla if they find a good job opportunity. According to a survey conducted by Quality Center Test Survey in 2004, approximately 88% of the alumni from the LEMO's English teaching program work as teachers. The job opportunities range from kindergarten to university level according to the alumni's experience and language proficiency. Many of the graduates also work in language institutes and as free-lance language tutors. As explained, in public schools, English is a compulsory course in the secondary and tertiary levels. Graduates from university programs may not work in these schools because the positions are reserved by the government for graduates from the Escuelas Normal Superior (section 2.2) Nonetheless, there are many job opportunities for LEMO alumni.

In this thesis, the three studies presented are linked (see Chapter one). The contextual background presented in this Chapter is common to each of the persons which participated in studies (Chapters five, six and seven). The third study deals with two of the teachers who also participated in study one and two in their first year as teachers. Little information was supplied about the actual work place of the students. For one participant (Anita), her work place was a private secondary all girl school in a rural area in the state of Morelos (central Mexico). In this school, English is a compulsory course and follows the national program for secondary schools. The town where this participant worked was her hometown as she returned home after graduation. The other participant in study three (Reina) did not go back home but stayed in Puebla where she found a job in a small private school in the city of Puebla. She worked at a kindergarten level where English courses are offered as an additional course to the government program.

## **2.6 Summary**

This chapter presented the contextual background where the studies presented in chapters five, six and seven took place. The studies were linked by the participants and precisely by their context in a university program that prepares teachers of English as a foreign language. The macro-context of language teaching in Mexico and the micro-context of the LEMO-BUAP served as a basis for the development of these studies. The following chapter (Chapter three) presents a review of related literature to the studies that set the theoretical framework for the development and understanding of the studies presented in this thesis.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a broad review of the literature that frames the three studies in this thesis. In each of the chapters reporting the individual studies (Chapter four to six), literature directly relevant to those studies is also presented. Thus, this review acts as a preliminary overview of the literature on the topic of the research. The main aim of this study is to explore the beliefs and experiences of a small group of teachers who are transitioning from their pre-service training into the first year of teaching. Thus, the following literature review focuses on the areas of teacher education relevant to the scope of the studies that are pre-service teachers, the teaching practicum (practicum experience / teacher experience), the first year teaching experience and teacher beliefs. Available literature on English language teaching in Mexico is scarce, and especially so in relation to beginning teachers, as few studies of this type have been conducted in this context. Nevertheless, at an international level, the literature on the topics for the study is much more extensive.

#### **3.2 Pre-service teachers**

The pre-service student-teacher is an individual who is in the preparation stage of academic development as a teacher. Mann (2005, p.105) states that initial teacher preparation is a necessary step of development for professionals which has as an objective to assist future teachers in their “possible pedagogic choices and teaching strategies, L2 methods, course design and course book materials”. At this stage in their professional development, it is most likely that student-teachers have little or no experience of teaching. In this sense, Mann also states that this phase in preparation may provide future teachers with the “stability and security” which new teachers will need to be able to carry out their



first encounters in the language classrooms. According to Richards (2008a, p.166) teacher education programs may be considered to be “the start of a teachers’ professional development” even though during their lifetime teachers continue to develop through experience, by working with colleagues and experiencing other “school based” activities.

However, it has also been proposed that becoming a teacher begins long before students in teacher preparation program encounter their first teaching experience. Lortie (1975), Bailey, Berthgold, Braunstein, Jagodzinski, Fleischman, Holbrook, Waissbluth, & Zambo, (1996); Borg (2004, 2005); Borg (2009) have suggested that teachers have already experienced an extensive “apprenticeship of observation” where students have been in direct contact with the profession for many thousands of hours before they finish high school. It can be said that the teaching profession is one of the few professions that students know about through direct contact before they enter their teacher preparation programs. Although this could be considered as an asset for the student-teachers it may also be a distinct disadvantage. According to Borg (2005, p.1) “teacher trainees bring a variety of often conflicting experiences, beliefs and goals to the process of learning to teach”. This may lead to conflicts between the students’ perceptions and the information that they are acquiring in their teacher preparation programs. According to Kennedy (1999, p. 57)

An important role of pre-service teacher education is to foster and shift thinking. It is located squarely between teachers’ past experiences as students in classrooms and their future experience as teachers in classrooms. From their experiences, teachers develop the ideas that will guide their future practices.

Thus, it is generally seen as the responsibility of teacher preparation programs to try to provide “significant learning experiences” where the “process and the outcome” (Fink, 2003, p. 6) for these shifts in thinking can occur. Student-teachers need opportunities to be

able to experience first-hand the intrinsic circumstances under which English language teaching takes place with the purpose of creating a space for reflection on teaching.

### **3.3 The practicum**

In most teacher education programs, the practicum course forms the core of the introduction of the pre-service teacher to the classroom experience. The preparations provided for teaching during their language teacher preparation program all lead towards the practicum. It is the practicum that first tests out the application of the pre-service teacher's skills in the classroom situation. According to Gebhard (2009, p. 252) "offering the kind of school based experiences within in teacher education curriculum that can help teacher-learners to make the transition from their academic program to the realities of teaching in a school is an important consideration for language teacher educators". The process of undertaking the pre-service teaching practicum is therefore of central importance in the professional development of a student-teacher. However, surprisingly the extent of research on the practicum in the field of language teaching is relatively limited (Bailey, 2006; Crookes, 2003; Gebhard, 1990; Golombek, 2009; Johnson, 1996; Richards and Crookes, 1998).

According to Richards (2003, p. xi)

While the practicum is considered a core course in most TESOL education programs, compared to many other areas of professional theory and activity it has received relatively little serious study, in terms of conceptual orientation, content, or practice.

As in other contexts, the significance of the teaching practicum as the conjunction of putting theory into practice as the result of teacher education programs is given considerable importance in Mexico. It is seen as the culmination of the future teacher as a student and the initiation of a future teacher into the professional world. The teaching practicum is also thought to be one of the most relevant events in learning to teach by pre-service teachers,

even though as Johnson (1996) suggests, as an initial encounter, it is only the first experience in the developmental cycle of a teacher's life.

In most universities, the teaching practicum is a curricular course where the student-teachers are given the opportunity to put into to practice, in a realistic setting that may be external to the campus, the application of the theory that they have learned in the education program that they are following. In most traditional undergraduate programs the teaching practicum is usually placed at the end of the program (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust and Schulman, 2005), as it is considered that by this time in their development as future teachers, the student-teachers have acquired sufficient theoretical knowledge to be able to undergo the practical component of the profession. Nonetheless, "learning in practice does not just happen on its own...it is important to recognize that practice alone does not make perfect, or even good, performance. Opportunities to connect practice to expert knowledge must be built into learning experiences for teachers" (Darling-Hammond, et. al. 2005, p. 402).

It is in the sense outlined by these authors, that most practicum components are built into English language teaching programs in the Mexican context, that is they occur towards the end of the program of studies. In addition, in the period leading up to the practicum, opportunities for practical learning experience are built in. As noted by Crookes (2003, p. 4), "there is not enough time in a practicum ... to do all the teacher development that might be desirable". Therefore, most programs must implement other components to assure that student-teachers are offered realistic possibilities to practice analyze and reflect on the process of teaching and the issues that surround this process. Hence, before entering the actual practicum phase of professional development, student-teachers usually undergo a microteaching component. According to Wallace (1991, p. 91) "microteaching engages in activities that involve teaching short lessons exemplifying certain skills...microteaching can

almost be a classic example of ‘safe’ experimentation in the gradual development of expertise” and eventually creates an awareness of what may go on in actual classroom situations.

Richards (1998, p. 20) suggests that microteaching follows a

...training-based view of teaching... built on the assumption that teaching can be broken down into individual skills that can be isolated and practiced individually... [*even so,*] microteaching activities can be used to provide different kinds of teaching experiences, which can be used as a basis for analysis and reflection.

The microteaching components that have been built in to the English language teaching programs in Mexico tend to follow the training-based view, as mentioned by Richards, because students usually put into practice a pre-determined set of skills under artificial circumstances (e.g. as part of a course with their peers as “students”). Nevertheless, as commented on by Richards, these experiences do serve as examples for examination and consideration of important aspects of teaching that may arise during these types of teaching situations. The microteaching components that have been built in to most teacher preparation programs in Mexico help student-teachers prepare for their actual practical experience with teaching.

In relation to the function and purpose of the practicum as a whole Schlechty (1990, p. 29) suggests that the practical part of the practicum can be considered as an “induction or an introduction of the student-teacher into the community of teaching”. For student-teachers in Mexico, the practicum course is indeed a major aspect of their initiation into their language teaching career. Richards (2008b, p. 3.) agrees with this stance offered by Schlechty, but he goes beyond it when he also suggests that “becoming an English language teacher means becoming a part of a world wide community of professionals with shared goals, values,

discourse and practices but one with a self critical view of its own practices and a commitment to a transformative approach to its own role”.

Arioğul (2007, p. 1) in his research on “understanding foreign language teachers’ practical knowledge”, discussed that “language teachers are influenced by three background sources: teachers’ prior language learning experiences, prior teaching experiences and professional course work in pre- and in-service education”. At this stage of their professional development, Mexican student-teachers are unlikely to have developed previous teaching experiences. Therefore, it is predictable that practicum students in the Mexican context will have a tendency to rely on their experiences as language learners as well as their experiences of the professional courses offered through their university classes as the basis for their entry into the practicum.

#### **3.4 The first year teaching experience**

Towards the end of the last decade, Richards and Pennington (1998) noted that the experiences of novice English language teachers had not been widely studied. However, more recently a body of studies has developed (Farrell, 2003, 2006a; Freeman and Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 1996) that focus on the intrinsic issues of the nature of the experience of first year language teachers. The first year of teaching for novice teachers is a critical period of transition from being a student of teaching to becoming a teaching professional. According to Farrell (2006b, p. 212) existing teacher preparation programs “cannot hope to account for all the different types of settings and conditions beginning teachers will inevitably encounter”. Thus, the transition often proves to be very difficult for first year teachers and challenges them in a variety of sometimes unanticipated ways. Moreover, “many teacher educators, teachers, students, administrators and even novice teachers themselves assume that once novice teachers have graduated they will be able to apply what they have learned in teacher preparation programs during the first year” (Farrell, 2009, p.1). In many cases,

this assumption is challenged by the fact that inevitably first year teachers are simply not sufficiently familiar with their new work environment for smooth applications of their training to occur.

Most teacher education programs rely on classroom observations and, as noted above, simulations such as microteaching. These training strategies are generally conducted in a supportive and collaborative context where the participant does not have the ultimate responsibility for maintaining and delivering the teaching process. For most novice teachers the reality of being projected into having their own classroom and students for whom they are responsible on a daily basis leads to a situation that inevitably produces much greater levels of stress. According to Veeman (1984, p.143) first year students are confronted with a “reality shock” when entering their actual and ongoing teaching situation. The first year of teaching also proves to be complicated conceptually because, typically, the teaching practices that are taught and discussed in pre-teacher education programs are what could be considered as a teaching abstraction. In other words, they do not coincide with the realities of the actual teaching situations with which novice first year teachers are confronted (Richards and Pennington, 1998). This tension may be the cause of considerable anxiety, particularly when the teaching outcomes are not the expected or idealized ones.

Because of these various factors and the tension between pre-service teacher training and the realities of the classroom, Huberman (1989, p. 33) suggests that the initial phase in the life a teacher can be referred to as a “survival phase”, During this phase novice teachers are more likely to be concerned about themselves and their performance than the actual learning of their students. Similarly, Farrell (2003, p. 96) comments on the survival stage as seeing “the beginning teacher reacting to the reality shock of the classroom and feeling overwhelmed by the complexity of the classroom”. Farrell (2006b) further comments on this issue in another study where he states that “... the ideals that the beginning teacher formed during teacher

training are replaced by the reality of school life where much of their energy is often transferred to learning how to survive in a new school culture” (p. 212) rather than developing their skills as teachers. On the other hand, and more positively, Huberman (1989, p. 33) also sees this initial phase as a “discovery phase” of being responsible for students, working with colleagues and coming to terms with actual work situations. In this phase all is new. The novice teachers are discovering who they are as teachers and what their role is in within the community of their new school.

In contrast to these survival experiences, up to the time of their first teaching job, most of the beginning teachers’ experience has evolved under controlled circumstances. Typically, the control and structure of pre-service training is removed in the first year and, as Calderhead (1992 in Farrell, 2003, p. 95) points out, “teachers in their first years have special needs and interests that are different from their more experienced colleagues”. In most teaching contexts, and Mexico is no exception, it is common that first year teachers are “caught off guard and left to sink or swim in schools that do not provide adequate individualized support for the difficulties encountered in their first year” (Greenlee and Dedeugd, 2002, p. 64). This situation is widespread and in most schools novice teachers may have little or no support of the type that Calderhead highlights as important for them.

### **3.5 Teacher beliefs**

Beliefs can be described as the mental acceptance and personal conviction of claims as true. Dilts (1999) and Richardson (1996) consider beliefs to be thoughts, assertions, propositions, judgments or evaluations that are made about ourselves, others and the world around us that are felt to be true. Beliefs have also been defined “as judgements or evaluations that we make about ourselves, about others, and about the world around us” (Lloyd Yero, 2001, p.1). Beliefs can be considered to be a valuable psychological construct in teacher education (Pintrich, 1990) because as M .Borg, M. (2001) suggests there is a

strong relationship between beliefs and behaviour because “beliefs dispose or guide people’s thinking and actions” (p. 186). Researchers agree (Bailey et.al, 1996; Pajares, 1992; Freeman, 1994; Richardson, 1996) that teachers’ beliefs are a driving force in teachers’ classroom practice, lesson preparation and teaching choices. However defining teacher beliefs is complex. According to Pajares (1992)

“...defining beliefs is at best a game of player’s choice. They travel in disguise and often under alias—attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertories of understanding, and social strategy, to name but a few that can be found in the literature” (p.309).

Pajares (1992, p.316) notes that clearly defining the concept of belief is difficult because it is “broad and encompassing”. Nevertheless, Kagan (1991, p.66) attempts to give a general definition of teacher beliefs, commenting that “teacher belief is defined broadly as tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms, and the academic material to be taught”, although “the individual holding it [*the belief*] may recognize that alternative beliefs may be held by others” (Borg, M.,2001, p.186). The realm of the beliefs about teaching that teachers hold when they enter teaching has basically been developed during their lives as students from the time of their initial education in conjunction with their particular life experiences. Pajares (1992) comments that by the time future teachers enter the university their beliefs about teaching have been well established. Gutierrez-Almaraza (1996) mentions that student-teachers’ experiences as language learners themselves also permeate their beliefs and practices as teachers. There has been a growing interest in the investigation of language teachers’ beliefs (e.g. Burns, 1992; Woods ,1996) because understanding teachers’ beliefs is considered as central to the understanding of teachers’ behaviors and professional practices.



For the purposes of this thesis and following key writers in this field, teacher beliefs can be considered as ideas that teachers possess regarding their understanding of the world, their work, their students, the subjects they teach their professional preparation, and their roles as teachers within a given context that they take into the classroom and that have developed during their lifetime (Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996; Richards, 1998; Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Borg, S. 2006). Beliefs not only deal with how teachers think things are, but also, how they think things should be (Linde, 1980).

In the past 17 years or so, research in the area of English language teacher cognition, “what teachers think, know and believe - and its relationship to teacher’s classroom practices” (Borg, 2006, p.1), has merited the attention of many researchers in the field e.g. Johnson, 1992, 1994; Richards, Tung & Ng, 1992; Burns, 1992, 1996; Borg, 1998, 2006; Golombek, 1998; Breen and Hird, Milton, Oliver & Thwaite, 2001. Borg (2009, p.165) states that “teacher cognition research, by providing insights into teachers’ mental lives and into the complex ways in which these relate to teachers’ classroom practices, has made a significant contribution to our understandings of the processes of becoming, being and developing professionally as a teacher”. However, in this area of research, there are still several issues that should be highlighted.

The first point is that initially teachers’ beliefs come largely from their experiences as learners, or what Lortie (1975) called the “apprenticeship of observation”. Bailey et al. (1996) suggest language teachers are considerably influenced by observed behaviours from their own classroom experiences and that they internalize them and make them theirs through out their years as students. Kagan (1992), Pajares (1992) and Richardson (1996) also agree that beliefs about teaching and learning have been established by student teachers before they enter their teacher preparation programs. Another issue is that there is a gap between the reality of teaching and beginner teacher beliefs about teaching. This gap exists

“between two powerful forces — previous life history, particularly which related to being a student and classroom experience as student teacher and teacher” (Richardson 1996, p.113). This gap is brought upon the student-teacher by that fact that they are lacking necessary experience to test out their beliefs about students and teaching and make connections with their reality (Almarza, 1996). According to Richardson (1996, p.113) “The beliefs that they [*student-teachers*] hold when they enter their program have not been tested in the classroom”. Still another pertinent issue is that teaching experiences either reaffirm or change beliefs. Hampton (1994) indicates that even though a number of the central beliefs held by teachers are amendable others are “impermeable and difficult or impossible to change” (p.129) because of the intrinsic value of beliefs as influenced by individual and professional events in an individuals’ life and thus, even though teachers’ beliefs may be shared, they are usually developed individually.

Grossman, Wilson, and Shulman (1989, p.27) propose that “teachers’ beliefs about the subject matter, including orientation toward the subject matter, contribute to ways in which teachers think about their subject matter and the choices they make in their teaching”. This proposal is especially true for beginning teachers who may come into the classroom to experiment with and use their preconceived ideas about how to go about their teaching. At this point in their careers, these ideas are inevitably in the abstract as they have little practical experience on which to base them. As these authors add, “teachers’ belief systems are founded on the goals, values, and beliefs teachers holds in relation to the content and process of teaching, and the systems in which they work and their roles within it” (p.30). It is through their experience that novice teachers will ratify or rectify what they believe is the best way to go about teaching according to the circumstances in which they find themselves. The relevance of the notion of teachers’ beliefs in this study lies in the issue that “the thinking and beliefs teachers hold are fundamental in motivating classroom

interactions” (Burns, 1996, p.154). It is necessary to be aware of teachers’ beliefs when researching their views of what they do in the classroom.

### **3.6 Summary**

This chapter has presented a brief and broad overview of the literature related to the topics that are further discussed in the studies in chapters five, six and seven. It has covered some of the body of work that is central to the core issues investigated in these three studies. As previously mentioned, the literature pertaining to these studies is extended through the accounts of each individual study. The purpose of this current review was to lay out the research landscape broadly and to provide a preliminary theoretical and conceptual framework for the research.

In chapter four that now follows a similar approach is taken. The chapter outlines the general nature, scope and design of the methodology taken across all three studies as a way of over viewing the studies as a whole. In each of the three chapters where study one, two and three are presented, the particular methodology employed for that study is then presented.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The studies in this dissertation are designed to examine pre-service and first year teachers' beliefs and experiences about teaching. The main purpose of this investigation was to gain an in depth understanding of past educational experiences in learning English and the meaning that these participants made of these experiences in their actual teaching. Data were collected from the participants before they began their teaching practicum, after finishing their teaching practicum and after their first year as teachers. As noted in chapter one, three thematically related research studies were carried out in order to become aware of the participants' beliefs about teaching and eventual changes in their perceptions and feelings about teaching. The first study and the second study were carried out while the participants were in their pre-service training stage. Study one was carried out before the students started their language teaching practicum. The second study was carried out after the pre-service teachers had finished their practicum course. The third study was carried out with the information from two beginning teachers after their first year of teaching.

In this chapter, the overall approach to the methodology used for all three studies is presented. The specific details for the design of each study will be contained in the chapters that describe each of them. In these chapters, details are provided about issues concerning the justification of the methodology and the epistemological stance. The limitations of the methodology are also discussed. Issues regarding narrative inquiry as a method for data collection are presented as well as information about the participants. Procedures for data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations are also presented.

#### **4.1.1 Aims**

Being a teacher in the teaching area of the LEMO (Chapter two), I have observed that the student-teachers in the program experience numerous problems between what they have been taught and what they actually do in the classroom. Mentors often complain that students-teachers do not understand the reality of teaching and student-teachers are not aware of the different types of contexts where English language teaching actually occurs in Mexico. These perceptions drove me to develop the following aims which guide this inquiry as a whole:

1. To identify initial beliefs which pre-service students and beginning teachers hold about being a teacher
2. To explore whether the initial beliefs of pre-service students and beginning teachers evolve or change during the early stages of their teacher development
3. To recognize whether the experiences during the initial stages of pre-service students' and beginning teachers' development influence their beliefs

#### **4.2 Justification of the methodology**

The central aim of this dissertation is to explore the beliefs and experiences of three pre-service, practicum and novice teachers from a teacher education program in central Mexico in order to understand how their beliefs and experiences influence their professional development. The epistemological stance which has been assumed offers a connection between the aim and the practical methodological concerns of the data collection (Oliver, 2004).

The methodology used for this thesis was viewed from a hermeneutic stance of research which studies human beings in their social settings (Schubert, 1989). It is through their

participants' conceptualizations of the specific events in their lives that the three studies in this thesis were undertaken. The understanding of these events, in the different stages of the participants' initial stages in becoming a teacher, were achieved by exploring the participant's interpretation of the events that were represented in their autobiographies, interviews, journals and narratives. This hermeneutic stance may also be related to an "interpretative epistemology" that seeks to explore different understandings of events (Oliver, 2004, p. 122). In the three studies presented in this thesis, the events took place during certain periods of the participants' lives as beginning teachers; nonetheless their perceptions coincide or differ on certain issues. Richards (2003, p. 36) states, regarding an epistemological perspective, that the construction of reality is "based on the interaction of the individual with the environment ... [and] ...the exploration of this relationship enables us to understand the ways in which the world is interpreted and common understandings are constructed." The participants in the studies presented shared similar backgrounds and shared similar contexts in the first and second studies. In the third study, their context was different; however, their situations as new teachers were similar.

The approach to research that was used for this thesis was within the qualitative research paradigm. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Richards (2003) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) the main objectives of qualitative research is to study individuals in natural settings reflecting their everyday lives and to seek to understand and interpret the meanings that these events have for the individuals. According to Gordon (1998 n.p.)

Qualitative methodology, generally associated with interpretative epistemology, tends to be used to refer to forms of data collection and analysis which rely on understanding, with an emphasis on meanings

In this study, the participants' views as students and pre-service teachers at the LEMO and as first year teachers in their school environments were analyzed. Autobiographical

narratives, a focus group interview, teaching journals, individual interviews and a personal narrative of the participants' first year as teachers were used as sources for collecting data. This data were collected in order to gain an understanding of the participant's beliefs and experiences during their initial teacher development as English language teachers. The type of information which was obtained from these sources was not quantifiable and a qualitative research approach was considered to be the most appropriate for these studies.

#### **4.2.1 Limitations to the methodology**

A limitation of the methodology chosen may have been that the researcher was very familiar with the social settings of the studies. The researcher had had no previous contacts with the participants in the studies. However, the fact that she was a teacher in the teaching area of the program in which the participants were enrolled may have proven to be a limit in the analysis of the data for the studies presented. This possible limitation derives from the fact that the researcher was very familiar with the contexts of the first two studies so that she may have overlooked important contextual, social, or cognitive issues that could have been relevant to the findings of the study and to their interpretation. Nevertheless, Byrne (2001, p. 2) considers "that the researcher is an integral part of the research process" so that that the researcher's familiarity with the situation being studied can also be considered an asset rather than a hindrance. The researcher attempted to "bracket" her own beliefs and to take care not to contaminate the interpretation of the data with her own preconceptions (K. Richards, 2003, p. 19).

A further consideration was that all of the data in this thesis were self-report. This may have been another methodological limitation. This limitation may have been overcome by utilizing another source of data collection such as classroom observations. According to Bailey (2001, p.114) "observation... refers to the purposeful examination of teaching

and/or learning events through systematic processes of data collection and analysis”. Observation presents an occasion to document the actual classroom behaviors of the participants. This form of data collection is used by many researchers who study teacher beliefs in order to understand teacher behaviors and their practices in the classroom. Observations can be used to cross-check whether what people say they do is what they actually do in practice. Although observation would have added to the triangulation of data in these studies and therefore their trustworthiness, it proved impossible to observe these participants in their classrooms. The participants had already been observed by their mentor and by their supervisor. It was not possible to have another observer in the classroom due to institutional constraints such as not allowing a third observer in the language classrooms because of the existing frequency of the observations for the practicum (twice a week for one or two hours a week during ten weeks). The institution imposed constraints on the number of additional observations because the mentors consider too many observers as an intrusion that made their students lose focus. As stated by Richards and Farrell (2005, p. 94) “having an observer in one’s classroom is a threatening experience because the teacher [*in this case the student-teacher*] is now ‘on show’”. Thus the student-teachers were already stressed by the observations of their mentor and the visits by the supervisor. To have more observers would have added to their anxieties, and, as stated by Wajryb (1992, p. 19), “the presence of a visitor inevitably affects classroom dynamics”.

For various reasons it also became difficult to observe the two first year teachers. One participant was working in another state and therefore observation was not possible because of the distance involved and gaining access was also difficult due to institutional constraints. Security measures within her institution such as permission to enter the institution during class hours were a problem because most private institutions of this sort



protect the privacy of their students from all strangers to the institution. The other participant who was in Puebla, and therefore in the same location as the researcher had similar security issues in her institution due to the fact that she was teaching in a private school with small children where parents require privacy for their children. Access to both schools was difficult and would have involved a great deal of time and complicated negotiations. Therefore, it was necessary to rely solely on the data collected through the autobiographies, focus group interview, teaching journals, individual interviews and narratives about their first years as teachers. It needs to be acknowledged that in the event that it would have been possible to observe the participants; more data that may have shed more light on the aspects being researched in this thesis could have been obtained.

#### **4.3 Narrative inquiry**

According to Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998), Creswell (2005) and Webster and Mertova (2007), narrative inquiry can be defined as the collection of narratives where the internal and external experiences expressed by individuals may provide investigators with a valuable structure to portray or interpret life events as perceived through the eyes of the narrator. In this thesis, the participants comment on issues as they have perceived them through different periods in their initial development as teachers. The research overall involves an attempt to interpret these events in order to try to seek an understanding of the impact which these beliefs and experiences have had on the participants' lives. Golombek and Johnson (2004, p. 308) comment that "narratives situate and relate facts to one another, and the essence of 'truth' is *how* phenomena are connected and interpreted." The purpose of this thesis is to try to interpret and connect issues that are related in the studies in order to try to uncover the relative issues that have had an impact on the participants' lives as teachers, so far. The three studies presented in this dissertation may be seen as a chronology of events because they happen at different periods in the development of the

beginning of the participants' professional lives and these events were shared by the participants with the researcher by means of diverse narrative forms.

#### **4.4 Participants**

Volunteers for this study were recruited from two pre-practicum groups at the LEMO program. For the process of recruitment, the researcher visited classes to give a general presentation about the study to the students and provided her contact information so that anyone interested in participating could follow up by contacting her. The only requisite to participate was to have had no previous teaching experience and to have time during the mid-hours of the day in order to be able to meet with the researcher. Six students subsequently contacted the researcher. However, two dropped out for personal reasons in the second phase of the data collection for study one. Thus, in the first study, four students who were in their last year of the LEMO program were the participants. They were all females age 22 and had similar backgrounds because they were originally from rural areas around the city of Puebla, Mexico where they had studied primary, secondary and high school (more specific details about the participants are provided in Chapter five). They were all also living away from their homes while they were studying in Puebla. In the subsequent two studies, the number of participants reduced for reasons that are explained in chapters four and five that describe each of those studies. In study two, three of the same participants from study one took part in the study and, in study three, two of the participants from study two took part in the study. The participants in the third study cooperated with the researcher throughout the two-year period in which the studies took place.

#### **4.5 Procedures for data collection**

The data collection was carried out in a non-observational manner. The information came directly from the participants' accounts. In order to be objective while doing the research the researcher used Richards' (2003) guide for "sound" qualitative research. Richards' states that several aspects should be present in this approach to research; these are "openness, inquisitiveness, honesty, authenticity, legitimacy and transparency" (p. 267).

When the data were analysed, the researcher guarded as extensively as possible from preconceptions. This was particularly important given the positioning of the research within the same educational context as explained above. The central aim was to find only coding categories that were present in the data (openness). In terms of the "spirit of openness and receptivity" (ibid. p. 268), when searching for categories, it was important to be sensitive to the possibility of new and different categories appearing in the data (inquisitiveness). Since the accounts were personal, it was necessary to stay away from preconceived interpretations of the accounts and to stay focused strictly on what was presented in the data, so that there would be no bias by the researcher (honesty). The voice of the participants in the accounts had to remain authentic, so that when the categories were identified and selected they could be illustrated by a direct representation of the teachers' ideas or statements (authenticity). Moreover, it was important to bear in mind that the "data is transformed by its organization into evidence" (Edge and Richards 1998, p. 352 cited in Richards 2003, p. 268). The researcher tried to demonstrate a correspondence between what was present in the data and the statements and interpretations made about these data (legitimacy). In research, there should not be hidden or underlying assumptions in presenting the data or the analysis of the data (transparency) as this would make the research lose validity.

The procedures for data collection were different for each study because they took place at different points in their development as teachers. Within the interpretative perspective

adopted, the data were collected by several means. In the first study (Chapter five), autobiographies of the participants' experiences as language learners and preparation to become language teachers and a focus group interview using salient issues from the autobiographies were used as sources for collecting data for the study. In the second study (Chapter six), the participants' teaching journals and a personal interview were used as sources for data collection. In the third study (Chapter seven), which can be considered a follow-up study to the two previous studies, an individual narrative of the participants first year of teaching was used as the source of data for the study.

#### **4.6 Analysis procedures**

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p. 157) "data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging ... [*the data*] ... to increase your understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others." The narratives in the three studies presented in this dissertation were examined by means of a "content analysis" approach that draws on a coding process that allows for "categories in the data to be identified" (Richards, 2003, p. 17). Based on the grounded theory research tradition in qualitative research, the data went through an open coding phase. Open coding was used in order to identify what categories of ideas were present in the accounts. According to Creswell (1998) "in open coding, the researcher forms initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied by segmenting information" (p. 57). After the preliminary categories were established, the information went through a process of axial coding relating categories to each other. The accounts were re-read for the axial coding. According to Creswell (1998) the items to be categorized in axial coding are "direct references to central phenomenon (central category of the phenomenon), strategies (the actions or interactions that result from the central phenomenon, context (the narrow and broad conditions that influence the strategies) and consequences (the outcomes of this

phenomenon)” (p. 57). Through the process of axial coding the development of connections between categories and subcategories were established (Pandit, 1996; Creswell, 1998). Tables were elaborated with the relevant categories and information and were presented for analysis of each of the three studies.

#### **4.7 Ethical considerations**

When carrying out qualitative research, measures to acquire informed consent and permission are essential for the ethical conduct of the researcher (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). The accounts which were analyzed provided personal and confidential information; therefore acquiring written consent to carry out the study was highly important. Official approval to carry out this research was requested through the Macquarie University Human Ethics Committee by the researcher (Appendix C). The ethical considerations built into this study were considered and approved by the committee.

Following Macquarie ethics committee requirements and in line with procedures for the ethical conduct of research more generally, the participants were requested to fill out informed consent forms in order to participate in the studies (Appendix D). They were also assured that during any of the phases of the studies they could cease to participate at any given time. In the three studies, pseudonyms were used in order to protect the privacy and identity of the participants. The participants were also provided with local contact numbers in Puebla and at Macquarie University in case they had comments, doubts or complaints about any procedure carried out in the studies.

#### **4.8 Summary**

In this chapter, the general methodology that guides the three research studies in this thesis is presented. This chapter lays out the aims, justification of the methodological stance selected, its limitations, procedures for data collection and analysis procedures. It also

presents information regarding the participants and ethical considerations that were taken into consideration in order to carry out the research for the thesis. Chapters five, six and seven present the specific methodology under which each study was carried out. In the following chapter, the first study in the series, the beliefs of pre-service student-teachers before they start teaching are analyzed and presented.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **STUDY ONE: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT BEING A TEACHER**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The process of becoming a teacher and identifying oneself as a teacher begins long before a teacher faces the first classroom full of students. Lortie (1975) refers to the term “apprenticeship of observation” to refer to what Borg (2004, p. 275) describes as “the phenomenon whereby student-teachers arrive for their training courses having spent thousands of hours as school children observing and evaluating professionals in action”. It is this initial contact with the teaching profession that begins to shape student-teachers’ beliefs about what teaching is about and eventually helps form their identity as teachers. Pre-service teachers enter professional preparation with ideas about practices, perceptions, and aims that are varied and at times conflicting (Borg, 2005, p. 1). The contexts where student-teachers have lived and studied and the teachers and other people they have been in contact with through the years contribute to the construction of a teacher’s beliefs.

The study reported in this chapter focuses on pre-service English language teachers’ beliefs about teaching. It was carried out in two parts. Part one consists of data collected through autobiographies written by four pre-service participants at the start of the study describing their experiences as language learners from childhood to the present. Part two was carried out with a focus group of the same four pre-service students where relevant issues from their autobiographies were discussed followed by an analysis of the conversation. These students were doing their actual teaching practicum during the following term.

### **5.1.1 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to present an analysis of four pre-service English language student-teachers' core beliefs about becoming a teacher and the issues that influence these beliefs. The participants reflected on their experiences as English language learners and on critical moments in their learning that have influenced their career choice. The goal of this study is to investigate how the development of the participants' beliefs emerges over time.

### **5.1.2 Research questions**

In this study, I intended to explore the influences that motivated the participants' beliefs and the changes in beliefs that the participants held about teaching. The main constructs of this research focus were the participants' experiences as language learners and how these were reflected in their ideas about teaching, their beliefs about language teaching in particular and the participants' perceptions about themselves as future teachers. Thus the specific questions for study one were:

1RQ1. What past and present experiences as language learners influence pre-service student-teachers' ideas about teaching?

1RQ2. What beliefs do pre-service language teacher students have regarding language teaching?

1RQ3. How do these pre-service teachers perceive themselves as future teachers?

The first research question (1RQ1) was presented in order to have background information about the participants. The intention was to explore the beliefs about teaching held by student-teachers before they started to teach. I was also interested in trying to recognize if the participants held any pre-conceived ideas about teaching (second research question for this study, 1RQ2). The third question (1RQ3) addresses how the students perceived



themselves as potential teachers. The intention was to investigate if they felt prepared to undergo the challenge of teaching.

In order to address these questions, it is important to take into consideration that the participants had never taught outside their own classroom situation. Their only experiences were of micro-teaching with their peers and their perceptions about teaching were from the point of view of their past experiences as students and the influences that the curricular courses in their undergraduate program had had upon them. Responses to these questions emerged through the interpretation of the participants' writing and their focus group conversations.

## **5.2 Research methodology**

This study was concerned with pre-service students' beliefs about their future roles as teachers; since the study dealt with the beliefs, views and perspectives of the participants (described in 5.2.2) below the general methodological framework that was chosen for this study fell within a qualitative research paradigm. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994):

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and the collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (p. 2).

Qualitative research concerns the collection, analysis and comprehension of different types of human behaviours and reactions and the study of what motivates individuals' beliefs

and reactions. Because of the nature of this study, this type of methodological framework was most suitable for the research.

Thus, data collection progressed in a two-phase design. The approach used in this study to collect the data was associated with the concept of narrative inquiry. As stated by Connelly and Clandinin (1990):

The study of narrative... is the study of the ways humans experience the world. This general notion translates into the view that education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; teachers and learners are storytellers and characters in their own and other's stories (p.2).

The first phase consisted of participant autobiographies. In the second phase, data were collected through focus group interviews (explained in detail below). In this study, the participants told the researcher, through their autobiographies and the focus group, about who they are, their experiences, and their beliefs about what the future as teachers may hold for them. According to Johnson and Golombek (2002):

...narrative inquiry enables teachers to organize, articulate, and communicate what they know and believe about teaching and who they have become as teachers. Their stories reveal the knowledge, ideas, perspectives, understandings and experiences that guide their work...Their stories reflect the struggles, tensions, triumphs and rewards of their lives as teachers (p.7).

Narrative inquiry was considered an appropriate approach for this study because of the personal quality of the data (pre-service teachers' beliefs) that are being collected and analyzed. There are different types of insights that can be gained in narrative studies, Creswell (2002, p. 478) maintains that narrative inquiry "seeks to understand and represent experiences through the stories that the individuals tell... [and] ...seeks to analyze the stories by identifying themes or categories of information". It is through this type of study

that the researcher may uncover underlying issues that the participants have about the topic being investigated.

In the first phase of this study, the data that were collected consisted of autobiographies (Aut) of past experiences in the participants' educational and learning processes. Creswell (2002) suggests that "in an autobiography the individual who is the subject of the study writes the account" (p. 476). Following this procedure, the participants were asked to write an autobiography of their experience as language learners and their views of teachers (or teaching) that they considered to be optimal (or at least adequate) or that have impacted them during their lives as students (Appendix E). They were asked to write their autobiographies during their spare time within two weeks of the commencement of the study and then e-mail them within the suggested timeframe (Appendix F).

For the second phase of this study, the same participants were asked to participate in a focus group discussion (FG). A focus group is a type of group interview that is a "carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive non-threatening environment" (Krueger and Casey, 2000, p. 5). This type of interview was chosen because it was considered to be less threatening than individual interviews given that they could feel more comfortable commenting on issues along with their peers. The focus group was used in order to discuss further the key issues brought up in the autobiographies: guiding questions (Appendix G) about language teaching, learning, and language competency were discussed in an atmosphere where the participants could share their thoughts with their peers. This additional data helped clarify some of the ideas that were shared by the participants in the autobiographies. The focus group interviews were also considered as a form of narratives about teaching and learning.

Gibson (2002, p. 69) has explained three advantages to having focus group interviews. First, he considers that having “a group talk aloud can be much more productive than the conventional interviewer-solo interviewee format”. Second, he considers that “participants’ comments would be more authentic in a peer-group context”. Third, “the strength of a group’s agreement or disagreement with individual comments might offer insight into likely reactions as a whole”. It is because of these advantages that a focus group interview was selected for this part of the study. The aim of setting up a focus group interview was to minimize feelings of pressure or nervousness. The focus group was more like a conversation, even though there were questions that were posed and the students took their turn answering.

The analytical approach that was chosen for the data interpretation was based on grounded theory. Pandit (1996) and Creswell (1998) state that the reporting approaches for grounded theory are:

- the statement of a problem or questions:
- identifying a focus
- data collection, analysis and outcomes: examination process
- open coding: development of categories
- axial coding: development of connections between categories and subcategories
- discussion of theory: confirmation of a theoretical framework

The previous summary clarifies the initial procedures for undergoing such analysis. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 159) suggest that “theory may be generated initially from the data”. The researcher may then “connect the parts to the whole, stressing the meaningful relationships that operate in the situations and social worlds studied” (Denzin & Lincoln 1998, pp. 4-5). In this study, the data were generated through narratives and therefore

drew on approaches from narrative inquiry and were analyzed based on concepts of grounded theory.

### **5.2.1 Participants**

The four participants were students in the last year of the LEMO-BUAP program (see Chapter two; section 2.4). These pre-practicum students responded to the invitation by the researcher to participate in the study. The students were enrolled in the course immediately preceding their Professional Experience course (Teaching Practicum). By this point in the BA, they had covered all the required courses in the program in order to begin their practicum (Appendix A).

With prior permission from the course teacher, I visited two classes where 15 students in each class were taking the required course, Reflexive Supervised Practicum, in order to invite students to participate. The students were assured that their participation in the study would not affect their academic record in any way and I also explained what the study was about. Those interested were invited to attend a meeting on an agreed date in order to receive more information about the study and four students attended. Thus, the four participants who attended the meeting were self-selected to participate in this study. The potential participants provided personal contact information at the initial meeting so that dates could be set to carry out the two phases of this study. The participants were informed that if they decided to participate, they would be referred to by pseudonyms in order to respect their privacy. They were also informed that they would be asked to fill out consent forms as required by the Macquarie University Human Ethics Committee and that during the study they could cease to participate at any given time.

The four participants who volunteered had similar backgrounds. They were all in their last year in the program. They were all females of the same age (22 years old), and came from

rural areas near the city of Puebla. They had studied in their hometowns until they finished high school and were all living in the city of Puebla until they graduated. Their mothers were housewives or primary school teachers. Their fathers were all farmers. One of the students did not provide any other details about her father. This might be because as her parents were divorced and perhaps the father was not actively in her life.

This group of pre-service teachers can be considered as being in preparation to be part of a larger community of English language teachers because the group shares similar professional interests and a passion about a topic they are studying. They had never taught a whole English language class up to the time of the study but had completed the Reflexive Supervised Practicum Course and were about to start their Professional Experience Practicum.

### **5.2.2 Data collection procedures**

The four student-teachers were contacted and requested to write autobiographies during their spare time and to e-mail them to me within two weeks. As previously mentioned (see 5.2. above) the autobiographies were focused on their experience as language learners and as students in the BA program. The participants were previously given a protocol of questions to assist them with the development of their autobiographies (Appendix E).

All four participants submitted autobiographies, via e-mail, written in English within the time limit. The autobiographies were written in English by the participants. The accounts were scanned and as a first step in the analysis, major themes were identified. From that first step, a content analysis of the autobiographies was then carried out where the autobiographies were read and re-read in order to identify thematic patterns, similarities and differences among the data. The first phase was an open coding process that consisted of several initial readings of the four autobiographies that had been written by the

participants. After analyzing the autobiographies, a table was designed (table 5.1) in order to organize the main themes raised by the students in their autobiographies.

Once the autobiographies were submitted, an appointment was made with the participants for the focus group interview to take place at the Facultad de Lenguas-BUAP at a convenient time and date for the participants. In the focus group interview, the four student-teachers were video recorded. The reason for using video recordings over audio recordings was that video recordings were able to capture verbal and non-verbal aspects of the conversations that assisted in the transcription and analysis of the interactions carried out in the focus group interview. Thus, a richer picture of the focus group interaction was achieved than by audio recording alone.

The focus group interview was held at the LEMO facilities in a multi-media room and took approximately thirty-five minutes. The video recording was carried out by a video-lab technician whom the students had frequently encountered during other such recording activities at the LEMO. Because of the students' familiarity with him, it was likely that the presence of the technician did not pose any effect on the type of responses given by the participants. The recording was undertaken non-intrusively from one side of the room so as not to interfere with the discussion. The interviews were conducted in Spanish, the participants' first language; so that the students would not feel self-conscious about their English language level since there had been little contact with the participants previous to the study. In addition, using Spanish meant that the participants who were still improving their levels of English could probably express themselves and their ideas more fully.

The focus group data were transcribed by the researcher verbatim from Spanish using some of the transcription conventions suggested by Richards (2003, pp. 173-174) illustrated in appendix H. They were translated into English for the purpose of presentation in this study (Appendix I). Using open coding, the data were then analyzed into categories.

Recurring topics were grouped together and a table (table 5.2) was elaborated in order to condense the information with the salient issues from the interview.

### **5.3 Data analysis**

As previously mentioned in this chapter, this phase involved the analysis of four pre-service teachers' autobiographical narratives about their experiences as language learners. The accounts consisted of the participants' views about their process of learning English, and influences during that process. The data were reviewed in order to identify significant topics in their narratives.

#### **5.3.1 Autobiographies**

Autobiographies are personal accounts of lived events. Bell (2002, p. 207) considers narrations as a "key way of coming to understand the assumptions held by learners". According to Pavlenko (2002, p. 214) narratives such as autobiographies are considered a justifiable source of data because they allow for the narrator's voice to be heard.

#### **5.3.2 Protocol used for analyzing the autobiographies**

As previously mentioned (5.2.3.2 above), a content analysis of the autobiographies was carried out. After an extensive analysis of the data, three major themes emerged as common factors for all the participants. These factors characterized some of the common experiences and beliefs that these student teachers possessed. The categories of: experiences as language learners, reasons for becoming a teacher, being a non-native speaker of English were identified.



**Table 5.1: Coding Stage of Autobiographies.**

	Hada	Anita	Ella	Reina
Experience as an English language learner	In junior high school and high school	In junior high and high school	Secondary school and high school	Secondary and high school:
	a) Entered to study the career with a vague idea of the language  b) When I first started studying English, it was frustrating for me.	a) At the beginning it was difficult for me because I didn't have notions about the English language.  b) I enjoyed my English classes at school	a) I enjoyed English classes"  b) I remember I liked to listen to the English pronunciation; it was very attractive for me	frustrating in the beginning"
	At the university	At the university	At the university	At the university
	c) now it's the opposite  d) cultural shock because of the huge political, economical and social differences between my country and the English speaking countries	c) At the beginning I was frustrated because everything was so difficult for me	c) The university was very difficult for me. At the beginning I did not understand anything about English language".  d) Fortunately, now I'm able to understand the language".	The first year I had a good English teacher she was a new teacher but she was qualified, responsible, enthusiastic, punctual [and] creative person
Becoming a teacher	a) advantages that knowing English brings with itself in this globalized society  b) a good opportunity to share with others what you know and provide something useful to the community  c) I want to be a good English teacher.	a) I chose this major because I like English very much  b) I learned a lot of things with her [ <i>one of the teachers in the program</i> ] and all of her advice has helped me be a better student  c) hoped to be a good English teacher in the future as my teachers.	I chose teaching instead of translator because of my mother's profession. She was an influence on me	...reason why I selected this major was that I like languages...I realized that it was an interesting major I learned a lot theses years.
Being a non-native speaker of English	I am conscious that I will never speak exactly as a native speaker, but I do not give too much importance to it either.	I am conscious that I never going to finish to learn English because I am not a native speaker...	No comment	No comment

The four participants were identified by the following pseudonyms: Anita, Ella, Hada, and Reina. “Aut” + “name of participant” signalled the entries from the narratives (e.g. Aut: Ella).

### 5.3.3 Protocol used for analyzing the focus group interview

The intention of the focus group interview was to further investigate the issues that had appeared in the autobiographies. After the transcription and translation of the focus group

salient themes that were identified. The participant's ideas were categorized in general terms and the direct reference to the transcription of the focus group was signalled.

**Table 5.2: Coding of Salient Themes in the Focus Group**

Content Analysis ( FG)	Hada	Anita	Ella	Reina
On being a teacher	Transmission of knowledge ...awareness of students' needs and satisfying those needs (3) Not only subject matter is important but also empathy ... getting along with the students (7)	Sharing knowledge and experiences...not only teaching but learning from others...never stop learning from new students (2)	Also guiding students , transmission of knowledge and the applicability of the knowledge that is useful for the students (4)	... not having been given enough tools to deal with everyday classroom problems... having a good relationship with the students(5)
Influences on career choice	Influenced as a child towards the importance of school and admiration towards teachers... interested in the area of humanities more than the technical part of teaching (11)	Liking to play school as a child...having an aunt that is an English teacher... liking her aunts materials and methodology for teaching English (10)	Strongly influenced during childhood by her mother (who is a teacher) and her sister ( who is also a teacher) to become a teacher... benefits of having time to be with your family that is different in other jobs (9)	Contrary to her classmates she didn't like her mom being a teacher ... in junior high she took private English classes and liked the materials and the classes in general, that influenced her (12)
Reasons for becoming an English Language teacher	Majority of the family are migrant workers in the USA... has known first hand from her relatives the difficulty that migrant worker have in the USA for not knowing English and the importance of the language in the globalized world (14)	Also has family members living in the USA, cousins and relative who don't speak Spanish and wanting to communicate with them and not being able to ... wanting to be able to understand and communicate motivated her to learn English (15)	Had a negative experience in junior school trying to learn the language but was curious to understand the lyrics of songs she liked and this encouraged her to learn the language and in high school she decided to be an English language teacher (18)	Had a hard time while taking private language lessons...admitting to not studying and hence the consequence...she decided to enter the University to become an English teacher ... her family was surprised (20)

Emotions and beliefs about starting to teach	<p>Feels that even an experienced teacher is not fully prepared for every situation... through the classroom observations that she has done, that every teacher and every student are different... its difficult to cater to the needs of all and this is only one group... you have to find a way to cater to the needs of each different class (25)</p> <p>Feels very nervous ... but realizes that it's normal because she's not sure of herself and teaching is something new(108)</p>	<p>Has the foundations, the theory but not the practice to teach (28)</p> <p>Has the theory now needs the practice... and through experience and everything that we acquire with practice we will become good teachers with time (34)</p> <p>Being responsible and committed towards students (95)</p>	<p>Terrified of starting to teach. Doesn't feel prepared because of lack of experience ... time, experience and knowing different kinds of groups and students will help to feel more prepared. Reiterates that she does not feel prepared (27)</p>	<p>Does not feel ready to teach because of lack of experience in teaching ... might have a little experience after practicum...every student and group are different ; this has to be taken into account when planning classes (26)</p> <p>Has an ideas of what teaching is but realizes that this idea will change when starting to teach (94)</p>
Being a good teacher (characteristics that they consider to have)	<p>Besides (comments in 36,40,&amp;44) patience, tolerance , experience as a language learner (understanding the process that students go through) (45)</p> <p>Perseverance and empathy(90)</p>	<p>Love for the profession (36). Critical thinker (40)</p> <p>Responsibility(89)</p>	<p>Love for the profession, responsibility, commitment, doing work with pleasure (44)</p> <p>tolerance (91)</p>	<p>Creativity, punctuality(49), commitment (51), responsibility(92)</p>
Issues regarding the fact of being a non-native speaker of the language	<p>Has language basics need practice...being non-native one has limitations with the language ...a need for experience in the target language community (53)</p> <p>Feels competitive for the job market despite being a non-native speaker and having cultural limitations ... is aware that in Mexico, to a certain degree, there is a preference towards hiring native English speakers (63)</p>	<p>Feeling the same as the classmate (comments in 54) must continue to study the language for a life time (64)</p>	<p>Feels insecure, has language basics,, lacks practice, insecure in the presence of a native speaker, need to be in the target language context for more practice (55)</p>	<p>Still needs to learn a lot of vocabulary and...many other things about the language (56)</p>
Readiness to start teaching	<p>Has the methodological theory needs to put it into practice... but feels prepared (60)</p> <p>Feels competitive for the job market ... feels at an advantage for having gone through the same process as her students in learning English (63)</p> <p>Personally , believes to be ready to start to teach(80)</p>	<p>Has the methodological theory needs to put it into practice... but feels prepared (59)</p> <p>Feels she has cultural limitations, lack of colloquial English, feels at an advantage for having gone through the same process as her students in learning English (64)</p>	<p>Feels sure about what was learned in school... now she has to dose it out and put it into practice (58)</p> <p>Feels she can compete in the job market but not actually at the level that she would like to (66)</p> <p>I can compete with a high school teacher for a job (71) feels ready and prepared to teach a class.</p>	<p>Nervous worried about what her students will think of her (61)</p> <p>Thinks she's prepared (83)</p>

Being influenced by a teacher from the past	You also learn from bad experiences and try not to make the same mistakes... turn the negative into positive and learn from the experience and make things better (105)	If some teachers did not leave a good impression on you as a student, as a teacher one must try to improve personally on those actions ...Learn from the negative experience and make things better (104)	Tries to remember and focus on those teachers that left a positive influence on me (100)	Tries to remember and focus on those teachers that left a positive influence on me and new how to guide students ... prefers to forget those teachers that meant nothing in her life (104)
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The quotations taken from the focus group interviews are signalled as “FG”+ “participant’s name”+ # (turn number) e.g. FG: Ella 105. In the next section, I discuss these key categories where the participants reflected specifically on the experiences and beliefs that motivated them during their education process. The following discussion is documented through the categories identified in the autobiographies and focus group interview.

### 5.3.2.1 Experience as language learners

In relation to language learning experiences, the participants referred to feelings of frustration and difficulty.

When I first started studying English it was frustrating for me (Aut: Hada).

...at the beginning it was difficult for me because I didn’t have notions of the English language... I enjoyed my English classes at school (Aut: Anita).

...frustrating in the beginning... (Aut: Reina).

Hada and Reina felt frustrated when they started to study English because of the difficulties that studying a different language entails. On the other hand, even though the English language classes were difficult for Anita, she enjoyed them. Ella also mentioned that she enjoyed her classes:

I enjoyed English classes...I remember I liked to listen to the English pronunciation; it was very attractive for me (Aut: Ella).

Ella mentions that she was attracted to the language and this may have influenced her feelings about learning English in high school. Even though the participants enjoyed their classes, they found learning difficult because as children living in rural areas they had little or no exposure to the English language.

Regarding their experience as language learners, the students distinguished between their experiences at school and those at the university. For some, it was frustrating because of the level and the requirements of their future careers as teachers.

At the beginning [*of the career*] I was frustrated because everything was so difficult for me (Aut: Anita).

The university was very difficult for me. At the beginning I didn't understand anything about the English language [*previously she had enjoyed the experience of learning English*]...Fortunately now I am able to understand the language (Aut: Ella).

For others, learning English was a pleasant experience.

... now it is the opposite... [*not frustrating*]... I had culture shock because of the huge political, economical and social differences between my country and the English speaking countries (Aut: Hada).

The first year at the university, I had a good English teacher. She was a new teacher but she was qualified, responsible, enthusiastic, and punctual [*and*] a creative person (Aut: Reina).

As the data show, according to the participants, the process of learning a foreign language in a different type of institution (university level) was a frustrating experience for some

caused by difficulty in understanding English and culture shock and a good experience. For other students, it was a pleasant experience caused by having qualified and enthusiastic teachers, contrary to their initial experiences with the language at junior and high school level. Nevertheless, they were further influenced in various ways to become English language teachers as we can see in the next section.

### **5.3.2.2 Reasons for becoming a language teacher**

Several reasons were mentioned in the autobiographies about why these students had decided to become teachers. For some, one of the main reasons was that they liked the language.

I chose this major because I like English very much (Aut: Anita)

...reason why I selected this major was that I like Languages ... I realized that it was an interesting major I learned a lot these years” (Aut: Reina).

One student, Hada, was aware of the fact that English is becoming a globalized language and mentioned that she decided to study English because of the advantages of knowing this particular foreign language:

...the advantages that knowing English brings with itself in a globalized society (Aut: Hada).

Another student, Ella, indicated that a family member influenced her choice of career. Although the faculty offers two programs, she had chosen teaching because of family experience.

I chose teaching instead of translation because of my mother’s profession. She was an influence on me (Aut: Ella).

Also, on becoming a teacher, aspirations of becoming “good” English teachers were mentioned as a motivating factor.

I want to be a good English teacher (Aut: Hada).

I hope to be a good English teacher in the future as my teachers are (Aut: Anita).

Hada took the sense of these aspirations further by referring to the social good of becoming a teacher:

.... a good opportunity to share with others what you know  
and provide something useful to the community  
(Aut: Hada).

Regarding the reasons for becoming a teacher, even though the participants did not focus on one reason in particular, they did have a sense of professionalism which is a noteworthy trait in a teacher.

### **5.3.2.3 Being a non-native speaker of English**

Several authors (Reeve and Medgyes, 1994; Braine, 1999; Samimy and Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Pavlenko, 2003) have written about non-native English language speaking professionals (NNS). They state that there are certain moments in the lives of these NNS professionals when being a non-native speaker becomes an issue that promotes or hinders their professional development. Only two of the students commented on the issue of being a non-native speaker of the language.

I am conscious that I will never speak exactly as a native speaker, but I do not give too much importance to it either  
(Aut: Hada).

I am conscious that I never going to finish learning English because I am not a native speaker... (Aut: Anita).

However, the students did not consider that being a non-native speaker of English was an issue that interfered in the development of their careers at this point. These participants' self-perception could be seen as positive regarding their language skills; but then, it was also realistic regarding how far they believe (at that moment) they could go regarding their English language proficiency.

In summary, the overall findings from the analysis of the autobiographies provided an initial dataset for beginning to understand the experiences, backgrounds and particular contexts of participants. Key issues that emerged in the autobiographies were experiences as language learners, reasons for becoming a language teacher, and issues regarding being a non-native speaker of English. These issues formed the basis for eliciting further information via focus group interviews about their teaching beliefs about teaching, career choice and influences on this choice, starting to teach, being a NNS of the language and starting their teaching. These are reported in the following section.

#### **5.3.4 Focus group interview**

As previously mentioned (5.2.8 above), following the writing of the autobiographies, a focus group interview was carried out with the four participants. The aim of the focus group interview was to investigate the students' beliefs about teaching and probe further the issues that emerged in the autobiographies. After the transcription and translation of the focus group, the general themes that were identified were the following: a transmission view of teaching, influences on career choice, reasons for becoming a teacher, feelings and beliefs about starting to teach, being a good teacher, issues regarding the fact of being a non-native speaker of English, readiness to start teaching, and



influences from teachers of the past. These themes and the data that support them are outlined in more detail in the sections that follow.

#### **5.3.4.1 Teaching as transmission**

The kinds of responses the participants provided indicated that, at this point of their development, they viewed teaching as transmission of knowledge and ideas. Teaching was seen as an act of giving knowledge.

... most of all about sharing our ideas and knowledge  
and our experiences with others... (FG: Anita: 02).

... besides this transmission of knowledge... (FG: Hada: 03).

...to give them the knowledge we have and they do not know...  
(FG: Ella: 04).

In these views, the participants expressed the concept of teaching as a one-way process. The overarching view was that the teacher is the one who must give knowledge to uninformed others. Anita's comment suggested that the teacher is the source of the ideas and the knowledge that will be imparted in the classroom, while Ella viewed teachers as "knowing" and learners as "unknowing". Hada explicitly used the term "transmission", thus apparently confirming her assumption that knowledge is transferred from teacher to student.

Nonetheless, they also perceived that students' needs must be taken into account, although this perspective could also be interpreted as transmission in the suggestion that the teacher knows what the students' need and what will be useful for them.

...it is also important to take into account our students'  
needs; I mean that the knowledge we are giving them is  
useful for them for their interests and for what they need  
them (FG: Hada: 03).

... they can apply this knowledge in the future, but that it is useful for them (FG: Ella: 04).

Hada stressed the importance of considering students' needs although her perspective on the matter implied that needs should be related to the knowledge that a teacher "gives" her students. Ella viewed knowledge in terms of what the student can use and what students can apply. She considered knowledge as useful aspects for living, a view that may have been influenced by educational goals set by the government and the institution that the student attends. Here, she expressed the belief that it was important to satisfy students' future needs more than her own role in the conveying of information.

#### **5.3.4.2 Influences on career choice**

The specific influences on career choice that were present in the data suggested that the students were motivated by different factors. Three students mention being influenced towards teaching as a career choice from the time they were children. However, the specific reasons for this early attraction differed:

...since I was a little girl. I like to play that I was the teacher ... I started taking to the idea that I wanted to be a teacher ... (FG: Anita: 10).

I grew up with my mother seeing that... she is an elementary school teacher...I started to like it... (FG: Ella: 09).

... from the time we are children...they [*parents*] taught us the importance of school...that school should be our priority... they start to create a certain admiration for teachers... (FG: Hada 11).

Anita was motivated by her personal interests. The idea of becoming a teacher grew on her from the time she was very young. In Ella's case, she was motivated directly by family influences; her mother was a teacher. Hada was influenced indirectly by her family. Her

parents taught her to admire her teachers and the significance of education. On the other hand, Reina differed from the others in that early influences detracted from her desire to teach. She was not influenced from childhood; on the contrary

In my case my mom is a teacher...I didn't like her teaching classes because she always got home late and we were waiting ...I didn't like it... later in high school she [mother]signed us up in an English course... I liked how the teacher taught us...that is when I started to say I want to study English (FG: Reina 14).

The experience of having a mother who was a teacher and the connection of her mother with learning English was a negative factor for Reina in her early decisions about career choice. It was only because her English teacher was a positive role model that Reina appeared to change her mind about both English and teaching as a career.

#### **5.3.4.3 Becoming an English language teacher**

Family influences were reflected again in the accounts of reasons for becoming English teachers. These family influences were not always experienced in the same way as the comments below from Hada and Anita illustrate. On the topic of becoming an English language teacher, Hada mentioned that she had direct relatives who were migrant workers in the USA. These family members stressed the importance of the English language in the globalized world and this was what motivated her to become a language teacher.

...my siblings...tried to convince me of the importance English has...not only in English-speaking countries...but also, in the world in general ...with all the globalization...in a way this was something that drove me to take a greater interest in...English ( FG: Hada: 14).

Anita also mentioned having family members who visited from the United States, but her experience was different. She comments that:

... I also have family in the United States... my cousins would come on holiday...they would talk to me in English... I wanted to study something that would help me to be able to speak English (FG: Anita: 15).

Anita was driven by personal interests and the need to communicate with her family to become an English language teacher. She wanted to understand her cousins when they spoke in English. This need for a language that was being used by members of her family drove her to eventually wanting to become an English language teacher.

In contrast, the other two participants were not motivated by family interests, but by the desire to achieve specific goals and by learning challenges. They stated that the reason for wanting to become English language teachers was the difficulties that they had experienced as English language learners in high school.

... it was hard to do certain translations and I was studying English ... but...when I listened to music ... I was curious as to what the lyrics said and though I hated ... due to all those things...I was going through in the classroom... I decided I wanted be an English teacher... (FG: Ella: 09).

Something similar happened to me in that sense... since they registered us in that course... I got the zeros...but I said 'I can do it...I'm just lazy...I'm going to study English' (FG: Reina: 12).

Ella's weaknesses and her interest in music became her strengths in the sense that she worked very hard on these weaknesses and these drove her to choose English language teaching as a profession. On a similar line, Reina also had to endure hardships studying English. Her low grades did not discourage her from learning but became a motivating factor. She pushed herself personally to continue studying the language and eventually decided to become an English language teacher. These participants were motivated to turn a negative situation into a positive element for their future careers.

#### 5.3.4.4 Starting to teach

Feelings and beliefs about starting to teach were also noted in the data. Anxiety and fear were primary among those that the participants commented on. The student-teachers clearly experienced feelings of apprehension about forthcoming teaching practice. They used terms like “nervous” and “terrified” to express their feelings about the new venture that they were about to undertake.

... very nervous (FG: Hada: 108).

I have never practiced and that terrifies me... (FG: Ella: 27).

... I would be a little nervous... (FG: Reina: 61).

These feelings are not unique to these student-teachers. Literature on per-service teachers and beginning teachers (e.g. Featherstone, Munby and Russell, 1997; Tochtermann, Cooner and Lehmann, 2005) include references to the nervousness and anxiety of beginning teachers. Incursion into the unknown is threatening to most human beings. The participants had not experienced practice teaching in real situations and what they were facing was very new to them. Their beliefs about self-efficacy (Shaukat and Siddiquah, 2007) being able to carry out their job, hindered their performance causing fear or nervousness rather than supported them in the processes.

The students also offset their nervousness by expressing views about preparation and how these would contribute to their development as teachers:

I feel we have the foundations, which are those subjects that have given us the foundations, have given us the theory, and now comes the practice and through the experience and everything we acquire in our practicum and in our professional lives we will be able to be good teachers, well, with time (FG: Anita: 34).

No, I don't feel prepared. I don't have the experience. I have never practiced and that terrifies me ... but I feel that

through time, getting experience, I am going to improve ...  
but for the time being due to lack of experience, I feel I  
am not ready (FG: Ella: 27).

I don't think that we are prepared because what we need  
is experience since after this first step of practicum ...  
after this we will have it, but a little, not everything (FG:  
Reina: 26).

Although Anita believed that she had the theoretical background to be able to teach, she was also anticipating how to put her theoretical knowledge into practice in the classroom, Reina and Ella clearly stated that they did not consider themselves ready to begin to teaching. They believed that their lack of experience inhibited their preparation to start teaching. They believed that the Professional Practicum course would be the beginning of their real teaching and that, over time and with practice they would eventually be prepared to teach and that this practice would lead them to gradually become accomplished teachers. Hada shared this idea:

No, I think that... not even an experienced professor feels  
completely ready for any situation ... (FG: Hada: 25).

While Hada also expressed misgivings about her readiness to teach, she also placed them within an idea gaining currency in teacher education that teachers will always be learning about teaching and are career-long learners as well as teachers. According to Peeler (2008, p. 166), "becoming a teacher is an evolutionary process. One experiences an ongoing trajectory of personal and professional growth while attaining new understandings, developing sets of skills to convey knowledge to students and strategies to cope". Along these lines, Hada believed that the teaching profession, regardless of experience or years in the profession, would always hold unknown or new situations that a teacher can learn from. These student-teachers believed that their practicum course would give them some of the experience they needed to continue this venture of being a teacher. However, they made no

references to “personalized theories [*that*] lie at the heart of teaching and learning” (Burns, 1992, p. 64) nor did they link these theories to their future practice.

#### **5.3.4.5 Being a good teacher**

In the interview, the participants were asked to comment on “being a good teacher”. The characteristics that were particularly mentioned were responsibility, punctuality and commitment to students. The data illustrated that participants considered that they already had some of the characteristics of what they considered to be a good teacher.

Responsibility” (FG: Anita: 89)

Punctuality [*and*] responsibility” (FG: Reina: 92).

I think responsibility is one of my greatest traits and I am committed in everything I do and will to do everything I can, in this case” (FG: Ella: 44).

Well, something that I would like to add, for example... I feel that it is important to have a commitment with the students” (FG: Hada: 51).

I think that one of the traits I have for this profession is creativity and a lot of creativity is needed to be able to, teach... (FG: Reina: 47).

In most articles that relate to the characteristics of a good teacher (e.g. Richards, Gallo, and Renandya, 2001; Sowden, 2007) the characteristics that are most salient have to do with the domain of the subject matter, teachers’ relationships with students, passion about the topic being related and attention to students’ necessities. Likewise, Anita, Reina and Ella considered that good teacher characteristics that they possessed were a sense of responsibility and a commitment to what they do. Being responsible and committed in their teaching gives these participants a sense of empowerment as they enter the teaching situation. As for Reina, she also mentioned creativity as an important trait for a teacher to have because as previously mentioned (section: 5.3.4.4), this was an attractive feature of a

former high school teacher. Punctuality was another characteristic of a good teacher indicated by her comments about her mother as a teacher always being late when getting home to tend to her family. The student-teachers appeared to feel that teaching must be undertaken with a great sense of duty and that teachers need to be dedicated to the job.

#### **5.3.4.6 Influences from the past**

According to Lindstone and Hollingsworth (1992; in Watzke, 2007a, p. 65) “...the prior knowledge of pre-service FL teachers is represented by learning experiences as a FL student and by the model presented to them by past teachers”. When asked if they had influences from past teachers, the participants in this study also mentioned models that they had built on from past teachers.

I think that some, no all, I mainly guide myself ... with professors that really had knowledge, with whom I felt I learned and who knew how to guide me (FG: Ella: 100).

...teachers who have given me something positive ... but to take into account those who left me with something negative in order to not make the same mistakes they made ... (FG: Anita: 103).

... because from the bad you can also learn ... I am not going to make the same mistake that my teacher made because I don't think it was right for a teacher to do that and I imagine the students will think the same ... and I would take something positive the teacher did to improve it (FG: Reina: 104).

... It would be important to take them into account and not just to say that I am not going to do what they did [*negative aspect*], but rather to think that they as teachers, why they did that and to be able to understand ... but try to improve it because I realized that it had not turned out perfectly for him (FG: Hada: 105).



Significant events in the students' educational lives had clearly had an influence on their development as teachers. These students believed that they could not only learn from the teachers who left a positive influence on them, but also, from the ones who had a negative effect on them because they could analyze what went wrong and not fall into the same type of negative teaching practices in the future. Richards, Gallo and Renandya (2001, p. 2) state that "the most resilient or 'core' teachers' beliefs are formed on the basis of teachers own schooling as young students while observing teachers who taught them". The participants showed a capacity for reflection on what previous experiences had meant for them. They believed that the experiences that they had, whether positive or negative would provide some kind of positive impact for their future teaching.

#### **5.3.4.7 Being a non-native speaker of the language**

Concerning being a non-native teacher and feeling competitive in the job market, the data showed that the participants were more concerned about how they felt about their own language proficiency than how they measured up to native speaker standards.

I think so, we do feel competitive despite the fact we are not native English speakers as I had recently mentioned, we have the advantage that we have gone through the learning process but I feel that maybe, there are certain cultural limitations that we um, that could reduce this competitiveness because well, in Mexico, this mentality is very common where I prefer that the... teacher be native or something like that this would be to a certain degree the only limitation but for everything else, I don't believe so (FG: Hada: 63).

As my classmate said, the limitations would be cultural we don't know many idiomatic expressions or phrases that are used in the United States our English is academic... on the other hand we have the strength or the strong point ... that we have gone through what the students are going through, then we can understand them, we can explain. I have had Mexican teachers and foreign teachers, and I have realized that regarding grammatical

matters, I understand better with the Mexican teachers because they explain better to me (FG: Anita: 64).

I can say that I do not feel competitive at this time since it is necessary to know the language in all aspects and at a more profound level than you, when you have this knowledge and can ...give it to the students at this time, I am going to feel competitive (FG: Ella: 67).

As in the study by Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999, p. 141) "...the construct of native speaker is recognized and is psychologically real in the participants' consciousness, they did not express a sense of inferiority vis-à-vis native speaker professionals". In general being a NNS of the language was not a realistic concern for these participants because they had not gone out into the job market nor had they been in real teaching situations.

However, they were able to identify both negative and positive aspects of non-nativeness. The negative aspect had to do with culture and English language proficiency as expressed by Anita and Hada. These students mentioned that the lack of cultural awareness of the target language was what impedes their development in the language and put them at what they regarded as a disadvantage in relation to native speakers.

Nevertheless, the students mentioned that they did have some advantages being non-native speakers of the language. Having the same cultural and linguistic background as their students was considered to be beneficial as future teachers. Among the positive characteristics of being a non-native English-speaking teacher proposed by Medgyes (1994), i.e., being a good role model for their students and understanding and being sensitive to the difficulties and needs of the students in general seem to accord with what the participants mentioned.

#### 5.3.4.8 Starting Teaching Practicum

The data from the focus group regarding starting to teach (doing their teaching practicum-compulsory course) revealed that the participants were aware that, theoretically, they had the basic knowledge from previous courses they had taken in the B.A. program to start teaching.

... in my personal opinion, I feel secure that what the school, the institution has given me or that this is the basic knowledge, ready to be put into practice, and nothing more ...I need to dose that out, but if I feel ready to take that on, yes (FG: Ella: 58).

I think that I have the foundations already and as she said, practice is missing, I mean, I already feel ready and I am secure because I have the knowledge, everything I learned in MELE I, MELE II [*teaching methodology courses*], teaching practicum (FG: Anita: 59).

I also think that I would also feel prepared to teach classes at this moment but, of course, the practice would help me a lot to grow, I mean, over time (FG: Hada: 60).

Ella and Anita considered that the institution had prepared them to take upon themselves this new venture and that they were ready to put theory into practice. On the other hand, Reina felt that the practicum course was part of her professional preparation and therefore, the course would help her consolidate her previous knowledge.

The participants appeared ready to take up the practice of teaching. Despite the feeling of anxiety expressed in section 5.3.4.3, they were looking forward to the experience of beginning to teach which they believed would help them become more secure about their future role as teachers.

## 5.4 Discussion of findings

These pre-service teacher's beliefs were partly made up of their past experiences as students which provided a background that seemed to be a source of influence on their future development as teachers. The data that emerged from this study show that like many pre-service teachers (Gebhard, 2009; Golombek, 2009) the participants were seeking a balance between their beliefs as a student, their development as a teacher, and influences from their own lives. Thus, we can perceive different dimensions of experience and belief impacting on these students. These were not isolated dimensions as they formed part of the network of influences making up whom the individual is and what she believes. Even though these influences are discussed separately below, they are highly intertwined. Three major sets of influences permeated the responses of the students:

- *Personal influences.* Early influences such as admiration of a relative's profession or interest in teaching since childhood motivated them to enter teaching.
- *Student influences.* Their experiences as language learners during different periods of their lives, from secondary school on, influenced these students' beliefs about language teaching and interests towards teaching
- *Teaching influences.* As students at the BA program (LEMO) they consolidated their aspirations to become teachers and added other dimensions to their beliefs as future teachers.
- *Role model influences.* In relation to their perceived roles as teachers, in this study these participants identified themselves as "the teacher as a subject matter expert" (Beijaard, Verloop and Vermunt, 2000, p. 751).

Regarding the four points above, the participants were focusing on satisfying academic needs that they perceive as necessary for their students and not necessarily what their students might believe they need (*personal influences*). The four participants were enthusiastic about starting to teach. At the same time, they displayed apprehension in relation to the unknown experience. Drawing on their teacher training as well as early childhood and school experiences (*student influences*), the participants had built a set of core concepts about attributes that being a teacher entail. The participants in this study considered that teaching is a profession that requires commitment, responsibility, and love for the profession, characteristics which they all appeared to share as part of their belief system. While, these students had the “received knowledge” (Wallace, 1991, p. 14) from their college courses they did not, at this point in their experience detail particular aspects of teaching, as they have not yet begun to teach. The four students perceived themselves as prepared to start teaching, even though, they were nervous about commencing their teaching practice in the language classroom (*teaching influence*). They judged themselves as having the “knowledge base” (Freeman and Johnson, 1998; 2004) obtained from their teacher education courses of their subject area and the methodological foundations to start teaching. They also regarded it as important that experience from the past as language learners would help them in the future as language teachers. They believe that recalling negative experiences as well as positive experiences with teachers that they had in the past will serve as indirect experiences and help them to become good teachers. In general, despite their awareness of responding to student needs, it can be perceived that these pre-service student teachers considered that their primary role as teachers (*role model influence*) is to share or transmit knowledge. These participants considered that as future teachers they had the tools to start to teach.

Concerning being NNS, the participants believe that being “non-native” speakers of the language they were at an advantage over “native-speakers” as teachers because they could anticipate the language learning problems of their students and use the students’ native language to explain difficulties that their students may have with the language (Medgyes, 1994). They had gone through the same process as their students and would be able to empathize with them. For the participants, being a non-native speaker of English was not considered a disadvantage since they had not tested their skills in the job market and they lived in a country where English is a foreign language. Nevertheless, the participants acknowledged that they still needed to work on their English language skills. Issues regarding their English language competence were important to them because it was not only the subject matter that they would teach, but also, also the means of instruction.

Based on data from autobiographies and focus group interviews, this study has presented the beliefs of four pre-service English language teachers regarding teaching and their preparation for teaching. The students expressed their beliefs about teaching as a profession and the influences on their career choice and particularly about becoming an English language teacher. They made manifest their lack of practice and the anxiety of undergoing such an unknown task that actually having to teach will cause them. The participants also reflected on the key attributes that they considered essential in order to be a good teacher and how experiences from the past had influenced their beliefs and expectations. These student-teachers also highlighted the advantages of being a non-native speaker of the language and how this could benefit their students in the future. We can conclude that at this stage in their development as teachers, they were not fully identified with the field, but they had positive attitudes to crossing the bridge from the student to teacher role in order to test their abilities and beliefs about teaching and to become immersed in the community of language teaching practice.

## **5.5 Summary**

This study has reported on the findings of the first in a series of three linked studies tracing how the beliefs and experiences of participants preparing for English language teaching careers unfold over time. In the following chapter (Chapter six), the research follows three of the students from this study and presents how their experiences and beliefs developed during their twelve weeks of teaching practicum.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **STUDY TWO: PRACTICUM STUDENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT THE TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The teaching practicum is the conjunction of putting theory into practice in teacher education programs in Mexico. It is widely seen as the culmination of the future teacher as a student and his or her initiation into the professional world. This is the second study, of the series of three undertaken for this thesis; it reports on the experiences of three student-teachers during their term as practicum students. The participants' experiences, beliefs and feelings about this venture into the world of teaching are the core interests of the study.

The discussion presented here is a continuation of the research presented in chapter five. In the previous study, the participants had not yet begun to teach. This chapter seeks to report on the experiences of the pre-service students who had participated in the previous study and who were now completing their pre-service teaching practicum. The participants' experiences, beliefs and feelings about this entry into the world of teaching were the focus of the data handling for this portion of the study.

#### **6.1.2 Contextual background**

In relation to this particular study, it is relevant to reiterate the nature of the contextual background for the LEMO practicum (see also Chapter two). In the LEMO program, the teaching practicum is the last course of the teaching component. The students are required to undertake their practice during 10 to 12 weeks for a minimum of two hours a week up to a maximum of four hours a week in a general English language classroom. Depending on their language proficiency level, (550 points minimum, TOEFL or similar standardized tests), the



students may be able to practice in the language courses in the LEMO program itself, in any of the additional English language courses offered by the faculty, or elsewhere outside BUAP. These arrangements may be made according to the availability of mentors (the teachers in charge of the class) and supervisors (the teacher in charge of the Practicum course). The decision about the placement of the student teachers also depends on logistical arrangements to do with class availability. At the placement location, the mentors guide and evaluate the students every time they practice and give the practicing teachers feedback on their work. Regarding the practicum course, it is obligatory for the students to prepare lesson plans for each day that they practice and to present the possible material that they will use before each teaching session to their supervisors. During the weeks in which the practicum is carried out, the students are required to keep a journal of their experiences in the language classroom (in English) where they reflect on the salient issues of the day. They have the option of writing a daily journal or a weekly journal that talk about the two practicum sessions of the week according to their preference. These journals are sent to their supervisor before their consultation session so that they can be used to discuss issues or problems at each weekly meeting (Salazar, 2009). Complementary requirements for the practicum course such as keeping a portfolio with lesson plans and materials developed for the lessons plus mid term and final research paper are also required.

### **6.1.3 Purpose of the study**

The language teaching practicum can be considered the consolidation of an undergraduate pre-service student-teacher's basic academic formation. This part of the research aims to explore the experiences and beliefs of three LEMO students about being a teacher and the issues that influenced these beliefs during their practicum. It is important for teacher training programs such as the LEMO to be able to understand how these students undergo and visualize their first teaching experience and what factors influence this effort in order to prepare students before starting this professional encounter.

#### **6.1.4 Research questions**

The following questions (study two research questions, 2RQ) guided this study which set out to examine the participants' inner thoughts and reactions as they experienced their teaching practicum.

2RQ1. What beliefs do the practicum students hold about teaching during their practicum?

2RQ2. What beliefs do the students hold about themselves as teachers during their term as practicum students?

2RQ3. What are the views of the students about the processes of the teaching practicum?

The first research question intended to investigate through the narrative data any underlying beliefs about teaching that emerged during the participants' practicum. The second research question intended to investigate if the participants' showed any change in their perceptions about themselves from the previous study. The third research question was posed in order to examine if the students had any perceptions about their development as teachers. In addressing these questions, this study examines the participants' teaching journal and the transcript of a personal interview with each participant. It is worth mentioning that this was the participants' first teaching experience. It is through the analysis and categorization of issues present in the participants' narratives that the answers to these questions emerged (section 6.5).

#### **6.2. Research methodology**

As indicated in section 6.1.2 (above) where the research questions are set out, this study is concerned with practicum students' beliefs and feelings about their role as teachers. In order to investigate questions such as these that are not quantifiable methodologically the overall research paradigm selected for the study was qualitative. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), qualitative research can be defined as "any kind of research that produces

findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (p. 17). The purpose of qualitative research is to explore, describe and interpret phenomena from the point of view of participants operating within real-life contexts. In this study the participants' personal views were analyzed in order to generate the findings in response to the research questions that were posed.

As in the first study, the approach to data collection used in this study is related to the conceptions of narrative inquiry. According to Pinnegar and Daynes (2007, p. 5) "narrative inquiry embraces narrative as both the method and phenomenon of study. Through the attention to methods for analyzing and understanding stories lived and told, it can be connected and placed under the label of qualitative research." In this study the participants' journals and interviews were seen as personal accounts of their experiences. These narratives "enable teachers to articulate and communicate what they know and believe about teaching and who they have become as teachers" (Johnson and Golombek, 2002, p. 7).

There are several ways of approaching the analysis of the content in journals and interviews. According to Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) one of the dimensions to analyzing the content of narratives is through categorical content analysis. It is also known as content analysis and is most suited for the study of student-teachers' journals and their interviews because "categories of the studied topic are defined and separate utterances of the text are extracted and gathered into these categories/groups" (p. 13) and later commented on. Thus, following Lieblich et al. for this study extracts of the participants' journals and their interviews were used to exemplify different categories found in the participants' journal entries and transcripts of their individual interviews.

### **6.2.1. Teaching journals**

Journals, diaries and logs, which were the primary data sources used in this study for data collection, refer to personal accounts of events, experiences and observations recorded for subsequent reflection. As mentioned by Bailey (1990, p. 215), they are “documented by candid entries... and then analyzed for recurring patterns or salient events”. According to Dörnyei (2007, p. 156) diary studies have been used since the early 1980’s in the area of applied linguistics in order “to obtain personal accounts of the experiences ...in teacher education programs.” In most teacher education contexts, the use of teaching journals is promoted in order to reflect on teaching practices and to learn from the experiences in the classroom. Among the benefits of journal writing reported by Porter, Goldstein, Leatherman and Conrad (1990, p. 235) are that it “encourages[s] students to make connections between course content and their own teaching”. Keeping a journal about experiences in the classroom can help student-teachers to become aware of their strengths and to work on areas that need improvement. Journals have proven to be an important instrument for teacher reflection and for professional development.

However, Nunan (1992, p. 123) poses the following query about keeping journals, “To what extent do the diary entries reflect what was really going on in the classroom at the time that the recordings were made?” This question relates more broadly to the reliability of self-report data. However, in this study, it can be considered that the journal entries reflect what was really going on in the classroom through the eyes of the person who wrote the journal and thus the entries reveal reality as these participants perceived it.

### **6.2.2 Interviews**

An interview can be defined as a face-to-face structured conversation that intends to elicit information about the interviewee’s activities regarding a given experience (Dörnyei, 2007; Kvale, 1996). In the second part of the study, the student-teachers participated in

individual interviews. These interviews were semi-structured, where the researcher followed a protocol of questions as a “guide, while still having the freedom to digress and probe for more information” (Mackey and Gass, 2005, p. 173). The interviews were used to corroborate data from the journals and to collect more in-depth accounts about the participants’ initial experience as teachers.

### **6.2.3 Participants**

It was considered both relevant and desirable to follow through with the same participants from the previous study reported in chapter five after they had completed their twelve-week teaching practicum. This approach would allow for continuity in investigating the issues and experiences that these students encountered and reflected upon during their first contact as student-teachers with classroom situations. However, ultimately it was not possible to work with all four original participants as one of the students from the previous study was not able to continue to participate. As soon as she finished her practicum, she obtained a job in Switzerland and left Mexico, and thus was no longer able to be easily contacted. Therefore, in this study, the participants were three female pre-service student-teachers of English as a foreign language from the Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas (LEMO) in the Language Faculty at the Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla (BUAP). As already outlined in chapter four (section 4.4), they had relatively similar backgrounds regarding their education and language learning experiences.

The classroom locations where these participants carried out their practicum were the basic language courses in the LEMO program. These locations within the BUAP are frequently used for the student teacher practicum when there are difficulties making arrangements with schools and teaching centres externally. Thus, these student teachers were undertaking their practicum in the school (LEMO) where they were still students taking other courses in conjunction with their practicum. However, this situation is not considered

to affect the data in the study as the students in the basic language courses were not known personally to these student teachers or to their teachers, who were the teacher mentors in the practicum. In addition, the practicum was a formal arrangement introduced as such to the students in the language classes, to their teachers and to the student teachers participating in the study.

The three student-teachers had no previous teaching experience before this course. During their practicum, they taught three to four hours a week during twelve weeks of a fourteen-week term. They were required to work along with their mentor. As previously mentioned as a requisite for the practicum course the participants were asked to keep a reflective electronic journal (e-journal) of their teaching activity that they were to e-mail to their supervisor (the lecturer in charge of the practicum course). The e-journal's primary purpose was to keep a record of the students' language teaching experiences for reflection and evaluation (Bailey, 1990, p. 215). The students were asked by their lecturer to follow a modified version of the "journal guidelines" presented by Ho and Richards (1993, p. 39) (Appendix J). The practicum lasts 12 weeks. During the first two weeks, the student-teachers observe the class where they are going to practice. Each participant handed in a different number of journal entries. Anita handed in 14 entries and Reina handed in 15 entries; because some of their classes were two-hour classes and they did not complete 20 daily entries. Hada handed in ten weekly journals where she talked about the two hours she had taught during the week (Appendix K).

The three student-teachers were recruited via personal invitation. Because they were the same student-teachers who participated in the previous study in chapter five, personal contact references had been previously collected from the participants. E-mails were sent out inviting them to participate further in the study and indicating that if they were interested in participating to meet with the researcher at the BUAP-LEMO for an information session about the study. At the meeting, the student-teachers were informed about the new stage in the

project and what their involvement in it would require. They were given time to think about whether they wanted to participate and they were asked to contact the researcher within a week as well as to read and sign the ethics consent forms if they wished to participate. As already indicated, three of the four students accepted to participate in the study. The fourth student–teacher from study one (Chapter five) did not participate for the reasons explained earlier.

#### **6.2.4 Data collection procedures**

After the initial contacts (explained in section 6.2.1 above), for the first part of this inquiry, the participants were requested to supply the e-journals that they wrote as a requirement for their practicum course. In order to avoid what Bailey (1990) mentions as “contamination of the data”(p. 221), the researcher did not contact the participants until they had finished their practicum so that their journal entries would not be biased by the study in such way that it could be reflected within or interfere with the entries in their teaching journals.

The participants sent their journals via e-mail to the researcher during the two weeks following the end of the practicum course that was approximately three weeks before the summer vacation. In this study, an “indirect analysis” (Bailey, 1991 in Bailey, Curtis and Nunan 2001, p. 51) or “secondary analysis” (Numrich, 1996 p. 132) of the students’ teaching journals was carried out because the researcher and not the participants, analyzed the student-teachers’ personal journals. The participants were not invited to analyze their journals because once the practicum courses at the university had finished, the students went back to their cities of origin and it was difficult to contact them because of personal and work constraints. The principle goal of the journal analysis was to identify relevant issues and themes in the participants’ reflections about their beliefs and emotions about being a teacher as they developed over the period of time that they carried out their practicum.

Interviews were chosen for the second part of this study because the researcher considered that they would help to clarify and expand on some of the issues and comments stated in the journals. They also allowed the student-teachers to talk more exclusively about their individual experiences as practicum teachers. After having sent in their journals, the students convened with the researcher on a day and a time that was feasible for them to attend the Language Faculty at the BUAP in order to undergo a personal audio-recorded interview with the researcher. The students were asked if they would like the interview to be conducted in English or Spanish and all three indicated that they considered English to be preferable. Thus, contrary to the focus group interview in the first study (Chapter five), these individual interviews were conducted in English following a protocol that was developed for this purpose (Appendix L). Following the interviews the recordings were transcribed by the researcher for analysis (Appendix M).

### **6.3. Data analysis**

As previously mentioned, the first part of the study consisted of the analysis of the data from the journals. The journals contained the students' reactions and personal observations about the practicum. The data were appraised in order to recognize salient themes present in the journal entries as described in Section 6.4.1.1 below. Another source of data for this research was personal interviews carried out by the researcher with the participants. The interviews were carried out, as previously mentioned, in order to clarify and expand on some of the issues presented in the journals. Thus in the second stage of the study, the interview transcripts were analyzed for relevant topics and these were reviewed and categories were developed and presented in a table as described in section 6.4.2.

#### **6.3.1. Practicum journals**

The journals were analyzed for patterns that were coded into categories. Throughout the journals, the most salient category was that of emotions with two main sub-categories of



anxiety and happiness. Another major category that was present throughout the journals was the participants' beliefs about their performance with subcategories of management, role adjustment and teaching skills.

#### 6.3.1.1 Protocol used for analyzing journal (Analysis procedure)

The journals that were submitted by the participants were examined to begin to identify key topics. Of the four dimensions for analyzing narratives mentioned by Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) a content analysis was carried out (section 6.2). An “open coding”, or development of categories of main issues, which emerged from the data (Creswell, 2002) of the journals, revealed two major issues (Table 6.1) common in the journals of all three participants.

**Table 6.1: First Coding Stage: Categories Emerging from the Student-Teachers' Journals**

Open Coding	Examples from student-teachers' journals
<b>1. Emotions</b>	“This was my first class in real context as a teacher. I was very nervous because it is not the same to do microteaching in my classroom and with my classmates that teach in a real context where someone is observing and evaluating you.”(Entry 1: Anita)
<b>2 Considerations about performance</b>	“According to my teacher's comments, I have to improve my way of giving instructions because students seemed confused when I spoke too fast.” (Entry 1:Hada)

After identifying these two major categories the journals were compared by the researcher for “global coherence” (Woods, 1996, p. 31) involving more specific recurring themes. Therefore, a second stage of coding (axial coding) relating to other sub-categories that emerged from the main categories previously defined (Creswell, 2002) was carried out. They are presented in Table 6.2.

**Table 6.2: Second Coding Stage: More Specific Categories Emerging from the Student-Teachers' Journals**

Open Coding	Axial Coding	Example from the Student-teachers' journals
<b>1. Emotions</b>	<b>a. motivation</b>	"...students had commented they liked they way I spoke. IT REALLY MOTIVATED ME! <i>[stress highlighted by student with capital letters end exclamation]</i> (Entry 1: Hada)
	<b>b. nervousness</b>	"I was less nervous than in my first class but I was still nervous." (Entry 2: Hada)  "Today I was less nervous that in the previous classes." (Entry 3 : Anita)
	<b>c. satisfaction</b>	"In this class I was relaxed and secured of myself."(Entry 6 : Anita)  "I was more comfortable, the activities that I planned for Thursday were amazing ..."(Entry 4 :Reina)
<b>2. Performance</b>	<b>a. management issues</b>	".... Personally, I think it was okay because it helped me when I did not know how to manage that situation.(Entry 11: Reina)  "I had some extra time so I used my "back up" activity. I think it was a bit obvious that I had extra time, but they did the activity though.( Entry 4 : Hada)
	<b>b. role adjustment</b>	"I think it helped to make them feel more confident towards me. It helped me too."(Entry 3: Hada)  "I feel that as I get to know the students more, I have more confidence with them, and this helps me to carry out better the lesson."(Entry 5: Anita).
	<b>c. teaching skills</b>	"...the activities that I planned for Thursday were amazing for the students they liked them." (Entry 4 :Reina)  "I need to improve the error correction techniques because I still have problems to correct the students." ( Entry 3: Anita)

### 6.3.1. 2 Protocol used for analyzing the interviews

As previously mentioned (section 6.2.2), interviews were analyzed for salient issues that would provide further depth to the analysis of the journals. The protocol followed for this

analysis was similar to the one used for analyzing the students' journals (section 6.4.1). The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim by the researcher in order to analyze their content and to code for significant themes. The first coding stage (Table 6.3) was an open coding for general themes. These themes were emotions and performance (teacher performance).

**Table 6.3 First coding stage: First categories emerging from the Student-teachers' interviews.**

Open coding	Hada	Anita	Reina
Emotions	I was completely nervous at the beginning (6)	I feel happy I feel confident of myself (18)	It was frustrating for me the first day (06)
Performance	I tried to explain but I realized ...in my students eyes that they were like still confused (8)	I don't know how to control and how to manage the class (04)	...you think [ <i>this</i> ] is wrong oh my god they are looking at me what I'm going to do?(10)

The second coding stage (Table 6.4) was an axial coding for more specific sub-categories. Under emotions, the sub-categories of nervousness, frustration and satisfaction arose and under the category of performance, the sub-categories of being prepared to start to teach, themselves as teachers, role adjustment, being a member of community of practice and themselves in the future were the most relevant categories.

**Table 6.4: Second coding stage: Specific categories emerging from the students in the interviews**

		Anita	Hada	Reina
Emotions	a) nervousness	I feel nervous...I began to sweat (02). I don't know how to control and manage the class (04).	I feel nervous ... my legs are shaking...my voice wasn't clear but as the class went by I started to feel more comfortable (6)	Very nervous... (06) I was really nervous... the words I didn't know...I spoke them in Spanish(12)
	b) frustration	I felt frustrated too (18) I felt frustrated because I think I wasn't able to do my best effort (20)	I had good and bad moments, some of them were frustrating at the very beginning... (42)	...it was frustrating for me because I was sick...the mentor said 'you have to give the class' (06)

	c) motivation	<i>[at the end of the class]</i> I feel happy...I feel good about my job...(18)	I was very excited and wanted to teach (8)	... that was good because it made me feel comfortable and relaxed (22)
	d) significant moment	When students began to ask me things that they didn't understand I felt I was their teacher not a student. (38)	I think that every end of every class was a significant moment because I said to myself well I survived another class (20)	When my supervisor went to observe me and she told me what were my strengths and weaknesses (40). At the beginning I was afraid but then I realized that ... I need to improve the those aspects (42)...it was positive....in some way it helped me to improve (46)
Performance	a) being prepared to start to teach	Well I felt prepared but I need experience in teaching... in a real context (24)... to manage a group ...to interact with students, to teach teenagers adults and children (26)	I felt I had the teaching ability but there were some things related to the language that I didn't know how to handle or explain to my students... I felt I need more preparation (8)	Not at the beginning ...I thought I was not good for <i>[this]</i> ...you realize that you can do it and you can improve in many aspects(24)
	b) themselves as teachers	I was a teacher that likes to prepare classes, to have dynamic classes, to use technology, to integrate the four basic language skills (32). I'm a good teacher (36)	I think friendly and a teacher that tries to promote confidence in students... and empathy...good relationship (12)	I think that I am a responsible person .I try to do my I organize the classes ...I include the activities that they <i>[the students]</i> like to engage in .... To participate. I am a punctual person and I don't want to have a mess in the class ...(30) I am very responsible (33)I am creative and enthusiastic(36)
	c) role adjustment	When I caught the students attention, when students began to ask me things that they didn't understand I felt I was their teacher not a student. (38)	...the comments I received were very rewarding for me and they told me that they understood me better their teacher ... they said that I was a good teacher ... they said that they understood what I explained ... (20)	You need to be friends with the students (32)
	d) being a member of the community of practice	I feel happy and I like to share my knowledge with the people... I like to interact with the students, I like to work with them and share my knowledge with them (44)	I feel very proud and I feel that I want to give something to that community ...I want to learn more from that community. Don't know something useful for other teachers ...that's something I did during my thesis project and I wanted to show good things ... that could be useful for other teachers. I realized that there were so many things that I found (useful for me and that I think that can be useful for other teachers so that's what I want to give.(28,30)	Because you think about the years that you spent in this place and now that I've finished the major I say oh I don't want leave the school (laughs) (62)... it's going t be difficult to work outside...to face real problems...real situations (64)
	e) learning to be a teacher	I think that I'm going to learn more during my experience during my preparation because my preparation as a teacher hasn't finished ...my preparation started... but it hasn't finished (40) I would like to be a good teacher that tries to understand her students ...that tries t to improve her teaching through the time...experience and with a good preparation.(50)	I have just started and I think that I still need to learn many things... <i>[like]</i> classroom discipline, sometimes being friendly, and it's not that easy to be friendly and keep control of the whole group ...so I think that's something that I still need to learn (34,36)	It's going to be difficult to work outside to face real problems real situations. (64)...I can't believe it.

	f) The future	I would like to do a master's degree and I would like to take courses or all the things that help me to be a better teacher(52)	Working in a bilingual school I hope (laughs) ... and being a good teacher ... that helps the students learn that guides her students through the process and that... helps her students to be successful in areas... in which English is needed.(38, 40)	I don't know working of course and studying an M.A... I want to study and I don't know with more experience of course many things can happen (83,85)
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Categories are drawn on from both journals and interviews in the discussion that follows. The journal entries are signalled as “Jour+# + name of participant” e.g. (Jour 2: Hada) and the interviews are signalled by the “INT + # of the turn+ participant’s name” e.g. INT (26) Anita. Since some of the prominent topics in the journals and in the interviews were similar, the information from both sources is discussed together. Nevertheless, there were some issues that were particular to journals or to the interviews and these are presented separately. The following discussion is documented through categories and sub-categories that became present in the coding processes.

## 6.4 Emotions

The practicum experience appeared to have been a cline of emotions for the three student-teachers. Early reactions to teaching practice centred greatly on emotions. The emotional impact that the first day of teaching brought was clearly a major issue in itself as the participants commented extensively on it in their journals and at the beginning of their interviews.

### 6.4.1 Nervousness

In their comments about the first day of teaching, the participants recalled the emotional enterprise that the day meant for them. Thornbury (1991, p. 142) highlights this common experience for novice teachers when discussing his own research he states “initial reactions to teaching practice focused ... on trainees’ self-consciousness ... Inevitably, nervousness colors most accounts...”

Nervousness was highlighted by Anita from the very first entry in her journal. Anita's emotions relating to nervousness evolved during her first teaching period. According to Nias (1996. p .4), "self-esteem is closely linked to a sense of personal efficacy". The following comment by Anita gives a sense of how her views of her personal efficacy among her peers were subtly altered in the actual teaching situation. The fact that she was being observed by her mentor and/or supervisor may have made Anita nervous as well as self-conscious about what she was doing.

I was very nervous because it is not the same to do microteaching in my classroom and with my classmates than to teach in a real context where someone is observing and evaluating you (JOUR1: Anita)

For Anita, the fear of the unknown clearly caused her emotional tension, as she expressed again during the interview.

I felt nervous...I began to sweat (02) INT: Anita

For Hada, also, feelings of nervousness were prominent during her first days of teaching. Even though she eventually implies that she survived the class and was thus happy, she may have begun that class by feeling that her performance did not live up to her own personal expectations of a satisfactory lesson.

I felt nervous ... my legs were shaking...my voice wasn't clear but as the class went by I started to feel more comfortable (6) INT: Hada

I was very excited and wanted to teach (8) INT: Hada  
[Commenting on her first day of teaching].

Although Hada was impacted by the emotions of the first day, she seems to have begun to concentrate more on her teaching and less on her environment. She may perhaps have started to control her emotions and stabilize her teaching activity.

“Before the class, I was extremely nervous because I knew I was going to be observed. However, as the class went through I became more confident.”(JOUR 5: Hada)

Like most beginning teachers, Hada’s anxiety may have been because of her lack of experience to handle unexpected situations. Also being observed creates an emotional tension for most people and especially so for pre-service teachers. As Hada became involved in her practicum, she forgot about being observed and was able to concentrate more on her teaching and thus, to become more self-assured. Towards the end of her practicum, Hada seemed to feel less anxiety about the whole teaching process.

A friend of mine recorded me today for the midterm paper and even though I knew the camera was there, I did not feel the pressure I usually feel when being observed. I think I could manage the situation without the teacher’s presence because there is enough confidence between me and the students by now.(JOUR 10: Hada)

The teaching practicum appeared to have given Hada elements of security to be able to carry out the teaching process. Towards the end, as seen in this comment, she began to seem more confident about what she was doing, experienced less anxiety and appeared less concerned about the need to be supervised by her mentor.

As with these other beginning students, Reina felt nervous about commencing to teach. From the very first day, Reina mentioned that she felt a sense of anxiety.

At the beginning of the first practice, I was a little nervous but the students made me feel comfortable they were very kind with me...I was very nervous... I forgot to ask them their names and most of the time I said “excuse me can you repeat your name please.” I realized that theory is different from practice; it is not the same being a student and being a teacher your way of thinking changes drastically. (JOUR: 1 Reina)

For Reina, the transition from student to teacher created tension and this could to be one of the factors that provoked her nervousness. Probably, due to her lack of experience, she also experienced an emotional gap between her planning stage for the class and the actual teaching process. The emotional nature of teaching even manifested itself in the physical reaction of blushing.

I was really nervous... the words I didn't know...I spoke to them in Spanish (12)... my face was red (14) INT: Reina

Reina had to revert to the mother tongue when she did not know a term in English. She may have been taught, in the past, that you never speak Spanish in English class and this caused her embarrassment. For Reina this incident might have become a learning experience that she could take into consideration in her future teaching.

For the three participants, the first day of teaching was a highly emotional endeavour. The first “reality shock” (Veeman, 1984) that the students encountered produced a great deal of tension and nervousness. Their emotional situation gave way to doubts about personal efficacy and awareness of lack of experience.

#### **6.4.2 Frustration**

In the interviews, these practicum students also mentioned that along with the nervousness that characterized their initial teaching experience, they also experienced frustration.



According to Kyriacou (2001), frustration may be considered as an unpleasant emotion resulting from some unsatisfactory aspect of a teacher's work. Anita, Hada and Reina felt frustrated by situations that, apparently due to their lack of experience and the gap between their expectations and the realities of the classroom, they could not easily overcome at the time that they occurred.

I felt frustrated too (18) I felt frustrated because I think I wasn't able to do my best effort (20) INT: Anita

Anita's frustrations came from being her own critic as she believed that she was not living up to her own higher expectations. Hada's frustration may have been caused by her lack of experience in the practical matters of teaching.

I had good and bad moments; some of them were frustrating at the very beginning... (42) INTR: Hada

She too may not have been able to reach the goals for teaching that she had set for herself. Reina's frustration came from a different source than that expressed by her peers.

It was frustrating for me because I was sick...the mentor said 'you have to give the class' (06) INT: Reina

She was sick on her first day of teaching so, she may have felt that she did not live up to her expectations because of her illness. Deep down, she may not have wanted to start teaching yet because she knew she could not give her best performance. She may have needed her mentor to show sympathy and postpone the beginning of her practicum for a few days.

Steffy and Wolfe (1998 n.p.) state that "pre-service teachers naturally are hesitant and unsure of themselves. As they visit classrooms, they are amazed at the master teachers'

skill at arranging classroom activities.” All three participants may have felt that in the eyes of their mentor teachers they had not achieved certain aims and expectations that they had set for themselves or satisfied certain personal needs that they had in this part of their development as teachers.

### **6.4.3 Motivation**

According Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 70) motivation is “the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn”.

In the interview, in the data provided by the participants, there was evidence of how their motivation developed over the course of the practicum and increased their determination to do the best job as teachers that they could.

Hada, for example, showed her motivation from the very beginning as she expressed first in her journal entry and then in her interview.

“...students had commented they liked they way I spoke.  
IT REALLY MOTIVATED ME! [*Stress high*] (JOUR 1:  
Hada)

I was very excited and wanted to teach (8) INT: Hada

Her students’ comments seemed to have given Hada positive external motivation from the earliest stages of her first time teaching experience. She also found that undertaking the practicum generated a sense of excitement that in turn further motivated her desire to teach. Anita and Reina expressed their motivation through their assessments of how effectively they had carried out their teaching and the emotions that arose as a result. Clearly, their sense of fulfilment about their teaching processes and activities gave them further motivation.

In this class I was relaxed and sure of myself (JOUR 6: Anita)

I was more comfortable, the activities that I planned for Thursday were amazing ... (JOUR 4: Reina)

Another comment made by Anita suggests that her feelings of enthusiasm and satisfaction were extending her motivation for the career she had chosen.

[*At the end of the class*] I felt happy... I felt good about my job (18) INT: Anita

Reina also was beginning to feel satisfied with her whole classroom situation. Her emotions were beginning to evolve for the better.

That was good [*the class*] because it made me feel comfortable and relaxed (22) INT: Reina

The sense of achievement and the emotions that accompany it that are reflected in these comments are likely to have given Anita and Reina greater reassurance about their teaching. The opinion that one's teaching has been a success can raise one's belief about efficacy (Pajares, 2002), lead to stronger motivation and therefore increase the confidence to manage the aspects of teaching that are previously found to be challenging.

#### **6.4.4 Significant moments during the practicum**

As stated by Labercane, Last, Nichols and Johnson (1998) critical moments in teaching lead to change and these changes help to develop better teaching practice. In the interviews, the participants were asked whether they had experienced a point that was critical to their development as a teacher. In relation to the practicum events, all three mentioned incidents that had a positive impact on their development.

For Anita, her significant moment was one of self- realization where she adjusted her role from student to teacher.

When I caught the students' attention, when students began to ask me things that they didn't understand I felt I was their teacher not a student. (38) INT: Anita

At this moment, Anita believed that not only the students considered her as a teacher, but she herself finally felt she was in her role as a teacher. This point in the practicum may have been the start of her transition to what in the future would be her profession.

According to Huberman (1989) all teachers go through an initial phase in their teacher development where recurrent themes of survival are found. Hada's comment reflected this experience.

I think that every end of every class was a significant moment because I said to myself well I survived another class (20) INT: Hada

Hada believed that having taught all of her classes was a major accomplishment for her at this point of her development. Her sense of significant happenings in the practicum was closely bound with her sense of being able to keep surviving in the classroom.

For Reina, a significant moment came as a critical point of feedback on her practicum.

When my supervisor went to observe me and she told me what were my strengths and weaknesses (40). At the beginning I was afraid but then I realized that ... I need to improve those aspects (42)...it was positive....in some way it helped me to improve. (46)INT: Reina

In Reina's case, what she had anticipated to be a negative experience had become a positive point of development, as her significant moment helped her realize that there were aspects of her teaching that needed improvement. She began to view this feedback experience in a

different light because she became aware that there were also positive aspects in developing further in her teaching.

These moments were realizations of successful teaching practices (Castineira, Preciado, and Witten, 2006). The significant moments for these teachers were motivating and not only presented the participants with points about their teaching and classroom development, but also, appeared to have left them with a sense of satisfaction.

## **6.5 Performance**

Performance can be considered the conjunction of different factors that contribute to successful outcomes of teaching such as “teaching preparation and procedures”, “classroom management” “knowledge of the subject” and “personal characteristics” (Stroot, Kiel, Stedman, Lohr, Faust, Schincariol-Randall, Sullivan, Czerniak, Kuchcinski, Orel, and Richter; 1998, p. 1). In this section issues of role adjustment, management issues, and teaching performance will be discussed.

### **6.5.1 Teaching performance**

The participants worried about their classroom performance as teachers. As Reina expressed when talking about her first day of teaching, losing face and fear of losing control of the classroom atmosphere was a concern for this practicum student.

...you think [*this*] is wrong oh my god they are looking at me what I'm going to do? INT: Reina (10)

An adequate classroom atmosphere and positive classroom participation appeared to be a source of satisfaction about good teaching for Reina. In a later journal entry, the feeling of having done a good job may have been due to the fact that she felt that her situation was under control in relation to the factors she mentions.

I think my teaching performance in this week ... was good. I felt happy about it because the class worked very well. The student's participation was okay they were able to cooperate ...in order to learn something new. (8)INT: Reina

For Anita when describing her classroom performance, as with Hada and Reina, issues of classroom management were salient in her teaching journals from the very first day. In the interview, she mentioned that on the first day she did not feel in control of what she was doing.

I don't know how to control and how to manage the class  
(04) INT: Anita

Yet in her journal, she reflected on the need for improvement probably because of her mentor's comments after her first class. She accepts this advice as something to be aware of for her subsequent classes.

... I have to work on some weak points that I had such as accuracy in English, dealing with occasional classroom management problems, and the use of the board in an organized and neat way. In general ... I need to improve my next lessons. (JOUR: 1 Anita)

Anita's reflections on her need to improve were repeated in her second journal entry. This issue would continue to be present when preparing her subsequent classes.

In general, I think that I did a good work in this second class, but I had weak points that I have to improve such as fluency and accuracy, use of appropriate error correction techniques, and dealing with occasional classroom management problems. (JOUR 2: Anita).

Anita had clearly identified what aspects of her teaching needed to be improved at this early stage. As subsequent entries showed she also appeared to have realized that she needed to improve her language proficiency, teaching skills and management issues, as well as what aspects of her teaching she wanted to focus on.

... But I think that I still have problems with error correction, pronunciation, and integration of the skills. Furthermore, I would like to carry out activities more dynamic, which motivate more to students to participate. I am going to try to improve these aspects in my following classes. (JOUR: 5 Anita)

Another recurring theme for Anita was the importance of promoting oral development with her students.

I have to plan more activities that involve speaking and emphasis on fluency and pronunciation. So that students could improve this skill. I think that as teacher I also need to improve my fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy but with the practice I could improved those aspects (7) INT: Anita.

Nevertheless, she also realized that in order to promote fluency and pronunciation in her class, there was a need to improve aspects of her own oral language proficiency. This realization could prove productive for her future as a teacher. From her comments in general, Anita appeared very much aware of the issues that she needed to work on in order to continue developing as a teacher. This kind of awareness may prove fruitful for her future professional development.

Hada also had issues about her performance in the classroom. From the very beginning, she felt that she was having problems managing her time for the activities that she had planned.

Well, it wasn't exactly complicated; the problem was that they needed more time to digest all the new vocabulary I introduced in the reading. I couldn't check the last exercise I asked them to do because the time was over and they had to leave.(JOUR: 2: Hada)

According to Richards (1998) regarding issues of teacher planning timing is a problem that cannot be determined ahead of time. It is probable that with more

experiences Hada may acquire the necessary flexibility to be able to come to terms with this sort of issues. Related to this issue, Hada also seems to have had problems with issues that were not contemplated in her lesson plans.

Students had very specific doubts about specific questions or examples in their books, so it was difficult for me make an explanation useful for the whole group. (Jour: 8 Hada)

Clearly, Hada was not prepared for this situation to happen. This circumstance was difficult for her because she was towards the end of her practicum and she still had areas that needed her attention about her performance as a teacher.

#### **6.5.2 Role adjustment**

Common to both the journals and the interviews was the issue of “role adjustment”, which, according to Thornbury (1991, p. 143), is the period in student-teachers’ lives when they make the transition from student to teacher. The participants’ perception of themselves as student and/or teacher appeared to be confused at times. These student-teachers were still experiencing different educational roles: as students taking two final academic courses from their program at the LEMO; and as teachers practicing their professional roles in real classrooms. The transition was particularly difficult for the three participants because they were student-teachers in the school where they were also students and thus the location itself may have contributed to the confused role perceptions.

In Hada’s case, the process of clarifying what role she was taking only became obvious to her gradually. Part of the way through the practicum she realized that her students’ did not know who she was. She may have entered the class in the persona of a practicum student and not as a teacher, although in fact she wanted to present herself as the latter. The



students she taught knew she would become a teacher, but they also knew she was a student at the LEMO like them. It was important for her to clarify her role.

I realized that I had never introduced myself (oops!). Then I introduced myself and gave them all my personal information. I told them if there was something else they wanted to know from me, and I was surprised when they started asking a lot of questions about my life, school and many other things. I think it helped to make them feel more confident towards me. It helped me too. (JOUR 4: Hada)

The feeling that her students knew her better and were beginning to treat her as their teacher made her feel more confident in her personal relationship with her class and this may have begun to permeate her confidence in her teaching. Hada finally began to feel even more like a teacher when she received positive feedback from her students.

...the comments I received were very rewarding for me and they told me that they understood me better than their teacher... they said that I was a good teacher ... they said that they understood what I explained ... (20) INT: Hada

As these comments suggest, Hada gradually began to adjust to her role as a teacher. This feeling of growing into the role of the teacher seems to have helped her cope with the practicum experience and it began to serve as a basis for her future teaching.

Reina also began to realize that there were differences among her students' behaviour regarding her role in the classroom and that perhaps some of the students considered her more as their peer than as their teacher. As in Hada's case, Reina needed to go through a process of "role adjustment" where she herself would have to make the transition from student to teacher.

It is relevant to mention that not all students are comfortable with my participation within the class. There is one boy who always bothers me, he tries to make me feel nervous as a consequence I get confused with the explanation... (JOUR 5: Reina)

Intrator (2006, p. 234) mentions that "...teachers must become skilled at learning from predicaments and circumstances of practice." Reina's entry 5 shows that two incidents caused her discomfort. First her students' class participation made her feel uncomfortable and second one student in particular challenged her and made her nervous and confused. In addition, that same day another incident affected her emotional state.

"There was a moment when some of the professors entered to the classroom, I started shivering and one of the students asked me something. I did not know what to say...but now I am angry with myself because I did not say anything (JOUR: 5 Reina)

The fact that more experienced teachers entered her classroom may have made her feel more vulnerable to her lack of experience. Here again, she seems to have become intimidated making her feel more like a student than as teacher. Reina continued to have difficulties and still had issues with role-adjustment towards the middle of her practicum. She seemed more worried about the opinions of the students than what her mentor and supervisor thought of her as a teacher.

My performance ... was a mess. I was tired, stressed... when I started to talk my voice was low... but I started to relax myself and be part of the group. I have a trouble with the explanation and they got confused... When he [*mentor*] left the classroom I thought students would act differently but they were kind to me and they did everything I asked them, besides I started to I feel relaxed, secure .... (JOUR: 10 Reina)

Despite her continued concerns about her performance, Reina appeared to be making gradual adjustments as the practicum went on and to be developing more positive relations with her students as this comment shows.

Heibert, Gallimore and Stigler (2002) state that “teachers are not always learning. Often it takes all of their energy just to get through the day. But all teachers learn some of the time, and some teachers learn much of the time” (p. 3). This day, Reina’s worries may have led her to learn more about teaching and her students. Because of the requirements of the practicum course and the other courses that Reina was taking, she states that she was tired and stressed out. This tension may have caused her to be depressed about her efforts and this may have led to her to become confused in her explanations to the students. Nevertheless, at the end of the period, her students responded well to her.

Reina repeated several times in her entries that she wanted to be part of the group in the sense that she placed a great deal of emphasis on feeling closely aligned to her students and maybe even equal in her relationship with them.

You need to be friends with the students you need to be part of the group (...) and that is very eh interesting and you enjoy being a part of them (32) INT: Reina

Reina’s comments suggest that she may have experienced ambivalence about what role she was playing: student or teacher. Anita also felt that she needed to know her students better.

I feel that as I get to know the students more, I have more confidence with them, and this helps me to carry out better the lesson.(JOUR: 5 Anita).

For Anita, having a better acquaintance with her students seemed to encourage her to do her teaching better. However, she was still not clear about whether she should be her students’

friend or teacher. Nevertheless, towards the end of her practicum Anita appeared to have adjusted more to the role she wished to adopt as a teacher.

When I caught the students' attention, when students began to ask me things that they didn't understand I felt I was their teacher not a student. (38) INT: Anita

This comment gives the impression of being a moment of self-realization. It suggests that Anita had taken the next step in the process of her teacher preparation and was beginning to conceive of herself as the teacher. As previously mentioned, the rite of passage from student to teacher seems to be difficult but rewarding. Each student goes through it in a different way but they must all experience it as suggested in these excerpts.

### **6.5.3 Management issues**

Present in the participants' journals and interviews were concerns related to classroom management issues. According to Stroort, Keil, Lohr, Faust, Schincariol-Randall, Sullivan, Czerniak, Kuchcinski, Orel and Richter (1998), classroom management is the environment that teachers generate that promotes learning. The participants in the study showed concern about their classroom management. From the very beginning of their practicum, the participants realized that they needed to work on key management issues.

Hada, for example had to confront situations that were not foreseen which provoked strong feelings of discomfort for her as she did not feel knowledgeable enough to respond to questions from the textbook that were not planned for ahead of time.

However, at the end of the class the teacher told the students to ask me any doubt they had regarding the exam of the next day and I got kind of shocked. Students had very specific doubts about specific questions or examples in their books, so it was difficult for me make an explanation useful for the whole group. (JOUR: 8 Hada)

In contrast, Hada's feelings of reassurance about managing her teaching became stronger when she was alone with her class as she clearly explains in this excerpt.

"I felt kind of freer during this class because my mentor was not there...I did not feel the pressure I usually feel when being observed. I think I could manage the situation without the teacher's presence because there is enough confidence between me and the students by now... (JOUR: 10 Hada)

Hada also realized that even though she had been practicing, there were still elements of teaching skills that she had not mastered.

It is quite a challenge to deal with a big class for a long class, but it's even more difficult when they are teenagers and getting their attention is not easy. The first two minutes of the class I did not yet know how to create a nice classroom environment, but as the class went by, I felt very comfortable.(JOUR: 11 Hada)

As she approached the last class, Hada began to feel more skilled in managing her teaching. She appears to have begun "to acquire the skills necessary to function effectively in the classroom" (Steffy and Wolfe, 1998). Hada's practicum may have provided a positive background for her to continue teaching.

In Reina's account of her experience, she seemed to be a very severe critic of her own performance. The control factor seemed to be a heavy burden on her teaching.

"My performance during this lesson was bad. Firstly, because I know that my teacher [*supervisor*] will be there to observe and she arrived a little bit late. Besides the students were talking and talking all the time it was as if I ask them to act like that..." (JOUR7: Reina)

Reina had problems with the management of discipline that day. Losing control of her classroom situation made her feel negatively about her teaching situation and her supervisor's visit did not help her circumstances on that occasion. It can be considered that due to her lack of experience, Reina felt that she should be in control of her class at all times.

The discussion so far has covered the themes that the students raised in both their journals and interviews. However, some themes relating to the category of performance were not present in the participants' journal, but emerged in the interviews as the participants reflected retrospectively on their experiences. These themes will be discussed separately below.

#### **6.5.4 Teaching**

For many pre-service teachers a lesson can be considered as a performance (Richards, 1998, p. 72). In this performance, their previous preparation, self awareness as teachers, learning to teach and becoming a member of the community of teachers takes the central role.

#### **6.5.5 Preparation for teaching**

According to Johnson (1994, p. 444), "The idea that pre-service teachers enter teaching with a good deal of confidence and a sense of unrealistic optimism about their teaching is not a new one." Two of the participants in this study reflected this opinion. In the post-practicum interviews, these participants stressed that they were capable of doing the job of teaching, but they were also now realistic enough to evaluate areas where they would need to develop their student-teacher interactions and teaching and management skills.

Well I felt prepared but I need experience in teaching... in a real context (24)... to manage a group ...to interact with students, to teach teenagers adults and children (26) INT: Anita

I felt I had the teaching ability but there were some things related to the language that I didn't know how to handle or explain to my students... I felt I need more preparation (8) INT: Hada

By feeling prepared or feeling that they had the ability to teach, Anita and Hada may have sensed that their academic preparation from their courses in the LEMO had been good, but not sufficient. They stated that they needed to develop their “experiential knowledge” that is the knowledge that is developed “by the practice of the profession” (Wallace, 1991, p.15). On the other hand, at this post-practicum stage, Reina was not entirely sure she was up to the task. She expressed what Huberman (1989, p. 35) calls “...the preoccupation with self (‘Am I up to this challenge?’)”. She appeared to express more doubts about her teaching abilities than Anita and Hada.

Not at the beginning ...I thought I was not good for [*this*]  
...you realize that you can do it and you can improve in many aspects (24) INT: Reina.

However, even though she stated uncertainties about her teaching skills, she suggested that there was room for development. It can be perceived from their comments that Hada, Anita and Reina all presented a willingness and sense of readiness to start teaching; even though, they acknowledge that they still had particular issues and challenges to be worked out following the practicum course.

#### **6.5.6 Self as teacher**

Overall, the participants in this study revealed that they believed that they were the type of teachers who could carry out their teaching practice effectively. Despite a variety of personally oriented misgivings, in general they had a high sense of self-efficacy that “refers

to a teacher's generalized expectancy concerning the ability of teachers to influence students, as well as the teacher's ability to perform certain professional task"(Kagan, 1992, p. 67).

In the post-practicum interviews, Anita and Reina appeared to concur with the issues of self-efficacy expressed by Kagan regarding how they visualize themselves as teachers.

I was a teacher that likes to prepare classes, to have dynamic classes, to use technology, to integrate the four basic language skills (32). I'm a good teacher... my mentor and my teacher told me that I had done a good job (36) INT: Anita

Anita believed that she had something to offer to her students as teachers. She had also had positive feedback regarding her teaching from her mentor and her supervisor which appears to have boosted her self esteem as a teacher.

I think that I am a responsible person. I try to organize the classes ...I include the activities that they [*the students*] like to engage in .... to participate. I am a punctual person and I don't want to have a mess in the class ... (30). I am very responsible (33). I am creative and enthusiastic (36). INT: Reina

Reina also believed that she was capable of carrying out her job as a teacher by being organized and resourceful.

Hada, on the other hand, felt that one of the concerns about being a teacher was relationship issues with students.

I think (I'm) friendly and a teacher that tries to promote confidence in students...and empathy...good relationship (12) INT: Hada



This issue about student to teacher relationships was constant in Hada's journal and interview.

#### **6.5.7 Learning to be a teacher**

Freeman states that "in English and foreign language teaching, learning to teach has been largely viewed as a matter of mastering content on the linguistic and meta-linguistic levels, practicing classroom methodologies and technique, and learning theoretical rationales for them" (Freeman, 2002, p. 4). He also goes on to argue that there are also social and environmental factors that affect learning to be a teacher and "there is thus an ongoing and dynamic tension between the fixed value of the content knowledge and the local, contextual adjustment of teaching practices that the teacher must learn to navigate (p. 5). Learning to be a teacher does not culminate with simply knowing about theory and putting it into practice. It is a process of adaptation of knowledge to the context and learners in order to ensure an effective learning atmosphere environment.

Clearly, two of the participants believed that they had only just started to learn about being a teacher.

I think that I'm going to learn more during my experience during my preparation because my preparation as a teacher hasn't finished ...my preparation started... but it hasn't finished (40)

I would like to be a good teacher that tries to understand... her students...that tries to improve her teaching through the time...experience and with a good preparation.(50)  
INT: Anita

I have just started and I think that I still need to learn many things...(34) [*like*]classroom discipline, sometimes being friendly, and it's not that easy to be friendly and keep control of the whole group ...so I think that's something that I still need to learn.(36) INT: Hada

Anita and Hada seemed to regard their practicum as the beginning of a long venture of learning and academic preparation. They had in mind idealized personality traits for a

teacher that they were seeking to develop or improve in their future preparation. On the other hand, at this post-practicum point Reina appeared to consider her future learning in the real world of the classroom to be a more challenging task than she had perhaps originally envisaged.

It's going to be difficult to work outside to face real problems real situations. (64)...I can't believe it. INT:  
Reina

Reina seemed worried about the shift from being a practicum student to being a teacher as previously mentioned. In contrast to Hada and Anita who viewed the future as one involving further studies and more experience, Reina seemed concerned about the reality of her situation as a teacher once she had left the mentoring of the university. Teacher learning can be considered an ongoing process of professional development as reflected to differing extents in these participants' comments. Hada and Anita considered that they had still had many things to learn at this point of their development, whereas, Reina appeared to be more anxious and uncertain about what reality held for her.

#### **6.5.8 Being a member of the community of English language teachers**

The work community for the participants in this research is the English language teaching community, specifically the Mexican teaching profession. At the time of the interview, these student-teachers expressed their desire to enter this community and share what they had learned or experienced in their brief encounter with the teaching profession with other teachers.

I feel very proud and I feel that I want to give something to that community ...I want to learn more from that community. Don't know something useful for other teachers ...that's something I did during my thesis project and I wanted to show good things ... that could be useful for other teachers. I realized that there were so many

things that I found useful for me and that I think that can be useful for other teachers so that's what I want to give.  
INT: Hada

I feel happy and I like to share my knowledge with the people... I like to interact with the students, I like to work with them and share my knowledge with them (44) INT: Anita

Hada believed that she had gained some useful information from her research for her thesis and from her experience of teaching that she wanted to share with other members of the English language teaching community. Anita considered that she not only had a need to contribute her understanding of language teaching to the community, but, she also felt that she needed to “transmit” her knowledge to her students through her teaching. Fischl and Sagy (2005, p. 69) mention that pre-service teachers tend to consider that “teaching means giving information”. Anita and Hada appeared to want to have an active part in their community; and, this may help promote their own professional development in the future.

For Reina, as previously mentioned, the passing from being a student to becoming a teacher had been important. She was emotional about this step in her development.

Excited... (58)...  
Because you think about the years that you spent in this place [*LEMO*] and now that I've finished the major I say oh I don't want leave the school (laughs) (62).Reina

She realized that her time as a student had ended and appeared to have mixed feelings about this too, which may have echoed her uncertainty about what the future held for her as a teacher. Becoming part of the community of practice for the participants in the study was expressed as an important step towards becoming a teacher. They not only wanted to go out and teach, but also, to participate and share with their colleagues what they had

learned in the process of their development up to the time of their post-practicum interview.

#### **6.5.9 The future**

These student-teachers tended to have an idealized notion of themselves and of the profession. The participants perceived themselves as “both dynamic and empathic, thus reflecting an idealized conception of themselves and of the profession (Gothier, Cheverier, and Anadon, 2007, p. 1). They also showed positive attitudes towards their future as English language teachers. Anita and Reina looked forward to continuing their education through enrolling in a Master’s degree program in order to be better prepared as teachers.

I don’t know working of course and studying an M.A...  
(83)

I want to study and I don’t know with more experience of  
course many things can happen (85) Reina

I would like to do a master’s degree and I would like to  
take courses or all the things that help me to be a better  
teacher (52) Anita

They believed that the better prepared they were, the better teachers they would be.

However, contrary to her peers, Hada also visualized her future in terms of looking forward to having a good job opportunity.

Working in a bilingual school I hope (38) ... and being a  
good teacher ... that helps the students learn that guides  
her students through the process and that... helps her  
students to be successful in areas... in which English is  
needed.(40) Hada

She felt that she could help prepare her students in other areas besides English. Her comments suggested she considered that she could do more for her future students as a person and teacher. From their statements in their interviews, it can be assumed that Anita, Hada and Reina see their future in positive terms, albeit with mixed degrees of optimism,

concerning the professional development and job opportunities they may come to have in the future. These areas will be discussed in the following section.

## **6.6 Discussion of findings**

The data that emerged from this study show that all three participants were navigating between being a student and becoming a teacher. It can be perceived that these students had been influenced too by their previous beliefs about being prepared to start to teach and about teaching (Chapter five). Their comments about their feelings and experiences as novices show that this is the point where the participants started to make connections between their implicit beliefs and their actual experiences as teachers.

Schön (1983) explains that there are two forms of reflection that teachers engage in: reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. Reflection-on-action is described as a process in which teachers reflect on actions and thoughts after they have taken place, as in the case of keeping a journal of classroom experiences. Reflection-in-action is the type of reflection that occurs while the action happens within the classroom. There were several situations that required reflection-in-action, where Anita, Hada and Reina learned how to handle issues on the spur of the moment. There were several points at which the participants were required to change their plans or to improvise because of the requirements of the situation. Their comments in both the journals and the interviews indicate that both kinds of reflection were important during their practicum experience and contributed to their development as future teachers.

The three participants in this study were clearly in a “discovery phase... [*which*] translates into the initial enthusiasm of having ones ‘own’ pupils; one’s own classroom, materials...” (Huberman, 1989, p. 35). They were also discovering ways of mediating between theory and practice according to the situations that were presented to them. It could be seen that

while their eagerness was manifest as they made their best efforts to perform according to what they expected of themselves as teachers and what was expected of them by their mentors and supervisor, in general their primary concern lay with being in control of the classroom situation. At this point in their development, the participants' had a "teacher-centred perspective" towards teaching which according to Richards (1998, p. 72) "sees the key features of a lesson primarily in terms of teacher factors, such as classroom management, teacher's explanations, teacher's questioning skills, teacher's presence, voice quality, manner, and so on". Their main interest was centred in the teaching process and their survival as teachers, rather than in the learning process of their students. This initiation into the world of teaching was full of experiences that they were not yet fully prepared to handle.

## **6.7 Summary**

Based on the data from the journals and the personal interviews, this study has presented the perceptions of three pre-service English language teacher practicum students regarding their beliefs and experiences during their practicum term. The participants' comments revealed the considerable emotional aspects of carrying out their practicum. Issues of motivation, nervousness, frustration and satisfaction became manifest in the data. Issues about their performance in front of their group, being prepared to teach, how they perceived themselves as teachers, problems with role adjustment were also major themes in the data. Additional issues that were present in the interviews related only to becoming a member of their work professional community, learning to be a teacher and their view of their future as teachers.

In chapter seven, the next study in this series to be presented will follow two of the students participating in this research. In this chapter, these beginning teachers narrate how they brought their own particular expectations into their first year of teaching. They also

describe the influences that their previous contact in other educational settings may have had on their first year experience and the way that their experiences and beliefs continued to develop during this time.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **STUDY THREE: TEACHERS' FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE: BELIEFS AND REFLECTIONS**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

Making the transition from the university program in English language teaching to the foreign language classrooms may be considered to be a difficult procedure. “The ideals that novice teachers may have formed during the teacher education program are often replaced by the realities of social and political contexts of the school” (Farrell, 2009, p. 184). Undergraduate teacher programs may tend to forget that there are other intricacies besides learning classroom skills that novice teachers must deal with. Despite their preparation, novice teachers must learn to “balance a delicate and sometimes conflicting role between learning to teach and learning to become a teacher” (Farrell, 2006b, p. 1). In light of the above, this third study, of the three carried out for this thesis, reports on the analysis of narrative accounts written by two novice teachers about their first year experience as teachers of English as a foreign language. These teachers were two of the four participants who were involved in studies one (see Chapter five) and two (see Chapter six). The focus of the research was the participants’ beliefs about their preparation and their reflections on their teaching context, teaching performance, and emotions experienced in their first year of teaching.

##### **7.1.1 Purpose of the study: follow up study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate if there was a continuum of changes in the novice teachers’ perceptions about the teaching profession following their in-service experiences. It is important for teacher trainers to be aware of these issues for the future development of pre-service teachers in teacher training programs; as well as, to offer the participants the opportunity to reflect on the impact that this first year had on them as teachers. This was done through the examination of the events, challenges and beliefs



experienced by two first year English language teachers in Puebla, Mexico. This study sought to comprehend the distinctive elements that permeated each teacher's experience during their first year of teaching and to understand their development from their own perspective rather than that of the researcher (Farrell, 2003). In this sense, the third study in this series can be considered a follow up study to those focusing on the teaching practicum.

### **7.1.2 Research questions**

In this study, I wanted to explore the beliefs and experiences of the participants (7.2.1 below) as they moved into the professional stage of their teaching careers, i.e. their first year as teachers.

3RQ1. What are the experiences and beliefs of first year teachers about their preparation and teaching?

3RQ2. Is there any sign of evolution and/or identifiable professional growth from the pre-service stage of their development to their present context?

3RQ3. In what ways do the teachers show any forms of evolution of professional growth?

Thus, the first research question was developed to attempt to lead to understanding how these new teachers perceived their initial teacher education in light of their first year experiences. In the subsequent research questions, I also wanted to investigate if there were any identifiable developmental trends linking their pre-service education with their professional teaching experience. It is worth noting that for this study, the participants wrote a narrative account about their first year as teachers. It is important to consider that because of lack of experience in unsupervised conditions, the participants may have been hesitant about writing extensively about their experience. It is through the analysis of the

narrative and the comparison to some of their previous thoughts (Chapter five and six) that the responses to these questions emerged.

## **7.2 Research Methodology**

This section presents the methodological framework within which the study was conducted. The methods employed to collect and analyze the data were based on a qualitative research paradigm (see Chapter three). As indicated in section 7.1.3 this study is concerned with the perceptions, practices, thoughts and feelings of first year novice teachers through reflection on their experiences.

The approach used to gather data for this study was based on the concepts of narrative inquiry (see also study one and two). According to Johnson and Golombek (2002):

...narrative inquiry enables teachers to organize, articulate, and communicate what they know and believe about teaching and who they have become as teachers. Their stories describe the complexities of their practice... [and] ... reflect the struggles, tensions, triumphs and rewards of their lives as teachers.(p. 7)

The novice teachers' narratives provided insights into the new experiences and difficulties that they encountered.

The technique used for the analysis of the data was categorical-content analysis "which focuses on the content of narratives as manifested in the different parts of the story...The steps taken in most parts of content analysis can be summarized as follows (1) Selection of subtext (2) Definition of content categories (3) Sorting the material into the categories (4) Drawing conclusions from the results" (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, Zilber, 1998, pp. 112-113). This procedure was followed in order to analyse the relevant themes present in the participants' autobiographical accounts.

### **7.2.1 Participants**

In line with the longitudinal characteristic of the three studies presented in this thesis, participants from the previous studies were requested to continue, in order to follow further their development from the pre-service training stage to their entry into their professional careers. Their involvement would grant an opportunity to continue to research experiences encountered and beliefs held by the participants after their first experience as teachers. Unfortunately, it was not possible to work with all three of the participants from the previous study because, after finishing her first year, one of the participants was faced with health problems, was confined to bed-rest for three months and thus no longer available to contribute to the study.

Thus, the participants in this study were two female novice teachers who were alumni of the LEMO program BUAP (see Chapter four, section 4.4) and who had also participated in the two previous phases of the research. Reina lived in the city of Puebla and was working in a private kindergarten school where English was an obligatory subject. Anita, on the other hand, returned to her hometown in a rural area of the state of Morelos after graduation and found a job in a private girls-only high school. For both teachers, this was their first experience of teaching their own classes following their student-teaching practicum. Both teachers were employed in part-time jobs in their new schools.

The novice teachers were recruited by means of a personal invitation by the researcher. As in the studies presented in chapters five and six, the same contact information was used to invite them to participate. They were contacted, once they had finished their first year of teaching, via e-mail and given a brief summary of what the final stage of the research consisted of. They were requested to contact the researcher to confirm their participation if they had an interest in following through in this final stage of the study. The participants were given time to think about their participation and both answered the invitation within

the following week (Appendix N), translated from the original Spanish). It was agreed that the follow-up contact would take place within the following month. As previously indicated, only two of the three participants from the study in chapter six agreed to participate in the study. The third teacher did not join the study for the reasons stated.

Since this was considered to be a follow-up study, the participants wrote a narrative of their first year of teaching once they had finished that first year. They were not able to participate further because of personal time and distance constraints. They wrote about issues that had been important or relevant to them during this teaching experience. In Reina's case her first experience of teaching lasted eight months of a ten month school year. She started teaching a few weeks after the school year had started. Anita taught during the whole ten months of the school year.

### **7.2.2 Data collection procedure**

Once communication with the teachers was established (section 7.2.1) the participants' were requested to write an autobiographical account focusing on their first year of teaching after the school year had finished. In the e-mail that was sent to them, the participants were given general guidelines, in the letter of invitation to participate in the study, about what to write about in their narratives (Appendix N). The participants were asked to write about issues that had been important to them. Each participant completed one narrative written as an extended account of her personal experiences.

The participants sent the researcher their narrative accounts via e-mail within the month of time allotted for developing this activity (Appendix O). The novice teachers were not able to participate in the analysis of their autobiographical account because of personal time and distance constraints. Therefore, the analysis of the narratives which was carried out by the researcher was an "indirect analysis" (Bailey, 1991 in Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, 2001, p.

51). The intention of analysing the teachers' narratives was to recognize issues that were significant to the authors when writing about their first year of teaching. This information was categorized under relevant themes to be commented on and compared with the information about similar topics present in the two previous studies (Chapters five and six).

### **7.3 Analysis of the data**

As indicated previously in this chapter, this study involved an analysis of two novice teachers' descriptive narratives about their first year of teaching. The accounts consisted of the participants' beliefs, feelings and reflections about their initial experience as teachers. The data were reviewed in order to identify relevant topics present in the narratives.

#### **7.3.1 Narratives**

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) state that "The study of narrative is... the analysis of the ways humans experience the world" (p. 2). For the purpose of this study, the narratives were located in the educational experiences of two novice teachers as they set out on their professional journeys as teachers in Mexican schools. Thus they are utilized here as "personal accounts by teachers of their own classroom experiences" (Creswell, 2005, p. 476).

According to Xiu and Connelly (2009, pp. 223-224) teachers' narratives have three dimensions: "temporal continuum (past-present-future)", "a personal-social continuum" and "place". Narratives cannot be considered as static, "rather they are seen as flowing out of the past and into the future as we observe" (Ibid. 224). In this study, the narratives were written after the participants had finished their first year as teachers, and thus constitute the two novice teachers' personal interpretations of their experiences and the important or significant events attached to those experiences over time (temporal). Also, the study does not focus solely on the individual but on the participant as a member of a community of

teaching so that the significant events that occurred during the time they describe in their accounts are embedded in the wider context of their respective situations (personal-social). In these accounts, the places where the events took place also take an important role in the development of the narratives because the participants write their accounts from the perspective of the conditions of the location in which they found themselves (place).

### 7.3.2 Protocol used for analyzing the narratives

A content analysis of the narratives (Table 7.1) was performed in order to identify salient themes (open coding) present in the texts. The significant topics identified in the narratives were four major issues regarding teaching context, performance, emotions and issues that go beyond the technicalities of teaching (which can be considered as those aspects of being a teacher that their degree program has not specifically prepared the participants for). These codings are presented in Table 7.1.

**Table 7.1: First coding stage**

<b>Open coding</b>	<b>Examples from novice teachers' accounts</b>
<b>Teaching Context</b>	There were just three groups from basic levels, so it was a part time job.(Reina)
<b>Performance</b>	...the help of my supervisor that monitored my work helped me to improve my teaching...(Anita)
<b>Emotions</b>	I was afraid and stressed to deal with parents and was not able to avoid this situation because of the age groups of the students.(Reina)
<b>Beyond technicalities of teaching</b>	At the beginning of the year, it was difficult for me to be incorporated as a staff member because the teachers were very envious with me. (Anita)

After identifying the main categories present in the narratives, a second stage of data analysis was undertaken (axial coding) in order to identify more specific sub-categories emerging from the narratives. This is illustrated in Table 7.2

**Table 7.2: Second coding stage: specific categories emerging from novice teachers' narratives**

Open coding	Axial coding	Anita: girls-only high school	Reina: bilingual kindergarten
<b>Teaching context</b>	<b>Work conditions</b>	<p>I didn't have full-time</p> <p>It is s a secondary school only for girls and I worked there as an English teacher for seventh, eighth and ninth grades.</p> <p>I had to work with teenagers, the groups were very large (40 students per group) they didn't like English.</p>	<p>I got a teaching position after quite a few weeks of looking for a job. Classes had already started weeks before.</p> <p>There were just three groups from basic levels, so it was a part time job.</p> <p>Worked with children between the ages of 3-5, which means, they were from kindergarten.</p>
	<b>Teaching support (Supervision)</b>	<p>...the help of my supervisor that monitored my work helped me to improve my teaching because she taught me strategies to motivate students to learn English, to control the group and to get significant learning... she observed my classes and she gave me comments to improve my teaching.</p>	<p>At my job I worked alone. I did not have a supervisor like in the LEMO.</p>
<b>Teaching Performance</b>	<b>Teaching skills</b>	<p>I used different strategies that I learned in the licentiate program but they didn't work.</p> <p>I was checking my materials that I used in the licentiate program and I found a book ... [with] strategies to work with large groups. It helped me so much to improve my classes.</p>	<p>The knowledge learned at the university was not as meaningful as I believed. There are aspects to deal with which are not mentioned in the courses in the BA program and that you as a new teacher are not prepared to handle.</p> <p>I have the theory about teaching English language but I can't put it into practice when I need to teach it.</p>
	<b>Responsibility</b>	<p>...if my students learned or didn't learn it depended on me; it was my responsibility.</p>	<p>The way I taught at the university was basically different because I was not responsible at all for the group In my job I was responsible for all the decisions regarding my students and their learning</p>
	<b>Management issues</b>	<p>It was very difficult to deal with teenagers"</p> <p>I didn't have control of the group. It was very difficult for me to manage the group.</p>	<p>I realize that everyday problems will emerge as part of the teaching learning process that goes on in the classroom.</p> <p>I was insecure about how to deal with children of those ages.</p>

<b>Emotions</b>	<b>Frustration</b>	I felt frustrated because I thought that was not a good teacher. I said “I don’t want to be a teacher anymore, I want to study another major, but I don’t want to continue teaching.	Personally, I perceived that even though I have the knowledge there are moments in which I do not have any idea how to apply it in the real situation and this is frustrating for me.
	<b>Stress</b>	It was stressing to work in this institution because the principle was very demanding and the groups were big.	I was afraid and stressed to deal with parents and was not able to avoid this situation because of the age groups of the students.
	<b>Motivation</b>	[At <i>the end of her first year teaching</i> ]...I love teaching English for that reason I want to improve my teaching each day.	I appreciate the good and bad moments that I have been facing during the last year. These taught me many things and I look forward to learning more things in the future.
<b>Beyond technicalities of classroom teaching</b>	<b>Dealing with Parents</b>	It was very difficult to cope with parents.	I was afraid and stressed to deal with parents.
	<b>Becoming a member of the teaching staff</b>	At the beginning of the year, it was difficult for me to be incorporated as a staff member because the teachers were very envious with me. They only criticized me about not having control of the group instead of giving me advice about how to improve teaching. Eventually my supervisor helped me and as I became a better teacher I was accepted better by the staff.	I also had problems becoming incorporated as a member of the school staff. After some time, since we (the teachers) were all about the same age, we began to get along well and this helped me feel good in that school.
	<b>Professional Development</b>	I thought it [ <i>the job</i> ] could be a good opportunity to improve my teaching.”  This first year of teaching has been a learning process because I learned to deal with teenagers, to work with large groups, to cope with parents and to motivate students to learn English.	I appreciate the good and bad moments I have been facing this last year. I learned many things about myself and my teaching.”  I realize that beginning to teach is a very significant and important experience.



<b>Continued</b>	<b>Significant /critical moment</b>	[ <i>At the end of her first year... after her students thanked her and commented that they now liked English</i> ] I discovered that I liked teaching and I want to continue sharing my knowledge with my students.	I faced a critical moment that affected even my self esteem which was trying to get a job. I looked for a job for several weeks. I know I was prepared but I did not have enough experience working in the educational field and this made it difficult to get a job because most authorities want experienced teachers.
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In the following section, the discussion of the salient issues present in the narratives is dealt with using the categories and sub-categories that emerged in the open coding and the axial coding procedures. The various entries from the narratives are signaled by “name of participant”+ narrative” (e.g. Reina’s narrative).

### 7.3.3 Teaching context

The novice teachers’ previous experience of teaching had been at university level (Chapter six) during their pre-service practicum. During this time, they had undertaken their practicum in the same Language Licentiate program where they were completing their degrees and their classes had consisted of one group each of 15 – 20 students per group. The students in these classes were majoring in English. While carrying out their practicum, Anita and Reina had been supported by the teacher mentor of their group and a supervisor (in charge of their practicum) who monitored their work in the classroom. During their first year of teaching, their situation was quite different as is explained in the sections that follow.

### 7.3.3.1 Work conditions

During their first year of teaching, the participants were operating in different teaching environments. Anita comments regarding her teaching context:

I didn't have full-time.

It is a secondary school only for girls and I worked there as an English teacher for the seventh, eighth and ninth grades.

I had to work with teenagers, the groups were very large (40 students per group) they didn't like English. (Anita's narrative)

Anita's situation was thus in considerable contrast to her previous experience as a practicum teacher, where she worked with a small group of young adults who were well motivated to learn English. Teaching teenagers proved to be a challenge for Anita, as we will see in subsequent sections in this chapter. Working with large groups was also a new experience for her. She may have felt impacted not only by the size of the groups but also, by the fact that her students, regardless of the reason, did not like their English class. Xu (2001, n.p.) suggests that

Most English teachers tend to view teaching English in large classes rather negatively. They often associate large English classes with disorderliness, lack of control, lack of students' attentiveness, lack of teacher-student interactions, and therefore, lack in efficiency and effectiveness

This comment seems to reflect Anita's case when confronted with this type of situation. Despite the fact that she was a part-time teacher, she was required to take on a substantial responsibility working with three different student groups. Thus, the context in which she found herself working presented considerable new challenges.

Likewise, Reina's situation was considerably different from her experience during her teaching practicum. In her first year, she was employed teaching at a private kindergarten in the city of Puebla.

I got a teaching position after quite a few weeks of looking for a job. Classes had already started weeks before.

There were just three groups from basic levels, so it was a part time job.

Worked with children between the ages of 3-5, which means, they were from kindergarten.

The first days as an English teacher in that institution my role was to take care of children (Reina's narrative).

These observations reveal that Reina's situation was another extreme contrast from working with young adults, as in her teaching practice, to working with pre-school children. In addition, Reina had a late beginning in the term, which meant that when she got started, she went through a challenging adaptation stage. One major challenge, and perhaps the most important, was to become acquainted with new students in an age range, which was entirely novel to her, and in a teaching setting where the routines of the school year had already commenced. This may be why in the beginning she only took care of the children rather than being assigned as a class teacher. As can be gathered from chapters five and six, Reina had never worked with very young children before. Reina, like Anita, also took upon herself a considerable load of responsibility for three groups in what was essentially a part time job.

#### **7.3.3.2 Teaching support**

The elements in this category exemplified the participants' articulated conceptions of the types of support they received in this initial period of their careers. The categories included assistance (or lack thereof) from mentors, supervisors, texts, or other resources. The issue of

teaching support is important as the participants came to realize the contrast between the levels of support they had received during their practicum had (Chapter six) and those offered to them as novice teachers. During her first year, Reina, for example, comments that she was not assigned a superior or colleague to support her as she started teaching career.

At my job I worked alone. I did not have a supervisor like in the LEMO (Reina's narrative).

During her first year of teaching, Reina was basically left to her own intuition regarding the handling of the children and the implementation of her classes. She could not rely on her previous preparation, as the BA program that Reina attended (see Chapter two) did not provide specific courses for the teaching of young children. Therefore, this experience proved to be complex for her to manage given that her prior teaching practice had been with young adults. The fact that not only did she have to deal with very young children behaviourally and developmentally but also teach them English was challenging for her.

On the other hand, Anita found herself in a somewhat different situation as she had the support of her supervisor within the school to help make her transition from practicum to first year teacher smoother.

...the help of my supervisor that monitored my work helped me to improve my teaching because she taught me strategies to motivate students to learn English, to control the group and to get significant learning... she observed my classes and she gave me comments to improve my teaching (Anita's narrative).

Malderez (2009, p. 262) referring to mentoring as a support system. She states that it is “a process of one-to-one, workplace-based, contingent and personally appropriate support for the *person* during their professional acclimatization (or integration), learning growth and development...” It is important for new teachers to count on some sort of assistance. The support offered to Anita clearly helped her, in her view, to improve the quality of her

teaching. It eventually enabled her to achieve more positive outcomes regarding her performance as a teacher as she suggests above.

#### **7.3.4 Teaching Performance**

As a result of recent research, it is increasingly recognised that learning to teach in the first year is a complex process for novice teachers (Farrell, 2009). As one aspect of learning to teach, teaching performance can be regarded as the way teachers show their understanding of their teaching knowledge and abilities in their classroom environment. In their narratives on their first year experiences, the teachers raised many issues in relation to teaching performance including teaching skills, management issues and classroom responsibility. In section 6.4.4, similar concerns that emerged during their teaching practicum were also discussed. Unsurprisingly, these novice teachers continued to be concerned about their performance in front of the classes they taught as they moved into their first year.

##### **7.3.4.1 Teaching skills**

Teaching skills can be defined as the dexterity that is developed by teachers in order to enhance a significant teaching-learning environment (Richards, 1998). The development of teaching skills has been noted to be difficult for novice teachers. According to Tarone and Allwright (2005, p. 12) “differences between the academic course content in language teacher preparation programs and the real conditions that novice language teachers are faced with in the language classroom appear to set up a gap that cannot be bridged by beginning teacher learners.” This gap seemed evident in Anita’s comments about her teaching skills.

I used different strategies that I learned in the licentiate program but they didn't work (Anita's narrative)

I was checking my materials that I used in the licentiate program and I found a book ... [with] strategies to work with large groups. It helped me so much to improve my classes. (Anita's narrative)

Even though Anita had recently finished her practicum, she appeared to be lost for strategies to help her with classroom instruction. During her practicum (see Chapter six), Anita worked with young adults for 12 weeks which was a very limited period with insufficient time to gain mastery of skills necessary for teaching, especially when her work would involve teaching teenagers. In an attempt to meet her new professional challenges she referred back to the strategies from her training program and her materials from her days as a student to try to find guidance in teaching her students. As she notes, these provided only partial solutions.

Likewise, Reina encountered many difficulties when faced with her first teaching assignment as a novice teacher. Reina shared Anita's conviction that the instruction offered in their academic programs may have been swept away by the experience of the first year of teaching. Farrell (2009) makes the point that this is a common experience among novice teachers. In study two (Chapter six), she was already anticipating that there would probably be problems once she was on her own.

It's going to be difficult to work outside to face real problems real situations. (64)...I can't believe it. INT: Reina (section: 6.4.5.3)

At the end of her first year of teaching, she still appeared to be struggling to put her theories about teaching into practice in her new situation and to apply them to the teaching of young children. She still appeared to find herself at loss with her new classroom situation.

I have the theory about teaching English language but I can't put it into practice when I need to teach it ...  
(Reina's narrative).

The knowledge learned at the university was not as meaningful as I believed. There are aspects to deal with which are not mentioned in the courses in the BA program and that you as a new teacher are not prepared to handle (Reina's narrative).

Reina appeared to be dissatisfied with her academic preparation for teaching in a similar context to the one she was working in. She seems to believe that her inabilities to handle certain situations in her working context were a reflection of lack of preparation rather than lack of experience.

#### **7.3.4.2 Responsibility**

According to Melo (2003, p. 177) "it is important for novice teachers to contemplate the nature of their work...." Anita and Reina were now confronted with the consciousness of the level of commitment to responsibility that being a teacher encompasses.

The way I taught at the university was basically different because I was not responsible at all for the group. In my job I was responsible for all the decisions regarding my students and their learning (Reina's narrative).

... if my students learned or didn't learn it depended on me; it was my responsibility (Anita's narrative).

The participants realised that they were no longer able to rely on mentors and supervisors to oversee their work. Contrary to her practicum experience (Chapter six), Reina now recognized that she had to make her own decisions about her teaching and her students' learning (section 7.3.3.2). Although Anita did have a general supervisor who supported her teaching skills, her comments indicate her awareness that ultimately she was the person responsible for what occurred in her classroom.

### 7.3.4.3 Management issues

Issues regarding classroom management appeared salient in the participants' narratives. Alberto and Troutman (1986) state that classroom management is the skill that a teacher has to administer assets, time, students in an environment that is supportive towards learning. Several factors appeared to have produced inconveniences for Anita and Reina, among them lack of experience and the particular age groups of their students.

It was very difficult to deal with teenagers (Anita).

I was insecure about how to deal with children of those ages (Reina).

The difficulties that Anita and Reina dealt with may have been due in part to the fact that the LEMO teacher preparation program offers a standard preparation for teaching. In addition, the two teachers had completed their teaching practice by working with one group of young adults at university level. At this point, the participants' responsibilities required them to work with three different groups of students per day which appeared to be proving considerably more complex for them.

In turn, Anita was particularly concerned about classroom control. This issue had worried her since her days as a practicum student (section 6.4.4), where she mentioned the need to improve her performance regarding classroom control.

I don't know how to control and how to manage the class.  
INT: (Anita: 04, section 6.4.4.1)

... I have to work on some weak points that I had such as accuracy in English, dealing with occasional classroom management problems, and the use of the board in an organized and neat way. In general ... I need to improve my next lessons (JOUR: 1 Anita, section 6.4.4.1).



As a professional teacher, she still expressed concerns about her classroom management abilities, in particular, her ability to control her students in the classroom.

I didn't have control of the group. It was very difficult for me to manage the group (Anita's narrative).

Being able to keep control of her students seemed important to Anita as a way to empower her to feel in control of her whole teaching situation. Working with adolescents who are by nature restless and energetic, she felt that she was not able to create an adequate learning environment. Clearly, she needed support to overcome her problems, but instead she was dismayed to find criticism by the staff in the school that she was working in about her ability to discipline her classes. The fact that colleagues were not supportive may have caused Anita even more anxiety.

They [*the rest of the staff*] only criticized me about not having control of the group instead of giving me advice about how to improve teaching (Anita's narrative).

On the other hand, instances where Reina explicitly expressed concerns about classroom control were not found in the data. Therefore, one can assume that Reina was less concerned about this area of her teaching than Anita. Rather, she seemed to see problematic areas in general as an inevitable aspect of learning to be a teacher.

I realize that problems will emerge as part of the teaching Learning process that goes on in the classroom (Reina's narrative).

Reina's comments show a positive sense that teaching is in itself a process of learning and she appears to accept the concept that "problems" would arise as a natural part of her development.

### **7.3.5 Emotions**

The wide range of emotions novice teachers experience during their first months in a classroom “requires that attention be given to their emotional and physical health, as well as their academic development” (Young, Bullough, Draper, Smith and Erickson, 2005 in. Pitton, p.39, 2006). The first year of teaching was a very emotional time for Anita and Reina, given that it was a time of new work relationships, new students and new teaching environments. In their narratives, several conflicting emotions emerged as the participants expressed feelings of frustration, stress and even love for the profession.

#### **7.3.5.1 Frustration**

During their first year as teachers, Anita and Reina experienced instances of frustration, which were probably generated by their lack of skill. They also experienced gaps between their expectations of the first year of teaching and the reality of what was actually occurring in their professional lives differences between what they expected to be their first year of teaching and what actually was happening in their work. Huberman (1993, pp. 201-202) considers that the initial stage of teacher development is often stressful for the novice teacher and it is a time where “feelings of panic, despair, depression” and even second thoughts about the profession itself are present. Anita’s comments indicate that she experienced such a stage as she started teaching in the new school.

I felt frustrated because I thought that I was not a good teacher...  
I said “I don’t want to be a teacher anymore, I want to study another major, but I don’t want to continue teaching” (Anita’s narrative).

Anita appeared to have had “uncertain self perceptions” (Huberman, 1993, p. 203) which may have discouraged her. The anxiety of her situation in the beginning days of her

teaching career appeared to make her doubt her capabilities as a teacher. Reina too went through a period of frustration regarding her preparation and ability to teach.

Personally, I perceived that even though I have the knowledge there are moments in which I do not have any idea how to apply it in the real situation and this is frustrating for me (Reina's narrative).

Huberman (1993) suggests that studies have shown that novice teachers may have complications regarding classroom management, the teaching load, the work environment, which cause emotional pressure on them. For Reina assuring herself that she was applying appropriate teaching skills and activities for students that drew on the theoretical knowledge she had gained was apparently a point of continuing tension that caused her a degree of frustration.

#### **7.3.5.2 Stress**

Winograd (2003) notes that beginning teaching can be a very emotional enterprise in the lives of teachers. For Anita and Reina, confronting professional situations that were completely new to them and that they were not personally or academically prepared to handle, highlighted emotional responses. As for other beginning teachers, for Reina and Anita the intricacies and realities of being a novice teacher proved to be stressful (Beattie, 2000) for a variety of reasons.

It was stressing to work in this institution because the principal was very demanding and the groups were big (Anita's narrative).

There were other elements besides the actual teaching that brought upon Anita an emotional burden in the beginning of her teaching. Huberman (1989) states that beginning teachers feel anxiety when closely monitored by other teaching staff. Lack of awareness of this likelihood and the previously mentioned factors appear to have caused Anita stress.

For both Reina and Anita, another factor external to actual classroom teaching that caused stress was dealing with young students' parents. Veeman (1984) and Huberman (1993) express the point that for new teachers the establishment of professional relationships with parents is frequently problematic and time consuming.

I was afraid and stressed to deal with parents and was not able to avoid this situation because of the age groups of the students (Reina's narrative).

It was very difficult to cope with parents (Anita's narrative).

Dealing with parents is an inevitable part of the teaching profession when working with children and adolescents. In the case of both Anita and Reina, it proved to be a stressful and anxiety-provoking dimension of their teaching.

### **7.3.5.3 Motivation**

Authors such as Dörnyei (2001), Harmer (2001) and Ryan and Deci (2000) agree that motivation is a factor that guides or encourages people into their behaviours and reactions. Despite the elements of stress and frustration expressed by Anita and Reina in their narratives, they did also emphasise that they were motivated as teachers and were eager to become better teachers.

*[At the end of her first year teaching]... "I love teaching English for that reason I want to improve my teaching each day (Anita's narrative).*

I appreciate the good and bad moments that I have been facing during this last year. These taught me many things and I look forward to more things in the future (Reina's narrative).

As may be recalled from section 7.3.5.1, the adversities that Anita faced were so strong in her perception that she had even considered leaving the teaching profession. However, at

the end of her first year, she considered that the trials she had faced had been worthwhile and this realisation may have driven her to express her passion for the profession. In a similar vein, Reina reflecting on her first year of teaching also mentions that she is motivated to continue to become a better teacher.

As the data show, the participants looked forward to continue being teachers, were hopeful for the future, and were anticipating opportunities to learn more and become competent professionals.

### **7.3.6 Beyond technicalities of classroom teaching**

There are many issues that English language teachers have to deal with that are not strictly related to the academic aspects of teaching the language and which novice teachers must learn to negotiate. “Becoming a teacher involves a complex negotiation between person and place including students and other teachers” (Bullough, Young and Draper, 2004, p. 367). This type of reconciliation was evident in Anita’s and Reina’s narratives.

#### **7.3.6.1 Becoming a staff member**

Besides actually teaching in an institution, language teachers must become incorporated as a member of the teaching staff. For Anita, this seemed to be a problematic venture not only because it required establishing new relationships, but also because she had acquired negative perceptions based on comments made by staff members about her inexperience in controlling her class. In the early stages, this experience caused her to feel embarrassed or annoyed and unsure about her acceptance as a staff member.

At the beginning of the year, it was difficult for me to be incorporated as a staff member because the teachers were very envious with me. They only criticized me about not having control of the group instead of giving me advice about how to improve teaching. Eventually my supervisor

helped me and as I became a better teacher I was accepted better by the staff (Anita's narrative).

She may have believed that in her new role she would inevitably receive support, guidance or advice from her fellow, and more experienced, teachers. Her assumptions may have been drawn from the fact that Anita had previously been in a practicum environment that was nurturing and supportive.

In my teaching practicum, I worked with students of the language school that were studying in the second semester. I had a mentor who was responsible for the group. The group was small (I had 15 students), the students were responsible and they really wanted to learn English I really enjoyed working with (Anita's narrative).

She appeared to believe that she would find a similar environment in her new school. Despite her initially negative feelings, she was able to overcome her difficulties with the counsel of her supervisor. As she gained self-assurance and improved her teaching, she appeared to have gained the confidence to start to incorporate herself into the staff and eventually to become accepted by the staff as a member.

Similarly Reina suggests that she experienced problems becoming accepted as a member of her school staff.

I also had problems becoming incorporated as a member of the school staff. After some time, since we (the teachers) were all about the same age, we began to get along well and this helped me feel good in that school (Reina's narrative).

Eventually, she began to bond with the teachers at her school because of their similar age group and perhaps because they shared similar views and interests. Her acceptance by her

peers clearly had a positive effect on her attitudes towards the school and her role within her teaching context.

On a broader level, for Anita and Reina, as is common for novice teachers being accepted and recognized as a staff member is also the beginning of developing an identity as a member the particular teaching community. Danielewics (2001, p. 10) describes becoming a teacher “as an identity forming process whereby individuals define themselves and are viewed by others as teachers.” The feeling of belonging is an important aspect of the professional development of a novice teacher.

#### **7.3.6.2 Professional Development**

Both Anita and Reina considered their first year of teaching as a period of individual and professional growth. As she began the year, Anita considered that regardless of the conditions of low pay and large student groups that she encountered in her position, nevertheless she was in a position to practice to become a better teacher.

I thought it [*the job*] could be a good opportunity to improve my teaching (Anita’s narrative).

At the end of the school year, Anita reflected in general on some of the key processes of her first year of teaching. Noticeably, she considered that it had been a positive period where she had learned from a personal perspective many aspects that she had not known about the teaching profession.

This first year of teaching has been a learning process because I learned to deal with teenagers, to work with large groups, to cope with parents and to motivate students to learn English. (Anita’s narrative).

Reina also reflected on what this first year had meant to her.

I appreciate the good and bad moments I have been facing this last year. I learned many things about myself and my teaching. I realize that beginning to teach is a very significant and important experience (Reina's narrative).

Likewise, despite the difficulties she encountered, Reina believed that her first year of teaching had been a beneficial experience. Gaining understanding about their practices as teachers and discovering that teaching involved much more than simply teaching about the English language seem to have helped both Reina and Anita deepen their personal and professional knowledge and complement their academic growth.

### **7.3.6.3 Significant / critical moments.**

According to Mezirow (1990), critical moments are events in people's lives that have an impact on them. Both Reina and Anita indicated that they had experienced significant, or critical, episodes during the first year of teaching that had impacted on their teaching and their thinking about their new profession. For Reina a critical point was the actual process of trying to get a job and gaining entry into her chosen profession. Clearly not being able to obtain work after graduation was a very tense experience for her.

I faced a critical moment that affected even my self esteem which was trying to get a job. I looked for a job for several weeks. I know I was prepared but I did not have enough experience working in the educational field and this made it difficult to get a job because most authorities want experienced teachers (Reina's narrative).

Attempting to obtain a job negatively affected her self-esteem as she attempted to negotiate the initial stages of engaging with educational authorities. As with most novice teachers, Reina may have been driven by the initial enthusiasm of finding her first job, but she also realized that she needed more preparation as she expressed in chapter five.



I don't think that we are prepared because what we need is experience, since after this first step in practicum...after this we will have it, but a little not everything (section 5.3.2.3. FG: Reina: 26).

Not finding a job, or being turned down for a job, invariably has an emotional impact on an individual and for Reina this experience represented an uncertain entry into her chosen career.

As for Anita, the critical point and its emotional impact were more positive. After having second thoughts about her career choice (section 7.3.5.1), Anita realized that she truly liked being a teacher. This realisation was triggered by a specific classroom incident involving her students.

*[At the end of her first year... after her students thanked her and commented that they now liked English] I discovered that I liked teaching and I want to continue sharing my knowledge with my students (Anita's narrative).*

This significant moment for Anita gives the impression of providing a very real start to her professional growth as a teacher. She has made a discovery about her personal attitude towards teaching and now seems even more motivated to continue working as a teacher.

#### **7.4 Discussions of findings**

The data that became salient in this study indicate that for Anita and Reina, the transition from teaching practicum to novice teacher did not prove to be straightforward or unidirectional. It was a complex and emotional passage filled with numerous challenges that they needed to understand and resolve. Moreover, this evolutionary process of moving into the teaching profession would not conclude in the first year. As Farrell (2003, p. 1) notes teachers "in their first years [of teaching] have special needs and interests that are different from their more experienced colleagues". This initiation phase continues

indefinitely and will vary from individual to individual until teachers build up their experience and eventually find their niche (institution, age level, and program).

Concerning their experiences of gaining entry into the teaching context, the two teachers expressed disappointment about being able to gain only part-time employment that in turn was demanding in each teacher's particular situation. The participants encountered contrasting student groups which were also quite different regarding the type of institution, age group and number of students from the ones they had worked with during their practicum. Thus, their respective teaching contexts required considerable adjustments to their theoretical preparation and level of knowledge about numerous aspects of their teaching, such as working with the age group, teaching skills and activities for their students and dealing with parents. The participants' also faced problems regarding mentoring or professional support during their first year of teaching. Unlike their previous experience as practicum students, the new teachers were required to face and resolve their classroom issues. At the same time, they became more acutely aware of the nature of the responsibility faced by a teacher for their students' learning and at the beginning of their first year experiences, this realisation seemed to weigh heavily and emotionally on them.

Relating to emotions, as during their practicum period (section 6.4.3.2), this first year was also an emotional time for Anita and Reina. They continued to be frustrated by the insecurity caused by lack of experience. For one of the participants, Anita, this lack of security even caused her to have second thoughts about her career choice and to contemplate turning to another profession. The participants felt stressed by being closely monitored (Anita) or not monitored at all (Reina). The establishment of professional relationships with parents also proved to be emotionally tense. Despite feeling frustrated and stressed, Anita and Reina also expressed feeling motivated to continue within the teaching profession and to continue developing as teachers.

With reference to teacher performance, as in chapter six the participants were still seeking ways to negotiate and reconcile the theories that they had learned in the BA program with their actual classroom practice. Given the contexts that they were working in, their preparation did not seem to them to be sufficient or adequate in relation to the specific student groups. At this stage in their development, the teachers were still more preoccupied with their performance as teachers than their students' learning. They were concerned with putting into practice adequate teaching skills to cater to the needs of their particular groups. Because of their lack of experience, the participants had issues with responsibility, working with the specific age groups that they had, and classroom control.

In relation to technicalities that went beyond classroom teaching, the participants also raised issues that were related to their socialization into the society of teachers (Farrell, 2003). Becoming members of the teaching staff appeared to have been a salient issue because of the difficulty that becoming accepted by their colleagues as part of the school staff posed on them. Nevertheless, both Anita and Reina considered the first year as teachers to be a learning process which would contribute to their professional development. The critical or significant moments that they encountered, positive or negative, impacted the participants' views of the essential nature of the teaching profession. In addition, they dealt with changes in personal perceptions as they began to reflect upon their first year of teaching and why it had been important for them.

Overall, it can be said that the participants in this study were evidently in a "survival" stage (Huberman, 1989, Farrell, 2003). They had sufficient enthusiasm to start teaching, as they had also mentioned when they finished their practicum (Chapter six); but they had yet to enhance their understanding of how to adapt or adopt what they had learned as students into real teaching situations as they experienced having their own students for the first time. Both Anita and Reina had had "painful beginnings that [were] made up of role,

overload and anxiety, difficult pupils, heavy time investment, close monitoring by teacher education staff and isolation inside the school”(Huberman,1989, p. 42). Both teachers were very self-aware of their achievements (or lack thereof) in classroom performance, which continually preoccupied their concerns. These preoccupations echoed the common experiences of new teachers at this phase in their professional development, who “are also concerned about control of the class and the content of their instruction” (Farrell, 2003) to a greater extent than the learning processes of their students.

For these two teachers, their first year of teaching had been a demanding realm of conflicting situations which posed a heavy emotional burden on them. Nevertheless, the participants did show that they were maturing as professionals. A key realisation was the level of responsibility they bore for the learning of the students in their classrooms. In contrast to the teaching practicum, they began to understand that this responsibility was invested in their personal skills as teachers. A further realisation was related to their core attitudes to becoming teachers. Anita’s acknowledgement of having learned many new skills and feeling she was teaching more effectively is symptomatic of her desire to develop as a professional teacher. Her initial feelings of wanting to switch to another career and then towards the end of her school year manifesting her love for the profession showed how she was growing into her professional role. Reina also showed evidence of professional growth. She realized that she needed to practice her professional skills in a realistic teaching context in order to be able to unpack the knowledge that she had acquired in her BA program, as she repeated several times in her narrative accounts. She also realized that having problems was a positive part of the teaching learning process and by not appearing to be extremely overwhelmed by them showed her emerging maturity to handle them.

## **7.5 Summary**

Founded on the narratives presented by the novice teachers, this study has presented their insights on their first year of teaching. This chapter can be considered as a follow up study to the first two but it is illustrated by the contribution of only two of the teachers who had participated in the previous studies. Nevertheless, the findings do provide insights into the experiences of teachers leaving the LEMO program that have implications for this program and which are discussed in the chapter that follows. This study was the final in the set three of studies related to alumni from the LEMO program. Their comments revealed that perceptions about teaching context, teaching performance, emotions and other issues went beyond their actual day-to-day teaching as major themes. The following chapter (Chapter eight) is the concluding chapter. It will evaluate the three studies contained in this thesis. The objective of this chapter is to respond to the general research questions for the dissertation and to provide conclusions, implications and recommendations related to the whole set of studies.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, an interpretation of the three studies as a whole is presented. These studies took place in relation to student-teachers in a public university in the centre of Mexico and encompassed three phases in the development of the participants as English language teachers. The studies were developed in the tradition of qualitative research and the approach that was used for collecting the data was through narrative accounts of the participants' beliefs and experiences. In this concluding chapter, the research questions are again considered in order to move on to a broader discussion of the findings. An evaluation of the work and its contribution to the field follow. Suggestions for further research and a general conclusion are also presented.

#### **8.2 The findings**

The research I have presented in this thesis was based on three thematically related research studies that were carried out in order to investigate the participants' beliefs about teaching and the nature of changes in their perceptions and feelings about teaching. The first study and the second study were carried out as consecutive studies while the participants were in their pre-service training stage. Study one, involving four individuals was undertaken before the student-teachers started their language teaching practicum. The second study was carried out after three of these pre-service teachers had finished their practicum course. These studies complemented each other by comparing the student-teachers reactions before and after they had experienced actual classroom teaching. Drawing on the data from the two previous studies, the third study was carried out by following two of these beginning teachers into their first year of teaching.

As mentioned in chapter four (section 4.1.1) the specific aims of the thesis were to

1. To identify initial beliefs which pre-service students and beginning teachers hold about being a teacher
2. To explore whether the initial beliefs of pre-service students and beginning teachers evolve or change during the early stages of their teacher development
3. To recognize whether the experiences during the initial stages of pre-service students' and beginning teachers' development influence their beliefs

Overall, the participants' beliefs and experiences were analysed in each of the studies. The narrative and autobiographical data that emerged provided qualitative categories that were common across the participants in each case. After categorization, these views were tabularized for presentation in each study and the general and specific categories that emerged were interpreted from the data. The findings of the studies provided responses to the research questions for each study. The research questions that guided the three studies and the thesis in general are basically concerned with teachers' beliefs during their last year in the program and the first year of teaching. Across the three studies, their early beliefs about teaching changed in the sense that before encountering actual classrooms and students, they had "idealized concerns about teaching (the ideal of teaching before experiencing the reality of teaching)" which were "replaced by their own survival as teachers" (Farrell, 2003, p. 96). Their responses in the first study showed that they believed to a large extent that teaching was an act of transmission of knowledge and being in control of the class. In the two later studies, where their experiences had been mediated by their actual experiences of teaching, the data showed that they were coming gradually to realize that being a teacher had to do not only with fundamental issues related to teaching, such as how to deliver content and how to control their classrooms, but also with issues related to the larger educational and school context, work conditions, teaching performance,

management issues and technicalities beyond classroom teaching such as dealing with parents. In the third study in particular, becoming a member of the school community of teachers and envisaging their own professional development were emerging as important aspects of playing their part in a professional teaching community. Nevertheless, the participants' early beliefs about teaching served as a threshold to connect their implicit beliefs about teaching with the actual experience of teaching. The following sections present in detailed a discussion of the most salient themes that emerged in the three studies so that the research questions could be answered.

### **8.2.1 Study one**

In study one (Chapter five), the past and present experiences as language learners that influenced pre-service student-teachers' beliefs about teaching, according to the data were permeated by personal influences which came from a teacher or family, student influences which were experiences that the participants had had as English language students, teaching influences which consolidated their aspirations to become teachers and role model influences which related to the participants' perceived role as an expert in the subject that they teach (Beijaard, Verloop and Vermunt, 2000).

The elements that shaped the beliefs the pre-service students had regarding language teaching were substantially underpinned by positive or negative images of teachers from the past who were seen as models to follow or not to follow (Richardson, 1969), by influences from their immediate family circumstances and upbringing (Schutz, Croader, and White, 2001)) and by "the students' self images as learners" (Fischl and Sagy 2005, p. 59). These four pre-service teachers gave great importance to the affective qualities of the teacher for example, being enthusiastic, friendly, considerate and concerned for their students (Fajet, Bello, Leftwich, Mesler and Shaver, 2005) when they expressed their ideals of teaching. The data also revealed that the self perceptions of pre-service teachers



as future teachers were of being relatively ready and confident about being able to go out into the professional world beyond their initial training and teach.

### **8.2.2 Study two**

In study two (Chapter six), it can be perceived that the beliefs that practicum students held about teaching during their practicum had been influenced by their previous beliefs about starting to teach and teaching. The data showed that the participants were starting to make associations between the inherent beliefs that they held and the concrete experiences as teachers.

The beliefs that students held about themselves as teachers during the practicum stage was one of confusion. Throughout the practicum phase, the participants taught in the School of Language where they were still student-teachers. While this situation presented a measure of protection from the challenges of external school contexts, it also posed a conflict for adjustment from their roles as students to their roles as teachers (Thornbury, 1991). At times, it was evident that they confused these roles. The most specific difficulty for them was that they were still student-teachers but at times needed to engage in student management issues (e.g. discipline) in a situation where they had little real authority. On one hand they were teachers with partial responsibility for their actions and teaching performance; and on the other hand, they were students in the same major and with the same teachers as “their own” students (2.3.1).

The views that the students possessed about the process of teaching during the practicum was that of the beginning of a process. Putting theory into practice and the adaptation of knowledge to context and learners (Freeman, 2002) seemed to be a very complicated experience for the participants. This is because they were having evaluative observations about their teaching; it was the first time they had “real” students instead of their peers and

the emotional stress of the responsibility not only for their teaching, but also for passing their practicum course.

### **8.2.3 Study three**

In study three (Chapter seven), the experiences and beliefs of the first year teachers about their preparation for teaching were brought to the fore. It can be noticed across the three studies that the participants' beliefs about being ready to teach changed radically from the pre-practicum and practicum stage into the first year of teaching. In the first two studies, the participants felt relatively confident about being able to go out into the professional world beyond their initial training and being able to teach. Once the participants started working, they entered a more tentative stage where they were less sure about their preparedness and their capacity to handle their responsibilities as teachers (Farrell, 2003). Their initial beliefs were challenged by reality.

Signs of professional growth from previous stages in their development were also evident in that data collected for this study. As novice teachers, the participants began to realize that the practicum stage of their careers had been under favourable controlled circumstances, where they received the aid of their mentor and supervisor. Nonetheless, in the practicum they had received an opportunity to teach real classes and test some of the personal theories that they held about teaching as well as the formal body of theory that they had learned in their teacher preparation program. They had been placed in a situation where the practicum "... not only provides the direct experience of interacting with students, but also provides the context and content for other activities such as self observation, peer observation, and discussion" (Gebhard, 2009.p.254). The participants used their prior knowledge of teaching from their "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975) during their years of schooling and their "received knowledge" (Wallace, 1991p. 14) from their university courses in order to carry out their practicum. Nevertheless, despite

this base for teaching there was clearly a very strongly felt need for additional support. The participants consistently expressed the view that their work as novice teachers would have been enhanced by having a mentor to guide them. The data showed that the differences in circumstances between their practicum and their first position as teachers seemed at times quite overwhelming. Farrell (2003) notes that most first year teachers face a variety of difficulties such as encountering heavy work loads, which involve working three or four times more hours than during their practicum and receiving little or no mentoring support to help them in the transition from student-teacher to teacher. During their practicum, because of the specific teacher training situation of the LEMO, the participants in this study had begun to develop some of the skills needed for teaching young adult language learners. However, in their first year, the two teachers studied found that their educational situations were quite different. One of the participants found herself teaching adolescents at a secondary school level and the other gained employment teaching at a kindergarten level. Needless to say, they lacked the necessary specific preparation for the students they taught as novices and had not yet developed the appropriate skills in order to work effectively with these groups. Their respective new learner profiles were one of the major causes of anxiety for these novice teachers. Nevertheless, the novice teachers were able to come to terms with their teaching situation and the experienced appeared to be satisfactory and even rewarding.

#### **8.2.4 Major findings across the three studies**

The data across the three studies suggested major thematic categories on which the participants' beliefs were centred: relevance of the context, emotional factors and teaching performance.

#### **8.2.4.1 Relevance of Context**

The first salient aspect was that of the relevance of context in which the participants' happened to be at the time of the studies. There is evidence in the data that the social context of the classroom situation played an important role in the development of the participants in the studies (Freeman, 2002). In the first and second studies, the participants were students in their teaching program and their points of views about the teaching issues they encountered were presented from a student standpoint. In the third study, even though the participants continued to have some shared views as in the previous years, they were confronted with a context and teaching situation that were completely novel to them, and where they were expected to be professional educators and these contextual factors were contributing to the development of changing beliefs and attitudes as teachers.

#### **8.2.4.2 Emotions**

The three studies provided evidence that the issue of initiation into teaching was an emotional time in the professional development of these novice English language teachers. The data in study one (5.3.4.4) showed that the participants had feelings of nervousness and fright which could be considered inevitable given that the participants were soon to venture into an unknown reality as teachers. The data from study two (6.4) also revealed the cline of emotions experienced by the participants as they became student-teachers and were confronted with real students and classroom situations. Their nervousness, frustration and motivation permeated the data from this study throughout. In the third study (7.3.5) the emotional aspect was also present in the data. The various personal accounts from the participants were infused with the emotional weight of their practicum and the challenges of their teaching. The experience of beginning to teach triggered strong affect which ranged from nervousness, stress and frustration to motivation, satisfaction and even elation. These emotions did not present across any particular patterns of activity; they appeared closely tied to the specific circumstances and to the nature of previous experiences that the

participants had acquired in their personal lives, their training, their practicum and their first year of teaching.

#### **8.2.4.3. Teaching performance**

A major finding was that overall during the phases that were researched in these studies the participants' main concern was centred on their performance as teachers rather than on the learning outcomes of their students. This finding supports other research that has been carried out on novice language teaching (e.g. Veenman, 1984, Johnson, 1996, Freeman and Johnson, 1998, Richards and Pennington, 1998). As Farrell (2003, p.96) states beginning teachers "are focused on successful classroom management and not so much on student learning".

Throughout the three studies, the participants regard for their teaching performance was a constant theme. In study one, the data suggested that the participants believed that they knew and understood what teaching was about. Their over-riding view of teaching was that it is an act of transmission of ideas (5.3.4.1). The data in this study also suggested that the participants believed that in order to achieve a quality performance as a teacher, teachers needed to act in a certain way. Concepts regarding responsibility for their work and their students, punctuality in their everyday tasks and commitment to their students and profession were present in the data (5.3.4.5). In study two, there was evidence that teaching performance was one of the strongest concerns of the participants (6.5). Beliefs regarding preparation, performance in front of a group, aspects that need improvement, starting to teach, role adjustment and teaching performance were present in the data. The data in study three (7.3.4) revealed that learning to teach as teachers working in specific educational contexts was a complex process for the participants as novice teachers (Farrell, 2009). The participants' attentions were very focussed on how they taught their classes. While, they took heed of using the skills that they had been taught (7.3.4.1) and were attempting to put

them into practice they were also concerned about the responsibility that they had taken on as teachers (7.3.4.2) and how they dealt with management issues that appeared in their work, that were often caused by their lack of experience in the field (7.3.4.3).

#### **8.2.4.4 Lack of experience**

Throughout the three studies, the participants frequently acknowledged their lack of experience, but retained their general optimism that with more experience they would be able to develop their teaching skills to become better teachers. In line with recent concepts of the teacher as learner (Cole and Knowles, 2000; Walkington, 2005) they also recognized the need to continue developing professionally in order to become skilled and effective teachers. They were hopeful that they would be able to continue their academic preparation at graduate level or work at other levels such in as bilingual schools which were more demanding of high language proficiency and teaching skills. Based on the evidence in the data from these studies, the beginning years of teaching may be seen as a period of consolidating, trialling and mediating what has been learned during training and exploring who one is becoming as a member of the teaching profession (Huberman, 1989; Watzake, 2007a, 2007b).

### **8.3 Contribution of the research**

In Mexico, there have been very few studies on English language teachers in general and specifically so in the area of English language teachers' beliefs and experiences of pre-service and novice teachers. This study intends to contribute to filling the gap in the research literature regarding the beliefs and experiences of pre-service students from public universities and first year English language teachers in Mexico and it adds to previous research on pre-service and novice teachers (e.g. Borg, 2005; Farrell, 2003, 2006a, b, 2009; Bailey, 2006; Mattheoudakis, 2007). This study makes a start on developing more research on these areas in relation to beginning language teachers who have studied in public

universities in Mexico. This study may contribute to the understanding of their beliefs and the influence of their previous knowledge as a way of informing the content of pre-service teacher programs in Mexico.

Specifically, the findings of this research pointed to the fact that it would be beneficial for the student-teachers at the LEMO program to have greater opportunities for more extended contact and practice in real teaching situations. We may recall that the practicum students in this research had the opportunity of practicing for only 20 hours. Thus at present, there is just a single opportunity that comes right at the end of the program. Many of the anxieties and difficulties experienced by the study's pre-service teachers during the practicum and in the first year of teaching were caused by lack of awareness and experience of specific aspects of teaching such as development of teaching techniques, selection and use of adequate materials, classroom procedures and nature and extent of their roles and responsibilities (as practicum students and as teachers).

To offset some of the difficulties presented, finishing teacher-students could be supported in a number of ways. First, it would be useful for the LEMO to look at the possibility of providing more extensive opportunities for teaching practice, staged over periods of time. Each of these opportunities could focus on a specific aspect that was highlighted in this research, for particular development by the student teacher. These areas could include, for example the linkages of theory into practice, the selection of classroom activities, classroom procedures and development of teaching techniques. The findings in this study showed that the general preparation of the LEMO did not necessarily prepare them for the teaching of different student profiles. It would be useful therefore to incorporate tasks that focus on how some of the theoretical aspects of the courses could be applied in different teaching situations.

Another area that could be incorporated might be to sensitise teachers to the range of future employment possibilities in Mexico, as well as the kinds of demands and responsibilities these positions might entail. The findings from this study show that the participants were not necessarily aware of the range of possibilities for employment and even when they had obtained employment, they took considerable time to accommodate to the particular circumstances of their teaching contexts. Moreover, making students who are about to become teachers more aware that novice teachers commonly experience a survival period and need a substantial amount of time to adjust to and become members of a particular teaching community of practice could help to ease the stress that is likely to be experienced by newly graduated LEMO teachers. In short, it would seem to be important for a program such as the LEMO to incorporate elements within its teaching courses that discuss these aspects of transition into teaching explicitly.

This research contributes to a broader body of work on teachers' beliefs and experiences. There is a need to carry out more extensive research about pre-service and first year teacher beliefs and teacher experiences (Farrell, 2003) in different social and cultural contexts (Freeman and Johnson, 1998) from different university programs within Mexico and Latin America. It may be interesting to compare and contrast related studies (probably with a larger cohort) in order to find out the "differences between the academic course content in teacher preparation programs and the real conditions that beginning teachers are faced with in the language classroom" (Tarone and Allwright, 2005,p.12). The impact of these teacher preparation programs on future teachers' beliefs and the results may suggest topics of interests to be developed in teacher preparation programs.



#### **8.4 Limitations of the research**

Although the three studies have provided a portrayal of the experiences of novice practitioners entering the field of teaching in Mexico, there are a number of limitations to this research which must be acknowledged. The first deals with the fact that the number of participants in the study is highly limited. The number of cases was further limited across the three studies by the attrition of two of the original participants as the second and third studies proceeded. This phenomenon is referred to as “sample mortality” (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 71). The circumstances under which the number of participants was reduced could not be avoided, however. Under ethical requirements, the participants were free to leave the study at any time and given the period in their development during which the studies took place (towards the end of their program at the university) which was inevitably a mobile one, there was no possibility of urging them to continue. Nevertheless, the greater richness of the findings that would have emerged from four continuing participants was reduced. Furthermore, the small sample of participants does not allow for any form of generalization to be claimed from these three studies.

The second possible limitation to this study has to do with the nature of narrative inquiry itself. According to Baumgartner (2000, p.1) “narratives are refashioned in light of present life experiences”. Narratives are past events told as the narrator sees them and feels about them at present. The written narratives in this study, particularly the autobiographies and the narrative accounts of the first year as teacher were all written some time after the events occurred. These accounts were written in different periods of the participants’ development as teachers and thus, the points which they highlight may be seen as those which were important for them at the time. Golombek and Johnson, (2004, p.308) also assert that narratives “are retrospectively interpretive since they aim to reconstruct and configure events through the retelling of them”. The reconstruction of events told through narratives were images of past events presented as remembered by the individual. These

may not have been exact accounts, but rather they presented the most salient issues about the events being presented as the participants saw them at the time of the research. In narratives, humans select to choose the events that they wish to talk about (Pavanko and Lantolf, 2000). Following this line, the participants may have minimized, exaggerated or misinterpreted past events in their lives or in the events that went on in their classrooms because of the emotional conditions under which many of the events took place.

The last limitation that could have influenced the outcome of the research was that during their first year as teachers, the participants were not able to write journals about their experiences on a continuing basis throughout the year. The narrative accounts that the teachers presented only encapsulate the essence of their experience but a more detailed and longitudinal account may have shed more data for the study and thus more light on the changing nature of their experiences.

### **8.5 Possibilities for further research**

The findings from this series of studies conducted in the area of pre-service and novice English language teachers' beliefs in the Mexican school context suggest a number of possibilities for further research. First, further studies related specifically to the LEMO-BUAP context need to be undertaken to enhance the quality and experience of the course for novice teachers. Specifically, one area could be the impact of the courses in the teaching components of the curriculum at the LEMO (outlined in Chapter two) on pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching. This type of investigation may help reveal more about these Mexican students' previous knowledge about teaching and learning through 'observational apprenticeship' and could focus on the impact that the curricular courses may have on these beliefs. This would be particularly useful in this context, as it has been suggested by teaching supervisors and employers that beginning teachers from the LEMO tend to replicate teaching styles from when they themselves were at school as students.

Such studies could illuminate whether they do indeed tend to teach the way they were taught, and whether and how the more recent teaching skills they are taught in their curricular courses have had an impact. Awareness of the concept of teacher beliefs and explicit discussion of them in their courses may help LEMO graduates to articulate and understand their own beliefs as they strive for teaching proficiency in their early years of teaching.

Still another concept worth investigating may be the role which the specific context of the teacher practicum plays in the development of teaching skills of practicum students. A topic of this nature would provide insights about the type of experiences they actually encounter. Findings from studies of this type could impact on the LEMO program by suggesting what kinds of arrangements with host schools could be made to ensure that the practicum has a positive outcome for student teachers. In relation to this research, specific areas of teaching that further studies may focus on could include experiences of classroom management, curriculum development, the development of teacher identity, and the way teachers negotiate their roles in a specific type of school. Such studies could provide useful findings that are likely to have an impact on language teacher preparation programs such as the LEMO.

LEMO would also benefit from survey research on the kinds of job opportunities available to graduating students. These contexts are highly varied as are the types of courses that are offered to students across different ages. Research on these areas could shed light, not only on the possible options for practicum placements but also on the possible teaching options in the job market. Findings from such research could be made available to student-teachers as they go through the final stages of preparation and having this greater awareness may help LEMO students fit better into job opportunities according to their strengths, abilities and personalities.

Future research could also include different approaches and designs to the one used here. The methodology used for this research was qualitative in nature and was based on the analysis of different types of narrative forms. In addition, it focused on only a limited number of cases. However, in some of the studies in the literature read for this thesis a quantitative approach to the study of beliefs of foreign language learning and teaching was productively used (e.g. Horwitz, 1985; Peacock, 2001 and Allen, 2002). Peacock, (2001) for example adopted a quantitative approach in order to reach a large number of undergraduates from all levels of a BA program in the Teaching of English as a Second Language in Hong Kong. He used questionnaires which asked about beliefs about language learning and which were analysed statistically. The approach taken by Peacock could be adopted for further research in Mexico. Furthermore, in order to gain a broader view of the teaching situations of first year novice English language teachers it would be useful to carry out mixed method research that used quantitative (questionnaires and statistical analysis) as well qualitative (using teachers' narratives and content analysis) approaches. The questionnaires could be used to analyse and quantify discrete points about beliefs and the narratives to interpret the teachers' personal views and experiences as first year teachers. Through such research, using two of more types of instruments for qualitative and quantitative data collection it would be possible to reach a larger number of participants in order to be able both to generalize views about the first year teaching and to detail the nature of specific experiences.

Longitudinal studies (Saldaña, 2003) tracking the experiences of novice teachers over time would also be very valuable as Huberman (1989) and Watzke (2007b) suggest. As the term implies, longitudinal studies tend to be time consuming. Also, the importance of counting on the involvement of colleagues or participants over a period of time makes longitudinal research demanding. Nonetheless, studies of this nature in Mexico on teachers' lives and

experiences or teacher cognition would help fill the current large gaps of understanding about how such processes develop in the regional (e.g. in the state of Puebla) and /or national context.

As previously mentioned, there is currently only a very small body of research related to English language teacher development in Mexico. It is therefore an area that proves to be very fertile for the development of research projects related to this general theme and more specifically to issues related to pre-service and novice English language teachers.

## **8.6 Summary**

The purpose of this thesis was to analyse the beliefs and experiences of a small group of pre-service and first year Mexican teachers about teaching and becoming teachers. These participants reflected on their experiences as foreign language learners, students in a teacher preparation program and as first year teachers. The impact of the teaching practicum process and their first year as teachers on their teaching beliefs was also analysed.

This thesis was developed through three thematically related studies. The first study focused on the pre-existing beliefs that the student-teachers held about teaching and becoming a teacher. It also discussed the influences that encouraged the participants to become teachers and in particular English language teachers and their views of the future as teachers. The data were collected through an autobiography written by each participant and a focus group interview was carried out where they expressed further their ideas and beliefs about what their teaching practicum experience would be like. An analysis and categorisation showed that the most relevant themes in this study were on being a teacher, influences on career choice, reasons for becoming an English language teacher, feelings and beliefs about starting to teach, characteristics of a good teacher that they believed they

possess, being a non-native speaker of the English language and being influenced by teachers from the past. In the second study, the focus was on analysing the beliefs and experiences of three of the same participants as they undertook their teaching practicum, in order to identify the major trends and patterns during their time as practicum students. The participants' reactions and reflections on the practicum process were analysed through their teaching journals and individual interviews. The data were categorized according to the most significant issues and the emerging themes were discussed. The main findings were issues related to their emotions and feelings during the process and to their performance as teachers. These issues built on their previous beliefs (discussed in Chapter 5) and showed that, even though the practicum term had been brief, it had served as a means for the participants to gain experience and start connecting some aspects of theory from their curricular courses with their actual classroom practice. The third study was a follow-up study involving two of the first year teachers who had participated in the two previous studies as students. These participants wrote a narrative account of their first year as teachers. In these narratives, they expressed their thoughts about the most salient experiences of this process. Issues relating to teaching context, teaching performance, emotions and technicalities of being a teacher that go beyond teaching (e.g. dealing with parents) were present in their narrative accounts. The strenuous emotional burden that was evident for the novice teachers during their first year were highlighted in the data. Analysis of the data also showed that there was a degree of professional growth in the participants as they began to realize the role of their responsibility to their students. Another point which they had not pondered on before they started teaching or while carrying out their practicum was the issue of gaining entry into their particular teaching community which in each case proved to be a difficult process for these teachers. Unlike their previous encounter with teaching during the practicum, the novice teachers were required to confront and solve classroom issues. Since the studies focused on three

different periods in the development of the participants' lives as teachers the data collection process was carried out longitudinally over a period of a year and a half.

The first two studies in this thesis were carried out in my workplace at the LEMO-BUAP. Since my academic duties in the program are related to teaching courses in the teaching area, the results of these studies aimed primarily to shed light on my work in order that areas which need attention regarding beliefs of pre-service teachers and the transition from student to teacher could be illuminated and measures taken to address them. This research brings to the fore greater awareness of the need to create opportunities in these teacher preparation programs for students to discuss and examine their beliefs about teaching with their teachers. Such examination is important in their courses if they are to understand and/or reconsider their initial beliefs about teaching in the light of the conceptual issues and concepts presented in their courses. This research also shed light on the need to investigate further what type of mechanisms can be implemented in the LEMO teacher preparation programs in order to make the transition from student to teacher less stressful. More broadly, the findings of this thesis also intend to make a contribution to the area of research in English language teacher education in Mexico. The possibilities for such research in the educational context in Mexico are wide open , particularly the area of English language teaching a field which is expanding at a dramatic rate and where there will in the future be calls for more rather than less professional knowledge.

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1 <sup>st</sup> sem	2 <sup>nd</sup> sem	3 <sup>rd</sup> sem	4 <sup>th</sup> sem	5 <sup>th</sup> sem	6 <sup>th</sup> sem	7 <sup>th</sup> sem	8 <sup>th</sup> sem	9 <sup>th</sup> sem	10 <sup>th</sup> sem
English I	English II	English III	English IV	English V	English VI	English VII	English VIII	Research Seminar I	Research Seminar II
Reading/Writing Seminar I	Reading/Writing Seminar II	Oral Communication	English Culture	Research Methods	Academic Writing	Literature I	Literature II	Discourse Analysis	History Of English
Introduction to Linguistics	Morphology & Syntax	Latin I	Didactics	Morphology & Syntax	Sociolinguistics	Pragmatics	Semantics	Elective	Elective
Learning Strategies	Mexican Culture I	University Ethics & Culture	Psycholinguistics	Elective	Elective	Elective	Elective	Ethics & Professional Practice	Practicum II
Computational Skills	Documentary Research Techniques	Language Acquisition	French IV	Language Teaching Methodology I	Language Teaching Methodology II	Alternative Learning Processes	Curriculum Design	Practicum I	
French I	French II	Phonetics & Phonology				Materials Design	Evaluation/ Testing	Classroom Research	
		French III							

Spanish Medium

English Medium

**Courses in the teaching area**

## Appendix B

### Observation Checklist

**Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla**  
**Facultad de Lenguas / Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas**  
**Práctica Docente II**  
**Formato de Observación**

<b>Student's Name</b> _____	<b>School:</b> _____
<b>Teacher's Name</b> _____	<b>Level:</b> _____
<b>Number of students:</b> _____	<b>Schedule</b> _____ <b>Date:</b> _____

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Check (✓) the statement that you consider appropriate according to your criteria.

Good ☺    Needs Improvement 💡

		☺	💡	And this is why.....
	<b>Preparation</b>			
1.	Lesson plans according to number of students and language level.			
2.	Clear and specific objectives for lesson.			
3.	Selection of equipment and materials according to the objectives of the lesson.			
4.	Time planning according to the objectives of the lesson and the activity(s) presented.			
	<b>Teaching</b>			
5.	Use of teaching techniques according to the objectives (e.g. error correction, instructions, explanations, feedback and evaluation, etc.)			
6.	Use and promotion of meaningful communication			
7.	Learners actively involved in the class.			
	<b>Class Management</b>			
8.	Student groupings according to activities.			
9.	Use of equipment needed for the class. (e.g. neat and organized use of the board).			
10.	Use of materials needed for the class.			
11.	Pace and time management through the development of the class.			
12.	Ability to deal with occasional classroom management problems.			
	<b>Self Management</b>			
15.	Punctuality			
16.	Friendly and respectful to students			
17.	Use of body language, gestures and teaching space as needed			
	<b>Language Use</b>			
18.	According to student's level.			
19.	Tone and volume of voice as needed			

## Appendix C Ethics Approval



16 November 2007

Ms Marlene Brenes Carvajal  
Plazuela de Santiago # 12  
Fraccionamiento Arboledas de San Ignacio  
Puebla,  
Puebla CP 72590  
Mexico

Reference: HE27APR2007-D05135

Dear Ms Brenes Carvajal,

### APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT TO PROTOCOL

Title of project: "Constructing teacher identity: non-native pre-service student teachers and beginning teachers"

Thank you for your recent correspondence dated 13 November 2007. The requested amendments have been reviewed and approved.

This approval applies to the following amendments:

1. The commencement of part two of the above study. Students who participated in the first phase of the research will be invited to participate in part two of the study. Students will be contacted via email and invited to a meeting where details of part two of the study will be explained.

Yours sincerely

pp A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'F. H.' or similar, followed by the initials 'pp'.

Dr Margaret Stuart  
Director of Research Ethics  
Chair, Ethics Review Committee (Human Research)

Cc: Professor Anne Burns, Department of Linguistics

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ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (HUMAN RESEARCH)  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY (Building C5C)  
SYDNEY, NSW, 2109 AUSTRALIA  
Secretary: Ph: (02) 9850 7850 Fax: (02) 9850 4465 E-mail: [ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au)  
[http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human\\_ethics](http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human_ethics)



6 June 2007

Ms Marlene Geardina Brenes Carvajal  
Plazuela de Santiago # 12  
Fraccionamiento Arboledas de San Ignacio  
Puebla, Puebla CP 72590  
Mexico

Reference: HE27APR2007-D05135

Dear Ms Carvajal

**FINAL APPROVAL**

Title of project: *Constructing teacher identity: non-native pre-service student teachers and beginning teachers*

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your responses have satisfactorily addressed the outstanding issues raised by the Committee. You may now proceed with your research.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. Approval will be for a period of twelve months. At the end of this period, if the project has been completed, abandoned, discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are required to submit a Final Report on the project. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. The Final Report is available at <http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human/forms>
2. However, at the end of the 12 month period if the project is still current you should instead submit an application for renewal of the approval if the project has run for less than five (5) years. This form is available at <http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human/forms>. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report (see Point 1 above) and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).
3. Please remember the Committee must be notified of any alteration to the project.
4. You must notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
5. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University (<http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human>).

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project **it is your responsibility** to provide Macquarie University's Research Grants Officer with a copy of this letter as soon as possible. The Research Grants Officer will not inform external funding agencies that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Officer has received a copy of this final approval letter.

Yours sincerely



Dr Margaret Stuart  
Director of Research Ethics  
Chair, Ethics Review Committee [Human Research]  
cc. Professor Anne Burns

REC-2 CRO File: 07/372

ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (HUMAN RESEARCH)  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY (E11A)  
SYDNEY, NSW, 2109 AUSTRALIA

Secretary: Ph: (02) 9850 7850 Fax: (02) 9850 4465 E-mail: [ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au)  
<http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human>

Portrait (85%)

## Appendix D Consent Form



### Information and Consent Form (for approval)

Name of project: **Constructing Teacher Identity: Non Native Pre-service Student Teachers and Novice Teachers**

You are invited to participate in a study of pre-service student teachers. The purpose of the study is to recognize the characteristics that identify pre-service student-teachers studying in a Mexican university. The study is being conducted by Marlene Gerardina Brenes Carvajal to meet the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Applied Linguistics under the supervision of Prof. Anne Burns, professor of the Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University (Sydney, Australia). Prof. Burns' contact numbers are telephone +61 2 9850 9294 and email [anne.burns@mq.edu.au](mailto:anne.burns@mq.edu.au)

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to write an autobiography, and participate in a focus group interview. The autobiography will be handed in to the researcher two weeks after the acceptance to participate in the study. The focus group interview will take about an hour at a time that will be convenient to all the participants in the study. Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. The researcher and her supervisor will be the only ones to have access to the data.

If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

\_\_\_\_\_ have read and understand the information

(Participant's name)

above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Participant's name- block letters)

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's name: Marlene Gerardina Brenes Carvajal

Investigator's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Ethics Review Committee through its Secretary (telephone +612 9850 7854) Sydney Australia; email [ethics@mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@mq.edu.au). In Puebla, contact Prof. Roberto Criollo A. Academic Secretary, Facultad de Lenguas BUAP (222 229 55 00 ext 5834 / email: [rcriollo@hotmail.com](mailto:rcriollo@hotmail.com)). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

### Student-Teacher's Copy

LINGUISTICS POSTGRADUATE OFFICE  
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY - NEW SOUTH WALES 2109 AUSTRALIA

#### General Enquiries

Telephone: (02) 9850 7102 Facsimile: (02) 9850 9352  
Email: [lingpgo@ling.mq.edu.au](mailto:lingpgo@ling.mq.edu.au)  
[www.ling.mq.edu.au](http://www.ling.mq.edu.au)

#### Applied Linguistics Coursework Enquiries

Telephone: (02) 9850 9243  
Facsimile: (02) 9850 9352  
Email: [lingdl@ling.mq.edu.au](mailto:lingdl@ling.mq.edu.au)  
[www.ling.mq.edu.au](http://www.ling.mq.edu.au)

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Protocol Guiding Autobiographies**

#### Suggestions for writing

Write an autobiography in which you reflect upon your previous language learning and professional studies at the Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas (LEMO). Keep the following ideas in mind as you write:

- Brief general information about who you are and where you are from
- Early experiences as an English language learner (easy? difficult? etc.)
- Influences that you had in order to decide to become an English language teacher
- Feelings about being a non-native English language teacher (influence?)

## **Appendix F**

### **Autobiographies**

#### **SOMETHING ABOUT ME (1)**

My name is Anita\* I was born in Quebrantadero Morelos, on July 20<sup>th</sup>. I studied the high school at the “Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Morelos, Plantel 07 Tepalcingo”. My father is a farmer and my mother is a housewife. They live in Quebrantadero, but I am living in Puebla because I am studying the University. I am single, but I have a boyfriend. He’s working in Mexico City at the airport.

I began to have contact with the English language when I was at the secondary school. At the beginning it was difficult for me because I didn’t have notions about the English language, but then with the practice it was easy for me. I enjoyed so much my English classes because they were very dynamic, and each class I learned something new. I was eager to learn English so that I could speak in English with my cousins that lived in the USA.

When I finished high school I didn’t know what to study. Firstly, I wanted to study mathematics. Then, I decided to study robotics. And finally, after thinking very much about what to study I decided to study Modern Languages. I chose this major because I like English very much. And when I was a teenager I really wanted to speak English very well. I wished to be able to carry out a conversation with foreign people, understand the movies in English, and what people say when they speak in English. Also, I liked how my English teachers taught me, and I hoped to be a good English teacher in the future as my teachers.

My teachers of the Language Faculty helped me so much to become an English teacher, they were very demanding but it helped me so much to improve my English level and become a good English teacher. I remember that I had a native speaker teacher that was very demanding with us, she was very angry when we committed grammatical mistakes and did not pronounce the words correctly, or when we did not know how to write a five paragraph essay correctly. At the

beginning, I was frustrated because it was very difficult for me but through the time I discovered that I had learned a lot of things with her and all her advices had helped me to become a better student. Furthermore, as English learner I had the opportunity to do my teaching practices at the faculty and that was a nice experience because I was teaching English in a real context. The first day of my teaching practices I was very nervous but little by little I started to have confidence in myself and to be relaxed. The comments of my mentor and my teacher of teaching practice helped me so much to improve my teaching. Moreover, as English learner I had the opportunity to carry out my thesis project in the research seminars I and II. It was difficult for me because it implied a lot of reading, writing, and investigation but with the help of my thesis director I was able to get it. Also, as English language learner I had the opportunity to go to congresses, conferences, panels, and courses that helped me so much to improve my teaching. I had the opportunity to take a course with the students of the university of Denver Colorado. In this course I could practice my English with native speakers, I learned so much about the culture, their teaching methods and approaches to teach English, and I had the opportunity to share my knowledge and ideas about teaching with them. It was a great experience. I thanks to the Language faculty and my teachers for all the opportunities that they gave me as English Learner.

During my major I achieved my objectives. However, I am conscious that I never going to finish to learn English because I am not a native speaker, and there is a lot of words, phrases, expressions, and idioms that I didn't know yet, and I am going to learn them through the time.

\*Name has been changed

## **Autobiography (2)**

My name is Reina\* I am 22 years old I born in Calpulalpan Tlaxcala. I am studying Modern languages at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma De Puebla (B.U.A.P) Calpulalpan is a little city near to Texcoco. I have two sisters and one brother, his name is Felipe\* he is 24 years , he is studying Medicine at the BUAP, One of my sisters is studying to become a teacher she is studying in Tlaxcala her name is Lety\* and the little one is 17 years old, her name is Ema\* she is studying high school in Calpulalpan.

My mother's name is María\*, she is a teacher, she is 48 years old she born in San Juan Ixtenco Tlaxcala, and my father's name is Hugo\* he is a farmer, he is 45 years old, he was born in Calpulalpan Tlaxcala.

Since I was a child, I studied in my hometown, which is call, La Soledad. From elementary school to high school, I studied in Calpulalpan. The name of my elementary school was “Vicente Guerrero”which was a public school. The next three years I spent on secondary school in Escuela Secundaria Técnica # 30 “16 de Octubre de 1984” which is located in Calpulalpan Tlaxcala. Finally, the last three years of high school I was in the Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Tlaxcala Plantel 03 located in Calpulalpan.

I choose this major because I remembered that my mother decided to register me in an English course when I was 12 years old. She used to say that English will be a useful tool in the following years, at the beginning, I did not like it, it was frustrated due to the fact that I did not understand anything, besides I was not a good student my grades were not good.

On secondary school, some of my friends told me that I was an intelligent girl basically because they know that I was taking an extra course to improve my English, moreover the teacher used to asked me every single day so I was an active students I did all my homework's and I tried to do my best. During English classes, I was exciting, because I understood everything that the teacher said; it was not difficult for me. I remember that some of my friends used to ask me to do their homeworks and I did it because I liked it even though it was not appropriate to help them because they did not learn and practice the language. When we were almost finishing secondary school, they suggested me to continue with my studies as an English teacher. I thought they were crazies but through the years, I realized that English was a very important language and if you know a little be about it, you will have a chance to get a good job.

I got interested in languages since I started to attend to my English course the most relevant about that course was the methodology used by the teacher, it was different from the one of which I

was accustomed to. I noticed that he really liked what he did, the techniques he promoted and the material was another characteristic that caught my attention. When I was finishing high school, my mother told me that I have to decide what would be the major or career that I want to study. At the beginning, I had no idea but I started to think about it and finally I chose this one.

I chose this major firstly because it was my second option the one that was my first option was demanding so I thought I would be not accepted. Hence, I selected this major. The second reason why I selected this major was that I like languages. The last one was the way my extra classes were designed to invite students to participate during the class. When I heard the name of the career I thought that I will learn at least three or four languages but it was not true, besides I believed that I will learn everything related to English but through the years I realized that it was an interesting major I learned a lot during these years. The first year I had a good English teacher she was a new teacher but she was a qualified, responsible, enthusiastic, punctual, creative person.

In general most of the teachers are well prepared to teach English but sometimes as students we are not conscious about the effort they do to improve our English level.

\* Name has been changed

### **AUTOBIOGRAPHY (3)**

In order to know who I am, firstly, it is important to mention where I come from. I was born in a small town called Morelos in 1985. I lived there until I decided to study a major in Puebla. I am the last of a family of four children. My father is a farmer and my mother a housewife. My three older siblings, tow brothers and one sister, live in the US being part of the huge flow of immigrants in that country from my town. I did my basic studies in my home town, but it was necessary for me to travel to a city to study and I chose Puebla. I really enjoy going home every weekend because it is an opportunity for me to refresh my mind and come back school with an increased willing to work.

Although most of the previous learning of English I had before the major was from a mathematics teacher and an engineer working as English teachers, I think it was not so difficult for me to assimilate the language. I had had very little contact with the language except for the Americanized context of this time (TV, music, advertisement). The way my teacher taught me in junior high school was by making direct translations from a very old book about dialogues. In high school it was a bit better since my teacher there taught me some grammar aspects of the language. Thus, when I entered this school to study this major, I had an extremely vague idea of English. However, the techniques and strategies my teacher of the first three target languages (I took Target language I, II, III with the same teacher) used, was a great help to rich the same level of my classmates who had already taken previous and effective English courses. In addition to such strategies and techniques, my teacher really motivated me through his disciplined and strict way of working to make greater efforts to learn the language.

From my point of view, there is not a “magic key” to learn English but through practice and exposure to the language. But above all, I have realized that a person can really assimilate the language when he starts to think in English and stops translating every utterance he receives or produces into Spanish. Every time that I traveled to my hometown I had long hours to think about anything in the bus, and I did it in English. I used to formulate any basic sentence at first about any



interesting object I saw or to structure more complex thoughts as my grammar and vocabulary knowledge increased.

When I first started studying English, it was frustrating for me not to be able to remember a word in a specific moment. Now, it is completely the opposite since there are many concepts that come to my mind in English faster than in Spanish. If I can say something about my English learning process, I would say that the more I practice it, the more I master it. However, I have also realized that when I stopped having contact with the language for a period of time, I tended to forget it when I tried to speak it again.

The reasons for which I decided to study English were influenced by my brothers. As I have already mentioned, they had to immigrate to the US. They told me about the problems they faced for not being able to communicate because of the language. Of course, that is something they mastered after some months. However, it caught my attention the advantage that a language brings with itself in this globalized society. Thus, I decided to study English.

Besides the important role of English as an international communication tool, the need of people who travel to learn English was another factor that motivated me to be an English teacher. Furthermore, I have always thought that being a teacher is such a good opportunity to share with others what you know and provide something useful to the community.

I am conscious that I will never speak exactly as a native speaker, but I do not give too much importance to it either. The fact of speaking a language implies learning about its culture for sure. When I first started to study the language along with its culture, it caused me a kind of cultural shock because of the huge political, economical, and social differences between my country and the English speaking countries. Even though this fact had an influence in my perception of the world, it has not changed the direction of my learning process.

I want to be a good English teacher. Thus, I try to take advantage of any good information, book, material, or situation that may help me improve. The LEMO is full of good teachers to whom I would like to follow, with my very personal perspectives of course. I have also had not so good teachers and I have learned from them as well. I do not try to critique the things they did wrong, but to analyze why they did so.

## MY LIFE (4)

My name is Ella\* and I am 22 years old. I am single woman without children and I was born in Teziutlan Puebla. This town is located at north of the state. However, I was not living there. I grew up in Tlatlauqui which is very close to Teziutlan. Consequently, I studied my elementary school, secondary school and Prepa School there. Especially, la prepa where I studied was a College that belongs to Colegio Bachilleres. It was a good stage in my life. Since, I had to make important decisions about my life

On the other hand, relating to my parents, they got divorce 18 years ago. Despite, my life had been so happy because my mother has been all the time with me, so I am not alone. And also, my father sometimes visited us, actually he does not it. My mother was a teacher, she is now retired and one of my two old sisters is also a teacher and another one is a manager of Wal-Mart's company.

According to my hobbies I enjoy listening to music especially English music; it is my favorite and also calling to my friends is my hobby. However, I have also other interesting things that I like to do, such as: going out to restaurants with my family, watching English movies at home, and taking yoga classes.

Regarding professional information, the decision to study English language career was made by me. Since, I was in the secondary school I enjoyed English classes. I remember that I liked to listen to the English pronunciation; it was very attractive for me. Therefore, my curiosity in the pronunciation arise the interest for English Language. My decision was taken I wanted to study a career about English. And that decision never changed. Since, I finished the prepa having in mind to study an English language career.

Nevertheless, the university was very difficult for me. At the beginning I did not understand anything about English language. It is important to mention that at preparatory school I did not have English classes in the last two years. So, it contributed for getting misunderstandings. Fortunately, I am now able to understand the language. That is why I enjoyed staying in certain classes such as: taller de materials, mele 1, mele 2 and evaluación del aprendizaje. Those subjects are related to teaching so I liked the most.

It is important to mention that I chose teaching instead of translator because of my mother's profession. She was an influence on me so that teaching took an important place in my life's decisions. Everything what my mother did as a teacher was so interesting for me. At the beginning I wanted to be a primary teacher, but being an English teacher was more attractive than another one.

I have many life projects in my mind; one of the most important is to study a master's degree at the end of the career. Then I would like to study a doctor's degree as well. I would like to grow up a lot in my professional teaching area because it is something what I enjoy the most. Five years from now I am able to look at me working at public Xalapa's university with the master's degree but also being a doctor's candidate. Perhaps I will be married and with one child. The most important is that I want to study a little more for being a good prepare English teacher.

\*Name has been changed

## **Appendix G**

### **Protocol for Focus Group**

#### Questions for focus group interview

The focus group interview will be conducted in Spanish so that the participants can express themselves freely without being self-conscious about their language proficiency. The rest of the studies will be conducted in English once the researcher gets to know the participants better. These will be the guiding questions. Other questions or items may arise as the interview is conducted.

1. ¿Qué significa para ustedes ser maestro? // What does being a teacher mean to you?
2. ¿Qué influencias tuvieron ustedes para tomar la determinación de ser maestro?//  
What influenced you to become a teacher?
3. ¿ Por qué particularmente maestro de inglés? // Why particularly did you decide to  
become an English teacher?
4. ¿Se sienten preparados para ser maestros de inglés?// Do you feel prepared to  
become an English language teacher?
5. ¿Cómo se sienten como hablantes del inglés? // How do you feel as English  
language speakers?

## APPENDIX H

### Transcription conventions

Transcription conventions adapted from K. Richards, 2003:173-174	
?	Questioning intonation
!	Exclamatory intonation
(3.0)	Pause of about 3 seconds
(2.0)	Pause of about 2 seconds
(...) *	Pause of about 1 second
(..)*	Pause of about 0.5 second
(.)	Micro pause
[XXxx] Inserted by the researcher (Not one of Richards' conventions)	
*Conversational analysts time to tenths of a second, e.g. '(0.6)'.	

## Appendix I

### Transcription and translation of focus group interview

Spanish Version	English Version
01 <b>T:</b> Gema eh ha sido condescendiente conmigo ¿no? (.) así que le agradezco mucho (2.0) este (...) bueno lo primero que quiero este es que platicuen sobre esta cuestión de ser maestro ¿no?(2.0) esto de ser maestro (...)¿de qué se trata ser maestro?	<b>T:</b> Gema has been patronizing to me, hasn't she? (.) so I appreciate this very much (2.0) um (...) well, what I want first, um, is for you to discuss this matter of being a teacher, right? (2.0) this being a teacher (...) what is involved in being a teacher?
02 <b>Anita:</b> mhm (.) más que nada de compartir (...) nuestros conocimientos y nuestras experiencias con (.) otras personas (.) pero no (.) no solamente enseñar (.) sino también aprender de ellos (...) siendo maestro (.) nunca terminas de (...) de aprender siempre aprendes algo nuevo de los estudiantes.	<b>Anita:</b> mmm (.) most of all about sharing (...) our knowledge and our experiences with (.) others (.) but not (.) not only teaching, (.) but also learning from them (...) being a teacher (.) you never stop (.) learning something new from the students.
03 <b>Hada:</b> Y bueno creo que aparte de esa transmisión de conocimientos (...) este (.) también es importante o sea tomar en cuenta (2.0) las necesidades de nuestros estudiantes o sea (.) que esos conocimientos que nosotros les estamos dando (...) sean útiles para ellos (.) para sus intereses y para lo que ellos necesitan.	<b>Hada:</b> And, well, I think that besides this transmission of knowledge (...) uh (.) it is also important to take into account (2.0) our students' needs; I mean (.) that the knowledge we are giving them (...) is useful for them, (.) for their interests and for what they need them.
04 <b>Ella:</b> y también me gustaría agregar que también (.) ser maestro es guiarlos (.) no nada mas es (.) darles información (.) o dar o (.) brindarles los conocimientos que nosotros tengamos y que ellos no sepan ni como hacerlo sino guiarlos en ese conocimiento dosificar ese conocimiento (.) en forma de que ellos aprendan (...) y puedan aplicar esos conocimientos en una vida futura pero que sean útiles para ellos (.)eso es ser maestro.	<b>Ella:</b> And I would also like to add that also (.) being a teacher is to guide them (.) it's not just (.) to give them information (.) or to give or, or (.) to give them the knowledge we have and that they do not know how to do it, but rather to guide them in this knowledge, give out this knowledge little by little (.) so that they learn it (...) and they can apply this knowledge in the future, but that it is useful for them (.) That is being a teacher.
05 <b>Reina:</b> este ser maestro es algo (...) muy difícil (...) porque (...) nosotros creemos que ya estamos preparados para (...) salir y (...) impartir clases (.) pero (.) no es	<b>Reina:</b> This being a teacher thing is something (...) that is very difficult (...) because (...) we believe that we are already prepared to (...) go out and (...) teach classes (.) but (.) it's not true (.) because

<p>cierto (.) porque cuando ya estás (...) eh (.) en ese contexto (2.0) te encuentras como que (.) con muchos problemas (...) y dices (.) esto no me lo enseñaron en la escuela y ¿qué es lo que tengo que hacer ahora? (...) y tu debes de buscar una (.) solución (.) o algo para (.) poder este entablar (.) una buena relación con los alumnos.</p>	<p>when you are (...) um (.) in this context (2.0) you meet up with (.) a lot of problems (...) and you say (.) ‘they didn’t teacher me this in school’ and ‘what should I do now?’ (...) and you should look for a solution (.) or something to be able, um, to have (.) a good relationship with the students.</p>
<p>06 <b>T:</b> ¿Alguien quiere agregar algo más?</p>	<p><b>T:</b> Would anyone like to add anything else?</p>
<p>07 <b>Hada:</b> Bueno algo (.) de lo que mencionó ella pues que también es importante la empatía (...) por lo que no nada mas son los conocimientos técnicos (...) sino también es buscar esa relación entre (.) estudiante y maestro para que se pueda dar ese ambiente (...) que pueda ayuda a los estudiantes a aprender.</p>	<p><b>Hada:</b> Well about (.) what she (Ella?) mentioned, that empathy is also important (...) that it is not only technical knowledge (...) but it is also to search for a relationship between (.) student and teacher to achieve this environment (...) which can help the students to learn.</p>
<p>08 <b>T:</b> Y este (2.0) ¿Que influencia tuvieron Uds. para (...) tomar la determinación (2.0) de ser maestro? O sea ¿Hubo algo que (...) que los (...) ¿cómo lo digo? les motivó (...) o o o es así como que la última opción o (.) ¿por qué es que Uds. (...) decidieron tomar este (.) como llamo yo (...) apostolado de ser maestro?</p>	<p><b>T:</b> And, uh (2.0) what influence did you (all) have to (...) make the decision (2.0) to become a teacher? I mean, was there something that (...) that (...) how should I ask this? Was there something that drove you (...) or, or, or was it like the last choice, or (.) why did you (...) decide to take this (.) how should I call it (...) calling to be a teacher?</p>
<p>09 <b>Ella:</b> Bueno (.) este personalmente mi mamá es profesora (...) eh (.) mi hermana es también profesora tengo una hermana que es profesora (2.0) y pues luego crecí con mi mama (.) viendo que eh (.) es maestra de primaria (...) viendo pues que ella preparaba su material (.) este hubo ocasiones cuando era niña (.) que yo la acompañaba a a este (.) al salón de clases pues tuve digamos este (.) convivencia (...) en esa área y (...) me fue me fue gustando (.) mi mamá desde (.) lo tengo muy presente desde pequeña me dijo quiero que seas maestra (.) por qué porque (.) hay ciertos beneficios que si tu estudias otra carrera pues no los vas a tener (...) en el sentido de (...) de tener digamos (.) yo como mujer una mejor convivencia con</p>	<p><b>Ella:</b> Well, (.) uh, personally, my mother is a teacher (...) uh, (.) my sister is also a teacher, I have a sister who is a teacher (2.0) and, well, I grew up with my mother (.) seeing that um (.) she is an elementary school teacher (...) seeing that she prepared her material (.) um, there were times when I was younger (.) that I would go along with her to, um (.) to class; I had, I guess you could say, uh (.) experience (...) in this area, and (...) I started, I started to like it (.) my mom, since (.) I remember that ever since I was little, she told me ‘I want you to be a teacher’ (.) why? because (.) there are certain benefits [perks] that you won’t have if you study something else (...) in the sense that (...) that we have, let’s say (.) me, as a woman, more time for family; for example, you will be able to attend to your family</p>



<p>la familia por ejemplo la vas a atender porque va a haber tiempo suficiente para que convivas con tu familia (...) siendo que si eliges otra carrera pues no la vas a tener (.) porque regularmente trabajas tiempo completo (2.0) entonces pues desde niña me fue (...) eh (.) preparando mentalmente (...) y si me quedé con esa idea así fue con una con otra hermana y (...) por eso tomé la determinación de (...) y como justamente después dije que mejor que inglés ¿no? (.) y tomé la determinación de irme a docencia (2.0) eh yo creo que fue la influencia de mi mamá</p>	<p>since there will be enough time to spend with your family (...) whereas, if you choose another major you will not have (.) since you will normally be working full-time (2.0) so, since I was young, she started (...) um (.) preparing me mentally (...) and I kept that idea, as did another of my sisters and (...) for that reason I made the decision to (...) and as I later said, what better than English, right? (.) and I made the decision to go into teaching (2.0) um, I think it was my mom's influence.</p>
<p>10 <b>Anita:</b> este también (.) desde (.) que yo era niña (.) me gustaba este jugar a que yo era la maestra (...) y mis primos este mis alumnos y así este pues poco a poco (.) me fui (.) fui este (...) me fui haciendo a la idea de que yo quería ser maestra también mi mi tía es maestra (...) después ya cuando iba a la secundaria yo iba a cursos de inglés (.) que ella [<i>la tía</i>] nos daba y pues me gustaba que sacaba materiales y hacia su clase muy dinámica y yo decía (.) cuando sea grande quiero ser una maestra de inglés y (.) y dar la clase como ella.</p>	<p><b>Anita:</b> Um, also (.) since (.) I was a little girl, (.) I like to, um, play that I was the teacher (...) and my cousins, um, were my students, and so, um, little by little (.) I started (.) I started, um (...) I started taking to the idea that I wanted to be a teacher. My aunt is also a teacher (...) later, when I was in junior high school, I went to English courses (.) that she [the aunt] gave us and I liked that she took out materials and made her class very dynamic, and I would say (.) that when I was older, I wanted to be an English teacher (.) and teach classes like her.</p>
<p>11 <b>Hada:</b> Bueno pues yo creo que también así de(.)sde que uno es (...) niño este a nosotros como que nos enseñan la importancia de la escuela ¿no? (...) que la escuela debe de ser tu prioridad y todo eso (.) y entonces también en cierta forma (.) se va creando (...) una cierta admiración (.) por los profesores (...) que pues que son (.) este la base de la educación no (...) entonces, a mi me llamó igual desde que era pequeña (...) y este (.) pues si siempre (...) me gusto o sea que (...) en el área (.) de en esta área de humanidades este la calidad humana de las personas pues tienen mucho que ver no solamente lo técnico (...) entonces pues (...) por eso me gustó.</p>	<p><b>Hada:</b> Well, I also think that (.) from the time we were (...) children, um, they taught us the importance of school, don't you think? (...) that school should be your priority and all that (.) and then also in a certain way (.) they start creating (...) a certain admiration (.) for teachers (...) who are (.) um, the foundation of education, right? (...) So, I also had this idea since I was younger (...) and, um, (.) well, I have (...) always liked it, I mean, (...) the field (.) of this field of humanities, um, a person's human quality, well, this has a lot to do, not only with the technical aspects, (...) so, then (...) that is why I like it.</p>

<p>12 <b>Reina:</b> En mi caso pues (.) a mi igual (.) mi mama es maestra (...) y a mi no me gustaba que (.) que diera clases (.) por que siempre llegaba tarde y nosotros allí esperando como que a ver que hora nos vamos a comer (...) y no me gustaba pero ya después eh (...) en la secundaria (...) este (.) nos inscribió en un curso de inglés (.) y este me gustaba como el maestro nos daba la clase (...) la hacia muy dinámica (...) y como menciono la compañera (.) igual el material que ocupaba y todo eso (.) me llamaba la atención (...) ya fue cuando empecé a decir (.) no (.) [sí] quiero estudiar inglés.</p> <p>13 <b>T:</b> Bien y bueno (...) pues todos Uds. han dicho de de que les gustó algo (.) de algún maestro no (.) y las otras dos ¿Por qué particularmente inglés?</p> <p>14 <b>Hada:</b> Bueno en mi caso (...) porque (...) la mayoría de mi familia pues (.) ha este ha viajado a Estados Unidos (.) algunos de manera ilegal y otros de manera legal entonces (.) este (.) yo recuerdo que mis hermanos este (.) alguna vez han platicado de (.) lo difícil que fue para ellos este pues llegar a los Estados Unidos (...) y era un un lenguaje que pues ellos no conocían en lo más mínimo no sabían entonces (...) qué difícil era para ellos comunicarse no (2.0) ellos como que en cierta forma me hicieron ver o (.) o me trataron de persuadir (.) de la importancia que tiene (.) el ingles (.) no solo bueno (.) no solo en los países este (.) de habla inglesa (.) sino en todo el mundo en general (.) por todo de la globalización (...) entonces (.) este en cierta forma eso fue como que algo que me motivó (...) a interesarme más por (...) por el ingles.</p> <p>15 <b>Anita:</b> Pues (.) a mi también como tengo familia en Estados Unidos (...) este siempre que (.) venían mis primos de vacaciones (.) me empezaban a hablar en ingles y todo y yo nada mas me quedaba y yo decía (.) yo quiero entender lo que dicen (.) entonces ya este (.) dije yo quiero estudiar algo (.) que este que me ayude (.) a (.) a poder hablar bien el ingles (.) a poder</p>	<p><b>Reina:</b> In my case, um (.) the same (.) my mom is a teacher (...) and I didn't like her (.) teaching classes (.) because she always got home late and we were waiting on her to be able to eat (...) and I didn't like it, but, later, um (...) in junior high school (...) um (.) she signed us up in an English course (.) and, um, I liked how the teacher taught us (...), he made it very dynamic (...) and, as my classmate said, (.) the material he used and all that (.) caught my attention (...) that was when I started to say (.) no, (.) [I do] want to study English.</p> <p><b>T:</b> Alright (...) well, all of you have said that you liked something (.) of some teacher, right? (.) and the other two, why English in particular?</p> <p><b>Hada:</b> Well, in my case (...) because (...) the majority of my family, um (.) has, um, traveled to the United States (.), some illegally, others legally, so (.) um (.) I remember that my siblings, um (.) at some time or another, have talked about (.) how difficult it was for them, um, arriving in the United States (...) and it was a language that, um, they did not know at all, they did not know (...) how difficult it would be for them to communicate (2.0) they, in a certain way, made me see, or (.) or, they tried to convince me (.) of the importance English has (.) not only, um (.) not only in English-speaking (.) countries, (.) but also in the world in general (.) with all the globalization (...) so (.) um, in a certain way was something that drove me (...) to take a greater interest in (...) in English</p> <p><b>Anita:</b> Well, (.) as I also have family in the United States (...) um, since (.) my cousins would come on holiday (.) they would talk to me in English and everything, and I would stay silent and I said to myself (.) I want to understand what they say (.) so, um (.) I said I wanted to study something (.) that, um, that would help me (.) to (.) to be able to speak English (.) to be able to</p>
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<p>entender lo que dicen (.) y poder comunicarme (.) y también cuando este (.) salía así (.) a alguna excursión o algo (.) y me topaba con extranjeros (.) eh lo poco que sabía (.) yo lo ponía en práctica con ellos les preguntaba aunque sea ¿qué hora es? o algo así (ríe) y este</p>	<p>understand what they say (.) and to be able to communicate (.) and when, um (.) I would go (.) on an outing or something (.) and I would meet foreigners (.) um, the little bit I knew (.) I would put it in practice with them. I would asked them, ‘what time is it?’, or something like that (laugh) and, um</p>
<p>16 <b>T:</b> buscabas tu oportunidad</p>	<p><b>T:</b> you looked for your opportunity</p>
<p>17 <b>Anita:</b> sí (.) de ponerlo en práctica.</p>	<p><b>Anita:</b> yes (.) to put it into practice.</p>
<p>18 <b>Ella:</b> Bueno pues (...) eh (.) eh en mi persona fue desde secundaria (2.0) eh (.) a mi me costó mucho trabajo puesto que el profesor que nos impartía la clase (.) la hacia (...) no divertida la hacia muy (...) muy difícil (.) muy estresante (.) y me costaba hacer luego ciertas traducciones traducciones puesto que el nos ponía a traducir (.) los textos (...) y me costaba mucho trabajo y yo estudiaba ingles (2.0) pero posteriormente (.) este al escuchar la música (...) me daba mucha curiosidad saber que decía la letra (.) no cual era el mensaje (.) y a pesar de que yo odiaba por (.) por todas esa (.) esas cosas que yo estaba viviendo en el aula (...) pues me empezó a entrar hasta cierto punto un gusto (.) o sea decía bueno porque (.) no voy a poder traducir estos libros (.) o estos textos perdón (.) si yo quiero saber también que dicen las canciones no (...) y ahí empezó mi interés (.) por que mas que gusto fue interés (.) y se fue incrementando a través del tiempo este (.) así mismo en preparatoria (.) y fue allá que decidí yo quiero ser maestra de inglés (...) como que de alguna manera esa mala experiencia (.) fue la que me persuadió no.</p>	<p><b>Ella:</b> Well, (...) um (.) um, personally, it was from junior high school (2.0) um (.) it was hard work for me since the teacher who taught us (.) did not make it (...) fun, he made it very (...) very difficult, (.) very stressful (.) and it was hard to do certain translations, since he made us translate (.) the texts (...) and it was hard and I was studying English (2.0), but later (.) um, when I listened to music (...) I was curious as to what the lyrics said (.), not what the message was (.) and although I hated due to (.) due to all those (.) those things I was going through in the classroom, (...) I started to take a certain liking to it (.) I mean, it was good because (.) I am not going to be able to translate those books (.) nor those texts, sorry (.) If I want to know what the songs say (...) and there is where my interest started (.) and it got greater through time (.) likewise in high school (.) and it was there that I decided I wanted to be an English teacher (...) in a certain way that bad experience (.) was what convinced me, didn't it?</p>
<p>19 <b>T:</b> Interesante</p>	<p><b>T:</b> Interesting</p>
<p>20 <b>Reina:</b> Me pasó algo similar a ella (.) en el sentido de que (2.0) porque a ese curso que nos inscribieron (.) inscribieron a mi hermano igual (.) que a mi (.) pero él sacaba las buenas notas (.) y yo los ceros (...) entonces (.) me dije “no si puedo (.) yo se que sí puedo nada mas que soy floja (...) y dije no ahora ¿qué voy a estudiar? no pues inglés (.) y cuando les [<i>familia</i>] dije (.) así como que (.) no “no te creo, como que</p>	<p><b>Reina:</b> Something similar happened to me (.) in the sense that (2.0) since they registered us in that course (.) they also registered my brother (.) as well as me (.) but he got the good grades (.) and I got the zeros (...) so (.) I said to myself ‘I can do it (.) I know I can do it, I am just lazy’ (...) and I said ‘now what am I going to study? English.’ (.) and when I told them [<i>family</i>] (.) they said (.) ‘we don't believe you, in</p>

<p>inglés (.) tu ni siquiera (.) sabes eres bien tonta y no sé que” a mi hermano le dije “no (.) te voy a demostrar [que]</p>	<p>English (.) you shouldn’t even try (.) you know you are stupid’ and other things. I told my brother ‘no, (.) I’m going to show you [that]</p>
<p>21 <b>T:</b> [son buenos los hermanos ¿verdad?]</p>	<p><b>T:</b> [brothers are good, aren’t they]</p>
<p>22 <b>Reina:</b> que sí puedo (.) por eso entre</p>	<p><b>Reina:</b> that I can (.), that is why I entered</p>
<p>23 <b>T:</b> Les ibas a demostrar que sí podías</p>	<p><b>T:</b> You were going to show them you could</p>
<p>24 <b>T:</b> esta bien (2.0) este (2.0) ¿Se sienten Uds.(.) preparados (...) para (...) tomar esta aventura (.) que es (.) el profesor de inglés?</p>	<p><b>T:</b> Alright (2.0) um (2.0) Do you feel you are (.) prepared (...) to (...) embark on this adventure (.) of being (.) an English teacher?</p>
<p>25 <b>Hada:</b> No yo siento que (.) siento que (.) ni aun (.) un profesor ya experimentado (...) se puede sentir ya completamente o sea listo para cualquier situación (...) porque bueno de lo que me he dado cuenta (.) en estas observaciones (...) que hemos hecho antes de nuestras practicas (...) este fue por ejemplo darme cuenta de (2.0) de qué de (.) cómo son las características muy particulares no solo del profesor sino de cada estudiante (...) entonces es algo así como que uno tiene que esforzarse por cubrir todas las necesidades de (.) del grupo (...) este algo que es muy difícil (.) y entonces siento que si eso es solo con un grupo cada grupo en el futuro va a ser diferente del otro (...) y entonces uno tiene que ir buscando maneras para poder ayudar (...) a (...) para poder este resolver sus necesidades eh acorde (.) a sus (...) diferencias.</p>	<p><b>Hada:</b> No, I think that (.) I think that (.) not even (.) an experienced professor (...) feels completely ready for any situation (...) because, well, from what I have seen (.) in these observations (...) that we have done before our practicum (...) these were, for example, to see that (2.0) that (.) as they are very peculiar traits, not only of the professor, but also of each student (...) then it is something like this, that one must make the effort to cover all the needs of (.) the group (...) this is very difficult (.) and so I think this is only with one group. Each group in the future will be different from another (...) and then one must look for ways to be able to help (...) to (...) to be able to cater to the needs according (.) to their (...) differences.</p>
<p>26 <b>Reina:</b> Pues (...) no (.) no creo que estemos preparados (.) porque (...) lo que necesitamos es experiencia ya después de este primer paso de las prácticas (...) después ya tendremos (.) pero un poquito (.) no toda (.) porque en la realidad necesitamos aprender (2.0) de cada uno de los alumnos porque cada uno es diferente (...) cada grupo es (...) igual diferente (.) y (...) con los cambios igual (.) todo se va modificando y (.) todos quieren aprender (.) cosas diferentes y debemos de tomar en cuenta eso (.) para planear una clase</p>	<p><b>Reina:</b> Well, (...) I don’t (.) I don’t think that we are prepared (.) because (...) what we need is experience, since after this first step of practicum (...) after this we will have it (.) but a little (.) not everything (.) because in reality, we need to learn (2.0) from each one of the students because each one is different (...) each group is (...) also different (.) and (...) likewise with the changes (.) each will change and (.) everyone wants to learn (.) different things and we should take that into account (.) to plan a class.</p>

<p>27 <b>Ella:</b> no (.) no me siento preparada (...) no tengo la experiencia (.) nunca he practicado (.) y eso me aterra (.) un poco (...) eh pero siento que con el paso del tiempo (...) agarrando experiencia (.) conociendo a los diferentes tipos de alumnos (.) que las compañeras mencionan (...) pues voy a ir mejorando (.) o puedo ir implementando cosas que yo sienta (.) que van ir (...) o que se van a ir necesitando (.) pero por el momento (...) por falta experiencia siento que no</p>	<p><b>Ella:</b> No, (.) I don't feel prepared (...) I don't have the experience (.) I have never practiced (.) and that terrifies me (.) a little (...) um, but I feel that through time (...) getting experience (.) knowing different types of students (.) that my classmates have mentioned (...) I am going to improve (.) or I can implement things that I feel (.) that will be (...) that will be needed (.), but for the time being (...) due to lack of experience, I feel I am not ready.</p>
<p>28 <b>Anita:</b> Bueno eh siento (.) que nosotros este tenemos las bases (.) lo que es lo teórico (...) pero nos falta (.) ahora viene lo práctico y ah (.) es lo que vamos a ver durante estas prácticas.</p>	<p><b>Anita:</b> Well, um, I feel (.) we are, um, we have the foundation (.), which is the theory (...), but we are missing the practice, and (.) this is what we will see during this practicum.</p>
<p>29 <b>T:</b> Sí porque esta era mi próxima pregunta (.) la siguiente pregunta iba a ser (.) bueno pues han llevado como nueve materias del área de docencia ¿no?</p>	<p><b>T:</b> Yes, because that was my next question. (.) The following question was going to be (.) well, you have taken like nine subjects in the teaching area, right?</p>
<p>30 <b>Todas:</b> si</p>	<p><b>Everyone:</b> Yes</p>
<p>31 <b>T:</b> ¿y bueno digo yo este no les ha (...) ayudado en algo a ustedes esas materias (.) (ríe)</p>	<p><b>T:</b> And, well, these subjects have not (...) helped you in something (laughs)</p>
<p>32 <b>Anita:</b> pues</p>	<p><b>Anita:</b> well,</p>
<p>33 <b>T:</b> no les ha ?</p>	<p><b>T:</b> have they?</p>
<p>34 <b>Anita:</b> siento que tenemos las bases (...) que son (...) que esas materias nos han dado las bases (.) nos han dado lo teórico (.) y ahora (.) sigue lo práctico (.) y a través de la experiencia (...) y de todo lo que vayamos este (.) adquiriendo en nuestras practicas (.) y en nuestra vida profesional (.) vamos a poder ser (.) buenos maestros (...) bueno con el paso del tiempo</p>	<p><b>Anita:</b> I feel we have the foundations (...), which are that those (...) subjects that have given us the foundations (.) have given us the theory, (.) and now (.) comes the practice (.) and through the experience (...) and everything we (.) acquire in our practicum (.) and in our professional lives (.) we will be able to be (.) good teachers (...) well, with time.</p>
<p>35 <b>T:</b> Bueno les voy a hacer una pregunta y voy a regresar con el punto (2.0) piensen en Uds. mismas (2.0) ¿qué (.) características (.) de un buen maestro (.) tienen Uds.? (inaudible) ¿Qué características (...) tienen Uds. de un buen maestro? (inaudible)</p>	<p><b>T:</b> Well, I am going to ask a question and return to the point (2.0) Think about yourselves (2.0) What (.) characteristics (.) of a good teacher (.) do you have? (inaudible) What characteristics (...) do you have of a good teacher? (inaudible)</p>

<p>36 <b>Anita:</b> pues antes que nada un buen maestro tiene que (.) amar su carrera (.) no porque si no le gusta (...) desde ahí empezamos mal (ríe)</p> <p>37 <b>T:</b> ¿Tú amas tu carrera?</p> <p>38 <b>Anita:</b> Sí porque me gusta (...) me gusta lo que voy a hacer (.) o lo que ya estoy empezando a hacer</p> <p>39 <b>T:</b> tu amas (2.0) este (.) la (.) profesión</p> <p>40 <b>Anita:</b> sí (...) y tiene que tener pensamiento crítico (2.0) tiene que</p> <p>41 <b>T:</b> ¿Tú lo tienes?</p> <p>42 <b>Anita:</b> pues creo que sí (ríe)</p> <p>43 <b>T:</b> no o sea por eso les pregunto o sea ¿cuales características tienes tú? (...) o sea (.) tu me dices (.) yo amo (.) la la profesión o sea este dices (...) que tiene un pensamiento critico abierto (.) se supone que estamos en la universidad del pensamiento critico (.) entonces que bueno (.) que la universidad esta (.) cumpliendo con (.) con esa función pero ¿que mas? (.) a ver platícame o platíquense ustedes</p> <p>44 <b>Ella:</b> Bueno este (...) para empezar a mí me encanta esto yo desde que (.) lo probé con mi mama (.) yo (...) me encanto eh estar este (.) frente a un grupo claro pero ahorita ya siento el nervio no pero (...) es algo que me gusta mucho y soy (.) soy una persona muy responsable (...) siempre me ha gustado que (...) cualquier cosa (.) o cualquier (...) plan que tenga que hacer (.) en cuestión de la escuela (.) o en casa me gusta hacerlo bien (...) creo que la responsabilidad es una de mis mayores características (2.0) y (...) comprometida en todo lo que hago y dispuesta a hacer todo lo que pueda en este caso yo hacia la enseñanza que si voy a brindar o voy a dar una clase pues (.) responsable con todo la (.) el compromiso aquí (.) y la responsabilidad primero que nada (.) y con el gusto de hacerlo (inaudible) ¿verdad?</p>	<p><b>Anita:</b> Well to start, a good teacher has to (.) love his/her profession(.) because if he/she doesn't like it (...) it all starts off wrong (laughs)</p> <p><b>T:</b> Do you love your profession?</p> <p><b>Anita:</b> Yes, because I like it (...) I like what I am going to do (.) or what I am starting to do</p> <p><b>T:</b> You love (2.0) this (.) the (.) profession</p> <p><b>Anita:</b> Yes (...) and you have to be a critical thinker (2.0) you have to</p> <p><b>T:</b> Are you?</p> <p><b>Anita:</b> Well, I think so (laughs)</p> <p><b>T:</b> No, that's why I am asking you, which characteristics do you have? (...) I mean (.) you tell me (.) I love (.) the profession, I mean, um, you say (...) that you are a critical thinker (.) I suppose we are in the university of critical thinking (.) so that is good (.) that the university is (.) fulfilling (.) that function, but, what else? (.) Talk to me, or talk among yourselves</p> <p><b>Ella:</b> Well, um (...) to start, I love this, ever since (.) I lived this with my mom (.) I (...) have loved being (.) in front of a group; sure, but now I feel nervous, but (...) it is something I like very much and I am (.) I am a very responsible person (...) I have always liked (...) anything (.) or anything (...) that has to do (.) with school (.) or at home, I like to do things well (...) I think responsibility is one of my greatest traits (2.0) and (...) committed in everything I do and will to do everything I can, in this case, if I am going to teach the class, (.) responsibility in everything (.) commitment here (.) and responsibility before all (.) and doing it with pleasure (inaudible), right?</p>
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45 **Hada:** Bueno yo siento que aparte de todo lo que ellas han mencionado (2.0) bueno de lo que yo siento que tengo si creo este pues sería también (.) paciencia (2.0) este (.) tolerancia (...) y siento que el hecho de (...) bueno en este caso de enseñar una (.) lengua extranjera (.) siento que el hecho haber sido yo un estudiante (.) de haber estado conciente de mi aprendizaje (...) pues me ayuda a entender (.) por lo que mis alumnos puedan estar pasando (.) por que (...) yo ya he pasado por eso ¿no? entonces (.) siento que eso es algo bueno (.) que me podría ayudar a mí como (...) profesora de inglés (.) que yo (.) pasé por lo mismo entonces (.) entiendo los procesos por los cuales los alumnos van a estar (...) pasando y que yo voy a poder solucionarlo (.) de acuerdo a eso.

47 **Reina:** Creo que (.) una de las características que tengo para (...) esta carrera (...) es la creatividad (.) y se necesita mucha creatividad (.) para poder este (.) enseñar (...) especialmente a los niños ¿no? eh [inaudible]

48 **T:** ¿Te gusta (.) el área de (.) enseñanza a niños?

49 **Reina:** Si, pero (...) lo malo es que no soy tan paciente como la compañera (.) me desesperan (2.0) a parte de que es muy bonito trabajar con ellos (2.0) y te dicen lo que piensan (...) si algo no les parece (...) te lo dicen (...) y (...) pues tu debes de tomar eso en cuenta para (.) reflexionar y decir “¿Qué es lo que estoy haciendo mal? (2.0) eh otra característica creo que es la puntualidad (3.0) creo que soy hasta exagerada en ese (.) punto (.) me gusta llegar temprano (.) y (.) me desespera que si quedamos a una hora (.) lleguen (.) diez minutos o (.) veinte (...) mas tarde (.) en ocasiones me he llegado a molestar por eso.

50 **T:** Ya somos dos iguales

**Hada:** Well, I feel, that besides everything they have mentioned (2.0) well, what I feel I have, um, would also be (.) patience (2.0), um (.) tolerance (...), and I feel that the fact that (...) well, in the case of teaching a (.) foreign language, (.) I feel that the fact that I have been a student (.), of having been conscious of my learning (...) this has helped me to understand (.) what my students may be going through (.) because (...) I have been through that, right? So, (.) I feel this is something good (.) that could help me as (...) an English teacher (.) which I (.) went through, so (.) I understand the processes through which the students will (...) go and that I am going to be able to solve it (.) according to that.

**Reina:** I think that (.) one of the traits I have for (...) this profession (...) is creativity (.) and a lot of creativity is needed (.) to be able to, um (.) teach, (...) especially to children, right? (inaudible)

**T:** Do you like (.) the field of (.) teaching to children?

**Reina:** Yes, but (...) the bad part is that I am not as patient as my classmate (.) they frustrate me (2.0) although it is very nice to work with them (2.0) and they tell you what they think (...) and (...) well, you should take this into account to (.) reflect and say “What am I doing wrong?” (2.0) Another trait I think is punctuality (3.0) I think I exaggerate in this (.) point (.) I like to arrive early (.) and (.) it frustrates me if we agree on a certain time (.) and [the other person] arrives (.) ten or (.) twenty minutes (...) later (.) At times I have gotten angry because of this.

**T:** That makes two of us

<p>51 <b>Hada:</b> Bueno algo (.) que a mí me gustaría agregar por ejemplo (.) este (...) siento que es importante (...) tener un compromiso con los estudiantes (.) o sea que ellos sean (...) este (...) nuestra prioridad (...) como maestros (.) no preocuparnos por (.) nosotros en cumplir con mi trabajo (...) entonces sino que siempre ellos (.) sean este (.) nuestra prioridad (...) que si tal vez nuestra clase (.) eh no sea muy buena (.) para (.) en ese momento (.) que tratemos de buscar otras soluciones (.) este (.) de manera que (...) que nuestro alumnos puedan aprender</p> <p>52 <b>T:</b> ¿Quieren agregar algo más? (3.0+) ¿Cómo se sienten (.) como hablantes del inglés? (3.0+) Esa es su segunda lengua ¿no? (...) Porque no la están (.) aprendiendo como (.) bueno si como lengua extranjera (.) pero para ustedes va a ser la (...) la lengua de la vida ¿no? (.) O sea ¿Cómo se sienten ustedes como (.) hablantes del inglés?</p> <p>53 <b>Hada:</b> Pues (.) hasta cierto punto este (.) a veces con ciertas limitantes no (.) por el hecho de (.) de no estar en el (.) contexto (...) en el cual la lengua se (...) pues se da como primera lengua (...) este (...) pero pues siento que (2.0) tenemos las bases (...) muy (...) muy básicas este (...) para poderlo hablar (...) sin embargo creo que (...) que necesitamos todavía mas experiencia estar en el contexto donde se habla la lengua meta.</p> <p>54 <b>Anita:</b> Pues yo siento también como lo dice la compañera (.) eh tenemos las bases (...) podemos hablarlo pero nos falta todavía (.) y eso va a ser a través del tiempo por que nunca acabamos de aprender incluso en español hay algunas palabras que (.) las vemos y decimos esto que significa (.) y es español (...) y así eh eh mismo con el inglés pues tenemos que ir aprendiendo a través de toda la vida.</p> <p>55 <b>Ella:</b> Pues yo puedo decir que hasta cierto punto me siento (2.0) eh insegura (...) porque a pesar de que tengo (.) esas (.) esas bases como mis compañeras lo</p>	<p><b>Hada:</b> Well, something (.) that I would like to add, for example (.) um (...) I feel that it is important (...) to have a commitment with the students (.) I mean, that they be (...) um (...) our priority (...) as teachers, (.) not to worry ourselves about (.) us fulfilling my job (...) but rather always about them (.) that they be (.) our priority (...) that if maybe our class (.) is not very good (.) at (.) that moment, (.) we try to look for other solutions (.) um (.) so that (...) our students can learn</p> <p><b>T:</b> Would you like to add anything else? (3.0+) How do you feel (.) as English speakers? (3.0+) This is your second language, isn't it? (...) Because you are not (.) learning it as (.) well, as a foreign language (.), but for you it is going to be the (...) the language of life, right? (.) I mean, how do you feel as (.) English speakers?</p> <p><b>Hada:</b> Well, (.) up to a point, um (.) sometimes with certain limitations (.) due to the fact that (.) we are not in the (.) context (...) in which the language is (...) is given as a first language (...) um (...) but, well, I feel that (2.0) we have the basics (...) very (...) very basic foundations, um (...) to be able to speak it (...); however, I think that (...) we still need more experience of being in the context in which the target language is spoken.</p> <p><b>Anita:</b> Well, I also feel the same as my classmate said (.) mm, we have the basics (...) we can speak it, but we are still missing [language] (.) and this will be over time, because we never stop learning, even in Spanish there are some words that (.) we see them and we say 'what does this mean?' (.) and that is in Spanish (...) and it is the same with English, since we have to continue learning our entire lifetime.</p> <p><b>Ella:</b> Well, I can say that up to a point I feel (2.0) insecure (...) because although I have (.) these (.) foundations, as my classmates mentioned, (...) I feel I am lacking a lot of</p>
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mencionaron (...) siento que me falta mucha practica y me encantaría platicar [*en inglés*] en todo momento (.) pero (.) el mismo contexto en el que la mayoría vivimos pues estamos aquí en un país en el que se habla español por ejemplo (.) eso me impide es como un cierto limite (.) entonces este si insegura (.) en ciertas ocasiones (...) cuando tengo cierto contacto con alguna persona extranjera (...) es como si mi mente se bloqueara (...) como si ya no supiera ni que decir (...) estoy con alguna otra persona con alguna compañera aquí y si (.) hay fluidez (.) pero no se probablemente este (.) el nerviosismo (.) no se eh este podría ser eso (.) lo que hay un cierto bloqueo (...) pero siento si inseguridad (...) me encantaría y siento que es necesario (.) practicar en un contexto real (...) pero pues en este caso pues no.

**56 Reina:** Yo siento que me falta aprender muchísimas cosas mucho vocabulario (2.0) porque eh en ocasiones (...) nuestros familiares nos preguntan oye “¿Qué dice esa canción?” (.) o (.) ¿qué están diciendo en la película? (.) Y tu “¡Oye... espérate!..tampoco lo sé todo” (.) creen que ya lo sabes todo (.) pero no te falta (...) eh aprender muchísimas cosas

**57 T:** Y ustedes ven alguna (.) bueno (2.0) este ¿Se sienten preparados para ser profesores de inglés? (3.0) O sea una cosa es este (...) digamos (...) que ustedes este digan bueno me falta ingles me falta vocabulario me falta (.) eh (.) practica pero ¿cómo se sienten (.) para emprender esto de ser profesor de inglés? (...) en su preparación (...) que si yo los agarro hoy día y les digo OK este (.) van a ir y allí hay cuatro salones de inglés tu tomas uno métanse a donde quieran y pónganse a dar clases de inglés (...) OK ¿cómo se sienten?

**58 Ella:** Pues (2.0) me sienten (...) bueno en mi opinión personal (.) eh me siento segura (...) lo que (2.0) la escuela (...) la institución (.) ha brindado o que (.) son los conocimientos básicos (...) listos para ponerlos en practica y nada mas (...)

practice and I would love to speak [in English] all the time (.) but (.) the same context in which the majority of us live is in a country in which Spanish is spoken, for example (.) this stops us; it is like a certain limitation (.), so I feel insecure (.) on some occasions (...) when I have certain contact with a foreigner (...) it is as if my mind were blocked (...) as if I didn't know what to say (...) I am with another person, or with one of my classmates, and I can do it (.) it flows, (.) but I don't know, it is probably, um (.) nervousness (.) I don't know, this could be (.) a certain kind of block (...) but I feel insecurity (...) I would love to and I feel it is necessary to (.) practice in a real context (...), but can't in this case.

**Reina:** I feel that I need to learn a lot of things, a lot of vocabulary (2.0) because at times (...) our family members ask us, 'Hey, what does this song say?' (.) or (.) 'what are they saying in this movie?' (.) and we have to say 'Hey, wait a minute! I don't know everything!' (.) They think you already know everything, (.) but you don't, you still need (...) to learn many things.

**T:** And do you seen any (.) well, (2.0) um, do you feel prepared to be English teachers? (3.0) One thing is, um (...) let's say (...) that you, um, say, well, I don't know enough English, I don't have enough vocabulary (.) mm (.) or practice, but how do you feel (.) to start being English teachers? (...) in your preparation (...) if I take you today and say, OK, um (.) you are going to go and there are four English rooms. You take one, go to the one you want, and start teaching English classes (...) OK, how do you feel?

**Ella:** Well (2.0) I feel (...) well, in my personal opinion (.) mm, I feel secure (...) that what (2.0) the school (...) the institution (.) has given me or that (.) this is the basic knowledge, (...) ready to be put into practice, and nothing more (...) I need

<p>necesito dosificar todo eso pero (.) si me siento lista para emprender esto si.</p> <p>59 <b>Anita:</b> Yo creo que (.) tengo las bases ya (.) y como dice ya nada mas falta practicar (...) o sea ya me siento lista (.) y estoy segura porque tengo los conocimientos todo lo que he aprendido en de MELE I, MELE II, practica docente</p> <p>60 <b>Hada:</b> Yo creo que igual también (2.0) si me sentiría preparada para dar clases ya en este momento (...) pero pues claro la practica (...) me ayudaría bastante a crecer o sea con el tiempo</p> <p>61 <b>Reina:</b> Yo estaría un poco nerviosa pero ya (.) con el tiempo yo creo se me (...) se me quitaría (...) porque cuando entras a un salón (.) y te quedas viendo a los alumnos dices (2.0) y ahora ¿qué (.) qué estarán pensando de mí (.) o qué quisiera entrar en sus mentes (.) y saber que es lo que piensan de ti</p> <p>62 <b>T:</b> mhm (asintiendo) Y eso es es importante no (2.0) este (2.0) bueno como (2.0) (inaudible) como no-nativos de (...) del inglés (...) ¿se sienten que tienen la capacidad de ser competitivos (2.0) en el mercado [<i>laboral</i>]?</p> <p>63 <b>Hada:</b> Yo creo que si (...) si nos sentimos competitivos a pesar de no ser (...) hablantes nativos del ingles (...) como ya lo había mencionado hace rato tenemos la ventaja de que (...) hemos pasado por el proceso de aprendizaje (...) pero (.) siento que talvez (.) mhm hay ciertos limitantes (...) culturales (...) que nos (.) eh esa competitividad se pudiera reducir (...) este porque (...) bueno en México es muy común no (.) que esta mentalidad de que (...) prefiero mejor que el (...) que el maestro sea sea nativo (.) o cosas así no (.) esa sería en un cierto grado la única limitante (.) pero por lo demás (.) yo creo que no</p>	<p>to dose that out, but (.) if I feel ready to take that on, yes.</p> <p><b>Anita:</b> I think that (.) I have the foundations already (.) and as she said, practice is missing (...) I mean, I already feel ready (.) and I am secure because I have the knowledge, everything I learned in MELE I, MELE II [teaching methodology courses], teaching practicum</p> <p><b>Hada:</b> I also think that I (2.0) would also feel prepared to teach classes at this moment (...) but, of course, the practice (...) would help me a lot to grow, I mean, over time</p> <p><b>Reina:</b> I would be a little nervous, but (.) with time, I think it would (...) it would go away (...) because when you go into a classroom, (.) and you look at the students, you say (2.0) now what? (.) What are they thinking about me? (.) or that you would like to get into their minds (.) and know what they think of you.</p> <p><b>T:</b> uh-huh, (nodding) and that is important, isn't it (2.0) um (2.0) well, as (2.0) (inaudible) as non-natives of (...) of English (...) do you feel you have the capacity to be competitive (2.0) in the [job] market?</p> <p><b>Hada:</b> I think so (...) we do feel competitive despite the fact we are not (...) native English speakers (...) as I had recently mentioned, we have the advantage that (...) we have gone through the learning process (...) but (.) I feel that maybe (.) uh, there are certain cultural (...) limitations (...) that we (.) um, that could reduce this competitiveness (...) because (...) well, in Mexico, this mentality is very common (.) where I prefer that the (...) that the teacher be native (.) or something like that (.) this would be to a certain degree the only limitation (.), but for everything else, (.) I don't believe so.</p>
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64 **Anita:** Pues al igual (.) que dice mi compañera (.) las limitantes sería lo cultural (...) no sabemos muchos (...) modismos (.) o frases que se usan en Estados Unidos (...) nuestro inglés es (.) académico (...) mas que nada (2.0) y pues (...) pero siento que por (...) por otro lado (...) nosotros tenemos la fortaleza (.) o el punto fuerte (.) de que hemos (.) hemos pasado (...) por lo que los alumnos están pasando (.) entonces los podemos entender (.) les podemos explicar (.) eh yo he tenido maestros mexicanos (.) y maestros extranjeros y me he dado cuenta que en lo que se refiere a cuestiones gramaticales yo entiendo mejor con los que son mexicanos (.) porque me lo explican más bien (...) en cambio con un extranjero aprendo mas vocabulario (...) cultura y todo (...) pero ya en lo gramatical me quedo y “¿ahora qué? ¡No le entendí!”...

65 **T:** [no le entiendo] (inaudible)

66 **Anita:** aha (asintiendo) si (...) no le entendí o no hizo esto (.) o siento que se va muy rápido y ya no explico bien (2.0) y bueno siento que si sería (2.0) eh (.) eh es bueno tener este maestro extranjeros (.) pero ya en los últimos niveles de lengua meta que al principio porque los mexicanos (.) te van (.) te van dosificando el conocimiento mejor.

67 **Ella:** Bueno pues no me complace (.) porque (...) personalmente pienso (...) yo puedo decir que no me siento competitiva (...) en este momento puesto que habría que conocer la lengua (.) en todos los aspectos profundamente (.) entonces tu en ese momento cuando ya tienes el conocimiento y pueda (...) pueda (.) ahm dijéramos darlo a los estudiantes en ese momento yo me voy a sentir competitiva (.) en este momento yo puedo decir que no (...) eh (...) tengo un conocimiento de la lengua sí (...) pero no al grado que yo quisiera para sentirme realmente competitiva (.) se que las cosas las puedo hacer bien (...) y soy una persona responsable como lo dije anteriormente y lo puedo hacer (...) pero es eh sentirme realmente competitiva (.) en este momento

**Anita:** As (.) my classmate said (.) the limitations would be cultural (...) we don't know many (...) idiomatic expressions (.) or phrases that are used in the United States (...) our English is academic (...) more than anything (2.0) and well (...) but I think that on (...) on the other hand (...) we have the strength (.) or the strong point (.) of having (.) that we have gone through (...) what the students are going through (.), then we can understand them (.) we can explain (.) I have had Mexican teachers (.) and foreign teachers, and I have realized that regarding grammatical matters, I understand better with the Mexican teachers (.) because they explain better to me (...); however, with a foreigner, I learn more vocabulary (...) culture and everything (...) but in grammar I am still like 'what now? I don't understand!'

**T:** [I don't understand her] (inaudible)

**Anita:** uh-huh (nodding) yes (...) I didn't understand or he/she didn't do that (.) or I feel that he/she is going very fast and doesn't explain well (2.0) and, well, I feel this would be (2.0) um (.) um, it is good to have foreign teachers (.) but in the last levels of target language better than at the beginning, because Mexicans (.) are going to dose the knowledge out better.

**Ella:** Well, it doesn't please me (.) because (...) I personally think (...) I can say that I do not feel competitive (...) at this time since it is necessary to know the language (.) in all aspects and at a more profound level (.) then you, when you have this knowledge and can (...) can (.) mm, let's say, give it to the students at this time, I am going to feel competitive (.) at that time, I can say that I do not (...) eh (...) I do have knowledge of the language, (...) but not to the degree that I would like to really feel competitive (.) I know what I can do well (...) and I am responsible, as I have previously said, and what I can do (...), but if I really feel competitive (.) at this moment, I can say that I don't.

<p>puedo decir que no</p> <p>68 <b>T:</b> Y aunque digamos si yo te dijera (2.0) bueno (...) ¿cómo te sientes junto a la maestra de inglés que da en la Secundaria Técnica #1 (.) en los fuertes?</p> <p>69 <b>Ella:</b> [habría que conocerla](ríe)</p> <p>70 <b>T:</b> [¿crees que puedes competir?]</p> <p>71 <b>Ella:</b> ¡Ha claro que si!(.) pero (...) bueno estamos con la profesora de tele de secundaria si ...</p> <p>72 <b>T:</b> [Bueno pero] competitivo en el mercado laboral</p> <p>73 <b>Ella:</b> [a no claro si ]</p> <p>74 <b>T:</b> o sea (.) no no te estoy diciendo (.) que que digamos este (...) eh que vas a ir a quitarle el puesto (.) a alguien que trabaja digamos en el anglo no o (.) en el liceo británico (.) o en la casa de la lengua o algo así no digamos en el mercado laboral</p> <p>75 <b>Ella:</b> [ah bueno si estamos hablando del mercado laboral yo creo que si]</p> <p>76 <b>T:</b> eso digo yo o sea en el mercado (.) ser competitivo en el mercado laboral (...) sea que (...) que ustedes (...) este pueden ir a pedir (...) un trabajo (...) pues aquí hay montones de alumnos de la LEMO (.) que dan clases en la LEMO (...) no o sea la (.) la maestra de practica docente por ejemplo (inaudible) o sea (.) lo que ella hace ustedes pueden hacer no (...) o ¿no?</p> <p>77 <b>Ella:</b> Ahhh... si.</p> <p>78 <b>T:</b> Entonces ser competitivo me entiendes (inaudible) creo yo que ustedes marcan una diferencia entre (...) corríjanme si estoy equivocada no (.) entre (...) capacidad de lengua (2.0) si y capacidad de (.) poder enseñar la lengua (2.0) ustedes están (2.0) haciéndolo (2.0) una diferencia</p>	<p><b>T:</b> And although, let's say, if I told you (2.0) well (...) how do you feel to work beside the English teacher in the [school] Secundaria Tecnica #1 (.) in the forts?</p> <p><b>Ella:</b> [you would have to know her] (laughs)</p> <p><b>T:</b> [Do you think you can compete?]</p> <p><b>Ella:</b> Of course I can! (.) but, (...) well, we are with the junior high teacher (distance TV )...</p> <p><b>T:</b> [Well, but] competitive in the work force.</p> <p><b>Ella:</b> [oh, yeah, of course]</p> <p><b>T:</b> I mean (.) I am not saying (.) that, let's say, um (...) eh, that you are going to go and take a job (.) from someone who works, let's say, in the Anglo, or (.) in the Liceo Britanico (.) or in the House of English, or something like that; I'm saying in the job market.</p> <p><b>Ella:</b> [ah, well, if we are talking about the job market, then I think so, yes]</p> <p><b>T:</b> That is what I am saying, in the market (.) to be competitive in the job market (...) be it (...) that you (...) um, can go and ask for (...) a job (...) well, here there are tons of LEMO students (.) who teach classes in the LEMO (...) not the (.) the teaching practicum teacher, for example, (inaudible) I mean (.) what she does, you can do, right? (...) can't you?</p> <p><b>Ella:</b> Ahhh.... yes.</p> <p><b>T:</b> Then being competitive, you understand me (inaudible) I think you make the difference between (...) correct me if I am wrong (.) between (...) language capacity (2.0) and the capacity to (.) be able to teach the language (2.0) you are (2.0) making it (2.0) a very marked difference, right? (...),</p>
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<p>muy marcada no (...) pero es la habilidad (...) de hablar como (2.0) con un nivel de suficiencia (...) porque tampoco (...) somos este (2.0) nativos de la lengua no (...) entonces es imposible (...) que no habiéndonos criado en Estados Unidos tengamos (...) esa (...) capacidad no (...) por ejemplo yo les puedo decir (...) que estuve viendo anoche al presidente de la República hablando con Tony Blair (...) y me pareció que su inglés estaba muy bueno (inaudible)</p> <p><b>79 Todas:</b> (ríen)</p> <p><b>80 T:</b> o sea dije yo wow habla muy bien ingles (3.0) si (inaudible) entonces (...) es (.) es lo que yo les estoy diciendo (.) no o sea por un lado ustedes se sienten como que bueno (.) mi ingles esta “so-so” no... (inaudible) podría estar mejor (...) eso es una cosa (...) pero por otro lado yo les pregunto (...) aquí esto se trata de ser maestro no (...) entonces (...) ¿se sienten listos para la batalla? (2.0) Van a emprender la batalla de enseñar esta semana misma no? (...) Van a agarrar sus (inaudible) su marcador y su borrador y se van a la lucha no (...) o sea (.) ahí que tal</p> <p><b>81 Hada:</b> creo que si estamos bueno en lo personal (inaudible)</p> <p><b>82 T:</b> o sea es personal aquí la cosa</p> <p><b>83 Reina:</b> Pues yo creo que (...) sí estoy preparada porque como (inaudible) no sabía ni que (...) ahora ya me siento mas preparada y (.) con las observaciones pues (...) me ayudo un poco mas para saber como son los (...) muchachos (...) y igual que es lo que les gusta que</p> <p><b>84 T:</b> [ya conocen a las victimas]</p> <p><b>85 Reina:</b> si</p> <p><b>86 Todas:</b> (ríen)</p> <p><b>87 Ella:</b> Pues si igual este si (.) me siento lista (.) para para dar la clase (.) y preparada</p>	<p>but this is the ability (...) to speak like (2.0) with a level of proficiency (...) since we (...) are not, um (2.0) natives of the language (...) so, it is impossible (...), not having been raised in the United States, we have (...) um (...) the capacity (...), for example, I can say to you (...) that last night I was watching the [<i>Mexican</i>]president speaking to Tony Blair (...) and I thought his English was very good (inaudible)</p> <p><b>Everyone:</b> (laughs)</p> <p><b>T:</b> I mean, I said, wow, he speaks English very well (3.0) if (inaudible) so (...) it is (.) it is what I am saying (.) not, I mean, that on one hand you feel like, that, well (.) my English is “so-so”, no... (inaudible), it could be better (...) that is one thing (...) but, on the other hand, I ask you (...) here, this deals with being a teacher, doesn’t it? (...) then (...) Do you feel you are ready for the battle? (2.0) You are going to start the battle of teaching this very week, aren’t you? (...) You are going to grab your (inaudible) your marker and your eraser and you are going into the fight, aren’t you? (...), I mean (.) what about that?</p> <p><b>Hada:</b> I think we are, well, personally anyway (inaudible)</p> <p><b>T:</b> Meaning that it is personal.</p> <p><b>Reina:</b> Well, I think that (...) I am prepared because as (inaudible) I didn’t know anything (...) now I feel more prepared and (.) with the observations (...) it has helped me a little more to know how the (...) students are (...) and what they like</p> <p><b>T:</b> [you already know the victims]</p> <p><b>Reina:</b> yes</p> <p><b>Everyone:</b> [laughs]</p> <p><b>Ella:</b> Well, yeah, I guess, um, yeah (.) I feel ready (.) to teach the class (.) and prepared</p>
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88 <b>T:</b> OK ahora otra cosa (...) díganme tres características que tienen ustedes de un buen maestro	<b>T:</b> OK, now something else (...) give me three characteristics of a good teacher that you have
89 <b>Anita:</b> (inaudible) Responsabilidad	<b>Anita:</b> (inaudible) responsibility
90 <b>Hada:</b> Perseverancia, (.) paciencia (.) y empatía	<b>Hada:</b> Perseverance (.) patience, (.) and empathy
91 <b>Ella:</b> Compromiso, responsabilidad y tolerancia.	<b>Ella:</b> Commitment, responsibility and tolerance.
92 <b>Reina:</b> Puntualidad (.) , responsabilidad (.) y (inaudible)	<b>Reina:</b> Punctuality (.), responsibility (.) and (inaudible)
93 <b>T:</b> Bueno (2.0) ¿Hay algo mas que ustedes (...) desean decir ahorita (...) respecto a (...) ser maestro?	<b>T:</b> Well (2.0) is there anything else you (...) would like to say right now (...) regarding (...) being a teacher?
94 <b>Reina :</b> Hasta ahorita tenemos un concepto de lo que (...) es ser (...) maestro (...) pero porque todavía no hemos enfrentado (.) esta situación (.) pero ya con el paso del tiempo (...) esta definición (.) o concepto va a ir cambiando	<b>Reina:</b> Up ‘till now we have a concept of what (...) it is to be (...) a teacher (...) but because we still have not come face to face (.) with this situation (.) but with time, (...) this definition (.) or concept will start changing.
95 <b>Anita:</b> y también (.) tenemos (...) que este (...) estar comprometidos (.) con nuestro alumnos y ver que realmente estén aprendiendo (...) y si no lo están hacer lo posible (...) porque ellos este aprendan (...) y no nada mas yo ya les di esto si no aprenden es su problema no (...) tener responsabilidad y compromiso (.) con ellos	<b>Anita:</b> and also (.) we have (...) to, um, (...) be committed (.) to our students and really see that they are learning (...) and if they are not, do everything possible (...) so they learn (...) and not only say, ‘I gave them that, and if they don’t learn, its their problem’, right? (...) have responsibility [liability?] and commitment (.) to them.
96 <b>Hada:</b> Si o sea siento que (2.0) que también es importante cuando (...) se esta forjando (...) la docencia no (2.0) este (.) tomar en cuenta los maestros del pasado (.) alguna vez leí (.) a un autor (.) no me acuerdo cual que decía algo sobre (...) “ghost past ghost teachers or something like that” (...) este (.) entonces creo que eso es muy importante (.) porque la idea que uno tiene ya sea de un mal maestro uno dice no pues no voy a hacer (...) lo que ese maestro hizo porque esta muy mal (.) o voy a hacer lo que aquel (...) buen maestro hizo (.) entonces (.) yo creo que es importante (.) también este (...) tomar en cuenta esos maestros que (inaudible) (.) y tratar de	<b>Hada:</b> Yes, I mean, I feel that (2.0) it is also important when (...) when it is forming (...) teaching, isn’t it? (2.0) um, (.) taking into account past teachers (.) somewhere I read (.) an author, (.) I don’t remember what he said, something about (...) “ghost past ghost teachers or something like that” (...) um, (.) so I think this is very important (.) because the idea you have, albeit of a bad teacher, you say, ‘I’m not going to do (...) what that teacher did because he or she is very bad’ (.) or ‘I’m going to do what that (...) good teacher did’ (.) so (.) I think it is important (.) also, um (...) to take into account those teachers who (inaudible (.) and try to improve

<p>mejorar</p> <p>97 <b>T:</b> Me leíste la mente (.) porque esa era mi siguiente pregunta.</p> <p>98 <b>Todas:</b> (ríen)</p> <p>99 <b>T:</b> o sea la siguiente pregunta era este respecto a (2.0) ¿creen ustedes que los maestros que tuvieron en el pasado (...) van a (.) ser de alguna manera (.) influencia (.) en Uds. este (2.0+) en el presente? (...) Esos fantasmillas como dice (...) este (.) Ariadna esos fantasmas del pasado (...) este (2.0) de alguna manera ¿dejaron alguna huella (...) este en ustedes?</p> <p>100 <b>Ella:</b> Yo creo que algunos no todos (...) yo me guío principalmente (.) con los (...) con las con los con las personas con los profesores (.) con los que (...) realmente tuve un conocimiento que sentí que aprendí (...) y que me supieron guiar</p> <p>101 <b>T:</b> en el pasado</p> <p>102 <b>Ella:</b> si (...) porque las (...) porque la como todo no hubo maestro que realmente yo (inaudible) pues ni para acá ni para allá (.) yo me quedé ahí (...) prefiero eliminarlos esos de mi mente para no s que no sean influencia (.) porque si puede ser influencia pero negativamente (.) yo quiero quedarme (.) con las personas positivas para mi (...) eh pueda mejorar pero aquí yo creo que es (2.0) eh (...) crecer (.) en el ámbito de este enseñanza en esta área (.) pero positivamente no</p> <p>103 <b>Anita:</b> Yo (...) como dice ella (.) quedarme con los maes (.) con los (...) maestros que me dejaron algo positivo (...) pero tomar en cuenta a los que me dejaron algo negativo para no volver a cometer (...) los mismos errores (.) que ellos cometieron (...) o sea (.) si (.) a mi me molestaba que llegaran [<i>los maestros</i>] tarde (...) que no hicieran nada en la clase (...) no vol no volver ha hacer eso</p> <p>104 <b>Reina:</b> (inaudible) porque de lo malo también aprendes (...) y como dice la</p>	<p><b>T:</b> You read my mind (.) because that was my next question.</p> <p><b>Everyone:</b> (laughs)</p> <p><b>T:</b> The next question was regarding that (2.0) do you think teachers you had in the past (...) will (.) somehow be (.) an influence (.) for you, um (2.0+) in the present? (...) These ghosts as (...) um (.) Hada said, these ghosts of the past (...) um (2.0) have somehow made a mark (...) on you?</p> <p><b>Ella:</b> I think that some, no all (...) I mainly guide myself (.) with the (...) with those with which people with those professors (.) with those that (...) really had knowledge, with whom I felt I learned (...) and who knew how to guide me.</p> <p><b>T:</b> in the past</p> <p><b>Ella:</b> Yes, (...) because the (...) because there was really not a teacher that I (inaudible) since it was not one way or the other (.) I was just there (...) I prefer to eliminate them from my mind so that they are not an influence (.) since they can be a negative influence (.) I want to be with (.) people who are positive for me (...) eh, can improve, but here I think that it is (2.0) eh (...) to grow (.) in the teaching environment in this field (.) but positively, don't you?</p> <p><b>Anita:</b> I (...) as she [Ella] has said (.) to keep the teachers (.) with the (...) teachers who have given me something positive (...) but to take into account those who left me with something negative in order to not make (...) the same mistakes (.) they made (...), I mean, (.) yes, (.) it bothered me that they [the teachers] came late (...) that they did nothing in class (...) and to not do that again</p> <p><b>Reina:</b> (inaudible) because from the bad you can also learn (...) and as my classmate</p>
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<p>compañera no pues esto (...) no voy a cometer este error que este maestro hizo (.) porque a mí no me (.) parecía cuando un maestro que hiciera esto o y me imagino que los alumnos van a pensar lo mismo (...) y tomaría algo positivo que hizo el maestro para mejorarlo</p> <p>105 <b>Hada:</b> (inaudible) Sería importante tomarlos (.) en cuenta y no tanto por (.) decirlo no voy a hacer lo que ellos hicieron (.) sino tratar de pensar que ellos como maestros por qué hicieron eso (...) y así poderlos entender (.) no sé a lo mejor (...) decir a no pues él trato de hacer esto pero no le funcionó (...) entonces yo podría (...) igual copiar (...) de en cierta manera eso que hizo pero tratar de mejorarlo (.) porque yo me di cuenta que no le había funcionado del todo</p> <p>106 <b>T:</b> Quizá lo ves con diferentes ojos ¿no? (.) (inaudible) a veces uno ve algo que (...) hizo alguien (inaudible) piensas (inaudible) yo me estaba muriendo por eso si no era tan importante (.) así pasa</p> <p>107 <b>T:</b> ¿algo más (.) que quieran agregar? (3.0+) ¿Están contentos (.) que van a empezar a practicar?</p> <p>108 <b>Todas:</b> si</p> <p>109 <b>Hada:</b> muy nerviosa</p> <p>110 <b>T:</b> el nervio</p> <p>111 <b>Hada :</b> yo creo que eso es bueno normal (.) no (.) tanto porque no nos sintamos seguras o con conocimientos (.) pero (.) pues siempre algo nuevo (...) este (.) este si es</p> <p>112 <b>T:</b> yo le llamo (.) yo siempre les digo que es como (.) pánico escénico ¿no? (stage fright) la primera vez que sales al escenario es como ahhhh (surprised) es como la primera vez que das una conferencia o algo así (.) todos sus compañeros te ven (2.0) pero es normal (...) o sea es normal (...) pero (.) que bueno (.) me da mucho gusto</p>	<p>said, um (...) I am not going to make the same mistake that teacher made (.) because I don't think (.) it was right for a teacher to do that and I imagine the students will think the same (...) and I would take something positive the teacher did to improve it.</p> <p><b>Hada:</b> (inaudible) It would be important to take them (.) into account and not just to (.) say that I am not going to do what they did (.), but rather to think that they as teachers, why they did that (...) and to be able to understand (.) I don't know, maybe (...) not to say since he tried to do that but it didn't work (...) then I could (...) copy (...) in a certain way what he did, but try to improve it (.) because I realized that it had not turned out perfectly for him.</p> <p><b>T:</b> Maybe you see it differently, huh? (.) (inaudible) at times people see something that (...) someone did (inaudible) and you think (inaudible) I was dying because of that if it was not that important (.) which sometimes happens.</p> <p><b>T:</b> Anything else (.) you would like to add? (3.0+) Are you happy (.) that you are going to start practicum?</p> <p><b>Everyone:</b> Yes</p> <p><b>Hada:</b> Very nervous</p> <p><b>T:</b> Nervousness</p> <p><b>Hada:</b> I think this is, well, normal (.) not (.) because we don't feel sure of our knowledge (.) but (.) there is always something new (...) um (.) this is it</p> <p><b>T:</b> I call it (.) I always say it is like (.) stage fright, right? (stage fright) The first time you go out on stage, it is like Ahhhh (surprised) It is like the first time you give a conference or something like that (.) all your classmates look at you (2.0) but it is normal (...) I mean, it is normal (...) but (.) well, (.) I am very pleased and I thank you</p>
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pues les agradezco mucho (inaudible)... bueno agradezco muchísimo.	very much (inaudible) ...well, I thank you very much.
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## ONGOING ACTIVITIES

### JOURNAL WRITING

It has been said that journal writing may benefit both the PTS and the STS in the following ways:

- a. Students can get help with areas of course content where they are having difficulty.
- b. Journal writing promotes autonomous learning
- c. STS gain confidence in their ability to learn, to make sense of difficult material, and to have original insights.
- d. Journal writing promoted more productive class discussion
- e. Journal writing encourages STS to make connections between course content and their own teaching.
- f. Journals create interaction beyond the classroom, both between PTS and STS, and among STS.
- g. Journals make the class more process oriented.

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### JOURNAL WRITING SCHEDULE

(Adapted from Ho and Richards, 1993)

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#### You are required to

- Write a journal once every two weeks during the teaching practice course
  - The weekly journal should be 250 words in length
  - Keep the journal in a personal file after being commented
  - Focus on and write about **one aspect** of the following two categories:
    1. About your teaching
      - goals and objectives of the lesson
      - effectiveness of materials
      - teacher-student interaction
      - successfulness in the lesson
    2. About the students
      - Their contribution to the lesson
      - Their participation in the lesson
      - Their motivation
      - Their interest in the lesson
-

## **Appendix K**

### **Practicum Journals Entries**

Hada's Journal (1)

#### **JOURNAL Week 1**

I think this class was ok. I didn't have much problem. Well, only a small one. At the end of the class, my mentor told me that power point presentations were not very interesting for students. Even though the students paid attention during my whole power point presentation, I think my mentor is right because I don't remember being so enthusiastic to such presentations when being a students either. The students seemed very interested in learning new things. The topic I presented hadn't been introduced by their teacher yet, and maybe that is why they were so concerned about the topic. At the end of the class, my mentor gave me the necessary feedback and motivated me telling me that his students had commented they liked they way I spoke. IT REALLY MOTIVATED ME!

#### **JOURNAL Week 2**

My motivation of the last class was the failure of this class. I think that my exercise was too complicated for the students. Well, it wasn't exactly complicated, the problem was that they needed more time to digest all the new vocabulary I introduced in the reading. I couldn't check the last exercise I asked them to do because the time was over and they had to leave. I didn't ask for feedback to my mentor in this class because I think he was a bit stressed, I hoped it wasn't because I was there and didn't let him finish the activity he was doing when I arrived.

#### **JOURNAL Week 3**

At the beginning of the class one student ask my name, so I told her and I realized that I had never introduced myself (ups!). Then I introduced myself and gave them all my personal information. I told them if there was something else they wanted to know from me, and I was surprised when they started asking a lot of questions about my life, school and many other things. I think it helped to make them feel more confident towards me. It helped me too. The rest of the class went right and I think I achieved my class objective.

#### JOURNAL Week 4

In this class, students seemed enthusiastic with the activity they did. I have realized that they like activities that seem to be funny because they think it is like spare time. I had some problems with some students who didn't want to participate so much. At the end, I had some extra time so I used my "back up" activity. I think it was a bit obvious that I had extra time, but they did the activity though. In general, it was a good class; I think that up to now I have made a good "connection" with the students.

#### JOURNAL Week 5

Before the class, I was extremely nervous because I knew I was going to be observed. However, as the class went through I became more confident. Students liked the activity because it was about something they like. According to my teacher's comments, I have to improve my way of giving instructions because students seemed confused when I spoke too fast. At the end of the class, I felt happy because I had another perspective of what I was doing.

#### JOURNAL Week 7

I think that today's class was good. Students seemed to understand the use of comparatives. I think they liked the images I presented regarding the differences between the city and the country. Also, they liked talking about the places they are from since many of them are not from Puebla, and the ones who are from Puebla were interested in knowing about the places their classmates were from.

#### JOURNAL Week 8

The beginning of today's class was good. The teacher in charge asked me to teach the first hour of class and not the last one as usual so that I could identify the difference in their behavior. They were noticeably different; they were much more active and talkative. However, it helped to have a more dynamic class. The activity about making an advertisement about their classmates seemed to be interesting for them. Everything I had planned in my lesson plan within the hour I'm supposed to teach. However, at the end of

the class the teacher told the students to ask me any doubt they had regarding the exam of the next day and I got kind of shocked. Students had very specific doubts about specific questions or examples in their books, so it was difficult for me make an explanation useful for the whole group.

#### JOURNAL Week 9

I think today's class was ok. Students seemed to like to talk about teenagers problems, they found it funny. I know why these last classes of the two last weeks I have used to use my backup activities. It's not that my activities don't match the times, but that I have felt that those activities might be more interesting in that moment and I just carry them out. In general, it was a good class.

#### JOURNAL Week 10

I felt kind of freer during this class because my mentor was not there. However, I think I could control the discipline within the classroom. A friend of mine recorded me today for the midterm paper and even though I knew the camera was there, I did not feel the pressure I usually feel when being observed. I think I could manage the situation without the teacher's presence because there is enough confidence between me and the students by now.

## Anita's Journal (2)

### EXPERIENCIA PROFESIONAL

#### JOURNAL 1

January 30th, 2007.

This was my first class in real context as a teacher. I was very nervous because it is not the same to do micro-teaching in my classroom and with my classmates that teach in a real context where someone is observing and evaluating you.

At the beginning of the class when I was in front of the group, I began to sweat because I was very nervous but little by little I began to be more relaxed and secured of myself and my lesson. I thought “ I don't have to be worried because I have prepared my lesson very well, and for this reason I won't have problems”.

Then, I started with the warm-up where the students played memory game in order to practice the past tense of the verbs. This activity helped me to create a good environment in the classroom, and to be less nervous. The students were playing memory game very enthusiastic. In the presentation phase, I explained the use of the simple past. I used pieces of paper of different colors as source to explain it. The students were paying attention to the explanation. In the practice phase, they gave me some examples of sentences in simple past that showed me that they understood how to write simple past sentences in affirmative, negative and interrogative forms. Finally, in the production phase I could see that I had achieved my lesson objectives because the students were able to identify the simple past of the verbs, and also they were able to write affirmative, negative and interrogative sentences in simple past.

In this class I didn't have problems to interact with the students, all of them collaborated and participated actively. But I have to work in some weak points that I had such as speak accurately, deal with occasional classroom management problems, and use the board in an organized and neat way. In general, I think that in my first class as a teacher in a real context I did a good work, but I need to improve my next lessons.

#### JOURNAL 2

January 31st, 2007.

This was my second class in real context as a teacher. I was less nervous than in my first class but I was still nervous. Today, the lesson objectives were to identify the simple past of different verbs by playing bingo, and to talk about a newspaper article using simple past tense.

I started the class with a warm-up, where students played bingo in order to identify the past tense of the verbs. This activity helped me to introduce the topic and to do a dynamic class. The students were playing bingo very enthusiastic, and they didn't want to stop playing, but the time was over and I had to continue with the lesson.

Then, I did a pre-reading activity where students had to set the situation of the reading and predict the story by looking at the picture and reading the headline of the newspaper article. In this activity all the students were participating actively, and I didn't have problems to interact with them. After that, I did a while-reading activity in which students read and found some irregular past forms of the verbs and match them to the infinitives in the exercise.

Finally, I did a post-reading activity in which students said if they predicted the story correctly. They also answered some questions about the reading using past tense, discussed, and gave their points of view about the reading. This activity was very dynamic, and all the students were participating but I didn't correct their errors while they were speaking. For this reason, I think that I have to look for appropriate error correction techniques because it is very difficult to me correct their errors while they are speaking. I notice when students make errors but it is difficult for me to correct them.

In general, I think that I did a good work in this second class, but I had weak points that I have to improve such as speak fluently and accurately, use appropriate error correction techniques, and deal with occasional classroom management problems.

### JOURNAL3

February 6th, 2007.

This was my third class in real context as a teacher. Today I was less nervous than in the previous classes. The interaction with the students was easier, and I had fewer problems to overcome.

At the beginning of the class the students solved a puzzle as warm-up. In this puzzle students have to write the past tense of the verbs. This activity helped to review what students learned the last class.

Then, in the presentation phase I explained about countable and uncountable nouns. I used PowerPoint as tool to teach this grammar point. The students were paying attention to the explanation, and when I finished explaining they asked me questions about the topic. They seemed to be interested in the topic that I was explained.

After that, students played alphabet game with things that they could buy at the supermarket in order to review the simple past tense that they learned the last class, and practice the use of countable and uncountable nouns. This activity was very dynamic, and the students were very interested playing this game.

Finally, in the production phase I gave them an exercise in which they have to identify the countable and uncountable nouns by separating them and writing them into two different columns. This activity showed me that I had carried out the lesson objectives because all the students could do the activity and understood the idea of countable and uncountable nouns.

In general, I liked so much this class. I felt secured while I was teaching. Also, when I finished my class the teacher told me that I had done a good job. I think that I had improved some aspects, but I need to improve more. Especially, I need to improve the error correction techniques because I still have problems to correct the students.

### JOURNAL4

February 7th, 2007.

This was my fourth class in real context as a teacher. This was a different experience because today the teacher asked me to teach the complete class because she had a meeting. I wasn't nervous although I taught the complete class.

I thought that students wouldn't pay attention to the explanation, and that they wouldn't want to do the exercises because the teacher in charge of the group wasn't there.

Fortunately, this didn't happen. The students were paying attention to the explanation, participating, and doing the activities. Also, they asked me questions when they had doubts about the topic.

I had to carry out some extra activities relative to the topic because I had planned my class for 30 minutes, and I had to teach two hours. It was a challenge for me, because I hadn't prepared the whole class, but I could improvise more activities to cover the two hours class.

The class was very dynamic and I got my objectives of the lesson because at the end of the class the students were able to identify when to use definite and indefinite articles, and when we don't have to use any article. In this class I felt secured and relaxed. Maybe, it was because the mentor didn't observe me. I feel more pressure when someone is observing and evaluating me.

## JOURNAL5

February 13th, 2007.

This was my fifth class in real context as a teacher. In this class I was more relaxed and secured of myself. I feel that as I meet more to the students I have more confidence with them, and this help me to carry out better the lesson.

At the beginning of the class I carried out an alphabet game as warm-up in which students said things that they could buy at the supermarket following the alphabet. This activity helped me to break the ice and do a dynamic class. Also, with this activity students could practice the past tense, and the use of countable and uncountable nouns that they learned in previous classes.

Then, in the presentation phase, I explained the use of the quantifiers some and any. I use PowerPoint to explain this topic. I think that the material that I used to explain helped me so that students could understand. They were paying attention to the explanation and asked questions when they had doubts. I was happy because I was able to catch the attention of the students.

In the practice phase, students gave some examples of sentences using some and any. They were participating very actively. In this phase I noticed that students have really understood the topic.

Finally, in the production phase I discovered that I had carried out the lesson objectives, which were that at the end of the lesson students will be able to identify when to use some and any by answering an exercise.

In general, I think that this was a well planned class, in which I had a good class management. But I think that I still have problems with error correction, pronunciation, and integration of the skills. Furthermore, I would like to carry out activities more dynamic, which motivate more to students to participate. I am going to try to improve these aspects in my following classes.



This was my sixth class in real context as a teacher. Today the teacher asked me to teach the whole class because she had an appointment with the doctor. I taught the two hours class although I had prepared a thirty minutes class. I had to improvise other activities related with the topic, and I also use the book to carry out other activities.

In this class I was relaxed and secured of myself. I started the class with a game that is called the stop game. This game helped me to break the ice and do a dynamic class. Furthermore, with this game students had the opportunity of practicing the vocabulary that they have learned during the course.

Then, in the presentation phase I explained the use of how many and how much. Students were paying attention to the explanation, and they asked me questions when they had doubts. In the practice phase, students answer some exercise about the use of how much and how many. In this phase, I improvised more activities about the use of how much and how many. I used some activities from the Internet and others from the book.

Finally, in the production phase students worked in pairs. They wrote a conversation using how much and how many about the ingredients that they need to prepare their favorite dish. In this phase I could see that I was able to get the lesson objectives.

In general, in this class I discover that as a teacher you have to be prepared to improvise, to change activities if these don't work, to adapt your lesson plan according to the students' needs, to make use of the technology, and so on. As teacher you have to do all the possible things to get that your students learn.

This was my seventh class in real context as a teacher. Today I was more confident. I liked this class; I think that it has been one of my best classes. I was able to motivate students to participate and do the activities. They were paying attention and asking questions during the class. Their attitude showed me that they were really interested in the class, and it makes me feel very satisfy of my lesson.

This was a class of one hour. I started the class with a competition as warm-up. This activity helped me to review the use of some, any, how much, and how many that had been taught the last class. Also, with this activity I could break the ice, and do a dynamic class. During the presentation, practice and production phases I was able to integrated adequately the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and also some sub-skills such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. The materials that I used were appropriate for each skill, and the lesson was understood by students. At the end of the class I realize that I had got my Lesson objectives which were that students will be able to identify when to use going to and will by choosing the correct verb form.

In general, as this was a class where I integrated the four skills and some sub-kills I realized that the most difficult skill for students is speaking. When they speak they have problems on fluency and pronunciation. For this reason, I have to plan more activities that involve speaking and emphasis on fluency and pronunciation. So that students could

improve this skill. I think that as teacher I also need to improve my fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy but with the practice I could improved those aspects.

#### JOURNAL 8

February 21st, 2007.

This was my eighth class in real context as a teacher. Today I was confident of myself and without nervous. The class was based in a reading called Hollywood Kids. Although this class was based on reading I also integrated others skills which were speaking, listening and writing.

At the beginning of the class, I carried out a competition as warm-up activity in which students review the use of going to and will. This activity also helped my to break the ice, create a good environment and do a dynamic class.

Then, as pre-reading activity I carried out a brain storm in which students talked about the problems of being a teenager. In this activity all the students were participating actively, they seemed to have interest in the topic.

As while-reading activity students answered a true/false exercise and some questions about the reading. They asked me questions about vocabulary because in the reading there were some words that they didn't understand. I am happy because I was able to solve all their doubts about vocabulary and they understood me.

Finally, in the post-reading activity I carried out a debate in which students discussed about Hollywood kids. On one hand, some students agreed that Hollywood Kids are happy because they have money and all what they want. On the other hand, other students said that Hollywood Kids have a lot of money but they are not happy because they don't have the most important which is the attention of their parents. It was a very interesting debate in which students were participating very active and they showed interest on the activity. Something that surprises me was that students that don't want to speak in the class were participating and did they better effort to express their ideas and points of view in English. I liked so much this activity, but I have to improve my error correction techniques because I still have problems with it.

In general, this was a good class in which I was able to cash the attention of the students, to manage the class, to motivate students, and to create a good environment. However, I still have problems to deal with some occasional classroom management problems and to correct students. I have to improve so much to become a good teacher, but with the practice and my effort I could do it.

#### JOURNAL 9

February 28th, 2007.

Today the teacher asked me to teach the complete class because she had a meeting. I had prepared one hour class for this reason I had to improvise other activities to cover the two hours class. I thought that students aren't going to pay attention to the class because their teacher wasn't there, but they were paying attention and participating actively. This made me felt happy because the students respect me as their teacher.

At the begging of the class I carried out a competition where students worked in teams, and competed with their classmates writing sentences on the white-board using going to or will and the word that I gave them in order to revise the use going to and will that they learned the last class. This activity was very funny and dynamic, students were very active

participating. They ran to the white-board and put all their effort to write correctly and faster the sentence. All the students wanted to win. They didn't want to stop the competition but I had to stop it because I had prepared other activities, and we could not spend all the class with this activity.

Then, in the presentation phase I explained about comparatives and superlatives. I used Power Point to explain this topic. It was a very useful tool that helped me so that students could understand the topic. Students were paying attention and they asked me questions when they had doubts.

In the practice phase, I gave students some exercise about comparatives and superlatives. They had some problems to answer the first exercise but then with the practice they were able to answer so fast and correctly the other exercises.

In the production phase, I showed students some pictures on the computer and they created sentences about these pictures using comparatives and superlatives. I corrected their grammatical errors and pronunciation. I think that I have improved my error correction techniques.

In general, I liked so much this class. I think that this was a well planned class although I had to add more activities at the moment because I had to teach two hours.

In this class I realized that students have confidence with me and ask me questions about their doubts. I really like to work with this group, and also with my mentor because she helps me and gives me tips to improve teaching.

#### JOURNAL 10

This was my tenth class in real context as a teacher. This class was very interesting I felt comfortable and secured of myself. Also, I felt proud of myself because I was able to solve the questions and doubts of students.

At the beginning of the class students answered an exercise in which they wrote the correct comparative form of each adjective in the right box, in order to revise the comparatives that they learned the last class. In this activity students showed me that they have really understood how to form the comparatives.

Then, in the presentation stage I explained students about the use of the present perfect. They were paying attention to the explanation. They asked me a lot of questions about this topic because this topic was new for them. When they started to ask me a lot of questions I was a little bit nervous because they could ask me something that I didn't know or something that I could not explain but fortunately it didn't happen and I was able to explain them all the things that they asked me.

After that, in the practice stage I gave them some exercises in order to practice the use of the present perfect, and to identify the difference between present perfect and past simple. Also, I did a listening activity in which students practiced the use of the present perfect. In this phase, I realized that students have understood the use of the present perfect and the difference between present perfect and past simple because they were able to answer all the exercises correctly.

Finally, in the production stage I gave students an exercise in which they have to read the answers to some questions about Joanna, and formulate the questions for those answers

using Present Perfect. They were able to do this activity without any problem. I realized that they have learned how to use present perfect in affirmative, negative and interrogative form. I had prepared another activity but the time was over and I have to stop the class.

In general, I liked so much this class. The only problem that I had in this class was the time. Students enjoyed the class for this reason the time went without feeling it.

#### JOURNAL 11

March 6th, 2007.

This was my eleventh class in real context as a teacher. I liked so much this class because the students were participating very active, and I was able to catch their attention.

At the beginning of the class, I gave to each student a card that began: "Find some one who..." Example: Find some one who has been to the United States. I asked them to stand up, and ask everyone in the class, beginning Have you ever...? Furthermore, I asked them to ask questions to find out more. For example: What did you do in the United States? What places did you visit? This activity was very dynamic, students were very active participating. They were around the classroom asking questions to their classmates using simple past and present perfect, my mentor also wanted to participate in this activity.

Then, I carried out a listening activity with all its phases: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening. In the pre-listening activity, I used Power Point to introduce the topic and explain some difficult words of the listening showing to students some pictures in this program. The use of Pictures was a very useful tool that helped me so that students could have a background about the listening.

In the While-listening activity, students did some exercises on their student's book. They didn't have problems to understand the listening because it was according to their level. They were able to answer so fast and correctly the other exercises.

In the post-listening activity, I divided the group in two groups, and I asked them to prepare an interview. The members of one of group were musicians, and the others were journalists who interviewed the band. I gave them some ideas to prepare the interview, and they had five minutes to prepare it. After that, I asked them to have the interview. I corrected their grammatical errors and pronunciation. They were participating very active and they enjoyed being journalist and musicians.

In general, I liked so much this class. I think that this was a well planned class, that although it was based on listening it also integrated other skills such as speaking, and writing, and some sub-skills such as vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar.

#### JOURNAL 12

March 13th, 2007.

This was my thirteenth class in real context as a teacher. Today I videotaped my class in order to observe me teaching English, and do a reflection on that. I think that it is going to help me so much to improve my weak points. I was a little nervous because I knew that my friend was videotaped me. I try to be relaxed and confident of myself. Sometimes students didn't want to speak aloud because they knew that my friend was videotaped.

At the beginning of the class, I organized a fun and dynamic activity in order to break the ice. I put some cards on the desk. On these cards there were brain teasers, riddles and tongue twisters. Then, I played the music and students passed a ball, when I stopped the music, the student that had the ball took a card and did what the card said. This was a very funny and dynamic activity. Students were very enthusiastic doing this activity, they wanted to continue doing this activity but I had to continue with the class.

Then, in the presentation phase I explained students about the use modal auxiliary verbs. When I finished explaining I ask students if they had questions but they told me that they didn't have any question. I think that they didn't want to speak or ask question because of the camera. I realize that they haven't understood very well the use of the modals verbs during the practice phase. For this reason, at the end of the class I explained another time this topic and I clarified their doubts. Finally, they could understand the topic very well.

I think that this class was a little stressful for me and for students because of the camera. But in general I think that this was a well planned class that integrated the four skills and some sub-skills such as vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. I have still to improve some aspects such as error correction techniques, set time and ability to deal with occasional classroom management problems. Furthermore, I think that although the camera caused that students didn't want to speak aloud, and ask questions about their doubts, the video-recording is going to help me so much to improve my weak points, to pay more attention on what I am doing bad, and to realize what I am doing well.

#### JOURNAL 13

April 18th, 2007.

This was my eighteenth class in real context as a teacher. I liked so much this class. My mentor told me that the lesson was great because all the students participated and were interested in the class. I am happy because I could catch the attention of the students.. Furthermore, in this class I got my lesson objectives which were that at the end of the lesson students were able to discuss the reading by answering the comprehension questions. Also, they were able to express what they think about the problems of the biggest cities in the world, and compare their ideas with the class.

In this class I was relaxed and confident of myself. At the beginning of the class I asked students to play a memory game in groups in order to break the ice, do a dynamic class and revise the use of the first conditional that they learned the last class. When they started to play they began to be active.

In the pre-reading, students looked at the pictures and the headline of the article in order to have an idea about what they were going to read. In the while-reading, students answered the comprehension questions and then discussed them with the whole class. Finally, in post-reading students worked in groups in order to write what they think are the ten largest cities in the world. Then, they made a list of the problems that these cities face and compared their ideas with the whole class.

Students were participating and doing all the activities that I asked them to do. They enjoyed the class.

This was my twentieth class in real context as a teacher, and this was also my last class as a student-teacher in the LEMO school. I liked so much this class, and I think that this was a well planned class. Furthermore, I think that I have improved so much through the time. I remember my first class, I was very nervous and I stared to sweat. I felt that the students were going to ask me things that I wouldn't know and I would feel frustrated. But fortunately, it didn't happen. I was able to manage the group and to catch the students' attention. My teaching practices have helped me so much to improve my teaching, and to have confidence of myself. I learned a lot of things during my teaching practices.

As this was my last class, I asked to my students to write a reflection about what they liked and didn't like about the class. I was so happy with their reflections because they told me that they learned a lot of things with me. Also, they told me that they enjoyed the classes because the majority of the classes were dynamic. Furthermore, they suggested me to be more demanding and strong with the students so that they don't get a lot of confidence with me. I am going to take into account their suggestion although it is going to be difficult for me because of my personality.

When I finished my class I said good bye to my students and congratulated their participation in during all the classes. They wished me good luck in my future as a teacher, hugged me and congratulated me because I had done a very good job in my teaching practices.

I liked so much to work with this group because they were cooperative and pay attention, also they have a good level of English. It was easy to work with them. I never going to forget to this group.

### Reina's Journal (3)

Teaching Practice of **January 31<sup>st</sup> 2007**. At the beginning of the first practice, I was a little nervous but students made me feel comfortable they were very kind with me. One problems I faced was my sickness I had a sore throat and I could not speak clearly, so my voice was not adequate to give the grammatical explanation to them because I noticed that sometimes they did not understand what I was saying. I also perceived that I committed some errors which were not noticed by my mentor. I was very nervous that I forgot to ask them their names and most of the time I said "excuse me can you repeat your name please." I realized that theory is different from practice; it is not the same being a student and being a teacher your way of thinking changes drastically.

The lesson plan helped me a lot but sometimes I did not followed it due to the fact that it is not the same to plan it and to be in front of the group. I think that my performance was not so bad, but I need to improve some aspects of my lesson and performance.

Teaching Practice of **February 1<sup>st</sup> 2007**. The second day was okay. I was relax but I consider I had some problems giving instructions. They did not understand what the instructions were and I remembered that I spook in Spanish to make clear myself and to explain them what was the purpose of the activity. The classroom management was another characteristic that I need to improve because there were moments in which I did not have any idea about how to catch student's attention when they were doing different activities, which were not related to the lesson, and I just said, "Let's check the exercises." Besides it is important to stated that I need to use a variety of activities to have an active class and as a result they will be participate during the lesson. These are some of the problems I need to solve, or at least I need to take care of them.

This third teaching practice was of **February 7<sup>th</sup> 2007**. Firstly I want to clarify that in this case the context was different as everyday. Second, I was more relax and I felt self confidence, in general students are very participative although there are some of them that are shy and they are afraid of committing errors but I try to make them feel comfortable. Besides my explanation was clear because they understood the instructions perfectly. The main problem that I faced during this lesson was that they need to do something because if they have some minutes without doing anything they start talking and I do not want to do. My mentor perceived this problem and he told me that must speak louder to attract they attention, he also suggested me not to waist much time in one activity. I want to conclude

by adding that I spent more than 30 minutes so the teacher told me that time was over and I did not notice this issue. Finally,

The practice of **February 8<sup>th</sup> 2007** was good, the dynamic that I prepared was exciting for the students, they really like it, but I realized that I do not have to write too much information on the whiteboard because while I was writing, they were talking to each other and they get distracted easily and they do others activities. Other aspect that I need to take into account is the number of students that attend to classes due to the fact that sometimes some I plan group activities but not all of them are there, as a result I make some modifications to the activity. Furthermore, the relevance of invite them to be part of the class make them feel important and they participate. I try to involve them in the teaching learning process. Personally I believe that teaching practice help me to improve certain features than must be carried out within the classroom.

**February 15<sup>th</sup> 2007** during this week I was a little tired due to the fact that my teaching practice start at 7:00 a.m. and I need to be on time. My performance inside the classroom was better than the previous one I was more comfortable the activities that I planned for Thursday were amazing for the students they like it. Personally, it was a productive week because my mentor gave me some suggestions to catch student's attention because as I mentioned in the previous reflections it is difficult for me the classroom management. He suggested me to use eye contact and to monitor students, He also told me to that before explain something I need to catch their attention. He told me that there are some students who are shy and that they are afraid of say something, so I need to take car of them but I try to promote participation even with those who are afraid of participate.

The second day **February 16<sup>th</sup> 2007** of teaching practice was good. The way at had planned my lesson did not work because it was planned for 25 students but only 15 students arrive so it was necessary to make some changes I had some problems in this lesson when I gave the instructions for the third activity I noticed this because they were talking each other. Asking what they have to do. Although I asked them if there was a question, they said no. I realized that examples are important because they help students to have a clear idea about what they have to do. My mentor told me that I have some natural problems but those problems are part of learning besides he told me I improve in some aspects. He said that the most important to avoid these problems is to be He suggested me to not ask them you have a question/doubt because they are going to say no, that it would



be a good idea to ask can you explain me when we are going to use ....etc or to ask them an example.

**February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007.** My performance during the last class I taught in general was good. The warm up was something I really liked it, they were involved in the activity besides they were having fun. Although when I gave the instructions for one of the activities I planned they understood very well but I commit an error when I suggested them to help their classmates, as a result most of them did not participate just few students participated so they were not paying attention. I realized that some of the students do not like to participate and sometimes they get angry, so I need to solve this problem.

At the end of the class my mentor provided me feedback and he told me that I need to solve a problem with one of the students, she is a girl who is very shy and every time I ask them to get in group she ask me permission to go to the bathroom and she do not participate. I was not aware of this problem until he told me to find a strategy to involve her in the class. He told me that the activities of that day were interesting. Finally I want to conclude by saying that I need a break the most difficult for me is design the material I going to use

**February 27<sup>th</sup> 2007.** Basically I consider that this teaching practice was not so good, I did not have enough time to finish some activities because it some of them the time I had planned was not enough and students spent much time. Therefore, I need to take into account facts that can affect the lesson.

It is relevant to mention that not all students are comfortable with my participation within the class. There is one boy who always is bother me, he try to make me feel nervous as a consequence I get confused with the explanation besides he get angry when I ask him to read, or participate, I going to talk with him in order to know if he has a problem or why he acts like that. There was a moment when some of the professors entered to the classroom, I started shivering, and one of the students asked me something. I did not what to say, but my mentor helped me answering the question of the girl, but now I angry with myself because I did not say anything. On the other hand, when I arrived one of the students asked me if we will play, and when she said that I realized that they like to play so I can deduce they enjoy to activities I planned for each lesson.

**March 1<sup>st</sup> 2007.** My performance during this lesson was bad. Firstly, because I know that my teacher will be there to observe and she arrived a little be late. Besides the students

were talking and talking all the time it was as if I ask them to act like that not everything was wrong because I felt that they consider me as a part of the group and they asked me many questions so I went from one side of the classroom to the other. I had some problems with the grammatical explanation and I did not notice until the teacher told me.

It was a productive day because both teachers told some aspects that need to be improved; they opinions are more less the same. However, professor Gema also congratulate me about some other areas of the teaching are not excellent but good. At the end of the class, she gave me feedback and she gave me some suggestions to avoid the problems I had. I also told her some of the problems I have with some of the students and she gave me some advices.

After been observing I feel less nervous but I a little be tired because I have to deliver chapter three and four of my thesis, I have to do many things in this quarter. In this week I just practiced once because the professor had planned some others activities.

I think my teaching performance in this week **March 8<sup>th</sup> 2007** was good I felt happy about it because the class worked very well. The student's participation was okay they were able to cooperate to establish a good relationship in order to learn something new. I also kwon that they like the different activities I had planned during these few classes I asked them they opinion about my performance they suggested me to speak louder because sometimes they did not heard what I say, so I need to increase my volume tone. The student's suggestions were similar to the ones that my mentor and my teacher told me. Furthermore, students told me to be friendlier with them. On the other hand, I worry about my practices due to the fact that I missed two classes because students were having exam so I need to talk with my mentor to solve this problem. I realized that teaching is a difficult process but everyday you learn something new and that you are part of a group and you need to be involved in that group, sometimes you miss students you learn to love them.

The first day I taught during this week was on **March 14th 2007**. As every week I faced some problems, in this case the problem was related with the time because I did not finished my lesson I arrived on time but students were doing another activity so I did not have enough time to do all the activities I had planned. However, the participants were cooperating as a matter of fact they asked if we were not to play that day and I just say we are going to continue with this next class. I can conclude by saying that they like some of the activities I include in the class.

My performance on the second day **March 15 2007** I was a mess. I was tired, stress when I started to talk my voice was low, and they say what? Can you repeat please, but I started to relax myself and be part of the group. I have a trouble with the explanation and they get confused instead of use has they used have I realized of this problem and I correct them although the technique I choose was not the appropriate one. At the middle of the class, my mentor told me that I must give the two hours because he has to do other things. When he left the classroom I thought students will act different but they were kind with me and they did everything I asked them, besides I started to I feel relax, secure. At the end of the class, I asked them to give some comments about my performance. Most of them say it was okay but I consider they said that because they want to finish the class. Some of the suggestions they gave has to do with my voice so I have to speak louder

During this week, I taught twice on Wednesday and on Thursday **March 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>** . The performance on the first day was good, I consider that the explanation was clear for the students they were cooperative and participative. Personally, I was relaxed and I was well prepared to explain, besides I make some modifications, well I changed the way I was explaining the grammatical point. At the beginning I thought it did not work but they understand everything however, I did not finish some activities because there was not enough time because they arrived late so I have to wait for them a few minutes more I think that each day my performance improve in some aspects, besides my self- esteem increase everyday. I was secure about the things I was doing that day, I was not nervous, and in some way they learn something. I taught the whole class two hours because I miss two classes. It is relevant to mention that the dynamics were funny for most of them. I can say that, it was one of the best classes I ever had.

On the second day once more time was an obstacle when I arrived the teacher was explaining the grammar so I was in responsible of the activities in one of the activities I had planned they faced some problems answering some exercises but I explained them again. But my mentor told me I had not to discuss with students because I asked to a girl to be quiet and she told me she was talking about something related to the topic but it was impossible to pay attention to the other students because she was speaking louder. At the end of the class, my mentor suggested me not argue with students, but I think I did the correct, so I consider it is necessary to establish the rules from the beginning of the course

but it is difficult to do it when you are not the person in charge of the group. There was a student who

I also noticed that the teacher distract students attention, there are times when he is talking with them as a result they are not paying attention to, I ask him to move at the back of the classroom to not distract them and he told me he will do it.

After vacations it was a little difficult for me to get up early and I did not want to return back to the school, as I missed some classes I just taught once during this week the day indicate by the teacher was on **April 19<sup>th</sup>**. Students were tired or I do not what happen with them besides I think that the topic presented was confused for them. The warm up did not worked as I planned they did not participate.

As next step, I decide to continue with the next stage but they faced some problems they told me that they do not what the passive voice was. Instead of stat with the reading, I started with the grammatical explanation, but they continue having difficulties, so the teacher interrupted me and he gave some examples to facilitate the comprehension of the passive voice. Personally, I think it was okay because it helped me when I did not know how to manage that situation.

On the other hand, activities were fruitful they performed correctly; moreover, I asked them to tell me sentences where passive voice were included and they did a good job, nevertheless I consider they think the activities are foolishness for them, but they learnt new vocabulary, that is the most significant for me.

As conclusion, I can say that I need to change my way of teaching and I have to improve certain aspects of it. However, I aware of my weakness that must be improved.

I did not finish the second lesson plan I missed one activity because of the lack of time, so I must organize my time to cover the whole lesson, although the objective was achieved. Finally, I want to add that next week will be my last class with them and I will miss to be in front of the class, and I will miss them.

This is the last journal I going to write during this period. The last teaching practice was on **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>** 2007. I practiced the two hours, I think my performance was good. The warm up was enjoyable and fun for most of them. The next stage was the grammatical explanation. I started explaining the grammatical point, which was the second conditional. Students were participating and cooperating although, they did not understand clearly, but

the teacher helped me with it, I asked them to write some examples to make sure they understood, so I started monitoring them at the end they did a good job.

I finish the lessons but it was a little difficult because of the time, so once more I have to be aware of organize activities without taking too much time in each one. The class finished and it was time to say good-bye that was the most complicated. I told them that I learnt many things from them and that they are good students and I say thank you very much, besides I asked them to write in a sheet of paper what they think was good and what I can improve in some way. The comments will help me in the future. The majority wrote that I need to speak louder that is an aspect which must be improved, on the other hand, activities and dynamics were considered as good points. Those comments will be included in the portfolio.

I think I improve in some aspect and there are others that must be improved, as my mentor suggested me. He told me than the class was interested and than he liked the way I planned it. Moreover, when I asked him to grade my performance he gave me a 9 and I ask him why? He said that if he give a 10 it would be wrong because I have weaknesses, which will be improved through the years and I know it is true.

## **Appendix L**

### **Protocol for Interview**

1. How did you feel on your first day of Practicum?
2. Did you feel prepared for this experience?
3. Describe yourself as a teacher?
4. What characteristics do you have of a good teacher?
5. During your practicum, did you have any significant experiences (positive or negative)?
6. How do you feel about this whole practicum experience?
7. Do you feel a member of the community of language teachers?
8. How do you visualize yourself in the future?

## Appendix M

### Interview transcriptions

#### Anita's Interview (1)

- (01) T: Anita\* Thank you for being here with us this morning (2.0) ahm well (unaudible) series of questions ahm just tell me what you think what you feel be honest (.) ok remember that there is no problem with this you won't have any problems at all (2.0) ok (.) ahm (2.0) let's suppose that today is your first day of teaching (2.0) how do you feel?
- (02) An: I feel nervous (laugh) because is my first day (.) eh teaching in a (.) real context as a teacher (.) and I (2.0) I began to sweat (.) (laugh)
- (03) T: [aha]
- (04) An: and I (2.0) I (.) I don't know how to control and how to manage (.) the class (laughs) (2.0) and [ah]
- (05) T: [How] did you prepare for this class?
- (06) An: well (.) I think (.) that I prepare all my materials but (2.0) I don't know eh (2.0) mhm what things are going to happen (.) during the class
- (07)T: and what happens?
- (08) An: (laughs) (.) maybe eh the students ask me some vocabulary (.) that I don't know (.) or (.) maybe [eh]
- (09) T: [o no no but actually happened]
- (10) An: uh (.) in this class?
- (11)T: [yeah]
- (12) An: eh (.) well (.) the students (.) participate (.) and (.) all are eh (.) paying attention (.) and I'm (2.0) I am (.) able to catch their attention (.)
- (13) T: [oh that's good isn't it ]
- (14) An: yes (laughs)
- (15)T: What else happened?
- (16) An: eh mhm (.) what else (.) eh they (.) they understand what I'm explained (.) what I explained eh (.) ah what else (2.0) I don't know (laughs)
- (17) T: When you finish the class (2.0) what did you think (.) when you finish the class?

- (18) An: Well (.) if the class (.) eh was (2.0) well prepared (.) and well organized and the students eh understood the topic (.) I feel happy (.) I feel confident of myself (2.0) and I feel good with my job (.) but if eh (.) it doesn't happen I feel frustrated (laughs)
- (19) T: Why do you feel frustrated?
- (20) An: Because (.) I think that I (2.0) I didn't eh (3.0) I I because I I think that I wasn't able (.) to (.) do my best effort (.) or to do the best for that class
- (21) T: Ah I see ok (.) mhm did you feel that you were prepared (.) for this experience of teaching? (.) did you feel prepared? (2.0) for example you had never taught before right?
- (22) An: no
- (23) T: And dhow did you feel? (.) Did you feel that you were prepared when you started teaching?
- (24) An: Well (.) when I start (.) I feel prepared but (.) I think that I need (.) experience and I need (.) eh (.) the experience to teach eh (.) to teach in a classroom in a real context as a teacher (.) and I (.) I need experience
- (25) T: What type of experience to (.) for what?
- (26) An: Eh to (.) for example to manage a group (.) eh to interact with the students (.) eh to (.) to interact (.) sometimes to (.) you teach eh (2.0) teenagers adults children and its different (.) and (.) maybe is that kind of experience
- (27) T: ok (.) describe yourself as a teacher (2.0) who is Anayeli the teacher
- (28) An: [laughs]
- (29) T: Can can you describe Anita?
- (30) An: [laughs] Well eh (.) during my teaching practice I (.) discovered myself as a teacher (.) and I
- (31) T: [how] [how]
- (32) An: [laughs] because during (.) eh (.) during all my practices (.) I discovered that (.) I was a teacher that (.) like (.) to (.) prepare the classes eh to (.) do a dynamic class (.) eh to (2.0) integrate (.) the skills (.) and to use (.) technology (.) such as internet eh (.) eh the proyector or (Spanish pronunciation) (questioning intonation) [laughs]
- (33) T: [the projector]
- (34) An: the projector and (.) eh (.) the tape recorder (.) and try to integrate the (.) the four skills (.) and the subskills



- (35) T: So what kind of a teacher do you think you are?
- (36) An: ah [laughs] what kind of so a teacher that integrates (.) the four skills and that (3.0) well maybe (.) a good teacher because I like the work that I did during the teaching practices (.) and also my mentor and my (.) eh teacher (.) eh told me that I had (.) done a good job
- (37) T: oh good (2.0) ahm during your teaching practicum (.) did you have any significant moment (.) something that when you remember your teaching practicum you say oh I remember this this happened to me this (.) this thing you know a significant moment (.) a po either positive or negative
- (38) An: eh yes eh when I catch the attention of the students and when (.) the students eh (2.0) began to ask me things (.) that they didn't understand something like that (.) ah I I think well they really (.) pay attention to my class because (.) sometimes I (.) I thought well maybe they are going to say eh they she is a student (laughs) maybe
- (39) T: [aha] (agreeing intonation)
- (40) An: we don't pay attention to her class (.) but they I (.) I discovered that eh they really pay attention to my classes and (.) [also]
- (41) T: [and so you were their (.) teacher]
- (42) An: yes (laughs) and also eh when (.) I finished my (.) teaching (.) practices eh they told me eh we learnt a lot of things with you (.) and they (.) made me feel (.) happy (laughs)
- (43) T: ok that's good (3.0) how do you feel as a member of this (.) community of practice now you are a member of the community of practice how do you feel?
- (44) An: Well I feel (.) eh happy (.) and I (.) like to share my knowledge with (.) the people (.) I like to teach I like to interact with the students (.) and (.) I like (.) eh to work with with them and share my knowledge with them
- (45) T: Do you feel that you've (2.0) finished learning how to be a teacher?
- (46) An: No (laughs) (.) I think that eh (.) I'm going to learn (.) more (.) eh during (.) my experience during my preparation because my preparation as a teaching (.) as a but (.) it doesn't (2.0) finished
- (47) T: ok so it's continuous
- (48) An: [yes]
- (49) T: [ you ] have to keep on learning (2.0) ok ah well (.) talking about this (.) how do you visualize yourself in the future (2.0) what kind of a teacher (2.0) what kind of a (.) student teacher or what kind of a (2.0) how do you see yourself (.) let's say in five years from now (.) this is Anayeli (.) she is a teacher what kind of a teacher is she?

(50) An: Well (.) I would like to be (2.0) a (.) good teacher (.) that try to (.) understand (.) their (.) eh their students (.) his (.) sorry (laughs) her students (.) and (.) that try to (3.0) to improve (.) eh her teaching (.) through the time (.) eh through experience (.) and (2.0) with a (.) good preparation

(51) T: How so (.) how do you want to prepare?

(52) An: eh I would like to (.) do a master's degree (.) and I would like to (.) take courses or (.) all the things that help me to be (.) a better teacher

(53) T: ok (.) well (.) thank you very much Anita (.) I really appreciate it

(54) An: You're welcome

## Hada's Interview (2)

(01) T: Good morning [Hada\*]

(02) HA: [Good morning]

(03) T: I appreciate you're participating (...) with me (.) in this interview (2.0) aehhm the first thing (.) I'm going to present is a (.) scenario (...) today is your first day of teaching

(04) HA: ok I remember (...) sure (.) a few weeks ago (.) when I started the (.) the practicum

(05) T: [how did you feel?]

(06) HA: I feel nervous (.) ehm my legs start shaking (...) (laughs) I was very nervous and (...) I think that (...) my voice wasn't (.) very clear (...) I was completely nervous (.) at the beginning (...) but as the (.) class ah (.) went by (.) I started to (.) feel more comfortable

(07) T: ok (...) ahm (2.0) did you feel that you were (.) prepared for this experience?

(08) HA: ah somehow ah (.) because (...) I felt that (.) I liked (.) that kind of experiences (...) and I was very excited and I wanted to teach (.) and (.) I felt that I had the (...) let's say the teaching ability (.) but there were some (.) things related to the language (.) that I didn't know how to manage them or how to explain them to my students (.) and I think that (.) that was something (.) that I had problems with (.) ah (.) because for example I don't know (.) I tried to explain but I realized (.) in my students eyes that they were like still confused and then I said (.) what (unaudible) explain this with that if I have already explained and I thought that they were going to understand this way (...) so I I felt that I needed more preparation

(09) T: ok (.) ahm (2.0+) more preparation like in what areas (.) or in what sense?

(10) HA: mhm (...) I don't know what's the name of that area but (...) trying to be more specific (...) as the classes went by (.) as my practices went by (...) I realized that (.) through samples (.) through examples (.) it was easier for my students to (...) to understand what I wanted them (.) ah to do (.) and (.) the things that I (.) want them to learn (...) and I realized that through examples (.) it was (.) very easy rather than just (.) explaining (.) trying to explain with (.) other words or something (2.0) and that was the kind of preparation that I had (...) that I hadn't found at that time

(11) T: aHa (following conversation) (3.0+) ahm (...) describe yourself as a teacher? (2.0) Ok you are (...) la miss Hada\* (...) what kind of a teacher is she?

(12) HA: I think friendly (...) and (.) a teacher that tries to (.) promote confidence in students (...) that was one of the (.) one of the things that I (.) try to focus (.) more on because (...) I realized that (.) there were some things that students were kind of afraid (.) of (.) I mean (.) when (.) when asking (.) because they thought (.) that they classmates were going to think that they didn't know anything or

something (.) so the first (.) thing (.) that I wanted to promote was confidence (.) and I think that (2.0) I tried to be (.) friendly with my students and that I tried (.) to create confidence and empathy (.) with my students a good relationship (.) because in that way we can work (.) better (...) so

(13) T: mhh what else (.) what other characteristics do you have as a teacher?

(14) HA: ahm (3.0) I think that I'm (2.0) like (3.0) kind of flexible (2.0) I'm not that strict (.) as a teacher and (.) also (3.0) what else (3.0) well I think that I'm (.) I'm like (.) I don't know helpful (.) (laughs) for my students (.) because (...) mhm (.) the thing that I had in (.) in mind (.) every time I taught (.) was that (.) they needed help (.) and I was trying to be attentive (.) to their needs (.) to anything that appeared (.) during the class (.) oh

(15) T: ok during your teaching practicum (...) did you have any significant (.) moments

(16) HA: [ehh]

(17) T:[any] moment that strokes you (.) it could be either positive or negative (2.0) [or]

(18) HA [oh well] at the beginning (.) I had a negative (...) moment (.) because (.) ah (.) one of my students (.) a girl (.) and I (unaudible) think she was like kind of (.) ah (...) rejecting me (...) or something because ah (...) I was asking them to participate and (.) then I told her (.) so it's your turn so you come here and she said no (...) I don't want to participate (...) and then in that moment I didn't know what to do (2.0) and ah what I just (...) did was ok (.) and then I continued with another student (.) ah because that that was (.) a negative moment (.) because I didn't know [ah ]

(19) T: [you] didn't expect that

(20) HA: exactly I didn't expect that (.) and (2.0) there were many positive moments (.) I mean I think that (...) every end of every class was a significant moment (.) because I (...) I said to myself (.) well I survived (.) another class or something like that (.) and also at the very end (.) of my practicum stage (.) ah (.) the feedback I asked my students for some feedback and the comments I received were (.) very rewarding for me (...) and they told me (.) some students told me that (.) they understood (.) better to me than (.) to their teacher (laughs) (.) so (2.0) and (...) they said that I had (.) ah that I was (.) a good teacher (.) they said that they understood what I explained (.) and that was a very (...) positive (.) and significant moment (.) to me

(21) T: ok good so (.) how did you feel?

(22) HA: [well]

(23) T: [Like a teacher (laughs)]

(24) HA: excited (.) I think that's an experience in each (2.0) I'm really happy for being in this area (.) because (2.0) I like the (.) this area when I was studying (.) and I like it (.) it even more now that I have (...) seen the real (.) eh the real thing (...) and (2.0) I'm (.) eh I mean I'm willing (.) to learn more (.) to practice more I know

that I need (...) I know that I need (.) eh much more practice (.) and (...) so I 'm I am happy for being (.) an English teacher

(25) T: ok ahm (.) how do you feel as a member (.) of this community of practice? (.) Ok you've just mentioned that you feel happier

(26) HA:[laughs]

(27)T: [but] I mean now you are the teacher you are the (.) a teacher (.) just like me (.) just like anybody else (.) ok you are a teacher (.) how do you feel? () As a member of this community

(27)HA: I feel very proud (...) and I (.) feel that I (.) want to (.) ah (2.0) ah (.) to give (.) something (.) to that community (...) I want to learn (.) more from that community

(28) T: what do you wanna give?

(29)HA: I don't know something useful for other teachers (...) that's something I realized during my thesis project (.) and (.) I wanted to show (.) good things (unaudible) it could be useful for other teachers (.) I realized (.) that (.) there were so many things (.) that I found (.) useful for me (.) and that I think that can be useful for other teachers (...) so that's (.) what I want to give

(30) T: ok (...) and ah (...) wHat do you think you can learn from the community of practice?

(31) HA: ah (...) well (...) most of (...) the community (.) ah has experiences (...) more experiences than me (...) so I think I can learn from those experiences of (...) of my of that community (...) and because (...) ah (.) that's something (.) there are certain things that you can only manage (.) through experience (.) through time (...) and I think that experience could help me (.) and even though they're not very experienced teachers (.) they face (.) if we face different things (.) each day (.) and that day (.) and that (.) things that they learn that day (.) can be helpful for me the other day or something

(32) T: ahm (2.0) did you finished that you ah finished (.) did you feel that you finished?

(32) HA: no I haven't (laughs) I have just started (2.0) and I think that (.) I still need (...) many many things to learn (laughs)

(33) T: like?

(34) HA: ah (3.0+) maybe mhm (3.0) classroom discipline (...) sometimes (.) being (...)friendly (...) ah (.) can (.) be (.) seen (.) as that you are very flexible and students do whatever they want (...) and it's not that easy to be friendly and (.) keep the (...) whole control of the group (...) so I think that's something that I still need to (.) to learn

(35) T: How do you (.) visualize (.) yourself in the future? Let's say (.) Ariana (.) five years from today

(36) HA: ahm (...) working in a bilingual school I hope (laughs)

(37) T: [ok]

(38) HA: and (...) being a good teacher (...) being ah a teacher (.) that helps the students learn (...) that guides (...) eh her students through the process (.) and that (...) ah she (...) ah helps (...) her students to be successful in any area (...) that in which English is needed

(39) T: anything else you'd like to say?

(40) HA: well I think that (.) this practicum stage (.) was (...) very interesting because (...) I had (.) good and bad moments some of them were like (.) frustrating (.) at the very beginning when I was very nervous I though (...) I'm not for this job I mean (...) I'm not good for this (2..) ah but then as the (...) time went by (.) I realized that (.) I need (.) the only thing I need is to work (.) more to (.) get prepared (.) to face any situation and that (...) I really liked (...) being an English teacher that I (.) I still need to improve a lot

(41) T: ok (2.0) thank you very much [I really appreciate it]

(42) HA: [you're welcome]

### Reina's Interview (3)

(01) T: tell me Reina\* (3.0) How are you ?

(02) R: fine (.) thank you

(03) T: ok good (...) mhm I'm gonna give you a situation [ok]

(04) R: [mhm] (agreeing intonation)

(05) T: ahm suppose that today is your first day of teaching how do you feel ?

(06) R: very nervous mhm (...) mhm it was frustrated for me the first day (...) because I was (.) sick (...) I had (.) sore throat and I told (.) to my mentor I don't pronounce this very well (.) it doesn't matter you have to (...) give the class and I say ok (...) so I arri[ve]

(07) T: [what were you hoping for were hoping for her to say? Go home]

(08) F [go home please]

(09) T: [laughs]

(10) R: but he didn't accept (2.0) so (...) arrived to the (...) classroom (2.0) and (.) the students (.) looked at me and I said (2.0) oh my god what am I going to do? (2.0) So (.) he told them that (.) eh that I will be with them working as a (...) teacher because I have to do my practices and you know (.) all that information (.) so I stay at the (unaudible) (2.0) to the classroom (...) and (.) he told me are you ready? (.) No please I don't want to pass (.) in front of (.) the students (2.0) but ah so I start the class (.) mhm (2.0) I didn't speak very well (.) I (.) eh say (2.0) eh my pronunciation basically was not appropriate (2.0) [that]

(11) T: [why] why do you think so?

(12) R: because I was really nervous that I (.) can not (...) say correctly the words I don't know and I speak in Spanish

(12) T: and do you think that's bad?

(13) R: ah (.) it's not bad (.) but it was (.) ah (.) something that you (.) think is wrong oh my god they are looking at me what I'm going to do? And maybe my (.) face was (.) red ah [(unaudible)]

(14) T: [like embarrassed]

(15) R: yes

(16) T: oh my goodness (2.0) well (2.0) what else happened that day?

(17) R: mhm (.) they participate (.) a lot (...) they were (.) really cooperative

- (18) T: that's good
- (19) R: yes and (...) I remember that (.) all the classes that (...) I finished (.) they clap
- (20) T: oh really how nice!
- (21) R: that that was good because (.) ah it make me feel (.) comfortable (.) and relax
- T: oh that's good (3.0) now (...) did you feel that you were prepared for this experience (...) [doing] your practicum?
- (22) R: [no] at the beginning no (.) ah (.) I thought I was not good for that (.) that to (.) to the base (...) you ah realize (.) that you can do it (.) and you can improve (.) in many aspects
- (23) T: and and are you satisfied with what you did?
- (24) R: yes (2.0) ah (.) as a matter of fact I (...) didn't want to (.) finish the classes because I (.) I'm miss them
- (25) T: oh it's good (2.0) that's great (...) now eh (.) describe yourself as a teacher
- (26) R: mhm
- (27) T: who is Reina (.) the English teacher?
- (28) R: I think that (.) I am (.) ah responsible person (...) and (2.0) I try to do my best (...) I (.) I organize the classes (2.0) and (...) in those classes I include the (.) activities that they ah like (...) to engage them (...) to participate (2.0) and I am a (2.0) ah (...) punctual person (...) and I don't want to (2.0) to have a mess (.) in the class and (.) don't Have any idea about (.) about what what to do (.) what 's the next (.) stage (...) that's why we need to plan (...) a the class
- (29) T: ok (.) ahm (...) what else (...) ah makes you ahm (2.0) feel like a teacher?
- (39) R: mhm (3.0) when you are part of the (.) students you need to be (.) ah a friend of them (...) and that is very eh (3.0+) interesting (.) and you enjoy to be a part of them
- (40) T: and (.) eh what characteristics of a good teacher do you have?
- (41)R: mhm (3.0+) the most important I think that is (.) responsibility (2.0) I'm very (.) responsible
- (42) T: well (.) mhm because a teacher can be very responsible coming to his class but (.) when they actually (.) go out there and teach (.) maybe nothing happens in the classroom what else do you Have (.) that's good (.) as a teacher?
- (43) R: I try to (.) be creative (...) to include activities that they like (...) but (.) I need to improve another aspects (...) that (.) they told me (...) students told (.) me that I need to be a (...) enthusiastic (2.0) enthusiastic teacher and (2.0) to be (2.0) self confident



- (44) T: so you have to work on (...) on some things
- (45) R: yes
- (46) T: mhm (3.0) during your teaching practicum (.) did you have any significant moments (.) any moments (.) they could be positive or negative (.) but any moments that really impact you as a teacher?
- (47) R: mhm yes when my (...) eh supervisor (...) went to (.) bserve me (2.0) and (2.0) she told me (.) what were my (...) strengths and weaknesses
- (48) T: and how did you feel with that?
- (49) R: ah (...) at the beginning I was (...) ah afraid (...) but then I realized that (...) ah she (.) said to because I need to improve the those aspects
- (50) T: and what aspects were they?
- (51) R: mhm (.) basically it was my (...) tone of voice (2.0) and (2.0) giving instruction (2.0) sometimes students get confused with the (.) instructions (2.0) but at the end I think that I improve that
- (52) T: oh good (...) and what else?
- (53) R: amh (2.0) mhm (.) that was ah positive (.) because mhm (...) in some way it help me to improve (...) ah negative ahh (2.0) one day (...) one of the students (2.0) mhm (...) told me a bad word (2.0+) and I was oh my god (.) but why me I (.) didn't (...) eh (...) said him anything (2.0) so I (...) talk with him (...) and (...) he said that (3.0) it was not (2.0) his (.) fault (3.0) mhm (...) that was a negative
- (54) T: and how did you feel?
- (55) R: bad (2.0) because I though it was my fault but it was not my fault (.) it was (2.0) eh (3.0) I don't know o maybe it was my fault but it was also (...) eh his fault (3.0+)
- (56) T: what happened? (2.0)
- (57) R: mhm (...) I talked with him
- (58) T: I mean but (.) something happen and he got upset right?
- (59) R: yes
- (60) T: what happened?
- (61) R: I talked with him and I (.) ah asked him if (.) he (2.0) mhm (2.0) because he was not so participative (3.0) and (.) I (...) always please Lee read this part or I don't know (...) annd he (.) look like oh my god again (2.0+) but (.) ah he accepts (...) it was necessary to be (...) eh (...) mhm (...) part of that rule (.) to participate (2.0)
- (62) T: and (...) ehm (2.0) was it difficult (.) for you to talk to the student?

- (63) R: mhn no at the beginning ah (...) it was a problem because I don't know what (...) what to do I don't know (...) ah how to (2.0) establish a conversation with him (...) but them eh no (...) things changed (3.0+)
- (64) T: and eh (3.0+) how do you feel as a member of this community of practice that's English language teachers because now you are an English language teacher (.) you've already finished all of your courses (.) how do you feel?
- (65) R: exciting
- (66) T: [mhm] nodding
- (67) R: yes (.) I can't believe it
- (68) T:[you can't believe it] (laughs) why not?
- (69) R: eh (.) because you (.) you think about the (2.0+) the years that you (...) ehm (.) spend in this (.) in this place (...) and now that I am finished (...) the major I say oh I don't want to go out of the school (laughs)
- (70) T: [mhm] nodding (3.0+)
- (71) R: it's going to be difficult to (.) work outside (...) to (.) face real problems (.) real situations
- (72) T: and eh (.) in your practicum (...) did you feel that this wasn't a real situation (.) you feel that your practicum wasn't a real situation
- (73) R: it was a real situation (...) (laughs) because you face eh many problems (2.0) inside and outside the classroom
- (74) T: oh really
- (75) R: yes
- (76) T: could you tell me about that a little bit?
- (77) R: ok eh (3.0+) as a teacher you need to (.) be in contact with students (2.0) inside and outside the classroom because they (...) eh (.) you need to (...) make them feel (...) eh (2.0) a significant person an important person (2.0) so you establish a (2.0) friendship (.) with them (2.0) and (.) sometimes (.) they don't want to (...) include (...) you (.) include you in your (.) (unaudible) eh (...) but other students accept you (...) so (2.0) you can (.) eh be (...) his or her friend
- (78) T: mhm and when you prepare for this type of problem (.) did anything cHange (.) you did you know that (unaudible) going to Happen?
- (79) R: eh no (.) no because at the University you can (.) you learn theory (.) but (.) when you go to the classroom (.) it's completely different
- (80) T: in what way?

- (81) R: you have the (.) the theory in your mind (...) but you maybe you don't know how to apply it
- (82) T: mhm
- (83) R: you are not prepared for that situation oh my god what am I going to do now? (2.0)  
And (...) you need to (.) be aware of those problems (3.0+)
- (84) T: mhm so (.) do you think that you are (.) ready to go out into the world? (...) Or would you (.) like to have practice more or oh?
- (85)R: oh I think we need to (.) practice more (3.0) but (2.0) anyway (...)
- (86) T: [you are ready]
- (87) R: [yeah]
- (88) T: to go out into the world
- (89)R: (laughs)
- (90)T: oh that's good (.) that's great (2.0) so (.) so in the future (3.0) how do you see Reina (.) in five years?
- (91) R: mhm (.) I don't know (.) working of course (2.0) and (3.0) studying an (...) M.A
- (92) T: [mhm good]
- (93) R: I want to study the (unaudible) (2.0) and (.) I don't know (...) with more experience (.) of course (2.0) aaannnd (2.0) I don't know (2.0) many (...) things can (...) happen
- (94) T: ok and do you think they are gonna be good?
- (95) R: both (...) bad and good (...) but (.) from bad experience you learn
- (96) T: andd (agreeing intonation) (...) just one thing (...) when you were teaching (2.0) what worried you the most? (3.0) (unaudible) more attention to when you are teaching?
- (97) R: mhm
- (98) T: ok you went home (.) you said I have to prepare my (.) what were you going to do? What did you pay most attention to? (.) Or worried you the most?
- (99) R: to have the material (.) on time (laughs)
- (100) T: oh really (laughs)
- (101) R: eh (.) because eh we have the lesson (3.0) so I need to prepare the material (2.0)

and I was eh (3.0) like crazy or something like that because you have to do (.) a lot of homework (.) besides you need to (...) need to plan (.) you lessons (.) and the material (.) and (.) all those things (3.0) but (3.0) I did

(102) T: you did it good (...) thank you Fabiola and I wish you a lot of luck (unaudible)

(103) R: ok thank you

## Appendix N

### Letter of Invitation to participate in study three\*

--- El dom 3-ago-08, Marlene Brenes <marlenebrenes@yahoo.com> escribió:

De: Marlene Brenes <marlenebrenes@yahoo.com>

Asunto: One more time a favour for ME!!!

A: e-mail address inserted here.

Fecha: domingo, 3 agosto, 2008, 6:39 pm

My dear colleagues ,

I hope that you are all doing well and enjoying your vacation after this first year of teaching on your own. I would like to know if you would like to participate in the third and final stage of my study.

In this phase I will ask you to write an autobiographical narrative about your first year teaching. Remember that an autobiography is based on the narrator's (YOU) own life and you are the main character in this story.

This story is about your first year of teaching. Your point of view about what teaching is about and all the experiences that you had (both good & bad). Write as if you were talking to a friend honestly and openly. Give illustrations and examples if necessary. You can write about many topics e.g. emotions, teaching methods, likes and dislikes about the school, relationships with co-workers, parents, your students. I'm sure there are a lot of things that you can talk about. You can e-mail these to me; but, if you don't have access to a computer you can also hand-write your stories and I will gladly pick them up were ever you tell me to. Could you please give me a call, send me a text message or e-mail me when you read this information.

If you have any problem *I'm sure* we can work things out. Please don't be stressed.

Thank You

Warm regards

Marlene

Marlene G.Brenes Carvajal

Facultad de Lenguas

BUAP

\*Translated from the original Spanish

## **Appendix O**

### **Narrative Accounts**

#### **Reina's Story (1)**

##### **My First Year as a Teacher**

Teaching and learning are two complex processes. The perception I had about teaching changed completely after the first year of teaching. During the first year of teaching, the conceptions I had about teaching in the BA program went through a process of change. My performances during teaching practices at the LEMO (university level) were of an inexperienced teacher. Even though I had the experience of my teaching practicum, the context and the participants were not the same. At the university, the active participation of a mentor and of a supervisor was permanently present to help the practicing student in some way with comments and advice to improve teaching. At my job I worked alone. I did not have a supervisor like in the LEMO.

The way I taught at the university was different basically because I was not responsible at all for the group. I was asked to teach certain topics taking into consideration some rubrics they asked me to cover in a specific period of time, so I was supported by them. In my job I was responsible for all the decisions regarding my teaching and my students. However, last year when finally I got a teaching position, after quite a few weeks of looking for a job, classes had already started weeks earlier. I was in charge of the classes, so I was responsible for the whole class and the learning of the students. It is important to mention that I worked in that private school during 8 months. I worked with children between 3 to 5 years old, which means, they were from kindergarten. There were just three groups, form basic level, so it was a part time job. The first days as an English teacher in that institution my role was to take care of children, to be honest, I was insecure about how to deal with children of those ages, I had worked with children from elementary school and I thought that the circumstances would be the same. Nevertheless I was wrong; the pre-school students require other necessities that I was not aware of and was not prepared to handle.

I faced a critical moment that affected even my self esteem, which was trying to get a job. I looked for a job for several weeks. I know I was prepared but I did not have enough experience working in the educational field and this made it difficult to get a job because

most school authorities want experienced teachers. At the beginning I also had problems becoming incorporated with the schools' staff. Eventually, since we (the teachers) were all about the same age, we began to get along well and this helped me feel good in that school.

The role of the institution where I had studied played a relevant role in my preparation to teach. Personally, I perceived that even though I have the knowledge there are moments in which I do not have any idea how to apply it in the real situations and this was frustrating for me. I have the theory about teaching and English language but I can't put it into practice when I need to teach it. The knowledge learnt at the university is not as meaningful as I believed. There are aspects that you have to deal with that are not mentioned in the courses in the BA program and that you, as a new teacher are not prepared to handle. One of which was how to deal with parents. I was afraid to deal with parents and was not able to avoid this situation because of the age groups of the children.

Now I realize that being responsible for students' education requires lot of work. I also realize that everyday problems will emerge as part of the teaching learning process that goes on in the classroom. Nevertheless, I appreciate the good and bad moments that I have been facing during the last year. These taught me many things and I look forward to learning more things in the future. I learned many things about myself and my teaching. I am constantly leaning more. Now, I realize that beginning to teach is a very significant and important experience.

## Anita's story (2)

### My First year Teaching

My name is Anita and I am going to talk about my first experience in teaching. I began to work as an English teacher at the Colegio Montefalco with a part time contract on August 20<sup>th</sup> 2008. Colegio Montefalco is a secondary school only for girls and I worked there as an English teacher for the seventh, eighth and ninth grades. This school is in my town in Morelos. I didn't have full time. It was stressing to work in this institution because the principal was very demanding and the groups were very big. I had forty students per group. I had to work a lot and the pay was not very good so I felt disappointed. My friend told me that it was the beginning of my professional life and this job was going to help me to have more experience and learn about teaching so in a future I could get a better job. Her advice helps me so much to continue working and I thought that it could be a good opportunity to improve my teaching.

The day that I began to work I thought that it was going to be very similar to my teaching practicum but it was very different. In my teaching practicum I worked with the students of the language school that were studying the second semester. I had a mentor who was responsible for the group. The group was small (I had 15 students), the students were responsible and they really wanted to learn English. I enjoyed working with them and I learned a lot of things with them.

At Colegio Montefalco I had to work with teenagers, the groups were very big (40 students per group), they didn't like English, they only learned English because it was a requirement, they hated English. It was very difficult for me to deal with teenagers. All these factors affected my teaching. Sometimes, I didn't have control of the group. It was very difficult for me to manage the group. I used different strategies that I learned in the Licentiate program to teach English but they did not work. Now, if my students learned or didn't learn it depended on me; it was my responsibility. I felt frustrated because I thought that I was not a good teacher. I said "I don't want to be a teacher anymore, I want to study another major but I don't want to continue teaching".

One day, I was checking my materials that I used in the Licentiate program and I found a book called "Look who's talking" this book has a lot of strategies to work with large groups of teenagers. It helped me so much to improve my classes. Furthermore, the



help of my supervisor that monitored my work helped me to improve my teaching because she taught me strategies to motivate students to learn English, to control the group and to get significance learning. Moreover, she observed my classes and she gave me comments that helped me to improve my teaching. Fortunately, I had the help of my supervisor that helped me to improve my teaching and to work with large groups. She helped to have self-confidence.

At the beginning of the year, it was difficult for me to be incorporated as a staff member because the teachers were very envious with me. They only criticized me about not having control of the group instead of giving me advice about how to improve teaching. Eventually my supervisor helped me and as I became a better teacher I was accepted better by the staff.

Another problem that I had in this first year of teaching was the parents. It is very difficult to cope with parents. They don't know their daughters very well because at home girls act out in one way and at school they are very different. Parents told me that I was very demanding and that I was very unjust with the girls in their scores. But what they didn't know was the fact that their daughters were very lazy, they didn't do homework, they didn't want to be in class, they didn't want to work so what can I do for them. I talked with the parents and they help me to do that their girls were more responsible.

This first year of teaching has been a learning process because I learned to deal with teenagers, to work with large groups, to cope with parents and to motivate students to learn English and discover that learning a foreign language can be pleasant because it helps you to know other cultures, and to express your ideas, feelings, emotions and experiences. I was so happy at the end of the year when some of my students told me "Thank you teacher for being very patient with us. We didn't know English but with your help with learned and now we like English". In that moment, I discovered that I like teaching and I want to continue sharing my knowledge with my students because I learned a lot of things about them and they learned a lot of things about me. I love teaching English for that reason I want to improve my teaching each day.

