

Co-teaching: a successful factor on teacher training through collaborative practices and professional advice

Co-enseñanza: factor de éxito en la formación docente mediante prácticas colaborativas y asesoramiento profesional

ABSTRACT: The emphasis of the present study was to design a didactic proposal to help preservice teachers to develop their teaching skills through collaboration and guidance from expert teachers on the field of linguistics and education. This study is based on the co-teaching model that is defined as the joint work of two teachers with the same group of students sharing planning, organization, delivery as well as physical space (Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg, 2010). Co-teaching promotes coaching and training for preservice teachers to apply theory into practice during the different steps of teaching: co-planning, co-delivering, and co-evaluation (Conderman and Hedin, 2012).

This research looked for the conceptions that preservice teachers had about the teaching practicum as well as the roles that cooperating teachers took regarding the supervision of preservice teachers. According to the findings preservice teachers realized they did not collaborate with cooperating teachers during planning, delivery and evaluation of the lessons. On the other hand, cooperating teachers were aware of the need of establishing collaborative teaching roles through a formal regulation that fosters commitment between participants. This article shows the results up to the planning phase that is the research stage; action phase and evaluation phase are already in progress.

KEY WORDS: Teacher training, preservice teachers, co-teaching, collaborative practice, professional advice.

RESUMEN: El objetivo del presente estudio fue diseñar una propuesta didáctica que ayude a los estudiantes practicantes de docencia a mejorar sus habilidades de enseñanza mediante la colaboración y el asesoramiento de maestros expertos en el campo de la lingüística y la educación. Este estudio se basa en el modelo de co-enseñanza que se define como la enseñanza conjunta entre dos maestros con el mismo grupo de estudiantes que comparten la planeación, organización, presentación, así como el espacio físico (Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg, 2010). La co-enseñanza promueve el asesoramiento y la formación de estudiantes practican-

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tes con el fin de aplicar la teoría dentro del aula de clases, así como la colaboración en las diferentes etapas de la enseñanza: co-planeación, co-impartición y coevaluación (Conderman y Hedin, 2012).

En esta investigación se buscaron las concepciones que los alumnos practicantes tuvieron sobre su práctica, así como los roles que los maestros cooperadores tomaron en la supervisión de alumnos practicantes. De acuerdo con los resultados, los alumnos practicantes reconocieron que no existe colaboración con los maestros cooperadores durante la planeación, la impartición de clase o la evaluación. Por otra parte, los maestros cooperados son conscientes de la necesidad de establecer roles de enseñanza colaborativos mediante una regulación oficial que promueva el compromiso entre los participantes. Este artículo muestra los resultados hasta la etapa de planeación que es el proceso de investigación; la etapa de acción y la etapa de evaluación aún están en progreso.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Formación docente, estudiantes en práctica, co-enseñanza, prácticas colaborativas, asesoramiento profesional.

Introduction

In the world of teacher preparation, student teaching has long been the culmination of a preservice teacher's journey to becoming a professional classroom teacher. While there are differences between teacher training programs in higher education with respect to the teaching practicum, the concept is generally the same: the preservice teacher works with an experienced teacher, the mentor (Sorensen, 2014). The process usually starts with an observation of the mentor. After this, the preservice teacher receives the responsibility to individually take over the class during a specific time. During that time the mentor observes and coaches (Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg, 2010).

Although there is some kind of collaboration between preservice teacher and mentor, additional learning opportunities may arise through higher levels of collaboration, e.g., co-planning of the lesson, co-teaching during the lesson, or co-eval-

uating of the lesson. According to Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg (2010), co-teaching is defined as the joint work of two teachers with the same group of students; sharing the planning, organization, presentation, and evaluation, as well as physical space.

These two teachers mentioned above are the preservice teacher and the cooperating teacher. The preservice teacher is a person who takes a job that requires training, especially in teaching. The cooperating teacher is a trained educator selected to coach and guide students who are training to teach in classroom settings, mentors (Virginia Wesleyan College, 2016). The two teachers are actively involved in all aspects of the class and wide attention is looked for in teacher training so preservice teachers can be taught practically by highly trained professionals in the area of language education.

As it is said above, in the co-teaching method there are two participants on teach-

er practicum; the preservice teacher and the cooperating teacher. However there is another one which is the college supervisor. It is the one who evaluates whether the preservice teacher achieves competency in entry level skills in the teaching profession and if the cooperating teacher is carrying out its job as the co-teaching method states (Virginia Wesleyan College, 2016). These are the three participants involved in teaching practice process.

This research deals with a teaching practice problem identified in a public university school in Nuevo León in which English Teaching and Bilingual Education preservice teachers have lack of individual advice and coaching from expert teachers on the teaching area. Students enrolled on the Language Science major have to complete the curriculum during ten semesters and teaching practices are carried out in the last semester as part of an academic subject that they took with more other subjects.

The objectives of the study are the following:

- To analyze the roles that cooperating teachers take toward the supervision of preservice teachers.
- To categorize different conceptions of the professional practicum according to preservice teachers.
- To design a co-teaching protocol establishing the roles of each participant to work collaboratively in teaching practices.

The relevance of this study is to develop competent and well trained English and Bilingual teachers, astute in both language

and teaching practice through collaboration. That is why this strategy makes the three teachers mentioned before to commit with each other to ensure the successful completion of the teaching practice experience.

Theoretical Framework

The Nature of Language Teacher Education

Language teachers get their first professional development in their teacher education schools as pre-service education. Language teachers should teach the aspects of language in context and seek for different methods of teaching that fit all students' needs in order to accomplish the language objectives.

There exist two goals of teacher education; training and development. "Training refers to activities directly focused on a teacher's present responsibilities and is typically aimed at short-term and immediate goals" (Richards and Farrell, 2005: 3) It is seen as a preparation for induction into a first teaching position. Training is the process in which preservice teachers, cooperating teachers and supervisors work together in order to prepare language teachers for the job of teaching and they should continue working in triad until the preservice teachers complete their training process at school (Richards and Farrell, 2005).

Teacher training also involves trying out new strategies in the classroom with supervision, monitoring and feedback from others on one's practice (Richards and Farrell, 2005). Training is to put in practice the theory learned on real classroom situations following a monitoring of the practicum to provide feedback that helps them to im-

prove the teaching skills. Teaching practice is a form of work-integrated learning that is described as a period of time when students are working in the relevant industry to receive specific in-service training in order to apply theory in practice (Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). So, professional practices on language teacher education are important for the development of well-prepared language teachers that aspire to get into language schools or private elementary schools.

On the other hand, teacher development refers to general growth not focused on a specific job. It is established as a long-term goal and looks for facilitating the growth of teachers' understanding of teaching and of themselves as teachers (Richards and Farrell, 2005). Another important dimension of understanding what is meant by teacher development is the difference between novice teacher and expert teacher.

Expert teachers show differences in the way they perceive and understand what they do (Richards and Farrell, 2005). Expert teachers are the cooperating teachers that accompany preservice teachers in their process of training. They help preservice teachers to take risks in the classrooms and put in practice what they have been taught to do during their major.

It is necessary to recognize that “the teacher does not abandon the theory, quite contrary to this: first, he questions it in the light of the evidence that he possesses and, later, he questions it again according to the results of his intervention” (Sánchez, 2016, p.4). Theory is never left behind; it is always reflected on practice and it improves teacher development.

Teacher education points to the importance of accelerating the pace of alternation between training for conceptual analysis and training for intervention (Sánchez, 2016). The linkage between theory and practice is a difficult process that needs to be understood and apply to achieve the teacher education goals.

Thus, it is highly recommended to propose to the initial teaching formation: regulate purposively the rhythm of alternation between training for the conceptual analysis and for the action in real contexts; multiply the situations of formation by which the students have to learn to elaborate their own answers; and above all, value the consciousness of each student about their own representations of teaching.

Teacher Training and Collaboration

Contact with the professional environment and with experienced professionals, promotes teacher professionalization (Correa, 2011). Collaborative relationships help preservice teacher to acquire experience from the expert teachers as well as to develop their social skills to work with others. Collaborative skills are critical for success in many professional environments, including effective work in school settings where educators, administrators, psychologists, counselors, social workers, and others partner to educate children and adolescents (Chanmugam and Gerlach, 2013).

Professionalization of teacher education requires not only a university education quality, but also the participation of professionals in the educational area and the recognition of their contribution in the learning process of future colleagues (Correa, 2011). Teacher training is not just

the job of one supervisor; it is the job of all teachers and administrators that are committed with education. Experienced teachers should monitor and guide preservice teachers on the process of becoming in-service teachers.

Experienced teachers can no longer be considered as silent agents of the learning process, as service providers by facilitating access to their class. In the same vein, according to Perrenoud (1993, cited in Correa 2011) contribution of experienced professionals in the training of their future colleagues is a characteristic of the profession. The teacher profession should be one that is committed with the future of education that means with new generations of teachers of any area.

Collaboration fosters benefits in two areas: personal development and teaching competence (Chanmugam and Gerlach, 2013). On personal development some of the benefits are: supportive feedback, a safe environment and learning from strengths and weaknesses through a reflective process. On teaching competence some of the benefits are: schedule management, mastery of content, ongoing evaluation and refinement of skills in planning and instruction.

The period of practice constitutes a potentially favorable space for the professional development of future teachers (Correa, 2011). Professional practice allows preservice teachers not only to the construction and manifestation of skills but also to the integration of knowledge of diverse nature and appropriation of an identity model.

Teacher training allows preservice teachers to develop their identity as teachers, too. With the guidance of cooperating

teachers and the collaboration between them, preservice teachers expand their identity to new teaching scenarios and get more benefits from it.

Co-teaching Model for Teacher Training

The co-teaching model in a teacher education classroom requires collaboration, commitment and creativity from all the participants. Co-teaching does not necessarily align with traditional practices in higher education, but it is an innovative practice to carry on teaching practice. Co-teaching served as both a teaching strategy for preservice teacher's development as language teachers and a strategy for faculty development.

Co-teaching Definition. This model of teaching is seen as “two teachers, (a cooperating teacher and a teacher candidate) working together with groups of students; sharing their planning, organization, delivery and assessment of instruction, as well as the physical space”

(Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg, 2008: 9). The origin of this concept is explained as an abbreviation for the term cooperative teaching (Beamish, Bryer and Davies, 2006).

According to Cramer, Nevin, Thousand and Liston (2010), co-teaching is defined as two or more teachers that share the responsibility of teaching a group or a class, providing students with help and services in a collaborative way for the needs of the students with or without disabilities.

Another definition is the one stated by Cook (2004). He explains co-teaching as a collaborative teaching, team teaching or shared class. It is a formative process de-

veloped by two or more professionals that established a collaborative relation in order to give joint instruction to a diverse group of students in the same physical space and with specific content and objectives.

Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg establish that co-teaching is a model of teaching in which two teachers work together to achieve specific purposes or objectives and they collaborate during the stages of teaching: planning, organization, delivery and assessment (2010).

Co-teaching Components. To understand better the model of co-teaching in the teacher training process, it is necessary to identify the key components of a co-taught classroom describe by Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg (2010). The components include the following:

- Preparation. “When co-teaching all the members of the triad (cooperating teacher, teacher candidate, and university supervisor) are provided with information about the role of each member, expectations for the experience, co-teaching and co-planning approaches, and strategies for how to build a strong partnership” (Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg, 2010: 5).
- Introduction. It is important to present the preservice teacher to the students as another formal teacher in the class. This is a critical element in the success of any student-teaching experience; how students view the preservice teacher (Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg, 2010).
- Involvement. Generally, in a non-co-taught classroom, one teacher is

passive while the other is active and leads instruction. In co-teaching, both teachers work together in the process of student learning (Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg, 2010). Co-teaching emphasizes the collaboration between the two teachers in the classroom to meet the needs of all students.

- Relationship building. According to Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg (2010), the participants in the co-teaching model should establish a relationship of professional trust and respect before teaching together. Both need to support and be committed to each other.
- Communication and collaboration. “Participants in co-teaching receive guidance on the importance of strong communication and collaboration skills” (Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg, 2010: 5).
- Planning. The cooperating teacher and preservice teacher are expected to have a specific time for planning the lessons where the focus includes the details of how, when and which co-teaching strategies use for future lessons. Preservice teachers will spend more time on their own preparing presentations, material, activities, etc., for their part in each lesson (Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg, 2010).
- Solo versus lead. Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg (2010) state that in co-teaching the cooperating teacher provides the preservice teacher time to develop and practice all aspects of teaching with mentoring and support. Both teachers are expected to plan for instruction and evaluation collabora-

tively. Ultimately, the preservice teacher becomes fully responsible for the entire classroom, but the cooperating teacher is leading all aspects of teaching. As the experience progresses, the preservice teacher changes its role of solo teaching and start gaining experience as a lead teacher.

- Modeling and coaching. “When co-teaching the cooperating teacher provides ongoing modeling and coaching, making the invisible visible by explicitly sharing his or her rationale for instructional, curricular; and management decisions” (Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg, 2010: 6).
- Power differential. Cooperating teachers and preservice teachers are taught to address issues of parity and gain experience in how to work as a team. Cooperative teachers should be opened to the preservice teacher’s contributions and ideas as well as the preservice teacher works on the cooperating teacher’s feedback and mentoring (Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg, 2010).

Implementation in Higher Education

There are many benefits of co-teaching in higher education; students in co-taught classrooms have the opportunity to be exposed to vary content presentation, individualized instruction, and scaffold leaning experiences. Co-teaching in its most effective form can promote equitable learning opportunities for all students (Graziano and Navarrete, 2012).

Preservice teachers participating in co-teaching display enhanced classroom management, improved collaboration

skills, and increased confidence in their ability to meet the diverse needs of children (Hartnett, J., Weed, R., McCoy, A., Theiss, D. and Nickens, N., 2013). When preservice teachers are learning in the field they notice the importance of social skills because now they are training teaching abilities that in the university environment will be difficult to put in practice.

Co-teaching does not necessarily align with traditional practices in higher education. Co-teaching requires more planning time than that of a solo-taught course (Graziano and Navarrete, 2012). Collaborative planning time is critical in co-teaching because it is needed for preservice teachers and cooperating teachers to know what strategy is going to be implemented and what the role of each participant is.

Planning meetings prior to and during the course, as well as after each class are important to maintain the course continuity, monitor the content and instruction, and communicate with one another (Graziano and Navarrete, 2012). After each class preservice teachers and cooperating teachers should talk about whether the objectives of the plan were reached and what was the experience when applying co-teaching strategies.

Co-teaching serves as both a teaching method in the classroom for cooperating teachers and a strategy for preservice teachers’ development in their role as teachers (Graziano and Navarrete, 2012). Both teachers have different experiences that make them grow as individuals and professionals in the language teaching field.

The experiences that are gained from co-teaching provide to preservice and cooperating teachers rich opportunities

for reflection on their teaching practices, themselves as individuals and their student's learning (Graziano and Navarrete, 2012). The co-teaching model provides to cooperating teachers the opportunity to analyze the needs of their students and their learning. Reflection plays an important role for this model because promotes correction and feedback.

Chanmugam and Gerlach (2013) say that students in a co-taught classroom observe the collaborative processes required for effective co-teaching such as cooperating teacher openness to dialogue and feedback. Students gain rich opportunities for the development of skills in areas of social work practice.

Furthermore, in the co-teaching relationship, the individual educator's reflection on teaching strengths and weaknesses becomes an opened, shared process rather than remaining private and introspective (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013). Reflection in the co-teaching model highlights the importance of being supervised and monitored in order to emphasize openness for feedback as well as collaboration between participants.

Methodology and Results

Action Research

According to the characteristics of the study, the methodology selected is action-research. This project is specifically addressed to improve the collaboration and mentoring from cooperating teachers to preservice teachers. According to Latorre (2015), the action-research methodology is conceptualized as a project of action formed by action strategies, linked to the

needs of the teachers, researchers or research teams. It is a process characterized by its cyclical aspect between action and reflection. This kind of research is specifically addressed to teachers in order to improve their practice through investigation.

The action-research methodology follows a continuous process, known as the research spiral that allows the articulation of reflexive action and transforming action. This dynamism means that it is necessary to articulate the planning phase, the action phase and the evaluation phase on a permanent basis (Gómez and Roquet, 2012). It is seen that a cycle of action research is not enough when it is required to achieve the full potential of the improvement on a practice.

Specifically, Lewin action-research model (Latorre, 2015) is followed, which describes action-research as reflexive action cycles. The cycle of action-research is the basis for improving the practice; it is integrated by these steps: planning, action and evaluation of the action.

During the planning phase two instruments were adapted to test the problem of study and to verify whether it really exists, or it does not and what its characteristics are. Cooperating teachers on the areas of English Teaching and Bilingual Education were interviewed in order to get data from their practice and analyze their roles as mentors. A questionnaire was applied to preservice teachers in order to find data related to their professional practicum as English or Bilingual teachers as well as to know their conceptions about their teaching practice.

The obtained data was categorized in different aspects from the teaching train-

ing process like lesson preparation, being coached, reflection on teaching experience and mentor feedback taking into account the cooperating and preservice teachers' conceptions and opinions.

Then, during the action phase from Lewin's action-research model, a protocol for collaborative teaching practices will be designed and implemented. It will be based on a series of strategies from the co-teaching model in teacher education that encourages the collaboration between teachers and students in order to develop teaching and social skills needed for the teaching field (Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg, 2010). The experiences that are gained from co-teaching provide to preservice and cooperating teachers rich opportunities for reflection on their teaching practices, themselves as individuals and their student's learning (Graziano and Navarrete, 2012). This new protocol for collaborative teaching practices (co-teaching) will be explained and carried out in the context of study.

Finally, during the Lewin's evaluation phase, the didactic proposal implementation will be tested through a meeting with cooperating teachers to check whether the collaborative teaching roles work or do not work according to their expertise.

This article shows the results up to the planning phase that is the research stage; action phase and evaluation phase are already in progress.

Context and Sample. The context for this research is a public university school in Nuevo Leon that is in charge of the development of future English and Bilingual teachers and the Language Center from

the same university. Both institutions are public and preservice teachers carry out their teaching practice there. This public university prepares English and Bilingual Teachers to face the teaching field once they have completed their corresponding curriculum. The language center is an institution that offers language courses to students from different majors as well as young and adult people that is not enroll in that university as a student.

At the beginning of 10th semester preservice teachers are assigned to different cooperating teachers. Sometimes preservice teachers look for cooperating teachers that want to receive them in their classes to deliver their teaching practice. The classroom where the practice takes place is an area with capacity for 25 – 30 students. It has class tools such as: electronic board, white board and computer with internet access.

The participants in the selected sample were 28 graduated teachers from the areas of English teaching and Bilingual Education that took the teaching practice subject; generations 2010-2015 and 2011-2016. Currently they are working as English or Bilingual teachers. Each preservice teacher (now, in-service teacher) or a pair of preservice teachers delivered classes in charge of one cooperating teacher and a supervisor. 7 cooperating teachers were selected to be interviewed. They work as university teachers in this public institution or as English teachers in its language center.

Data Analysis and Results

A structured questionnaire was used to elicit student teachers' perceptions of their cooperating teachers' assistance or lack of

assistance regarding preservice teachers in a public university. The instrument was taken from Ngoepe (2014) and adapted to the research context. It consisted of closed questions; some of them were modified for use in this research. The questions were related to preservice teachers' experiences with lesson preparation, being coached, reflections on teaching experience and mentor feedback. Data was collected by means of a Likert-type scale questionnaire (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree) with 18 different statements.

The questionnaire was structured to capture some participants' biographical information, which included age, gender and the major specialization on English teaching or Bilingual Education. 28 in-service teachers participated as the sample of study for this research from which 67.86% were women. Almost half of the participants (42.86%) delivered their teaching practicum as English teachers. It also sought information on opinion statements about their experiences during teaching practice and the cooperation and roles that cooperating

teachers play during the teaching practice process. This instrument reported only on preservice teachers' opinion statements.

Descriptive analysis was applied to check the perceptions on mentoring during teaching practice. Four categories about the perceptions of preservice teachers were created for analysis. These categories were: support with lesson preparation, being coached, reflections on teaching experience and mentor feedback. The scales strongly agree (SA) to agree (A), and strongly disagree (SD) to disagree (D) were incorporated as one opinion in the discussion for ease of interpretation. The neutral (N) option remained as the middle point between the two opinions (agree and disagree) mentioned before.

Numbers of statements in each table are not in order because they were getting together according to their corresponding category. Each table shows a teaching category evaluating cooperation and teaching practice (see table 1).

Based on the data in Table I "Views about support in lesson preparation", the

Table 1. Views about support with lesson preparation

| Questions | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 2. My mentor helped me to plan for the lessons I was asked to teach. | 10.71 | 10.71 | 28.57 | 17.86 | 42.86 |
| 3. My mentor helped me to write the learning outcomes for the lessons I taught. | 3.57 | 7.14 | 28.57 | 17.86 | 42.86 |
| 4. My mentor helped me to decide on the media that I could use to develop concepts in lessons that I taught. | 7.14 | 17.86 | 10.71 | 28.57 | 35.71 |
| 5. The mentor identified some teaching skills for me to implement in a lesson before/during planning. | 3.57 | 32.14 | 21.43 | 14.29 | 28.57 |
| 17. The mentor teacher helped to identify some teaching materials. | 10.71 | 42.86 | 10.71 | 17.86 | 17.86 |

majority of the respondents (67.86%) disagreed that their cooperating teachers helped them to plan for the lessons they were asked to teach, 21.42% stated that cooperating teachers helped them to plan for their lessons and 10.71% remained neutral.

Furthermore, 60.72% confirmed that the cooperating teacher did not help them to write the learning outcomes for the lessons taught, 10.71% said that their cooperating teachers help them to write the learning outcomes for the lessons and 28.57% remained neutral.

A significant proportion of the respondents (64.28%), were in disagreement with the statement “my mentor helped me to decide on the media to develop concepts in the lessons that I taught”. Only 25% were of the opinion that their mentors helped them to decide on the media they could use to develop concepts. According to Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg (2010) the cooperating teacher and preservice teacher are expected to have a specific time for planning the lessons where the focus includes the details of how, when and which co-teaching strategies will be used for future lessons. Preservice teachers will spend more time on their own preparing presentations, material, activities, etc., for their part in each practice lesson.

Furthermore, 42.86% said that the cooperating teacher did not identify teaching skills for them to implement before and during the planning stage of the lesson and 35.71% said the opposite.

Moreover, 53.57% of the respondents agreed that their mentors helped them to identify some teaching materials but 35.72% disagreed with that statement. Ac-

ording to Graziano and Navarrete (2012) planning meetings prior to and during the course, as well as after each class are important to maintain the course continuity, monitor the content and instruction, and communicate with one another. After each class preservice teachers and cooperating teachers should talk about whether the objectives of the plan were reached and what was their experience during the practice.

In summary, regarding support with lesson preparation, the majority of the preservice teachers indicated that their cooperating teachers did not help them to plan lessons, write specific lesson outcomes, decide on the type of media used or support them in identifying some teaching skills but most of those cooperating teachers supported them in identifying specific applicable teaching material to use in classes.

On the category “Views on being coached” (see Table 2), it was clear that the 57.14% of respondents supported the view that the cooperating teachers let them observe on lessons they taught during the initial days of teaching practice to enable them to get used to the class but the rest of the respondents (42.86%) said the opposite and there is no neutral preservice teachers’ opinions.

Furthermore, 42.86% agreed that the cooperating teachers demonstrated some teaching skills before asking them to teach a lesson but 39.29% stated that cooperating teachers did not demonstrate teaching skills they just let them teach but they did not learn from their expertise as English or Bilingual teachers.

It is important to highlight that there is a considerable percentage of preservice teachers that were not in agreement with

Table 2. Views on being coached

| Questions | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. The mentor teacher let me sit and observe his/her lessons during the early days of my teaching practice in order to get used to the class climate. | 28.57 | 28.57 | 0 | 21.43 | 21.43 |
| 9. The mentor teacher demonstrated some teaching skills before asking me to teach a lesson. | 17.86 | 25.00 | 17.86 | 14.29 | 25.00 |
| 13. The mentor teacher coached me how to teach English or any content in English. | 7.14 | 28.57 | 21.43 | 21.43 | 21.43 |
| 14. My mentor teacher regularly sat in on lessons and observed what I taught. | 42.86 | 21.43 | 10.71 | 10.71 | 14.29 |
| 6. My mentor encouraged me to use group work during the lessons that I taught. | 28.57 | 28.57 | 14.29 | 17.86 | 10.71 |
| 10. My mentor teacher discouraged me from using group work in lessons that I taught. | 0 | 3.57 | 10.71 | 32.14 | 53.57 |
| 12. My mentor teacher allowed me to use any teaching method that I thought was useful to develop concepts in lessons I taught. | 64.29 | 28.57 | 3.57 | 0 | 3.57 |

the way cooperating teachers let them observe before teaching and that they did not model teaching skills in order for them to understand how to use different teaching strategies.

Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg (2010) state that the cooperating teacher should provide ongoing modeling and coaching, making the invisible visible by explicitly sharing his or her rationale for instructional, curricular and management decisions. The cooperating teacher should show to the preservice teacher how to use different teaching strategies and how to lead with certain issues of classes before the preservice teacher takes his/her role in classes.

About half (42.86%) of the respondents disagreed that the mentors coached them how to teach and 21.43% were neutral concerning this statement. A significant proportion of preservice teachers (64.29%)

consented that their cooperating teachers regularly sat in on lessons that they taught and let them deliver the class, they just observe what it is being taught.

Some (57.14%) agreed that the cooperating teachers encouraged them to use group work during the lessons that they taught. On top of that, 85.71% disagreed that the mentors discouraged them from using group work in lessons that they taught.

A substantial percentage, 92.86% agreed that their mentors allowed them to use any teaching method that they thought useful to develop concepts in the lessons they taught. According to Correa (2011) teacher training is not just the job of one supervisor; it is the job of all teachers that are committed with education. Experienced teachers are required to monitor and guide preservice teachers on the process of becoming in-service teachers. They have

an active role in observing and monitoring preservice teachers to make them realize about their weaknesses and make them work on these ones to improve them.

On the category “Reflections on the teaching experience” (see table 3), it was clear that the majority of the respondents (82.15%) agreed that teaching practice gave them opportunities to experiment with teaching approaches covered theoretically.

57.14% of preservice teachers confirmed that they gained a lot of knowledge on how to teach during teaching practice but 25% of them were neutral about this statement. According to 67.86% of the respondents, they gained many insights on how learners learn English or any content in English during teaching practice and just 17.86% of preservice teachers disagreed with this statement.

Moreover, 71.42% assented that all their practice teaching lessons in English or any content in English were enjoyable and 21.43% were not sure about it. The experiences that are gained from the practicum provide to preservice and cooperating teachers rich opportunities for reflection on their teaching practices, themselves as individuals and their student’s learning (Graziano and Navarrete, 2012). According to the results preservice teachers confirmed that they have gained a lot of knowledge on how to teach English or any content in English through their teaching practice process and that they had enjoyable classes or lessons during their period as preservice teachers.

On the category “Views on cooperating teacher feedback” (see Table 4), it seemed that the majority of respondents (67.86%)

Table 3. Reflections on the teaching experience

| Questions | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 8. Teaching practice gave me opportunities to experiment with teaching approaches covered theoretically. | 42.86 | 39.29 | 14.29 | 0 | 3.57 |
| 11. I gained a lot of knowledge on how to teach during teaching practice. | 25 | 32.14 | 25 | 14.29 | 3.57 |
| 16. I got a lot of insights on how students learn English during teaching practice. | 25 | 42.86 | 14.29 | 3.57 | 14.29 |
| 17. All my practice teaching lessons in English are enjoyable. | 35.71 | 35.71 | 21.43 | 3.57 | 3.57 |

Table 4. Views on cooperating teacher feedback

| Questions | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 7. My mentor teacher provided me useful feedback that helped me to develop as an effective teacher after sitting in on lessons I taught. | 25 | 42.86 | 10.71 | 7.14 | 14.29 |
| 15. My mentor teacher gave me useful feedback on my questioning techniques. | 32.14 | 28.57 | 10.71 | 14.29 | 14.29 |

were of the opinion that the mentors provided them with useful feedback that helped them to develop as effective teachers after sitting in on lessons that they had taught.

Furthermore, 60.71% agreed that their mentors gave them useful feedback on their questioning techniques, 21.43% of preservice teachers disagreed and 10.71% remained neutral.

In summary, preservice teachers from the institution studied said that they had good feedback and mentoring from their cooperating teachers, so they could grow professionally as teachers. As Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg (2010) said cooperating teachers and preservice teachers must gain experience in how to work as a team. Cooperating teachers should be opened to the preservice teachers' contributions and ideas as well as the preservice teachers work on the cooperating teachers' feedback and mentoring. The relationship constructed should be based on tolerance and openness to one's other's ideas. Both should take

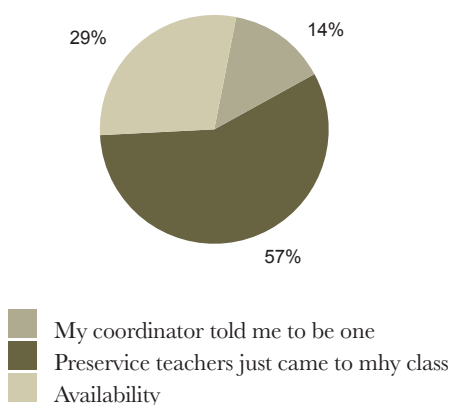
in and work with the ideas of the partner when they are well founded.

Also, a semi structured interview was applied to 7 cooperating teachers to know the roles that they take as mentors during the teaching practice process and how the organization of this process is carried out inside this university school. The instrument was taken from Hamilton (2010) and consisted of 12 open questions that were developed to answer with certain relevant information for this investigation. Data was categorized in each question according to the interviewees' answers and graphics were created for ease of interpretation.

Graphic 1: Selection. First question shows that more than half of cooperating teachers (57%) said that they did not know how they were selected to be cooperating teachers; preservice teachers just came to their classrooms and asked them if they could deliver their practice sessions there. 29% said that they were selected because of the availability they show to the supervisor in charge of

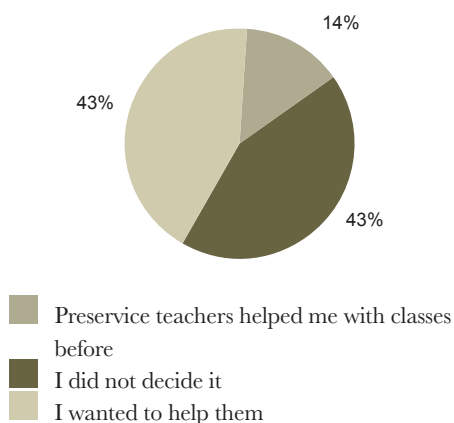
Graphic 1

How were you selected to be a cooperating teacher?



Graphic 2

Why did you decide to have a student teacher?



the practice while just 14% mentioned that their coordinator told them to accept preservice teachers in their classrooms.

Graphic 2: Decision for being a cooperative teacher. On question 2 some cooperating teachers (43%) mentioned that they decided to have a preservice teacher in their classroom because they wanted to help them to grow professionally but the same significant percentage (43%) said that they did not decide, preservice teacher just came to their classrooms with a letter of presentation for practicing.

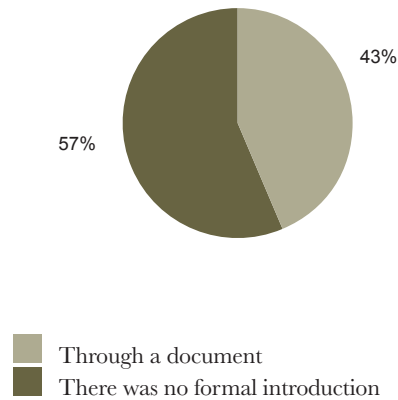
Graphic 3: Meeting preservice teachers. On the next question, most of the cooperating teachers (57%) said that there was no formal introduction with preservice teachers the first time they met but a significant percentage (43%) mentioned that there was a formal introduction through a document or letter that preservice teachers shown to them at the beginning of their practice sessions.

Graphic 4: Information about cooperating teachers' roles. Moreover, almost all cooperating teachers (87%) mentioned on question 4 that there is a presentation letter provided to them to inform about the preservice teachers' practices, but it does not state what preservice teachers required of them as mentors before, during, or after the practicum. Just a teacher said (14%) that he did not receive any letter for presentation nor for stating his roles.

Graphic 5: Evaluating preservice teachers. On graphic 5 it is shown that 86% of cooperating teachers did not have responsibility for evaluating or grading of preservice teachers, they are not asked to do that. Contrary, 14% mentioned that they had the responsibility on the evaluation of lesson plans each class preservice teachers taught.

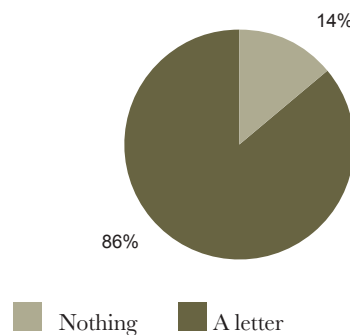
Graphic 3

How were you introduced to your student teacher?



Graphic 4

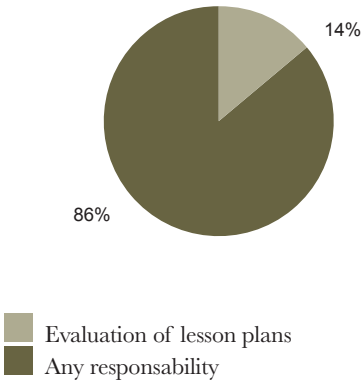
What information was provided to you, written or oral, to inform you what the university expected or student teacher required of you before, during, or after the practicum?



Graphic 6: Feedback. Furthermore, a significant percentage of cooperating teachers (72%) said that they set aside time for feedback and reflection at the end of the class, while the other 28% mentioned that they gave feedback to preservice teachers

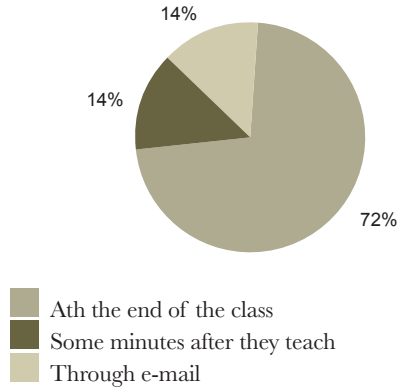
Graphic 5

What responsibilities did you have for evaluation or grading of your student teacher?



Graphic 6

How did you and your student teacher set for feedback and reflection?



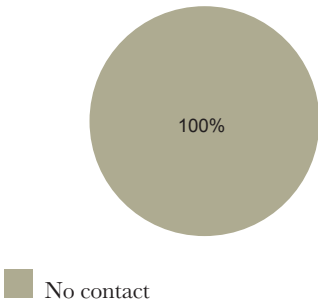
some minutes after they taught or through e-mail.

Graphic 7: Collaboration with faculty. On question 7, all cooperating teachers affirmed that there was no contact with the university personnel in charge of the teaching practicum in the school. They just had contact with preservice teachers.

Graphic 8: Compensation. Also, all cooperating teachers stated that they did not receive any compensation or reward for their work and time they spent with preservice teachers. Some of them mentioned professional satisfaction for preservice teachers' development and their thankfulness.

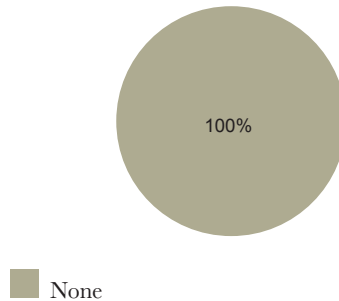
Graphic 7

What contact did you have with university personnel during the student teaching practicum?



Graphic 8

What compensation did the university provide for your work as a cooperating teacher?



Graphic 9: Preparation. Regarding preparation as mentors, cooperating teachers (43%) said that it will be valuable for them to have a workshop or a meeting with the supervisor before the semester starts as an opportunity to be more prepared as mentors. Their answers highlighted that they need instructions to follow during the teaching practicum to know what their roles are because they are in charge of preservice teachers during their practice sessions.

Graphic 10: Cooperating teachers' experiences. There were too varied answers regarding the experience as cooperating teachers. 29% mentioned that learning technology tools and being more responsible are teaching aspects that have improved through their experience as cooperating teachers. The others said that becoming more professional, identifying problems in class

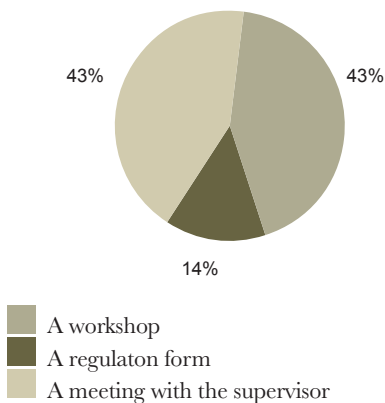
and changing their way of being have been teaching aspects that have improved through their experience as cooperating teachers.

Graphic 11: Changes according to experiences. Furthermore, cooperating teachers emphasized some aspects of the teaching practice process that they would change or do differently. 29% mentioned that provide more feedback and activities in the classroom must improve. The other cooperating teachers said they would be more professional, they would change the book used in their classes and they would talk to the preservice teachers' supervisor before classes start.

Graphic 12: Extra comments. Finally, cooperating teachers added some comments they considered important regarding the teaching practicum for English and Bilin-

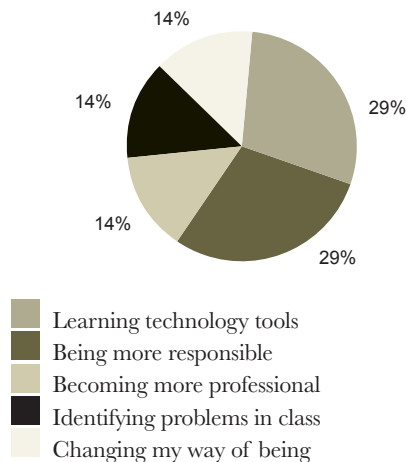
Graphic 9

What opportunities might be valuable for you to have in order to be better prepared as a cooperating teacher?



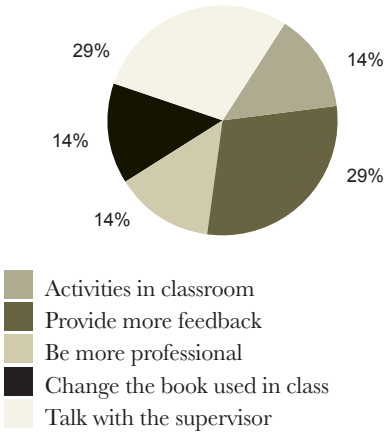
Graphic 10

In what ways did you experience transform your own teaching practices?



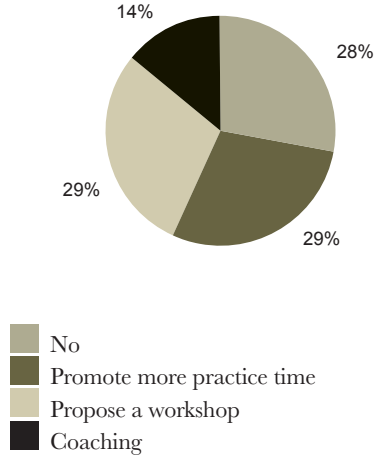
Graphic 11

Is there anything about your experience that you would change or things you might do differently?



Graphic 12

Is there anything else?



gual teachers in this school. Some of them (29%) said that preservice teachers must have more practice time in the curriculum. Since 6th or 7th semester students could start their first practices as teachers. Other 29% emphasized the importance of having workshops or meetings with supervisors to agree in the ways cooperating teachers have to help preservice teachers through this process. A cooperating teacher (14%) mentioned that they must know well how to coach preservice teachers to really help them to improve. The 28% left wanted to add nothing else.

Conclusion

The first objective of this study looked for categorizing the conceptions or opinions that preservice teachers have about the teaching practice in their institution. So, according to the questionnaire results,

even though cooperating teachers supported preservice teachers in identifying specific applicable teaching materials to use in classes and provided good feedback to preservice teachers, they did not support them with lesson preparation during teaching practices and they did not coach them on how to teach. Preservice teachers mentioned that coaching and support in lesson preparation is missing but that teaching practice in their institution is an enriching experience.

The second objective looked for identifying the roles that cooperating teachers take during the teaching practice sessions. Through the interview results, it was shown that it is missing a formal regulation in which the role of cooperating teachers must be stated. Most of the times there is no formal presentation with preservice teachers and cooperating teachers do not

decide to have preservice teachers in their classrooms. Cooperating teachers want to help preservice teachers, but they need to follow a set of instructions or a regulation in this process to have a particular role in it.

Cooperating teachers were in agreement that they gain experience being immersed in the process of teaching practice and as Correa (2011) mentioned the teaching practices process is not just the job of a supervisor, it is the job of all teachers committed with the future of education. Some cooperating teachers add as a suggestion to get students in teaching training since 6th or 7th semester in order to have more teacher training time. The period of practice constitutes a potentially favorable space for the professional development of future teachers. Professional practice allows preservice teachers not only to the construction and manifestation of skills but also to the integration of knowledge of diverse nature and appropriation of an identity model (Correa, 2011).

The co-teaching method promotes coaching and training for preservice teachers to apply theory into practice as well as collaboration in the different steps of teaching like co-planning, co-delivering, and co-evaluation (Conderman and Hedin, 2012). According to preservice teachers the co-teaching steps mentioned here are not followed because as it is seen there is no collaboration in planning, co-delivering is not mentioned by preservice teachers, just observation during their classes, and finally, co-evaluation is not taken into consideration as part of the teaching experience in this institution. Preservice teachers cannot evaluate students even though this is a very important step during the whole process of

teaching as well as in the teaching practicum.

Cooperating teachers mentioned that they provide feedback to preservice teachers at the end of the classes and most of the times it is about planning and delivery or about the PPT presentation. They said they observe the class and check planning, but they are not asked to do that, the only thing is to sign the lesson plan. According to the interview results there is no co-planning, co-delivery or co-evaluation during the sessions. Preservice teachers and cooperating teachers do not collaborate in the teaching practice process because there is no regulation for doing that. They follow what preservice teachers tell them they have to do or what the letter sent to them says to do but preservice teachers are not under cooperating teachers responsibility.

According to the research results, a didactic proposal will be developed in order to improve on the aspects mentioned before by Conderman and Hedin (2012) and to promote collaborative practices and professional coaching through a series of strategies from the co-teaching method during the teaching practice process.

According to Bacharach and Heck (2010) co-teaching is defined as the joint work of two teachers with the same group of students; sharing the planning, organization, presentation, and evaluation, as well as physical space. The didactic proposal will look for the implementation of collaborative practices regulated through a document which will state the cooperating and preservice teachers' roles in order to improve on coaching as well as guidance during the teaching areas of planning, delivery and evaluation.

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