

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

School of Humanities

An investigation into the cognitive transformation
that English language teachers go through when
engaging in Collaborative Reflective Practice

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ABSTRACT

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE COGNITIVE TRANSFORMATION THAT ENGLISH LANGUAGE
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Nowadays there is a longstanding recognition in the field of English language education that teachers must continually reshape their knowledge of teaching and learning and therefore engage in continuing Teacher Development (TD). Current TD literature considers Reflective Practice (RP) to be a fundamental component of its process (Dewey 1934; Schön 1983; Wallace 1991) hence, it was the focus of this research study. However, a prevailing theory on RP assumes that development is largely deliberative and linear enabling an automatic and permanent change in teachers to better their practices (Larrive 2008; Louw, Watson and Jimarkon 2014; Vieira and Marques 2012; Vo and Nguyen 2010). More recent empirical studies have opposed this view and advanced that only given the appropriate circumstances can RP be successful in promoting ongoing teacher development (Eröz-Tuga 2013; Farrell 2001, 2008, 2012; Gün 2011; Slimani-Rolls and Kiely 2014).

Accordingly, the idea under which this Reflective Practice study was carried out was oriented towards learning from experience by means of evidence-based critical thinking eased through collaboration with others (Richards and Lockhart 1994; Wallace 1991). It was precisely through evidence-based cooperative discussions that participants were able to uncover themselves as teachers bringing to the foreground how they think about what they do and why and how they have grown from their experiences. These co-constructed rationalizations enabled teachers to transform their teaching cognitions leading to new actions and practices in their classrooms.

Hence, this collaborative action research was conducted with 5 in-service English language teachers from an ELT undergraduate program of a university in the central part of Mexico over a period of 9 weeks by means of 2 video recorded classroom observations and different spaces for professional dialogue such as a focus group, one on one feedback discussions and final personal interviews. Overall, this collaborative reflective practice study showed that teachers' abilities to be critically reflective about their teaching are enhanced given the appropriate conditions which RP necessitates such as opportunity, time and assistance from others, often lacking in everyday teaching scenarios, evaluative classroom observations and traditional teacher education programs. By challenging the 'status quo' of classroom observations and TD in this context, this RP process helped teachers understand and reconstruct their teaching knowledge especially in terms of students' responses to their instructional decisions and the impact this had on how their classes unfolded. It promoted an alternative way to fulfill the goal of teacher development, not through a 'transmission' model of education in which knowledge is simply deposited into the brains of teachers, but through a process in which teachers learn and continue to develop their skill in dialogue within a professional community (Johnson 2006; Mann 2005).

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Declaration of authorship



Academic Thesis: Declaration Of Authorship

I, **Jovanna Matilde Godínez Martínez** [please print name]

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

[title of thesis] **An investigation into the cognitive transformation that English language teachers go through when engaging in Collaborative Reflective Practice.**

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. Either none of this work has been published before submission, or parts of this work have been published as: [please list references below]:

Signed:

Date:

Dedication

To every thing, every event and every person that helped me achieve my doctoral degree.

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Abbreviations

AR	Action Research
CAR	Collaborative Action Research
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CFG	Critical Friendship Group
CO	Classroom Observation
COs	Classroom Observations
COTE	Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CRP	Critical Reflective Practice
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ICELT	In-service Certificate in English Language Teaching
RP	Reflective Practice
SEP	Secretaría de Educación Pública
SCT	Social Cultural Theory
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TD	Teacher Development
TDG	Teacher Development Groups
TT	Teacher Training
ULO	University Language Office
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Chapter 1: Introduction

An investigation into the cognitive transformation that English Language teachers go through when engaging in Collaborative Reflective Practice

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a general overview of this study. It begins by describing the significance of exploring language teacher development by engaging in a process of collaborative reflective practice with English language teachers from a university in the central part of Mexico. This chapter also provides the background of the study, which includes the research context and the results of a pilot study that paved the way for the aim and research questions that underlie and construct the research design. Finally, the chapter concludes by outlining the structure of the rest of the thesis.

1.2 The general motivation and significance of the study

My interest in Reflective Practice as a central component in language teacher development is founded on the notion that current traditional English language teacher (ELT) education and training programs have proved unsuccessful in fostering ongoing or long-term teacher development. As a former ELT teacher trainer in Mexico and Costa Rica, I can refer to several observed factors from my own experience as well as feedback from former trainees to sustain my foregoing assumption. A main perceived cause for the lack of success in long term teacher development in ELT is that educational authorities require teachers to attend training programs that more often than not do not consider teachers' individual and professional needs for development as is the case with the participants in this particular research context (PIL-UAEH 2013). This, in turn, does not allow for the content of the programs to be easily adopted into teaching repertoires or become part of teachers' knowledge. What is more, everyday teaching constraints such as teachers having to strictly follow a syllabus and textbook at the expense of context

specific needs as well as having demanding working schedules and complying with varying institutional norms and regulations, play a key role in the lack of ongoing teacher development in these contexts.

As a teacher trainer, becoming aware of this reality became challenging, as my 'idealized' perception of a person's motivation for engaging in teacher training was to develop and improve their practice for what I considered the 'better'. I assumed that this improvement was being sought deliberately, yet reality was quite different. I was therefore obligated to question results from past training courses and come to the realization that the teacher education programs I had conducted failed to promote critical skills, reflectivity or continuing teacher development. This mainly had to do with my perception of reality; it was how and why I was conducting training that affected the outcomes and perceptions I transferred to my trainees. While conducting teacher education courses, I had always been concerned with end results – in this case beneficial changes in teachers' practices – and evaluated the trainees' and my own performance accordingly.

'Change' was accounted for by the improvements teachers displayed in the mandatory/ evaluative classroom observations carried out by the end of the training programs. Nevertheless, this transformation was only temporary and superficial as reported by former trainees in subsequent courses or through other means of communication such as e-mails and social media. In their feedback, teachers stated their inability to implement the content delivered in past preparation courses to their daily classes, due to constraints such as having an excessive workload, oversized groups, complying with institutional requirements and their lack of time. Furthermore, the content delivered – however valuable – had not become part of their teaching repertoires as it was imposed knowledge that did not necessarily suit their teaching development needs, stances or contexts.

Nevertheless, as a researcher I saw this as an opportunity to gain understanding of this situation by systematically studying the matter through collaborative reflective practice research as Reflective Practice (RP) is considered to be a fundamental component of ***Teacher Development*** (TD) (Dewey 1933; Farrell 2008; Leather and Popovic 2008; Leitch and Day 2006; Schön 1983). What is more, the contextual and personal factors mentioned above, which are for the most part neglected in 'one size fits all' teacher training programs would be considered and valued (Block et al. 2012; Ritzer 1993, 2012).

1.3 Background of the study

Along with this perceived reality, a literature review on Reflective Practice in English language teacher development – the theoretical base of this research –, which is thoroughly discussed in chapter 2, revealed a lack of empirical studies with in-service language teachers contemplating all of the above circumstances and constraints. For the most part, the empirical studies in the field of language TD through Reflective Practice have been carried out in Europe, Canada, Asia and the USA and specifically within pre-service teacher settings (McCabe et al. 2009; Eröz-Tuga 2013), with individual in-service teachers (Farrell 2001; Larrive 2008) or in formal teacher training programs (Vo and Nguyen 2012; Gün 2011; Yürekli 2013; Ho 2013; Louw, Watson and Jimark 2014). With regards to Latin America, RP studies have been mostly undertaken with pre-service teachers and when dealing with in-service teachers their ultimate focus has been on end results that promote a linear automatic change in teachers' practices (Cárdenas and Faustino 2003; Farias and Obilinovic 2008; Insuasty and Zambrano 2008/ 2010; Pellerin and Paukner Nogués 2015). To the present, there are not any accounts of similar studies done collaboratively with in-service English language teachers within their everyday teaching contexts, or in Mexico overall, the country where this research was carried out. The following section describes my research context more in-depth.

1.3.1 The research context

English Language Teaching (ELT) was first implemented as a mandatory subject in middle school and high school in Mexico in the 1960s as one of the educational agreements of the “Secretaria de Educación Pública” (SEP) which is the federal organization in charge of regulating education in Mexico from pre-school all the way to higher education. Most recently in 2008, SEP released the 494 and 540 federal agreements and modified the 181 agreement, where it was stipulated that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) would be taught starting 3rd grade of pre-school all through elementary school, middle school, high school and university level, due to its underlying effect as a world language as well as its influence in the world’s major business, travel and educational fields (SEP 2008).

As was expected many public and private schools began to incorporate ELT or EFL to their programs, as was the case of the university where this study took place, one of the 32 state government universities in Mexico. In this state university, English was established as a mandatory subject in all of its undergraduate programs in 1992 where at the beginning students attended four-hour English classes per week. In order to regulate the teaching of English at the university, the University Language Office (from now on ULO) was created in the year 2000. Up to date, it is the ULO’s responsibility to design and implement the English programs, designate course-books, hire the language teachers and state the norms and regulations for each one of the faculties and educational institutions incorporated to this university regarding English Language Teaching (PIL-UAEH 2013). ULO is also in charge of establishing updating and teacher training programs for the ELT staff and certifying their English language levels so they meet national and international teaching standards.

I find it relevant to now mention that in 2007 I worked full time at the University Language Office where I was responsible for the recruiting process of the new language teachers and seeing that the current staff complied with the teaching profiles established by this university. At that time, the university required teachers

to have a college degree, preferably in ELT and an English language certification with a minimum B2 level according to the descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for the learning and teaching of languages – the CEFR in 2001 advanced a systematized description of levels going from basic to proficient as follows: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2 –. The language certification needed to be from a recognized certification exam office such as the *British Council in Mexico* or *Cambridge English Language Assessment*. The standardized language certification required by this university back then was the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 550 points; nowadays any internationally recognized language certification with a B2 level according to the CEFR descriptors is valid. However even if teachers had their language certifications, if their undergraduate degree was different from ELT, which was common – the university had at first hired engineers, accountants and lawyers as English teachers –, then a methodology course lasting 150 hours was too required. The most common ELT course available then, was the In-service Certificate in English Language Teaching (ICELT) offered by the British Council in Mexico.

When working at the ULO, I had access to the English language teaching staff profiles where I was able to observe that in 1992 when English became mandatory in this university, the hiring conditions were lenient. For instance, if intending teachers had been to an English-speaking country – typically the USA – and came back knowing the language – non-academic –, they were hired. Further, the teaching prospects that had graduated from any undergraduate program that included the subject of English throughout its syllabus or had completed the English language courses offered by the university's language center, were hired as well. This was due to the fact that there was an existing urge to hire English teachers to comply with the agreement that the SEP put forward in the 1960's and this university could not fail to observe the agreement. Nevertheless, as time went by and English Language Teaching became more founded in this university, standards, norms and regulations were employed regarding hiring and permanence conditions. Little by little the entire English language teaching staff –

new and old – had to comply with the new established requirements mentioned above. If teachers failed to do so, then classes were taken over by new ‘qualified’ teachers or they simply resigned on their own.

However, and of relevance to my study, I must point out that this university’s course of action regarding ELT has been largely carried out according to institutional constrictions and to what the ULO perceives to be the need for training in ELT. Regarding the latter, training courses are more often than not compulsory and are carried out on the teachers’ ‘free’ time. The contents of the programs are set by the ULO, detached from the different existing contextual factors, excluding teachers’ academic interests and needs for development. I became aware of this as aside from working at the ULO for 3 years, I was also an English teacher in this university involved in ELT matters and partook in the mandatory institutional training programs for 13 years (August 2000 - June 2013). I can confirm that ongoing teacher development has not been successfully fostered in these type of standardized professionalization processes as the main focus for all involved is on homogenized subject knowledge and skills to effectively deliver lessons at the expense of teacher critical reflection of their practice and ongoing teacher development (Ritzer, 1993, 2012).

Aside from professionalization matters, it is more often than not that teachers are held accountable for students reaching the institutional standards of performance in this context. This has led them to establish teaching practices that primarily allows them to comply with institutional policies at the expense of ongoing critical reflection of their teaching and student learning – this point is fully discussed in section 4.3.3, p.147 –. It is such controlled scenarios added to daily constraints that drain teachers as to further expect them to have the motivation and energy to automatically implement innovations from former mandatory training courses or to individually engage in critical reflective practice processes, inclining teachers to routine actions in their classrooms (Dewey 1933, 1975).

For the purposes of this study I must make a distinction now between the terms *reflection* and *critical reflection*, as they will be used throughout this thesis. The first is taken as “looking back into one’s teaching and drawing some general conclusions about the classes taught — ‘I had a very productive lesson today’ or ‘This was not one of my best classes’ type of comments —. As opposed to *critical reflection*, where teachers reflect on their practice as a way to bring themselves to the level of awareness of what they do and the reasons for this” (Gün, 2011, p.127). It is one thing to *‘reflect’* on your practice and simply move on to the next teaching event as opposed to *critically reflecting* on your teaching in order to gain awareness and take action in line with those critical thoughts (Dewey 1933).

1.3.2 The pilot study

Central to my research concern was to choose suitable methods and methodology to support me giving an account of the reality that I wanted to investigate. Therefore as a novice researcher in the field I found the need to conduct a RP pilot study in this context, which allowed me to understand methodological constraints mostly related to practicalities, but also to my own position as a researcher in the field of reflective practice. Many tensions and challenges arose, as I will now discuss yet in the end, this pilot study allowed me to reorient my initial questions, procedures and stance.

The pilot study research design and procedure

I decided to carry out a pilot study with the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) staff from the Humanities Faculty in this specific university in Mexico in the months of February through May of the year 2014. Accordingly, I held a briefing at the beginning of February, once the participants were set in their teaching routines as to not interrupt or conflict with the beginning of their semester. There were approximately 15 EFL teachers ranging from young adults all the way through mature adults who taught different English level classes in sometimes 3 or 4 different undergraduate programs within this faculty. For the selection of the

participants of the pilot study, all 15 teachers were summoned to a briefing where the objectives and aim of the research were thoroughly explained. At the end of the briefing only four female teachers volunteered to participate as shown in Table 1 – the four teachers were given pseudonyms to protect their identity –.

Table 1 The pilot study participants

Teacher Elisa	Teacher Paula	Teacher Mila	Teacher Mary
Elisa is a 52-year-old female English teacher who holds a BA in Accounting and a Masters degree in Education and has a 22-year English language teaching experience. She initially taught children and for the last 18 years she has taught young adults. Elisa began teaching without any previous ELT training and as an in-service teacher she enrolled in a methodology course called COTE (Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English).	Paula is a 42-year-old female English teacher who holds a BA in ELT and has a 10-year English language teaching experience with young adults. Paula began teaching without any previous ELT training and as an in-service teacher obtained her teaching degree from the ELT undergraduate program of this university.	Mila is a 32-year-old female English teacher who holds a BA in ELT and has a 10-year English language teaching experience with young adults. Mila began her teaching career after she obtained her teaching degree.	Mary is a 27-year-old female English teacher who holds a BA in ELT and has a 6-year English language teaching experience with young adults. Mary began her teaching career after she obtained her teaching degree.

The main reason for choosing teachers pertaining to this faculty was because this was also the place where I had been working since June 2011. I was not an outsider to them; hence the teachers would feel more comfortable participating and engaging in the pilot process. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that I had personally not worked directly with any of the teachers as I specifically worked for the ELT undergraduate program of the faculty.

In order to find evidence for the aim of the preliminary study and what were the research questions back then:

1. What do EFL teachers at the Faculty of Humanities think and know about reflective practice?
2. Do collaborative reflective practice activities enable or not reflectivity in teachers? If so, how does it occur?
3. Is there a change in the teachers' teaching practice through the use of reflective practice? How is change accounted for?

Semi-structured personal interviews in English (see Appendix 1) were conducted at the beginning of the pilot study with the purpose of finding out teachers' teaching experience/ backgrounds and current knowledge of reflective practice. Once I had interviewed all four teachers there was a cycle of three classroom observations (COs) with each one of the participants within the three-month time frame. The teachers decided on the aim of the observations, which for the most part dealt with classroom management procedures and just one of them asked to be observed specifically on her use of the language. After every classroom observation (CO), we had immediate one-on-one feedback sessions where for the most part my notes were discussed aiming first at the objective stated by the observees but also pointing out other areas that in my point of view required attention. After every cycle of COs and feedback sessions were held, a focus group interview (see Appendix 2) with the four participants was also carried out for teachers to share their experiences and for me to know if the feedback and focus group sessions enabled '*critical reflection*' in the teachers and hence a change in their teaching. There were a total of 3 focus groups; one after every classroom observation cycle was over.

The pilot study conclusions

Once the data collection process was over and after transcribing the data and analyzing it by means of **content analysis** (Dörnyei 2007) the following main findings emerged.

With regard to the first research question, the initial personal interviews were found to be problematic in the sense that they were carried out in English, the teachers were not able to express themselves thoroughly and openly as they could have done in their native language (Spanish). Secondly, many questions were too theoretical and poorly structured, taking for granted that teachers understood the concepts of critical reflection and reflective practice in ELT (Gün 2011), hence participants had difficulty providing answers (see Appendix 1, questions 8-14). For instance, Mila's answer to question 8 – What are your strengths as an English teacher? – was: *“To be honest, there isn't anything that I could say that I am good, it's difficult for me to know that”*. This response shows the challenge of accessing teaching stances and beliefs which teachers do not normally consider in their day to day routines and that require suitable dialogic spaces for discussion prompted by more sensitive questioning as will be discussed in the analytical chapter 4. Finally, regarding the main aim of the interviews which was to respond to research question 1 and find out teacher's current reflective practice stances, 3 out of the 4 participants stated they did not know what RP was as the following extracts show:

Extract 1

“Well I remember the concept but I'm not so in touch with it recently because I haven't studied a little more about that. But that was like 10 years ago”. (Mila)

Extract 2

“No, I haven't ever listened about that, but I think it's really interesting”. (Paula)

Extract 3

“I think that I have heard it but I haven't understood it...” (Mary)

All in all, the majority of the semi-structured interview questions only served to gain an informed notion of the teachers' profiles and teaching backgrounds (see Table 1).

Concerning research question two, the COs were thought to be reflexive and developmental, however I – the researcher – ended up adopting a ‘teacher trainer role’ where feedback conferences were one-directional orienting teachers towards good and bad practices and suggesting improvement actions for future classes. This was not only appreciated by all of the participants as they reported in the focus group interviews but it was also expected as classroom observations in this context had been long carried out with formative and evaluative purposes (an in-depth discussion of this matter is provided in section 6.3.1, p.196). My position directly interfered with the real intention of the COs as I failed to provide critical feedback and challenge teachers’ thinking about their practice leaving little to no reflection on teachers’ behalf (Hoffman et al., 2015, p.105). The following extracts illustrate some of the participants’ thoughts regarding the COs:

Extract 4

“...your strengths make you feel good but the other side you can see also your weaknesses and it feels weird and a little bit uncomfortable but at the same time you say, well that’s real, it’s true and she is observing and she is more objective. Finally, I think the most useful part is that you listen for other strategies, for other advice, that is really good. There were some moments where I can say: Yeah I know that this is not good in my class but what should I do? What would you suggest? And you told me some alternatives...” (Elisa)

Extract 5

“I felt as well comfortable of the things that you were saying because I knew that all of them were really true... I felt happy as well because nobody told me that before because I hadn’t been observed so I was glad that you were there and that you could tell me all the things that I can do to improve. You gave me pieces of advice of what I can do with my students, how to set certain rules so I can manage them a little bit better...” (Mary)

Again, these extracts show that directive feedback was appreciated as teachers adopted trainee roles to go according to my trainer role and received what they expected from me: an evaluation of their practice.

In accordance to my evaluative feedback, after the second classroom observations were carried out, 3 out of the 4 teachers had made noticeable – yet still superficial – changes to their teaching. However, for the one teacher whose practice basically remained the same according to my personal field notes, sharing her experience in the second focus group was not only uncomfortable but she chose to remain silent at times as compared to her colleagues' experiences she had almost nothing to share. The following extract provides her full stance on the matter.

Extract 6

“Well in my case I think I have to work a lot, I have realized that I still have the same aspects to improve and that worries me... I’m conscious about it but it takes, for me it takes time. I don’t really know how to manage this problem as I was talking to you yesterday... but anyway I think I’m learning a lot, I’m learning because this is kind of reflection for me. What am I doing, what have I done and if I still have this problem, what shall I have to change, so it’s useful, kind of painful but useful.” (Elisa)

This extract takes us to one of the principles of RP where teachers to begin with need to feel ready to engage in RP. As Wallace (1991, 1998) argues, to become aware of certain inconsistencies in your practice when you are not prepared to face them may only leave you with “unpleasant emotions without suggesting any way forward” as was Elisa’s case. Another principle of RP that was not met was that as novice practitioners in RP research, teachers should have been able to choose the reflective tools that best suit them personally and academically, the ones that would make them feel more at ease during the process (Hobbs 2007). Imposing focus groups for everyone to share their COs experiences –something so personal- was invasive and inappropriate. Mary made a comment in the last focus group interview about this: *“I have to confess that at the beginning I did not want them to know all my mistakes”*. Hence, the one-to-one personal feedback session would have sufficed at this point of the pilot study.

Regarding the last question, it was unreasonable for the teachers to go through a complete reflective practice process and report permanent change in their teaching in such a short period of time. This was confirmed in the third and last cycle of classroom observations where all of the teachers, one way or another, went back to the teaching practices that were pointed out to them in the first CO's. When this was addressed in the last focus group interview, one of the participants even said: *"What if I don't change? It doesn't affect me that much"* — Mila. Clearly, the participants' answers and classroom practices in the third observations showed that this last research question focused on a **weak form of RP** (see section 2.3.5, p. 44) by being interested only in the end result – how to – directly related to the methodological concerns of teaching and not on the process of critical reflection that teachers should have been through (Posteguillo and Palmer 2000). As stated by Tomlinson (1999a, b) I — as the guiding researcher — too was inclined to assume that once engaging in RP, *'critical'* reflection and development would be automatic, and that the relationship between reflection and action would be transparent amongst participants. I believe this to have happened as I too held an *'idealistic'* perception towards development. By contrast researchers state, "focusing on 'why' questions is what is important for critical reflection and this is how a deeper understanding of one's own teaching can be generated" (Gün, 2011, p.127), standpoint that I took as a premise for the actual research design.

Regardless of the fact that the final pilot study outcomes previously reported were unfavorable, there were also positive conclusions pertaining to how **collaborating** and **discussing teaching matters openly** with each other aided participants' practice (Wallace 1991), which is of keen importance to the position I took for preferring collaborative over individual RP for this study. The following extracts exemplify this:

Extract 7

"Many, many years ago when I started my classes it was really amazing because I didn't know what to do, I was not prepared or trained to be a teacher so I didn't know what to do and the first thing that came to my mind was go and observe somebody, a teacher... I learn more from other colleagues by observing them than from other courses specifically." (Elisa)

Extract 8

"Knowing that you are not alone in this helps you a lot, my colleagues shared some of the things that they did in order to improve the aspects in which they had much more trouble with and I learned from them. I think that this is not an experience that someone should deal with alone, sharing experiences gives the opportunity to have the necessary feedback and let you know that you can be supported by others." (Mary)

Extract 9

"Well it is good that we get used to these kinds of things because those kinds of things are the ones that we are missing here in the university... I want to repeat this experience because it really helped me to get some points from my class that I didn't know and to know some strengths that I didn't know too... Well, it was hard at the beginning to listen to somebody else criticizing you, but then I realized that it was a good critique... But we are always afraid of others' opinions, that's one problem that here... it's not only here in the university or here in our area, it's a problem here in Mexico." (Mila)

Extract 10

"...this motivated me to read about the things that maybe I didn't do well and now I think I have to practice the suggestions and recommendations you gave me from now on in my classes." (Paula)

All in all, this first attempt at carrying out a RP study enlightened the actual rationale and research design as will now be discussed. The end results and procedures of the pilot study primarily revealed the necessity for a paradigm shift regarding Classroom Observations as a means to develop as opposed to an evaluation of teachers' practices. The stance and role the researcher adopted towards RP and the relationship built amongst the researcher and the participants were also questioned as they directly impacted the study procedures and outcomes. Finally, teachers expressed benefitting from support and assistance,

hence suggested the creation of spaces where sustained collegial discussions about teaching related matters could be held.

1.4 Aim of the present study and research questions

In accordance to the primary pilot study results, the current ***action research study*** emerging from my own teaching context offered 5 in-service English language teachers from an ELT undergraduate program pertaining to the Humanities Faculty of a large state-run university in the central part of Mexico to become part of a collaborative Reflective Practice process, which considered their everyday teaching contexts and constraints to initiate a cognitive transformation by increasing their teaching awareness. This was possible by the creation of appropriate spaces for discussion throughout the whole RP study in order for teachers to verbalize their mental constructions and for me as the researcher to have an account of these thinking processes. Accordingly, the study was positioned on a ***qualitative, collaborative and interpretivist research paradigm*** by drawing on a focus group interview, video recorded classroom observations and semi-structured personal interviews.

This study first centers on the value of creating a context for professional dialogue by means of a focus group interview, which is nonexistent in the participants' current professional community. A second focus is in the effectiveness of using class videos as input evidence to enable a joint critical rationalization of the practices observed in order for teachers to become aware of their teaching or in increasing teaching awareness. Finally, attention is paid to how an increase on teaching awareness leads to new teaching decisions and experiences, thus to a reconstruction of teachers' knowledge allowing teachers to engage in ongoing teacher development. Nevertheless, development would occur according to each participant's reflective practitioner qualities and actions as well as their degree of involvement in the RP process and only in areas consistent with personal

perceived needs. This is the central inquiry of the study, which examines the role that RP might play in English Language Teacher Development.

Research Aim

To gain insight into the cognitive transformation that English Language teachers go through when engaging in Collaborative Reflective Practice.

Research Questions

Q1: What is the reasoning behind participants' teaching practice prior to engaging in a reflective practice process?

Q2: How helpful is feedback from other sources and sharing perspectives with peers in fostering critical reflectivity in teachers?

Q3: To what extent does collaborative Reflective Practice influence participants' cognitive transformation?

1.5 The research design

The previous research questions were answered by means of 3 data collection instruments as will now be explained. However, for the analysis and concluding results of this study; a triangulation exploration method (see section 3.9 p.107) of all the data obtained was used as to maximize the transferability of research results and procedures to other similar research contexts.

Research Question 1

Research question one was answered by means of a *Focus group interview* (see Appendix 3), which was prompted on theory driven aspects adapted from Barbara Larrive's reflective practitioner survey (2008), Steve Mann's teacher development

definition (2005) and Richards and Farrell's Teacher Knowledge concept (2005), which will be presented in detail, in Chapter 2. The most salient topics were the following: *teachers' formative knowledge, experiential knowledge, choice of methodological approaches, choice of resources, their current teaching stances and beliefs, their current position towards teacher development, their sense of agency in their specific teaching contexts as well as the possible teaching constraints they face*. This study aimed to provide a setting by means of a **focus group** interview where together, the participants of this study and I were able to rationalize how they perceive to carry out their practices enhancing a dialogic space where opinions and standpoints were built on by the beliefs and positions of their peers (Johnson 1999; Bowen 2004; Richards & Farrell 2005).

The focus group interview also served to explore teachers' qualities and levels as reflective practitioners basing each level according to Barbara Larrive's 2008 reflective practitioner grid. The purpose of following Larrive's work was dual, I first aimed to provide evidence that these participants possessed reflective practitioner qualities hence Larrive's descriptors allowed me to do so as follows: *Pre-Reflection, Surface-Reflection, Pedagogical-Reflection and Critical-Reflection*. Consequently, by showing their reflective practitioner qualities the **teachers' readiness** before engaging in this research would also be revealed. It has been proven that **teacher readiness** is a main factor prior to engaging in RP, as it is not feasible to force anybody to reflect when their personal and professional conditions do not allow them to do so (Wallace 1998; Farrell 2011).

The focus group was carried out in the teachers' and my own first language — Spanish —; together, we decided this in order to create a distended, relaxed environment where everyone felt comfortable to express their ideas. The focus group interview was also recorded with previous permission from the participants in order to have access to the information afterwards for transcription and analysis.

Research Question 2

With regard to research question two; it was answered through the collaborative analysis of 2 video-recorded classroom observations with each one of the teachers participating, which lasted approximately two hours each. These video recordings were the main source for discussion during the post-observation phase (one-on-one discussion which were also recorded). My role was to enable discussion by ***stimulated recall*** (Kagan 1984), "stimulated recall depends on the videotape of a real situation. The principle involved here — stimulating an individual's recollection of what she or he was thinking at the time of an interaction — is aimed at providing a look into the thought process leading up to an interaction, whether it be teaching, learning or communicating" (Rosenstein 2002, p.30).

The reasoning behind the use of video recorded observations as opposed to regular classroom observation in this research was guided by previous studies in the field that used the same approach (Farrell 2001; Gün 2011; Erozt-Tüga 2013; Ho 2013). I was specifically guided by a study in 2011 whose author stated that "conducting classroom observations and giving feedback to teachers is undeniably useful yet insufficient in itself to help teachers reach a level of reflection that will optimize their professional development" (Gün, 2011, p.127). Hence, video recorded classroom observations as evidence to aid stimulated recall, suited well.

Video reviewing served to collaboratively discuss what took place in the classes according to the teaching stances and beliefs each teacher had provided in the focus group interview. This was aimed at answering the question "what were you thinking when you did or said that?" and gain an evidence based understanding of the teachers' cognitive processes during the classroom sessions. There was no intention to give direct feedback, but to interpret collaboratively with the participants, stopping or freezing the recordings in points of interest to reveal their perceptions at that point and their decision processes. This helped to notice routine practices and discontinuities that otherwise could not be recovered from the simple narrative or field notes. Overall the video-recordings as supporting evidence

allowed for an informed discussion of the teachers' practices and facilitated the gathering of comparative data between my field notes and the participants' stances and beliefs. Putting two sources of data together for an elaborative description helped me strive for balance, objectivism and open-mindedness in presenting and later analyzing the data (McDonough and McDonouch, 1997, p.112). The one on one post-observation discussions were also recorded with previous permission from the participants in order to access the information afterwards for transcription and analysis.

Research Question 3

The final research question was answered through the analysis of the final semi-structured personal interviews (see Appendix 4) held with each one of the participants once the video-recorded classroom observations were over. The use of a final instrument to consolidate the reflective process and hence the data collection was also taken from similar reflective practice studies (Farrell 2001; Gün 2011; Eroz-Tüga 2013; Ho 2013). However, most of these studies employed a teacher journal as the consolidation tool and just one of them used a final interview. My argument for choosing an oral tool over a written one is based on Valerie Hobbs' 2007 study. She suggests that in order for reflective practice researchers to obtain feasible results they should avoid forced reflection particularly in the form of a substantial written assignment, increasing the likelihood of resentment and negativity towards the task. Additionally, given the personal nature of reflective practice participants should be actively involved in choosing the format of their reflective assignment, as was the case of this study. Participants were asked at the beginning of the research -during the focus group interview- if they wanted to keep a written journal throughout the process, to which all responded negatively. This was the main reason why the use of an interview was selected as I also believe that it is through the social interaction of discussion that "active learning evolves and each participant interprets, transforms and internalizes new knowledge as a result of collective thinking" (Vo and Ngyen, 2010, p.207).

Overall the main purpose of the final semi-structured personal interview was to have a final account of the participants' experience in this study. I specifically looked into perceptions and stances regarding the reflective practice process each one of them engaged in and what reflective practice meant for all of the involved prior, while and after the process. The interviews were also arranged to be carried out in Spanish with a fairly open agenda, which allowed for two-way communication where both the teachers and I gave and received information. Ample research in the field has made clear that the interviewer and interviewee jointly co-construct the discussions in order to generate information that otherwise would be challenging to access (Mann 2010; Talmy 2010). The semi-structured interviews were too recorded with previous consent from the participants.

In line with this research design, the study included the following nine steps in order to respond to the nature of Reflective Practice as my research area and the exploration of the research aim and research questions: **1.** Carrying out a briefing with the participants to explain the nature of this doctoral study and its implications for them as partakers **2.** Leading a focus group interview at the beginning of the investigation with all of the participants to identify their teaching stances, their degree of reflectiveness and readiness to partake in a Reflective Process, **3.** Conducting two video-recorded classroom observations per teacher in a 9-week period **4.** Having two-recorded feedback sessions per teacher immediately after the observations took place **5.** Carrying out a final semi-structured personal interview with every teacher to close up the study, **6.** Transcribing and coding the data, **7.** Choosing the data analysis method **8.** Analyzing the data, and **9.** Drawing conclusions and making implications.

1.6 The thesis structure

This thesis is structured as follows. The introduction puts forward background information in order to understand the whole of the study providing an account of a pilot study, which paved way for the actual research design. It briefly presents the motivation and significance of this research as well as the aim and the research questions.

Chapter two reviews literature on the use of ***Reflective Practice*** to enhance ***Teacher Development*** through ***Collaborative Reflective Approaches***. This is of key importance not only to understand the disciplinary orientation of this research but also to understand how and why Reflective Practice (RP) in English Language Teaching (ELT) has developed over time to its current position, recognizing the rationale behind the introduction of RP in English language Teacher Development (TD). Chapter two also provides a section with recent empirical studies where it is exposed that most of the research in the field has been undertaken in controlled scenarios with pre-service teachers, with individual in-service teachers, or in formal teacher training programs; presenting the lack of research with practicing in-service English language teachers and the possible collaborative development opportunities within their everyday teaching context.

Chapter three discusses the methodological approach adopted in this study; it describes the participants of the study, the data collection instruments, the research procedure and data analysis. This chapter also addresses the possible limitations of this research.

Chapter four describes the major findings that emerged from the analysis of the data obtained from the focus group interview. A thick description of the teachers' teaching knowledge, teacher development processes along with their worries and teaching constraints is given, gaining an informed notion of these teachers teaching stances within this study's context. Additionally, according to data

triangulation, *surface-reflection* is pointed out as the initial reflection level for the five teachers pertaining to this study providing a base for the teachers' engagement in this RP research.

Chapter five reports the most salient and useful findings derived from the analysis of the video-recorded classroom observations and post-observation discussions. Dominant practices amongst the participants are put forward such as giving instructions, focusing on advanced students and grouping students, which affected the pace of the classes and brought consequences for the students' participation, engagement in activities and performance. The reasoning behind these practices generally coincided yet at times teachers' reactions and thoughts were constricted to their very personal teaching stances and belief systems. Further, challenges representative of this teaching context are also described. Most issues were context related yet other concerns were outside teachers' practices yet still had an effect on how their teaching unfolded. Nevertheless, once these matters were critically analyzed, teaching awareness was reported, which enabled informed teaching actions to minimize or eradicate poor teaching results and constraints.

Chapter 6 helps to bring closure to the initiated collaborative Reflective Practice process by illustrating the participants' reflexivity in taking part of this investigation. Comprehensive descriptions of the cognitive transformation that participants went through were put forward, where together, teachers challenged fixed paradigms towards teacher development, reflective practice and classroom observations. These narratives illustrate how their initial positions adapted throughout the whole RP process, which enabled reflective action at different levels for them as a result of their increased teaching awareness.

Finally, chapter 7 concludes the whole investigation by summarizing the most salient outcomes resulted from this research and their inferences to current Reflective Practice literature in the field of English Language Teaching development.

1.7 Summary

The main purpose of this chapter was to set the context of this research into exploring language teacher development by engaging in a collaborative reflective practice process. This was achieved by providing background information and presenting the general motivation and significance of the study within the specific research context. The chapter also included the aim and research questions, which underlie and construct the research design. This study identifies that there is a need for reflective practice research with in-service teachers in more collaborative ways within their daily teaching routines, as most of the studies have been undertaken within controlled research settings and with top-bottom positivist views.

The following chapter will focus on relevant teacher development and reflective practice literature. It will try to demonstrate how these two theoretical contexts fit together and relate to the purpose of this study and the data here presented.

Chapter 2: The Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

To accurately interpret the findings of any research project, it is essential to fully understand the disciplinary orientation in which the research takes place. This chapter introduces the notion of **Reflective Practice** (RP) and its immersion in **English Language Teaching** (ELT) impacting for the most part the area of **Teacher Development** (TD). The chapter begins by providing a theoretical account of Teacher Development in ELT and its contribution to the evolution of teachers' knowledge and practice. Next, a historical overview of the Reflective Practice approach is presented describing its process, the attributes and abilities of a teacher who engages in a reflective process — *the reflective practitioner* — as well as the existing types of reflective practice available — *Individual Reflective Practice (IRP)* and *Collaborative Reflective Practice (CRP)* —. Finally, the chapter proceeds advancing selected empirical RP studies that demonstrate how other researchers in ELT have approached the ideas here discussed and how the present research has built on them.

2.2 Teacher Development in Language Teaching

Nowadays there is a longstanding recognition in the field of language education that teachers must continually reshape their knowledge of teaching and learning and that learning to teach is not just something you do while you are enrolled in an official training program or as a brand-new teacher; on the contrary, it is how you could be throughout your entire teaching career (see Bailey, Curtis & Nunan 2001; Borg 2003b; Elias and Merriam 2005; Farrell 2007, 2009; Freeman 2002; Hedgcock 2002; Jonhson 2006; Mann 2005; Richards and Farrell 2005). Accordingly, several processes that incorporate this notion appeared over different periods of time: *teacher training*, *teacher preparation*, *teacher education*, *teacher development*, *professional development*, *continuing professional development* and *staff development*. However, there is a distinction between each term and the

overall results each one enables for the ongoing teacher development process, the following discussion explains such difference.

2.2.1 Towards a definition of Teacher Development

When speaking of teacher development in language teaching it is important to make a distinction between three terms often used interchangeably: *teacher development*, *teacher training* and *professional development*. Where “**Teacher Training** (TT) introduces instructional knowledge, methodological choices available and familiarizes trainees with a range of terms and concepts that are the common currency for language teachers” (Mann, 2005, p.104). These training specificities are more often than not a distinguishable part of formal education courses conducted by a trainer and presented to the teachers as is the case of the majority of the formative processes English language teachers have been exposed to in Mexico, the country where this research was carried out. With regards to **Professional Development**, the difference is not that marked in literature yet at an institutional level it is more common to find *Continuing Professional Development* (CPD). CPD is career oriented and found to be instrumental, serving more the institutions’ needs and purposes than those of the teachers and is usually undertaken in three main levels: self-development, management perspective (the institution) and the professional body perspective (IATEFL, AAL, TESOL, MEXTESOL — Mexico’s context —). Whereas ongoing **Teacher Development** (TD) is seen as an inherent personal, conscious, ethical and moral commitment as opposed to a simple technical responsibility (Mann 2005). Teachers’ context based awareness, personal values, beliefs and teaching knowledge are seen related to the actions carried out in their practice such as choosing the most suitable techniques or strategies for a particular individual or class in a particular place (Johnson 2003 and Mann 2005).

In other words, professional development and teacher training “are seen as outside top-down phenomenon as opposed to the inside bottom-up view of **teacher development**” (Bowen, 2004, p.1). Hence, TD was the notion adopted for this

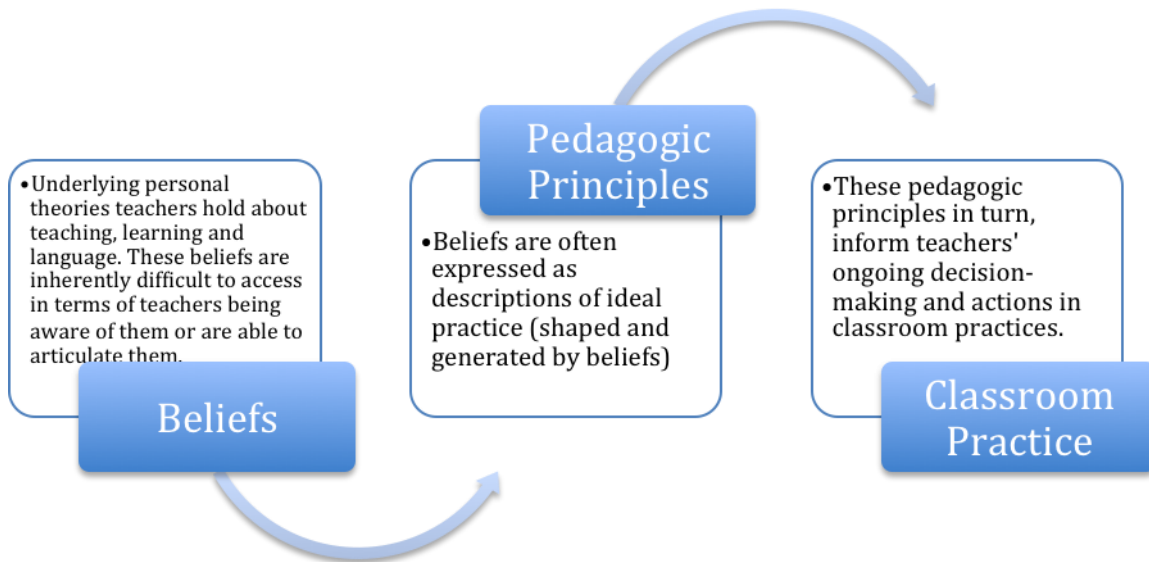
study as teacher's past teaching experience, their educational contexts, teacher's belief system and previous knowledge play an important role on the decisions and actions carried out in their practice. Yet this last term, **knowledge**, is an essential component of the development process, as teachers' reasoning for carrying out their practice in certain ways is a first step into any reflective practice commitment therefore I will now proceed to discuss it more in-depth.

2.2.2 The nature of Knowledge in the Teacher Development process

For many years, the traditional view of teacher knowledge that dominated educational research was based on the assumption that "expertise in teaching was characterized as systematic, codifiable, observable, teaching behaviors that integrated subject matter knowledge with classroom knowledge with the final outcome being student learning" (Berliner, 1987, p.6). Nevertheless, researchers in the field began opposing this paradigm with publications such as Walberg's 1977 article: 'Decision and perception: New constructs for research on teaching effects', where ideas such as 'teachers' mental lives' were advanced. In his article, Walberg explains how language teachers' decision-making and **perceptions/ beliefs** of teaching and learning are critical parts of teacher thinking and teachers' mental lives' as they shape what they consider effective for their practice also known as **teaching stances**.

In this study, a **teaching stance** is understood to be "an overall attitude towards understanding classroom life. It is a prevalent pattern that characterizes a teacher's continuing responsiveness to the particular circumstances of his or her teaching" (Copeland et al. 1993). This notion is of keen importance for this research as teachers' stances inform teaching practices and — as explained in section 1.5, p.16 — were the base for initiating this study and gain insight into participants' versions of reality in this educational context. As a complement of this teacher stance definition, the term **belief** was also adopted (see figure 1) where **beliefs**, **pedagogic principles** and **classroom practice** are distinguished as follows:

Figure 1 The three-stage belief model (Breen et al. 2001)



During that period of time and regardless of how strong the prior assumption was, other researchers contributed to Walberg's premise and continued defining teacher knowledge. For instance, Lortie in 1975 coined the term ***apprenticeship of observation***, which suggested that much of what teachers knew about teaching came from their real-life experiences inside and outside the classroom. He argued that many beliefs teachers held about teaching originated from experiences as students, from other personal experiences such as family traditions and values, social encounters, community participation, popular culture, teacher preparation, observing teachers, professional development, and scholarly literature. Freeman in 1992 used the apprenticeship of observation for a longitudinal study and reported that teachers recalled on their own language learning experiences and concluded: "the memories of instruction gained through their apprenticeship of observation functioned as the facto guides for teachers as they approach what they do in the classroom" (p. 3). Nevertheless, Lortie also stated that this type of teacher knowledge was "intuitive and imitative rather than explicit and analytic" (1975, p. 62) where "teachers' personal history and experience influenced their perceptions

of classrooms in a way that made it difficult to see alternatives” (Feiman-Nemser and Buchman, 1987, p.63), acknowledging the downside of the apprenticeship of observation. Even more, teachers’ “urge to change and the pull to do what is familiar created a central tension in teachers’ thinking about their practice” (Freeman, 1992, p.4), tension that language teachers still struggle with. Quoting from the pilot study conclusions (see section 1.3.2, p.7), Lortie’s point can be clearly illustrated when Mila states: “*What if I don’t change it? — referring to her practice — It doesn’t affect me that much*”, showing awareness over her practice yet without feeling the necessity to look into it.

As a positive conclusion of the apprenticeship of observation Freeman and Richards point out that “by becoming aware of our beliefs with regard to those teachers we have witnessed, we can begin to develop teaching philosophies based on choice and realize that we do have choice over our actions and beliefs” (1996, p.16). Yet, and in accordance with Johnson (1999), Bowen (2004), Mann (2005) and Richards & Farrell (2005), it is my understanding that if teachers are not presented with the appropriate opportunities to critically rationalize, discuss and uncover their teaching stances and practices; they may fail to acknowledge other versions of reality within their same professional community and the many teaching choices available to them. As a consequence, teachers might remain in a teaching comfort zone repeating only what is familiar to them regardless of the overall teaching and learning outcomes — as Mila’s example illustrates — or as I said before, the many other teaching alternatives available.

I do not intend to suggest that teachers are irrational or lack common sense; there is extensive research as to how teachers reflect on a regular basis. Yet there is a distinction between **reflection** and **critical reflection** as I explained earlier. Hence, if teachers are provided with opportunities to critically think about their practice and move away from routine thinking, teaching awareness can be fostered and set off

actions in favor of teachers' practices, student learning and ongoing teacher development which is one of the underlying assumptions of this study.

Most recently and still considering the old teacher knowledge paradigm, it was stated "teachers' knowledge is first developed through teacher education programs and then in their careers through reflective practice" (Tedick, 2005, p.85). However, and speaking from my own personal experience as a teacher, a trainer and a researcher in ELT, I believe that **teacher knowledge** is not in any simple way transferred from educators and trainers to teachers, on the contrary it is constructed through engagement with experience, reflection and collaboration (Richards 1998). Teacher knowledge is not static; it evolves and transforms jumping from one teacher type of knowledge to another allowing teachers to acquire a vast amount of different knowledge types. I find the need to now present different classifications of teacher knowledge in order to understand what is embedded in teachers' practice and teaching decisions. The following are some of the first definitions put forward:

- **Teacher Knowledge:** is internal to the teacher, recognizing teachers' prior personal experiences, personal values, personal beliefs and individual purposes as being related to and informing their professional knowledge (Elbaz 1983; Connelly & Clandinin 1992). It is socially constructed.
- **Experiential Knowledge:** is the accumulation of our real-life experiences which shape who we are and how we perceive and respond to the world around us; basically, one's personal history and experiences that model the educational thinking of teachers' (Feiman–Nemser & Buchmann 1987).
- **Personal Practical Knowledge:** refers to teachers experience in a way that allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons, it is in the teachers' past, future, plan and actions of their teacher practice (Connelly and Clandinin 1992)

- **Professional Knowledge:** refers to subject matter knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and knowledge of context. These areas of teachers' professional knowledge are considered to have a direct impact on how teachers represent their matter content –in other words, what and how they teach (Shulman 1992).

As time went by more researchers contributed to explaining and defining the different types of knowledge fixed in teacher knowledge taking as a base these first definitions. Mann (2005) for instance, distinguishes between *knowledge organized into topics*, *individual knowledge* and *situated knowledge developing over time*. Where **knowledge organized into topics** is typically instructional methodological teaching content delivered in teacher education programs. Whereas **individual knowledge** acknowledges that a person's teaching knowledge is the contribution of many types of knowledge such as *received knowledge*, *personal knowledge*, *experiential knowledge* and *local knowledge*. Where *received knowledge* is the base for teachers going from syntax, second language acquisition, to pedagogic components to knowledge about the language, which then leads to an ongoing engagement between received knowledge and *experiential knowledge* where new understandings emerge from *experience* — the process of reshaping existing knowledge, beliefs and practices —. This process takes place in the cognitive space between *external knowledge* (received and declarative), the *teaching context* (local and situated) and the individual (personal, practical and usable knowledge) where knowledge is constantly changing over time through the process of teaching and reacting to local influences, also known as **situated knowledge developing over time**.

However, and as clear as Mann's teacher knowledge explanation may be, it lacks a main component, which is of interest to this study: **critical reflection**. I consider that gaining teaching experience does not equal an automatic critical rationalization of teachers' actions especially under teaching constraints and daily routines which as stated by the pilot study participants, the participants from this study (see

Chapter 4) and former trainees, more often than not do not leave space for such type of reflections. Even more and regardless of the different set of investigations into how teachers develop and build knowledge bases, I strongly agree with the notion that teacher knowledge as well as teacher development come from the inside-out (Bowen 2004), therefore the need to include reflective practice as part of teacher knowledge. This allows for an uncovering of different sets of beliefs and stances regarding favorable teaching practices and teaching focuses as well as different times and levels of development within a same professional community. As Johnson states, “differences in teachers’ apprenticeship of observation, educational experiences, and teaching and learning experiences will formulate the foundation for each individual’s teacher knowledge and reasoning” (1999, p.130).

Therefore this thesis takes on the scheme of teacher knowledge put forward by Richards and Farrell (2005), who frame the development process of teacher knowledge in terms of four conceptualizations: ***skill learning*** (lesson planning, classroom management, evaluation, and so forth), ***cognitive process*** (teacher background, experiences, beliefs and assumptions), ***personal construction*** (reorganization and reconstruction of knowledge through new experiences) and ***reflective practice*** (critical examination of own teaching experiences). This last process –*reflective practice*– leading to possible improvement and further development in areas individually perceived by the teachers which as stated before may not necessarily coincide with the development areas or needs of other teachers within their professional communities.

2.3A historical account of the Reflective Practice approach in Education

The terms ***Critical Reflection*** and ***Reflective Practice*** are not by any means new to the field of education, these concepts have been around for centuries yet their interest arose due to other trends in the field, the most important ones being ***Constructivism*** (Dewey 1933, 1998; Piaget 1972; Bruner 1990) and ***Social Cultural Theory*** (Vygotsky 1934, 1986). Therefore, and having situated my research in the educational area and being these last two theories a base for the

development of RP, a brief background discussion of Constructivism and Social Cultural Theory will now follow.

2.3.1 Constructivism

According to the philosophical and scientific position of the constructivist theorists, learners construct knowledge through actively engaging and interacting with content and the world. Knowledge is by no means acquired through instruction but constructed through personal experiences and the continuous testing of hypothesis, encouraging thoughtful reflection of events, being **reflection** the central factor in the teaching and learning process. One of its most underlying assumptions is that each person has a different interpretation of the world and hence a different knowledge construction process, based on past experiences as well as cultural and personal factors. In general, learning is described as the process by which new ideas and experiences are matched against existing knowledge, and how the learner adapts or constructs new knowledge to make sense of the world. According to this view, there were specific contributions made to the field of education by the main Constructivism theorists.

Dewey (1933, 1998) often referred to as the founding philosopher of the Constructivist theory, rejected the notion of rote memorization and content repetitiveness as a main learning focus or outcome in schools. Opposite to this view, he proposed that education be grounded on real life experiences and put forward the *Directed Living Method* where students would engage in real-world, practical workshops in which they would demonstrate their knowledge through creativity and collaboration.

In line with Dewey, Piaget (1970, 1985) too rejected the assumption that learning was the passive assimilation of given knowledge. He therefore developed the *Cognitive Development Theory*, which stated that learning was a dynamic process that involved successive phases of adaptation to reality where learners actively constructed knowledge by creating and testing their own hypothesis of the world.

The major concepts in this cognitive process were the following:

- **Assimilation:** when a learner perceives new objects or events in terms of existing schemes or operations, in other words the new information is compared with existing cognitive structures.
- **Accommodation:** when existing schemes or operations must be modified to account for a new experience.
- **Equilibration:** it is the master developmental process, encompassing both assimilation and accommodation. Anomalies of experience create a state of disequilibrium which can be only resolved when a more adaptive, more sophisticated mode of thought is adopted.

Finally, the last main contribution to the Constructivist theory was that of Bruner (1990) yet he emphasized more on the role of the teacher, the language and the form of instruction. For Bruner, social interaction was the base for good learning. He viewed learning as a discovery process where learners constructed their own knowledge by means of active dialogue with teachers building on their existing knowledge also known as the *Discovery Learning Model*. As part of the discovery-learning model, Bruner provided the following principles for constructivist learning and curriculum change:

- Instruction must be concerned with the experiences and contexts that make the student willing and able to learn (readiness).
- Instruction must be structured so that it can be easily grasped by the student (spiral organization).
- Instruction should be designed to facilitate extrapolation and or fill in the gaps (going beyond the information given).

Some examples of the discovery learning system are: guided discovery, problem-based learning, simulation-based learning, case-based learning, and incidental learning.

2.3.2 Social Cultural Theory

Russian psychologist L.S. Vygotsky put forward the social Cultural Theory (SCT) in 1934. SCT argues that human mental functioning is essentially a mediated process that is organized by language and cultural artifacts, activities and concepts, which provide frameworks through which people experience, communicate and understand reality and therefore are the base for cognitive development. According to Vygotsky, the primary means of **mediation** -whereby “an individuals’ understanding is refracted through the experience of others” (Chesnokova, 2004) is language. He proved the importance of language in the learning process by demonstrating that in children, communication is a pre-requisite to the child’s acquisition of concepts and language but he also suggested that we learn with meaning and personal significance in mind not just through attention to the facts. In other words, that language and the conceptual schemes that are transmitted by means of language are essentially social phenomena **co-constructed** with aid and collaboration with others hence knowledge is not simply created in isolation.

Aside from language, he presented other mediating tools in aiding child and adult cognitive development: *regulation, mediation by symbolic artifacts, mediation through a second language and imitation*. According to Vygotsky at an early stage, children’s actions, thinking and utterances are subordinate to the language constructions and behaviors of adults and older children within their social communities. By participating in these communities, children develop the capacity to **regulate** their own activity and replicate language and behavior in similar settings in which their activity was initially subordinated/ regulated by others; reshaping an initial biological perception to a culturally based one. Now, when mediation is carried out with the use of **symbolic artifacts**, it is a means to intentionally “control and reorganize our biologically endowed psychological processes” (Lantolf and Thorne, 2007, p. 201). Mediating through symbolic artifacts is done with the purpose of moving away from automatic biological responses and consider alternative more beneficial actions. In order to do this, people recall on previous situations and the actions carried out then, paying

attention to relevant aspects of the situations and the overall outcomes. After having rationalized the situation, new actions are thought of along with new projected outcomes. These actions are then carried out when similar circumstances present, allowing people to gain consciousness over their actions and avoid impulsive responses to external stimuli.

Mediating through a second language is similar to the private speech that occurs when a person is trying to regulate or mediate her mental functioning. “Such utterances serve to focus the speaker’s attention on what needs to be accomplished, how to accomplish it, and evaluate when something has been accomplished” (Lantolf and Thorne, 2007, p.203). A second language offers its speakers a different linguistic option for conducting such mental activities as they have been learned and put to use in similar social interactions. People who have acquired a second or third language have the advantage of choosing the language that eases mental mediation.

Finally, before discussing ***imitation***, the term ***internalization*** must be considered, as imitation is another form of internalization. Internalization is a view of social understanding “as involving the gradual and progressive internalization of interpersonal exchanges that can help us make sense of peoples’ understanding of others” (Fernyhough, 2008, p.229). It is rooted by social interaction experiences and allows humans to have control over mental activity and how language is articulated in a social community. “Vygotsky proposed that the key to internalization resides in the uniquely human capacity to imitate the intentional activity of other humans” (Lantolf and Thorne, 2007, p.203). Nonetheless, imitation is not thoughtless; it is voluntary, intentional and carefully selected according to the social situations and does not necessarily occur immediately after a behavioral display has been observed. A person first internalizes the pattern and chooses a suitable setting to replicate the behavior and learns of its effectiveness or not according to the social circumstance and outcomes.

As can be observed, language and mediation tools are central components of SCT hence were developed in Vygotsky's educational model, the *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD), which is his last main contribution to the field. In the ZPD learners with aid from others — learners, teachers, the context, society — can master concepts and ideas that they would not be able to understand on their own. The ZPD comprises cognitive structures that are still in the process of maturing, but which can only mature under the guidance of or in collaboration with others. This model has two developmental levels:

- *The level of actual development:* point the learner has already reached & can problem-solve independently.
- *The level of potential development (ZPD):* point the learner is capable of reaching under the guidance of teachers or in collaboration with peers.

Nevertheless, to ensure development in the ZPD, the assistance/guidance received must have certain features:

- ***Intersubjectivity:*** the process whereby two participants who begin a task with different understandings arrive at a shared understanding, where each partner adjusts to the perspective of the other.
- ***Scaffolding:*** has to do with the form of teaching interaction that is adjusted during a teaching session to fit the learner's current level of performance.
- ***Guided participation:*** the shared activities between expert and less expert participants.

Overall, in both Constructivism and Social Constructivism theory the principal statement is that learning takes place by doing. Learners bring their prior knowledge and experiences into the new learning situation in which they must re-evaluate their understanding of it. However, it is Social Cultural Theory that adds a collective dimension to learning that the Constructivist theorists like Piaget fail to recognize, where collaboration is imperative as learners become part of a

knowledge community. Most importantly both of these theories acknowledge that each person has a different interpretation of the world based on past experiences as well as cultural and personal factors and consequently will carry out a different knowledge construction process. This is a key premise for this study and is further developed in the Reflective Practice approach as follows.

2.3.3 Dewey's Reflective Practice Approach

As with Constructivism, Dewey (1933) too is known to be one of the founding philosophers of the **Reflective Practice** approach in education and was particularly concerned about routine thinking on behalf of teachers. He noted that teachers who did not bother to think 'intelligently' about their work engaged in tedious teaching routines where actions were guided by impulse, tradition, or authority and where learning outcomes were the memorization of mass content that had no further application in students' academic or real life. Dewey states, "while we cannot learn or be taught to think, we do have to learn how to think well, especially how to acquire the general habits of reflecting" (p.35). Thinking 'intelligently' or thinking 'well' was defined as **reflective inquiry**, an "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (p.16). In other words, teachers were encouraged to think carefully about what they do in class and the reasoning behind it to enable better future actions for their practice, what he called **reflective action**.

Hand in hand with his definition, Dewey (1933) developed first two and then five main phases embedded in reflective thought — reflective inquiry — and how it should systematically be carried out in order to facilitate reflective action:

- **Suggestion:** A doubtful situation is understood to be problematic, and some vague suggestions are considered as possible solutions.
- **Intellectualization:** The difficulty of the problem that has been directly experienced is intellectualized into a problem to be solved.

- **Guiding Idea:** One suggestion after another is used as a leading idea, or hypothesis; the initial suggestion can be used as a working hypothesis to initiate and guide observation and other actions.
- **Reasoning:** Reasoning links between present and past ideas that help elaborate suppositions reached through reflective inquiry.
- **Hypothesis Testing:** The refined idea is reached, and the testing of this refined hypothesis takes place; the testing can be by overt action or in thought (imaginative action).

(p.10-16)

Overall the purpose of his proposal of reflective inquiry was to find solutions to practical teaching problems by encouraging teachers to “make informed decisions about their teaching, and that these decisions be based on **systematic** and conscious reflections rather than fleeting thoughts about teaching” (1933, p.12) or impulsive decisions. Nevertheless, he also suggested that teachers needed to possess certain personal qualities in order to make informed decisions without which reflective inquiry or reflective action could not be possible. He considered the following attributes to be part of a **reflective individual**:

- **Open-mindedness:** a desire to listen to more than one side of the issue and to give attention to alternative views.
- **Responsibility:** careful consideration of the consequences to which an action leads, what the impact of reflection has on the learners?
- **Wholeheartedness:** teachers can overcome fears and uncertainties to critically...
- **Evaluate their practice:** directness (something that is worth doing), which is the overall goal of engaging in reflective practice.

It is relevant to highlight that these specific features of a reflective practitioner just like the development of teachers' knowledge come from the inside-out and cannot be forced, yet they are key to this study due to the fact that teachers participating in

this research project must have developed these qualities along their practice. As research supports (Clegg et al 2002; Hobbs 2007), it is not feasible to force anybody to reflect when their personal and professional conditions do not allow them to do so — when they are not ready —.

Researchers who agreed with Dewey's view of teaching as a process and not a product built on his work as was the case of Zeichner and Liston who stated that reflective teachers are those who "assess the origins, purposes and consequences of their practice at all levels allowing them to have control over the content and processes of their own work" (1985, p.26); giving teachers a sense of agency and responsibility over their teaching regardless of external factors such as the institution, the curriculum or the students. In their later efforts, they simplified Dewey's reflective inquiry theory by distinguishing between ***routine action*** and ***reflective action*** and suggested that, for teachers, "*routine action* was guided primarily by tradition, external authority and circumstance" (p.24) whereas *reflective action* "entailed the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge" (p.9). Basically, the same concepts presented by Dewey yet in a simpler manner, however an interesting contribution of theirs was their own ***reflective teacher features***:

- Examine, frame and attempt to solve the dilemmas of classroom practice;
- Are aware of and question the assumptions and values they bring to teaching;
- Are attentive to the institutional and cultural contexts in which they teach;
- Take part in curriculum development and school change efforts; and
- Take responsibility for their own professional development.

(p. 6)

My study adheres to the notion that teachers should possess these reflective practitioner features — both Dewey's & Zeichner and Liston's — when engaging in any type of reflective inquiry process. Having previously acquired these features is the same as being prepared or ready to partake in RP, enabling and easing critical thought, which would result difficult if teachers lacked these characteristics.

Nonetheless I do not coincide with the idea of standardizing reflection as Dewey's five-phase reflective inquiry model suggests which is the main criticism to his theory (Hatton and Smith 1995; Ixer 1999). Conversely, this research proposes that teachers according to their own personal teaching backgrounds, stances, beliefs, experiences and personal development needs, will engage in a reflective process at their own pace combining or skipping some of the phases along the way. If teachers are ready — are reflective practitioners — they will find the most suitable and favorable way of carrying out RP provided the appropriate circumstances.

A second criticism to his work as in his Constructivist theory is that Dewey fails to consider 'collaboration' as a part of reflective inquiry. His work is grounded on the premise that any given teacher learns to reflect on a particular experience individually; suggesting that critical reflection is linear or automatic and individuals can come to terms with their actions on their own, which recent research in the field has proven difficult to happen (see section 2.5 of this chapter). This thesis however, is based on the idea that collaboration in RP enables better understanding of teachers' practices than if carried out in isolation. This view will be further discussed in 2.3.5.

Regardless, Dewey's initial position paved the way for other theorists to make further developments on RP theory, one of them being Donald Schön.

2.3.4 Schön's Reflection on, in and for action

A second great thinker in RP who developed on Dewey's work was Donald Schön (1983); he focused on Dewey's theory of reflective inquiry centering his work on the pragmatic notion of 'practitioner-generated intuitive practice'. At that time, he noticed that teachers were used to following and applying different theories to their teaching without reflecting on them or the outcomes in their classes conforming a gap between theory and practice. Hence, he strongly believed that there was a need of inquiry into the epistemology of practice: "What is the kind of knowing in which competent practitioners engage? How is professional knowing like and unlike **technical rationality** — the kind of knowing in academic textbooks, scientific papers and journals — (p.vii)". Therefore, he suggested that teachers needed to become aware of their teaching through critical reflection which would enable them to theorize their actions, what he identified as **knowing in action**: to know what drives your teaching. This was his founding philosophy and main contribution to RP: the link between theory and practice.

Accordingly, he defined **reflective practice** as a continuous process of thinking and doing with the ultimate goal being ongoing teacher development and hence **reflective practitioners** as "those who continually develop their professional expertise by interacting with situations of practice to try to solve problems, thereby gaining an increasingly deep understanding of their subject matter, of themselves as teachers, and of the nature of teaching" (p.vii). In line with his positioning in the field, Schön developed three different types of reflection: *on*, *in* and *for action*; where **Reflection-on-action** "requires practitioners to take the time to explore why actions and events took place in certain ways in their classrooms and in doing so, develop a repertoire of images, ideas, examples and actions that can be drawn upon and come into play when beginning to build new theories and responses that fit new situations" (Schön, 1983, p.138). This type of reflection is proposed to be carried out after a class has been taught, on the teachers' own time. It is a class recapitulation and requires looking back on teacher's own practice to what one has accomplished by reviewing the actions, thoughts and reasons for doing things and

the overall results those actions generated. If outcomes are positive then those teaching actions become part of a repertoire yet if they are negative, they are disregarded.

This first reflection paves the way for **Reflection-in-action** which is when a practitioner is able to reflect on his or her intuitive knowledge while engaged in the action of teaching. In other words, it is how teachers think on their feet and make use of the repertoire of images, ideas and examples gained from reflection-on-action by examining their beliefs and experiences and how they connect to their theories-in-use. Practitioners engage in a process of problem solving by confronting a situation and making use of their teaching repertoire to solve it. This is what Schön called a **framing and reframing of teaching problems**, where there is (1) appreciation; the teacher problematizes a situation in class, (2) there is action; she makes use of her intuitive teaching knowledge previously informed by engaging in reflection-on-action and (3) re-appreciates the situation by observing the overall result these actions generated.

According to Schön, once the practitioner has had experience with reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action, these experiences provide the data, which may then lead to new understandings and plans for further action, **reflection for action**. In Schön's words, reflection for action expects the practitioner to identify what has been accomplished and then create constructive guidelines to follow to be able to succeed in the given task in the future. Inevitably, teachers cannot question every step of the class but do recognize certain situations or actions that do not work and that is where the cyclical reflection **on, in** and **for** action comes into play which in Schön's view is crucial for the ongoing teacher development process (see figure 2, adapted from Schön 1983).

Figure 2 The Reflection cycle



Overall Schön's main contribution was to link theory to practice and just like Dewey by problematizing teacher's teaching hence making the purpose of RP to solve educational problems. Additionally, by putting forward his reflection cycle — reflection on, in and for action —, he describes important moments in teachers' practices that can lead to ongoing development and confront routine thinking and teaching. However, a shortcoming in Schön's proposal is that he takes for granted that teachers will mechanically engage in his reflective cycle without considering chief factors or constraints such as teachers' lack of time, excessive workload or a lack of readiness — teachers missing the qualities of a reflective practitioner —. Therefore, if teachers do not partake in reflection-on-action due to these existing factors, it cannot be guaranteed that either reflection-in-action or reflection for action will even take place.

In order to confront the observed weakness in Schön's proposal, I believe that RP as an ongoing teacher development process can be enhanced if carried out collaboratively. Not everyone has the time or will to critically rationalize teaching issues on their own, especially when teachers have fixed teaching routines that — in their eyes — will seem appropriate. Therefore, I draw on Vygotsky's social cultural theory, where the base for cognitive development is the participation of humans in communities where knowledge is socially constructed with others. Thus,

it is important to now make a distinction between individual reflective practice and collaborative reflective practice and why this thesis relies on the latter.

2.3.5 Two views of Reflective Practice: Individual and Collaborative

As mentioned previously in this chapter, *reflective inquiry* or *critical thinking* can help teachers move from a level where they may be guided largely by impulse, intuition, or routine to a level where their actions are guided by critical thoughts (Dewey 1933, 1934 and Schön 1983). Nevertheless, reflective practice in itself has not always enabled development. This widely relies on whether a teacher engages on a weak form or a strong form of RP and in my view, whether a teacher chooses to engage in it individually or with assistance.

According to Farrell “a ***weak form of reflective practice*** is no more than a thoughtful event where teachers informally evaluate various aspects of their professional expertise” (2008, p.2) without further implications to their teaching and afterwards simply move on to the following teaching event. This weak form of reflection does not necessarily lead to the development of teaching practices, on the contrary it can lead to “unpleasant emotions without suggesting any way forward” (Wallace, 1998, p.292) if teachers do not know how to manage any noted inconsistencies in their teaching as a result of their reflections — if indeed they are noted —. Thus, it is likely that in this weak form of RP teachers will not consider it as a serious development process. By contrast, the ***strong form of reflective practice*** views teachers “systematically reflecting on their own teaching and taking responsibility for their actions in the classroom” (Farrell, 2008, p.1). In this stronger version, “teachers collect data about their teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching” (Richards and Lockhart, 1994, p.1).

According to the stronger form, a reflective practitioner should “look back on events, make judgments about them and alter their teaching behaviors in light of craft, research and ethical knowledge” (Valli, 1997, p.70); in other words, engage in

a form of evidence based reflective teaching. Such evidence based reflections can be done through multiple structured reflective instruments such as journals (Bailey 1990; Brock, Yu and Wong 1991; Kral1994; Templer 2004; Miller 2004b), class video recordings (Good and Brophy 1973; Pak 1985), professional literature, self-observation, self-evaluation (Luft 1969), written or oral personal reflections (Ashton-Warner's; Bailey 1983,1990), self-reporting (Good and Brophy 1973; Koziol and Burns 1985) and so on. Yet, in the choice of the approach is where researchers draw a line between **individual** or **collaborative** reflective practice. Here the term **collaboration** is taken as "the process of shared creation' wherein two or more individuals with complementary skills interact to create a shared understanding that none had previously possessed or could have come to on their own" (Schrage, 1990, p.40).

However, it is imperative to point out that reflective practice is not generally associated with teachers' daily routines (Johnson 2006), therefore, it is often challenging to sustain within teachers' professional lives. "Fostering reflection requires ample time and supported opportunities, and it may be best carried out collaboratively where pairs or groups of colleagues can examine their knowledge and beliefs, explore alternative views and approaches to classroom practice, and construct and reconstruct their understanding of and explanations for their own classroom practices over time" (Johnson, 1999, p.22). I support this view as I strongly believe that when guided by routine and known practices, it may be challenging for individual teachers to notice any inconsistencies in their teaching and if indeed noticed, to go beyond a weak form of RP as the pilot study conclusions presented in Chapter 1 revealed.

Nevertheless, there is skepticism towards collaboration, as researchers state, "educators are particularly susceptible to group-think and collaboration" (Fullan, 1993, p.82) which may be true especially in countries such as Mexico where researchers might have to work around this prevailing cultural stance of teachers not being used to sharing or discussing teaching matters openly with their

colleagues (Shacklock and Smyth 1998). Nevertheless, I believe that if participant teachers find themselves as being part of a reflective practice community, where sustained collaboration and aid from others are part of their daily teaching routines, reflective inquiry can be accomplished regardless of cultural, external or institutional contextual factors.

Further, more and more academics in the field are leaning towards the cooperative/ collaborative reflective paradigm and support the idea that increased teaching awareness is often made possible through collaboration (Beaumont & O'Brien's 2000; Edge 2003; Burns 2005; Farrell 2001, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2013; Gün 2011; Yürekli 2013; Brandt 2008; Larrive 2008; Ho 2013; Eröz-Tuga 2013; Stillwell 2009; Copland, Ma and Mann 2009; Vo and Nguyen 2010; McCabe, Walsh, Wideman and Winter 2009; Bibilia 2011; Low, Watson, Jimarkon 2014; Murphey, Farrell and Inada 2010; Hobbs 2007). I too agree a teacher's sense of plausibility is developed through ongoing engagement with the experience of teaching but also through interaction with other teachers' versions of plausibility (Roberts 1998).

2.4 Reflective Practice in English Language Teaching

Up until now it has been considered that John Dewey's work on Reflective Practice, which was later developed by Donald Schön has been the ground base for RP's existence in the educational field. Yet, it was Michael Wallace (1991) who first introduced the Reflective Practice approach to English Language Teacher Education, the academic context of this study.

Michael Wallace proposed a two-phase model that in his view leads to professional competence in English language teaching beginning in a ***pre-training*** phase that later leads to ***professional education (development)***. The ***pre-training*** stage acknowledges that teachers do not 'come clean' to formal instruction; their preconceived knowledge is driven by prior personal and academic experiences, personal beliefs and cultural backgrounds that frame how they perceive the new

formative experiences and are therefore encouraged to reflect and build upon them. Whereas the **professional education (development)** phase requires a combination of received and experiential knowledge to take place. As explained earlier, **received knowledge** is the base for teachers going from syntax, second language acquisition, to pedagogic components, to knowledge about the language and **experiential knowledge**, is where new understandings emerge from *experience* — the process of reshaping existing knowledge, beliefs and practices —.

From his proposal, it is evident that Wallace marks **input** as a fundamental part of the reflective process; it is this input which language teachers will reflect and build upon to gain experiential knowledge and therefore develop. Also, and different from his precursors, he values and promotes **collaboration** in RP advising teachers to draw on their own knowledge and individual experiences as well as those experiences of and with others to gain experiential knowledge. Further, Wallace expands the conception and purpose of reflective practice by stating that RP is not only problem-based, that it should be carried out when teaching is successful as well. Teachers are therefore encouraged to critically reflect at all times, either to find a solution to a problem or to figure out how to extrapolate positive teaching practices to future classes and enable positive outcomes once more.

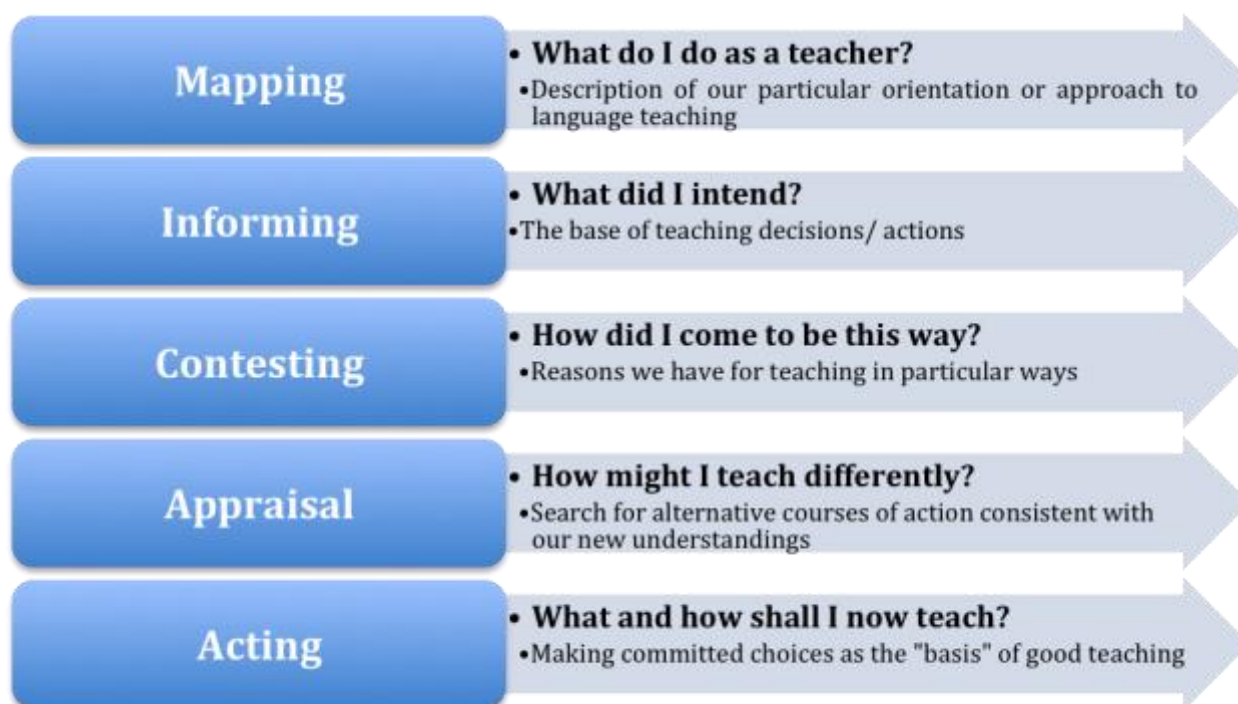
Wallace's contributions also attracted other RP theorists in ELT who both agreed and disagreed with his argument. For instance, in 1992 and regardless of all of the previous research in the field, Sparks-Langer suggested that there did not appear to be a single accurate definition or study on reflective practice that suited or aided teacher development or that described how it could be best carried out. Position that I agree with to a certain extent as up until then it had been largely suggested that the majority of language teachers, if not all, "looked back" on their teaching and from their reflections made changes or drew implications for their classes (Gün 2011; Tomlinson 1999a, b). This prevailing idea suggested a natural/ linear teacher

engagement in reflection-on and in-action unavoidably leading to improvement and change — reflection for action — (Schön 1983). However, this assumption lacked empirical research support, which was the main reason why other researchers in the field continued building on RP theory trying to narrow the gap that Sparks-Langer singled out (Barlett 1990; Richards 1990; Hatton and Smith 1995; Loughran 1996; Moon 1999; Johnson 1999; Murphy 2001; Alger 2006 Hussein 2007; Hannay, Wideman and Seller 2007). Nonetheless, these authors presented overly explained definitions of reflective practice expanding or summarizing previous notions, which resulted too complicated for everyday language teachers to understand and therefore consider; what is more, they did not suggest any further developments.

This thesis however takes on the view of RP put forward by Wallace (1991) and Richards & Lockhart (1994). Where input and collaboration are fundamental components of RP encouraging teachers to rely on previous knowledge, experiences, beliefs and personal backgrounds to build on and co-construct new understandings favoring collaborative over individual reflective practice (Wallace 1991). What interests this research from Richards and Lockhart's contribution is that RP is evidence based and does not merely rely on thought; “a **Reflective approach to language teaching** is therefore one in which teachers collect data about their teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about their teaching” (Richards and Lockhart, 1994, p.1). Where RP encompasses **critical reflection** on teachers' behalf, focusing on what they do in class and the reasons for this as opposed to how to change what is “wrong” which is for the most part only related to methodological teaching issues; thus, enabling a deeper understanding of teachers' own practice.

Richards and Lockhart's reflective process comprises 5 main phases as the following figure shows:

Figure 3 The Reflective process



Where mapping involves the observation and collection of evidence about teacher's own teaching regarding a specific problem in their contexts. After, a specific issue is narrowed then they analyze it asking themselves what was the intention of approaching this specific issue in that way, in other words, what was the base of their decision? In the following stage, teachers confront and dislodge the many and complex reasons for their teaching actions where teachers may discover inconsistencies with what they think they do and what actually takes place. In the appraisal phase, the actual thinking process leads teachers to search for new ways of teaching consistent with their new understandings, which then lead to new teaching actions, where teachers rearrange their teaching and try out the new ways they developed in the previous phase.

Regardless of the fact that in my point of view strict systematization of RP reduces teachers own critical thought, the questions that Richards and Lockhart's reflective process propose serve as a guide to aid teachers and researchers in engaging in their own reflection processes. These questions are rarely considered by practitioners in their everyday teaching routines and if properly adapted to research contexts, they may shed light into how and why teachers conduct their practice the way they do.

All in all, and as observed in almost every proposal of RP here presented, an integral part of reflective teaching is to learn to take action, otherwise, “reflection without action is verbalism and action without reflection is activism- doing things for their own sake-” (Richards and Nunan, 1990, p.212). Therefore, teachers should take action “when possible, on whatever they might be learning or becoming aware of about themselves as teachers, about others and about students’ responses to their practice, for the purpose of enhancing the quality of learning opportunities they are able to provide in their classrooms” (Murphy 2001, p.500). In other words, language teachers who become aware of their teaching practice and what is more, decide to take action by exploring instructional innovations, trying out alternatives, sharing experiences with others and modifying — or even breaking — routines based upon what they have become aware of and learned through reflection — individual or collaborative —, have a high possibility of achieving continuous teacher development (Cinnamond and Zimpher 1990; Dewey 1933; Richards and Lockhart 1994; Schön 1983; Wallace 1998; Zeichner and Liston 1985).

The chapter proceeds by presenting collaborative RP empirical studies that expose how other scholars have approached the ideas discussed thus far and how the present study has built on them. Five main research approaches were chosen according to my research interests: *Teacher Development groups*, *COs*, *Collaborative Action Research*, *Focus Group interviews* and *Critical Friendships*.

2.5 Empirical Reflective Practice Research in ELT

Among various scholars' research on English language Teacher Development through Reflective Practice, the following empirical studies were selected for three main reasons. Firstly, they were within a teacher ***collaborative paradigm***, which as reported by all of them, facilitated teacher critical reflection and their overall engagement in the RP processes. Secondly, the authors provided evidence to support that ***teacher readiness*** was a fundamental aspect when engaging in RP research, which resulted in better outcomes for the research itself but most importantly for the development of the teachers and their practices. And thirdly, their proposed ***methodology was clear and suitable for collecting and analyzing RP data***, which served as framework for this PhD research.

2.5.1 Empirical Research on Teacher Development Groups

Teachers come together in teacher development groups to reflect so that they can complement each other's strengths and compensate for each other's limitations and therefore, achieve outcomes that might not be possible for an individual teacher working alone (Farrell 2007). Head and Taylor define ***teacher development groups*** (TDG) as "any form of co-operative and ongoing arrangement between two or more teachers to work together on their own personal and professional development" (1997, p.91). Commonly, in these development groups the role of a group leader and two co-leaders should exist "in order to sustain the group and develop a level of trust among the members so that they can be open during group discussions without feeling the need to hide their opinions" (Farrell, 2008, p.3). The group leader's job will be to organize and the following two will be in charge of getting tasks accomplished and maintaining group cohesion and personal relationships, yet, differences in the implementation of teacher development groups will depend on the context, the participants and the aim of the TDG.

In 2012 Vieira and Marques argued for the need to take an inquiry-oriented approach to teacher education by supervising (planning, monitoring and evaluating) the quality of teacher development practices in a principled way. In order to do this, they conducted a study where they created a teacher development group with ten students from a post-graduate course on Pedagogical Supervision in EFL teaching. The final outcome was to jointly elaborate an exploratory set of criteria — grid — to evaluate teacher development practices. Seven of the students were secondary school EFL teachers and three were teaching at the same university where the two researchers worked; yet only five of them (including the two authors) had experience as supervisors of pre-service teachers in training.

The first step in the elaboration of the grid was for all of the participants to get together and recall a ‘bad’ teacher development experience and point out the negative attributes, the same procedure was done by recalling criteria attributes of ‘good’ teacher development practices and comparing them to the negative ones. After a first grid was designed, it was then piloted by analyzing two units from a teacher development resource book. Once the results were obtained research participants re-examined the criteria units on the basis of questions about the presence/absence of assumptions and aims of reflective teacher education and pedagogy for autonomy. The group then redefined the grid by using it in planning, monitoring and evaluating a variety of teacher development practices:

- Comparing two different units from two resource books, focusing on ‘control and power relationships’ in the foreign language classroom;
- Planning a teacher development proposal about lesson observation for student teachers;
- Planning and evaluating two sessions for teachers in local schools;

- Planning, monitoring and evaluating an action research project carried out with a group of student-teachers;
- Monitoring their own sessions on a regular basis by using at least two of the criteria to evaluate each session as a post-session written activity;
- Evaluating their course and all the other courses within the post-graduate program at the end of the year.

After the revised grid was once more piloted the participants of the study met to discuss and elaborate the final version yet they found criteria to be problematic in three main areas. For one, some of the participants found that implying that an autonomous teacher would automatically develop autonomous learners was not necessarily true. Secondly, that not always did teachers manage to integrate theory and practice, finding unnoticed inconsistencies between what was believed and what was carried out in their teaching and finally that maintaining reflection in and on-action (Schön 1983) continuously throughout their practice was uneasy.

Regardless of the fact that this study and grid development was detailed and contemplated aspects, which could be defined as ‘proper’ teacher development tasks, the own designers felt uneasy when applying this grid with other colleagues. *“We ourselves feel this limitation whenever we try to use the criteria with others, since those others did not experience what we did for long hours of discussion and experimentation during the course”* (Vieira and Marques 2012, p.15). Furthermore *“readers or potential users may find the criteria unsuitable in their own working contexts, or irrelevant given their own professional theories and experience”* (p.15).

Overall, the grid was too theory-driven and context based that given the complexity of teacher development and RP it would result impossible to apply in a different context, as it is quite impossible for other people to replicate the conditions under which it was designed. Nevertheless, the teacher development group functioned well due to aspects such as proper collaboration, mutual respect and motivation.

In 2013 Farrell too reported on the use of a teacher development group that took place in Ontario, Canada with an English as a Second Language teacher who consistently obtained negative unsolicited feedback on behalf of one of her students and did not know how to positively deal with the negative comments. She was already participating in a teacher reflection group, which the researcher was in charge of, therefore, she decided to articulate this critical incident within the group for guidance.

For the purpose of this research a ***critical incident*** was defined as “an unplanned and unanticipated event that occurs during class outside class or during a teacher’s career but is vividly remembered” (Brookfield, 1990, p.84). Further, *critical incidents* can be identified by reflecting on a ‘teaching high’ or ‘teaching low’; ***teaching high*** being a current perception of events that enables a sudden change on lesson plan to allow better teaching outcomes while a ***teaching low*** is an immediate incident problematic for the teacher yet outside her practice. The incident in this case was identified at a teaching low as it was caused by negative unsolicited feedback on behalf of a student who took the course for personal reasons rather than academic and failed due to a lack of interest.

The data was collected by means of two main instruments; *teacher journal entries* and *teacher narrative accounts* and followed the next procedure:

- After every course term exam, the school required for teachers to hand out a feedback sheet for the students to complete

- After receiving negative feedback from a specific student, the teacher would describe the critical incident on her journal
- This incident would be brought up in the teacher reflection group in which she was involved to seek help or guidance
- The cycle repeated until the end of the term

Direct transcripts of the teacher journals were presented following a *narrative reflective approach* where by “telling their stories teachers do not only reflect on specific incidents within their teaching world, but also feel a sense of cathartic relief as it offers an outlet for tensions, feelings and frustrations about teaching” (Johnson and Golombek, 2002, p.6). The teacher was first asked to describe the incident and then explain the value, role and meaning of that particular incident to her (Tripp, 1993). With regards to analysis, the author used McCabe’s (2002) framework for narrative analysis as follows:

- **Orientation:** This part answers the following questions, who, when, what and where?
- **Complication:** Outlines what happened and the problem that occurred.
- **Evaluation:** So, what? What does this mean for the participants of the story?
- **Result:** This part outlines and explains the resolution to the problem/ crisis.

As an end result, the teacher was able to first understand her student’s statements as a display of concern and willingness to learn even when the course content was not within his interests and then to place those comments on a broader scale regarding her teaching. In other words, she was able to impersonalize the negative feedback as comments were not directed to her or her teaching but were a sign of frustration regarding her student’s personal circumstances and his reasons for taking the course — his fiancé had enrolled to the course and she had asked him to enroll with her, yet he was unhappy with his decision —. This teacher alone could have gotten to this same conclusion by reflecting on the situation,

nevertheless the intervention of her co-workers aided her to impersonalize the negative comments allowing her to recover her sense of agency.

A similar case to teacher development groups are **co-counseling groups**, where two individuals agree to meet and divide the allotted time in half so that each speaker and listener get to talk-listen for an equal time period on whatever matter is relevant to their particular needs (Head and Taylor 1997). There are also **study circles** where “practitioners meet and discuss research and consider its implications for classroom and practice programs — these study circles offer the opportunity for practitioners to focus and reflect more deeply on the content and methodologies they are learning in workshops and implementing in their classes —” (Burt, Peyton, & Schaetzel, 2008, p.4).

An example of these other type of teacher development groups is Valerie Hobbs 2007 case study, conducted in a Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) certificate course where participants were required to complete a *reflective teaching journal*. This study explored how the required RP assignment seemed to provoke not only ‘strategic’ reflection but also a strong negative reaction from the majority of the trainees, thereby limiting the assignment’s usefulness. Data was collected according to Denzin’s (1978) framework of methodological triangulation and included field notes, audio-recorded informal interviews and conversations, questionnaires, course documents, participants’ teaching practice journals, and follow-up emails over the course of the year.

By the end of the study, Hobbs concluded that the obligatory *RP Journal* elicited ‘strategic’ responses as writing prompts were leading and suggestive. All of the course participants expressed a negative attitude towards the journal; the experienced teachers resented having to engage in reflection about their teaching and those with no teaching experience viewed it as a waste of time. The researcher mentioned that it was only natural to feel resentment towards a

stipulation that asks one to be open and honest about one's beliefs whilst implying that a certain response is preferable. Finally, the course participants remarked that there was not always time to consult with one another as the researcher had required them to do and that because no one was ensuring that collaboration occurred, it was easy enough to 'fake it' and report it in the journals. Hobbs suggests that in order for researchers to obtain reliable results they should avoid forced reflection particularly in the form of a substantial written assignment increasing the likelihood of resentment and negativity. Even more, that given the personal nature of RP, participants should be actively involved in choosing the format of their RP assignment. I too maintain this view since not only may forced RP have high negative results on research but also on teachers' sense of agency and personal value, which was a particular concern of mine as I engaged in this RP study.

All in all and as Hedgcock states, when research is properly conducted "in these communities of practice" teachers of varying degrees of expertise carry out their roles as practicing technicians who learn from each other (2005, p. 301), which is one of the best ways to fulfill the goal of professional development not through a "transmission" model of education in which knowledge is simply deposited into the brains of teachers, but through a process in which teachers learn and continue to develop their skill in dialogue within a professional community (Johnson, 2006). As Johnson emphasizes, by articulating an experience — why teachers teach the way they do —, when they reflect on general theories and methods within the contexts of their own experiences and classrooms, and when teachers talk about their reasoning with others; assists not only to obtain new perspectives but to develop self-awareness allowing for teacher development to take place.

2.5.2 Empirical Research on Classroom Observations

Classroom observations (COs) have many ways and purposes to be undertaken in research, yet, they are usually carried out according to the aim of the study, the participants involved and the context. ELT is the academic field that has offered some of the widest range of COs studies not only for RP but for other theoretical conceptions.

Aynur Yürekli (2013) engaged in classroom observations but focused specifically on the post-observation phase. This study took place in the School of Foreign Languages Preparatory Program in a private university in Turkey and discusses the importance of the post-observation session (feedback) in teacher development. It primarily looks at the intervention types that observers employ in comparison to the intervention types that the observed teachers prefer. The study bases its discussion on Heron's six-category intervention analysis (2001), which is a framework for interpersonal relationships in terms of guidance and supervision.

The group consisted of 36 non-native (Turkish) and 12 native-speaker (British, American, or Canadian) teachers, with ages ranging from 34 to 56 years and experience ranging from 13 to 25 years. All instructors had either a degree or held a certificate (such as the CELTA or the US-based Certificate TEFL) in language teaching and were observed between 10 and 12 times each by different observers in the same educational institution. The six-category intervention scale developed by the researcher was piloted with 35 instructors working in the institution where the study was conducted resulting in a 29-item scale to elicit teachers' preferences regarding the six intervention categories suggested by Heron. The same scale was rephrased and used with observers to elicit their intervention preferences during the post-observation stage. Observees were asked to rate the items on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'strongly agree' (5) to 'strongly disagree' (1), to express preferences in regard to post-observation behavior. Similarly, observers were asked to rate the items on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'always' (5) to 'never' (1), eliciting how frequently they engage in each type of behavior

while giving feedback during the post- observation session. In both cases, the highest score possible for each item was 5, whereas the lowest score was 1.

The factor analysis of the items was conducted taking the responses of both observers and observees into consideration. The means and standard deviations were calculated on group bases and a *T* test was carried out to determine whether there was a significant difference between group means (confidence interval taken as 95 per cent). However, when score averages, along with the rank order of preferences were taken into account the following results emerged. Observees' high intervention type preferences centered around two main types, namely Supportive (4.61) and Informative (4.21), which shows a balance of both authoritative and facilitative intervention due to the fact that teachers (observees) saw the observer as a source of information regarding potential areas of improvement in their own teaching. The *Catalytic intervention*, which is geared towards self-exploration and teacher reflection, was not the most effective intervention method preferred by the population of this study as was expected. By contrast, the preferences of observers centered around three types all facilitative in nature, Supportive (4.63), Cathartic (4.37), and Catalytic (4.29), showing that they favored teacher 'self-reflection' and 'discovery' as a method of development.

Yürekli suggests that all six types have equally important functions and aims if employed in the correct way and at the correct time. Knowing about individual teachers' preferences and being able to modify feedback and observer roles accordingly will enable observers to conduct more effective feedback sessions that have the potential to bring about the desired behavioral changes in teachers. However, imposing an intervention type without adequate teacher preparation and readiness may have unwanted consequences. Therefore, observers, despite being in favor of facilitative intervention types, should be prepared to reach a compromise, rather than only employ what the current literature dictates.

Other researchers who studied RP through COs were Louw, Watson and Jimarkon (2014), they focused their research on how the tension between allowing for dialogic spaces and providing constructive authoritativeness in the feedback phase was managed. This case study involved four male trainer native speakers of English with experience in English language teaching in Asian contexts and was carried out in a short intensive TESOL course where out of 120 course hours, six 90-minute classroom observations in co-teaching mode were a compulsory part of the program. The data was collected by means of semi-structured personal interviews where trainers' beliefs about the feedback they provided during teaching practice conferences were elicited and recorded. In order to investigate the congruence between those beliefs and the practice of giving feedback, sixteen 15 to 30-minute classroom-observation feedback sessions were also recorded, where feedback was given without a specific protocol.

Data analysis was conducted by **content analysis** (Dörnyei 2007) which treats the data inductively following these four phases; (1) *transcription*, (2) *pre-coding and coding* to capture both descriptive labeling and more abstract features of the data, (3) *growing ideas* and (4) *interpreting the data*. The entire data set was first analyzed by treating it as four corpora, one for each trainer. Corpus analysis posits that language users make choices in their language and that through the analysis of frequencies of such choices, patterns in the discourse can be identified that are not open to intuition (Baker 2006). Furthermore, the recordings of the complete data set of feedback sessions were then analyzed for turn lengths as a means of showing authoritative positioning of trainers (Hyland and Lo 2006). Trainers took an average of 21.8 words per turn, and trainees only 11.1 words per turn, leading researchers to initially suggest that trainers may take an authoritative approach in feedback.

The main findings highlighted overall two sets of beliefs: those based closely on trainers' personal experience or 'experiential beliefs', and those associated with widely accepted progressive methodologies, which trainers may be under social pressure to conform to, 'received beliefs'. For the most part experiential beliefs and practice showed high levels of congruence, on the other hand received beliefs — reflecting the social desirability of low levels of authoritativeness — were more often incongruent with practice. Trainers' beliefs conformed to a perceived preferred method but were incongruent with their practice, which according to the researchers, reflected the fundamentally irreconcilable tensions inherent in feedback session as well as in any other language-learning teaching area.

Bhar Gün (2011) states that “conducting classroom observations and giving feedback to teachers is undeniably useful yet insufficient in itself to help teachers reach a level of reflection that will optimize their professional development” (2011, p.127). With this in mind Gün too conducted a CO study and believed that the best tool to aid his research would be to video record the lessons while the observations took place. His aim was to investigate to what extent did teachers learn about teaching from trainer, colleague, learner observation feedback compared to watching their own video-recorded lessons (self-feedback). He suggested that regardless of teachers' nationality, experience and background in ELT, with focused input and with the opportunity to watch videos of themselves teaching along with a variety of sources, the teachers could be trained to reflect on their teaching. As a means of structure, Gün used Dewey's 1933 RP principles as a guide: (1) the issue on which the teacher reflects must occur on the social context where the teaching takes place, (2) the teacher must be interested in the problem to be solved, (3) the issue must derive from his/her practice and (4) systematic procedures are necessary.

The study was conducted in a Turkish university in an intensive English language-teaching program where 4 teachers (2 Turkish, 1 American and 1 British) with 3 to 7-year experience in ELT observed each other during an 8-week period with the aid of 3 ELT experienced trainers (1 Brazilian and 2 Turkish) and 4 learners chosen by each one of the four teachers. Each week started with the input session where the observation task designed for each week was explained to the trainer, to the colleague, and to the learner (in the learner's L1 to avoid any possible misunderstandings) followed by video-recorded observations. The task was given to the teacher immediately after the observation, and the teacher was asked to submit the task back to the trainer within the same day as the observation. The teacher was asked to do the exact same task within the next 2 or 3 days after viewing the video of himself/herself teaching in that given week.

The reason for following such a cycle was to highlight for the teacher the difference between 'reaction' (immediately after the lesson) and 'reflection' (after attending the focused input session and watching the video). After watching the videos and completing the given observation task, the feedback from the trainer, colleague, and learner was also shared with the teacher. That is, at the end of each observation, the teacher had a set of feedbacks consisting of (a) his/her first-time task, (b) second time task, (c) trainer completed task, (d) colleague completed task, and (e) learner completed task. The aim of all observers was to collect information, rather than to evaluate the teachers' performance. It was left to the teacher to consider the feedback and draw conclusions and implications.

Having completed the 8 weeks of input sessions and observations, the teachers were given a feedback form consisting of the following questions:

- Whose feedback was the most beneficial and useful to you (colleague, learner, trainer, watching yourself in the video)?
- Did you see any improvement as a result of the input sessions? Which had most impact on you/your reflections?
- Will the meetings for the Reflective Learning and Teaching Project help you in the future? If so, how?
- How do you compare the regular observations you had so far to these ones?
- What could we do to help you continue developing?

The reported results — mostly in the voices of participants — concluded that; (1) all four teachers stated that they appreciated the feedback from colleagues, trainers, and learners however, they all agreed that the videos had the greatest impact on their teaching. (2) Although they knew what specifically to look for while they watched the videos, they identified other areas to work on, which were not the focal points in any of the observations thus showing that critical reflection and practice awareness took place. (3) More over and the most striking result of the study was that by watching videos of themselves, the 4 teachers stated that they were able to transfer their critical reflection into ‘on the spot’ strategies in their classroom (reflection in action). The researcher also believes that the reason for the effective reflection was that their videos provided ‘observable evidence of their instructional decisions’ (Richards and Lockhart 1994; Rich and Hannafin 2009) and that when teachers are given the opportunity to discuss their reflections on their teaching, they seem better able to mutually identify problems and suggest effective solutions in a cooperative and collaborative group interaction pattern as opposed to individual reflection (Wallace 1998; Johnson 2002/ 2006).

Another researcher that concentrated on reflective feedback sessions by means of video recordings was Betil Eröz-Tuga, (2013); this case study took place at an undergraduate program in ELT in a foreign language education department in a

large state-run university in Ankara, Turkey. The study focused on how self-reflection through the discussion of video-recorded teaching sessions leads to the development of a critical perspective into classroom practices. The main focus was on helping students learn to help themselves in teaching contexts, without the guidance of a supervisor. The research questions were the following:

- Does reflective teaching increase trainees' self awareness and self-perception of themselves as language teachers in the practicum?
- Does receiving regular feedback on their teaching performance enhance the assessed teaching performance and experience of trainees?
- Does watching video recordings help improve trainees' insights about their own teaching performance and increase the complexity of their comments regarding classroom events?

Participants were 11 out of 18 senior students taking the researcher's Practice Teaching course and who voluntarily decided to engage in the reflective project. The 11 participants were videotaped twice throughout the semester before their formal assessed teaching class. After each recording, they had feedback sessions which involved watching their videos with the researcher and their training partner. During these sessions, the participant trainees commented on their own teaching and received feedback from the researcher and their training partner. They used a feedback form as a guide for what to focus on while watching the videos. This form concentrated on three general issues: classroom procedures and lesson planning, self-presentation and classroom *persona*, and classroom management.

When the semester concluded, all participants had taught a lesson that was observed and graded by the researcher/ class instructor; this session was the assessed teaching portion of the course. The trainees wrote self-evaluation reports reflecting on their experience in the practicum and the self-reflection practices.

Data were gathered by means of two sets of recorded feedback sessions of each participant and their self-evaluation reports. The reflections on the two videotaped lessons were analyzed to see if there was a change in the depth, substance, and quality of their comments regarding classroom events. **Content analysis** (Creswell 2007) was applied to the self-evaluation reports to uncover their views on the practicum and their insights about their teaching performance.

The reported results showed that after watching their first videos, participants were able to point out only two common difficulties that caused classroom management problems:

- Classroom interaction patterns and language use in class.
- Their physical presence and body language in the classroom.

Nevertheless, for the second video feedback sessions, the researcher reported that participants seemed more reflective and critical about their own performance and more insightful in commenting on their partners' performances than they were in the first sessions. They showed improved self-awareness and displayed a conscious effort in trying to fix the problems the researcher warned them about in the first feedback meeting, as well as the ones they noticed themselves. Moreover, they were able to make comparisons between their first and second videos, pointing to improved aspects of their teaching performance as well as recurring weaknesses. As can be noted the videos of the trainees were the main focus of reflection and they helped demonstrate exactly what was meant on the feedback comments rather than just telling trainees and risking ambiguity.

All in all, classroom observation research will never be entirely comfortable, teachers' psychological state, if strong will inevitably allow for any classroom observation as long as such visits pose no undue complication in schedules and other institutional constraints. "Yet if it is week, observation will not easily take place" (Farrell, 2001, p.373) due to the fact that teachers may feel some degree of intrusion when an extra person is sitting in their classrooms or "feel nervous about implicit judgments being made about their teaching" (Cosh, 1999, p.25). Cosh feels strongly about not making judgments about the teaching of others as "notions of good teaching are very subjective; they are to a large extent intangible and unable to be addressed through a list of criteria, and giving constructive feedback is a difficult skill where the observer risks giving offence" (Cosh and Woodward, 2004, p.20). Another existing constraint is that teachers prefer to be observed by more experienced colleagues making this an asymmetrical relationship which will enable a one-way development process.

Still, COs are amongst one of the most common used approaches in RP research for language teacher development and have continued to aid teachers and their practice in many ways, yet, its use can be maximized if teachers are fully aware of their present circumstances and are opened to the processes embedded in COs.

2.5.3 Empirical Research on Collaborative Action Research

Action research distinguishes from other kinds of research in that it is directly related to professional action and teacher development; it is situational, context-based, collaborative, participatory and self-evaluative. Cohen and Manion define Action research "as a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention" (1980, p.2179). Unlike conventional research, there is no recommended methodology for implementing or reporting it, on the contrary, there is a wide range of possible procedures; it does not have to be generalizable or even verifiable, although some writers suggest that it is most effective when it is done on a collaborative basis (Wallace 1998). This is why, it is more often than not that Reflective Practice is established within an

Action Research paradigm “to promote critical inquiry into solutions, to solve pedagogical problems and ways to improve teaching” (Ho, 2013, p.297) and is also centered in **collaboration** as it is viewed essential in promoting teacher learning (Rodgers & Babinski, 2002).

Hence, **Collaborative Action Research** “goes beyond a search for solutions to immediate problems and towards the creation of a professional learning culture in schools that emphasizes inquiry and reflection as the norms” (Clift et al., 1990b, p.54). Teachers will become more reflective about their individual and collective practice by working together to address common problems, sharing experiences and develop their individual and collective resources for dealing with their shared difficulties in their school and classroom environment. As put by Pennigton, “the quality of experience of a group of teachers as a whole may be greater than the sum of the individual experiences of its members” (1995).

Barbara Larrive in 2008 conducted a Collaborative Action research study to develop a tool that measures teachers’ level as reflective practitioners. She discusses the need for a commonly shared language to categorize the various levels involved in becoming a critically reflective teacher/ practitioner. The aim of this assessment tool was to provide a way to gauge how a prospective or practicing teacher is progressing as a reflective practitioner to serve as a vehicle for facilitating the development of structures to mediate higher order reflection.

According to her literature review, she depicted three main levels of reflection, which served as a base for the conceptual framework for the development of the assessment tool:

- An initial level focused on the teaching actions, functions or skills, generally considering teaching episodes as isolated events. (**Surface Reflection**)
- A more advanced level considering the theory and rationale for the current practice. (**Pedagogical Reflection**)

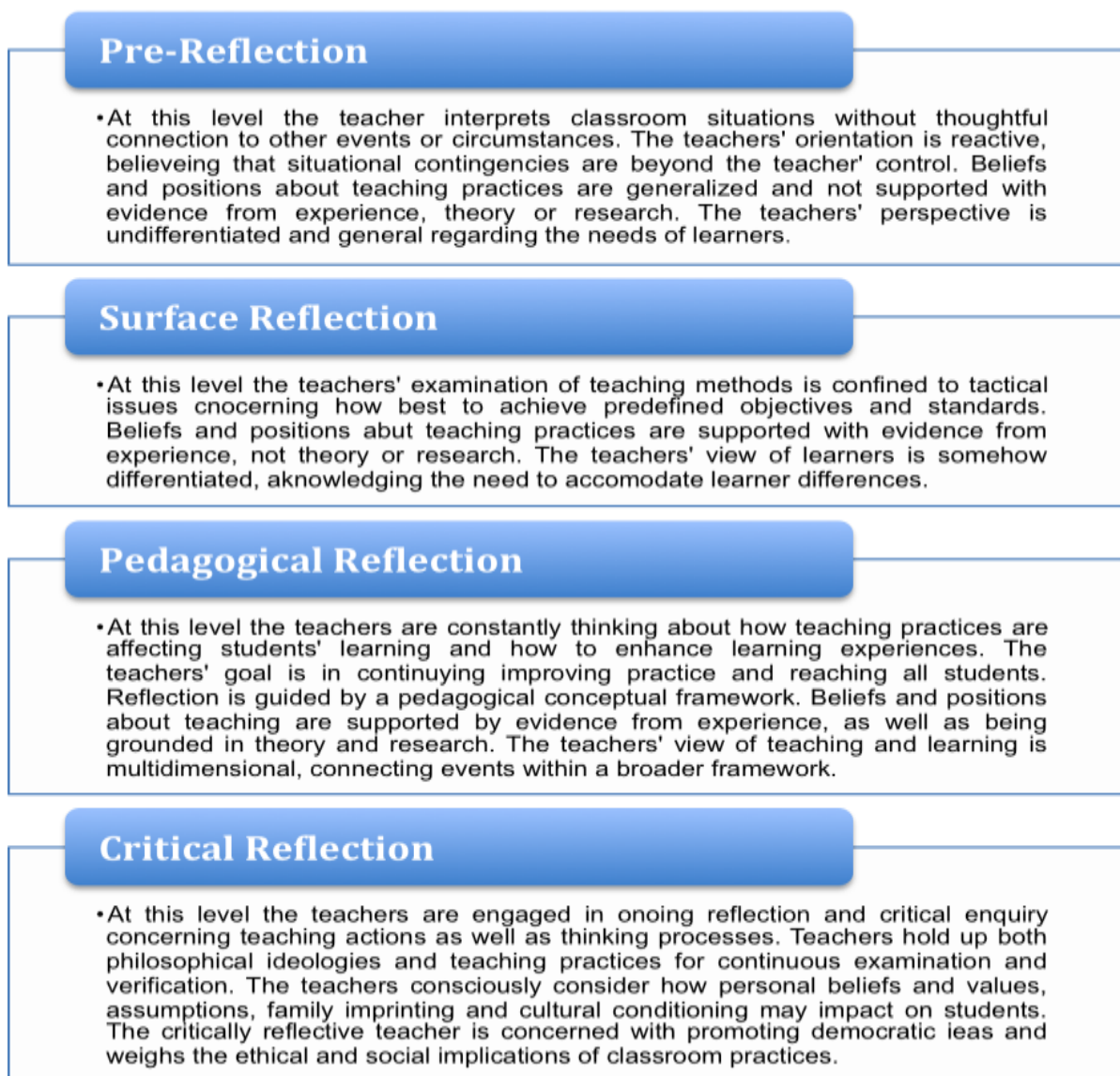
- A higher order where teachers examine the ethical, social and political consequences of their teaching, grappling with the ultimate purposes of schooling. (***Critical Reflection***)

(Larrive, 2008, p.342)

The research was carried out with 119 individuals worldwide who were identified to have conducted empirical studies or written on the subject of teacher development through reflective practice, out of which 40 respondents completed the survey (40%). These authors were solicited via email to participate in this research project by providing their expert judgment to establish specific descriptors to define levels of reflective practice. Using this three-level framework, — with the addition of a pre-reflection category where no reflection at all takes place —, the collected descriptions were sorted into four categories and a draft instrument was constructed and piloted with five education faculty members who agreed to both respond to the items and to be interviewed to solicit feedback on the items, as well as the conceptual framework and definitions of the four levels.

This resulted in a survey comprising 100 items. In order to facilitate the rating task, quality indicators (items) were clustered into 20 sets, each with 5 indicators arranged in random order. After, the instrument was piloted on a website and all responses were submitted online, the end results showed that the most difficult distinctions were between pedagogical and critical reflection, followed by distinctions between surface and pedagogical reflection. However, the distinction between pre-reflection and surface reflection proved to be the most problematic. Apparently the most difficult distinction for respondents was between no reflection (pre-reflection) and a minimal amount of reflection (surface reflection). The following were the final descriptors for each level:

Figure 4 Reflection descriptors



Overall, the purpose of Larrive's research was to construct an assessment tool that could be used to establish the level of reflection engaged in by a teacher candidate or a practicing teacher, establishing an entry level that would allow a supervisor/mentor or even themselves to develop intervention strategies to facilitate movement towards higher levels of reflection. Regardless of the subsequent uses of the instrument or not, the fact the such agreed descriptors regarding a teacher's level of reflection were made possible through the collaborative experience of so many researchers throughout the world, gave this study a great amount of validity.

Most recently in 2013, a series of collaborative AR projects were carried out in a course about Reflective Teaching in the Language Classroom as part of a post-graduate teacher education program at a university in Hong Kong. Belinda Ho's purpose was to help in-service language teachers improve their teaching practice and pupils' learning opportunities through an enquiry oriented and cooperative approach. There were a total of 20 in-service primary, secondary, and tertiary teachers in the course who then formed groups of 3 to 4 where each group had to undertake a practicum over the course of an 8-week period. The teachers in each group first identified a common problem encountered by their students, they then worked out the common teaching methods, which they would use during the 8 weeks in order to help solve the problem. They further decided on common research instruments and methods and prepared a group schedule based on a form designed by the researcher. Before the practicum, each teacher taught a lesson in a traditional teacher-centered way that was video recorded. Then, AR was carried out over a double lesson in each of the 8 weeks where all of teachers in the same group used the same cooperative learning structures to teach the AR lesson in the same week. During the 8 weeks, each group was required to meet twice to discuss the progress of its AR project, share good practices, voice problems, discuss possible solutions, and decide how the AR project should proceed from there. Along with this, each teacher wrote a detailed lesson plan for each AR lesson along with a reflective journal.

The teachers collected and analyzed the data obtained through AR — before, while and after through pre- and post-questionnaires, video recordings, observations, and teacher journals — by making frequency counts and using **content analysis** to see if the AR had successfully brought about changes in students' learning. They then evaluated the effects to see if the common problem encountered by the students had been solved.

The findings reported that introducing reflective teaching through collaborative AR is an effective method to help teachers develop as professionals. It enabled them to evaluate their own teaching through reflection and obtain ideas and support from their fellow teachers regarding how to improve their practice through group interaction. The students also benefited from their teachers' AR projects as results provided empirical evidence of their language gains regardless of their formative levels, the kinds of school they attended, and their motivational levels. Yet the most important report was that ***teaching paradigms*** were changed even under constraints related to ability and context. It was through personal engagement in collaborative action research activities, that teachers in this study managed to change their teaching paradigms from a traditional teacher-fronted role to one that facilitated students to work and learn in groups.

Still, learning to be reflective through collaborative action research and reflection itself is a time-consuming intensive process as “teachers struggle to learn to work with other adults” (Clift et al., 1990b, p.59) and to construct new understandings about their teaching contexts, of theory and of the practical reality through individual and collective knowledge as well as experience. Nevertheless, the success that collaborative action research may have will depend on how well the teachers interact, are congruent with their beliefs and needs and involve themselves in the process. The quality of this experience on the group development and teamwork may also enrich the experience of the individual, “it is possible that a focus on research may help to reinvigorate novice and experienced teachers, giving them new ways of approaching practice that may affect their teaching in major ways in the future” (Pennington, 1995, p.714).

2.5.4 Empirical Research on Focus Groups

Focus groups according to Willer & Miller (2004) create opportunities for sustained concentration and discussion where understandings, arguments, clarifications and interpretations are constructed through talk with other professionals drifting away from simple complaints and chat to focus on areas such as teaching, materials and course design (Beaumont & O'Brien 2000). By means of focus groups, researchers are able to access "the attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions of participants in ways that observations or surveys can not" (Gibbs, 1997, p.2), and unlike individual interviews, the researcher relies on the interaction amongst the participants for data collection. The following empirical research studies, describe their use of focus groups within the RP paradigm.

In 2009 McCabe et al., carried out an investigation of the use of focus groups in Ontario, Canada, the main aim was to examine the role of critical reflection in a teacher education program. Their specific objectives were to understand Critical Reflective Practice (CRP) from the perspective of the faculty, to find out the opinions students had regarding their experience in becoming language teachers and to examine the students' engagement with the strategies and tools that were supposed to enable them to become reflective practitioners. The participants for this study were 19 pre-service teachers from the Junior, Intermediate and Senior classes who had an undergraduate degree that included teachable subjects. The teachers in charge of those practicum classes were also chosen making a total of 19 students and 15 faculty members. The data gathering was through focus group interviews based on the following questions:

- What is your understanding of critical reflective practice?
- Why critically reflect?
- What strategies are used to promote critical reflective practice?
- What are the benefits of critical reflective practice?

All of the focus group sessions were tape-recorded and after analyzed by means of the following content analysis procedure: (1) **data reduction**: selecting, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the raw data through coding, writing summaries and memoranda; (2) **data display**: organized assembly of information to facilitate drawing conclusions through narrative text, matrices, and networks; (3) **conclusion drawing**: deciding what things meant in regard to the research questions and proceeded from the data displays and (4) **verification**: triangulation in which information from the various sources was compared.

Study reports concluded that there were major differences in the opinions between the faculty and the students regarding the understandings of CRP and the reasons for its existence in the program. While the majority of the students referred to CRP as a mandatory task that had to complete after each class in response to an event or series of classroom events, the faculty on the other hand viewed CRP as a continuous process that aids teachers in understanding where they stand and the effects on their teaching practice and most importantly as a strong support for continuous professional development.

With regards to how to critically reflect, there was a mutual understanding on written accounts as the main tool for conducting CRP yet both parties also mentioned that if *greater opportunities of spoken interaction with peers and faculty were given*, there would be more and major benefits. Finally, with regards to the benefits of CRP, the students again differed in their responses with the faculty. To begin with, they only mentioned CRP as a task within their program and that it would be most unlikely for them to carry it out once they were teaching in real life. On a positive note, students mentioned that the written CRP accounts helped them acquire the educational jargon required for future job interviews. Conversely, faculty members advanced 'idealistic' purposes for carrying out CRP, which mainly had to do with continuous professional development, however, there was no

evidence from the results to support their view. At most, the students reported to want more opportunities to conference with peers, faculty and associate teachers through mentorship, as there was an appreciation of others' experiences. The faculty also mentioned that they perceived the need for more oral interaction, which potentiated CRP such as classroom discussions after class, peer discussions and teacher-student discussions. The authors suggested that in order to replicate this study, researchers should reduce the emphasis on written evidence of reflection and encourage a more collaborative and dialogic approach to the reflective processes such as mentoring, peer coaching and collaborative study groups.

In general, the overall purpose of focus group interviewing is to give voice to "key informants" who understand the context and who are willing and able to reflect on it, and to articulate what is going on in terms of their own professional practice (Dexter 1970). Nevertheless, the dichotomy of focus group interviews is that its main advantage can also be its major drawback as some individuals may not be confident enough to express an opinion in a context that is not fully confidential; or vice versa.

2.5.5 Empirical Research on Critical Friendships

Hatton and Smith describe the term ***critical friendship*** in language teaching as "to engage with another person in a way which encourages talking with, questioning, and even confronting, the trusted other, in order to examine lesson planning, implementation, and evaluation" (1995, p.41). In other words, critical friends are "people who collaborate in a way that encourages discussion and reflection in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning" (Farrell, 2001, p.369). This reflective approach allows voice to the teachers' thinking in a sympathetic and constructive manner. However, it does not mean that one of the teachers involved in these collaborative relationships is less experienced and requires help. On the contrary, another person is required to work with a teacher and give advice as a friend rather than a consultant, in order to develop the reflective abilities of the teacher who is conducting her own action research (Stenhouse 1975).

Hence in order for a critical friendship to function properly it is important to define the roles of the participants ahead of time, decide time frames and discuss the teachers' readiness for reflection (Mann 2005). Derived from the term critical friends, ***Critical Friend Groups*** evolved, in these groups a set form of "collaboration amongst peers is valued and is seen as a necessary factor for effective schooling since it fosters expert instruction" (Bowman and McCormick, 2000, p.256). Moreover, through the social interaction of discussion, "active learning evolves and each participant interprets, transforms and internalizes new knowledge as a result of collective thinking" (Vo and Nguyen, 2010, p.207), enabling teachers to develop new perspectives but also to show their strengths for others to learn from them as well.

A similar case to critical friendships is ***teacher collegiality***, which according to Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) is characterized by authentic interactions that are professional in nature such as openly sharing failures and mistakes, demonstrating respect for each other and constructively analyzing and criticizing practices and procedures. However, this type of collaboration by no means requires teachers to engage in peer coaching, plan together, consult together or the like, it is characterized by tacit norms of professional behavior in a community of knowledgeable users and developers (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Lortie, 1975).

Extensive research has been carried out as to how non-judgmental dialogic collaborative discourse enables teacher reflection and development and reveals that teachers who have taken part of it generally hold positive opinions (Bartrick 2002; Mann 2002; Oprandy 2002; Pearce 2002; Edge 2002; Boon 2003; Anderson, Baxter & Cissna 2004; Barnett Pearce & Pearce 2004). Vo and Nguyen's 2010 study, offers insights into the participants' experiences as well as the application of Critical Friend Group (CFG) as a model of EFL teacher professional development in Vietnam. The research questions were the following:

- How do the participants feel about their CFG experience?
- To what extent (if any) do they believe it can help them to improve their teaching performance?
- What are their attitudes towards future CFG activities and how these will impact on their professional development?

The research participants were four teachers (three females and one male), all beginner teachers who had worked with one another before currently teaching the same course of elementary English and using the same textbooks. The data were collected by means of observations and interviews and the data collection procedure was as follows. First participants were asked to implement a full CFG process, which involved three peer classroom observations and three feedback meetings. During the feedback sessions, the participants discussed what they had learnt from each other's teaching performance and what they thought should be improved as well as how. Within the two weeks after the completion of the CFG process, four interviews with the individual participants were conducted. In addition, one of the researchers observed the participants in their feedback sessions, while the other played the role as a facilitator as it was the first time the participants had taken part in this type of CFG. Finally, all the data were collected for analysis.

Data analysis followed an iterative process employed in qualitative research where data collection and analysis are continuously revised and refocused based on emergent themes (Miles and Huberman 1994). Relevant sections were identified from the observations and interviews through **content analysis** and were sorted into categories based on the research questions. The end results were for the most part presented as direct quotes from participants' interview excerpts and showed that teachers enjoyed their CFG experience as peer support, combined with a lack of pressure, prompted their learning through others. Yet, participants also expressed that without this model, they rarely talked to each other in a group with a professional focus. Additionally, participants reported to have learned particular

instructional ideas and techniques from each other but they also felt more responsible for their own teaching as they wanted to present successful lesson plans for their peers as well. Finally, all 4 participants agreed on continuing with the CFG as they believed this practice to improve teacher performance as well as student outcomes and promoted a sense of professional community where they could continue learning about each other's teaching.

A researcher who is well known in the field of Reflective Practice and whose work focuses on critical friendships and critical incidents within ELT is Thomas C. Farrell. In one of his many studies, he too reported on a critical friendship between two colleagues — an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teacher and himself — . I decided to choose this 2001 research because contrary to other studies, the teacher initiated the process, chose her preferred methods of reflection, selected the lessons to be observed, and decided on the cycle of observation which related to her approach on teaching academic writing. The author's designated role was to observe lessons, talk with the teacher after the process, read and interpret her journals, and manage the process in general; the teacher then authenticated the author's interpretations.

The teacher in this critical friendship study wanted to have an outsider's view of her teaching practices besides her own perspectives and those of her students. She intended for her and the researcher to share their views instead of having an evaluative type of observation, hence, the researcher would act as a catalyst for the teacher to look at her teaching. The data was collected through classroom observation notes, audio recordings of individual meetings, video recordings of classes, the teacher's written reactions to her classes and to the process in general as well as e-mail correspondence. The process began with the teacher describing how she taught writing and the researcher went on to observe a complete writing cycle, which lasted a total of 7 classes. There were not any specifications of the observer role therefore the pattern that developed was for the researcher to

document his notes and share them by the end of each writing cycle. After the first cycle was over, both colleagues arranged a meeting to discuss the observations yet the teacher addressed most of the issues in the observer's notes without having looked at them previously. Farrell believes this was possible due to the use of journal writing, which gave the teacher the opportunity to initiate her own critical rationalizations of her practice enabling a self-directed change of behaviors.

For the second cycle a similar observation pattern occurred yet the EAP teacher took a more pro-active role by e-mailing and explaining changes to the observer and why she was making those changes in order to benefit her students. A key aspect of this friendship was that immediate feedback was not given; it was until the end of a full writing cycle that both teachers discussed the teaching journal and the researcher notes, noting that they both had similar comments regarding each observed class. Farrell mentions this as a research strength as not giving immediate feedback can take the pressure off both observer and the teacher of having to come up with solutions right on the spot. What is more, both parties avoided immediate feedback to prevent any confrontation that may have derailed their "critical friendship" as they worked in the same institution. Nevertheless, a major drawback of this study is that the author fails to describe the data analysis approach and procedures however, he does include direct quotes from the different excerpts of data collected as well as a table where a summary of the researcher notes and teacher journal comparison is made.

A significant suggestion that Farrell rises is that the teacher readiness should be strongly considered before embarking in this type of reflective practice due to the fact that there is self-disclosure and a process of change is implicit, and both require a strong psychological state.

The next chapter will provide full details of the research design and data collection instruments of this investigation, which were influenced by several of the studies here presented.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has reviewed literature on two intertwined fields of study, Teacher Development and Reflective Practice. First of all, the term Teacher Development was defined; descriptions of different processes embedded within teacher development were put forward along with the notions that outline these processes and the end results for individuals. Subsequently the term Reflective Practice was singled out as a fundamental component of TD, hence, a historical account of the term ever since it first appeared in the 1930`s up to date and its immersion in the field of ELT was also provided. Accordingly, different reflective practice models were advanced placing an emphasis on cooperative RP. Finally, thorough descriptions of salient empirical collaborative reflective practice studies were presented with the purpose of framing the present study's aim and research questions. It was made clear that the goal of this investigation was to look into the participants' cognitive transformation as a result of engaging in RP. The focus is on reporting how by actively engaging in collaborative RP enables teaching awareness, which in turn allows for a better understanding of teachers' practices allowing alternative teaching decisions and new teaching experiences to take place. All of this favoring the bottom-up stance to continuing professional development adopted for this study.

Chapter 3: The Methodology

3.1 Introduction

After presenting my theoretical framework for this study, my stance on RP research can be summarized as follows: *The critical point for English language teachers when engaging in RP as a means of continuing development is primarily on how they carry out this process and how the process enables them to become aware of their teaching decisions and actions. This gained awareness then allows for new teaching choices and experiences hence, a reconstruction of their teaching knowledge which can and will be different for each teacher serving personal stances as well as personal needs for development* (Farrell 2008; Mann 2005; Richards and Lockhart 1994; Wallace 1991).

Considering this theoretical background, Chapter 3 aims to present the methodology in order to give answer to this study's aim and the three research questions. It starts with an overview and justification for adopting an ***interpretative research paradigm*** by means of a ***collaborative action research study*** in order to gain insight into the cognitive transformation that English Language teachers go through when engaging in collaborative Reflective Practice.

The discussion then moves on to present the aim and research questions along with the research design that gives a comprehensive explanation of the selection of a ***focus group interview, video-recorded classroom observations*** and personal ***semi-structured interviews*** as the data collection instruments. It also gives an account of the context and the participants of the study as well as my role as the researcher. Further, my reasons for using ***methodological triangulation*** to enhance the theoretical implications of my findings are given and finally I put forward my data analysis procedure following the guidelines of ***content analysis*** and provide some of the possible limitations of this research. The following discussion explains my choices more in depth.

3.2 Interpretivism

A main characteristic of social science is the fact that it takes into account peoples' multiple perspectives and interpretations of the world. "So many variables affect different events and people's actions that it is impossible to determine an absolute truth" (Mack, 2010, p.7), social reality is therefore seen as multiple perspectives of a same event, also referred to as ***interpretivism***. Different from the *scientific* and the *critical research* paradigms, ***interpretivism*** suggests that the better way to observe reality is through the direct experience of people, establishing an inside subjective view to research rather than an objective outside perspective. This stance towards the world is essential to my research, as I believe that teachers interpret reality according to their own cultural backgrounds, knowledge, previous experiences and personal beliefs, these then play a central role in their teaching.

Interpretivism was developed as a reaction to the scientific model and has its bases on *hermeneutics* — the study of meaning and interpretation in historical texts — and *phenomenology* — which considers human beings' subjective interpretations and perceptions of the world as a starting point in understanding social phenomena — (Ernest, 1994, p. 25). The interpretivist paradigm hence strongly relies on a cyclical process of making meaning through different interpretations and conceptions of the world. Further, the role of the researcher in the interpretivist paradigm is to "understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants" (Cohen et al, 2007, p. 19) rather than to make objective generalizable assumptions of reality. Theory and knowledge are therefore emergent and grounded in data gained through experience and the experiences of others where "the researcher is required to grasp the subjective meaning of social action respecting the differences between people" (Grix, 2004, p. 64). This view allowed me to embrace the differences in teachers' stances and beliefs of teaching and the reasoning behind them disregarding the 'right' or 'wrong' way of doing things, which is not within my research objectives.

With regards to the educational field, researchers state, “uniform causal links that can be established in the study of natural science cannot be made in the world of the classroom where teachers and learners construct meaning” (Mack, 2010, p.8). This construction and co-construction of meaning can therefore be only understood through the teachers, the students’ and in this case my own experiences and interpretations, as the guiding researcher. That said and being my research goal *intellectual* which objective is to understand something and gain insight into what is happening and why it is happening (Maxwell, 2012, p.219); the use of the interpretative approach was more than suitable as understanding the meaning for participants in this RP study, of events, situations and actions they were involved with, and of the accounts that they gave of their practice and teaching experiences was fundamental.

Now that I have set a relationship between my position for partaking on reflective practice research and my choice of research paradigm, I will now proceed to extend this relationship to the research method I selected, ***collaborative action research***.

3.3 Researching Reflective Practice through Collaborative Action Research

There are several approaches to educational research contained in the paradigm of qualitative, interpretative, naturalistic and ethnographic research. The choice of approach is likely to be in line with the research purposes, some of them being description and reporting, the creation of key concepts or theory generation and testing (Cohen et al. 2007). Accordingly, as I wish to present comprehensive descriptions of the cooperative RP processes that teachers in this study carried out, ***collaborative action research*** was selected as the research approach.

3.3.1 Action Research

German-American psychologist Kurt Lewin (1946) is known as the initiator of Action Research (AR). At the beginning of the 20th century he suggested that social research unavoidably led to social action and advanced ***Action Research*** as a

cyclical process of plan, action, observation and reflection (fact-finding about the result of the action) in order to look into noticed gaps between the ideal and the reality in a social research context. This new interventionist research paradigm aimed to investigate practical issues situated in participants' contexts by means of systematic data collection procedures. The findings that emerged from this research approach were then analyzed and used to change and improve practices or begin new intervention plans — new cycle of actions — grounded on the research context and its participants, denoting the intertwined nature of its two elements, action and research. Where “the **action** component involves participants in a process of planned intervention, where concrete strategies, processes or activities are developed within the research context in response to a perceived problem or question” (Wallace, 1998, p.19). Whereas “the **research** element involves the systematic collection of data as planned interventions are enacted, followed by analysis of what is revealed by the data, and reflection on the implications of the findings for further observation and action” (Burns, 2005, p.59). These key components along with an active involvement of its participants differentiated AR from other kinds of research, which focus was more theory oriented and on generalizable applications.

With regards to language teaching, AR was implemented in the 1980's by several academics who conceived teachers as knowledge generators (Allwright 1988; Chaudron ; Day 1990; Lier 1989; Nunan 1989; Zeichner and Liston 1996), drifting away from the traditional view of teachers as passive assimilators of trending teaching methodologies irrespective of their functioning or suitability to their specific teaching contexts and practices. Opposite of this view, teachers were looked at as rational professionals capable of understanding their classroom life and having the agency to change it by engaging in teacher-initiated actions. Wallace (1991) describes action research in language teaching as “an extension of the normal reflective practice of many teachers but it is slightly more rigorous and might conceivably lead to more effective outcomes” (p.57). As stated in Chapter 2, section 2.5.3, AR in language teaching is directly related to professional action and

teacher development and it is why Reflective Practice is more often than not put within an Action Research paradigm, “to promote critical inquiry into solutions, to solve pedagogical problems and ways to improve teaching” (Ho, 2013, p.297). Anne Burns (2005) adds:

An examination of the current forms and purposes of AR in the field confirms that, to date, it is portrayed predominantly as a means of enhancing teacher professional development. The current goals and outcomes tend to lie in the realms of personal and/or professional action and teacher ‘growth’ rather than in the production of knowledge about curriculum, pedagogy or educational systems. (p.63)

Nevertheless, researchers have also advanced empirical data of the limited involvement by individual teachers in AR, the majority of the published work reports on researchers working together with other colleagues or graduate student investigations with volunteer teachers. Hence, it has been suggested that AR might be best undertaken collectively to improve practice (Burns 1999; Cohen and Manion 1994; Wallace 1998). Notion that this thesis favors as **Collaborative Action Research** (CAR) goes beyond a search for solutions to immediate problems and towards the creation of a professional learning culture within professional communities to emphasize inquiry and reflection as modes and models for professional development (Clift et al., 1990b). Through CAR, opportunities are provided for teachers to work together and address common problems, share experiences and develop their individual and collective repertoires to deal with shared difficulties.

Therefore, CAR was chosen as the research paradigm for this study as the participants and myself worked together to co-construct new versions of reality according to our experiences while engaging in collaborative Reflective Practice in benefit of the teachers’ practices. Further, each data collection instrument set the pace for the next data collection process as one set of data informed the next data collection as will be fully explained in section 3.5. Hence forth, this small-scale **collaborative action research study** offers insights into the participants’ cognitive

development through collaborative RP as well as the application of this approach as a means for continuing development in this context and perhaps similar teaching contexts; all of this to be answered by the following research aim and research questions.

3.4 The research aim and research questions

Research Aim

To gain insight into the cognitive transformation that English Language teachers go through when engaging in Collaborative Reflective Practice.

Research Questions

Q1: What is the reasoning behind participants' teaching practice prior to engaging in a reflective practice process?

Q2: How helpful is feedback from other sources and sharing perspectives with peers in fostering critical reflectivity in teachers?

Q3: To what extent does collaborative Reflective Practice influence participants' cognitive transformation?

3.5 The research design and data collection instruments

The data collection tools I selected for this study were a focus group interview, video-recorded classroom observations and semi-structured personal interviews, all part of **qualitative data collecting tools**, which seek out the 'why', not the 'how' through the collection, analysis and interpretation of data that are not easily reduced to numbers (McDonough and McDonough, 1997, p.48-50). "These data

refer to the social world and the concepts and behaviors of people within it” (Anderson, 2010, p.1) and I used them as a means of gaining insight into each one of the participants’ stances and beliefs in this teaching environment.

3.5.1 The value of creating a context for professional dialogue

Powell and Single define focus groups as “a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment, from personal experience, on the topic that is the subject of the research” (1996, p.499) and hence gather a significant amount of different perspectives about the same issue. By means of focus groups, researchers are able to access “the attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions of participants in ways that observations or surveys can not” (Gibbs, 1997, p.2), and unlike individual interviews, the researcher relies on the interaction amongst the participants for data collection. Focus group interviews are usually carried out within a selected group of people and the ground rules are set in manners that “create an emotionally safe environment for discussion in which all voices may be heard” (McCabe et al., 2009, p.4) where the moderator usually remains neutral and monitors her personal interventions and standpoints so they may not influence the participants’ opinions.

As briefly discussed in section 1.5, p.16, this collaborative RP process began with a **focus group interview** conducted in the teachers’ and my own first language (see Appendix 3), which created the conditions for teachers to jointly express the ways they viewed teaching and learning in this specific context and how they came to construct those views (**teacher knowledge**) (Farrell 2008, 2011, 2013; Richards and Farrel 2005; McCabe 2009). This was important in the sense that knowing what you do in your classes and why you do it is the base for teaching actions and decisions and plays a key role for any type of teacher awareness or development to occur (Wallace 1991; Farrell 2001; Gün 2011; Viera and Marques 2012; Louw, Watson and Jimarkon 2014). “Practices are more than just what we do but are inclusive of the reflections and learning that accompanies the work of teaching” (Hoffman et al., 2015, p.100).

Teachers in this study openly favored this dialogic space and reported that by articulating teaching within the contexts of their own experiences and classrooms with others assisted to learn about shared issues, the reasoning behind practices and to obtain new perspectives about teaching (Jhonson 2006). An interesting statement by all five participants was that this had been the first time in their teaching careers they had been presented with an opportunity to talk to others about their practice. Bailey states “one reason why reflective teaching is worth doing is that it creates a context which promotes professional dialogue” (op.cit., p.8), which typically does not occur in this research context.

Nevertheless, expressing their stances and beliefs was initially challenging for these teachers as they were concerned about their opinions being valued, their peers’ perceptions regarding their teaching stances or contradicting their colleagues and harming their work relationships. Yet, the researcher role I adopted helped lessen these concerns. By becoming a facilitator and supporter in the interactions I held with the participants and building trust amongst all involved resulted helpful in enabling teachers to openly share their stances and beliefs, regardless of this being the first time they had ever taken part of this type of professional conversations. Researchers in the field suggest, “social interaction settings, such as classroom life, are enhanced when all participants feel valued and respected” (Slimani-Rolls and Kiely, 2014, p.230).

All in all, successful cooperative interactions in the focus group interview were possible as teachers displayed reflective practitioner attributes. These attitudes were fundamental not only for the focus group interview to run successfully but for the whole reflective process to take place as they speak to the moral implications of reflection (Copeland et al. 1993), they resemble to a certain extent the teachers’ moral commitment to their profession.

3.5.2 Video reviewing and collegial discussions in fostering teaching awareness

According to Hopkins (1993), classroom observations (COs) are a pivotal activity with a crucial role in classroom research, teachers' personal and professional growth and school development as a whole. As mentioned in section 2.5.2 (p.58) of the literature review, COs have been a widely-used research instrument in ELT (Cosh 2004; Threadgold & Piai 2000; Richards & Farrell 2005; Aynur Yürekli 2013), with the purpose of "allowing teachers to gain self-knowledge as well as co-construct and reconstruct their own knowledge with others and so gradually improve and develop their skill as teachers" (Brown, 2007, p.492). There are various reasons for undertaking classroom observations in educational research such as increasing knowledge and understanding of a phenomenon or creating new knowledge (idiographic and particular or transferable and general). To bring about change, innovation and action, often at an institutional level (point where research and evaluation interact) and for personal-professional development (McDonough and McDonough, 1997, p.104).

Having as a background premise that teaching stances and beliefs are constructed and viewed differently by individuals, the purpose for me as a researcher in conducting COs was to understand and observe these stances in their day to day teaching lives. Further and taking this everyday teaching context into account, ***naturalistic observations*** were suitable as this study is also interested on developing opportunities as part of teachers' integral lives. In a ***naturalistic type of observation*** "the context becomes crucial because it sites the phenomena of study in place and time, and can therefore tap into the constantly fluctuating interactions and relationship patterns in a group of people working together" (McDonough and McDonough, 1997 p.114). In other words, the context speaks for itself giving an integral view, where even short interactions may contain some complex verbal and behavioral presuppositions (***insider knowledge***).

Hence, once trust was built amongst all participants and teachers felt equally important and engaged in this RP study, the next phase was to conduct the two video-recorded classroom observation cycles. In accordance with the type of CO, my role as the leading researcher was unobtrusive remaining objective and reflexive yet considering the stances and beliefs that I wanted to observe. The observing criteria was obtained from the reported practices each teacher described in the focus group interview regarding how they perceived to carry out their teaching therefore a rigid or systematic instrument for observation was not used. Systematic observation does not take the whole into account leaving out features within the particular context and its participants yet it is precisely the context and its particularities that I was interested in observing not on slotting teachers into certain categories.

Two video recorded classroom observations were carried out with each one of the five participants over a nine-week period, which included two post-observation discussions prompted by means of video stimulated recall. Recalling on the fact that COs in this context had always been carried out for evaluative purposes with institutional supervisors or teacher trainers in command; participants were expecting the researcher to assume one of those roles and provide directive feedback regarding 'right' or 'wrong' observed practices. However, and in accordance to my facilitator role as well as the aim for research question 2, I chose to refrain from giving directive feedback and used video stimulated recollections of teachers' practices to promote cooperative critical discussions (Eröz-Tuga 2013; Gün 2011; Ho 2013; Slimani-Rolls and Kiely 2014; Yürekli 2013).

Researchers such as Brandt (2008) support this notion suggesting that in CO studies "feedback alone is insufficient and that feedback and critical reflection should be integrated in the form of reflective conversations assigning a greater prominence to reflection with the aid and presence of a facilitator" (p.37). Nevertheless, Brandt's view insists on the facilitator primarily initiating feedback discussions. Conversely, this study used the videos as initiators for dialogue where

prompting on behalf of the researcher was limited to questions such as: What happened here? Do you notice how so and so react when you do this? Why do you think this happens? Avoiding any type of imposed feedback. Therefore, the teachers in this study were prompted to review their *teaching knowledge* in order to rationalize their actions, decisions, and reactions from certain moments in their class videos. What interests this study from the video-reviewing process was how teachers interpreted their teaching and solved the challenges aroused from their practice.

3.5.3 Reconstructing teachers' knowledge

Most research in RP for language teaching has advanced that given the appropriate circumstances critical reflection of teachers' practices is possible (Wallace 1998; Johnson 2002, 2006). In this study those circumstances were provided by observable evidence of teachers' instructional decisions along with collegial support and spaces for discussion (Richards and Lockhart 1994; Wallace 1998). The last space for discussion in this study was provided by a final semi-structured personal interview (see Appendix 4). The interview as a data collection instrument is a common tool in ELT and Applied Linguistics research and it is most often used to gather data about the participant's identities, experiences, beliefs, life histories and orientations' regarding a certain topic within the aim of the research. For this research, a ***semi-structured personal interview*** was conducted with each one of the participants at the end of the study. The interviews were also arranged to be carried out in Spanish with a fairly open agenda, which allowed for joint co-constructed discussions on the individuals' experiences after engaging in this collaborative RP research.

3.6 The researcher's role

As mentioned in the past section, establishing a suitable researcher role in the field of Reflective Practice to meet research interests was central as the researcher's way of reasoning condition the whole process of inquiry. Recalling on the pilot study experience, my interventionist role conditioned the trainee roles adopted by

the participants; results were comparable to those of formal evaluative COs and did not promote reflective thought or awareness for teachers.

In order to properly restructure my research from the experience of the pilot study, my standpoint regarding teacher development and reflective practice as well as my researcher role had to be adjusted. This was possible by engaging in **reflexivity**: “where researchers reflect not only on the practical acts of research but also on the mental experience which construct the meaning about practice” (Mortari, 2015, p. 1). Accordingly, researchers look into themselves in order to rationalize their theoretically informed stances, “questioning and explaining how research processes and findings are constructed” (Hertz, 1997, p. viii). I specifically undertook research on recent empirical RP studies and reviewed RP theory, analyzing how theory was conceived in practice. It was an entire year however, before I was ready to partake once more in RP fieldwork. My current conception and stances of the RP world are acknowledged in my research through my theoretical framework (Cohen et al. 2007) and were extrapolated to the facilitator/coaching role I adopted in order to assist participants in their RP processes.

This facilitator/ coaching role I opted for in this study enabled teachers to become active participants of their entire RP process. Teachers experienced a sense of empowerment and ownership over their teaching, which lead them to take action and co-construct and reconstruct their teaching knowledge accordingly. The data and excerpts presented in the analytical Chapters 5 and 6 are examples of such outcomes. For instance, in extract 4 of Chapter 5 (p. 173), Monica and I discussed how she and other participants deliberately paced their classes according to the more advanced students. From an outsider’s view, it seemed this decision was detrimental to the less advance students, yet the teachers’ decision was founded on respecting students and their readiness for participation in class. If I had imposed my outsider opinion, I would have not accessed this valid reasoning and had suggested the teacher a change that in my perception would benefit the whole class. However, an interventionist opinion was not required, my purpose was to

serve as a catalyst for teachers to become aware of their teaching which would enable them to take self-directed actions; all of the teaching changes participants undertook in this study were conducted under their awareness, view and command. Researchers state that reflexivity aims at “raising a thoughtful eye on oneself, which allows the subject to gain self-awareness” (Dahl- berg et al., 2002, p. 139). Accordingly, as I maintained a facilitator role, teachers maintained control over their practice.

3.7 The research context and participants

As discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.3.2, the experience of the pilot study led me to rethink my initial research. My main challenges were, amongst others the number of participants and their degree of involvement, which was passive and ultimately guided by me. Therefore, I needed to reorient my investigation and carefully chose the specific context and participants for the actual study, hence, I chose the English language teachers pertaining to the English Language Teaching undergraduate program of the Humanities Faculty of this same university.

As opposed to the EFL teachers who pertain to the Humanities faculty language department, who teach different English level classes in sometimes 3 or 4 different undergraduate programs and whose English classes range around 4 hours per group a week; the English teachers from the ELT undergraduate program are self-governed, respond to the coordinator of the BA and make up for the entire ELT staff. Their English classes are 8 hours a week per group therefore programs are longer and course books are different. What is more, these teachers are also content teachers within the program, teaching subjects such as discourse analysis, the teaching of grammar and vocabulary, sociolinguistics, and so on.

In order to carry out the data collection, five out of the six language teachers from this ELT undergraduate program were summoned to a briefing at the beginning of February (2015) where the objectives and aim of the research were thoroughly explained. The remaining teacher was not called to be in the briefing as she had

already participated in the pilot study in 2014, therefore only the new participants were taken into account. By the end of the briefing all five teachers freely volunteered to participate and together we arranged the research agenda, which was then emailed to them (see Appendix 5).

3.7.1 The research participants' teaching profiles and practices

There was a total of five teachers for my study, 4 women and 1 man, all English language teachers ranging from young adults all the way through mature adults. The teaching profiles and practices that I will now proceed to describe were reconstructed from the teaching stances and the information provided by them in the focus group, classroom observations and semi-structured personal interviews. However, the names given are pseudonyms in order to comply with ethical issues (see section 3.11) and the order in which they are presented goes in line with their teaching experience.

It is relevant to consider that I had personally worked in the ELT undergraduate program of the Humanities faculty of this university since June 2011 as the program coordinator before taking an official leave to conclude my doctoral studies. Therefore, the participants were well acquainted with me, as I am their former boss. This eased my access to the institution, to them as research participants and to their classes; hence it was the main reason for choosing these specific teachers.

Teacher Isabella

Out of all of the participants of this study Teacher Isabella is the oldest (47 years old) and the one with the longest English language-teaching career as she has been teaching for over 24 years. She began teaching in Elementary school, Middle school, and High school yet once she obtained her ELT degree she was hired to teach at this university. In the year 2011, she was accepted by the US Embassy to go on a year exchange program to Chicago, USA and work as a Spanish assistant at a city high school. Once she returned from this exchange program she was offered more classes at the Faculty of Humanities within the Language Department

and in the ELT undergraduate program, therefore she stopped teaching in other schools.

Isabella was very direct in what concerns her teaching decisions in this undergraduate program. For instance, she openly stated her strong position on the emphasis of teaching grammar, as she believed that since students were to become English language teachers themselves, a grammar base was fundamental. Nevertheless, she clarified that language functions and language use were seen first in class and only after students had grasped the language then she would overtly give the grammar explanations. Moreover, she mentioned to be convinced that not a single student should be left behind hence, she made sure that every student understood even if it meant re-explaining the topics in different ways during class or arranging after-class sessions to go over themes with whom ever needed it. Further and just like other teachers in this context, Isabella said she mainly followed the program and course book and complemented with own designed materials only once in a while. This was due to lack of time and an excessive amount of work but also because designing own materials had to be based on the program and class goals and that took time hence following the book eased her practice. Nonetheless and as a way to compensate for strictly following the program and course book, she regularly asked students for suggestions regarding the type of activities they would like to do and took their suggestions into account for subsequent classes.

Since the very beginning of the focus group interview Isabella stated that her main goal when teaching was for her students to learn, hence, she did everything that was in her hands in order enable learning. If the students corresponded in the same way or not, that was out of her hands, she was concerned with her part. Nonetheless and regardless of her lesson planning and activities being recycled from past semesters and focused thoroughly on the course program and course book, she did not have any problem on modifying or changing things according to the group. For Isabella, whatever happened in her English classes needed to be

formative and with the ultimate purpose of aiding students' learning instead of depleting it.

Teacher Lucia

Lucia is a 44-year-old English language teacher with 18 years of teaching experience. She first learned English informally in private home lessons and once she gained confidence in the language, Lucia enrolled in formal English language courses. Throughout her career she has taught in Elementary school, High school and now College. She obtained her ELT degree while in-service in the same undergraduate program where she now teaches. Recently she obtained a Master Degree — in Education — due to the newly imposed institutional requirement for all of its teachers to have such a degree.

Contrary to many of her colleague's teaching stances, Lucia had a different view on teaching in this undergraduate program. She was the only teacher to state that grammar was not her main focus regardless of the context. Her approach to teaching was integrating all of the language skills by teaching language functions and language in use, being her main focus communication. For her it was important that students were able to communicate by means of all of the language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) using the language functions learned in class. She treated students as students and provided them with the knowledge to learn English; she believed that knowing the grammar meticulously would be their concern once they graduated.

Additionally, she mentioned to follow the program as well as the course book because professionals had designed them, she did not see a valid reason not to trust their work. She also made use of past lesson plans and materials adapting them to the new group and environment. Her reasoning for doing this was the amount of workload this context implied and referred to the many constant and fluctuating administrative and teaching demands on behalf of the institution (these will be addressed in analytical Chapter 4, section 4.3.3). However once in a while

and when time allowed, she did bring extra activities and materials suggested by her students. Nevertheless, designing new lesson plans and bringing own-designed activities and materials was not always easy, due to the fact that if students did not respond well to them, she found it demotivating. Not only that but she found it difficult to stop the activity as she valued the time spent in designing and preparing the new lesson. Therefore, she usually finished the plan irrespective of it not working and would think of a way to review the topic for the next class.

All things considered, Lucia said to always try to look on the bright side when thinking of her teaching and that her decisions in class were threefold, directed in part by her students, by what the institution dictated and by what she felt was 'right' to teach.

Teacher Montserrat

Teacher Montserrat is a 38-year-old English language teacher with 12 years of teaching experience. She obtained her ELT degree while in-service as she explained that when she began teaching the ELT undergraduate program was non-existent in this state. Throughout her career she has taught in Elementary school, High school and currently in College. However, she has also taught preparation courses for Cambridge English Language Assessment such as: Key English Test (KET), Preliminary English Test (PET) and First Certificate in English (FCE) and became an official oral examiner for the same institution.

Montserrat learned English at the state university's local language center and once she completed her last advanced course, she was invited to teach in that same place. At first and since she did not have any teaching background or experience she mentioned to have taught using as the *facto* guides the English classes that she had liked as a student. Montserrat stated that her classes back then and up until today are very dynamic making use of visual aids and games, this was how she learned English herself and therefore believed that it would be effective for her students as well. This is called the ***apprenticeship of observation*** (see section

2.2.2, p. 26), which suggests that much of what teachers know about teaching comes from their real-life experiences inside and outside the classroom (Lortie 1975). However, she then found the need to develop in ELT and enrolled in a methodology course called In-service Certificate in English Language Teaching (ICELT) offered by the British Council in Mexico gaining knowledge on ELT methodology (skill learning). Montserrat has travelled to English Speaking countries such as the U.S.A and Canada for holidays but never for academic purposes. Finally, and as a means to complete her teaching profile, she too learned French and currently teaches French classes in this undergraduate program as well.

Moving away from her teacher profile I will now describe how Montserrat stated to carry out her practice in this specific context. To begin with, she mentioned that every time she started a new semester she used the diagnostic exam results administered at the beginning of the term in this undergraduate program to have a general view of her students' language levels but also to learn what language areas needed to be reinforced. She then made time aside during the semester to focus on these weaknesses apart from complying with the mandatory program and course-book. Further, Montserrat commented to have an integrated skills approach to language teaching trying not to focus as much on grammar. However, she mentioned that students in this context demanded thorough grammar explanations, as they too would become English language teachers therefore she was forced to provide them.

Moreover, she said her daily lessons were organized and designed according to the mandatory program and course book yet she also enjoyed designing games and bringing her own materials even though she did not do it constantly due to the amount of work and groups she had and the time designing materials and activities implied. The amount of work also affected the way she planned; usually she recycled old lesson plans and adapted them to the new group as she commonly taught the same levels every semester. One way she mentioned to adapt her

lesson plans was by taking suggestions from her students regarding specific areas or activities; these two activities were a common practice for the majority of the teachers in this study. Montserrat also mentioned that whenever she noticed that an activity was not working, she stopped it and changed it right away. Yet it was not always easy to do, as changing activities on the spot required having an adequate repertoire of activities previously developed (**reflection in action**, Schön 1983). Therefore, when she was not able to stop the class because she was not able to think of an activity to take its place, she would plan a follow up lesson with the same topic taking into account what she did, why the past lesson did not work and how she could do things differently — **reflection on action** — (Schön 1983).

All in all, Montserrat described her practice as dynamic and interactive and gave the impression that whatever she perceived to be her students' needs, was a prime focus in her lessons. Yet a key comment was that, she was working hard on being coherent with what she believed and what took place in class since it did not always match.

Teacher Monica

Monica is the youngest female teacher (33 years old) pertaining to this English language department. She began teaching after she obtained her degree and has been doing so for 8 years at College level in the Faculty of Humanities of this university. However, she is fairly new to the ELT undergraduate program, this was her second semester teaching English VII. Monica has never been abroad for academic purposes or holidays, so the English she knows was learned at the BA.

In what concerns her practice, she too stated that one of her main focuses was on teaching grammar due to the fact that students demanded the grammar explanations in this context. She believed this to be a trend not only for this undergraduate program but for other ELT contexts in Mexico. Monica commented that she had personally learned English this way and it worked well for her, which is the main reason she emphasized it in her classes (**apprenticeship of**

observation, Lortie 1975). Nonetheless she stated to be recently starting to change her approach to a more communicative one. Monica also agreed with most of the teachers in following the program, course book and in her particular case she also mentioned following the teacher's book. She commented that since this was a fairly new teaching environment for her, she relied on the suggested lesson plans from the teacher's book and used them as a guide for her class. Nonetheless when end results were poor or students did not understand, she designed a follow up lesson plan to review the topic. Monica also agreed with Lucia in that stopping a lesson was difficult for her to do, therefore she preferred to think of a way to review or re-teach topics in the following lessons.

Monica seemed shy and did not quite open up at first to share her thoughts. Nevertheless, considering her particular circumstances, it is my assumption that it was due to the fact that had recently joined the language staff of this undergraduate program. Researchers in the field such as Cosh and Woodward argue that "teachers will feel nervous about implicit judgments being made about their teaching" (Cosh, 1999, p.25), especially when adapting to a new teaching environment as was Monica's case. Further, Monica also mentioned that it was a challenge for her to teach in this context therefore she always wanted to make sure her explanations were clear and eased her students' learning. Especially since these students were not like the students she had in other undergraduate programs from the Language Department, the ELT undergraduate students observed her as an example of what should be done or not as an English teacher.

Teacher Daniel

Daniel is 28 years old and is the only male teacher within this language department. Daniel graduated from the undergraduate program in ELT where he currently teaches English II and IV as well as a content subject called Sociolinguistics. In the year 2009 and still as an undergraduate student he was accepted to a 6-month exchange program at Texas State University (USA) where he was able to experience living and studying in an English-speaking country. His

teaching career began once he had graduated (6 years); in his early years, he taught children and later moved on to teaching English at College level. Most recently he had been hired fulltime at the University Self Access Language Center (SAC) working as a counselor mainly in the speaking areas and served as a translator/ interpreter whenever English speakers visited the SAC. Nevertheless, he resigned from the position after 3 years as he commented it had become more administrative than academic and the activities he was doing did not have to do much with ELT. Moreover, at the beginning of 2015 Daniel applied and got accepted for a teacher exchange program called Fulbright Garcia Robles with the US Embassy. He would be a language teacher assistant at Lycoming College in Williamsport, Pennsylvania starting August 2015 all the way through April 2016.

Regarding his teaching in the ELT undergraduate program, he was thorough and very direct towards the stances and beliefs that informed his practice. He stated that regardless of the English level, his prime focus was on speaking and that students were able to communicate and understand ideas without fear. However, once he noticed that students did not have a problem communicating, he would then change to a strong emphasis on grammar. He mentioned doing this because knowledge of grammar and ELT meta-language (ELT academic jargon) as an English teacher was central for him. Further, Daniel was the only teacher to state that he did not like the course book and he would prefer if he did not have to use it. He therefore followed the program and only used the book when necessary and usually to reinforce grammar points. Other than that, he brought own designed materials from real English speaking contexts that did not always serve academic purposes. He believed that real material assisted better student learning of the language than academically designed material from textbooks.

Finally, he strongly believed that he was responsible for student learning only to a certain extent. For instance, if he realized that an activity or task was not working, he would immediately stop it and make use of his teaching repertoire to change the activity in benefit of the students (*reflection in action*, Schön 1983). He also

asked for student feedback once in a while and stopped his class to solve doubts whenever possible. However, if students came to class unengaged and uninterested, he did not hold himself accountable for them or their learning outcomes. He stated that the process of English language learning and teaching was a shared responsibility and that students needed to do their part as well, especially since they were mature college students.

Now that I have presented the research design along with the data collection instruments, my reasoning for the change in my role as a researcher in RP as well as the context and the participants of this study, I can now proceed to discuss my data analysis.

3.8 The data analysis

In qualitative research, the data analysis is more often than not carried out in line with the research aim and objectives but also to the type of information this aim seeks to uncover. As repeated throughout this thesis, the aim of this study is to gain insight and report the cognitive transformation that participants in this study went through while systematically engaging in collaborative reflective practices; therefore, my data, which, is mostly in the form of written extracts from oral narratives (transcripts of the focus group interview, the one on one feedback conversations and the final personal teacher interviews) needed to respond to this enquiry.

3.8.1 Analyzing narratives through content analysis

Narratives in English language teaching are prized as they “offer insights into people’s private worlds, inaccessible to experimental methodologies, and thus provide the insider’s view of the processes of language learning, attrition, and use” (Pavlenko, 2007, p.164). Narratives can aim to provide accounts on **subject reality** (findings on how ‘things’ or events were experienced by the respondents),

life reality (findings on how ‘things’ are or were) and **text reality** (ways in which ‘things’ or events are narrated by the respondents) (Denzin 1989). This will depend on the researcher’s purpose for reading and examining the narratives and the analytical approach on choses to engage in according to the research aim and objectives. Accordingly, in order to gain insight into the aim of this study, in other words to access participant teachers’ subject and life reality a **content analytical approach** was selected. Narrative analysis of subject reality and life reality commonly appeal to some form of thematic or content analysis in order to examine thoughts and feelings in a lived process but also to examine research contexts in a historic and diachronic manner when the context plays a key role in the development of research as is the case of this study (Pavlenko 2007).

Content Analysis is an approach to documents that emphasizes the role of the investigator in the construction of the meaning of and in texts, “there is an emphasis on allowing categories to emerge out of data and on recognizing the significance for understanding the meaning of the context in which an item being analyzed (and the categories derived from it) appeared" (Bryman, 2004, p.542). The purpose of following this type of analysis in this study was to discover logical groupings and connections among categories that would shed light on my research aim and questions. Further, since analysis in both my research method (**Action Research**) and my type of analysis (**Content Analysis**) simultaneously occur as the data collection process begins, I was able to highlight the most salient points and themes which proved important in the subsequent data collection phases -in this case for the COs and final personal interviews-. This is one of the main advantages of content analysis, the sensitivity to recurrent themes salient in participants’ stories and thus to themes that are important for the following research stages and overall development of the study.

My literature review was also drawn upon to decide on the way the concepts of ***teacher development, teacher knowledge, reflective practitioner*** and ***reflective practice*** would be considered within the analysis and later reported in the analytical chapters of this study. Hence, the process of data analysis was both data driven and theory driven. An example of such analysis is provided in Chapter 4, figure 5 where in order to analyze the focus group transcript (see Appendix 13), the categories and subcategories selected were theory driven and one last category was emergent from the data.

Based on this largely bottom-up inductive analysis approach, the following is an overview of the steps followed in data analysis:

- Transcription of texts (*the units*);
 - pre-coding and coding to capture both descriptive labeling and more abstract features of the data by using words and sentences (*the units of analysis*);
 - growing ideas by comparing categories and making links between them;
 - and interpreting the data by drawing theoretical conclusions from the texts.
- (Dörnyei, 2007:246)

In addition to this explanation, each analysis chapter presents a discussion of the specific procedure followed, indicating the steps and tasks undertaken to analyze the data for each research-question of the study.

Nevertheless, and as helpful as content analysis may be for narrative examination, researchers have argued about this type of analysis not giving justice to the interpretive nature of narrative data suggesting that content cannot be separated

from context and form. They have also pointed out that content or thematic analysis may lack a theoretical premise or established procedures for the matching of instances to categories. Further, they have suggested an overreliance on repeated instances and exclusive focus on what is in the text, paying little attention to ways in which narrators use language to interpret experiences and position themselves as particular kinds of people (Pavlenko, 2007, p.167).

Yet in this research, the main reason for choosing content analysis over other types of analysis was multiple. Firstly, it went in line with my research objective, which was to capture each one of the participants' experiences when engaging in RP. As will be described in chapters 4, 5 and 6, even single instances that were unique to individual participants were considered as units of analysis and categorized accordingly. The reconstruction of the participants' teaching profiles and practices previously described was possible due to this type of analysis (see Appendices 14-18).

Secondly content analysis eased the managing of the vast amount of data gathered and transcribed which were: a full transcription of the focus group interview that lasted two hours (see Appendix 13), full transcriptions of the one on one feedback sessions with each participant teacher which lasted around an hour to an hour and a half each (10 transcriptions in total) and full transcripts of the last semi-structured personal interviews which were an hour to an hour and a half long as well (5 transcription in total). Hence, the use of a linguistic mode of analysis would have resulted in a significant amount of time invested that did not necessarily meet the type of information this research intended to focus on and report. I will engage a deeper discussion regarding the latter in the upcoming section (3.8.2) where transcription processes are described.

All things considered, content analysis resulted successful as I approached its weakness in advance by adopting a specific theoretical framework and making use of it in the categorization process and making connections to the emergent themes from the data. Further, reiterative topics within the data were analyzed carefully and placed within the necessary categories, even if repeated yet with a different purpose in order to contemplate all relevant information (see figure 5, p. 120). I am aware that the data obtained in this study could benefit from other types of analysis, which consider **text reality** such as discourse analysis in order to examine how participants utter their stances and position themselves and others while making sense of their RP experience. However, it will be an option for future RP studies that consider other research aims and which involve less data.

3.8.2 Transcription

In qualitative research, transcription is considered an integral and important initial phase of the data analysis (Duff, 2008, p.165), especially when the researcher is to be the one undertaking the transcription and analysis procedures as was my case; therefore, the need to include it as part of this section.

More often than not, the conventions used when transcribing and the level of detail included will depend on what one is studying and the theoretical perspectives implicit in the transcriptions. In my case since the objective of my data collection was content-based interested on participants' subject and life realities and not on conducting a linguistic analysis; I selected two transcription variations according to Mary Bucholtz (2007) along with her transcription conventions.

My reasoning for using Bucholtz transcription variations along with the transcription conventions was due to her view on transcription as an interpretative process

(what is transcribed) as well as a representational process (how it is transcribed). “Thus transcription involves both decisions about content (What does the transcriber hear on the recording and include in the transcript?) and decisions about form (How does the transcriber write down what she or he hears?) (Bucholtz, 2000, p.1439). These decisions respond to the context that include the transcriber’s own expectations and beliefs about the speakers and the interaction being transcribed; the intended audience of the transcript and its purpose.

Bucholtz distinguishes between 4 main transcription variations and for the purposes of this study I make use of two of them. The first type of variation is called *global representation of talk*, which involves the basic research function of transcription. This variation does not include detail into “the structural features of the speaker’s talk, such as prosody, pauses, repairs or hesitation markers, or other features of interest to discourse analysts” (Bucholtz, 2007, p.786). This general format is more often than not used in the transcription of spoken discourse in non-linguistic research in social sciences, which is carried out for the purpose of examining discourse content and not analyzing discourse structure, as was the case of this study. However, it does take into account that the comments and utterances are the result of considerable co-construction by the researcher and the participants of the study, comments and stances on behalf of participants that would not be accessed otherwise.

“The second type of variation is based on differences, both unintentional and deliberate, in the minute details of *notation and format* that may occur when researchers reproduce their own or others’ transcripts for analysis. The third type of variation involves *orthographic variability* within a single transcript and its relationship to phonological variation” (Bucholtz, 2007, p.786). These last two variations are related to linguistic analytical positions towards transcript analysis, taken into account when transcribing data extending it to its analysis. Finally, the

fourth type of variation concerns languages other than English dominant in the research context, *variation in translation*. In the case of this study, Spanish was the language that predominated through out the data collection process both during individual interaction with the participants and during the group discussion. This type of variation is rooted in differences in the translation of morphemes across utterances and speakers within a single transcript. As I was the one transcribing and translating the data for my research, conveying the same intentions and meaning regarding the participants' participations in both English and Spanish was a premise.

Overall, Bucholtz argues that each type of variation has potentially significant analytical and political consequences; yet, it is necessary for social researchers to understand the motivations and effects of variations as an inevitable part of the transcription process and of linguistic representation in general. With regard to the focus group interview and the final personal semi-structured interviews carried out in this study, they were completely transcribed as I was looking into detail and thorough accounts of my participants' stances and beliefs. I must highlight that because I was interested in each one of these teachers' positions, even single instances were meaningful and therefore considered. However, the scenes transcribed from video-recorded COs were only those discussed with the teachers, which were of prime interest for my study. This was mainly done as I wished for the excerpts to provide content and to enhance readability (Duff 2002).

3.9 Triangulation

"The exclusive reliance on one method for data collection in a study may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular slice of reality being investigated" (Cohen et al, 2011, p.141). Therefore, drawing upon the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behavior is usually preferable, also known as *triangulation*. Triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to explain more in depth, the fullness and complexity of

human behavior by studying it from more than one angle yet there are different ways to go about it. Denzin (1970b) differentiates between *time triangulation*, *space triangulation*, *combined levels of triangulation*, *theoretical triangulation*, *investigator triangulation*, and *methodological triangulation*, being this last one the approach selected for my research. **Methodological triangulation** uses the same method on different occasions or different methods on the same object of study.

As a major concern of mine was that this research and its end results truly contributed to the field of RP, the use of **methodological triangulation** by means of a focus group, video-recorded classroom observations and semi-structured personal interviews was carried out. I used methodological triangulation as a means to strengthen the weaknesses that each one of these data collection methods may have independently and at the same time enable better understanding and outcomes for the whole of the study. I understand with Golafshani that the mere use of “multiple methods, such as, observations, interviews and recordings will in itself lead to more valid, reliable and diverse constructions of reality” (2003, p.604). Examples of data triangulation are provided through out the whole thesis where accounts and extracts from the data analysis are given to strengthen discussion and arguments. The use of internal cross-referencing was also enhanced so readers could find more detail as needed.

3.10 Limitations of the research

Regardless of the fact that for this study I adhered to the research rationale and design previously described, it is important to bear in mind that all research methods have limitations as methods are only partially convincing in certain research contexts. With regards to this study, there were some limitations identified while implementing collaborative RP, the following discussion develops on them more closely.

Classroom Observations are amongst one of the most common used approaches in RP within the ELT field and have continued to aid teachers and their practice in many ways. Yet, its use can be maximized in RP research if academic scholars and teachers are fully aware of their present circumstances and participants are willing to cooperate (Farrell 2001). This leads to the first limitation encountered in this research which was to persuade teachers to participate particularly as video recorded classroom observations would be the main source of data collection and feedback. It has been argued that if prospective research participants' psychological state is strong (Dewey 1933; Wallace 1991), teachers will most likely allow for any classroom observation as long as such visits pose no undue complication in schedules or other institutional constraints. Yet if it is week, observations will not easily take place due to the fact that teachers may feel some degree of intrusion and will feel nervous about implicit judgments being made about their teaching (Cosh 1999; Farrell 2001). Further and aside from this existing general fact, teachers in this study were used to conforming to trending CO paradigms where teaching practices were evaluated by more experienced practitioners hence my researcher profile and experience in ELT were also questioned. Therefore, in order to persuade teachers to participate in RP research by means of COs, researchers will need to have previously established a coherent stance towards RP and accordingly a clear research aim and objectives. Researchers should also be ready to comply with their stances throughout the course of the whole study, giving their research procedures credibility.

With regards to this study, I — as the guiding researcher — established my stance in RP as presented at the beginning of this chapter and explained my research rationale to the teachers in order to motivate them in becoming research participants. Once the teachers accepted, I actively sustained this stance by engaging in consistent actions. To begin with, I refrained to give directive feedback regardless of participants not being able to notice teaching discontinuities in the post-observation sessions while reviewing their class videos. I insisted on

prompting teachers yet allowing them to engage in critical reflection at their own pace. This study provided examples of how difficult it was in the first feedback conversations to access teachers fixed paradigms and teaching positions as in their eyes, class outcomes were as expected so there was no apparent need for discussion (see extract 3 in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1). It was through much video reviewing and sensible prompting that participants slowly began to gain teaching awareness over their practice. This initial stage can be challenging as the researcher and the participants may be reviewing the videos with traditional mentor-trainee roles, which the researcher must control by following a facilitator role regardless of initial discrepancies between what teachers notice or fail to notice and what the researcher observes. Further, flexibility on behalf of the researcher must exist when the reasoning behind practices do not coincide because as reflexive researchers, our own constructions of teaching paradigms can and should be adapted through this type of collaborative RP studies. Imposing an opinion or view on participants' teaching not only is evaluative but it also drifts from RP purposes.

Another significant limitation identified was the reduced number of COs conducted for this study (2 per teacher). Previous studies (Gün 2011) have found that when participants are exposed to extended periods of video recorded COs, they are able to not only engage in in-depth critical inquiry of their practice but they are also cable to complete full RP cycles such as the model advanced by Schön in 1983 (Reflection on action, Reflection in action and Reflection for action). The reason for conducting only 2 classroom observations in this study was due to the constricted schedule participant teachers must comply with. For instance, these participants needed to administer 2 mid-terms and a final exam during a 4-month period considering a 2 week Easter break and the days that teachers do not teach as they are administering exams, checking students' portfolios and Self Access Center Reservations (see Appendix 5 and Figure 6, p.164). Consequently, I could not interfere with this schedule nor could I program more COs in a shorter period of

time, as I would have interfered with effective reflective practice processes. Understandingly, only two video-recorded classroom observations were allowed and scheduled. Regardless, in future research, it would be reasonable to include more COs in an extended period of time — probably two terms — as opposed to this study which only lasted 9 weeks with a 2-week holiday period in between. Nonetheless, this has not affected the main purpose of the study.

Finally, it is important to reiterate that previous empirical studies where more COs were conducted, were also carried out in controlled research scenarios such as training courses and with student-teacher participants (see section 2.5.2, p.58) as opposed to in-service teachers in their daily routines as this study presents.

Another possible limitation is how representative this study is, as it was conducted in a local context in Mexico with 5 participants. However, and different from the participants in the pilot study who pertained to the Humanities Faculty's EFL staff, which consists of about 15 teachers in total. The 5 teachers in this research belonged to the ELT staff of the ELT undergraduate program of this same faculty consisting of a total of 6 teachers therefore my study participants represent almost 100% of this community's population. Hence, these five English language teachers who teach pre-service English language students depict various teaching profiles and practices as well as the working conditions of this context as it was reported in section 3.7.1. For instance, Daniel and Monica personify the recent ELT graduates who began their teaching careers once they graduated and who were presented with opportunities to study and travel abroad for academic purposes while obtaining their teaching degrees. On the other hand, Isabella, Lucia and Montserrat portray the experienced teachers who have had multiple English teaching jobs and were part of a professionalization process as in-service teachers to comply with the permanence conditions that this institution established.

Still and regardless of these participants falling into two broad generational categories, their differences in teacher knowledge, teaching experiences and personal involvement in this study led me to gather and map a vast amount of data so as to inform their experiences while participating in this RP research in a deep way. Readers can identify what is similar to their contexts and benefit from the findings by examining corresponding situations.

A final difficulty had to do with the physical space required for carrying out professional conversations with teachers. As the guiding researcher, I was not provided with an exclusive space to conduct my research as the ELT undergraduate program's infrastructure only included 9 classrooms, one teacher's room and one main administrative office. However, I was able to hold the initial research briefing as well as the focus group interview in the teachers' room, with previous consent of the BA Coordinator. Yet, this space is designated for the use of the whole ELT undergraduate staff hence other teachers not within the research were able to freely access while conducting this study. This disrupted the pace of the conversations at times, study participants were less expressive and used a lower tone of voice when other teachers outside the study were present. It is more likely that this might have affected the extent to which teachers engaged in discussions and the type of information they chose to provide at those specific times.

The post-observations sessions, which required the participants and I to review class videos were also affected by this issue. Sometimes feedback sessions were carried out in the classrooms if there were not any subsequent classes but mostly the participants and I met in the teacher's room. In the case of this study, non-participating teachers were very understanding and avoided staying in the room if a feedback session was taking place. They tried to be quick when walking in for class material or the tape-recorders and if they needed to be there, they used

headphones and positioned themselves with their back towards us as to not interfere with our discussions. Nevertheless, circumstances might be different in other contexts hence physical spaces for research should be considered.

All in all, this section unpacked some of the possible constraints researchers might encounter when conducting Reflective Practice research with in-service teachers in similar contexts by means of video recorded classroom observations. Such constraints need to be expected so that their implications can be prepared for in advance. Nevertheless, this first experience by the willing volunteers could be taken to a larger scale — if appropriate — and therefore allow for a more extended generalizability. As Blaxter et al. state, “if your research and its results are of potential use to your participants and context, it is more likely that it can be implemented in similar contexts” (2006, p.155), in this case for the rest of the EFL staff in the different faculties of this university, in other states in Mexico and in different world regions.

3.11 Ethical Issues

Research ethics refers to “the moral principles guiding research, from its inception through to completion and publication of results and beyond’ (ESRC, 2010:40). With regards to this study, Ethics were informed by the guidelines produced by the University of Southampton’s Research Governance Office (RGO) as follows.

Before starting my field work, approval from the RGO was necessary to conduct the research requiring approval of five different forms submitted for review: Protocol (see Appendix 6); Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix 7); Consent Form (see Appendix 8); Risk Assessment Form (see Appendix 9) and Student research project checklist form (see Appendix 10). Once I had their approval, I submitted an official document (see Appendix 11) to the university

faculty where the pilot and research studies were to be carried out in order to be granted *access and acceptance*; “access to the institution or organization where the research is to be conducted and acceptance by those whose permission one needs before embarking on the task’ (Cohen et al., 2007, p.53). After receiving a formal reply letter from the head of the faculty allowing me access to the institution (see Appendix 12), I then went on to conducting a briefing with the teachers and only those who freely volunteered were taken as research participants.

With regards to *confidentiality*, only the volunteer teachers were handed a detailed *participant information sheet* (see Appendix 7) and were asked to sign the *consent forms* where they agreed to participate freely and most importantly withdraw at any point of the process (see Appendix 8). Informed consent is defined as “a statement, usually written, that explains aspects of a study to participants and asks for their voluntary agreement to participate before the study begins” (Neuman, 2006, p.135). The consent forms also stated that the information gathered by means of the data collection instruments would all be anonymous and presented as such for the purpose of this study. Nevertheless, if I failed to comply with what was agreed in the consent form, the participants could report this to the Research Governance committee from the University of Southampton. Regardless, it is essential to consider that it may be possible that the ‘categorization of data may uniquely identify an individual’ (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.367) in spite of efforts to protect teachers’ privacy, small scale research as was this case, is vulnerable to this type of threat.

3.12 Summary

The above methodology has attempted to obtain suitable data in order to answer this study’s aim and the three research questions. It offered an overview and justification for the research approach selected in order to gain insight into the cognitive transformation that English Language teachers go through when systematically engaging in Reflective Practices. The discussion then moved on to

present the aim and research questions along with the research design that explained my choice of data collection instruments. It also described my role as the researcher, the participants of the study as well as the data analysis and finally, the possible limitations of this research. The following three chapters will now put forward the most salient findings obtained by means of the methodology here presented.

Chapter 4: Teachers' positioning and understanding of their practice

4.1 Introduction

The analysis of the data gathered by means of the instruments presented in Chapter 3 was broken down in order to respond separately to the three main research questions of this study. That is, each question will address relevant findings and therefore will be given a separate chapter. Thus, this chapter is concerned with:

What is the reasoning behind the participants' teaching practice prior to engaging in a Reflective Practice process?

In order to respond to this first research question this chapter is divided into three sections; in first place an account of the data analysis procedure is given, providing a step-by-step explanation as well as a coding map to ease the understanding of such process. I then make use of the theory in which my research was based to contrast, compare and give a full account of the reasoning behind teachers' decisions and actions in this specific context. Finally, and as a secondary purpose of this first research question, evidence is offered supporting that participant teachers possess reflective practitioner behaviors according to the teaching information they provided. This was done with the purpose of knowing whether their current teaching condition would allow them to successfully engage in the subsequent phases of this reflective practice study without derailing their condition as language teachers or the possible outcomes of the investigation.

4.2 The data analysis procedure

My interpretivist stance towards social reality obliges me to present the multiple perspectives of one same event through the direct experience of people, in this case through the experience of the participating teachers. This position extrapolated to how I analyzed and interpreted the data, as I believe knowledge is gained through a strategy that "respects the differences between people and the

objects of natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Grix, 2004, p.64). In short, to make sense of data in terms of participants’ definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities (Cohen et al. 2007).

To gain knowledge in order to respond to this first research question I followed Dörnyei’s four-phase **content analysis approach** (see section 3.8.1, p.101), therefore the following steps were taken:

1. This RP investigation began with a focus group interview, which was carried out at the beginning of February 2015. I then immediately went on to transcribe the audio recording of the interview making use of two of Mary Bucholtz’ (2000) transcription variations as well as her transcription conventions (see section 3.8.2 and Appendix 13). Her view on transcription as an interpretative process (what is transcribed) as well as a representational process (how it is transcribed) goes in line with my interpretivist approach to this research, which takes the context as key but also the researcher’s role and stances into account. Bucholtz distinguishes between 4 main transcription variations and for the purposes of this study I make use of two of them. The first type of variation I used is called *global representation of talk*, which involves the basic research function of transcription. This general format is more often than not used in the transcription of spoken discourse in non-linguistic research in social sciences, which is carried out for the purpose of examining discourse content and not analyzing discourse structure. Additionally, it takes into account that the comments and utterances are the result of considerable co-construction by the researcher and the participants of the study, comments and stances on behalf of participants that would not be accessed otherwise. The second transcription variation I made use of was *variation in translation*, which concerns languages other than English dominant in the research context. In the case of this study, Spanish was the language that

predominated throughout the data collection process during individual and group interactions as well as during the classroom observation discussions. As I was the one transcribing and translating the data for this research, conveying the same intentions and meaning regarding the teachers' participations in both English and Spanish was a premise.

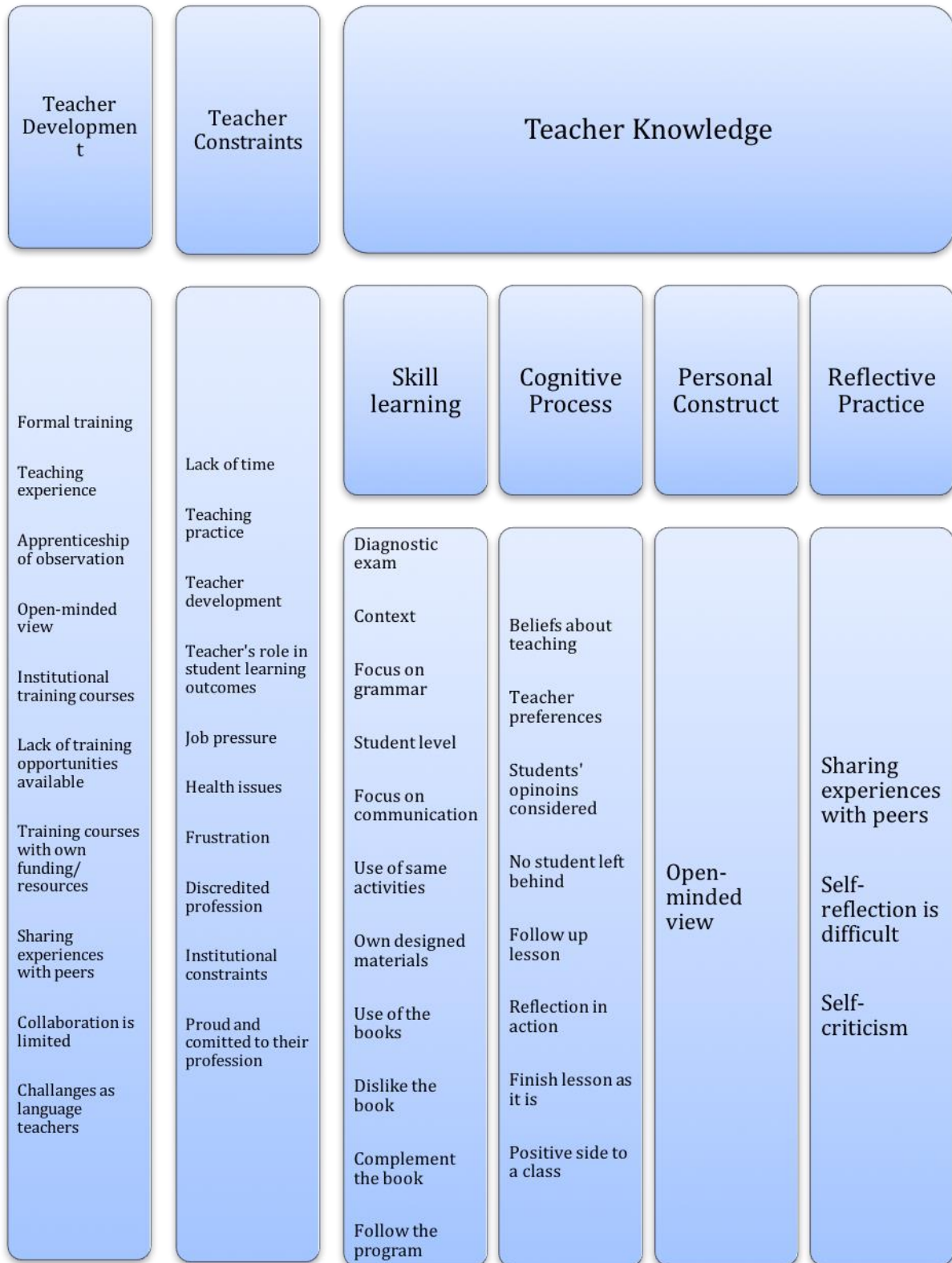
2. Once I had the transcript of the focus group, I then proceeded to set organizational categories drawing on the literature review. I centered on the key theoretical notions of this study: ***teacher development, teacher knowledge, reflective practitioner*** and ***reflective practice*** as well as on the most recurring and salient themes emerging from the data. I then coded the data according to each category setting units of analysis; this required scanning “the data carefully, usually several times over, to see what categories suggested themselves, or emerged” (Ibid, 2010, p.107). Miles and Huberman (1994) are in favor of mapping out this process to have as visual display of themes and relationships emerging from the data. Hence, I too mapped the coding process for the focus group transcript as figure 5 shows.

As mentioned throughout the literature review, *teacher development* is the academic field of study in which my research was positioned; therefore, it was one of my head organizational categories. Within teacher development another fundamental concept is that of *teacher knowledge* being this last one a second head organizational category. However according to the teacher knowledge concept I adopted for my research, the notions of skill learning, cognitive process, personal construction and reflective practice are embedded within teacher knowledge and were taken as sub-organizational categories. Finally, the third and last general category, *teacher constraints*, emerged from the data.

Each category includes several units of analysis; some of these units reappeared or overlapped in the focus group interview yet not always within the same category therefore they too are repeated in the coding map. An example of this would be the unit of analysis called '*sharing experiences with peers*' found in the subcategory of reflective practice where sharing experiences with peers was part of the actions one of the teachers took in order to enhance critical reflection of his teaching. Yet this unit of analysis also appeared in the category of teacher development however it was mentioned as a technique used to better a teacher's practice (see Figure 5).

It is convenient to mention that in order to recreate the participants of this study's teaching profiles and provide the thick descriptions of their practices presented in section 3.7.1, p.93, a similar map to figure 5 was produced for each individual teacher (see Appendices 14-18). More specific units of analysis were present per participant, which also served as observing criteria in the subsequent classroom observation phase as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Figure 5 Focus group coding map



3. After coding the entire focus group transcript according to the main themes, the next step was to grow ideas by comparing categories and subcategories and making links between them.
4. Finally, after making the links and comparisons I was able to interpret the whole corpus and draw conclusions based on my theoretical framework as well as emergent themes. The following discussion provides this interpretation.

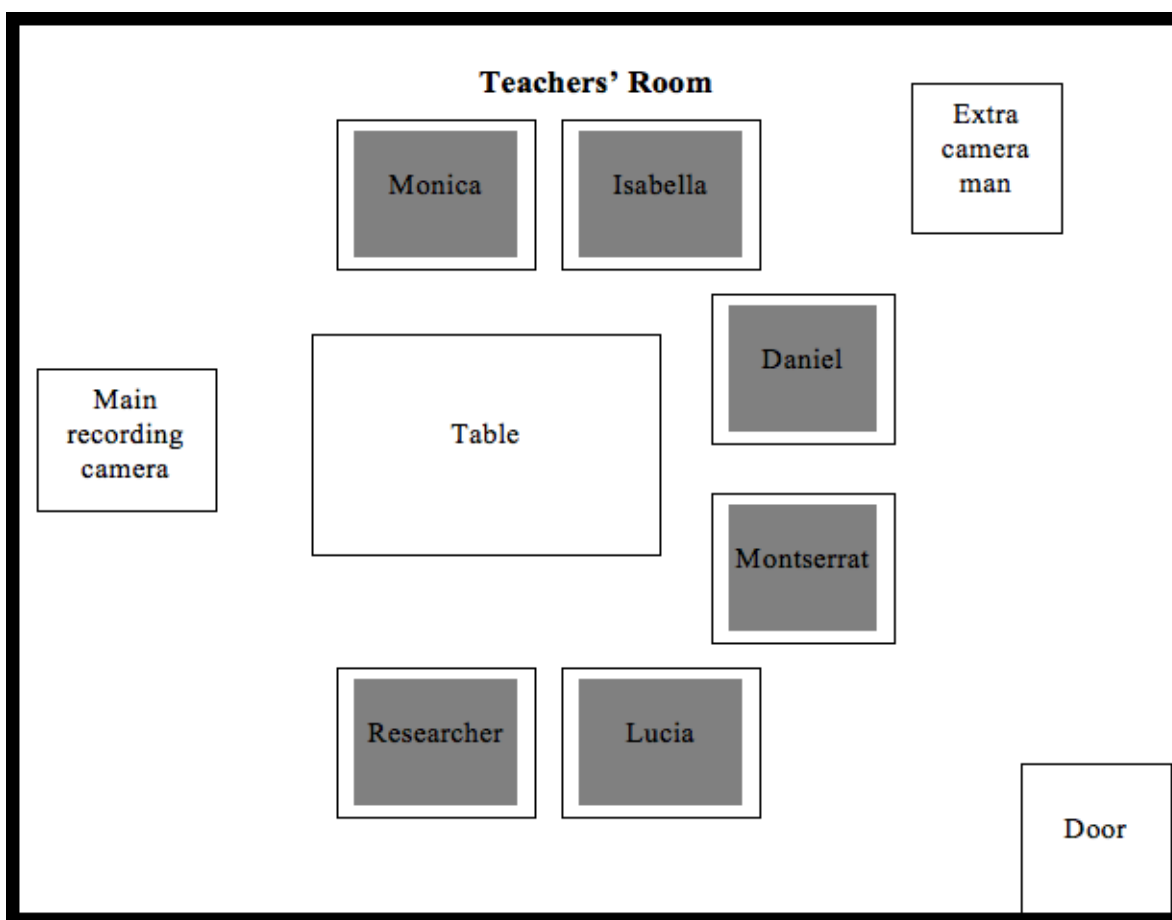
4.3 A view into the participants' English Language Teaching

A central belief guiding this study is that knowing where you stand regarding your professional career is a premise on trying to move forward and further develop. Accordingly, knowing what participant teachers do and why they carry out their teaching practice in certain ways was a fundamental jumping off point for any awareness or development to occur (Wallace 1991; Farrell 2001; Gün 2011; Viera and Marques 2012; Louw, Watson and Jimarkon 2014). However, teachers in this context are rarely given the opportunities to converse about their teaching or uncover themselves as teachers in their naturally occurring settings — classrooms and institutional contexts —. Hence, this study aimed to provide such a space by means of a ***focus group interview*** where together, participant teachers were able to articulate teaching within the contexts of their own experiences and working environments. The focus group interview gave teachers the possibility to exchange opinions and standpoints built on by the comments and positions of their peers enhancing a professional space for discussion.

The focus group interview took place on February 6th 2015 at 9:00am in the Teacher's Room of the English Language Teaching undergraduate program of the Humanities Faculty of this university. With previous consent from the head of the faculty (see Appendix 12), the five participants pertaining to the English language teaching staff were summoned (see Map 1). They are — starting with me the researcher at the bottom-left and moving to the right — Teacher Lucia, Teacher

Montserrat, Teacher Daniel, Teacher Isabella and Teacher Monica. There was an extra cameraman present at the back of the room just in case the main camera malfunctioned or ran out of battery.

Map 1 The focus group interview setting



Commentaries on behalf of the participants after the focus group interview was carried out positively supported this collegial dialogue in the sense that teachers were appreciative for having the opportunity to express and hear the opinions of their colleagues regarding their profession as a space like this had not been provided to them in the past (Farrell 2008, 2011, 2013; McCabe 2009). Roberts firmly believes that a teacher's sense of plausibility is developed through ongoing

engagement with the experience of teaching but also through interaction with others and their versions of reality (1998). This was the underlying assumption for conducting a focus group interview as opposed to individual interviews.

The following sections provide a detailed view into the teaching stances of the participants of this study. Let us remember that in this study a *stance* is understood as “an overall attitude towards understanding classroom life. It is a general or pervasive pattern that characterizes a teacher’s continuing responsiveness to the particular circumstances of his or her teaching” (Copeland et al. 1993).

4.3.1 The knowledge behind the practice

In Chapter 3, section 3.7.1, I recreated an account of the participants’ profiles and practices according to the information provided by each one of them in the data collection process. This was done not only to gain knowledge about their practice but most importantly to understand the reasoning behind it. After learning how and why the participants of this study teach the way they do, it is of premise to contextualize and discuss those practices according to the theoretical background this thesis is based on. Yet before entering this discussion, table 2 presents a brief summary of these teachers’ profiles to remind us of who they are. Teachers are presented in a seniority and length in teaching career fashion.

Table 2 The study participants

Teacher Isabella	Teacher Lucia	Teacher Montserrat	Teacher Monica	Teacher Daniel
Isabella is a 47-year-old English language teacher with 24 years of teaching experience. Throughout her career she has taught in Elementary school, Middle school, High school and College. She obtained her ELT degree while in-service and is currently teaching English 1 group a and content subjects in the ELT undergraduate program. Isabella also teaches English as a Foreign Language in other undergraduate programs.	Lucia is a 44-year-old English language teacher with 18 years of teaching experience. Throughout her career she has taught in Elementary school, High school and College. She obtained her ELT degree while in-service. Lucia currently teaches English 1 group b in this undergraduate program as well as content subjects in Spanish yet in the Education undergraduate program of a federal university in the state of Hidalgo called "Escuela Normal Superior de Hidalgo".	Montserrat is a 38-year-old English language teacher with 12 years of teaching experience. Throughout her career she has taught in Elementary school, High school and College. She has also taught preparation courses for Cambridge language examination certificates such as: KET, PET and FCE. She obtained her ELT degree while in-service as well as Isabella and Lucia. Montserrat currently teaches English VI, French I and French II, as well as content subjects in this undergraduate program.	Monica is a 33-year-old English language teacher with 8 years of teaching experience. She has only taught English at College level and she began her teaching career once she had obtained her ELT degree. Monica teaches only one subject in this undergraduate program, English VII. However, the majority of her classes are English as a Second Language in other undergraduate programs.	Daniel is a 28-year-old English language teacher with 6 years of teaching experience. In his early career, he taught children and later moved on to teach English at College. He began his teaching career once he had obtained his ELT degree. Daniel currently teaches English II and English IV, as well as content subjects in this undergraduate program and has some ESL classes in other undergraduate programs as well.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this first research question is trying to gain insight into the reasoning behind the participants' practices. Therefore, describing how each teacher perceives to carry out their teaching was fundamental yet not enough to entirely encompass the reasoning behind some of their actions and decisions. In chapter 2, section 2.2.2 I stated that **teacher knowledge** informs the reasons and believes behind someone's practice. Let us remember that this thesis looks at teacher knowledge in terms of four conceptualizations: **Skill learning** that deals with teaching decisions and choices regarding lesson planning, classroom management, evaluation, all part of 'how to' methodological aspects of

carrying out a class. **Cognitive process**, which has to do with teacher background, experiences, beliefs and assumptions; more closely related to 'why' and the motives for conducting a class in a certain way. **Personal construction**, the process of reorganization and reconstruction of knowledge through new experiences and **Reflective practice**, which in short is the critical examination of own teaching experiences (Richards and Farrell, 2005). It was based on this schema (see figure 5) that data from the focus group interview dealing with these concepts were analyzed in order to construct and present a full account of teachers' context based awareness, personal values, beliefs and teaching knowledge and how these guide the actions carried out in their practice.

A prescriptive view to grammar teaching

Again, in section 3.7.1, p.93, I presented each teacher's personal perception of what English language teaching involves in this context. However, there were two recurring themes in their accounts regarding their teaching decisions and choices, which I believe important to be initially discussed. The first was related to a choice on whether to view grammar as a prime focus on their day-to-day classes as opposed to having an integrated skills approach to language where grammar would not predominate over the four basic language skills –listening, reading, speaking and writing-. The later, dealt with the way the participants of this study planned their daily lessons and the materials they made use of.

Regarding the first, it was suggested that this teaching context strongly defined the participants' teaching focus. According to the nature of this ELT undergraduate program, a central teaching objective for 4 out of the 5 participants was on explicit/overt grammar explanations. The teachers' reasoning behind this stance was that these undergraduate students were to become future English language teachers therefore in-depth grammar knowledge was fundamental. Extract 1 provides Teacher Isabella's perception for this emphasis on grammar.

Extract 1

Researcher: *As teachers, I know we are supposed to follow a program, a text book and so on yet, we also teach what we think is important to teach, right? So, what do you invest on as teachers in your classes? What is important for you to teach?*

Isabella: *Personally, I focus on my audience. I check who will be my audience and in the particular case of this undergraduate program I center heavily on grammar... because they are to become future teachers, so they will not, I always say this, the type of English that students from this undergraduate program will learn is not to go on holidays or travel abroad for some time, or just to communicate. They will teach so they need all the bases and according to the program revision that we've made, there is not a single subject that gives them this grammar base.*

If we refer back to the participants of this study's teaching accounts, one can observe that Daniel, Monica and Montserrat supported this prescriptive grammar view, based on a perceived contextual necessity. Their stances relied on the notion that English language teachers should dominate English grammar in order to suitably comply with the profession. Hence, as their undergraduate students are to become English Language teachers, they believe the overt teaching of grammar is essential. This view towards ELT is specific of this context as Isabella explains to me in extract 1, in other undergraduate programs of the faculty the type of English that students learn is to communicate in order to travel, study or live abroad. The distinction teachers make towards their approach to ELT, either for communication or for teaching, also gives insight into what they believe an English teacher should know, which in this case resulted in an exhaustive knowledge of grammar.

Further, in extract 1 Isabella also mentions the syllabus of this undergraduate program to reinforce her view on favoring prescriptive grammar teaching. Truly, after a personal revision of the syllabus (see Appendix 19), one can infer that it is a valid assumption to state that the only exposure that students have to knowledge of the language (grammar knowledge), is what they are taught in their English classes. There are not any other content subjects or institutional subjects in the syllabus that present students with this opportunity. Hence, this background

provides academic evidentiary support to enhance these teachers' prescriptive grammar stances.

Nevertheless, and regardless of this strong and well-based posture, teacher Lucia challenged their grammar oriented position arguing that students should be treated as students and not as teachers. According to Lucia, students' role is to learn and therefore she adopted an integrated skills approach to language teaching giving an equal weight to the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing and the two sub-skills: grammar and vocabulary. In her opinion, learning a language is easier by integrating these skills in content that allows students to communicate or understand certain language functions, rather than to expose students to grammar explanations that in their current role may not seem relevant. All in all, and however contradicting stances were at a certain point, it is a fact that the majority of the teachers in this context feel that students should move from level to level with an in-depth knowledge of grammar. However, after Lucia put forward her communicative teaching position, the rest of the teachers clarified that they first taught language functions and language in use and once students were able to produce such functions, they would then proceed with the explicit grammar explanations.

Recycling past lessons

Moving on to the subject of lesson planning, material design and so on, the five teachers pointed out that for the most part they recycled lesson plans, activities, exams and tasks semester after semester yet adapting them according to the new students and group dynamics. This was mostly due to the fact that looking for materials and designing activities to fit the program goals and objectives was time consuming and after all, they still needed to comply with the institutional program and textbook. Further, these teachers mentioned to have more than one class hence the amount of work this implied did not allow for new lesson planning and own-designed activities on a regular basis. This is the case for many of the language teachers in this context as activities such as lesson planning and grading

is usually carried out in their own time. It is understandable that teachers cannot over-invest their time on work related matters when they have so many classes, multiple jobs as well as personal lives that require their attention; this will be discussed more in depth in section 4.3.3.

Nonetheless, there were specific circumstances where teachers were willing to invest more time yet this entirely relied on what they called, 'the audience'. According to these teachers there were occasions where students demanded and required more attention, which meant accepting suggestions and designing new lesson plans. Those students — irrespective of their level — were so committed to their learning that they too as teachers felt more committed to deliver classes that met their expectations. Extract 2 shows some of the teachers in this study discussing this point.

Extract 2

Researcher: *So, there are groups where you feel more willing to design new class activities and there are groups that you perceive as indifferent so you use the same lesson plans from previous semesters without changing anything...*

Daniel: *Yes, you can even tell when you're home planning. You think that it's with a certain group and you feel even more committed. You say: I need to do my best with this group.*

Monica: *But there are also groups where you think, same lesson plan... whatever hahaha...*

Daniel: *Yes, there are groups where you don't feel the same pressure... not even to do things right.*

Isabella: *Yes, I agree. The audience has a lot to do with planning. I remember about a year ago, there was a student in one of my groups and he would always ask the most specific questions about grammar. A lot of the times I did not have the answer and when that happened I had to compromise to look it up for the next class. His classmates were not that happy that he always asked but the fact that he asked kept me 'on my toes'. I knew I had to think of his possible questions and the answers too... although... he wasn't always entirely convinced with my explanations.*

In excerpt 2 teachers react to a statement about group dynamics, they report to adapt according to their 'audience', audience in this context refers to the type of students they are delivering their lessons to. However, according to their narratives teachers make a further distinction between what I call 'passive' and 'active' audience. Thus, for example, Isabella recalls a story on a demanding student (active audience) from a previous year who 'kept her on her toes', making her prepare for that particular student's possible inquiries. Daniel too comments on the commitment he feels when having an active audience, he describes feeling more engaged and committed as opposed to how he feels with disengaged students (passive audience) where past lesson plans are recycled without further modifications.

One can conclude that in this context, when the type of students and group dynamics provide the extrinsic motivation to prepare an additional activity or redesign an entire lesson plan, teachers are willing to put in the extra effort. Especially in this specific context as participants firmly believe that students in this undergraduate program are more aware of their needs and preferences as language learners.

However, all five participants stated that putting the extra effort and conducting activities and tasks that eased and enabled student learning was due to their professional commitment. Nevertheless, all of them also agreed on making students responsible for their share on the teaching-learning process. The two younger teachers, Monica and Daniel felt very strong about this point and stated that to a certain extent the majority of the students were dedicated to their learning yet others did not care much (passive audience) thus they could not hold themselves accountable for their learning outcomes. In response to my question on teachers' responsibility for students' learning achievements in extract 3, Daniel shares a personal experience about how the pressure he felt in the past for trying to assure that every single student learned in his classes affected his health and why he can no longer hold himself accountable for all learning results.

Extract 3

Researcher: *It's not an easy task being a teacher. Especially when you are held accountable for 100% of your students' learning outcomes. Yet, may I ask, personally do you feel responsible for students' learning? Do you feel it all comes down to you as teachers?*

Daniel: *I believe it's a shared responsibility. We as teachers try our best but sometimes, or at least in my case, I try not to pressure myself so much anymore because it's frustrating. I even had to go to the doctor once due to stress colitis. When the doctor asked my profession, I said an English teacher. He replied: but that's easy. I said: I wish! So I told myself, I'm not going to... I am going to worry but to a certain extent. And I won't take everything as my responsibility because I used to think that everything was my fault. Well at the beginning I used to think that everything was my fault, even more in my English classes because it was their base. Yet some students compromised but others came into my class disengaged and careless, they were just 'chilling'.*

From this experience, Daniel learned that it was best to change his view and stop taking all of the responsibility for his students' learning or worrying in excess about job related matters. He commented that now at the beginning of each semester he made it a point to share his stance with the students so they could also commit to their education. Generally, everyone agreed in making students responsible for their learning yet Lucia in a very realistic way pointed out that even if teachers held students accountable for their learning, the institution looked at teachers as being ultimately responsible for reaching the learning outcomes required. For instance, if a certain teacher had an irregular number of students failing or dropping out of her class, the BA coordinator had the responsibility to summon the teacher and ask her to implement certain strategies to 'rescue these students'. It is more often than not that these strategies are executed aside from regular class schedules adding to the heavy workloads teachers already comply with. Therefore, Lucia advised her colleagues not to only focus on what they believed to be their role as teachers, overlooking the institution's expectations.

It is common that teachers regardless of other existing contextual factors are held accountable for overall results and learning outcomes in this particular context.

Frustration in ELT

I decided to move the discussion towards participants' practices. I aimed to understand what are teachers' reactions when things go according to plan and what their response is when things do not go as expected. In extract 4 Monica gives a brief yet concise opinion about this issue.

Extract 4

Researcher: *What happens when you are motivated and pumped up and you planned a very interesting class yet when you execute, things don't work out as designed. What do you feel? What happens then?*

Monica: *Well, if I see that definitely things are not working, I think of a different way of presenting things in a follow up class. I mean, you get frustrated but you have to try again, don't you?*

Researcher: *So you prefer to plan a follow up lesson... You don't stop your class and change the activity, you finish the lesson and then think of a different way to present or review the topic.*

Monica: *Yes, I mean... I realize when students don't understand. I know classes are linked and I know I can't move forward if a previous topic is not well understood. But I always finish my lesson, as it is...*

After setting the scene to discuss this topic, it was interesting to observe that the immediate and almost unison response of all five teachers was the word: 'frustration'. The teachers felt frustrated especially because, as said before, they all mentioned to set personal time aside to prepare new lessons when required hence, their expectations are always for the lesson plans to run successfully. Therefore, when the opposite occurred they felt dissatisfied and dealt with this frustration in different ways. For instance, teachers Monica, Isabella, Lucia and Montserrat consciously made the decision to finish their lesson plans regardless of the negative outcomes. Their reasons mainly relied on the time spent on planning; they felt it unfair to stop the lesson and change the activities after investing a considerable amount of personal time in them. Thus, they preferred to prepare a follow-up class to consolidate or review the topic in a different way.

This was a shared view amongst all of the teachers except for Daniel. Contrary to this initial stance Daniel found it pointless to continue with a certain task or activity once he realized that it was not working. Therefore, he stopped the activity and changed it to something that worked well in past as he comments in extract 5.

Extract 5

Daniel: *I don't, I don't continue but in order to make the decision to not continue with a certain activity and change it... well, it may seem that you are pulling that new activity from under your sleeve. And maybe you are pulling it from under your sleeve but it's because in that moment you realize that it is not the way and that it's not working. So, you change things for something you did in the past, something that worked well.*

Researcher: *That is not easy to do, it requires a teaching repertoire, practice and experience...*

Daniel: *Yes, because students can tell when you are improvising, you need to improvise well.*

In his participation, Daniel explains that there is nothing wrong with stopping a class if things are not resulting effective however difficult that may be for some of his colleagues. He argues that even if students notice he is improvising, the change in activity for something that has been successful in past classes is what should be relevant. However, he also explained that even after changing tasks and activities, results might still not be as expected so just like the rest of the teachers he would plan a further lesson until he feels that in general students have grasped the topic.

One might think that the automatic response of a teacher when an activity is not being successful is to stop and change things in benefit of the students. However, '**reflection in action**' (Schön 1983) requires an ample range of activities and tasks that teachers can make use of at the moment of teaching. This can happen as long as teachers have been through the process of '**reflection on action**' (Schön 1983), which means that they have previously reflected on good and bad teaching

days de-constructing and re-constructing their teaching knowledge and repertoire to make use of when necessary. However, that is not always the case; this may be due to a lack of opportunity or space for critical reflection of their practice or other personal factors such as the time spent planning — like these study participants — , which may strengthen their view on concluding a lesson in spite of unfavorable results.

Gaining new knowledge and reconstructing old knowledge in ELT

This last point leads the discussion in the direction of how the participants of this study have reconstructed their knowledge throughout their teaching careers. However, as teachers in this study are hardly given the opportunity to discuss this matter, it was challenging to access information that more often than not, teachers do not consider. *Personal construct* and *Reflective Practice* as described in the literature review are processes inherently difficult to access and explain especially if one is not entirely aware of them. It is by creating spaces for reflection — such as this focus group interview — that teachers can think about them and express a stance (Farrell 2008, 2011; McCabe 2009).

Still, the closest evidence from the data that can be drawn upon regarding personal construct are comments on the teachers' behalf towards being *open to change*; whether it was when designing their lessons, complementing their course books or allowing for suggestions on behalf of their students (see extracts 2, 3 and 6). This was of relevance to my study due to the fact that ***open-mindedness*** is one of the key qualities of a reflective practitioner regardless of differences in teaching stances and opinions (Dewey 1933, 1934; Zeichner and Liston 1985).

Within the topic, the notion of ***critical reflection*** or ***reflective inquiry*** was also discussed. Teachers were able to give more insight as they understood critical reflection in the sense of looking back into one's teaching and drawing some general — 'good' or 'bad' — conclusions about the classes taught (Gün 2011). Isabella for example saw herself as being very self-critical as extract 6 exemplifies.

Extract 6

Researcher: *Do you try to be coherent with what you say you do and with what actually takes place in your classes? Because it's like a process, it takes time to get there... Do you ever think of this or of what happens in class?*

Isabella: *I do. I am very critical of myself and if I mess up, I know I need to change things. I don't mean to say that I'm always analyzing my classes or that when I come out of a class it's the first thing I do, but I do analyze my classes. I am interested in knowing why things do not work, why do certain activities not work in certain contexts or with certain students?*

In extract 6, Isabella interpreted my idea on “being coherent” as being ‘*self-critical*’, which according to her implies analyzing her practice for “right and wrong” actions. She reveals having a worry when things “do not work” and mentions making it a point to finding the causes for failed activities. Nevertheless, she does not provide a clear case or reveal the specific actions carried out to give solution to her worries. This is an example of a natural teaching worry, which does not necessarily promote a further action to advance practice, what Farrell calls, a ***weak form of reflection*** (2008). Further, Isabella’s focus when analyzing her teaching is only on problematic areas yet not on successful practices or in understanding her teaching as a whole as researchers on RP suggest (Wallace 1991; Farrell 2008).

Contrary to Isabella’s perception, Lucia did not view self-reflection as an everyday activity or an easy task to do overall. She argued that one way or another she always tried to find the positive aspects of her lesson even when things did not go as planned. Lucia mentioned that regardless of her teaching years up until today she was not able to tell herself that what she had done was wrong; her point is clearly illustrated in extract 7.

Extract 7

Lucia: *It's really hard being critical of oneself and with what you're doing. For me, regardless of the teaching years I have, it's difficult for me. Because I've invested time, I've put a lot of effort and then to tell yourself that what you did is incorrect... it's hard, isn't it? It's very*

hard. Even when I am conscious that things in fact went wrong, I try to tell myself that things were not that bad after all.

Extracts 6 and 7 are examples of why current researchers in the field support collaborative over individual reflective practice. Participants in this study have difficulty noting the difference between analyzing a teaching situation which according to Farrell (2008) is simply a **weak form of reflective practice**, “a thoughtful event where teachers informally evaluate various aspects of their professional expertise” (p.2) without further implications to their teaching and afterwards simply move on to the following teaching event. As opposed to a **strong form of reflective practice** where teachers “systematically reflect on their own teaching and take responsibility for their actions in the classroom” (Farrell, 2008, p.1), looking at both the positive and negative aspects of their teaching (Wallace 1991). Lucia verbally states not being able to admit flaws even when she is aware of them, which strengthens my view on aiding teacher reflectivity through collaboration.

Summary and Discussion

In words of the participants, a factor that influences their teaching is their context; the fact that these language teachers teach in the ELT undergraduate program of this university enables them to believe that ‘grammar’ should have a stronger weight over communication or any other language skill. The reasoning behind this thinking is that students are to become language teachers themselves and see it as their job to assure that they are competent in knowledge of the language, which according to their perspectives seems to be the base for English language teaching and learning yet only in this specific environment.

Further, a recurring issue that was brought up was the fact that these teachers’ lack of time and excessive workloads did not allow for the implementation of new teaching material and activities on a regular basis. All five teachers stated to recycle old lesson plans and materials and relied on the book for their day-to-day classes. This however, was not viewed as a negative aspect of their teaching.

They mentioned that if their circumstances were different, in other words, if they had less classes or a single job, they would be willing and able to implement more own designed materials and lessons accommodating their students' needs. This however, is not particular of this context as demanding schedules and overwhelming workload appear in most of reflective practice research as central constraints (Farrell 2001; Gün 2011; Hobbs 2007; Vo and Nguyen 2010). It is my understanding that these teachers and possibly teachers in similar contexts carry out their practice following institutional programs and textbooks to ease their day to day teaching routines, not due to a lack of commitment.

Moreover, teachers stated to establish a two-way compromise with their students that allows for feedback and comments on how to better their practice or adjust to their students' needs. Therefore, and regardless of having to strictly follow programs and text books, their students' needs are also taken into account, what Vygotsky (1934) called **scaffolding** (see section 2.3.2, p.34). This flexibility on their behalf shows participants are **open-minded** and can move away from the traditional teacher transmission model to a context based and student needs teaching approach when necessary (Dewey 1933).

According to these teachers' accounts, critical reflection of their practice is not in any way simple. As stated by Wallace (1991) to become aware of one's own practice may lead to unpleasant emotions without necessarily leading to any way forward as was Lucia's case. What is more, reflective inquiry does not only focus on bad teaching events, it can and should also be based on positive teaching outcomes. Yet the teachers in this study were not able to mention a single positive teaching experience or their reactions to them, they mainly focused on the feeling of frustration when things did not go as intended. Moreover, as explained earlier, all of the teachers except for Daniel decided to conclude their lessons even when the expected results were not showing and had valid reasons for doing so, the main ones relate to the time spent planning and the lack of teaching repertoire to make use of on the spot. This strengthens my view that not everyone is able to

engage in reflective practice individually; their teaching preferences, stances, beliefs and context may in their perception be adequate and not allow them to advance even when their flaws are indeed noticed. Hence, a reflective inquiry process in language teachers can be eased through systematic collegial support.

Thus far, I have discussed the participants of this study's teacher knowledge, which informs the majority of their actions in the classroom. Having this overview of where they stand regarding their practice was central to this first research question yet what they did in order to reach those current stances had to do with their course of action towards developing over the years, which will be discussed in the next section.

4.3.2 Teachers' transformation across time

The following data describes what these teachers have done and currently do to further develop as language teachers and the many constraints embedded in the nature of teacher development in this specific context.

Professionalization of teaching

To begin with, all of the participants agreed that the teaching stances described in previous sections were due to a mix of formal training and teaching experience. However, the older teachers who have longer teaching careers — Isabella, Lucia and Montserrat —, engaged in ELT training as in-service teachers. They commented that their repertoires and development had been constructed more through direct teaching experience than by formal training. For example, Montserrat mentioned that at the beginning of her career since she did not have any ELT methodology awareness, she began to teach as she had been taught. However, she only used as models the classes that she had liked and where she had obtained the most benefit which according to her were usually very active classes with games (*apprenticeship of observation*, Lortie 1975). The two younger teachers -Daniel and Monica- with less teaching years on the other hand began to teach once they had obtained their teaching degrees so their teaching

repertoires were more theoretically informed.

This scenario is not uncommon to find in this particular context, the vast majority of the language staff of this university falls either into the group of the older teachers or to the group of the younger teachers. I am aware of this as in 2007 I worked full time at the University Language Office where I was responsible for the hiring process of the new language teachers and seeing that the staff — new and old — complied with the teaching profiles established by this university. I therefore had access to the entire staff's teaching profiles and was able to establish my previous assumption. The teachers pertaining to this study that went through the process of in-service professionalization described in Chapter 1 were Isabella, Montserrat and Lucia. The three of them enrolled in college either full time or part time while teaching to obtain their ELT degrees. They too had to join language development courses to familiarize themselves with the format of the current standardized language exams in order to sit an exam and obtain a B2 language certification according to the CEFR as the institution required. It is relevant to comment that this university did not provide financial support for such professionalization processes; they were carried out under personal funding in the majority of cases.

Researchers in the field of Applied Linguistics who have a critical view on ELT have studied this homogenized type of professionalization phenomena, which according to them responds to the social developments in which they occur not contemplating classroom practices, teachers or students (Ritzer 1993, 2012 and Block et al 2012). With regard to this study context, the agreements stated by the SEP (1960 and 2008) in charge of regulating education in Mexico and then the institutional standards and norms put forward by the ULO in 2000 and 2013, dictated the abuts of professionalization for Isabella, Lucia and Montserrat amongst many other teachers. Ritzer argues that for all involved in these types of standardized teaching profiles and professionalization processes, what he calls the 'McDonalization of society' — packaged one-size fits all experiences —, the inevitable outcome is a dehumanizing, standardized environment in which teachers

and students are effectively ‘caged’ (1993, 2012).

The prime focus is on homogenized subject knowledge and skills to effectively deliver lessons. In fact, courses such as the Cambridge Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA), the United Kingdom Postgraduate Certificate in Education (UK PGCE) and in the case of this research the British Council’s ICALT are evidence of ‘McDonalization’ in the field of ELT (Gray and Block 2012). Teachers are required to follow fixed teaching methodologies and scripts that lack face validity, as they do not contemplate contextual factors at the expense of teacher reflection. Moreover, the worldwide expansion of standardized language certifications, which cover a range of purposes, formats and ages are also considered to be another part of McDonalization in ELT. The fact that these tests are grounded on the descriptors that the CEFR marks allows for a ‘caged’ way of teaching in order to achieve ‘caged’ levels in standardized exams. As the data shows, the emphasis in professionalization for this university has been more on instrumental rationalism in benefit of institutional compliances and bureaucracy, in detriment of more context-sensitive, theory informed teacher knowledge.

Regardless and however draining this process was for Isabella, Lucia and Montserrat, a key component in complying with the institution as well as acquiring more teaching knowledge and experience, was that these teachers *remained committed, open to change* and *willing to learn*. Extract 8 presents Isabella’s view regarding this matter.

Extract 8

Isabella: *If the fact that you’ve been teaching for a certain amount of years means to you that you’ve gained enough experience and know it all, that’s where you’ll end up losing yourself as a teacher. You need to understand that teaching is like the health area, it’s evolving all the time and you need to be open-minded to receive, acquire and evolve as well. Students are constantly changing too.*

Isabella explains that teaching experience is of value yet not enough to forever consolidate you as a teacher in the ELT profession. She suggests that just like any other academic field, ELT is constantly evolving and teachers need to evolve accordingly. Nonetheless, the idealistic/ romantic view to professional development discussed at the beginning of Chapter 1 (sections 1.2 and 1.3), is the base of Isabella's position. Isabella puts forward her view of what teacher development should be yet she does not support her position with clear examples from her own practice (Zeichner and Liston 1985; Sparks-Langer 1992; Tomlinson 1999; Gün 2011). However, and of value to this study, Isabella's opinion is an illustration of the ideology that many in-service teachers had to adapt in order to maintain their jobs at this university but also to keep up to date with the recent ELT graduates like Monica and Daniel. Newly graduates that had the advantage of a proper methodological teaching background and in some cases like Daniel were provided with the opportunity to teach and study in English speaking countries adding to their teaching knowledge and experience.

Ongoing teacher development in ELT

Thus far, I have presented information regarding the type of professionalization that teachers were involved in to properly comply with this institution's requirements at the beginning and throughout their careers. Nevertheless, and of interest to my research is the type of continuous development that teachers have been exposed to over the years in order to better their practice. However, according to the participants of this study's narratives, they have found more constraints on trying to develop than opportunities to advance as professionals.

To begin with, all five participants pointed out that the institution did not offer any type of updating training programs for ELT. This university began a compulsory professionalization campaign in 2010 where all of its staff had to enroll in summer or winter courses on three main developmental areas: English as a Foreign Language, The use of the new Information and Communication Technologies and on Educational Research Skills. The content in all three courses was delivered in a

way that could be applicable to the teachers' everyday practices. However, as the training programs were offered to the entire university staff, meaning they were not exclusive to the ELT or EFL staff, the programs did not accommodate these teachers' particular needs for development. This was made evident when out of the five teachers, Montserrat was the only one who mentioned having benefit from the institutional training programs as extract 9 shows.

Extract 9

Researcher: *Ok, now regarding your development as teachers, what have been some of the ways in which you have developed your teaching? What has worked for you as language teachers to keep yourself up to date in ELT?*

Montserrat: *Well... the majority of my training courses in ELT have been on my account but I have also taken the training courses that the university offers; I didn't know anything about technology. I now know how to stream a video in class, but definitely if you're going to take a training course it needs to be applicable to your English classes...*

Montserrat in extract 9 explains how she learned one thing that was applicable to her English classes from the teacher education courses offered by the institution, yet the rest of the participants did not have anything to share. For the most part the participants of this study mentioned that they had to look for ELT courses elsewhere, on their own time and with their own economic resources. And in doing so, they faced constraints such as having long commutes because this state — Hidalgo — did not offer suitable ELT training programs. Moreover, when teachers were able to find and pay for fitting ELT Updating courses, they needed to be outside their class schedules otherwise the institution would not grant them permission to attend.

The following excerpts were taken from teachers Isabella and Lucia who were discontent with how the university had undertaken professionalization and the negative effects it had on their teaching.

Extract 10

Lucia: *They want you to become the best teacher there is... but how? How can I become a better teacher? I know I need to increase my language proficiency yet how can I do this? Not by teaching, I need to train myself. It's true that you learn by teaching, you do learn, but not what you really need. I need to learn more teaching strategies, so I need to go with the experts and here in our context we don't have any. I think most of you feel the way I do... So, what do I do? I end up reading or asking someone who has taken more trainings than me how to do things and end up doing everything to become better on your own. So, the institution wants better teachers but you have all these constraints such as time, money, and a lot of things. And to become better professionals you have to invest with time and money, don't you? So, it's really hard, at least for me it's hard.*

Isabella: *I have to agree with Lucia, I don't know if it is only here in this university, or the state or a bigger context but ELT is not being covered regarding training. We require higher levels of proficiency to what is actually offered. English teachers are neglected; we are not taken into account like teachers of other academic areas, they say: "oh, it's just English". In our university, the development office does not have trainers with suitable backgrounds, they are recently starting to look for them. And if you look for courses on your own, you don't have the university's support, so what do you do?*

As a teacher trainer, I have been involved in the area of English language teacher education in Mexico and Latin America. It has been through my experience that I can relate to and agree with the constraints Lucia and Isabella state when trying to professionally develop. It is more often than not that the institution directs the areas to carry out development-training programs, which teachers compulsory enroll and comply with. Nevertheless, not always do these mandatory trainings benefit their English classes. Further, when training programs do cover the area of ELT, they are 'one size fits all' neglecting personal interests and needs for development favoring the institutions' necessities (Ritzer 1993, 2012 and Block et al. 2012). These development programs support to an extent teachers' practices however without reinforcement or continuity, teachers tend to fall back to their daily routines

and known practices as stated in section 1.3, p.3.

Additionally, a point raised by Lucia and Isabella and that I had not become aware of — not as former head of this undergraduate program or as a teacher trainer —, was the lack of support teachers received from the university when trying to develop on their own. If indeed these teachers have made the effort to develop their practice, a sense of demotivation and frustration can be inferred from their positions due to the lack of support from their school authorities in doing so. This frustration is understandable when one can observe the existing dichotomy in this context; where teachers are not presented with appropriate opportunities for development in their academic field and they are not supported either when engaging in development on their own. Regarding this last point, Lucia further argued that due to these tight constraints and to the demands of the institution, the way teachers complied with teacher development was not always suitable. In her case, she holds a Master degree in Education, as the institution was demanding that teachers obtained a postgraduate degree. She therefore enrolled in a program that suited her needs regarding distance, economy and field; regarding the latter, Education was the closest academic field to English language teaching. However, she was aware of the fact that her degree in education did not impact her English language teaching profession. The content and knowledge that she acquired in her postgraduate degree was mostly related to administrative educational matters and curriculum design for elementary and secondary schools in Mexico.

One can conclude that this university is worried about ELT teachers having suitable teaching profiles and therefore sets norms and regulations for teachers yet it does not invest in them in order to ease the undertaking of its requirements.

On a more positive note, Daniel commented that as a way to overcome these existing constraints, he made use of the experiences of others to aid his development and practice (see extract 11).

Extract 11

Daniel: *Experience helps, and aside from my own experience, the experiences of my colleagues help a lot too. I am able to ask colleagues about my doubts and their opinions on how I intend to approach teaching.*

Researcher: *Really? You ask your colleagues for help?*

Daniel: *Yes, but it's because we have a relaxed environment here and we are also closer.*

Daniel positions himself as being open to others' point of view and standpoints, position that is to a certain extent explicable after reading his teaching profile. Being the youngest teacher in this study and after having lived and studied in an English-speaking country where he was in need to ask for guidance, collegial discussions were not outside his teaching comfort zone. Nonetheless and contrary to his position, Isabella argued that not everyone was open to collaborate and as teachers you did not always feel comfortable asking others for advice. Still, Daniel insisted that this particular context — the ELT undergraduate program — was more lenient and teachers and colleagues kept closer professional relationships that eased collaboration, Monica in agreement with Daniel stated the following:

Extract 12

Monica: *It's true, I feel more comfortable asking teacher Isabella something than going to someone from the general language department, over there is no trust between us.*

Monica puts forward an opinion about the lack of engagement and trust existent in the faculty language department, therefore collaborating with each other is not seen as an option. This is not the first time this situation is brought up in this research; in the results of the pilot study it was put forward as one of the main reasons why collaboration amongst teachers did not occur. On the contrary, Daniel and Monica stated that the context of the ELT undergraduate program where teachers are more acquainted with one another; collaboration was viewed as a

possibility. Additionally, the fact that there was a teacher's room made a difference, other areas like the faculty language department did not have this physical space so it made it difficult for teachers to talk to each other or even see each other on a regular basis. The rest of the participants agreed mentioning that having a teachers' room did make them become more acquainted. The fact that the area was available to plan, grade or have lunch allowed them to engage in conversation frequently.

The rest of the teachers did not give an opinion regarding teacher development, however when Lucia and Isabella put forward their thoughts, the group nodded showing their support and agreement to what these teachers stated.

Summary and Discussion

At the beginning of Chapter 2, section 2.2.1, I described the difference between: "teacher *training*" and "teacher *development*", terms that are often confused and used interchangeably. Where "**Teacher Training** introduces instructional knowledge, methodological choices available and familiarizes trainees with a range of terms and concepts that are the common currency for language teachers" (Mann, 2005, p.104). This generally takes place in formal educational courses, while **Teacher Development** requires received and experiential knowledge and is an ongoing process. As explained earlier- **received knowledge** is the base for teachers going from syntax, second language acquisition, to pedagogic components and knowledge about the language. Whereas **experiential knowledge** is where new understandings emerge from *experience* -the process of reshaping existing knowledge, beliefs and practices- (Mann 2005; Wallace 1991).

From the information gathered in this study and presented in this section regarding teacher development, the teachers were able to describe their teacher professionalization and training processes yet there was hardly any evidence on the efforts made to engage in teacher development. As previous research suggests, teachers have difficulty distinguishing between the terms training and

development and therefore believe to be developing their practice only through training (Mann 2005). The participants of this study were not able to indicate specific examples of how they tried to improve their practice except for Lucia who mentioned *reading* and *asking others for help* and Daniel who *shared experiences with peers* to aid his development.

Nevertheless, and however limited Lucia and Daniel's examples were, their participations supported the direction in which my study was going. Extensive research has been carried out as to how non-judgmental, dialogic, collaborative discourse enables teacher reflection and development and reveals that teachers who have taken part of it generally hold positive opinions (Anderson, Baxter & Cissna 2004; Edge 2002; Farrell 2008, 2011; Mann 2002; McCabe 2009). Hedgcock states, in these professional communities, teachers of varying degrees of expertise carry out their roles as practicing technicians who learn from each other (2005, p.301). By articulating an experience, talking about their reasoning with others and reflecting on general theories and methods within the contexts of their own experiences; assists not only to obtain new perspectives but to develop self-awareness as a teacher allowing for real teacher development to take place (Johnson 1999). I believe this is one of the most suitable ways to fulfill the goal of teacher development not through a 'transmission' model of education in which knowledge is simply deposited into the brains of teachers, but through a process in which teachers learn and continue to develop their skill in dialogue within a professional community (Johnson, 2006; Slimani-Rolls and Kiely 2014).

Overall, teacher development resulted being a sensitive theme to talk about, these English Language teachers faced many constraints such as a *lack of time*, *lack of appropriate opportunities for improving performance*, *lack of support from their institution (economical and administrative)* and therefore took professional development in their own terms doing what was within their reach and resources. These presented constraints support my reasoning for conducting collaborative as opposed to individual reflective practice research. It is my view that when facing

limitations such as the ones stated by these teachers, the feelings of frustration and demotivation increase therefore collegial support with appropriate opportunities for development can make a difference. Moreover, teachers can complement each other's strengths and compensate for each other's limitations and therefore, achieve outcomes that might not be possible for an individual teacher working alone (Farrell 2008).

Many teacher constraints regarding teacher development were presented in this part of the chapter; nevertheless, I found it necessary to dedicate an entire section to this matter as different type of limitations were recurring themes throughout the focus group interview. What is more, they were presented as aspects affecting directly the participants' practice; therefore, the following section is put forward.

4.3.3 Teachers' everyday worries and constraints

As mentioned in section 4.2 of this chapter, the data I obtained from the focus group interview was arranged according to key organizational categories. The information discussed so far has been theory driven yet my final organizational category arose from a recurring theme emerging from the data: *teachers' worries and constraints* (see figure 5). This issue encompassed several aspects of these teachers' daily practices aside from what I have already presented hence it was imperative to examine and discuss them separately. Three main areas surfaced within the topic of constraints and worries, the first one deals with the institution's administrative demands and impositions, which teachers must comply with. The second has to do with the status that the English language teachers hold in this university and how it has affected their sense of agency as professionals and finally the role of teachers' personal lives within their ELT profession is also discussed. These three main themes incorporate additional constraints, yet I decided to arrange them under these headings for organizational purposes.

Administrative demands and impositions

There were several opinions with regards to how administrative matters affected or limited these teachers' practice. Administrative constraints in this context refer to the managerial situations externally imposed to teachers by the institution — be it internal policies, the head of the faculty or the undergraduate coordinator —. Extracts 13 and 14 discuss an administrative procedure such as calling the role, which may seem as a routine activity for any given teacher however, it has become a constraint for the teachers in this context.

Extract 13

Researcher: *Do you feel that you can conduct your practice as you please? I mean, regardless of conforming to the institution's policies and regulations or a program and textbook; are you free to teach according to your personal teaching stances?*

Daniel: *Usually, yes... but the administrative side of the institution tights our hands a little more. For instance, why should we have to keep calling the role and not allow students to come in late? At a college level, I don't think that's correct but those are the rules and we have to follow them.*

Daniel's positioning in extract 13 explains why he sees pointless having to call the role at this academic level as according to him calling the role takes time away from class. He argues that students know their class schedules and the responsibility that being enrolled in college entails. Looking back at Daniel's teaching profile, one can observe in his last statement that he is strongly in favor of treating students as college mature adults holding them responsible for their actions. Nonetheless, he too understands that while being part of an institution and regardless of his personal opinion, he still needs to comply with what the university requires from him as a professional.

Isabella in extract 14 added another issue regarding role call; she had recently been informed that teachers would have to call the role online. At the beginning of every class teachers will log in with a special computing account to the university's

role call website, look up their class and call the role so there is an immediate record of the students attending class.

Extract 14

Isabella: *I agree with Daniel, the administrative part... this is where they begin to take your teaching autonomy away. Now they have included another modality for the roll call, we're going to call the roll online. But we do not have Internet in the campus or computers in the classrooms.*

The fact that the institution establishes certain formalities to administratively control its undergraduate programs is common in this context. However not providing teachers with the proper equipment, tools and settings for the new established formalities is common as well. Nevertheless, the institution does not realize that failing to comply with their part hinders teachers' jobs by making them focus on things such as the roll call, which should not be a concern at all. Most importantly, Isabella talks about the institution taking her 'teacher autonomy' away, which is the focus of her intervention. Current writers in the field define teacher autonomy in terms of three dimensions (Smith, 2001, p.5):

- **A capacity for self-directed teaching:**

'In determining the initiatives they take in their classrooms, teachers must be able to apply to their teaching . . . reflective and self-managing processes' (Aoki 2000; Little 2000; cf.; McGrath 2000, Thavenius 1999, Vieira, e.g. 1999, 2000).

- **Freedom from control over their teaching:**

'In practice, . . . language teachers often work in situations where their capacity to grant learners greater freedom in learning is severely constrained' (Benson, 2000, p.115); 'Learner autonomy develops within the

space that the teacher is able to open up for it in their interpretation of the broader constraints on the learners' freedom of action in learning' (Breen and Mann 1997, Lamb 2000).

- **A capacity for self-directed teacher-learning:**

'It is unreasonable to expect teachers to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners if they themselves do not know what it is to be an autonomous learner' (Little 2000; Savage 2000; Smith 2000).

In the case of Isabella and Daniel, they are both referring to how the institution hinders their freedom from control over their teaching by telling them to carry out the action of calling the roll and also how to go about it. These teachers argue not being against norms to regulate administrative matters, as they are necessary, yet on how tightly these norms are established.

Another organizational constraint everyone agreed one were the low English levels that students were admitted into the undergraduate program, which did not match the institution's admission requirements. This program lasts 8 semesters therefore students have 4 years to reach a B2 English language level according to the CEFR. If students fail to do so, they are not able to graduate or obtain their degree. Teachers in this context are aware of this and the institution is aware of this too as they designed the admission requirements; still, students without proper language levels are admitted in order to increase the university's enrollment numbers. However, once the students are part of the institution, the teachers are held accountable for students reaching the standard levels of performance, especially in this undergraduate program. Teachers therefore mentioned having to set time aside from their classes to work on students' language deficiencies, divide the groups at times and implement strategies so students meet the established language levels per semester with the ultimate goal of achieving a B2 level in the last semesters of their undergraduate studies. The research participants mentioned

being aware of the different language levels students enrolled into the program with, it is a constant semester after semester. Nonetheless, the institution complicates this situation by allowing aspirants into the program who do not comply with the stipulated minimum language requirements (A2 level according to the CEFR). Again, the participants of this study view and put forward a discontinuity between what the institution administratively states on paper as opposed how these regulations are actually carried out in the practice.

Extract 15 exemplifies Lucia's view on the pressure teachers feel when trying to comply with the many and distinct institutional administrative demands.

Extract 15

Researcher: *Is there anything else regarding administrative matters that you think might be making teaching more complicated than it should in this context?*

Lucia: *I feel that you have to comply with so many things. On the one hand the faculty authorities need something, then the coordination of the ELT program requires something else. So, you have to divide yourself in half in order to comply with everyone, it's crazy. This is an extra pressure aside from having to be a good teacher... complying with so many changing administrative matters takes away from my practice.*

From Lucia's stance one can see that teachers take into their teaching responsibility with a strong sense of commitment yet they too advance that if the institution truly followed its own academic regulations, reaching institutional standards would be facilitated.

Agency in the ELT profession

Moving away from administrative constraints a second limitation put forward by the participants of this study was the lack of recognition the ELT academic field received in this context depleting these teachers' professional status. This inevitably had to do with how English language teaching was first established in this environment. Recalling on the fact that in 1992 the hiring conditions for this

university were extremely lenient and English language teaching was not governed or had learning goals that impacted the undergraduate programs in which ELT was imposed, this view becomes more understandable. Further, the University Language Office was not established until January 2000 yet the dean of this university approved its official Institutional Program along with the regulations for implementation and teacher hiring and permanence conditions until November 2013. I believe this to be one of the main reasons why it has taken more than expected for the ELT area to become established as a serious subject within the undergraduate programs of this university and therefore contemplated within financial projects for the benefit of its community.

Isabella who holds the longest teaching career is a witness of how ELT has evolved in this state; the following anecdote (extract 16) illustrates the status that English teachers had at the very beginning.

Extract 16

Isabella: *I remember a long time ago we used to sign sheets for attendance in this elementary school I used to work in and I always signed as 'Profesora de Inglés'- English teacher -. My former colleagues would look at the list and say: well yes, I suppose you can sign as 'Profesora de Inglés'. I used to think, how else would you want me to sign? As janitor? Now that I teach in this undergraduate program, I make sure to talk to the students and share my sense of pride and commitment for my profession, it is important for me to do it.*

As exemplified in excerpt 16, if content teachers did not view English language teachers as professionals or colleagues, there was little hope that school authorities would be any different. Regardless and even though this situation has changed over the years, ELT teachers now positioning themselves as professionals and ELT being a consolidated academic field in this context, one of the participants in this study (Montserrat) still felt that the teaching job in general was discredited. The following extract puts forward her full comment on the matter.

Extract 17

Montserrat: *Unlike other countries, we do not hold a status as English language teachers. People do not know what it entails; it requires a lot of your own free time including weekends to finish work. I remember my sister used to ask me why I didn't go out on the weekends. I always replied saying I was working, planning my lessons and materials for my classes. Her response was: you're always working but I don't really see you do anything. Sometime later she began working as a teacher in a high school and then I would call her to see what she was doing and if she wanted to go out but now it was her who said she was busy planning and preparing her classes. I responded: but you're a teacher, teachers don't do anything.*

Montserrat is trying to explain that teaching is not just something that occurs inside the school or within your class schedule. She describes teaching as a demanding profession, which more often than not requires teachers to make use of their personal times to successfully accomplish the job. People outside the profession do not often realize what it entails and therefore can lessen the occupation by misjudging it. Hence, personal judgments towards language teachers like the one made by Montserrat's sister in extract 19 are common. However, I am of the idea that in any profession, unless people have the opportunity to be involved, comprehending how much it entails can result challenging.

In line with Montserrat's position about needing to take time aside from her personal life to comply with her job, Monica too had a strong personal worry that was affecting her life, not only as a teacher but as a mother as well. Extract 18 describes her position.

Extract 18

Monica: *You know, lately I've been thinking about my job. I know as a teacher I need to prepare myself even more, however, how do you develop if you don't have any time? If you don't have any money? but most importantly time! I am a teacher here but I am also a mother and for me it becomes even more complicated. The institution tells me that I need to get a Master degree yet sometimes I wish I had time to sleep".*

Monica's view adds a personal/ social dimension about needing to comply with her role as a mother and as a wife — in her case — and not only with her role as an English language teacher. Monica is 33 years old and mother of two, her life priorities have evolved around her family yet she still manages to comply with what her job demands of her, except for obtaining a postgraduate degree as she mentioned in excerpt 18.

It is not uncommon that institutional policies require certain profiles from their teachers whether they have a single class — just like Monica — or are full time teachers. They also tend to overlook the fact that sometimes language teachers work at two or three different schools in order to have a decent income. Monica for instance has one class in this undergraduate program yet has 4 more classes in the general language department of the Humanities Faculty. She therefore has to comply with the ELT undergraduate program requests and with the other undergraduate programs' norms and regulations where she teaches EFL. It is understandable if currently she has not been able to fully comply with all institutional requirements.

All in all, and aside from these prevailing administrative and personal constraints, the teachers' final comments in the focus group interview referred to their strong sense of commitment towards their profession and how satisfied they felt working in this specific context. The following excerpts (19-23) reflect this point as participants in this study explain that regardless of the non-academic circumstances that come along with their English language teaching professions, they have a vocation for ELT and are therefore committed to it. If it were any different, they would not have the energy or will to leverage the limitations and constraints that were just discussed.

Extract 19

Isabella: *Taking aside everything we said I feel committed to what I do and I would not like to do anything else.*

Extract 20

Montserrat: *I've had the opportunity to work in other contexts and in other professions yet I always come back to teaching, specifically to teaching here in this undergraduate program. They are demanding but students work and at the end it is gratifying.*

Extract 21

Lucia: *When you think about the demands, worries and challenges and still feel happy at work, the rest doesn't really matter.*

Extract 22

Daniel: *I could not imagine not liking my job, with everything it entails, it would take too much from me and it would not be worth it.*

Extract 23

Monica: *I think we all like our job and feel responsible towards it.*

Summary and Discussion

The teachers' opinions regarding the difficulties they face in their current teaching context shed light into how consuming and demanding the institutional/administrative requirements can be. For the most part bringing constraints to their practice that they felt were unnecessary and not within their responsibilities as language teachers. Their personal lives also came into play whether by taking time away from them to comply with their jobs or by having them as priority and not being able to fully observe institutional standards and norms. Nonetheless these teachers provided accounts to support how committed they are to their professions and the strong sense of responsibility that guides their practice, which allows them to deal and overcome the stated constraints.

This is of special relevance to my study as teachers need to possess certain personal qualities in order to make informed decisions without which engaging in reflective practice may not result positive (Dewey 1933). By the data gathered thus far teachers' reports presented signs of having ***open-mindedness, open to change, professional commitment and will*** (Dewey 1933; Farrell 2007; Farrell 2013;

Wallace 1998). Having these features is the same as being prepared and ready to partake in reflective practice (Dewey 1933; Wallace 1998), enabling and easing thought which would not be the case if teachers lacked these characteristics or were reluctant to reflectivity and development overall (Clegg et al 2002; Hobbs 2007). This now leads the discussion to the secondary aim of this first research question.

4.4 The participants as reflective practitioners

The discussion so far has dealt with teachers' current stances regarding their practice prior to engaging in a reflective practice process. However, a second objective of the focus group interview was to gain an informed notion of the participants' as reflective practitioners. This was important in the sense that possessing reflective behaviors would ease their engagement in this study as previously stated.

The reflective descriptors adopted for this purpose were as follows: *Pre-Reflection*, *Surface-Reflection*, *Pedagogical-Reflection* and *Critical-Reflection* (Larrive 2008) (see figure 4, page 69). These descriptors were initially adopted in order to have a theoretical base to place the participants as reflective practitioners according to teaching information they provided. However, as the research phases in this study advanced, the participant teachers displayed reflective practitioner behaviors and actions that challenged these initial descriptors. An exhaustive discussion on the matter will be provided in chapter 7; yet for the secondary purpose of this research question, which is to gain an informed notion of the participants' as reflective practitioners, the data here presented was essential.

According to the Barbara Larrive's descriptors at the minimum level of reflection (***pre-reflection***), teachers interpret classroom situations without thoughtful connection to other events or circumstances. The teachers' orientation is reactive, believing that unanticipated events are beyond their control. Beliefs and positions about teaching practices are generalized and not supported with evidence from

experience, theory or research and the teachers' perspective is undifferentiated and general regarding the needs of learners. Conversely, at a maximum reflection level (**critical-reflection**) teachers engage in ongoing reflection and critical enquiry concerning teaching actions as well as thinking processes. Teachers hold up both philosophical ideologies and teaching practices for continuous examination and verification. The teachers consciously consider how personal beliefs and values; assumptions, family imprinting and cultural conditioning may impact on their students and weigh the ethical and social implications of classroom practices.

Fittingly and from the data obtained regarding the participants of this study's teacher development, teacher knowledge and practice, **surface-reflection** characteristics prevailed amongst all five participants. In **surface-reflection**, teachers' examination of their teaching methods is confined to tactical issues concerning how best to achieve predefined objectives and standards (Larrive 2008). The participants of this study's choices of methodological approaches were context-based, centering heavily on a prescriptive grammar view. Moreover, beliefs and positions about teaching practices were supported with evidence from experience, yet not theory or research. In this specific context, when teachers decided to continue or stop a lesson according to the positive or negative outcomes they were obtaining, their decisions were grounded on personal stances and beliefs yet again, they were not able to reference theory or past research as directing their teaching decisions. Further, the teachers' view of their learners was somehow differentiated, acknowledging the need to accommodate learners' needs, differences and feedback yet only when they felt students were thoroughly engaged. Moreover, the five teachers provided comments and positions showing their high sense of commitment towards their profession and consequently towards their students' learning. Nonetheless, they also extended the teaching and learning process to them, sharing the responsibility for learning outcomes. Finally, when personal, institutional and administrative constraints affected their students' performances as well as their own, teachers commented to go out of their way to

assure these constraints affected as less as possible, assuming their responsibilities as teachers and acting on them.

4.5 Summary and concluding remarks

Summary

This first analysis chapter was concerned with *the reasoning behind the participants' teaching practice prior to engaging in a Reflective Practice process*. I therefore described the analysis procedure followed by a sample of the coding process. Thick descriptions of the teachers' teacher knowledge, teacher development process along with their worries and teaching constraints were also given, gaining an informed impression of these teachers teaching stances within the study's context. Finally, according to the information gathered from the initial data collection, **surface-reflection** was pointed out as the initial reflection level for the five teachers of the study.

Concluding remarks

This first analysis provided significant data to respond to research question one. Detailed accounts of the most salient aspects informing these teachers' practice were provided such as *the context driven approach to teaching, the use of materials and the way lesson planning is carried out, dealing with unfavorable teaching outcomes, attending student needs, student-teacher commitment, complying with institutional demands and teacher development*. Where many times teachers' stances coincided yet others did not, allowing for different representations of these teachers' stances to emerge regarding ELT. In addition, these reported practices permitted an informed based decision to place all five teachers within a surface level of reflection (Larrive 2008). In knowing that these teachers posses reflective practitioner behaviors results positive for their engagement in this reflective practice process without concern of putting the participants' professional integrities at risk by a forced or unwary participation.

Moreover, and of keen relevance to my study, the data also offered important elements to sustain my position towards a collaborative approach to reflective practice. Teachers commented on the lack of appropriate development opportunities in their current teaching contexts and the many constraints they faced when trying to engage individually in teacher development — time, money and institutional support —. I was able to obtain clear examples of how talking to other colleagues about their practice, teaching concerns and inquiries, aided their development, even more than the training courses they had been exposed to. Further, comments were also raised onto how difficult and stressful it was to be self-critical; all five teachers commented that if it had not been for the focus group conversation, they would have not had the opportunity to elsewhere talk about their practice and its underpinnings. This reinforces my view that collegial support with appropriate opportunities for discussion can aid teaching awareness (Farrell 2008, 2011; McCabe 2009).

Even though a latent concern of mine was on the degree of veracity the teachers' accounts might have; possible factors being shyness on behalf of the teachers to express real concerns and thoughts or that sharing perspectives with others resulted uncomfortable. The information given served as base criteria for the following data analysis procedure, the video-recorded classroom observations. Assumptions and stances here presented would be later confirmed or contradicted; nonetheless, what would be of interest is the reasoning behind their actions whether they accurately matched or not these initial teaching stances.

Chapter 5: Fostering reflective enquiry through systematic collaborative practices

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented findings concerning the participants of this study's current teaching stances in the ELT undergraduate program of a large state run university in the central part of Mexico. These stances served to gain an informed notion into the beliefs that inform these teachers' daily practices yet they too served as a base for the subsequent data collection phase — the video recorded classroom observations —, which is of interest to this chapter as the aim is to address and answer research question 2:

How helpful is feedback from other sources and sharing perspectives with peers in fostering critical reflectivity in teachers?

Thus, this chapter looks at the collaborative discussions between the participants of this study and myself of video-recorded classroom observations where my role was to enable dialogue through **video stimulated recall** of specific moments of their classes (Kagan 1984; Rosenstein 2002). Let us remember that stimulated recall relies on the videotape of a real situation — in this context I refer to real classes in their actual time and place —. “The principle involved here — stimulating an individual's recollection of what she or he was thinking at the time of an interaction — is aimed at providing a look into the thought process leading up to an interaction, whether it be teaching, learning or communicating” (Rosenstein 2002, p.30). Researchers in the field of RP support the use of video stimulated recall in language classroom observations due to the fact that traditional classroom observations and feedback have not been sufficient when the end result is for teachers to reach high critical reflective levels that will overall promote professional development (Eröz-Tuga 2013; Gün 2011; Ho 2013; Slimani-Rolls and Kiely 2014; Yürekli 2013). Researchers such as Gün (2011) comment, “simply asking teachers to complete a ‘post observation reflection sheet’ after a classroom observation and

expecting them to think '*critically*' about their teaching has resulted in no significant change for the teachers I have observed over the years" (p. 127), therefore the need for some type of input — video recordings in this case — to enhance '*critical reflection*' on behalf of teachers. Brandt (2008) supports this notion suggesting that feedback alone is insufficient and that feedback and critical reflection should be integrated in the form of reflective conversations assigning a greater prominence to reflection with the aid and presence of a facilitator (p.37).

Hence, the purpose of video reviewing in this study was for me to assist teachers and collaboratively discuss what took place in their classes according to the teaching stances and beliefs each one provided in the focus group interview. This was aimed at answering the question "what were you thinking when you did or said that?" and gain an evidence based understanding of the teachers' cognitive processes during the classroom sessions. As stated by Leather and Popovic (2008), '*critical reflection*' of teachers' practices can become more effective through systematic training and practice as opposed to leaving teachers to individually carry out reflection on their own, which may result in vague thoughts without further implications to their teaching (see findings supporting this statement in Chapter 1, section 1.3.2 and Chapter 4, section 4.3.2). Moreover, in order for teachers to become 'reflective practitioners' of their own professional practice, they may need to be 'coached' or assisted in this ability where the role of the 'supervisor' — in this case the researcher — should be to promote '*critical reflection*' 'by providing input but refraining from taking over' (Bailey op.cit., p.326). This is why collaboration and systematic aid from the researcher through stimulated recall of video recorded classes was viewed optimal for the aim and purposes of this study.

Accordingly, this chapter is divided into two main sections. The first part provides a thorough description of the classroom observation agenda carried out with the participants in order to gather the video-recorded data that would subsequently be collaboratively analyzed. The data analysis procedure is also described in order to put forward the thoughts and decisions taken to report salient findings. The second

section gives an account of the most dominant practices such as giving instructions, focusing on advanced students and grouping students, which affected the pace of the classes and brought consequences for the students' participation, engagement with the activities and performance. Finally, challenges representative of this context were also reported by drawing on a critical incident report (Brookfield 1990 and Farrell 2013) and the use of teacher collegiality (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992), exemplifying the use of collaborative systematic practices to enhance teacher critical reflection.

5.2 The data collection and analysis procedure

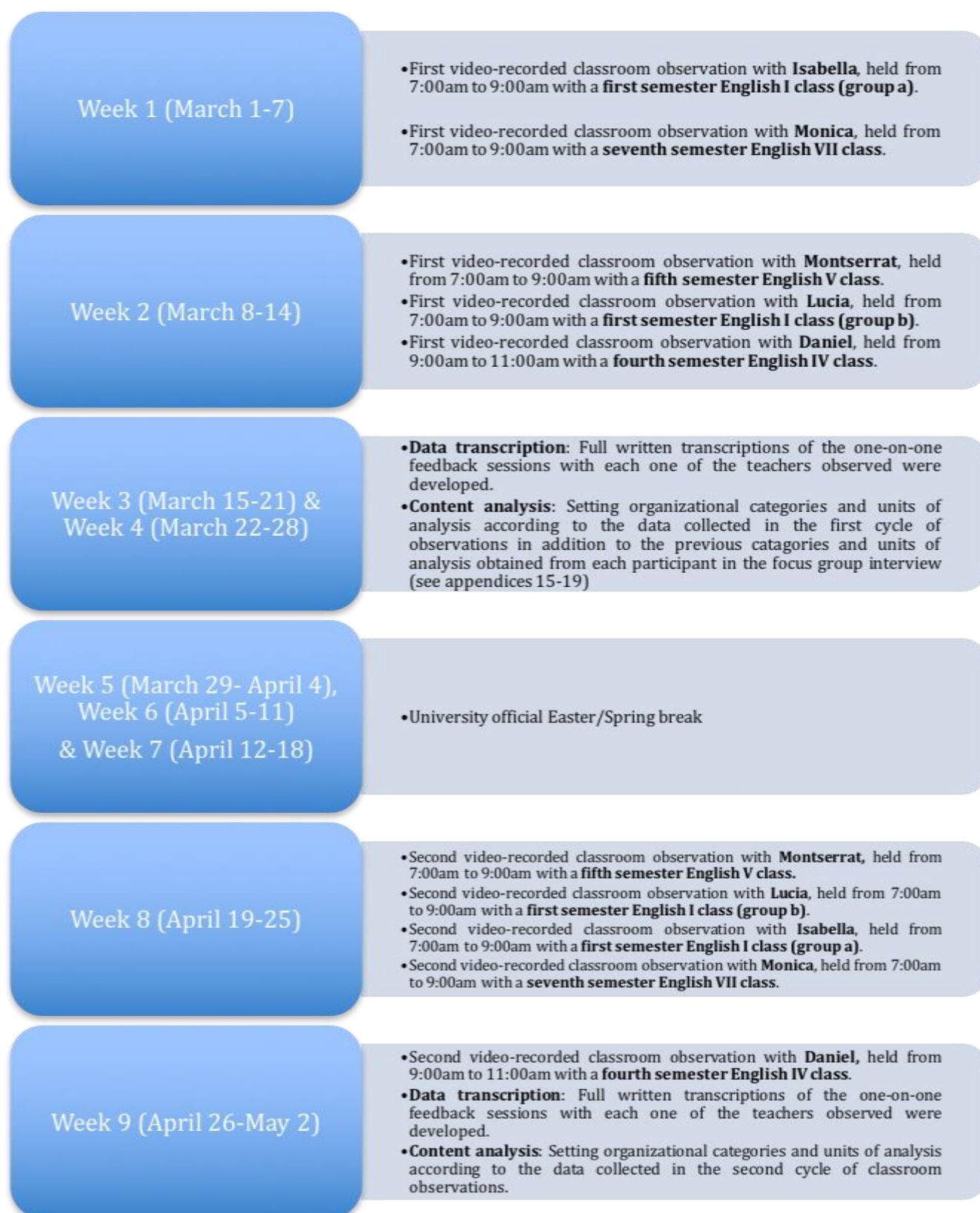
My position and underlying assumption taken for this research on Reflective Practice is that input and collaboration are fundamental components of RP, encouraging teachers to rely on previous knowledge, experiences, beliefs and personal backgrounds to build on and co-construct new understandings with others (Wallace 1991; Nguyen 2010). Accordingly, teachers should collect data about their teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about their teaching (Richards and Lockhart 1994). Where **critical reflection** encompasses focusing on what teachers do in class and the reasons for this as opposed to how to change what is “wrong” which is for the most part only related to methodological teaching issues (Gün 2011). Hence in order to collect data to serve as input for teachers to jointly analyze with the researcher and possibly other colleagues, the following procedure was followed.

At the beginning of February 2015, the data collection process for this research began with a focus group interview with all five participants present. As reported and illustrated by themselves in Chapter 4, the focus group data served to gain knowledge about the teachers' practices and to understand the reasons behind these reported practices — the how's and why's —. By means of this information I was able to construct a full account of each individual's teaching stances in the ELT undergraduate program of this university. These stances then served as

observing criteria under which the video-recorded classroom observations to be reported in this chapter were carried out. Therefore, previous to the classroom observations, I made use of ***content analysis*** to develop several observing categories for each participant. My field notes mainly followed these categories yet relevant emerging data not within the established classifications was also contemplated.

In order to conduct the second phase of the data collection, the participants of this study and I agreed on the most suitable time, date and preferred group to schedule the two video-recorded classroom observations required. The research agenda (see Appendix 5) was confirmed and e-mailed to them and lasted a total of 9 weeks. Figure 6 shows how the 10 video-recorded classroom observations were conducted and organized within the given 9-week period.

Figure 6 Organization of the video-recorded classroom observations



Each video recorded classroom observation lasted 2 hours and focused on the teachers' actions and how their classes unfolded. In order to record the classes I used a handheld digital video recorder, which I set static in a specific area of the classroom. Nevertheless, and when I deemed it necessary, in order to capture a relevant class moment such as student interaction or student engagement in a task, I walked around the classroom with the camera. Students were previously advised by their teachers about my presence and were asked to act naturally not minding the camera or me. This Ethics issue was addressed in the initial research briefing held with the participants of the study where Ethics were informed by the guidelines produced by the University of Southampton's Research Governance Office (RGO) and full data collection procedures were described in the participant information sheet handed to them (see Appendix 7). Once the 2-hour classroom observation was over, the teachers and I immediately held the one-on-one post-observation discussion setting approximately one hour aside to talk about the observation. As the observations were being held I actively took notes about particular moments from the classes according to my observing categories. With the aid of video stimulated recall, these specific moments were then pointed out to the teachers with the intention of knowing what was their purpose for carrying out those events in certain ways. When practices did not match with what the teachers had explained in the focus group interview, my job was to point them out and discuss them as well, discovering the teachers' perceptions of what took place in class and the reasoning behind it.

This process was repeated for the second round of classroom observations yet in the second round, categories emergent from the first observations were added to the observing criteria as figure 6 shows. By the end of the nine weeks, the participants of this study had been exposed to 2 video-recorded classroom observations, they had also had input feedback from the video recordings — which were saved in their personal USB drives for further personal viewing and analysis —, and had participated in 2 collaborative discussions of certain moments from

their classes with the researcher. The following section discusses the most salient findings emergent from this process.

5.3 The mirror effect: Contrasting and discussing teaching stances to teaching videos

Reflective Practice theory suggests that in order for a teaching issue to be relevant for any given teacher, (1) the issue on which the teacher critically reflects must occur on the social context where the teaching takes place, (2) the teacher must be interested in the problem to be solved, (3) the issue must derive from her practice and (4) systematic procedures are necessary (Dewey 1933). Accordingly, only the teaching issues that emerged during my fieldwork, which considered these four premises were taken into account and thus reported. Additionally, and even if it was not noted by Dewey, the notion of **collaboration** (Wallace 1983, 1989, 1991) was added in this study as I believe that critical reflection is a social activity “because if left unsocialized individual reflection can close in on itself, producing detached, idiosyncratic teachers. Because reflection is not an end in itself, but for the purpose of action, communal dialog is essential. Many different voices are necessary” (Gün, 2011, p.131).

Henceforth, the teachers in this study through systematic reflective practices such as video-stimulated recall and collaborative discussions about those recollections were prompted to review their *teaching knowledge* in order to rationalize their actions, decisions, and reactions in class contrasting them to their teaching stances and beliefs (Richards and Farrell 2005); hence, the interesting thing was to observe how teachers interpreted their teaching and solved the challenges aroused from their teaching practice. Harmer states, “we need to hold up mirrors to our own practice, making more conscious what is beneath the surface” (2007, p. 410). Therefore, and after watching their class videos and discussing them with me, a number of matters arose; yet, I am to discuss only the most dominant and representative practices as was explained at the introduction of this chapter.

5.3.1 Discussing dominant practices

Giving Instructions

The five participants in this study shared their tendency to over repeat instructions and provided alike reasoning for doing so; in their own words teachers emphasized or repeated instructions because they wanted to assure that students had a clear idea of what they had to do. If teachers noticed that a task was not being fulfilled according to their directions, they believed that repeating them was the way to solve this issue. Nevertheless, after watching their class videos and verbally expressing the reasons for their actions, as well as becoming more conscious about this issue throughout their entire practice, they were able to understand that repetition was not resulting effective for their purposes. What is more, after systematically analyzing this matter, teachers were able to propose more proper and successful ways to giving instructions as it is illustrated in the following extracts (1, 2 and 3).

Extract 1

Researcher: *What happens when you give out instructions? What are you thinking? How do you know that they have understood and are ready to carry out the task?*

Daniel: *Sometimes I just wait for them to be quiet and I start giving out instructions. Yet in this class I think I should have waited for them to decide who would be writing in order for me to start dictating the questions. It just doesn't cross my mind, what happens is that, when I plan I don't do it as meticulously as I should maybe. I don't take several things into consideration and it's not the first time this has happened to me, not taking things into consideration when planning. I think of how things will run in my mind but when I do things in the classroom, I realize that not everyone understands my instructions or I forget to do things. Then I find myself having to repeat instructions until students get the hang of it but it has to do a lot with how I plan... maybe I could have written the instructions on the board, right?*

As Daniel began to verbalize how he delivered instructions, he also began to realize that he did not give students enough time to settle and fully pay attention

before giving indications. Further, since he did not write a detailed lesson plan he left out aspects such as explicitly writing the instructions he is to give, which is important for the lesson to run efficiently. He comments that in his mind he knows what directions go along with every task and activity yet since he does not write them down, he finds himself giving out instructions one too many times until his students understand what they have to do. In his first classroom observation, he had asked students to form teams to carry out a collaborative timeline activity yet he had to repeat and clarify instructions with each one of the teams in order for them to produce the required task outcome. It was curious however that Daniel decided to go through the instructions once more with each team separately instead of doing it with the whole class, as the entire group needed clarification. When I asked why, he commented that he liked to make sure his students knew individual doubts and questions would be answered and that he was worried for their learning and personal needs. However, he realized that every group had had the same doubts so he should have clarified instructions for the group as a whole and save time that was later needed to finish his lesson plan.

For his second classroom observation, I noticed that instructions were written in his lesson plan and that he read them out loud from the plan. Along with his oral instructions he had also written them down on the blackboard and had provided an example for students to use as a model. He stated: *“it is not something that I am used to but after the first observation I thought it was necessary for me to start doing”*; Daniel was referring to explicitly writing instructions and thinking of examples to go along when planning, which worked well and saved time allowing him to finish his entire lesson plan in the second classroom observation. He still went around monitoring students and small group of students individually yet the second time I observed it was to solve more specific and individual doubts.

The next extract taken from Montserrat’s classroom observations allows to illustrate two dominant classroom patterns regarding giving instructions that affected the course of her class according to students’ reactions: 1. The students’

dependence on the teachers' instruction repetition and 2. the students' confusion about how to carry out the activity. In this particular case, Montserrat was able to notice these two patterns as she began to observe herself not only in her English class but in the rest of her classes as well. By becoming aware of this issue as participant of this study, she found **evidence** from her daily practice to help her understand she was repeating a pattern that was hindering her classes as it is now explained in extract 2.

Extract 2

Montserrat: *This part I have to work on, the instructions and giving them examples. I gave them examples but they were oral and I feel I have to write them down.*

Researcher: *Right.*

Montserrat: *I mean, I have to write them for those who do not understand my idea and are more visual.*

Researcher: *This was basically what I wanted to discuss with you.*

Montserrat: *I try to pay attention now not only in this class, in all of them... I also noticed that I tend to repeat instructions a lot. Sometimes and regardless of students already engaged in the activity, I tend to repeat them like 3 times... ha, ha, ha... when I noticed it I began to tell myself: you already gave instructions twice, they're already doing the activity and you keep repeating them.*

Researcher: *ha, ha, ha*

Montserrat: *I began to notice that it distracts students sometimes. Either it distracts them or since students know I am going to repeat them they do not make an effort to understand instructions the first time around. Once I realized this, I knew I had to start working on it as well.*

This extract exemplifies that language classes are heterogeneous — mixed ability —; **Mixed ability** refers to classes where students differ greatly in ability, motivation for learning English, needs, interest, educational backgrounds, styles of learning, anxiety, experiences and so on (Ainslie 1994; Shank 1995; Tomlinson 1999; Berry and Williams 2002). Therefore, considerations such as providing visual

aids for students who require the extra support are necessary. Extensive research findings support the notion of 'showing' as a complement of 'telling' when giving instructions in ELT (Atkinson 1987; Cook 1996; Harmer 2001; Krashan 1998; Gün 2011; Louw et al. 2014; Richards and Rodgers 2001; Yürekli 2013); both Daniel and Montserrat as well as the rest of the participants of this study reported to favor this notion after critically analyzing their practice.

For the most part all of the teachers were able to notice their lack of clarity when giving instructions except for one, Monica. In her case, we had to watch the class videos several times in specific moments in order for her to understand why her students took a long time to carry out each one of her class activities and why they constantly asked for teacher-feedback during the tasks. I too had to be more vocal about the points that were going unnoticed by Monica such as her tendency to not only repeat but also add more information to the instructions. This will now be further illustrated in extract 3.

Extract 3

Researcher: *Are you noticing how much instructions are repeated? Now watch this other part... I notice that you tend to repeat instructions a lot and afterwards when you repeat them, you change them. Why do you think this happens and then why do change the instruction?*

Monica: *Well, it's a good question, I had not noticed that I repeated so much but well, maybe it's because they are not doing what I expected so I give more detail in the second instruction, it's what I tend to do.*

Researcher: *(watching the video) ... I'm noticing that they also ask you, they ask you if they are on the right track, if they're doing things right. Why do you think this happens?*

Monica: *Because maybe they get confused with the first instruction I gave and the new one?*

Researcher: *I don't know, that's why I also wrote it in my notes because on the one hand you repeat instructions a lot and on the other students frequently ask if they are right...*

Monica: *I don't know why this happens, I had not realized it... ha, ha, ha... it's just that I had not stop to think about this. But oh! Mmm... I think they also ask me to make sure if they're... well they have doubts*

too... they want to make sure if they are following the steps or doing what I expected.

Wallace (1991) states that teachers occasionally have such fixed teaching ideologies, preferences and routines that without proper reinforcement and input, certain teaching constraints may forever go unnoticed. This was the case of Monica, looking back at the extract you can observe how my questioning allowed her to go deeper into her teaching to things she had not reflected upon. It was through cooperatively re-viewing her class videos and hinting how her tendency to add details to her instructions was interfering with the time it took students to comprehend the instruction, engage in the activity with clarity and then complete it, that Monica understood she had an issue. For her second observation, she told me her main concern was on effectiveness in instruction delivery, therefore she had made it a point to write instructions down, she practiced them at home and listened to how she sounded out loud to see if she conveyed her intentions appropriately. In my latter observation, students had fewer doubts and Monica also seemed less hesitant when giving indications.

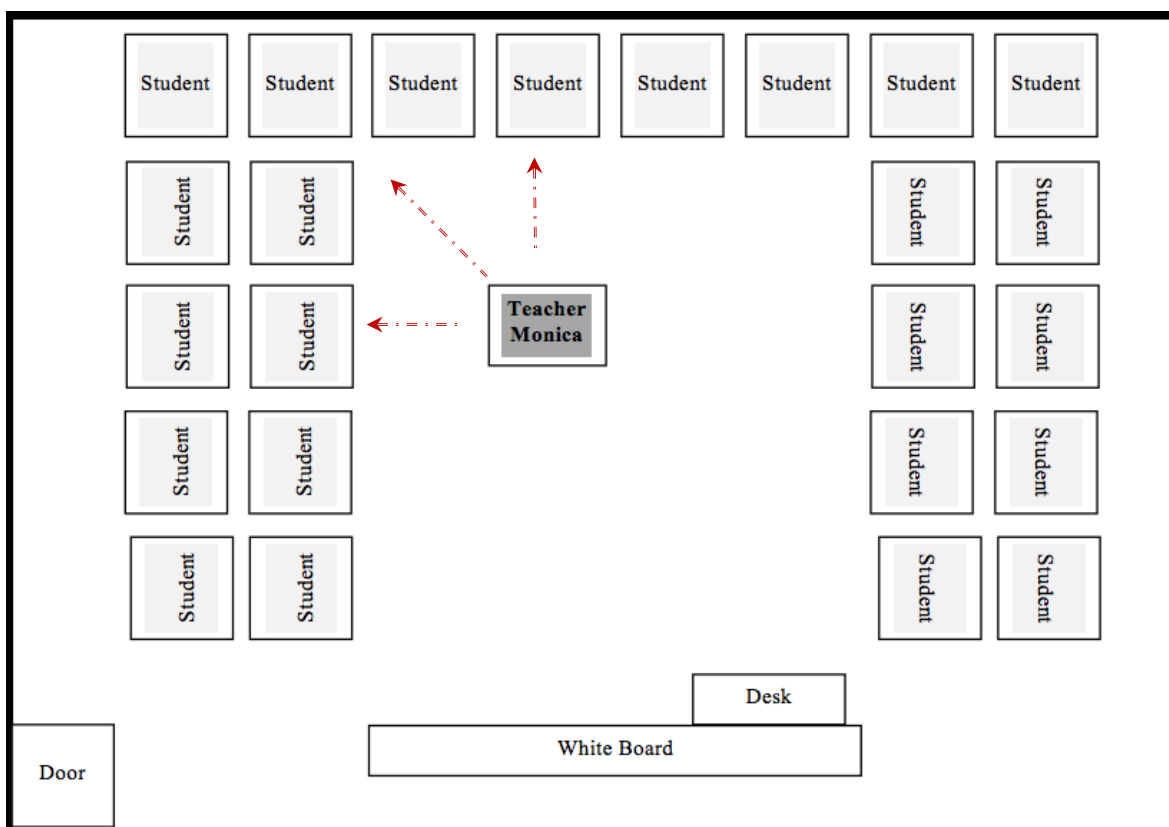
Overall the five participant teachers who shared this teaching issue opted for the following actions in order to strengthen their instruction delivery: they began to write detailed instructions in their lesson plans and on the blackboard, some of them — Lucia and Monica — practiced instructions when planning, all five participants provided models and examples and they tried to avoid repeating or changing the instructions once students had appropriately engaged in the activities. All of these actions were perceived in the latter observations.

Focusing on advanced students

A second recurring practice that emerged during the one-on-one post observation discussions with all of the teachers involved in this study was that student participation and class pace were focused on the more advanced students. However, all five teachers consciously allowed this to occur, their decision was founded on respecting students and their readiness before participating. They were

keen on not wanting to ‘push’ students by ‘putting them on the spot’ or forcing them to do something — especially speak — when they felt unprepared. According to them, this could interfere with any progress a student might have or affect their contented working classroom environments, which was a premise for all of them as well. Nevertheless, and as understandable as their reasoning was, teachers were not aware of the fact that allowing students to participate at will caused advance student participation monopolization. What is more, according to my observations and to the video reviewing, the weaker students resulted being neglected not only by not giving them the same opportunities to participate, they were also not given enough time to understand indications and topics or solve their doubts. Map 2 and extract 4 exemplify this observed dilemma.

Map 2 Teacher focus



Class Map 2 illustrate how Monica, in her seventh semester English 7 class, tends to come too close to the left side of the classroom when giving indications and examples. Her attention and her focus are therefore on the advanced students while she entirely excludes the right side of her classroom.

Extract 4

Researcher: *You know that the side of the class, which you focus on and teach, understands you, right? They are usually your strong students... you tend to focus a lot on them.*

Monica: *It's just that they raise their hand a lot and they participate a lot. So, when I ask the rest of the class they get bored and if they're not participating then they start to disrupt the class.*

Researcher: *Oh, ok, but then you were telling me that this side of the group (watching the video and pointing at the screen), the right side did not understand what they had to do.*

Monica: *I'm going to mix students in a different way.*

Researcher: *Yes, and maybe move a little bit back so...*

Monica: *Yes, so I don't ignore them as much.*

Researcher: *You know, maybe you don't realize other students' difficulties because your attention is only on this side of the class and they are the ones who understand quickly. So, you take for granted that the rest of the group has also understood because look at yourself... your focus, your vision and your body is directed towards the strong students, the other students do not have your attention, do you notice?*

Monica: *No... but well I had not seen this, right now I get it because I'm watching myself in the video and that's why I'm noticing.*

Researcher: *Are you noticing whom you give your instructions to? And when you show the book to point at the exercise it's only to them, the rest of the students have to pay attention to what the strong students are doing in order for them to know what they have to do... and watch here... you're giving feedback, can you tell who is listening to you?*

Monica: *The same ones, the stronger students.*

In her first classroom observation Monica mentioned not knowing why certain students had such a hard time engaging in class tasks and activities. After watching her interaction with the class and discussing it with me, she understood that she was neglecting precisely the students who presented difficulties by focusing and pacing her class according to the more advanced students. After viewing one example after another from the class videos Monica commented she

would start mixing strong and weak students therefore her focus would be on everyone. However, Monica also explained that students' expectations at this English VII language class were high therefore when someone spoke they expected to hear an interesting correct participation. Hence, when a student who did not have a high language level participated, the advanced students did not pay attention and began to talk. This is why she tried to move from one activity to another at a quick pace, so that the advanced students did not disrupt, however, she also realized not everyone benefited from this teaching decision.

Regardless, the same issue repeated for her second classroom observation, yet there were other factors such as clear instructions, more general monitoring and a firmer secure position on behalf of Monica that lessened the negative effect this issue had in her class. I find it pertinent to now comment that gaining awareness does not necessarily lead to immediate change; critical reflection is a process that can lead to possible improvement and further development in areas individually perceived by the teachers which may not necessarily coincide with the development areas or needs of other teachers within their professional community — as was Monica's case —. I strongly agree with the notion that teacher knowledge as well as teacher development come from the inside out and it will be according to each teacher's readiness that change will come about (Bowen 2004). What is more, the "differences in teachers' apprenticeship of observation, educational experiences, and teaching and learning experiences will formulate the foundation for each individual's teacher knowledge and reasoning" (Johnson, 1999, p.130), which at the same time will allow for different sets of beliefs and stances regarding best teaching practices and teaching focuses as well as different times and levels of development.

However, several actions were taken by the participants of this study to overcome participation monopolization after discussing the issue in the post-classroom observation discussions and watching their class videos. Isabella for instance held a one-hour speaking class out of her regular schedule to help students who did not

want to speak in class due to their low language levels. Others decided to change their positioning in the classroom, mix students and ask other students to participate once in a while even when they did not voluntarily raise their hands. It is central to point out that the actions taken did not impede the advanced students to continue participating; these teachers' actions were aimed at balancing interaction and participation as for them it was key that advanced students remained active allowing their classes to run successfully.

Grouping students in class

As reported in the above section, these teachers extensively mentioned throughout the post-observation conversations a 'comfortable working environment' as a key component of their daily practice. Therefore, the way students were allowed to group or pair up in class was also based on student preference. Again, the reasoning behind this decision had to do with respecting students' personal needs and preferences; in these teachers' own words, this allowed for their classes to flow and consequently eased their teaching. Other more personal reasons were also put forward such as allowing students to work at their own pace and enhancing learner autonomy in their classes as extracts 5 and 6 show.

Extract 5

Researcher: *Look at this girl (pointing at the video); I want to see if you notice something I noticed in class... When I realized that she does not understand and that she only copies what her classmates do, I wondered if you noticed this as well.*

Isabella: *Well they... she doesn't usually sit here; they sit over here in the back. He helps her a lot and there was another boy that doesn't come any longer who also supported her. I saw that they worked together and that she tried to keep up in class but he doesn't come any more so you take him away from her and she doesn't know what to do.*

Researcher: *Exactly and she doesn't know what to do and it's obvious, let's keep watching... who would you say is your weakest student in this class?*

Isabella: *I'd say her.*

Researcher: *Yes, me too.*

- Isabella:** *and Ceci, who is re-taking the class.*
- Researcher:** *When I noticed, she was looking at her mobile phone instead of doing the listening activity... did you notice that?*
- Isabella:** *That she wasn't writing.*
- Researcher:** *uhum*
- Isabella:** *Only when, well... that she wasn't writing, no. When I asked them to put up their answers and she didn't have anything written down and she only goes like (raises her shoulders) ... she really doesn't say much, she only hints that she doesn't have the answer.*
- Researcher:** *And what do you do in those cases?*
- Isabella:** *Well, now I have to, it's not been long since Joan left –the boy who helped her– so I have to start integrating her to the class and not always leave her sitting next to the same person because Toño the other boy that helps her wasn't here today either, so she ended up sitting next to Manuel.*
- Researcher:** *Can I interrupt you for a second... watch, observe how everybody is writing something as the listening track is going and she is just waiting for everyone else to finish so she can copy the answer.*
- Isabella:** *It's when she didn't show me her answer, that's when I noticed... what I did, I don't know if you noticed, I pointed at the other students' answers so she could see the answer.*

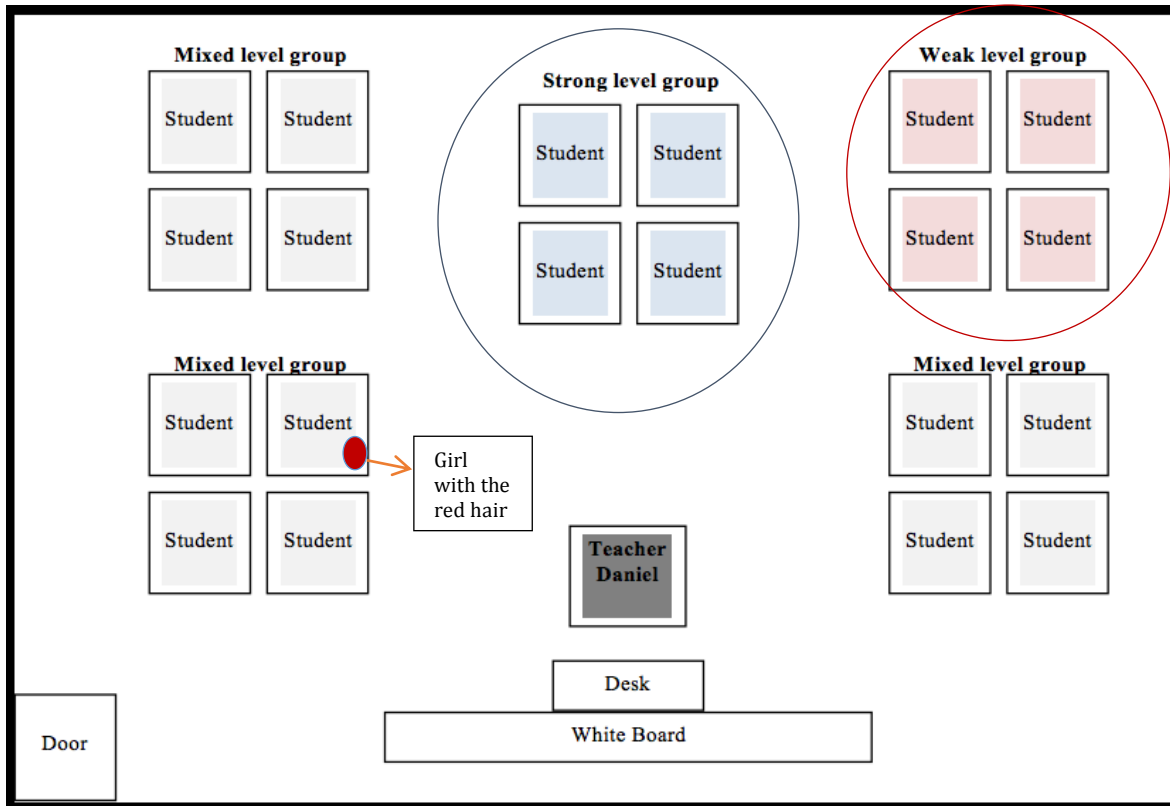
In this example, Isabella allowed one of her students to sit next to whoever she felt comfortable working with. At first she thought that this student in particular was apparently finishing tasks and working, yet, when her two supporting classmates were absent this girl was not able to carry out any of the class tasks as the video showed. At first, Isabella tries to validate this girl's actions by commenting that the people who helped her were not present, however after prompting to Isabella that she was her weakest student and together analyzing more moments where this girl kept not working, Isabella realized that she had to start integrating her with the rest of the class.

For the second classroom observation, the two boys who helped this girl were again coincidentally absent yet Isabella asked her to move closer to the group

instead of letting her sit in the back. This girl ended up sitting next to the most advanced student in the class and she tried to copy him in several occasions yet this boy told her that she had to think for herself and that he was not going to do the work for her or let her copy. Isabella and I reviewed this scene several times to see this girl's reaction, which was to actually start working on her own. I also wanted to hear Isabella's thoughts regarding this particular situation; she commented that at first she allowed this girl to work at her pace making use of other students to help her. She tried not to correct her in front of the whole class as she was a weak student and did not want to make her uneasy. Nevertheless, when she noticed that this girl was not putting any effort regardless of the help she obtained, Isabella decided not to use other students to help her and made sure this girl was always sitting where Isabella could be attentive to her work. Additionally, she sat her next to different students to encourage her to think and take initiative for her learning instead of over-relying on one or two classmates. This girl had no other choice than to begin working on her own, surprisingly she seriously made an effort to understand and do things; there was a point in the second observation where she even refused being helped by Isabella when she offered. This resulted in a positive outcome for both Isabella and her student, taking each one their share of responsibility on the teaching and learning process.

Daniel was also flexible regarding partner preferences with his students; he strongly suggested that at this educational level not giving them the power of decision over who they worked with and the possible outcomes would be equivalent to taking away students' share of responsibility over their learning. His position is more clearly described in extract 6 and map 3.

Map 3 Grouping students



Map 3 shows Daniel's English 4 class where he deliberately allows students to group each other according to their preference yet this has a significant effect on his class pace as generally advanced students end up working together finishing tasks faster than the rest of the group.

Extract 6

Researcher: *And for instance, if you observe that you have strong and weak students, why do you let them choose their groups according to their preference? If you observe this affects how your class flows or the time it takes for them to do an activity.*

Daniel: *Well I always ask them if they want me to group them up or if they prefer to group themselves up. I think... I don't know but since the very beginning I tell them that my approach is like this: you're grown-ups, this is college, if you're going to work, you're going to work if you don't want to, it's none of my business. I'm not going to be there to push you to do it. This is important, they have to graduate with a proper language level, they're going to be English teachers and they can't say 'I kind of know', they have to be good. That's why I tell them: if you're going to work then you're going to work and if you don't, you don't have to, it's your decision. I always tell them: it's your call. That's why I always let them choose who they want to work with but I had not stop to think that it may be affecting them and myself.*

Researcher: *Uhum, well it's not the first time I hear this, your colleagues think the same way... (Daniel interrupts)*

Daniel: *But yes, these students here are strong (pointing at the video), right now that I'm watching this... in this group everyone is strong and this other group in the corner most of them are weak. But I think so, now that I'm actually thinking about it, this girl asks for help – the girl with the red hair – she has difficulties but she is intelligent because she sits next to people that help her.*

Researcher: *At the beginning, you mentioned that it was their responsibility too and that this was College and that they had to make their own decisions, right? I remembered what you commented in the focus group: I have my share of responsibility but they have their share as students.*

Daniel: *But part of my responsibility is to notice these things.*

Researcher: *Well... yes... because when they affect how your class unfolds, well what do you do then? What happens?*

Daniel: *yes, I get it... I understand.*

Researcher: *I noticed this and I wanted to know why you thought that way?*

Daniel: *Well it's just that I have noticed that if you make the teams, it could be positive but negative as well. Because I have noticed that sometimes they feel more comfortable when they pair up or group up with certain classmates, so if I make the groups, for instance Kelly with someone stronger, I know how she's going to react... When I tell them to group up I also know who will end up together, I know. I also know their reaction when I make the groups, everybody says: no! So now I don't know how to do this... or balance it.*

Researcher: *Yes, balance it.*

Daniel: *You know, you're right I have to look into this situation because I always allow them to make their groups and some teams are benefitted for instance this one right here (pointing at the video) she is weaker but Ricardo is strong and they're friends so there is no problem there. The problem is for example in this team where Christopher and Alba are at, they take longer and they hold back the rest of the class... yes... I get it.*

Daniels' strong perception of making students responsible for their share on the teaching and learning process is evident throughout his teaching; hence group/ pair work was not the exception. In his opinion, students should be 'mature'

enough to choose who they work with and if they work in class at all. However, there are students who possess this ***learner autonomy*** Daniel refers to, “a freedom of action in learning” (Breen and Mann 1997; Lamb 2000), while others sit and work next to their friends irrespective of their learning outcomes; either way Daniel still holds them responsible for their decisions. Nevertheless, after scrutinizing group work in his class video he began to notice that this strict perspective of how things should be in college was affecting the outcome of his classes, specifically in the time it took for the entire group to complete tasks/activities. Together, we observed that the stronger students usually finished first and the weaker ones took longer than planned, which then allowed the stronger students to get distracted and drift away from the class topic to talking about personal matters. This then led to classroom management problems as students also began to walk in and out of class and it was not easy for the Daniel to gain control back.

Overall, Daniel had difficulty understanding the need to intervene and arrange group work in his classes as he had a very valid and strong argument for allowing free grouping amongst his students. Nonetheless, the more he watched the video, the more he understood this necessity. He commented that before watching himself on the videos, he thought that the number one reason why he never finished his lesson plan was due to the fact that he was unorganized and did not plan in detail. The class videos along with his spoken thoughts and rationalization of this situation allowed him to consider other factors such as group work as conceivable causes for the noticed class difficulties.

Although the majority of the teachers suggested modifying certain interaction and grouping patterns in order to control time and group management in their classes, such as combining advanced and weaker students together or according to the class activity; there were also valid positions from the younger teachers — Monica

and Daniel — towards being flexible and tolerant when students did not entirely follow instructions or engaged 100% of the time in all class tasks. For instance, they argued that there were times in group work that not everyone participated, yet as long as there were strong students to serve as models, the rest of the students were allowed to contribute or only listen, it was their decision. Further, Daniel and Monica maintained that in some cases student discussions in class were so meaningful — even when drifted from the class topic — that they allowed them to go on for longer. They found it important for students to engage in meaningful English discussions where they put to use what they were learning in class; it was key for them hence they found it detrimental to stop them. Conversely, the three older teachers did not agree with this perception, they preferred a much more controlled scenario regarding following instructions, class participation and grouping students.

The discussion so far has focused on some of the dominant practices the participants of this study presented throughout the video-recorded classroom observations as well as the reasoning behind these practices. Now, I move on to discussing specific teaching events particular to some of these teachers, which also shed light into how the use of collaborative systematic practices can enhance teacher critical reflection even when matters are outside their practice or have to do with strong personality traits.

5.3.2 Dealing with teaching challenges

A critical incident

A **critical incident** (see section 2.5.1, p.51) is defined as “an unplanned and unanticipated event that occurs during class, outside class or during a teacher’s career but is vividly remembered” (Brookfield, 1990, p.84). Further, critical incidents can be identified by reflecting on a “teaching high” or a “teaching low”; **teaching high**: being a current perception of events that enable a sudden change on lesson plan to allow better teaching outcomes and **teaching low**: an immediate

incident problematic for the teacher yet outside her practice (Farrell 2013). The case reported in this study was identified at a teaching low as the teacher (Isabella) found the need to articulate a critical incident within her first semester English 1 group where she did not know how to deal with the consistently negative attitude obtained on behalf of one of her students, excerpt 7 reports on this incident.

Extract 7

Classroom Observation 1 discussion

Researcher: *Where you nervous?*

Isabella: *A little, at the beginning.*

Researcher: *Yes, why? I felt you... it was strange, I thought to myself why is she that nervous?*

Isabella: *You know what? I have to tell you because I trust you observing my classes, or telling me, or commenting. Good, bad, regular, I know it's coming from someone who knows. I was worried about a student in this group he was my worry.*

Researcher: *Who? Can I tell you who? (watching the video), the one in the middle with the hood.*

Isabella: *Yes, him, this one (pointing to the video). Since the beginning he feels that he's here for... so... besides he's... his facial expression, did you notice? Maybe it's a mistake on my behalf... I don't direct myself to him that much, I don't exclude him but I avoid eye contact, I skip him sometimes. Because his... I need to feel comfortable with students' actions as well; I worry about them being comfortable too. So, when I see that this particular student is not comfortable and I already discussed this with him, but he doesn't let me, the class dynamics does not flow. But he is that way and I already spoke to him about it and I told him: if you feel this is way too simple for you, only come to the mid-term exams and final exam. I told him: I care about everyone and I need to focus on everyone, you notice how the class dynamics runs and it really doesn't help me that you are not comfortable in class.*

Researcher: *What did he say?*

Isabella: *The day I spoke to him and that I asked him to stay I said: Class you may leave, I only need Emmanuel and another student who doesn't come anymore to stay; we need to adjust some things. The other student because I needed to talk to him about his portfolio and to Emmanuel because I observed that he was uncomfortable and I*

needed to talk to him separately. And when I asked them to stay, he just stared at me and his response was: Why shall I?

Researcher: *Wow... like challenging you?*

Isabella: *That's how I felt it! And I don't want... I think that... it's, ay! How can I tell you? This had never happened to me really, because I was trying to give him the option of not coming, to only come for tests.*

Researcher: *And why does he want to come?*

Isabella: *Because he says that this is the class... the one he cares about... he says that he honestly expected something better from the university.*

Researcher: *Regarding what... how?*

Isabella: *To the... the undergraduate program, he expected it to be more challenging and it was not the case.*

Researcher: *Ay...*

Isabella: *And... and since English is the base of the undergraduate program, it's the only one he cares about, that it doesn't hurt him to review topics.*

Researcher: *That's what he said?*

Isabella: *...it's his arrogance... yes... and I insisted that he only come to exams explaining it was not comfortable for me to work like that, because I needed to make sure everyone was convinced of what we are doing in class.*

Researcher: *True*

Isabella: *And I told him.*

Classroom Observation 2 discussion

Researcher: *And what happened? Did you talk to him after my observation?*

Isabella: *Yes, but... I mean he listens and he says ok but he doesn't even look at you sometimes, he's too arrogant. Besides nobody wants to work with him, it's complicated, it's complicated.*

Researcher: *And I don't know if you mind me asking, what does this cause in you? That a student wants to impose on you and that those attitudes are his way of showing how he feels, what does it cause you?*

Isabella: *It causes me uneasiness; his attitude disturbs me even when I have already talked to him about it. But if I focus too much on it and I emphasize it, I'll make other students become more aware of it so I*

let it go. My position now is like what I did today with the inappropriate language, I tell students: I remind you that now that we've finished the conversations, for the next time you should only use the language set in class. Just like that in a very general way. But in that precise moment I don't stop the class because I would be emphasizing on him.

Researcher: *Yes, in that precise moment it caught my attention because I personally don't know what I would have done. I probably would have turned around and said excuse me, what did you say? Can you repeat the word, but you are absolutely right; If you emphasize on it, the rest of the class will make a big deal out of it as well.*

Isabella: *Besides not everyone has the language level that he has so that is an advantage for me. He can say whatever he wants but the rest of the class doesn't understand.*

From the data provided in extract 7, one can observe how Isabella noticed this particular student felt uncomfortable in her class since the semester began and decided to show his discomfort by being rude. As a relaxed classroom environment is keen for Isabella in order to suitably carry out her practice, she decided to make her stance known to this student; she felt that it was her responsibility to find the best possible outcome for both her student and her. Nevertheless, he was reluctant to cooperate which made Isabella feel frustrated, as she was not able to find the positive solution she had expected. However, and as a result of discussing this critical incident in both of the post observation conversations, Isabella was able to impersonalize and rationalize what was happening (Farrell 2001).

To begin with, she understood that her student's negative attitudes were not against her or her class in particular. She had spoken to other first semester teachers after her classroom observation and they informed her that they presented the same issue with this particular student, fact that comforted her. Further, she understood his attitudes as a display of personal dissatisfaction with the undergraduate program and the university failing to meet his expectations. Isabella therefore decided not to reinforce his rude comments or attitudes in class by overlooking them and simply making general recommendations to the group

whenever this student's actions affected an activity. Isabella still felt uneasy due to him yet she decided not to let him affect her position in class, the class environment or the rest of the students.

This teacher alone could have gotten to this same conclusion by reflecting on the situation individually. Nevertheless, by exposing the situation as well as her first reactions to it, enabled Isabella to talk to her colleagues about this student and find out his negative attitudes were not exclusive to her class allowing her to make proper teaching decisions and regain her sense of agency. Researchers in the field such as Farrell (2001, 2008, 2013) report on similar critical incidents and suggest that collaborative critical discussions serve to take the teachers out of the situation by listening to other outsiders' perspectives, aiding them to avoid taking matters personally favoring their practice and in this particular incident, maintaining a comfortable learning environment in the class.

Finding support to confront challenges

A similar case to critical friendships is **teacher collegiality**, which according to Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) is characterized by authentic interactions that are professional in nature such as openly sharing failures and mistakes and demonstrating respect for each other in order to constructively analyze and criticize practices and procedures. In this next example, Lucia demonstrated her teacher collegiality towards me by sharing an observed teaching discontinuity in her practice she had become aware of after individually reviewing her class videos. The issue dealt with a teaching position shared in the focus group interview by the participants of this study and herself, where for the most part everyone had stated to recycle lesson plans, activities, exams and tasks semester after semester yet adapting them according to the new students and group dynamics. Nevertheless, in reality this was not the case for Lucia, her issue is thoroughly described in excerpt 8.

Extract 8

Lucia: *I think in the focus group interview I stated that your group should be new and your classes should be new even if it's the same level every semester. But no! I said it but I'm not doing it. I try to include new material, different activities to not merely focus on the book and bring a new topic, a topic from their everyday life but I don't do it as frequently. It was until this semester that I said, every week I'm going to bring something different to class so students also feel different and that I'm not just following the book structure because regardless of how many new exercises you bring, you're still following the book so it's basically the same thing. But I have been doing this for a very long time, class after class and I'm like stuck in this routine. This is because I'm in a comfort zone and this comfort zone impacts my whole performance, everything, right?*

Researcher: *Yes! and How did you get to this point? I mean, how did you come to realize this?*

Lucia: *When I read the... after watching the class video I went back to the focus group transcript that you sent us and I read what I had said. Then I read your comments from the class observations and I noticed those inconsistencies. I believed that I was being innovative and when I saw my class, I said no, not really! This has really stricken me but for the positive. I want to become better; I think everyone works to become better. I have been observed before and they tell you what you want to hear, the good things. But what I saw is not right. Because I have classes where I already have my lessons planned and material to go with the plans. So, I go home and just re-read the lesson and look for one or two new exercises but I'm basically doing the same thing and it's not right. It should not be this way. This is why I accepted more groups, 7 this semester because I know I don't need to invest my time on some of my classes. I mean, I know I have to better my practice but I'm in this comfort zone and you leave becoming better for later, for next semester, for next month. All of a sudden 2 or 3 years went by and your practice remained the same, then Jovanna comes along with her study and points out some things, things I already knew ha, ha, ha but that I pretended not to notice or listen to, right?*

Lucia's example illustrates one more founding notion of this study, where it is suggested that teachers should move away from ***routine thinking*** where actions are guided by impulse, tradition, or authority (Dewey, 1934, p.35), to continuously engaging in ***reflective inquiry*** in order to increase awareness of their practice. In other words, to thinking carefully about what teachers do in class and the reasoning behind it, which can lead to better future actions for their practice, also

called ***reflective action*** (Dewey 1934).

In our second post-observation discussion, Lucia commented that she had formerly participated in other classroom observation practices yet the feedback she had received was mainly condescending, focusing on her positive teaching qualities strengthening her view that she was carrying out her practice appropriately and in accordance to her teaching beliefs and stances. However, in those past observations the main feedback had been a written report where colleagues or supervisors had ticked off teaching factors — methodological teaching issues — that were observed or not. As complement to the observations, Lucia had been also asked to hand in a reflective report according to her feedback yet only as a requirement, Lucia states that there had not been any real reflection on her behalf. Researchers in the field support Lucia's remarks, stating that by "simply asking teachers to complete a 'post observation reflection sheet' after a classroom observation and expecting them to think '*critically*' about their teaching has resulted in no significant change for the teachers or their practice" (Brandt 2008; Gün 2011).

Conversely, after Lucia was provided with the opportunity to observe her practice in this study with the help of different types of evidence, she was able to critically reflect on her teaching and increase her awareness. The impact of this raised awareness was noticeable, as Lucia was able to explain and differentiate the lack of a critical approach on her former classroom observations, which only addressed 'good' things from her practice and not the challenges. Further, I was able to observe some implications to her teaching in her second classroom observation. For instance, Lucia chose to exclusively use the course book for language structure practice, she still followed the program yet the way she presented the topic was different from how it was suggested in the textbook. Her physical position in the classroom also changed as well as her physical appearance, she decided to dress younger and engage more with the class. By her students' reactions I was able to notice that they were enjoying the class and so was Lucia. When I asked, what had encouraged her to take these actions she said "...*becoming aware was*

the key, before you only do things as a routine, you're not conscious. I observed myself and now I have to think before I act but I also needed to do something about it'.

I firmly believe that by providing a space for evidence-based systematic reflective practice along with collegial support can make a difference in helping teachers advance as reflective practitioners and even more, develop as language teachers (Betil Eröz-Tuga 2013; Richards and Lockhart 1994; Farrell 2008; McCabe 2009; Wallace 1991). I cannot state for certain that the changes Lucia or the rest of the teachers made to their practice in the second classroom observations were permanent. Researchers in the field have advanced that the impact of RP on teachers' development "cannot be discerned from discrete overt teacher behaviors; a teacher's reflective stance in teaching can be noted only when considering patterns over time" (Copeland, 1993, p.349). Nevertheless, these teachers' efforts on moving away from ***routine thinking*** and a 'teaching comfort zone' were authentic, giving proof that *teaching awareness* occurred as the thinking processes in which teachers engaged in matched the actions that proceeded them, complying with the aim for conducting video-recorded COs.

Moving on to another teacher collegiality case reported in this study, Daniel's example is now put forward. In his case, upon independently revisiting his class videos, Daniel noticed the need to work on pacing and timing his classes in a more suitable manner. He therefore decided to seek advice and guidance from more experienced colleagues; the way he engaged in collaborative collegial support is exemplified in extract 9.

Extract 9

Researcher: ... Hey and did you notice anything in yourself or in your classes after I observed your last class?

Daniel: Yes, other issues... I had to ask myself about other aspects of my teaching such as timing my classes, uhm... and I also talked about this with other colleagues or with people whom I admire as teachers. And there are different opinions, some of them pace their classes

very well; they even use chronometers for each activity. There were others that told me – and I was surprised to hear their answer – Bernardine, PhD was one of the people I spoke to and she said she had difficulty pacing her activities and controlling the time. I admire her and she has all this experience, she has been dedicated to the field (ELT) and she said she also had difficulty with time. Her husband is also a teacher and she made a comparison, she said he was very precise with times and she had difficulty sticking strictly to the time frames. She said: if I see they are discussing something, I let the activity run longer and suddenly when I realize it, I let it run for too long.

I didn't feel as bad afterwards ha, ha, ha I told myself, if it happens to her or to very experienced teachers, I didn't feel as bad anymore... But I do think I need to do something about it because, because... but I feel it's going to be really hard for me to just say stop! But... sometimes I do it, sometimes I stop the activity and continue with the next one when I notice they are taking too long. But I always like to give them time but they take longer, it's hard for me to estimate the time, it's just hard for me...

This example suggests teaching awareness and the need for collegial support as Daniel goes on to share his academic concern with other colleagues. It was in fact after listening to several teachers' points of view regarding pacing and timing activities, specifically experienced teachers who he admired, that he realized that he was not the only one who faced this difficulty allowing him to feel more relaxed about the matter as participants in similar studies have reported (Vo and Nguyen 2010). Daniel concluded that it was in deed an area relevant to his practice and he needed to take action, regardless of the difficulty it represented for him. I firmly believe that once teachers become aware of certain issues or discontinuities in their teaching practice, they cannot go back to being unaware. What is more, if they possess the '**readiness**' to take action by exploring instructional innovations, trying out alternatives, sharing experiences with others and modifying or even breaking routines and paradigms based upon what they have become aware of and learned through critical reflection, they have a high possibility of advancing as reflective practitioners and achieve continuous teacher development.

5.4 Summary and concluding remarks

Summary

This chapter was interested in reporting findings in order to respond to the second research question of this study: *How helpful is feedback from other sources and sharing perspectives with peers in fostering critical reflectivity in teachers?* Hence, I first described the data collection process as well as the reasoning for setting categories and units of analysis so as to understand the results here discussed. It is relevant to consider that even though the collection procedure offered a comprehensive amount of data, the most salient and useful findings according to the aim and research questions for this study were selected and thus reported. Accordingly, three dominant practices were described and exemplified where the reasoning behind these practices generally coincided amongst the five participants of this study yet at times teachers' reactions and thoughts were constricted to their very personal teaching stances and belief systems. Challenges representative of this teaching context were also put forward related to issues outside teachers' practices yet that had an effect on their teaching. However, once these situations were analyzed by means of systematic collaborative reflective practices as the teaching examples and data extracts provided in this chapter illustrate, informed self-directed teaching actions were carried out by the study participants minimizing the negative effects for their practice.

Concluding remarks

It is well known in the field of Reflective Practice for language teaching that teachers can increase their ability to identify their strengths and weaknesses and take action towards improving themselves as professionals when they receive feedback from different sources (Eröz-Tuga 2013; Farrel 2001; Gün, 2011). The five teachers participating in this study gave testimony of becoming aware of their practice or increasing their awareness — yet at different personal levels and times — after engaging in evidence based collaborative discussions with the researcher by means of video stimulated recall. They stated that having evidence from their

practice allowed for **reflective enquiry** — critical analysis of their practice — to occur, which at the same time enabled or increased their teaching awareness (Dewey 1933; Bailey 2006; Eröz-Tuga 2013; Johnson 2006). Awareness was not only reported to the teaching points initially highlighted in the focus group interview by each one of the participants but for their entire practice. This provided proof to reinforce my view that when a teacher possesses certain reflective practitioner qualities, such as the ones these teachers reported to have in Chapter 4, section 4.4: **open-mindedness, open to change, professional commitment and will** (Farrell 2007; Viera and Marques 2012; Farrell 2013; Louw, Watson and Jimarkon 2014), becoming aware is eased and can lead to further discoveries, changes and improvements in teachers' teaching; in other words, **ongoing teacher development**.

Through video reviewing and cooperative discussions, the teachers from this study were able to notice how some of their teaching decisions and actions — which they thought pertinent — could lead to certain class failings that they considered either irrelevant or caused by other teaching aspects. Researchers such as Bailey (2006) point out that in fact critical reflection becomes valuable when teachers are able to make a critical enquiry into the process of their teaching by interpreting the data collected from their practice and to bring about 'changes' in their teaching cognitions and practices based on those interpretations. Nevertheless, in this study it was not easily done due to the fact that some of these teachers' stances and teaching paradigms were so strongly fixed and well-founded that even when issues were noticed, the implications for their practice were overlooked as in their eyes, the class tasks and activities were being completed (Wallace 1991). It was through much video-reviewing, prompting by the researcher, collaborative discussions and teachers verbalizing their thoughts, that allowed the participants to accept and consider other outside perspectives of their practice, which then led them to notice flaws or constraints and propose more suitable teaching decisions.

These findings give foundation to my position towards favoring collaborative as opposed to individual reflective practices. According to Bowen (2004), Johnson (1999) and Richards & Farrell (2005), if teachers are not presented with the appropriate opportunities and spaces to rationalize their teaching practices they may fail to recognize the stances and beliefs that inform their teaching. As a consequence, they will remain in a teaching 'comfort zone' repeating only what is familiar to them regardless of the overall teaching and learning outcomes or the many other teaching choices available. These dialogic spaces are more often than not uncommon in teachers' daily lives as they normally follow institutional policies and norms, comply with programs, accomplish objectives, but their teaching views and challenges are hardly taken into account as discussed in the introduction of this thesis.

Conversely, the teachers from this study were able to articulate teaching issues, worries and personal stances by engaging in collaborative dialogues with the researcher. This study provided them with the opportunity to be listened to, opportunity that had not been given to them elsewhere. Nevertheless, becoming aware did not necessarily bring about change to their teaching. In some occasions teachers decided not to modify certain actions due to strong personal stances yet willingly made other noteworthy changes to their practice in areas simpler for them to manage, which resulted in general positive outcomes. This was acceptable as immediate and superficial change is avoided when properly engaging in reflective practice. However, and regardless of not being able to report major or permanent transformations, the small changes described were carried out in areas feasible for teachers to manage, which in future will pave way for further actions considering practitioners' raised awareness. What is relevant is that these small changes served as evidence of teachers' efforts on trying to move away from ***routine thinking*** or what they called a 'teaching comfort zone'.

The collaborative discussions we held were not the only medium aiding their teaching awareness. Daniel, Lucia and Montserrat for instance, decided to engage

in ***collegial discussions*** with other language teachers to seek advice. Monica did not feel comfortable sharing her experience with colleagues; she therefore decided to talk to someone closer to her — her husband — about her video-recorded classroom observations. She mentioned feeling more comfortable talking with someone who would not judge her or criticize her for what she was becoming aware of regarding her teaching. Further, all of the teachers except for Isabella independently reviewed their class videos noticing issues not necessarily discussed in the focus group interview and which were brought up in the second post-observation discussions or in the final individual interviews. These further reflective actions were initiated by the participants and then discussed with the researcher; these practices too resulted positive in the sense of aiding their awareness and enabling alternative teaching decisions. Additionally, the fact that these teachers conducted further reflective behaviors as opposed to having them imposed by the researcher, resulted in genuine approaches towards their involvement in critical reflection of their practice (Hobbs 2007).

For the most part, these teachers represented the teaching stances advanced in the focus group interview, which as stated before were so set that if they had not had input evidence they may have not realized flaws and discontinuities so evident from the outside. Betil Eröz-Tuga (2013) suggests that when it comes to reflecting on teaching performances, research results clearly signal that ‘showing instead of telling’ enables practitioners to see their own classroom presentations and what is more, confront what they are observing. Although it may be somewhat disappointing for the teachers to see themselves on tape and time consuming for the researcher, watching videotaped recordings is a beneficial component to ongoing teacher development as the findings from this study have supported.

Chapter 6: The process of developing teaching awareness

6.1 Introduction

This last analytical chapter helps to bring closure to the initiated collaborative Reflective Practice process by responding to research question 3 and providing a final account of the participants' experience and perceptions concerning their partaking in this study.

To what extent does collaborative Reflective Practice influence participants' cognitive transformation?

The focus of this section is on the re-constructed and co-constructed knowledge that teachers gained as participants of this cooperative RP experience. Accordingly, a brief description of the data collection and analysis procedures by means of a semi-structured personal interview is first described. Then, a narrative of these teachers' remarks regarding what reflective practice meant for them prior, while and after engaging in this reflective practice study is also illustrated. This was done with the purpose of consolidating this collaborative reflective process and to understand, how and to what extent engaging in this study enhanced these participants' teaching awareness, cognitive transformation (reconstruction of their teaching knowledge) and reflective actions.

6.2 The data collection and analysis procedure

In order to gain knowledge to respond to this last research question, a ***semi-structured personal interview*** (see Appendix 4) was carried out in the first week of May of the year 2015 with each one of the participants once the classroom observation cycles were over. Together, the participants and I decided on an interview as it is through social interaction that "active learning evolves and each participant interprets, transforms and internalizes new knowledge as a result of collective thinking" (Vo and Nguyen, 2010, p.207). Nevertheless, let us remember that I made use of ***methodological triangulation*** to enable better understanding

and outcomes for the whole of the study, therefore data from the focus group, the video-recorded observations and my personal field notes were also included when appropriate.

Regarding data analysis, a similar procedure to the one taken for the focus group interview was respected. Following Dörnyei's four-phase **content analysis approach**, I transcribed the audio recordings of the 5 semi-structured personal interviews making use of Mary Bucholtz' (2000) *global representation of talk* transcription variation as well as to her *variation in translation*. Once I had the transcripts of the 5 interviews I set organizational categories and coded the data according to salient emerging themes such as: *initiating a reflective practice process, being observed and video-recorded while teaching and engaging in reflective action*. After coding all 5 interviews, the next step was to grow ideas from the data in order to interpret the whole corpus and draw conclusions. The following discussion provides this interpretation.

6.3 Reflections on Reflective Practice

Reflective Practice, as stated throughout this entire thesis, is a cyclical process in which teachers gradually advance as reflective practitioners and it will be according to each teacher's involvement that the process will take more or less time producing different outcomes for each individual. Nevertheless, gaining teaching awareness in order to advance as a reflective practitioner not only requires a certain '**readiness**' on behalf of the teachers but also '**appropriate circumstances**' for awareness to take place (Bowen 2004; Johnson 1999; Richards & Farrell 2005). Therefore, the teachers from this study and I jointly created those 'circumstances' that as mentioned before, are nonexistent in this naturally occurring teaching environment. By providing participants regardless of their teaching experiences, teaching stances, backgrounds in ELT, teaching context and teaching constraints, with evidence-based input along with dialogic spaces for discussion allowed for reflective inquiry of teachers' practices to occur. This systematization and its outcomes positively reflected RP's main goal which is

for teachers to gain an increased teaching awareness and advance as reflective practitioners. The following discussion makes this process explicit.

6.3.1 Initiating a Reflective Practice process

I believe that in order for any undesirable situation to not be repeated, one must avoid echoing the conditions and circumstances, which originated it. A major concern in the development of this study was for circumstances and outcomes to be different from those of the 2014 pilot study. Therefore, aside from modifying my researcher role, specific contextual factors as well as participants' concerns were contemplated and in doing so, this study paved the way for an initial stage of awareness regarding a change in how teachers' practices can be observed.

Classroom Observation in the research context: challenging traditional evaluative observation

Classroom Observations (COs) in the ELT undergraduate program of this university are not compulsory or part of the institutions' formative requirements. However, most of the teacher population has been observed in their condition as pre-service teachers as was the case of Monica and Daniel or when partaking in teacher education programs like Isabella, Lucia and Montserrat. However, the foundations under which COs are carried out in either context are aligned to formative/ evaluative purposes. The participants of this study reported to conform to CO models where the mentors or supervisors assumed the traditional positions of authority, intending to "transmit traditions of successful teaching while the observees listened and responded accordingly" (Bullough et al., 2002, p.72). Unavoidably these previous experiences led the participant teachers to view COs as a form of '*teaching assessment*' expecting the observer to focus on '*teacher mistakes*' and directly hint them towards '*good teaching practices*' — mostly methodological teaching issues — for future classes (see findings in section 1.3.2, p.7 supporting this statement).

As a means to move away from this traditional CO paradigm, there had been previous research studies carried out in this context. Isabella and Lucia mentioned having taken part of a peer-observation study in the year 2010 that was guided by senior teachers from the ELT undergraduate program in which participants were to observe each other with the freedom to select who to observe yet with the condition of allowing anyone into their classes as observers as well. After every classroom observation, teachers held one on one feedback conferences and were also required to turn in a 'free style' written reflective report regarding their observation experience — reports included anything participants wanted to write about in any preferred written style —. Nonetheless, Isabella commented that there had not been a specific aim for the observations and in her experience, feedback had mostly been in praise form avoiding any type of questioning regarding her teaching.

Hoffman (2015) reports on a series of ELT classroom observation studies performed with pre-service teachers since the 1990's up to date, where findings concluded that observers highly avoided discussing concerns from observed lessons, seeking to sustain a positive relationship with their observees (p.106). In this specific context Hoffman's position extrapolates to how the teachers reacted in the peer-observation study. As the observer's experience or lack of it plays an important role regarding how the observation and feedback take place, the participants in that former study — as novice observers — most probably felt insecure towards giving negative feedback to their colleagues and preferred to focus on the positive teaching aspects of their peers (Cosh and Woodward 2004). Nonetheless, this issue interferes with any reflective or developmental type of classroom observation and can be turned upon by designing a clear research objective for the COs to take place and by building trust and *teacher collegiality* amongst the researcher and research participants in order to constructively analyze and criticize practices and procedures (Farrell 2008; Fullan and Hargreaves 1992).

Contrary to Isabella's experience, Lucia reported that due to an unpleasant incident as participant of that peer-observation study, she had decided not to partake in any further CO practices. She explained that she had received imposing intrusive feedback from one of the senior teachers, which did not contribute to her practice and affected her sense of agency as a teacher and as a person to the extent that she saw the need to seek professional psychological therapy. Previous studies suggest that, "imposing an intervention type of feedback without adequate teacher preparation and readiness may have unwanted consequences for the researcher, for the observed teacher and for future observation practices (Yürekli 2013). Yürekli also proposes that the type of feedback conferences should be previously discussed and agreed upon by the observer and the observee in order to meet both ends' expectations. By the end of the study Isabella and Lucia stated they had not benefit much from participating in the peer-observation research and when required to turn in their reflective reports, they had written them a day before the deadline with recalling information that was not necessarily accurate. Overall, COs in this former study were found purposeless and the reflective report was observed as a task rather than a means to understand their practice.

Regarding my own research, I consider that these teachers' past experiences, which formed their perceptions of what COs entailed were the reason why at first not everyone was convinced of taking part of this investigation; only two out of five participants immediately accepted my invitation. The three remaining teachers had valid reasons for not wanting to participate, as was Lucia's case. Monica for instance — who was a new teacher to the ELT undergraduate program —, was also hesitant to accept, as she felt insecure about the way she was conducting her practice and did not want to feel exposed. Daniel had never been observed as an in-service teacher and the fact that this study made use of video-recordings made him feel even more uncomfortable; he commented the following:

Extract 1

Daniel: *“... you know when somebody observes you, it's like a one-time thing, yet observations with video recordings, it's like there you have it, to see over and over again. I mean you can see if you messed up again and again... you can actually let others see how you really are! And what if you don't like what you are...”*

Daniel mentioned in his final interview that he was in fact going to decline my invitation as he was concerned about becoming aware of things regarding his practice that he might not like, things that as teachers you are aware of yet chose to overlook. Copeland (1993) states that sometimes “a failure to find meaning in a certain problem may be caused either by **inability** or **unwillingness** on the part of the teacher to consider the matter at a certain time” (p.351). However, the participants from this study had reported information favoring reflective attitudes such as: openmindedness, willingness and responsibility. Therefore, another possible reason why teachers felt hesitant to partake in this study was because they were — to a certain extent — aware of their teaching yet due to a lack of opportunity for reflective inquiry, did not know how to deal with their noticed practices.

After learning this information, I — as the leading researcher and in order to convince teachers to participate in my study — found the need to share my pilot study experience along with its most salient results. I provided information to show that assistance and cooperation from peers were key factors in effective non-evaluative COs. I also mentioned my intention to be a facilitator in this study where showing and discussing instead of telling would prevent me from imposing a type of feedback that could have a negative effect on them as teachers and research participants (Low et al. 2014; Gün 2011; Eröz-Tuga 2013). I explained how they would not adopt trainee positions where one-directional discussions would prevail; conversely, evidence-based collegial discussions would be promoted where I would be interested on learning about their practices and the reasons for their

particular ways of conducting their classes, not on evaluating them. After this explanation was offered, all five teachers agreed to participate in the research.

Nevertheless, once the study began other worries appeared, such as being truthful when stating their thoughts and opinions. The younger teachers, Monica and Daniel mentioned being nervous about their colleagues' remarks if they gave their honest responses to the focus group interview questions. Lucia's concern was about contradicting her colleagues and possibly harming their work relationship (Cosh and Woodward 2004), however, she commented: "*after observing my colleagues and feeling that their responses were being fairly candid my concerns lessened*". Daniel and Lucia appreciated the fact that opinions were both coincidental and diverse, which allowed them to give honest responses even when they resulted controversial. Monica did not express much yet when her colleague's comments matched her thoughts, she thoroughly agreed with them. Isabella and Montserrat on the other hand did not have a problem expressing their teaching positions; in fact, both of them had the most active participation in the focus group. What was interesting from initiating this collaborative reflective process was that — as previously reported in similar research by Cosh and Woodward (2004) and Gün (2011) — the teachers understood that they are able to share opinions and talk about their own practices and teaching stances without feeling judged or evaluated.

6.3.2 Being observed and video-recorded while teaching

For the majority of the participant teachers, the first classroom observations resulted uneasy; they expressed feeling nervous and noticing nervousness on their students as well. I believe this was caused by the fixed nature of COs in this context. Nonetheless, as participants observed my peripheral positioning in the class and that I complied with how I had previously stated that these COs were to be conducted — where I served as a catalyst for teachers to look at their teaching avoiding teaching assessment (Farrell 2001) —, this initial nervousness disappeared.

The first post-observation discussions dealt with precisely their opinions after being observed as well different type of issues from their practice. In some cases, teachers were already aware of these issues while others came as a surprise to them as they had not noticed them or did not think of them as teaching issues. The following extracts exemplify this.

Extract 2

Isabella: *... It's like this, if there is no one I think it's only my perception, if there is no one to tell you... or to help you reflect because that has been the case, you have not been imposing... it has been more like: What did you see? Why do you think you did this? So, you get me thinking, you get me reflecting and you get me seeing what I had not seen. I realize that there are things I need to modify, not because you say it, not because I think it, but because I noticed it and they need it, right?*

Extract 3

Monica: *I think there were things I had already noticed like being insecure when teaching. I usually did not question their explanations or participations because I thought: they know, they're ELT undergraduate students, right? They... what we mentioned in the focus group, they have a high English level as well as pedagogical and methodological knowledge, all of that so I did get nervous. I had already noticed this insecurity of mine but I hadn't really paid much attention to it because I wasn't sure if anyone else noticed it too... so, it is always helpful for someone else to point it out to you, that way you confirm that it's not just a feeling, that it's a real issue and I know I have to change it.*

Extract 4

Lucia: *I saw that your comments were true, I watched my class video twice and I feel that I am in a comfort zone regarding simple and considerable teaching issues. I asked myself, why does this happen to me? I think it's because I have been teaching the same class for a very long time, so you know it by heart and you take it for granted... now, before I do something I think, I don't just react, right? Even when asking a simple question or when giving instructions, especially instructions, those do not always come our right ha, ha, ha.*

As research has previously advanced, becoming aware of teaching issues and moving forward in your practice is not easily done suggesting that teachers be

assisted by a colleague — or in this case a researcher — to provide input but refrain from taking over teachers' reflections (Bailey op.cit., p.326). As extracts 2, 3 and 4 show, teachers were able to notice or confirm personal teaching issues through input from our collaborative discussions. They confirmed that it was not just a personal perception as they were provided with evidence from their practice — video recordings —, which validated their thoughts as well as my comments. All five teachers commented that having someone to aid their reflectivity was useful in increasing their awareness. They stated that becoming aware of teaching issues and wanting to do something about it required support from others, it was not something teachers should do in isolation (Gün 2011; Eröz-Tuga 2013; McCabe 2009; Wallace 1991). This position of favoring collaborative as opposed to individual reflective practice was coincidental for both the pilot and the study participants, however and different from the pilot study, these teachers confirmed that by means of COs they were supported to become aware of their teaching and not evaluated or assessed.

Other salient remarks dealt with the experience of observing themselves in their class videos. As hesitant as teachers were at first to watch themselves teaching, 4 out of the 5 participants reported to have individually reviewed their class videos afterwards; either to confirm matters from our discussions, or to contrast their own perceptions to their classes, this is illustrated in extracts 5 and 6.

Extract 5

Daniel: *... well it's strange because you never see yourself. I mean, you really never know how you look or how you stand, you don't know. I mean, I wasn't even very conscious about things like that however those things have to do with the teacher image that you represent for your students. They are things that you do not even consider because you never see yourself teach in front of a mirror, observing how you move, how your voice sounds. After you watch the video you can actually say, oh yes, that's me! I saw that I tend to raise my voice or that sometimes students have doubts and I saw what students do when I turn around, it's is really weird, but it's a very good experience.*

Extract 6

Montserrat: *Another thing from my first observation that caught my attention was my vision because to me it's natural, so I forget that I have to be more attentive. So, in all of my classes I tried to change my physical positioning when carrying out an activity so I had a clear vision of everyone. This way I would see all my students when they raised their hands and stop giving the impression that I am ignoring some of them on purpose as I saw on the video.*

Video reviewing proved helpful in gaining awareness of noticed and unnoticed practices. For instance, observing their physical positioning in the class, their facial expressions or gestures and becoming aware of the impact it had in their practice resulted relevant for the majority of these teachers as they had never contemplated those factors before, just like Daniel comments in extract 4. This was of especial importance to Montserrat who noticed an issue that was to a certain extent natural to her regarding a personal physical condition — she has zero visibility in her right eye — yet that had an impact on her practice. She was unable to acknowledge all of her students due to how she physically positioned herself in class. Montserrat's example was the only teaching issue caused by a physical condition, however Monica reported the exact same issue in her classes (see chapter 5, section 5.3.1) however, in her case it was due to the fact that her focus and attention were exclusively on her advanced students.

It is fair to comment that after carrying out the second classroom observations, I observed and increase in teachers' insightfulness about their own practice — strengths and weaknesses — and their ability to propose better teaching actions for the future (Gün 2011; Richards and Lockhart 1994; Rich and Hannafin 2009; Schön 1983). Teachers were more engaged in the post-observation discussions and were able to point out the majority of the issues I was to address with them and also identified other areas to work on. What is more, they displayed a conscious effort in trying to deal with the issues discussed in the first observations (Johnson 2002, 2006; Wallace 1998). Daniel for example noticed he had been inflexible in imposing his idea of making students responsible for certain learning

decisions such as grouping or participation, which resulted contra productive to his lesson. Monica became aware of gaps in her classes due to the fact that she usually followed the suggested lesson plan from the teacher's book, she therefore made the decision to only use the teachers' book as a guide and changed or modified activities according to her students' context and interests. She also assured that her physical position in the class contemplated all of her students and that her instructions were explicitly written down and conveyed her intentions appropriately. Montserrat also changed her physical position in the class and avoided covering every single activity from the book if it was not relevant or of interest for her students; she replaced those activities with own-designed materials and games.

Overall, what is relevant from all the examples mentioned in this section is that teachers engaged in evidence-based **reflective enquiry** of their teaching and then made small modifications to their practice accordingly. Researchers state, "benefits for the classroom come from each teacher's engagement with the analysis process and then taking ownership of specific change initiatives in their practice" (Slimani-Rolls & Kiely, 2014). A characteristic of the initial changes here reported was that they were in areas suitable for participants to manage as teachers believe: "*change is gradual, I need to start little by little and with things that are easy to control*"-Isabella. These teachers are of the idea that small changes can lead to further developments, statement that I also support as immediate and superficial change is not within the aim of this study or the RP interests. Further, teachers' actions were identified with those of reflective practitioners where "one is aware of the underlying reasons which guide the solutions or changes being considered for their practice" (Copeland, 1993, p.352), meaning that actions here taken were the result of a reflective inquiry process and not impulsive reactions (Dewey 1933). The following section discusses further reflective actions that teachers decided to carry out after partaking in this study.

6.3.3 Engaging in Reflective Action

As a result of examining their practice through video stimulated recall, engaging in collaborative discussions with the researcher and in some cases having collaborative discussions with other colleagues (see reported results in Chapter 5), helped participants reconstruct their understanding regarding the purpose for engaging in Classroom Observation practices going from a teaching assessment point of view to seeing CO as a means for teaching awareness. Further, in confronting and rationalizing in a critical and collaborative way certain noted discontinuities or issues from their practice, each individual made informed changes in areas they perceived as necessary. This was possible not because I directly suggested those changes to them or due to vague reflections about their teaching but because teachers were provided with the appropriate circumstances to become aware of this necessity — as Isabella explains in extract 2 —, leading them to experience a sense of control over their practice (Nguyen 2009; Nilsson and Van Driel 2010; Slimani-Rolls & Kiely 2014).

Accordingly, the participants in this study understood the notion of reflective practice as a gradual process where changes or modifications only took place in areas considered suitable and relevant for their individual practices. This is understandable as it was the first time that these teachers were presented with the opportunity to systematically critically reflect upon their teaching within their everyday teaching context, hence RP was undertaken under their own terms. To better explain their position, the following extracts put forward some of these teachers' RP understandings after taking part in this collaborative reflective practice research.

Extract 7

Daniel: *It's a continuous process... very personal. It's about me! It's about who I am and how I am. It teaches you to understand things in a different way, instead of seeing them as right and wrong. It's about how you can facilitate learning, more than anything else, more than right and wrong. I believe it's about thinking why you do things and*

its consequences and how you can become better in order to facilitate student learning. At the end of the day that's what we're here for, for them, right? But first you have to break certain barriers that are part of you as a teacher... those fears of seeing yourself as you really are, you need to be able to see yourself in a very real and objective way. You cannot guide yourself by emotion, you have to be critical and reflective about your practice, it's really about finding yourself. After that shock, the next step is to accept yourself and be willing to make changes. I think that's by far the most important thing. According to your critical reflections you need to be willing to change and to not let the impulse of not changing win. The last part of the process would be to actually be willing to make changes to better your practice.

In his stance, Daniel states that RP is a personal continuous process that aids teachers in moving away from the traditional teacher education paradigm where 'good' and 'bad' teaching practices are discerned and evaluated to understanding why a teacher's practice is carried out in a certain way. He reinforces previous research findings mentioning that teachers should be 'ready' to break with routine thinking and fixed paradigms in order to take action according to what teachers may become aware of as a result of partaking in RP (Bowen 2004; Dewey 1934; Eroz-Tüga 2013; Johnson 1999; Richards & Farrell 2001, 2005; Gün 2011; Ho 2013; Schön 1983,1987). However, and different from his colleagues' positions, Daniel orientates his personal improvement towards his students' learning process and in doing so he defines his personal stance for partaking in RP: *in order to help students' learning*.

Monica also made sense of the whole cycle involved in reflective practice yet she added the notions of **collaboration** and peer support that Daniel failed to include. Extract 8 delivers her full stance.

Extract 8

Monica: *It's a process that helps the teacher obtain immediate feedback ha, ha, ha... But first you need to allow someone to help you reflect because I am not sure I could have started the process alone. I did need someone to tell me, hey you need to be observed and video*

recorded, that's the first step. The next step would be to observed what happened, discuss it and accept it, right? Because a lot of times people can tell me that I'm wrong, but if I don't accept it, I won't be able to move from my comfort zone, I believe that it is another important step. First you need to be observed, second, you need to see which were your issues and allow for comments and critiques, third you need to take action. And start with one issue at a time because you cannot correct everything at the same time. It's not magic! It's a process! You can start with the easier things to change and maybe that will help you to change the more difficult things, right? Big things happen when you start with the little changes. You can implement changes little by little, step by step, it's not going to be an overnight change. You need to be conscious about what you are doing because maybe you'll fall back to the same practices but if you're conscious you'll also be able to notice and next time you'll be more aware.

Monica describes Reflective Practice as a process that requires input and collaboration in order to ease **reflective enquiry** and hence allow for teaching awareness or in her words 'automatic feedback' of one's practice to take place (Dewey 1933; Wallace 1991, 1998; Johnson 2002, 2006). She further points out that becoming aware then leads you to make manageable changes and to be attentive while teaching as there is an existing possibility of falling back to old practices. Nevertheless, she takes this as a natural step of the gradual change that RP involves, according to Monica, gaining teaching awareness is the main goal. Researchers support her position and state, "reflective practitioners learn from setbacks and continue the reflective process" (Copeland, 1993, p.354). Often, an action or a solution sets a teacher back or redirects related teaching issues enabling the cyclical reflective process to begin once more.

Finally, Montserrat too describes RP as a cyclical process, however she adds that teachers should not only reflect on teaching issues and discontinuities but also on 'good' practices to reinforce them and make use of them in future classes (Wallace 1991), extract 9 illustrates her position.

Extract 9

Montserrat: *I would say it's a process where you first need to observe yourself. You need to identify the areas where you need to become better and why not, also what you are doing right so you can keep doing it. After you identify certain issues you need to accept them, right? Because there are people who are not willing to accept no matter how much you tell them. So, you identify, accept and then, what are you going to do about it? I mean we always have the decision in our hands, right? You chose an action and then you do it. Then you have to monitor yourself and remember to pay attention to what you became aware of from your practice so the process results effective. Observe, identify, accept, work on it, and then start the process again and observe what happens to see if things got better. It's like a cycle.*

Montserrat shares dimensions of RP common to Daniel and Monica such as RP being a continuous process that requires teachers to be open-minded in order to allow observations of their practice leading teachers to take action. However, Montserrat does not see taking action as equivalent to immediate change in reflective practice. She states that every teacher needs to decide what to do with his or her gained awareness yet a type of action is necessary in order to complete the RP cycle. Richards and Nunan (1990) support her argument stating that an integral part of engaging in reflective practice is to learn to take action, otherwise, “reflection without action is verbalism and action without reflection is activism — doing things for their own sake —” (p.212).

All in all, obtaining these reflective practice definitions from the participants according to their experiences gives proof that these teachers not only increased their teaching awareness, they also advanced as reflective practitioners by “continually interacting with situations of practice to try to solve problems, thereby gaining an increasingly deep understanding of their subject matter, of themselves as teachers, and of the nature of teaching” (Schön, 1983, p.vii).

In the final interviews, every single teacher mentioned or gave proof of individually initiating small yet significant actions to benefit their practice and hence develop according to their own teaching stances, needs and beliefs. For example, Daniel

and Isabella had begun asking students for feedback more often yet Daniel also found support in other colleagues and asked for their advice to make changes in his practice; the main change observed was a more organized and structured lesson plan. Others had taken bigger steps such as Monica who enrolled in an online Master Degree program with Arizona State University, USA. She mentioned having two purposes; first she would comply with an institutional requirement and secondly she would increase her language proficiency and ELT knowledge. Lucia had also enrolled into a language development course with the ultimate goal of obtaining a higher language certification than the one she currently possessed, which was a B2 (according to the CEFR). She had also attended a reflective practice conference that was coincidentally held in the state of Hidalgo at that time, which motivated her to change the way she was carrying out her practice. She commented: “*reflective practice is not how you define it, it’s what comes from it, the conscious actions you take and the conscious changes you make*”.

6.4 Summary and concluding remarks

Summary

This final analysis chapter was concerned with the participants’ reflexive processes in taking part of this collaborative RP action research. After explaining the data collection and analysis procedures, reports on the participants’ stances regarding classroom observations, teacher development and reflective practice were put forward in order to illustrate how their initial positions adapted from the beginning of this study throughout the video-recorded observation cycles, until the last personal interviews. Teachers’ accounts reported an increase in their teaching awareness that lead to a transformation in their way of thinking and doing regarding their personal practices. Detailed descriptions of their RP processes were also advanced according to each participant’s direct experience, which enabled reflective action at different levels for each one. This was one of the most relevant findings not only for this research but also for the RP field.

Concluding remarks

The purpose of doing research in ELT by means of collaborative reflective practice is in enabling teachers to gain self-knowledge as well as co-construct and reconstruct their own knowledge with others and so gradually improve and develop their skill as teachers (Brown 2007; Cosh 2004; Richards & Farrell 2005; Aynur Yürekli 2013). Regarding the research participants, I firmly believe that the reason for the reported **critical reflection** activity in this study was that teacher videos provided observable evidence of teachers' instructional decisions (Richards and Lockhart 1994; Rich and Hannafin 2009). The fact that feedback was evidence-based facilitated reflective enquiry leading the participants to start conversations, which I developed on as opposed to the traditional evaluative CO paradigm and imposed feedback that these teachers were used to conforming to (Wallace 1998; Johnson 2002, 2006).

Conversely, COs and video reviewing were experienced and reported as effective supportive tools in increasing their teaching awareness. These tools allowed them to engage in meaningful and critical conversations of their practice where participants were the main data providers. It was precisely through these discussions that fixed teaching positions could be accessed, conversed and transformed even under constraints related to context, ability and personal factors. Nevertheless, the impact that reflective practice had for each one of the participants largely relied to the extent that each one decided to be involved in the process and establish congruency with what they become aware of regarding their practice and their succeeding actions as the teachers' own definitions of reflective practice state. Hence, it was corroborated that cooperation — in the form of collegial discussions and video reviewing— was not only useful; it was also necessary for cognitive transformation to occur.

Chapter 7: Doing Reflective Practice research from an interpretivist perspective

7.1 Introduction

This study is the result of a collaborative reflective practice process. Each chapter in this thesis has illustrated the different stages in which a group of in-service English language teachers from a public university in the central part of Mexico were invited to reflect upon their own teaching in a setting where systematic plans for reflective inquiry and sharing perspectives with peers are not promoted.

After introducing the rationale and aim of this study and providing the theory along with the methodology that framed it — Chapters 1, 2 and 3 —, the subsequent sections reported salient findings. Chapter 4 allowed for an informed notion into the participants' stances in reported practices of what they claim to do in class. Chapter 5 described a cooperative stage where the teachers and I, as the guiding researcher, challenged the status quo of evaluative classroom observations in this context and worked together in order to rationalize their teaching by means of input evidence and collaborative discussions. The data showed how the participant teachers were able to notice 'routine actions' and consider overlooked factors affecting their practice, enabling an increase in their teaching awareness. Given the fact that this educational context does not promote spaces to ease reflective thought or collaboration amongst practitioners, these findings strongly reinforced the notions directing this study. Finally, Chapter 6 portrayed the participants' reflexive processes in taking part of this action research illustrating how their initial teaching stances and positioning adapted throughout the whole study. Teachers' reports showed an increased teaching awareness that lead to a transformation of their way of thinking and doing in their everyday teaching allowing them to advance as reflective practitioners.

Conclusively, this last chapter proceeds by discussing such findings in the light of the present research interests, contrasting the obtained results with the theoretical

base upon which this research was conducted. This was done with the purpose of advancing empirical data attending existing issues and debates, which contribute to the current Reflective Practice literature in the field of English Language Teacher Development.

7.2 Discussing current debates on empirical reflective practice research

As explained in the literature review of this work, educational philosophies such as Constructivism and the Social Cultural theory emerged as a reaction to traditional teaching-learning paradigms where learning outcomes were the memorization of mass content that had no further application in students' academic or real life and teacher education models viewed practitioners as 'empty vessels' who passively assimilated trending teaching methodologies (Dewey 1933, 1998; Piaget 1972; Bruner 1990; Vygotsky 1934, 1986). Regarding the latter — which was the focus of this study —, traditional teacher education models failed to acknowledge the backgrounds, beliefs, stances and teacher experiences that practitioners possessed, brought to training courses and permeated in their everyday practices (McDonough and McDonough 1997). Therefore, the philosophical and epistemological position of the constructivist and social-constructivist theorists suggested that knowledge was by no means acquired through instruction; both teachers and students brought their prior knowledge and experiences into the new learning situations. Knowledge was therefore socially reconstructed and co-constructed through personal experiences and experiences with others by continuously testing hypothesis, encouraging thoughtful reflection of events, being **reflection** the central factor in the teaching and learning process. Yet, these theories also recognized that each person had a different interpretation of the world and consequently would carry out different knowledge construction processes, a key notion in this research.

Accordingly, research approaches adhered to these proposed theories, advancing new concepts and ways to go about teaching and learning as well as teacher development. For the purposes of this study my interest was on one of these

emergent concepts also known as Reflective Practice. RP as stated throughout this work, is a trend approach in teacher education and development programs that takes into account *input* — evidentiary support from teachers' practice — and *collaboration* — collegial support — as fundamental components of its process encouraging teachers to rely on previous knowledge, experiences, beliefs and personal backgrounds to build on and co-construct new understandings with others (Richards and Lockhart 1994; Wallace 1991; Farrell 2008). As expected, RP has been much employed in ELT research — since the early 1990's —; educational scholars whose attention has been on continuous teacher development by means of reflective practice have aimed to establish a paradigm that looks at teachers as being able to analyze, understand and develop their practice after partaking in research; all of this in the efforts of drifting away from top-bottom traditional teacher education models and evaluative teaching scenarios. Yet, after conducting a literature review on the field as well as a RP pilot study, I became aware of two main issues affecting the intended purposes of RP for language teacher development and which this empirical study has aimed to respond to. Before explaining how my research has tried to narrow this gap, it is necessary to first discuss these observed dilemmas.

Positivist view of reflective practice processes

In the literature review of this thesis (see sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.4), it was stated that the Reflective Practice paradigm for English language teaching was initially established as an interventionist approach to continuous teacher development. It aimed for language teachers to intuitively engage in critical rationalizations of their practice and from their reflections make permanent changes or draw implications for their teaching (Gün 2011; Tomlinson 1999a, b). This 'positivist view' strongly implied that reflective inquiry or critical reflection were linear processes where individuals could clearly come to terms with their teaching on their own. A pilot study was also put forward as an example of this idealistic perception researchers traditionally carried out RP investigations. Recalling on the pilot study experience (see section 1.3.2, p.7) — which made use of classroom observations and focus

group interviews —, participant in-service teachers superficially changed their practices in certain moments of the investigation as they felt pressured not only to comply with the researcher's expectations but also to position themselves as reflective practitioners in front of their colleagues when group discussions regarding their practice were held. Nonetheless, by the end of the research, participants had all gone back to routine practices and viewed my investigation as one more evaluative type of classroom observation process where good and bad teaching actions were assessed and discussed. I found no evidence in our classroom discussions and personal interviews to support further rationalization processes or real implications for them as ELT practitioners.

Similar research findings on the field that show how teachers do not engage in reflective tasks, especially when they understand them as imposed institutionalized duties can be found in Valerie Hobbs (2007). Her study made use of reflective journal writing in a Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) certificate course. However, her participants viewed journal writing as a course task rather than a means for critical rationalization of their practice where strategic responses to comply with the required assignment were employed. Her participants stated that it was unlikely for them to engage in such an activity once they became practicing teachers as it clearly did not impact their teaching. Conversely, the teacher mentors after reading the journal entries sustained an idealistic view of the RP approach as they believed the data to be true — meaning that the participants' accounts were thought to be reliable and not lightly written — hence, classified teacher journal writing as an effective tool to enhance critical reflection of one's practice.

A similar study by McCabe et al. (2009) aimed to find out the opinions students in a teacher education program had regarding their experience in becoming language teachers. A second research objective was to examine the students' engagement with the strategies and tools — journals and focus groups — that were believed to enable them to become reflective practitioners. Yet again, the majority of the

students in McCabe's study referred to the journals and focus group meetings as mandatory tasks that needed to be completed after each class. A key reported finding were the contradictory positions students and faculty held regarding RP after the research process was over. On the one hand, students were not able to identify RP as an approach to better understand their practice or that supposed any type of benefit to their continuous teaching development. At most, they acknowledged how discussing teaching matters with peers allowed them to build their teaching repertoires. The faculty on the other hand, viewed RP as a continuous process that aided pre-service teachers in understanding where they stand and the effects on their teaching practice and most importantly as a strong support for continuous professional development.

Aside from noting that imposed reflective tools and tasks had poor results for participants as well as for the intended research purposes of the RP investigations I reviewed, I also became aware of other proposed approaches that held a positivist view towards RP. For instance, Barbara Larrive (2008) as well as Vieira and Marques (2012) designed grids and reflective practitioner level models as assessment tools to evaluate teachers' practices in order to determine their level as reflective practitioners. They aimed to establish an entry reflective practitioner level that would allow a supervisor, mentor, researcher or even practitioners themselves to develop intervention strategies to facilitate movement towards higher levels of reflection. Through the use of these grids, practitioners would also have control over their development by evaluating their actions while partaking in RP processes. From this positioning in the field, it can be inferred that teachers were viewed as members of homogenous professional groups who shared the same practices across various contexts. What is more, teacher development through the evaluation and classification of teaching practices was still a premise.

Nevertheless, teachers have personal needs and positions for engaging in teacher development as is the case for reflective practice. The conditions under which teachers carry out their practices are contingent and dependent on several issues

at various levels: personal, professional, institutional and even social; therefore, they will carry out particular actions and tasks that more often than not will belong to several descriptors at once making pre-classified grids unfitting and linear to suitably describe any RP process. Teacher behaviors and actions as diverse as they happen to be, cannot be caged, classified or generalized and especially not evaluated when engaging in personal reflection cycles — the reported results in Chapter 6 thoroughly sustain this view—. Thus, reflective practitioner levels or grids may only serve as a starting point indicating teachers' readiness before engaging in RP research as was the case for the participant teachers of this study.

Overall, these empirical studies and others (see Ho 2013; Louw, Watson and Jimarkon 2014; Vo and Nguyen's 2010) show that mentors, trainers and researchers understand the fundamentals of RP for language teacher development. That is, they understand that practitioners need to be provided with a time and place to critically rationalize their practice by means of reflective tools and tasks to better understand their teaching and its implications for student learning. Hence, they have made it a point to making ELT practitioners become aware of this view through their research. Yet, the way many RP investigations have been designed and implemented has resulted in oversimplified research processes that expect a generalizable outcome for all participants with the ultimate goal being an apparent change in participants' practices and a homogenized view of what RP entails for their teaching. My position as a reflective practice researcher however, assumes a more socio-constructivist stance. Participants' different types of knowledge and teaching stances are contemplated and acknowledged in the co-construction of their own RP processes allowing them to select suitable reflective tools and giving them the liberty to engage in the process according to personal perceived teaching needs. This view pervaded throughout the study and its implications are discussed in section 7.3 of this chapter.

Reflective Practice research in controlled teaching scenarios

Hand in hand with oversimplifying RP processes and expecting permanent changes in participants' practices in order to classify them as reflective practitioners or not, I identified the teaching contexts and research scenarios under which research has been undertaken as a second main concern. By my literature review, I was able to observe that many RP studies have been conducted in controlled scenarios such as teacher education courses or with pre-service teachers enrolled to ELT undergraduate programs (see section 2.5, p.51).

Out of 11 empirical studies used as support for this research design, 8 were carried out in controlled scenarios where research participants did not comply with regular class teaching schedules, hence, they did not face the many daily contextual circumstances and constraints related to a teacher's daily life as described in Chapter 4. Opposite, researchers experienced 'ideal' circumstances as participants observed relaxed teaching routines where classes were used only for research purposes and required no further obligations from the study participants. What is more, participant involvement was to a certain extent unavoidable as the RP tasks were viewed as part of their education programs and expected to serve formal evaluative purposes. These controlled settings differ in many important ways from naturally occurring everyday teaching environments where teachers are faced with demanding working schedules and are constrained by varying institutional norms and regulations. Therefore, the implications that RP research may have for continuous teacher development and teaching practices may vary according to the research scenario in which a study takes place.

After (i) situating the field and its complexities, (ii) conducting a pilot study where unexpected (and frustrating) results obliged me re-conduct and reorient the principles and methodology, and (iii) designing a collaborative research project, I certainly consider that RP research is by no means a linear approach towards continuous teacher development nor a particular moment during the teachers' training processes to tick boxes. Conversely, RP aims for practitioners to

experience full RP cycles in real life teaching scenarios which will allow them to gain awareness of their teaching through experience in order to understand the underlying stances informing their practices. In turn, they will be able to make knowledgeable evidence based decisions in benefit of their practice and student learning. The next section advances how my investigation has contributed to the field contemplating the issues here discussed.

7.3 Contribution of the study

Most recently, academics have stated that in order for RP to be properly documented and disseminated, researchers need to be well informed — both theoretically and experimentally — so as to achieve reliable outcomes (Ho 2013; Farrell 2001, 2013). Hence, scholars should look into themselves in order to rationalize their theoretically informed stances, questioning and explaining how research processes and findings are to be constructed and presented in order to actively contribute to the field of study.

In my efforts to move away from a positivist top-bottom RP ideology yet still contribute to ELT development; I first aimed at placing “RP in an appropriate place and orchestration within teachers’ everyday practices” (Copeland, 1993, p.145), which as explained previously, typically does not occur in this context. Secondly, I felt committed to establish a RP stance which would foster teacher development by creating appropriate conditions which RP necessitates such as: opportunity, time, and assistance from others; often lacking in everyday teaching scenarios and traditional teacher education programs. Therefore, my stance in RP is oriented towards learning from experience by means of evidence-based critical thinking eased through collaboration with others.

Accordingly, my investigation offered an empirical account of the participation of a group of higher education Mexican English language teachers in a collaborative Reflective Practice process to initiate a cognitive transformation by learning from experience enhancing their teaching awareness. This was done with the purpose

of teachers developing a better understanding of their practice especially in terms of students' responses to their instructional decisions and the impact this had on how their classes unfolded. The process aimed for participants to engage in critical reflective practice at their own pace and according to personal perceived needs, hence, teaching awareness did not lead to impulsive immediate changes on behalf of the teachers in this study. Yet, it did lead them to begin a transformation of their teaching knowledge based on observable evidence of their instructional decisions supported with collegial discussions even under constrained circumstances related to context, ability and personal factors (Richards and Farrell 2005; Richards and Lockhart 1994; Wallace 1998).

In assuming a stance towards RP one should also examine if this approach is appropriate for a particular situation and context and if indeed appropriate one must also give proof of this. For that reason, it is important to discuss the implications revealed by adopting the RP stance described and attending the gap I observed in recent empirical studies. The discussion centers on how my research rationale did not only favor participant involvement for the RP processes to run efficiently but it also allowed my research and its results to become of value for participants' practices. I would like to discuss four aspects in this study: the researcher and participants' roles, the need to systematize RP in research, the effects of Collaborative Reflective Practice and how an understanding of RP is developed.

The researcher and participants' roles

As a traditional teacher trainer, I was used to taking over feedback conferences imposing my views of 'right' and 'wrong' teaching practices not allowing observees to reflect and construct meaning of their teaching. Hence, for this study, I opted for a reflexive researcher and facilitator role refraining from giving directive feedback and providing teachers with assistance and opportunities to rationalize the teaching knowledge, beliefs and stances that guided their practices. Other academics have also reported that a facilitator role is required for the success of RP investigations

(Nguyen 2010), this coaching role enables sensitivity and peer support, which combined with a lack of pressure, prompts learning through others. Even more, these catalyst roles allow participants to openly share failures and mistakes and constructively analyze and criticize practices and procedures, which scholars depict as successful authentic professional interactions that allow for reflective inquiry to take place (Vieira and Marques 2013). Examples of such interactions were described in chapter 5, where teachers openly shared and discussed teaching concerns.

Aside from observing the need for a facilitator role, my research participants too realized the need to have an active involvement in the RP processes. They understood that the more they became involved in the research, the more they understood their practice and gained agency over their teaching allowing them to give critical well founded explanations for any changes in their teaching knowledge and teaching actions along this investigation. The consistency in these roles was key for the reported positive research outcomes.

The need to systematize RP in research

In this study, initially, systematizing RP by having a fixed time, tools and place for collegial discussions to take place was necessary in order to engage practitioners in the process. Nevertheless, the systematization approach was negotiated; the research agenda, tools and ways of RP implementation for this study were discussed with the participants considering the particularities of this real-life teaching scenario. Hence, the participant teachers, physical spaces, daily teaching schedules and institutional regulations were fully contemplated as to not cause any type of imposition over teachers' daily routines. A key part of this negotiation were the means by which teachers would be engaging in critical reflection about their practice which were chosen by them — oral conversations about their classroom observations (one on one feedback conferences) and personal interviews to talk about their reflective processes —. I consider that teachers should be able to choose the reflective tools that best suit them — both personally and academically

—, research tools that can make them feel more engaged during the whole research process and generate reliable responses (Hobbs 2007).

Farrell in 2001 reported on a teacher initiated and negotiated classroom observation study where his colleague decided on the means for reflection and communication throughout the observation cycles — e-mails and a teacher journal without any immediate direct feedback or discussions —. The researcher, per request of the observee, only took notes during the classroom observations and shared his comments by the end of each cycle which lasted 8 classes. This functioned well for the observee's purposes which was to have someone witness issues she had become aware of while teaching and the changes she decided to make in order for her classes to run more efficiently. Farrell reports a genuine need for contact and feedback on behalf of the observee as well as authentic dialogues that showed the teacher's reflection on her practice and the abuts of her decisions in class. Many times, his notes and the observee's journal entries coincided yet, when there were any doubts or questions about how his colleague carried out a certain class activity, they were cleared out in further journal entries and e-mails. A key reflection by Farrell and that I too put forward is that imposed reflection tools or procedures are unnecessary and can probably obstruct the success any participants' RP processes.

The effects of Collaborative Reflective Practice

The combination of qualitative tools utilized to promote reflection and collect data such as focus group, personal interviews and video stimulated recollections of COs, resulted positive for this study. The view of fostering reflective inquiry by means of evidence-based critical discussions has been supported. Hence, this study first suggests that RP is eased if teachers find themselves as part of a reflective community where spaces for sustained discussions about their practices are provided. Secondly, by having perceptible data upon which to discuss teachers' practices supports the comments and opinions given by the observer and the person being observed (Gün 2011: Yürekli 2013). Discussions do not merely

rely on vague recollections of teaching events or on a specific person's perceptions, which increases the value to the discussions taking place and the depth of reflective inquiry.

Teachers' reports gave testimony of gaining teaching awareness or increasing their awareness as a result of watching their videos and jointly discussing what they observed with the researcher. I do not disregard the possibility of teachers becoming aware of their practice by means of other methods yet teachers in this study also reported that some of the teaching practices they observed were already known to them. It was by observing themselves on the videos that they were able to confirm their inner thoughts, which they chose to discuss with me. Comparable findings were advanced by Eröz-Tuga (2013) in a study aimed to help Turkish pre-service teachers learn to help themselves in teaching contexts, without the guidance of a supervisor by means of video stimulated recall. His findings showed that participants "became more sensitive and more conscious about classroom events as they watched themselves on screen" (p.181). Eröz-Tuga also reports that aside from showing improved self-awareness, participants showed a conscious effort in trying to fix the issues pointed out to them in initial feedback meetings, as well as the ones they noticed themselves. Regarding this study, after together critically reflecting upon their practices, teachers were also able to propose changes to improve their practice in the future (Dewey 1933; Schön 1983, 1989). "This could be in order to avoid a repeat of an undesirable situation, to prepare a strategy for dealing successfully with an anticipated situation, to improve tomorrow what was a problem today, or to think through one's deeply held assumptions that have an impact on teaching and learning" (Copeland et al. 1993, p.353). However, teaching modifications were conducted only in the areas teachers perceived as necessary, experiencing ownership over their practice unlike Eröz-Tuga's study, where change was to a certain extent still pointed out to his participants.

In this investigation, for the second cycle of video recorded classroom observations more critical reflections were verged including more descriptive and contrasting information. Participant teachers had become more critical of their practice and initiated feedback discussions asking me to play the video in certain moments to provide evidence of their rationalizations. My interventions also lessened, as my role was to listen and confirm the majority of their thoughts with video-input and the use of my field notes. Gün in 2011 also showed the value of video reviewing in a classroom observation study in Turkey. He provided participants with four different types of feedback including the traditional trainer and peer-observer feedback along with feedback from students and the video recordings. His reports showed that teachers preferred and benefitted the most from watching the class videos. They became more aware and critical of their teaching and were able to identify further areas to work on as a result of an increased awareness as was the case of my study participants. However, and different from my research, the participants in Gün's study after watching videos of themselves teaching were able to transfer their critical reflections into 'on the spot' strategies in their classroom — *reflection in action*, Schön 1983 —. This was most likely due to the fact that in his investigation teachers were exposed to 8 video recorded observations in an 8-week period as opposed to 2 video recorded observations and feedback discussions in a 9-week period as was my case. Hence, the amount of exposure to systematic reflective practices between investigations can make a difference in research outcomes (a discussion on the matter is provided in section 3.10 of this thesis).

Regardless, what is important to highlight is that reports on the increase in teachers' awareness as a result of reviewing their class videos and discussing them with peers or the researcher was corroborated. Teachers in this study either confirmed teaching issues or noticed new teaching issues they had not become aware of by primarily observing themselves teach. Those issues were then jointly discussed and rationalized enabling participants to take personal further decisions and actions in their practices. A key aspect for this to happen was the two-way

communicative relationships built between the researcher and the participants. Yet and as was reported in Chapters 5 and 6, teaching awareness did not lead to permanent or immediate change, yet it did lead them to begin a transformation on their teaching perceptions, which impacted their subsequent teaching actions and decisions. A clear example was put forward by Lucia in Chapter 5 (extract 8, p.186) as she individually reviewed her class videos and compared them to the focus group transcript — the focus group transcript, the class videos and CO feedback transcripts were all provided to each participant —, becoming aware of a discontinuity between how she perceived to carry out her practice and what occurred in her classes. After her discovery, Lucia decided to make specific adjustments to her teaching and shared the experience with the researcher critically comparing her actions and results. Daniel and Monica — the younger teachers — looked for advice and counseling with colleagues and family members to find possible solutions to teaching matters that they were not able to manage on their own.

I must point out that results from this study suggest that the younger generations seem to be more prepared to cooperate and uncover teaching issues with others while I believe it will take older teacher generations a longer engagement in RP to become comfortable with openly sharing teaching issues. This may have to do with the fact that in Mexico talking about teaching worries has not been a trend as reported by the pilot study participants and the older participants of this study (Isabella, Lucia and Montserrat), yet this is a matter that deserves further examination and research.

All in all, having teachers become aware of a need to change resulted effective in this study as opposed to telling them they should change as it commonly happens in traditional evaluative classroom observations. Researchers in the field state that only teachers can truly transform their pedagogy (Slimani-Rolls and Kiely 2014), position that this study's outcomes support. The reported cognitive transformations in this investigation and the further actions conducted as a result of cognitive

transformation were self-regulated assisted by the collaborative RP process participants engaged in.

Developing an understanding of RP

This study illustrates how by teachers being active participants of their development process was fundamental in helping them understand their practice and consequently establish experience based stances of what RP entails for ELT development.

Teachers' new standpoints regarding their teaching and RP in this context were reported in the final study interviews. Every single teacher gave an account of how they thought before their participation in this collaborative RP study and why; accordingly, they also reported what made them change previous perceptions to new teaching stances and the reasoning behind them (see section 6.3.3, p.205). A key finding similar to that of Eröz-Tuga (2013) and Gün (2010), was that participants' understanding regarding the purpose for engaging in Classroom Observation practices was reconstructed going from a teaching assessment point of view to seeing COs as a means for teaching awareness and development. Moreover, teachers realized the need to have an active role in their development such as being their own feedback providers as Monica states in extract 8 of Chapter 6 (p.206), as opposed to relying on external factors (observers, supervisors and teacher training programs) to point out issues or changes to their practice. By gaining teaching awareness and enhancing their ability to critically think about their practice, the participants of this research experienced empowerment over the changes in their perceptions and actions in the classrooms and were able to critically give foundation for that transformation. I consider this to have been the most beneficial and salient outcome for teachers and was only possible as teachers responsibly confronted their teaching in a critical and collaborative way.

By the end of the study, the participant teachers were able to define RP as a cyclical and gradual process that requires input and collaboration in order to ease **reflective enquiry** (Dewey 1933; Wallace 1991, 1998; Johnson 2002, 2006). It further requires teachers to be 'ready' to break with routine thinking and fixed paradigms in order to take action according to what teachers may become aware of as a result of partaking in RP (Bowen 2004; Dewey 1934; Eroz-Tüga 2013; Farrell 2001; Gün 2011; Ho 2013; Johnson 1999; Richards & Farrell 2005; Schön 1983,1987). However, taking action does not equal immediate change, every teacher has the prerogative to decide what to do with their gained awareness. Let us remember that regardless of participants pertaining to a same professional community, each of these teachers represents a particular practice (see teachers' teaching stances and profiles in section 3.7.1, p.93), hence, according to their lived RP processes teachers may decide to search for alternative teaching approaches, change styles, meet contextual needs, question their strategies and so on, yet an action is necessary to complete the process. Murphy states, "teachers need to take action when possible, on whatever they might be learning or becoming aware of about themselves as teachers, about others and about students' responses to their practice, for the purpose of enhancing the quality of learning opportunities they are able to provide in their classrooms" (2001, p.500).

7.4 Study Conclusion

As described at the beginning of this section, this study has attempted to drift away from a positivist top bottom approach to reflective practice where participants are viewed as members of standardized professional communities who share the same expectations, concerns and professional aims. RP research within this view has been of an interventionist nature with generalizable and linear conclusions and implications for participants' practices.

Conversely, with an interpretivist view towards RP research, my aim was to observe the reconstruction and co-construction of participants' realities — in this case of English language teaching — through the direct experience of teachers

and my own experiences and interpretations as the guiding researcher while partaking in this study. Accordingly, different types of transformation occurred as a result of conducting RP research in this context and challenging the status quo of evaluative classroom observation and conventional teacher development as well as evidencing the complexity embedded in RP processes. By complexity, I refer to the nonlinear way RP procedures develop at different times and modes for each participant according to personal teaching stances and beliefs, thus enabling individual results for each person involved regardless of teachers pertaining to a same professional community. As a researcher, understanding this complexity and extrapolating it to my research design resulted positive and enabled the favorable results obtained.

Accordingly, by systematizing RP into practitioners' everyday teaching provided them with tools, opportunity and support to become aware of their practice and critically analyze it to properly deal with issues and discontinuities in benefit of their teaching and students' learning. These tools and opportunities had not become available to teachers before this study thus confirming that RP as well as RP research are essential components of ongoing teacher development. After this research, I feel compromised to the field of Reflective Practice, which requires more in-depth analysis and investigation. ELT education programs that aim to promote ongoing teacher development by incorporating RP as an integral part of everyday practices need a framework that is both theoretically and empirically well informed, this will be my next focus in this field of study.

Overall, reflecting on my understanding of the problem on Teacher Development I encountered as a teacher trainer, I find myself at the end of this study content with the obtained results. However, I first had to transform myself by putting aside my teacher trainer role and becoming a researcher learning how to reflect on my own practices before serving as a catalyst for these teachers to gain teaching awareness and begin their own transformation. As former U.S. President Obama once stated, I needed to be the change I was looking for (Denver, Colorado 2008).

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 THE PILOT STUDY SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

1. How long have you been teaching English?
2. How did you become an English teacher? What caused/ motivated you?
3. Do these reasons still exist for you now?
4. Do you like being an English teacher? Why?
5. Did you have any formal training before becoming an English teacher? or Did you receive training along the way? In other words, where did the strategies, methodology and ideas that you use in your English class come from?
6. Did you receive any feedback from a mentor or supervisor as you received training? What sort of feedback and was it useful for you?
7. How has your teaching practice changed throughout the years?
8. What do you think your strengths are as an English teacher?
9. How do you see these strengths reflected on your students' learning?
10. What do you think your weaknesses are as an English teacher?
11. Have your weaknesses had an impact on your students' learning? How?
12. Have you done anything to overcome those weaknesses?
13. Do you talk to other colleagues about your teaching practice and possible problems that you may have in your classrooms?
14. If so, has talking to other colleagues helped in any way?
15. What do you think you need in order to become the best teacher you can be? Take into account school conditions, teacher development, resources, etc.
16. Do you know or have heard about the term Reflective Practice?
17. Anything else you would like to add that I haven't asked you about?

APPENDIX 2 THE PILOT STUDY FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRES

- **Focus group questionnaire after the first classroom observation**

1. How did you feel being observed?
2. Was the aim of the observation achieved?
3. Was the feedback provided useful?
4. Did you talk to other colleagues about your classroom observation? If so, what were some of the comments that you shared? Did talking to other colleagues help you out? How?

- **Focus group questionnaire after the second classroom observation**

1. How did you feel being observed the second time?
2. Was the aim of the observation changed?
3. Was the aim of the observation achieved?
4. How did you use the feedback comments of the first classroom observation for the next classes and for the second classroom observation?
5. Were there any changes in your practice after your first classroom observation? How can this be accounted for?
6. Did you talk to other colleagues about your second classroom observation compared to the first one? If so, what were some of the comments that you shared? Did talking to other colleagues help you out? How?

- **Focus group questionnaire after the third classroom observation**

1. What is your overall opinion, feelings and thoughts regarding this classroom observation experience?
2. How did you feel after your first feedback and then your second and their feedback?
3. What motivated you to change your mistakes?
4. Was it comfortable to talk to your colleagues about the classroom observations and your mistakes? Did you gain anything from sharing these experiences? Do you think you would have gotten to the same conclusions alone, without talking to your colleagues?
5. Why did some things didn't change in your practice? or Why did you repeat some of your mistakes?
6. What would you need to thoroughly change and keep developing by yourselves?

APPENDIX 3 THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

(February 2015)

QUESTIONS:

1. En que se enfocan a la hora de enseñar inglés? Para algunos docentes la gramática es fundamental para otros la comunicación es lo más importante -es la finalidad de aprender otro idioma- comunicarse, otros le dan relevancia a la cultura. Para ustedes que es importante?
2. De donde han obtenido su repertorio de técnicas, estrategias, actividades, ejercicios, metodología en cuanto a la enseñanza del inglés?
 - a. Experiencia? Training oficiales?
 - b. Como preparan sus clases, ustedes llegan a diseñar materiales, hacen planeaciones de clases nuevos todos los semestres?
 - c. Llegan a tomar en cuenta las opiniones de alumnos para sus planeaciones.
3. Ustedes creen que sea importante actualizarse continuamente. En que específicamente?
 - a. Cuáles creen ustedes que sean los problemas mas comunes por los que los maestros de inglés no hagan mas training?
4. Usualmente cuál es tu sentir cuando las cosas no salen como planeabas o hay algún imprevisto en tu clase? -anécdota-
 - a. Cuando tienes un buen día o mal día en clase, te pones a pensar en las razones por las cuales fue así?
5. Te sientes empoderado como docente de inglés? Tu contexto laboral tiene algún efecto en tu sentir de empoderamiento?
 - a. Te sientes responsable por el aprendizaje o falta de aprendizaje de tu alumnos?
 - b. Que te preocupa de tu enseñanza –de tu teaching-
 - c. Cuales son los retos en tu trabajo, horarios, grupos grandes,
 - d. Sientes que tienes poder de decisión, te sientes autónomo en tu trabajo?
 - e. Cuales son tus challenges como profesor de inglés y como intentan resolverlos, como negocian y resuelven?
 - f. Los profesores de inglés no tienen el prestigio en México que tienen en otros países,
 - i. Multi-empleo, condiciones sociales económicas y laborales, ganan poco dinero.
6. Cuál crees que sea tu contribución en general hacia el aprendizaje de inglés de tus alumnos? Y como futuros profesionistas?

APPENDIX 4 THE SEMI-STRUCTURED PERSONAL INTERVIEW

(May 2015)

QUESTIONS:

1. Me podrías describir tus pensamientos y tu sentir a lo largo de tu participación en este proyecto; desde que recibiste la invitación, al compartir puntos de vista en el focus group con tus colegas, ser observado y grabado, en el feedback, cuéntame.
2. Participar en esta investigación te llevo a pensar en aspectos de tu practica, de ti como docente, de tu persona, alumnos o de tu contexto laboral, sobre lo que no habías pensado antes?
3. Tuviste algún tipo de reacción que sentiste necesaria llevar a cabo tanto profesionalmente como de manera personal en algún momento de tu participación en este proyecto? Qué fue y porque lo pensaste así? Lo sigues haciendo?
4. Llegaste a compartir con alguien esta experiencia?
5. Cuales crees tu que son algunos factores que te afectan tanto a nivel profesional como personal al laborar en este contexto?
6. Como seria tu contexto laboral ideal de impartir clases? Piensa en todo lo que me acabas de comentar, recursos como docente, como persona, contexto, etc.? Has trabajado en algún lugar que te ofrezca este contexto?
7. Si escucharas hablar de reflexividad docente, como la definirías a partir de esta experiencia de compartir conmigo tu día laboral?
 - a. Crees que es importante reflexionar sobre lo que haces?
 - b. Es suficiente reflexionar o necesitamos algo mas para mejorar nuestras practicas?
8. Finalmente, que o cual es tu impresión en general de esta experiencia, habías participado en algún proyecto así antes?

APPENDIX 5 THE RESEARCH AGENDA

MARCH 2015						
SUN.	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT.
1	2	3	4 Observation Isabella	5 Observation Monica	6	7
8	9 Observation Montserrat	10 Observation Lucia	11	12 Observation Daniel	13	14
15	16 Transcribe data	17 Transcribe data	18 Transcribe data	19 Transcribe data	20 Transcribe data	21
22	23 Transcribe data	24 Transcribe data	25 Transcribe data	26 Transcribe data	27 Transcribe data	28
29	30	31				
APRIL 2015						
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 Observation Montserrat	21 Observation Lucia	22 Observation Isabella	23 Observation Monica	24 Transcribe data	25
26	27 Transcribe data	28 Transcribe data	29 Transcribe data	30 Observation Daniel		

<p align="center">FACULTY OF HUMANITIES</p> <p align="center">OUTLINE OF PROPOSED RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS, TO BE SUBMITTED via ERGO FOR ETHICAL COMMITTEE APPROVAL</p> <p>STUDENTS PLEASE NOTE: You will need to discuss this form with your Supervisor. In particular, you should ask him/her to advise you about all relevant ethical guidelines relating to your area of research, which you must read and understand.</p> <p>ALL RESEARCHERS PLEASE NOTE: You must not begin your study until Faculty of Humanities ethical approval and Research Governance Office approval have been obtained through the ERGO system. Failure to comply with this policy could constitute a disciplinary breach.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Name(s): Jovanna Matilde Godínez Martínez Start date: 03/03/2014 End date: 27/02/2015 Supervisor (student research only): PhD Alessia Cogo How may you be contacted (e-mail and/or phone number)? jmgm1v08@soton.ac.uk, jovannamgm@gmail.com Into which category does your research fall? Delete or add as appropriate. Undergraduate/Masters/MPhil/(PhD)/I PhD/Staff Research (PhD)
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6	<p>Title of project</p> <p>Does Reflective Practice enhance Teacher Development in English language teachers at the Faculty of Humanities of the Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Hidalgo?</p>
7	<p>Briefly describe the rationale for carrying out this project, and the specific aims and research questions</p> <p>This research study aims to see if carrying out reflective practice activities could have better benefits in the English teachers' teaching practice rather than the traditional university's formal imposed training courses.</p> <p>RESEARCH AIM</p> <p>Do general English teachers at the UAEH carry out critical reflective practice?</p> <p>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What do general English Teachers at the UAEH think about reflective practice? Do support groups enable or not reflectivity in the teachers? If so, how? Is there a change in the teacher's teaching practice? How is change accounted for?

8	<p>What is the overall design of the study? (Give a brief description, including start and end dates, and a step by step account of what you will do.) The data collection will begin on March 2014 and end approximately by February 2015 as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There will be an individual interview carried out at the beginning of the research process with each one of the subjects involved in the project. 2. There will be 3 classroom observations per teacher. 3. After every classroom observation there will be a feedback session with the observer and the observed teacher. 4. After every teacher has been observed once, there will be a focus group session with all the participants.
9.	<p>What research procedures will be used? (Provide a brief description of what participation will involve, for study participants, including duration of any activity/ task/ test. Please attach copies of any instrumentation to be used, e.g. interview schedules or questionnaires). There will be three major forms of data collection, the first one will be individual interviews with every subject and these will be semi-guided which will last around 5 to 10 minutes each one; their aim is to find out the teachers' beliefs and perceptions regarding reflective practice. Concerning the classroom observations, the goals and objectives of the observations will be chosen by the observed teacher therefore there will not be a formal classroom observation sheet or format, however the parts that the observed teacher asks to focus on will be video recorded for deeper analysis. It is likely that the observer will not stay for the entire class but the part of the class chosen as the objective as the observation. Finally the focus groups will take place after each teacher has been observed once, their purpose is for the participants involved to reflect collaboratively and talk about their experiences being observed, these will last for 15 to 20 minutes depending on the interaction from the subjects.</p>
10	<p>Who are the participants? (What age are they? Where and how will they be approached, and how will they be recruited?) There are approximately 15 general English teachers ranging from young adults all the way through mature adults in the Humanities Faculty of the Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Hidalgo who teach different English level classes in sometimes 3 or 4 different BAs within the humanities faculty. The subjects for this research will be those teachers who volunteer to participate.</p>
11	<p>How will you obtain the consent of participants, and (if appropriate) that of their parents or guardians? I will talk to the Head of the English department of the Humanities Faculty to</p>

	arrange a meeting with the English staff where I will explain the research aim and objectives and make a general invitation for volunteers to participate, I am aiming at having at least 5 volunteering participants for this research.
12	Is there any reason to believe participants may not be able to give full informed consent? If yes, what steps do you propose to take to safeguard their interests? No
13	Detail any possible discomfort, inconvenience or other adverse effects the participants may experience arising from the study, and how this will be dealt with. The major discomfort would be for teachers involved in the classroom observations to feel uncomfortable while being observed due to possible negative feedback that may arise from the observations.
14	How will it be made clear to participants that they may withdraw consent to participate at any time without penalty? This will be explained to them in the general meeting where I describe the research aim and objectives and where teachers will freely volunteer to participate in the research project or withdraw if necessary.
15	How will information obtained from or about participants be protected? For the data collection, linked anonymity will take place, their data will be coded with numbers instead of the participants' names; the classroom videos and recordings will be labelled with the participants' numbers instead of their names as well. With regard to the focus groups, the participants must know that what is stated and said in these groups must remain confidential for the protection of the participants and themselves.
16	If this research involves work with children, has a CRB check been carried out? N/A <div style="text-align: center;">Yes No</div>
17	Outline any other information you feel may be relevant to this submission. N/A

APPENDIX 7 THE PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Participant Information Sheet



(Face to Face version 1/ Nov. 20, 2013)

Study Title: To understand the thinking processes that English Language teachers go through when engaging in Reflective Practice and how these processes inform their teaching actions.

Researcher: Jovanna Matilde Godínez Martínez **Ethics number:** 8392

Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

I have been an English language teacher for 13 years and have been interested in continuous teacher development for a long time, however I had not taken reflective practice into consideration when engaging in teacher development. Therefore, this being a PhD research study for the University of Southampton (UK) it aims to see if carrying out reflective practice activities could have better benefits in the English teachers' teaching practice rather than the traditional university's formal imposed training/ teacher development courses.

Why have I been chosen?

The participants for this research were specifically general English teachers from the Humanities Faculty of the Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Hidalgo who teach different English level classes. The main reason for choosing teachers working in this specific context was because this is also the place where I work and know most of the English staff, I am not an outsider to the staff and therefore the participants will feel more comfortable.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Teachers who are willing to participate in this research will be interviewed individually at the beginning of the process and then be observed three times during the semester. After every teacher has been observed there will be a focus group for teachers to talk about their experience in the project and being observed.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

The main advantage will not be for individual participants but for the English staff of the Humanities Faculty in what regards to the gaining of new findings that could help teachers develop and collaborate in new ways.

Are there any risks involved?

The major discomfort would be for teachers involved in the classroom observations to feel uncomfortable while being observed due to possible negative feedback that may arise from the observations.

Will my participation be confidential?

The data gathered from the subject will be coded with numbers instead of the participants' names; the classroom videos and recordings will be labelled with the participants' numbers instead of their names as well.

With regard to the focus groups, the participants must know that what is stated and said in these groups must remain confidential for the protection of the participants and themselves. Lastly, all the information will be kept on a password protected computer.

What happens if I change my mind?

The participants have the right to withdraw at any time without their legal rights (or routine care if a patient) being affected.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you should contact the Chair of the Faculty Ethics Committee Prof Chris Janaway (023 80593424, c.janaway@soton.ac.uk).

Where can I get more information?

IN case of further doubts please contact Jovanna Matilde Godínez Martínez at the following address jmgm1v08@soton.ac.uk

APPENDIX 8 CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM (*FACE TO FACE: Version 1/ Nov 20, 2013*)

Study title:

Does Reflective Practice enhance Teacher Development in English language teachers at the Faculty of Humanities of the Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Hidalgo?

Researcher name:

Jovanna Matilde Godínez Martínez

Staff/Student number:

23209658

ERGO reference number:

8392

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet (version1/ November 20, 2013) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

☐

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study

☐

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

☐

Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password-protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

To be completed in accordance with the attached guidelines

Activity:

1. There will be an individual interview carried out at the beginning of the research process with each one of the subjects involved in the project.
2. There will be 3 classroom observations per teacher.
3. After every classroom observation there will be a feedback session with the observer and the observed teacher.
4. After every teacher has been observed once, there will be a focus group session with all the participants.

Locations:

All the data collection will be carried out in the Humanities Faculty of the UAEH where general English classes are taught in 9 different BAs. This is also the place where I work and know most of the English staff, therefore this will be the most suitable context because I am not an outsider to the staff and thus the participants will be more willing to engage in the research process.

Potential risks:

The major risk would be for teachers involved in the classroom observations to feel uncomfortable while being observed due to possible negative feedback that may arise from the observations.

Who might be exposed/affected?

The main people being affected by teachers feeling uncomfortable might be their own students.

How will these risks be minimised?

The objective of this research will be explained thoroughly to the subjects volunteering to be observed. The characteristics of people receiving observers in their classrooms will be explained and detailed so people know what is expected of them before accepting to volunteer or not in the project. Furthermore, the aim of the classroom observations will be chosen by the teachers being observed to facilitate and ease the observation.

Risk evaluation:

(Low) / Medium / High

Can the risk be further reduced?

Yes / (No)

Further controls required: None

Date by which further controls will be implemented: N/A

Are the controls satisfactory: N/A Yes / No

Date for reassessment: N/A

Completed by:	Jovanna Godinez	Jovanna Godinez	November 20
	_____	_____	_____
	Name	signature	date
Supervisor/manager: If applicable	Alessia Cogo	Alessia Cogo	November 20
	_____	_____	_____
	Name	signature	date
Reviewed by:			
	_____	_____	_____
	Name	signature	date

APPENDIX 10 THE STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECT ETHICS CHECKLIST

Student Research Project Ethics Checklist Nov 2011

This checklist should be completed by the student (with the advice of their thesis/ dissertation supervisor) for all research projects.

Student name: Jovanna Matilde Godínez Martínez

Student ID: 23209658

Supervisor name: Alessia Cogo

Discipline: Modern

Languages

Programme of study: MPhil/PhD Mod Languages PT – 4222 (Distance Pathway)

Project title: Does Reflective Practice enhance Teacher Development in English language teachers at the Faculty of Humanities of the Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Hidalgo?

		YES	NO
1	Will your study involve human participants?	X	
2	Does the study involve children under 16?		X
3	Does the study involve adults who are specially vulnerable and/or unable to give informed consent?(e.g. people with learning difficulties, adults with dementia)		X
4	Will the study require the cooperation of a third party/ an advocate for access to possible participants? (e.g. students at school, residents of nursing home)		X
5	Does your research require collection and/ or storage of sensitive and/or personal data on any individual? (e.g. date of birth, criminal offences)		X
6	Could you research induce psychological stress or anxiety, or have negative consequences for participants, beyond the risks of everyday life?		X
7	Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time? (e.g. covert observation of people)		X
8	Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics? (e.g. sexual activity, drug use)		X
9	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses or compensation of time) be offered to participants?		X
10	Are there any problems with participants' rights to remain anonymous, and/or ensuring that the information they provide is non-identifiable?		X
11	Will you have any difficulty communicating and assuring the right of participants to freely withdraw from the project at any time?		X
12	If you are working in a cross cultural setting, will you need to gain additional knowledge about the setting to work effectively? (e.g. gender roles, language use)		X
13	Are there potential risks to your own health and safety in conducting the study? (e.g. lone interviewing in other than public spaces)		X
14	Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS?		X
15	Does the research project involve working with human tissue, organs, bones etc that are less than 100 years old?		X

Please refer to the Research Project Ethics Guidance Notes for help in completing this checklist.

If you have answered NO to all of the above questions, discussed the form with your supervisor and had it signed and dated by both parties (see over), you may proceed with your research. A copy of the Checklist should be included in your eventual report/ dissertation/ thesis.

If you have answered YES to any of the questions, i.e. if your research involves human participants in any way, you will need to provide further information for consideration by the Humanities Ethics Committee and/or the university Research Governance Office. This information needs to be provided via the Electronic Research Governance Online (ERGO) system, available at www.ergo.soton.ac.uk.

CHOOSE ONE STATEMENT:

- ☒ I have completed the Ethics Checklist and confirm that my research does not involve human participants (nor human tissues etc).
- ☒ I have completed the Ethics Checklist and confirm that my research will involve human participants. I understand that this research needs to be reported and approved through the ERGO system, before the research commences.

Signature of student: Jovanna Matilde Godínez Martínez Date: November 20, 2013.

Signature of supervisor: Alessia Cogo Date: November 20, 2013.

APPENDIX 11 ACCESS AND ACCEPTANCE DOCUMENT 1

Dr. en D. Edmundo Hernández Hernández
Director del Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades
P R E S E N T E

Por medio del presente me permito saludarle y a la vez solicitar a Usted la autorización para llevar a cabo la segunda parte de investigación de campo para mis estudios de doctorado con la Universidad de Southampton, Inglaterra. La recolección de datos esta pensada hacerse en la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza de la Lengua Inglesa con los maestros de la Academia de Inglés del lunes 23 de enero al día viernes 1 de mayo del presente.

La recolección de datos tendrá como objetivo entrevistar a los docentes así como observar sus clases durante el tiempo antes mencionado.

Sin más por el momento y esperando contar con su apoyo y respuesta favorable, quedo al pendiente.

Pachuca, Hidalgo a 16 de enero de 2015

Jovanna Matilde Godínez Martínez

CCP. Coordinación de la Licenciatura en Enseñanza de la Lengua Inglesa

APPENDIX 12 ACCESS AND ACCEPTANCE DOCUMENT 2



UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DEL ESTADO DE HIDALGO INSTITUTO DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES Y HUMANIDADES

Dirección del ICSHu

Número de Oficio: UAEH/ICSHU/018/2015

ASUNTO: AUTORIZACIÓN PARA REALIZAR
PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

MTRA. JOVANNA MATILDE GODÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ
ESTUDIANTE DEL PROGRAMA DOCTORAL
"DISTANCE PH D IN ELT"
UNIVERSIDAD DE SOUTHAMPTON DE INGLATERRA
PRESENTE

En respuesta a su documento recibido el día 16 de enero del año en curso, en el que solicita autorización para realizar proyecto de investigación de campo en el programa educativo de la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza de la Lengua Inglesa de este Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades a mi cargo, relacionado con sus estudios de doctorado, me permito hacer de su conocimiento que no existe inconveniente alguno por parte de esta Dirección.

Reciba un saludo respetuoso.

Atentamente
"Amor, Orden y Progreso"
Pachuca de Soto, Hgo., a 20 de enero de 2015

Dr. en D. Edmundo Hernández Hernández
Director



C c p Mtra. Bertha Paredes Zepeda - Jefa del Área Académica de Lingüística
Archivo

Carr. Pachuca-Actopan, km. 4, Col. San Cayetano, C.P. 42084
Tel. (01-771) 717-20-00, ext. 5200
edmundoh@uah.edu.mx

PROMOTORA



APPENDIX 13 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

February 6th 2015

Jovanna: Well, am, (.) thank you all for being here (.) and for participating with me in this project. (0.2) There are two things that I want to, umm::, (0.3) arrange with you before we start. And one of them is umm: how we're gonna talk about the questions that I say- that I say –that I:, sorry that I ask and the topics that I bring out. This is just a regular conversation, ok? No, there's no difference on who takes am:, who talks first or second and if you don't want to talk. I mean it's really up to you, just feel free to say anything you want and however you want to say it, it's fine. And another thing for us is that being Spanish our native language, that we would feel, all of us, including me, more comfortable doing the focus group in Spanish if it's ok with you. So do you agree? =

TT: =Yeah, Yes, nodding with their head and laugh. =

Jovanna: Empezamos, luego, luego, gracias. Bueno yo voy a introducir temas y ahora si que vamos a platicar todos de él y yo también (.) si yo siento que puedo incluir algo o decir algo, este, también lo voy a hacer. Pero básicamente es una plática, vale? Y todo tiene que ver con (0.3) su – su- práctica docente en enseñanza de la lengua inglesa y todo, todo, todo, es con base en eso, sale? Bueno voy a empezar con, con la primer pregunta.

¿Cuándo, nosotros como docentes de inglés, yo sé que seguimos un programa, que seguimos, este, a lo mejor >un libro de texto, etcétera< pero también tú, tú tienes una idea de que es importante enseñar, no? Entonces, no sé, pare ustedes, a que le invierten, ósea que es importante para ustedes importante enseñar. Yo sé que hay maestros que dicen: no, la gramática es indispensable y fundamental y ese es uno de mis aims ((soportes)) no, otra gente dice no, la comunicación, meramente, la comunicación. Otros profesores me dicen, no, pues sabes que yo incluyo cultura, porque también es importante que los alumnos sepan cultura. Entonces... pero realmente cuando me pongo a pensar y cuando yo planeo clases digo bueno yo a que le invierto, a que le doy más énfasis en mis clases. A que le dan más énfasis ustedes en sus clases, que es importante para ustedes. (0.3)

Montserrat: Bueno en mi caso primero a partir del diagnóstico para ver que es lo que necesitan los chicos porque a veces si llegan muy bajos en gramática o a veces tienen muchos problemas para comunicarse. >Entonces< a partir del diagnóstico ya es como decido (.) bueno en este curso vamos a ponerle un poquito más de énfasis ya sea en la gramática O YA SEA INCLUSO en-estrategias para- para este (.), de lectura de comprensión de textos O ya sea en estrategias para listening. Entonces depende de cómo es este, lo que (.), el- la- la falta que tengan ellos de algún conocimiento es lo que voy a tratar de refor- de:: reforzar =

Jovanna: (Asienta con la cabeza) = ya.

Isabella: Yo voy por la audiencia (0.2) es:te, como que si me fijo quien, quien va a ser mi audiencia y en el caso de la licenciatura en particular, si le doy mucho peso a gramar... (.) Porque ellos van a ser futuros profesores, entonces ellos no van a ellos- el inglés- siempre lo digo. El inglés que los alumnos de esta licenciatura van a aprender (.) no es inglés para salir de vacaciones (.) o para irse algún tiempo al

extranjero, solo para comunicarse. Ellos van a enseñar entonces ellos necesitan todas las bases y de acuerdo a la revisión que hemos hecho de la curricula, no hay una sola materia en toda la licenciatura que les de esa base de gramática=

Daniel: = and=

Montserrat: =Si= (acentúan con la cabeza mostrando estar de acuerdo)

Isabella: =A lo mejor llevan una materia en un semestre pero, pero es como enseñar gramática, no les enseñan gramática, o les enseñan gramática=

Jovanna: =Cierto, cierto=.

Isabella: =Entonces, como que yo, en mi caso particular, en, aquí tengo dos grupos y si le doy mucho peso a la gramática, muchísimo. Explicarles y les doy la razón, ósea vamos a ver porque esto, porque ustedes tienen que saberlo, porque ustedes lo van a explicar y ustedes lo tienen que abordar.

Daniel: =and=

Montserrat: (Siguen asentando con la cabeza mostrando estar de acuerdo)

Isabella: =He tenido la oportunidad de trabajar en otro espacio y ahí no es relevante, ni siquiera le van a poner interés los chicos, ahí lo tienes que hacer más comunicativo. Entonces yo si voy por observar mi audiencia, saber quién va a ser y si aquí enfoco en gramática=.

Jovanna: =Entonces tú vas de acuerdo a tu contexto, gramática de acuerdo al contexto de la licenciatura=.

Isabella: =Eso es lo que yo hago=.

Daniel: =En mi caso, bueno yo me enfoco igual luego en el nivel (.), por ejemplo en los de segundo, >que doy en segundo y en cuarto<, ahí creo que si le pongo atención a la, a la parte de la gramática pero no tanto. Me enfoco más a que empiecen a soltarse a hablar:: y a platicar=

Montserrat: =A que pierdan el miedo= (asentando con la cabeza en forma afirmativa)

Daniel: =que puedan entender diálogos por ejemplo. Les pongo mucho videos, trato de - de, por ejemplo los audios que los practiquen ellos en casa, los del libro. Los que yo les llevo casi siempre es >mate<... videos por ejemplo que saco de YouTube::, o alguna otra fuente que no son para propósitos académicos(0.2). Y ya con los de 4to AHÍ SI ya le pongo un poquito más de énfasis en la parte de la gramática porque se supone que, bueno esa parte, bueno ya están un poco más sueltos. Creo que (0.3), <que es como más importante que estén como más conscientes al final, una vez que ya pueden comunicarse> =

Jovanna: =Comunicarse primero =

Daniel: =Ya ahora si como que se vuelven más conscientes de esa parte, aja.

Jovanna: Y ustedes?

Lucia: Bueno, <yo no creo> que sea lo más importante, si, si van a ser maestros de - de (0.3), van a enseñar inglés, no tendría que ser, para mí no lo es, enseñar gramática no lo es (.) Es como (0.3) ayudarles a ver, el - el - el - mundo no, ósea, el mundo que da, que te ofrece la lengua=

Jovanna: =Un idioma=

Lucia: = Aja, Es este (.), es darles, es bien difícil no? darles un poco de todo porque haces tú - te entregan tus resultados - a veces tú no haces el diagnóstico pero y TE DICEN, bueno así está tu - ESTA es la foto <de tu grupo no?>Y ahí ves,

y ves que falta de todo ósea, ves alumnos que están mal en gramática, ves alumnos que=

Daniel: =Aja= (asienta con la cabeza)

Lucia: =Que a lo mejor en lectura de comprensión no entendieron no porque no supieran gramática sino porque desconocían es parte de:: de lo que, del mundo, de lo que te ofrece la lengua. Entonces es (.), es bien difícil es bien difícil saber cuándo (.) cuando tienes que enseñar que. Yo no, yo no, será también que tiene que ver quién eres tú como maestro, no? A mí la gramática no me gusta mucho, no? =

Jovanna: = Ni a mi jaja =

Lucia: = Entonces, entonces puedes hablar, este, puedes enseñar a través DE y es más sencillo=

Jovanna: = Funciones =

Lucia: = Exactamente, de que SI ellos lo van a necesitar explicar pero bueno ya les tocara, SU ROL ahorita es el de estudiantes. Yo así lo veo, ya en su rol de maestro pues tendrán que desvelarse y ponerse a estudiar lo que tengan que enseñar de gramática =

Jovanna: = Es muy cierto, les voy a decir una cosa. yo, hasta que no fui docente, la gramática a mí me daba igual=

Daniel: = Aja = (asienta con la cabeza)

Jovanna: = Ósea, si les soy sincera yo decía, y yo cuando empezaba a ser maestra de inglés (.), me costó: trabajo poderles enseñar gramática porque me decían, pero es que el - el Present Perfect ((Presente Perfecto)) porque tiene el auxiliar así. Y yo decía, <pero porque me preguntan eso>, ósea =

Montserrat, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: Se ríen y asientan mostrando estar de acuerdo.

Montserrat: = Así como que eso porque, no? =

Jovanna: = Ósea, si no? Yo les decía, pero porque mejor no nos basamos en que podemos hacer con este tema=

Daniel: = Aja = (asienta con la cabeza)

Jovanna: = Y y y mi idea siempre fue así como de (.) yo no sé porque, igual tome como tu concepción (toca en el hombro a T4), de quitar, quitarles el nombre. Yo decía, no a ver, que se hace con el presente perfecto, ah pues hablar de experiencias. Entonces ese era mi título "Talking about experiences and what you've done" ((Hablar de experiencias y que he hecho)) =

Monica: = Pero, de alguna manera como que ellos siempre te, a ver Miss, pero entonces como lo hago? =

Montserrat: = Porque quieren agarrarle la lógica al idioma, no? =

Jovanna: = Pero porque crees? Pero a parte porque crees? Porque crees que sea eso?

Monica: Porque pienso que al principio así eran mucho los maestros, no, como bien grammar based ((basados en gramática)). Entonces como no les enseñaron. yo me declaro que igual era más grammar ((gramática)), hasta mis amigas me decían que era Miss Grammar ((señorita gramática)), porque si me gusta la gramática pero últimamente como que he optado más por (.) como lo usas no? para que lo usas y ya después como si me voy al grammar ((gramática)) pero primero como que, los usos=

Jovanna: = Pero que interesante, como dices tú. Ósea, porque los alumnos regresan y te preguntan por la gramática. Como evaluamos? =

Daniel: =Aja= (asienta con la cabeza)

Jovanna: =Ósea, yo creo que, siento que es lo que va, si te preguntan, si están así como tan (.) interesados y enfocados en la gramática tiene, hay una razón no? Ósea, tiene mucho que ver a lo mejor con como evaluamos, si nuestras evaluaciones a lo mejor son de gramática te van a decir, si Miss yo sé que puedo hablar de mis experiencias pero finalmente en el examen viene así, que no?

Montserrat: Grammar! Algo que, ahorita que estoy dando la PILI de cuarto de - de - sexto semestre, que es PILI 4 que es teaching listening and speaking ((enseñanza de la comprensión auditiva y oral)), JUSTAMENTE me – me di cuenta porque los chicos quieren meter a fuerza un tema de gramática y yo así de a ver chicos no estamos enseñando gramática, aquí tenemos la competencia es realmente las estrategias que van a adquirir los alumnos PARA escuchar realmente para que entiendan y para que sean capaces de comunicarse. Entonces en estas primeras clases que estuvieron presentando como cuatro decían, querían como partir DE UN TEMA DE GRAMÁTICA yo, yo así de a ver chicos y me quede pensando dije bueno porque están tan inmersos en la gramática o porque quieren poner gramática para todo.

Daniel: = Yo pienso que ahí=

Montserrat: = Y pensé bueno es que quizá en nuestras clases de inglés lo que están viendo es que también NOSOTROS nos enfocamos muchísimo también en esa parte=

Daniel: = Yo también concuerdo mucho con lo que opino la maestra Isabel, ósea, a parte de la lección si debe haber una parte o una sección que sea enfocada puramente en grammar ((gramática)) y despotricarlo y hacerlo pedacitos y vamos a analizarlo así muy bookish ((libresco)), así de a partir del libro y le vamos a llamar presente perfecto y aquí vamos a llamarle causative ((causal)), causative ((causal)), no sé =

Jovanna: =Because they need to know right? ((Porque necesitan saber cierto?))=

Daniel: =lo que sea, they need to know ((necesitan saber)) y necesitan saber ese metalanguage ((metalenguaje)) y necesitan saberlo y siento que a veces=

jovanna: =Por el contexto=

Daniel: =Bien por el contexto=

Montserrat: =Estoy de acuerdo con eso porque aparte cuando tienen la de how to teach grammar ((como enseñar gramática)), realmente lo tienen que saber y por ejemplo hace dos semestres estaba yo enseñando >how to teach grammar and vocabulary< ((como enseñar gramática y vocabulario)), y cuando terminaban de hacer sus presentaciones yo les hacía las preguntas como las que te hacían tus alumnos así de, Y PORQUE EL AUXILIAR ES ESE. Y los chicos se me quedaban viendo así de que le pasa de donde salió esa pregunta=

Isabella: =Es que hay cosas como que, >de repente los perdemos de vista<, yo quiero decir, no baso mis clases en grammar pero si le doy mucho peso a gramática =

Daniel: =Aja= (asienta con la cabeza)

Isabella: =NO, no doy gramática y después aplico, NO, aplico y ellos entonces ya me van diciendo que es esto, que tienen en común que no tienen, bueno pues

esto recibe un nombre y se usa así o como es que ustedes creen que se usa, pero (0.3) cuando digo que a veces perdemos de vista es porque (.) porque también tienes que atender a muchas cosas no es nada más, yo decía la audiencia >porque es lo primero que se me vino<, pero también tienes que pensar en su nivel, tienes que pensar en la edad. Los adultos, no los adultos jóvenes, los adultos, los otros adultos más maduros demandan la explicación de gramática=

Montserrat: =ah sí porque si no, no le entienden=

Isabella: =Porque sienten que es la única forma de entenderle y si tú los quieres empezar a - a - no digo que no se pueda pero, es, para ellos es más complicado y frustrante si quieres que partan este de la competencia, del uso. Es como a ver, jamás en mi vida he hecho esto, jamás en mi vida he escuchado estas palabras, tú quieres que yo produzca, dime que es. Ósea como que lo quieren, a ver tú dime que es=

Jovanna: =Ya luego lo uso=

Isabella: =Aja, es eso, pero así te lo van pidiendo, así te lo van pidiendo=

Jovanna: =Es como funciona no? Yo creo que de acuerdo >al contexto, a tu audiencia< es lo que tú y también de acuerdo a tu personalidad, a ti como maestro de inglés es como TÚ enseñas tu este (0.2) a que le das más valor, a que le das más valor en tu práctica docente no? Pues bueno, vamos avanzándole. (0.3) Yo sé que todos tienen muchí::sima experiencia >no sé cuántos años tengan cada uno dando clases< pero de donde han aprendido la mayoría de sus técnicas, la mayoría de sus estrategias, este actividades, de donde, de donde sale todo ese repertorio, ósea a que se lo adhieren ustedes a la experien::cia, a los trai::nings ((entrenamientos)), a - a qué?=

Isabella: =Yo pienso que es una mezcla de todo=

Daniel: =Aja= (asienta con la cabeza)

Isabella: =Y a TU apertu:ra porque, si de pronto dices >en el caso mío<. Yo tengo “x” años >que prefiero decir que es mi edad<, tantos años dando clase=

Jovanna, & TT: Se ríen

Isabella: =Y por el solo hecho de decir atrás de mí ya hay (0.2) tantos años ya lo sé todo pues ya perdiste, ahí ya perdiste. Ósea debes de entender que esto es como la medicina no? Que está evolucionando todo el tiempo y tú debes de tener la mente abierta para recibir e ir captando e ir evolucionando tú también. Porque los alumnos también están cambiando=

Monica: =A parte seria como muy aburrido (.) que continuaras enseñando como te enseñaron a ti no, como que no te sentirías satisfecho contigo mismo no?

Lucia: Bueno, yo creo que te ves te ves cómo (0.2) así cuando ellos entran al curso que dicen de que va a ser de que se va a tratar, que voy hacer para aprender. Uno también, que voy a hacer para enseñar porque eres nueva, aunque sepas lo que sepas no? =

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel & Monica: =Aja= (asientan con la cabeza indicando estar de acuerdo con lo antes mencionado)

T4: =Tal vez sabes mucho y, o no sabes muchas cosas pero al final eres nueva con ellos, aunque sea el mismo contenido, son nuevos y cuando te ves así, a lo mejor podrás ser hasta (.) ser un poco más creativa porque esa novedad te - te - creo que alimenta la creatividad no? =

Jovanna, Montserrat, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: (Asientan con la cabeza en señal de acuerdo con Lucia)

Montserrat: = Bueno en mi caso (.) yo empecé:: a dar clases, yo estudie en el centro de lenguas, >siempre desde niña jugué a ser maestra entonces dije voy a ser maestra< Eh, pero yo empecé a dar clases sin tener toda esta metodología no? Y realmente como yo lo hacía era (0.2) con clases que a mí me habían gustado como yo había aprendido que eran generalmente clases muy dinámicas, >clases con muchos juegos con muchas actividades< Entonces al principio yo empecé a enseñar así, ya después tome el, el curso con consejo británico (.) el - el - ICELT, y ahí va mucho con la metodología entonces de ahí aprendí mucho para como unir la metodología, el diseño de materiales, como sacarle realmente provecho a mis materiales que diseñaba y como mejorar mis clases. Entonces fue una mezcla de la - de lo EMPÍRICO que yo tenía con ya tener algo más teórico y es como le - le he ido haciendo y estoy completamente <de acuerdo con Lily> que cada vez que empezamos con un nuevo grupo, empiezas una nueva experiencia. El, ahora en el inter-semestral uno de mis alumnos me preguntaba: Miss y no se aburre de enseñar siempre lo mismo? Dice, porque SEMESTRE tras SEMESTRE estás enseñando los mismos contenidos. Y me quedaba yo pensando, le digo no, le digo, porque cada semestre es diferente le digo

Isabella: (Asienta con la cabeza en acuerdo)

Montserrat: ustedes son diferentes cada grupo es diferente Y LAS ACTIVIDADES (.) LAS ACTIVIDADES, cambian ósea, cambian con la dinámica que tiene el grupo.

Daniel: Aja (asienta con la cabeza)

Isabella: A lo mejor son las mismas, a lo mejor son las mismas pero=

Lucia: =A lo mejor son las mismas pero las vas mejorando, dices con ellos yo puedo hacer esto, con ellos si puedo hacer esto, entonces ay, este el semestre pasado quedo hecho todo un fiasco, a ver qué tal con este, ósea se trate de experimentar y de =

Jovanna, Montserrat, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: (Asientan con la cabeza en señal de acuerdo con T4)

Montserrat: =de ir perfeccionando, como las puedes ir mejorando y cuales si realmente funcionaron y cuales tenemos que modificar=

Monica: =cuales tenemos que tirar a la basura jajaja=

Jovanna: = Yo cuando entre a la licenciatura (.)escolarizada >antes de entrar a la semi-presencial<, bueno cuando me cambian a la semi-presencial conocí a una maestra que (0.3) estaba muy orgullosa de sus años decía, tengo 25 años dando clases y yo decía wow, 25 años no pues casi casi le hago así (reverencia) no? Y de repente nos piden traer una muestra de clase, y pues te pones, yo nerviosa 18 años obviamente, >la que seguía después de mi tenía creo que 29<, entonces yo decía hijole, no? Pues que voy a hacer yo comparada con todos ellos, nerviosa de ver sus presentaciones y cuando pasa esta maestra yo con la ansiedad de verla no =

Montserrat: =que me va a presentar, no? =

Jovanna: =Y cuando veo esa clase, no- me sentí así de, no, no puede ser, ósea no lo puedo creer. Mal, sus materiales muy muy viejos así como que de >la copia, de la copia, de la copia, de la copia<, y yo así de enserio, en serio si hacemos

eso? Ya conforme yo fui avanzando en mi experiencia como docente, había ocasiones en que me daba un flojera, yo decía, lo hago iguali::to al semestre pasado y NO me importa y había otras ocasiones en que decía, >NO, no salió y no me gusto como me sentí<, NO, entonces a romper ese plan y empezar otra cosa de nuevo no? Pero yo, dependió mucho de mi estado de ánimo, dependió mucho de mi grupo (0.5) la verdad.

Isabella, Daniel & Lucia: (Asientan moviendo la cabeza)

Jovanna: Ósea, hay grupos para los que yo decía, uy nombre a este grupo le tengo que hacer esto, le tengo que dar esto y hay grupos en que yo decía, ósea que apáticos, pues ahí les va, igual que el semestre pasado y no cambio nada. No sé, a mí - a mí me pasaba así.

TT: (Asientan con la cabeza todos y se ríen.)

Jovanna: Y había ocasiones en que yo hacía mis planeaciones de clase y para el siguiente semestre dependiendo del grupo, los aplicaba igual o los iba modificando. Pero definitivamente (0.4) a mí me impactaba mucho (0.2) mi audiencia, no sé porque. Y yo a veces decía >quiero ser la mejor maestra, quiero echarle ganas y tener las mejores planeaciones y materiales< pero a mí me afectaba mucho con que estudiantes estaba tratando =

Daniel: =Si, si, inclusive lo podrías notar en casa >cuando planeas tus cosas, luego piensas que es con tal grupo y hasta sientes como más compromiso, no con este grupo le tengo que echar más ganas< =

Isabel: =Si, tiene mucho que ver=

Monica: =Si hay grupos que así como esta, como salga jajaja=

Daniel: =y hay OTROS GRUPOS con los que no te sientes con tanto o presión inclusive de hacerlo bien no? =

Isabella: =Si, hay quienes te mueven, el solo hecho de, yo recuerdo apenas hace que como un año, en un grupo había un chico que este te preguntaba, PERO DABA EXACTAMENTE EN EL PUNTO MEDULAR la pregunta y entonces si era así como de (0.5) muchas veces debo decirles que no tengo la respuesta ahorita pero, y mañana lo abordábamos no y entonces=

Jovanna: =Y no se le olvidaba=

Isabella: =No, no, pero luego los compañeros eran los que decían hay ya vas a preguntar otra vez, pues déjenlo. Y me gustaba que preguntara, ósea, si era así como chin no? =

Montserrat: =ÓSEA COSAS QUE TÚ NI SIQUIERA HABÍAS CONSIDERADO=

Isabella: =Pero te movía, te tenía como que al tiro y órale tienes que estar este, porque no había una respuesta que le convenza, porque a veces yo le decía, esto es así y se me quedaba viendo así como, no te convencí verdad. Y me decía, pues bien no=

Jovanna, Montserrat, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: (Todos se ríen)

Jovanna: =Y entonces tienes que buscar una respuesta=

Isabella: =Pero te mueve ósea te mueve, los otros se sentían así como ya va a preguntar otra vez, y tú a veces y yo a veces le decía hoy no me vas a preguntar nada, no hoy no. Ah bueno. Asia si era.

Jovanna: Oigan y por ejemplo yo sé que aquí tenían o manejan un libro de texto, no? Ustedes llegan a crear material o se basan solamente en lo que tienen aquí? =

Montserrat: =Si llevo a traer material.

Lucia: Es que (.) bueno yo a veces, es, es difícil no? cuando tienes que trabajar mucho (.) ósea hay a quien le da tiempo, a mi honestamente a veces no me da tiempo y a lo mejor haces algo con tu libro de texto y le cambias una o dos cosas o de pronto de las 4 sesiones que tienes dices bueno 3 con el libro y una la hago yo, porque al menos yo hacer una diario diferente =

Isabella: =No=

Lucia: =Sería muy desgastante, si ese fuera mi único grupo y mi único trabajo, pues otra cosa sería pero la realidad es que, mi realidad no es esa =

Jovanna: =Si=

Lucia: =Entonces yo estaría mintiendo si digo que la verdad pues soy la súper maestra y que cada clase material nuevo, NO, no. Y yo digo bueno (.) cualquier libro es bueno, con que lo uses como esta hubo una persona preparada detrás que supo hacerlo y tienes que confiar no?

Jovanna: >Creo que el que escribió el de ustedes fue David Crystal no?<

TT: (Asientan y dicen que es muy bueno)

Jovanna: Que tengo entendido que, fíjate, yo sé que en la universidad están utilizando un libro que está diseñando la universidad que yo no puedo dar ni un si ni un no, pero personalmente no estoy de acuerdo en eso pero el de esta licenciatura que todavía me toco escogerlo >con Moi y con Rosa María Funderburck<, no que bárbaro!, ese libro de verdad nos impactó, ósea, está muy bien tiene muchísimo y tu escoges. Fue lo que nos gustó de ese libro. Pero este, do you feel imposed? ((se sienten obligados)) Ósea que sienten que el libro es una imposición y que la armarían más sin el libro? =

Daniel: =Yo si me siento así, A Mí nunca me ha gustado, de verdad te lo digo, nunca me ha gustado el libro, no soy fan así de los libros la verdad, este (.) si los uso porque sé que tenemos también que cubrirlo y luego los alumnos hacen el gasto y te dicen oiga profe lo compramos y no lo vamos a terminar. Qué bueno también yo luego platico con ellos y les digo miren este, >nada más vamos a tomar lo que sea más importante pero algunas cosas nos las vamos a saltar< y es lo que luego hago. Si veo que algo es como muy importante verlo, pues lo vemos y sino a veces me lo salto por lo mismo, por lo regular lo ocupo para la parte de grammar ((gramática)), es donde más ocupo el libro. ↓ Ya para la otra parte pues ya traigo actividades o así ↓ (.) pero si, si creo que TIENE SUS VENTAJAS y sus desventajas pero yo le veo más desventajas ↓ a ocupar libros jeje ↓ (.) la VENTAJA es que te da chance de cómo delimitar un poco que es lo que vas a enseñar, ↓ esa es la ventaja ↓ =

Jovanna: =Como tu programa=

Daniel: =↓ Pero lo malo es que igual te limita demasiado ↓ =

Isabella: =Pues de nueva cuenta, desde el libro como dice Lily, igual como trabajas y das 50,000 clases, el libro te (.) te va llevando no? Y de otro modo (señala a T3) ósea si eres más libre pero requieres más tiempo. Buscar y diseñar los materiales para tus objetivos requiere más tiempo y que sean adecuados =

Montserrat: = Porque al final de cuentas tiene que seguir teniendo un tema la clase, tienes que CONTEXTUALIZAR tus materiales a todo lo que tienes que seguir en el programa=

Isabella: = Entonces pienso, para mí es más fácil enriquecer el libro, es más fácil. No digo que sí es bueno o es peor pero es más fácil enriquecer este contenido

que diseñar todo. DESDE LUEGO si tú diseñas todo, queda todo a tu gusto, todo va enfocado a esta audiencia y a lo mejor tenga un mejor resultado=

Jovanna: = Pero como dice T4, como no es su único grupo ni su única materia como no son poquitos alumnos, es complicado, si si si (.) y hablando de los alumnos ustedes llegan a tomar en cuenta sus opiniones para sus clases? Si les llegan a preguntar oigan que quieren ósea, o de plano no aceptan sugerencias =

Lucia: = Aquí especial, aquí sí, saben que van a ser maestros entonces ellos te dicen, este (.) yo quisiera que viéramos más este (.) que aprendiéramos más idioms ((modismos)) por ejemplo no? O yo quisiera, en otros contextos no, pero, aquí estos alumnos si son si son=

Montserrat: =A parte proponen cosas no? No sé, nos gustaría que, ↓por ejemplo ahorita en la mañana que estaba trabajando estábamos viendo un ejercicio de reading↓ ↑ y ya uno de los chicos me dice y bueno cuales son las, ↓ porque acaban de hacer el diagnóstico del TOEFL↓ Dice, bueno y cuáles son las estrategias que podemos utilizar para TOEFL en la parte de reading no qué? Dice en mi caso me cuesta mucho trabajo. Entonces ya empecé a enseñarles más estrategias y ya dice, bueno y porque no vemos a lo mejor los viernes dice que nos de las estrategias. Entonces te empiezan a proponer, igual cuando entre con ellos al principio igual decía y porque no hacemos este, de conversación, entonces si están como acostumbrados a PROPONER. A decir Miss y cómo ve si hacemos esto o lo otro=

Jovanna: =Pero bueno llega el momento en que te incomoda que te propongan o lo tomas a bien =

Isabella: =Yo creo que también tiene que ver, es como cuando tú corriges al alumno. Si tú le dices ay ya te volviste a equivocar, van 5 veces que te corrijo, pues como, ósea como lo toma el alumno no? Así como mejor ya no digo nada=

Montserrat, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: (Todos se ríen)

Jovanna: =Mejor ya no pregunto=

Isabella: =Yo también sí, hay sugerencias, yo si me pongo así en el - en el - en el spot y les digo, si me equivoco si la riego pues háganmelo saber. Claro que si ustedes llegan y me dicen usted es la maestra y nos está enseñando esto pues ni sabe, pues tampoco va a ser como para mí, entonces vas estableciendo tu ambiente de trabajo y Si ósea se aceptan sugerencias pero ESO NO QUIERE DECIR, también eso tiene que quedar como entendido, que no =

Monica: =que tampoco vas a hacer todo no? =

Isabella: =Que tampoco es a la carta=

Montserrat: =O QUE ELLOS VAYAN A DECIDIR TODO NO? =

Isabella: =No, vamos negociando, vamos viendo esto es factible, esto no es factible por esto =

Daniel: =Yo no lo pregunto pero cuando veo que no funciona, cuando veo que no funciona o cuando los veo con cara así ↓ de que ya me quiero salir a comer una torta o algo así↓=

Montserrat, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: (Todos se ríen)

Montserrat: = te están viendo con cara de comida.. jajaja=

Daniel: = Si, la verdad les digo, como sintieron la clase o que hizo falta o que no les gusto y ya, a veces si comentan a veces si siento que tiene varios comentarios pero no me los dicen=

Jovanna: = Sientes que no te los dicen porque es como la autoridad y=

Daniel: = Yo creo que eso piensan como que no sé si me voy a molestar o a lo mejor piensan eso que se va uno a molestar y por eso no son tan abiertos a veces=

Jovanna: =Fíjate que yo en un inicio, mi carácter era súper súper este firme, así y recta y así como que, siguiendo las reglas con punto, santo y seña no, y, y los alumnos de prepa fueron lo que me enseñaron a irle bajando dos rayitas a mi desgorre porque me decían es que usted es súper inflexible! tanto para lo bueno como para lo malo es inflexible y a veces hasta nos da miedo preguntarle y un día me dijeron unos alumnos, >nosotros supimos que era Jovanna y preferimos dejar la materia sin derecho< Después dije, caray!, eso no está bien, ósea eso no está nada bien porque empecé a analizar y dije si es cierto porque yo era así de que, MAL, NO, ESTO y en el momento corregía y PUM, PUM ,PUM, y en un momento mis alumnos dijeron ya no hablo=

Isabella: =Si=

Montserrat, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: (Todos se ríen)

Montserrat: =les dio miedo hablar=

Jovanna: =Poco a poco lo fui cambiando pero fue::: (.) echar a perder a un grupo y a otro grupo y a otro grupo, no fue fácil y más porque era algo también personal y era parte de mi personalidad el carácter entonces que los alumnos me hicieran una sugerencia, par a mí era tan difícil aceptar, yo creo que ósea, me ponía roja, roja, roja. Una ocasión me toco darle clases a mi hermano, y pedí >ya saben las reservaciones del Self Access Center< ((Centro de Auto-aprendizaje)) y mi hermano que no me las entrega!, que le pongo 9, uy no. De verdad en la casa yo no me la acaba eh, en la casa mi mamá me dejó de hablar, mi hermano uy no=

Isabella, Montserrat & Daniel: (Se ríen)

Jovanna: =Pero yo decía es que es mi trabajo ósea perdón pero no me las entregó, me pongo a pensar y después a unos alumnos les di chance de entregármelas una semana más pero a él porque no, porque era mi hermano y yo tenía que ser la maestra incorruptible, pero no me la acababa =

T5: =Pero si no te ibas a ver mal, no? =

Jovanna: =Es que fueron muchas cosas. Pero no piensas, y yo aprendí a ser más abierta=

Lucia: =Depende que tan abierta porque es peligroso, ósea=

Jovanna: =Si, si, si, si=

Lucia: =Cuando tú les dejas que digan y que te propongan, a que ahora queremos esto y tú sí, sí, sí, también es, ↑ y encontrar ↑ el punto medio a mí, me cuesta trabajo no, a pesar de que tengas mucho tiempo dando clases, precisamente por eso, porque ningún grupo es igual, ninguna generación es igual entonces sigue siendo complicado=

Daniel: =Creo que también es importante estar al tanto de que también estas expuesto, como profesor y también aceptarlo porque algunas veces cuando no puedes dar una respuesta porque no la sabes o se te olvido, aquí la cosa es difícil aceptar porque dices cuando como esta es mi función de profesor como no puedo dar una respuesta a algo que me están preguntando si esto es algo que se supone que debo hacer. Pero creo que también es importante aceptar que no sabe uno todo=

Montserrat: =Si, aceptarlo=

Jovanna: =Y dejárselos en claro a ellos también no? =

Montserrat: =Decirles, a ver si no se algo, bueno lo busco para la próxima clase=

Isabella: =Es comprometido=

Daniel: =O que sea su tarea para la próxima clase jeje=

Isabella: =Si, porque tampoco se vale que siempre digas no sé=

Jovanna: =Ok, ahora en cuanto a Teacher Development, ((Desarrollo del Profesor)) a su training ((entrenamiento)). Ustedes si realmente crean (.) de qué manera se desarrollan ustedes como docentes de inglés? Ósea cuales son las formas que a ustedes les han funcionado como docentes de inglés?, llámese la experiencia, este, TRAININGS ((entrenamientos)) oficiales u obligatorios por parte de aquí de la institución, que han hecho para mantenerse así como al día. Yo sé que hay muchísimas maneras, las comunes son esas los trainings ((entrenamientos)) que promueve la universidad, cursos que ustedes toman por fuera, este, que, que han hecho? **(0.3)**

Montserrat: Pues la parte de trainings ((entrenamientos)) que es la que te va llevando la universidad, en el de tecnología que yo no sabía nada, ni bajar un video y todo eso, ya después que pase TICs ya, ya puedo bajar un video ya lo puedo subir a mis clases no. Y que sea realmente, si tomas un training que sea de algo que realmente te sirva o que realmente ocupes.

Jovanna: Ok, pero la preguntas más bien es, que han hecho ustedes para desarrollarse? Que es lo que, yo sé que hay muchas maneras pero específicamente a ustedes cuales les han funcionado? Cuales les han ayudado a formarse, vaya=

Lucia: =Ay, eso es bien difícil bueno en mi caso (0.3) porque:: no tienes acceso aquí, ósea, si te ofrece la institución si (.) te ofrece esa profesionalización pero al menos yo siento que como maestra de inglés no =

Isabella: = no hay =

Lucia: = excepto por los cursos que tuvimos hace cuantos años, fuera de ese yo nunca había tomado ósea, el otro para la certificación, yo no había tomado ósea, busco, los buscas (.) por tu cuenta, pagas tú, son muy lejos, no te dan permiso, este:: (.) si vas, bueno, yo quiero ir ahorita a uno porque digo hace mucho que no hago algo de inglés. Pero si digo voy a ir no? pero si no te dan permiso o esta caro no te dan dinero entonces dices y como ósea. Quieren que seas el mejor (0.2) y cómo? Ósea como le haces no? Eso es bien difícil, yo pensando precisamente en eso dices bueno, yo como puedo ser mejor maestra? Pues necesito, uno, mejorar mi nivel todos los días, todos los días. Como se hace eso? No dando clases, necesitas tú tomarlas o entrenarte a ti no? Ósea SI APRENDES, si es cierto que aprendes dando clase, pero, pero no lo que realmente se necesita. Como aprendes de nuevas técnicas, pues yendo con los expertos, y aquí en nuestro contexto pues yo no sé alguien dígame un experto que nos (0.3), o yo creo que así se sienten como yo no? =

Isabella & Daniel: =Aja= (asienten con la cabeza)

Lucia: =Por eso le buscas y dices voy a ir, por lo menos a este curso porque hace mucho que no voy o por lo menos a esta serie de conferencias pero:: dos horas de una conferencia la verdad es que no es mucho=

Isabella: =Aja= (asienten con la cabeza)

Lucia: =Que haces pues leer no? Buscar alguien que haya ido, que haya hecho y hacerlo por tu cuenta muchas veces entonces eso es lo que, si quieren mejores maestros o tú quieres ser mejor maestro pero tienes las posibilidades de tiempo, LA ECONOMÍA, ósea es un conjunto de cosas y para profesionalizarte tienes que invertir y requiere de tiempo y dinero no? Entonces es bien difícil, yo, yo siento que es difícil=

Isabella: =Yo también voy por esa parte, yo creo que, no sé si sea solo nuestra universidad o sea el estado o sea más grande, como que el área de la enseñanza del inglés está muy descobijada en ese sentido, como que no hay suficiente capacitación al nivel que se va a requiriendo para estarte actualizando, como que se piensa que, pues es inglés, a pues es la de inglés, no, como que ni siquiera te toman en cuenta de manera PROFESIONAL no. Pues es la que enseña inglés, esta fácil. A lo máximo a lo que llegamos en- en nuestra certificación es lo que hicimos contigo. Y nuestra universidad en la dirección de superación académica no tienen esa preparación (0.3) empiezan a buscar y no hay quien la de (0.3)

Daniel: =Aja= (asienta con la cabeza)

Isabella: =entonces como podemos aspirar a más tiene que ser siempre como dice T4, buscas tú por tú cuenta y encuentras el espacio y no encuentras el apoyo (0.2) entonces que hay que cubrir primero =

Jovanna: =Esas han sido las problemáticas comunes la falta de tiempo, de dinero, de apoyo, y de que quizá a lo mejor la institución plantea una capacitación pienso yo (.) por lo que yo he visto a nivel institucional de lo que ellos piensan que es lo que necesitan, a one size fits all ((una talla “modelo” para todos)), pero no es lo que cada uno requiere (.)

TT: (Asientan estando de acuerdo con lo antes mencionado)

Jovanna: Pero, y::: tomando esas problemáticas como por aparte (.) ósea que es lo que han hecho ósea como se han formado, como se han superado y como has mejorado tú en tu practica desde hace 10 años que empezaste o 7 u 8 o 20 a ahorita? Ósea, de que te has agarrado me dice T4, no pues yo he leído, leer e investigar por tu cuenta. Ustedes que han hecho? =

Isabella: =Pues lo mismo=

Daniel: =La experiencia y a parte de la experiencia de uno creo que el de los compañeros ayuda mucho luego=

Isabella: =Así es=

Daniel: Poder preguntar y decir, oiga ↓ como ve esto o cómo ve el otro? ↓=

Jovanna: =Ósea si lo haces, si platican entre ustedes? =

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel: (Asientan con la cabeza)

Isabella: =Bueno con algunos que te permiten hacerlo, con quienes te sientes cómodo o que aceptan, que aceptan compartir contigo, no todos aceptamos compartir con todos. Entonces tu no siempre te sientes con la confianza, y es T3, no, no me va a decir. No sé T5??? =

Daniel: = Pero yo creo que el ambiente está un poco más (.) tranquilo en ese aspecto, creo que aquí, creo que aquí estamos un poco más cercanos en ese aspecto=

Monica: =Eso es cierto, yo me siento como más en confianza de venir y preguntarle algo a la T2 que ir con alguien de mi departamento de lenguas extranjeras=

Daniel: =Si, acercarse y preguntar=

Jovanna: =Yo sé que hay una gran diferencia entre los docentes de inglés general en la universidad al contexto de LELI, es ósea punto y aparte y lo viví porque >yo creo que a muchos de nosotros nos ha tocado dar clases tanto allá como acá< y el contexto es diferente. Tan solo hace un año me dicen las maestras de mi estudio piloto, es que nosotros no tenemos ni siquiera un área como en LELI para poder sentarnos y platicar, mínimo vernos y planear juntos o intercambiar opiniones=

Monica: = Yo creo que el área a lo mejor sería lo de menos, es que no hay confianza entre nosotros. Que tal vez está la cafetería pero no, yo voy y no tengo la confianza para decir ahí está la maestra fulana, me voy a sentar con ella y preguntarle no mmm no=

Daniel: = Pero si influye el espacio, hay unas carreas que no tienen este espacio=

Isabella: = El espacio te da más cercanía=

Montserrat: = Ya sea que vengas por tus cosas, te vas cambiando de clase en clase o cuando son días para cerrar el semestre que estamos todos aquí cada quien >apartando su espacio con nuestras pilas de exámenes<, pero en eso estas como, también vas compartiendo la experiencia=

Jovanna: = Entonces yo podría decir que, el desarrollo sería (.) por tu cuenta?, investigando por tu cuenta=

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: = Si= (asientan estando de acuerdo con lo antes mencionado)

Montserrat: =La mayor parte si es por tu cuenta=

Isabella: =O buscas cursos...=

Jovanna: Y platicas así como (.) entre ustedes pero no con todos, con los que se prestan= y como ustedes dicen, con lo que se sienten en confianza, hay algunos con los que no se sienten en confianza. -A ver y vamos a (.) otra cosa, yo sé que este nosotros, (0.2) todos tenemos nuestra docencia y sabemos dar clases a nuestra manera y (.) como nos gusta, pero que pasa cuando las cosas no salen como tú quieres. Que pasa cuando estas toda eh (0.2), purcked up y planeaste y preparaste y llegaste a tu clase y las cosas no van como tú quieres, ósea que (.) pasa ósea como te sientes? Que haces después de que no salieron como tú esperabas?

Lucia: LLORAS=

Jovanna, Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: Todos se ríen

Isabella: Yo si me siento frustrada=

Daniel: Yo creo que ese es el sentimiento, lo primero que haces o sientes es frustración.

Isabella: Como que en el desarrollo de las cosas= a veces si me detengo mucho en (0.2) uno o en dos que (0.2), que de plano se te quedan viendo así como que me está diciendo porque no entendí nada?, como que me regreso así como (0.2) para asegurarme y solo son dos. Y mientras a lo mejor los otros 15 o 20 están así como ya estuvo ya déjelos. Yo no puedo avanzar, como que no este, o de plano les digo me esperan tantito al final no? y ahorita volvemos a platicarlo para seguirle avanzando acá. (0.2) Porque oseas, SUS CARAS te están diciendo todo

Montserrat: =Si sus caras te dicen todo=

Isabella: Pero necesitas observarlos no?, igual y puedes seguirte de filo, igual y no te importe? pero a mí en lo personal si me frustra.=

Jovanna: Y que hacen, después de la frustración que hacen?

Monica: =Pues yo me pongo a pensar en otra manera para el siguiente día, si de plano veo que no? (.) para nada, ósea si te frustras pero pues tengo que volver a intentarlo no? =

Montserrat: Tienes ese sentimiento primero de frustración, pero después tienes que ir como pensando a ver qué hice?, como que vas analizando a ver que hice en esta clase, ay esta actividad como que si funcionó, como que no funcionó, ya como que la vas cambiando y vas empezando un poquito como a reflexionar, ah pues puedo cambiar esto.

Jovanna: Y si lo cambias? =

Montserrat: =Pues a veces lo hago, repetir la clase como tal no, pero llevo una actividad que refuerce.

Jovanna: Ya

Montserrat: Por ejemplo no sé, (0.2) quinto semestre lleva voz pasiva, lleva (.) reported speech, lleva condicionales que son temas complicados, entonces con voz pasiva si todavía veo que les cuesta trabajo les llevo (.) otro material diferente, ya no el mismo que use que los dejo así de (hace mueca con la cara), ay creo que no entendieron nada jeje y deja ese sentimiento de frustración. Entonces hay que buscar otra actividad que les ayude más a entender.

Daniel: O inclusive en el momento,=

Montserrat: =O inclusive en el momento

Isabella: Cambia ahí la actividad

Daniel: Decidir, ya no voy a seguir con esta actividad y cambiar y parece que te la sacas de la manga y tal vez si te la sacas de la manga pero porque en ese momento te da cuenta de que esa no es la forma y no está funcionando y dice no, mejor voy a meter esto que a lo mejor hice en una clase pasada y me funcionó.=

Jovanna: -A ver, si es cierto una pregunta, por ejemplo, si tú ves que algo no está funcionando, le sigues... =

Isabella: No

Jovanna: Ósea la TERMINAS? O, (0.2) o de plano la paras y a otra cosa?

Montserrat: No yo si la paro y a otra cosa.

Lucia: Pues depende... =

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: Todos se ríen

Daniel: =A veces... porque con algunos grupos si funciona y con otros no...

Lucia: Si, pararla, es que...(0.3) por ejemplo, depende también de cómo seas como maestro porque a mí, yo no soy tan tan, este, tan (0.3) creativa así como para al momento, digo ijoles ya me senté para, por lo menos para un jueguito y ponerlos en equipo no? Y que de pronto pues no les gusto la musiquita o lo que les hayas puesto para la actividad, hasta esa cosa tan sencilla, dices ay pues ay, yo ya la hice!

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, & Monica: Todos se ríen

Lucia: Ya no a la próxima lo cambio y ya...=

Montserrat: =Si, ahorita la termino y ya luego la vuelvo a modificar =

Jovanna: Ahorita que la escucho a ella, recuerdo perfecto una clase, tenía dos grupos, era segundo y era el mismo nivel. Con un grupo llego y todo mi lesson plan de dos horas salió perfecto, yo salí de esa clase así como soy la mejor. Llego al otro grupo, no, nada...=

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: Todos asienten con la cabeza

Montserrat: No funcionaba=

Jovanna: Un fiasco total y mis alumnos así de (hace muecas con la cara), y yo todavía HANDS UP, quien va a participar?, y todos así (0.2) (hace muecas con la cara) y yo me paso al español y digo: si me están entendiendo, si saben qué hacer?=
=

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: Todos se ríen

Jovanna: Y yo decía, no, salí, dije cómo es posible que? (.) no funcionara, y el= grupo, el grupo así de... bueno yo dije ash, ósea ahorita cambiarle, PERDÓN...!

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: Todos se ríen

Jovanna: Y dije por sangrones se echan todo mi lesson plan.

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: Todos se ríen a carcajada

Lucia: Si, que haces no?=
=

Jovanna: Ya con el tiempo, pero sabes porque porque fue, porque yo me anticipe a, lo mismo, yo era como más inflexible, más estricta, pues ahora ya está ahí y ahora lo hacemos no? Ósea, no me importa que no les guste.

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: Todos se ríen

Jovanna: Y es así como, para la próxima si la paro, pero si te requiere esa habilidad en el momento de decir sabes que la paro en este momento y sale cambiamos a esto otro. Pero eso requiere un repertorio y experiencia.

Montserrat: Y que no se vea tan así como, (0.2)=me la saque de la manga porque no funcionó... =y tienes que tener un repertorio de actividades...

Daniel: =Si, porque eso lo huelen los alumnos...=
=

Jovanna: Después aprendí a hacer mi lesson plan pero tener una o dos actividades más "just in case", si no jala esto= pues escojo una de mis extras y (.) empecé a hacer eso porque dije no, después conforme yo iba obligándolos a terminar mis planeaciones hasta yo me sentía mal porque no les estaba gustando...

Montserrat: =Si a parte tenías en sentimiento de frustración tuyo y el de los alumnos.=

Isabella: Y menos obtienes los resultados que quieres=

Monica: Y las clases van ligadas, no? Como vas a seguir haciéndolo así, si no entendieron la clase pasada, no?

Isabella: Finalmente tu objetivo es que aprendan entonces tienes que modificarlo.

Jovanna: Y eso a mí me cayó el 20 como con el tiempo, la verdad, ósea no fue así como de (0.2) luego luego, no! Fue con el tiempo... pues si... algo más de esto?=
=

Lucia: Reflexionar sobre cómo, ay, es que es bien difícil, siempre vas a ser este...(0.3) a buscarte lo bueno, ósea sabes que, sabes que te fue muy mal, muy mal y dices bueno, pues es que esto(.)... estuvo pasable no?

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel & Monica: Todos se ríen

Lucia: Y esto otro, también, y entonces así desde que llegaste hasta que saliste y al final dices, pues todo perfecto no?=
=

Jovanna, T1, Isabella, Daniel & Monica: Todos se ríen

Lucia: Ósea es bien difícil, ser analítico con uno mismo, con lo que tú estás haciendo, a mí, a pesar de (.) los años que tenga (0.2) me cuesta mucho trabajo, mucho trabajo. Porque es como, es como, dices bueno yo le invertí, puse mi mejor

esfuerzo y decirte a ti mismo que lo que hiciste no estuvo bien pues es muy duro no? Es muy duro! =entonces aunque sabes inconscientemente que fue un fiasco, (0.2) pues uno trata de decir pues no estuvo tan mal, ya acabo el día.=

Daniel: Y más como cuando le pones todo a tu clases, es cuando se siente más frustración= porque lo planeas así como que, esta clase va a estar súper bien y te la imaginas de una manera y=

Montserrat: Y sale lo contrario...

Daniel: =Y todos van a estar bien emocionados y que no salga=

Montserrat: O estas más emocionada tú con tu material que preparas o algo así y luego dices aahh...=

Isabella: Yo si soy muy crítica de mí, (0.2) y así como que me digo, no si la regaste aquí y si cámbiale (0.2) ósea, este dicen... tengo una amiga que siempre dice, es que el trabajo es que alguien me diga algo porque en verdad que yo si lo empiezo a pensar, entonces me dice, no ya tu ratoncito ya te está corriendo allá adentro. Porque en verdad, ósea sí, no quiero decir, si pensó y si soy muy analítica y critica de lo que hago... (0.2) trato de cambiarlo, no quiero decir que ay si siempre me estoy analizando= y saliendo es lo primero que hago, pero si le doy muchas vueltas, no? Y digo, porque no funcionó? O porque con esta persona no funciona y no funciona y no vuelve a funcionar? Y a lo mejor nunca me funciona! Pero si soy muy de...=

Montserrat: Pero por lo menos si estás ahí pensando en cómo mejorar... y aparte si es como el ejercicio que te acostumbras a ir pensando y...

Daniel: Y tu contexto no, creo que la misma practica te lo va pidiendo y depende de los grupos, al menos a mí me cause mucha presión, presión, ir pensando y que les puedo ir exigiendo. Ya cuando están en otros niveles más avanzados ya les puedo exigir más. Pero no solo me juzgo o juzgo mis clases a partir de mí, no solo de mí!

Montserrat: A mi me paso cuando inicie en quinto semestre que les daba inglés y les daba PILI, imagínate! ósea era así como que mucha presión porque yo les decía tiene que hacer y enseñar así y de esta manera e incluir esto, esto y esto y en las clases de inglés yo no estaba haciendo entonces si era como que cada día, y ahora qué hago? porque estamos viendo esto y si era como que la presión de que a ver, yo les estoy diciendo así en la clase de PILI que era grammar y vocabulary y así de grammar tiene que ser así y debe de llevar este enfoque, y hay que poner varias actividades y las funciones y todo. Después era así como que, bueno ahora acá en la clase de inglés como es lo que, que es lo que yo estoy haciendo? y si concuerda con lo que les estoy enseñando en PILI? porque al final de cuentas si me estaban juzgando como modelo no?

Jovanna: Exacto

Montserrat: Entonces si era mucha la presión y haber concordancia con lo que tu estas enseñando en la mañana como docente de inglés a como tú les estas dando la instrucción para que ellos sean docentes, no?

Jovanna: Eso es bien cierto porque tienes que ser coherente con lo que dices que haces y con lo que haces realmente en clase, no?. Eso es una, una parte muy difícil de un docente y la reflexión y la autocritica pues también te lleva a un proceso. La reflexión tiene un procesos y uno de ellos es el pensar, el hecho de que tú tengas el interés en pensar lo que hiciste, después de pensar lo que hiciste

te pide que sepas discernir entre lo que si salió y lo que no salió bien sin broncas, ósea verlo así, simplemente como sucedieron las cosas. Pero muchas veces el proceso de reflexión se queda en el bueno ok, esto si salió bien o no salió bien, lo cambio para la próxima. Pero realmente la reflexión más crítica te lleva a un nivel de decir, bueno porque hice esto así?, que fue lo que estaba pensando?, cual era mi idea al planear las cosas de esta manera y porque lo pienso así, no salió, ok, entonces como puedo cambiar esa manera de pensar y cambiar la actividad para que a la próxima si salga, no con la misma clase, quizá para el próximo semestre, pero realmente darte ese espacio, eso es difícil. Y pararte cuanto tú estas... tú como docente ya tienes una práctica, un repertorio de tasks y actividades, entonces pararte, parar en seco y no hacer lo que estas acostumbrada a hacer y reaccionar igual, es súper difícil. Ahí es donde está el reto y profesional y como persona porque ahí es donde está el cambio no? Y es bien difícil!, a mí me ha costado mucho y llevo 14 años dando clases de inglés y no, realmente si me costó mucho el llegar a hacer ese cambio y hacer reflexión. Y ahorita que, que, me estoy dando cuenta de esto me pongo a pensar en si antes reflexionaba o no reflexionaba. (0.2) O si pensaba o simplemente decía sí, pero pues no cambiaba nada y volvía a repetir y le seguía así. (.) Son cosas como dice T4, son difíciles y no es fácil ser docente y tampoco que te sientas tan 100% accountable for students' learning y hacerte 100% responsable si aprenden o no aprenden y eso viene a la siguiente pregunta, realmente si se sienten responsables del aprendizaje de sus alumnos, sientes que cae en ti...!

Isabella: Asienta fuertemente con la cabeza

Jovanna: Eso es 50 y 50.

Isabella: No, no es punto y aparte pero que aprendan sí!.

Daniel: Yo que aprendan si lo comparto. Y bien se los he dicho en la clase, hoy especialmente a los de 4to semestre les decía, tiene que darle un porcentaje a su parte de compromiso para aprender en la clase y denle un porcentaje al mío y todos decían 50 y 50 profe., les dije hay no como creen, ustedes solo cargan con 50 y yo cargo con las 50 de cada uno de ustedes, 50, 100, 150, 200, mi porcentaje se dispara, eso ya no es justo. Entonces les digo, yo, I set the path, lo más correcto que creo yo que puedo hacerlo o a lo que más doy por así decirlo y ya les dejo a ellos if you want to follow that path or not?. Igual trato de incluirlos lo más que se pueda pero creo que una gran parte de responsabilidad también depende de ellos, hay algunos que están en la clase de inglés así como para aprender solo en la clase y hay otros que llegan y te dicen que vieron una película o tal canción, están más despiertos y más motivados y eso hay que verlo y no dependen a lo mejor tanto de ti.

Lucia: No... no, no puedes hacerlos responsables porque la institución decide y por lo general si los alumnos no pasan o llegan mal a cierto nivel de quien es la culpa, pues tuya, les preguntan quién les dió inglés 1?, quien les dio el semestre pasado? Entonces si te cala y si te afecta porque te cargan la responsabilidad bien densa, pero, (.) pero, ser como, estar este... debemos estar preparados para aceptar esas responsabilidades y que tanto porcentaje. A lo mejor los alumnos pueden decir eso o como cuando uno dice si es toda mi responsabilidad, pues tú das el 100% aunque ellos no den nada!, finalmente después ya ellos tendrán que

asumir las consecuencias, no? Pero si hay que dar y te exige mucha responsabilidad como quiera que sea.

Isabella: Bueno al final del día tú tienes que dar tu 100 pero este otro porcentaje de los alumnos es difícil no sentirte responsable. Yo si me siento muy comprometida y si a la vuelta de la esquina o dos o tres semestres o años, si te dicen hola profesora con usted aprendí una, aunque sea una palabra en inglés, ya! Ya con eso ya digo lo logre, no?

Jovanna: Esa es tu parte del compromiso.

Isabella: Si aunque no puedes este, no puedes ponerle número...

Montserrat: Si, no puedes medir tu compromiso.

Isabella: Si y tampoco hay receta mágica, ni licuar los contenidos y dárselos para tomarlos

Jovanna: Tú que dices T5

Monica: Yo creo que somos responsables de darles y ayudarles a comprender y estoy de acuerdo con T3, si ellos llegan al salón y no hacen nada, es como cuando aprendieron a hablar español, (0.2) tú tienes que poner de tu parte. Aquí también es igual, nosotros les podemos enseñar pero ellos también necesitan querer aprender más.

Jovanna: Ahorita me vino a la mente un ejemplo con las matemáticas que en la vida han sido mi fuerte. Pero yo tuve un maestro en la prepa que era licenciado en historia y me dio estadística, y saque 10 y yo no me la creía pero él lo hacía ver y explicaba de una manera tan fácil que yo decía que bárbaro, le entiendo a todo. Y matemáticas para mí era mi nightmare ósea yo decía porque matemáticas si ni las ocupamos.

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel & Monica: Todos se ríen

Jovanna: =Pero cuando ese licenciado, el licenciado Valencia de Prepa 3 me dio clases, que bárbaro saque 10 y exenta para el global, yo no me la acababa. Y es cuando yo digo bueno, tú tienes la responsabilidad de que un alumno aprenda hasta cierto punto pero también el que un alumno se motive si es responsabilidad de nosotros no? O no sé cómo lo vean ustedes?

Lucia: =Es compartida

Daniel: Si, yo también creo que es compartida, nosotros como docente intentamos hacer lo mejor pero a veces o al menos en mi caso, trato de no enfrascarme tanto porque es frustrante y me acuerdo que hasta me dio colitis nerviosa. (.) Y fui con el doctor y me dice: oiga Usted tiene colitis, en que trabaja? Y le digo, soy maestro de inglés. Y me dice pero pues eso esta fácil no? Y yo, ajá! Entonces ya me dije, ya no me voy a, (0.3) si me voy a preocupar pero ya no me lo voy a tomar tan a pecho.

Lucia: Ni adjudicarme tanta responsabilidad

Daniel: Ni adjudicarme tanta responsabilidad porque todo era mi culpa y bueno al principio yo si pensaba que todo era mi responsabilidad y más en inglés uno porque era como su base. Pero de repente veía a unos alumnos despreocupados y que nos les importaba y en mi clase así como que chilling.

Jovanna: Y bueno hablando de eso, cuales dirían ustedes que son como que sus challenges? Sus retos en la docencia de inglés? Qué les preocupa de su profesión como maestros, (.) que les preocupa?, que no les parece? Que te preocupa de ser maestro de inglés y en esta institución?

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel & Monica: Todos se quedan callados, hacen una pausa larga antes de comentar...

Monica: A mí me preocupa que en verdad aprendan no? Si se explican o no se explican?

Jovanna: Y como lo resuelves?

Monica: Como lo resuelvo, (0.2) ahí está el problema jaja mmm... pues si les pregunto, si me explique? O si me entendieron? Quieren que cambie la forma en la que les explico? Y de plano si veo que no me entienden, trato en ese momento de cambiar la forma de explicar. Pero esa es una de mis preocupaciones.

Lucia: A mí me preocupa el desarrollo, yo voy a esto, quiero ser mejor maestra. Pero a quien le digo? Como lo resuelvo? Le digo a mi coordinador, le digo a T2. Como le hago, a veces yo, yo si me pregunto ijoles, si me capacitara tendría que dejar de trabajar? Para pues si, no, tendría que dejar de trabajar para...(0.3) a veces si pienso y si me voy al DF que es lo que me queda más cerca, y empiezas a hacer números de todo, de dinero, de tiempo, este, (.) y de todo y dices ay, así me siento. Porque si quiero ser mejor, si quiero ser mejor maestra pero creo que me falta mucho, los años que yo tengo de maestra no significan nada, nada, nada, nada, y cuando tú quieres capacitarte pero no puedes hacerlo por la circunstancias en que te encuentras o las condiciones, eso es frustrante y más cuando impactas a otra vida pues si es todavía más complicado.

Jovanna: Eso es cierto y más cuando hay una cuestión aquí en México y en Latinoamérica, que el maestro de inglés no tiene un prestigio como el que tienen en Europa, en Estados Unidos, o Canadá. Un docente de inglés en Europa, Canadá o Estados Unidos, tiene un full time job, es toda la semana, tienen sus 40 horas y dentro de sus 40 horas tiene 5 horas pagadas de planeación a la semana aparte tiene sus breaks dentro de las 40 horas y son bien pagados y, y, y (.) tienen a parte el prestigio. Son respetados como docentes de idiomas sin importar cuál idioma estés enseñando. Entonces, como te impacta o como les impacta ese sentir de que ustedes no tiene ese prestigio? y más cuando vienen de otros países y dicen yo soy docente de inglés hasta de un high school and they're very proud of their job, no? Que se siente aquí en México ser docente de inglés?

Isabella: Yo bueno, yo siempre me siento orgullosa de ser maestra de inglés y siempre lo defiendo precisamente por eso, porque antes como que todos decían pues aunque sea de maestra de inglés.

Jovanna: Eso como que te patea no?

Lucia: A mí eso me da coraje...! aunque sea de maestra y peor aunque sea de maestro de inglés, eso es peor...=

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel & Monica: Todos asientan con la cabeza o dicen ajá!

Isabella: Yo recuerdo mucho cuando había listas y firmaba Profesora de Inglés y era en una primaria donde yo trabajaba y me decían si, pues si, (.) si le puedes dejar profesora. Ósea si le puedes dejar profesora? Entonces como le pongo janitor o qué?

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: Todos se ríen

Isabella: Entonces a mí me empezaba a molestar y entonces siempre Profesora de Inglés y ahora que doy clases aquí en LELI hablo con mis estudiantes y les digo que su profesión es importante y defiéndanlo de la mejor manera posible!

Jovanna: Eso de que aún no tengamos nuestro lugar como nos impacta pero más importante que haces al respecto? Como lo resuelves?

Isabella: Pues eso, defenderlo y trabajando bien y demostrando, por ejemplo cuando dicen en la primaria todos los maestros de inglés esto... (0.2) yo pido, ponme a parte. Tú puedes hablar de ellos pero no generalizar, conóceme ven a ver mi trabajo para que te hagas una opinión de mí no de manera general de los maestros de inglés en ningún aspecto. Porque a mi si me pega, ósea pero yo voy a hacer lo propio por demostrar lo contrario y que voy a hacer demostrarlo con mi trabajo.

Jovanna: Y ustedes?

Monica: Últimamente me he quedado así como que pensando en mi trabajo, y sé que necesito algo más no? Pero como dicen, como te preparas más sino tienes tiempo y tampoco el dinero y a parte el tiempo no? Y yo bueno soy maestra aquí pero soy mamá igual no? Y eso es un poco más complicado todavía y me dicen pues ya estudia la Maestría cuando yo quisiera tener tiempo hasta para dormir a veces no? Y sé que de manera profesional si me siento comprometida con ser maestra de inglés pero como dices tú, necesito capacitación y como a que horas no? Y como qué? Tiene que ser forzosamente relacionado a mi área y aquí no hay.

Lucia: Y cuando lo puedes hacer, este, (.) por ejemplo yo tengo una maestría y la estudie porque era lo que estaba dentro de mis posibilidades de estudio, en cuanto a tiempo, distancia, de todo no? De manera preferente yo hubiera estudiado algo que fuera de lo que aquí no de enseñanza del inglés. Pero de manera imponente y rápida te están exigiendo que tu CV crezca y que te sigas preparando pero a veces te vas a donde las circunstancias se prestan y las puertas que se te abren. Y después dices si, si tienes una maestría y demás pero a lo mejor a mí la mía me gusta pero yo he escuchado maestros que dicen pues ya para salir del compromiso no?, pero tampoco se trata de eso y yo estoy contenta con lo que tengo pero poco me ayuda o poco impacta a mi docencia de inglés.

Jovanna: Tienes razón... y los demás?

Montserrat: Yo creo que también depende mucho donde estés trabajando no? Por ejemplo yo trabaje muchos años en el centro de lenguas y es otro contexto y tienen diferentes razones por las cuales aprender inglés no? Y también he estado trabajando aquí donde realmente están interesados en aprender el idioma. Entonces por esa parte pues no, no (.) lo he sentido tanto o no he tenido muchos problemas. En la cuestión de que a diferencia de otros países nosotros no tenemos el estatus como docentes de inglés, la gente no sabe lo que conlleva, requiere mucho de tu tiempo libre e incluso puedes estar encerrado los fines de semana trabajando para poder sacar el trabajo adelante! Yo me acuerdo que mi hermana me decía hay pero porque no sales, yo le decía es que estoy trabajando, tengo que hacer planeaciones, preparar clases, materiales, etc. Y ella que me contesta, pues tú nada más dices que trabajas y trabajas y yo creo que no haces nada.

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: Todos asientan y dicen cosas como, entonces las planeaciones se hacen solas, si así dicen, eso piensan...

Montserrat: Después ella entro a trabajar al CONALEP, una escuela como maestra a dar una clases no? Y ahora yo le hablo y le digo, que estás haciendo y ella me contesta: no tengo mucho trabajo y que los planes y que los materiales. Entonces yo le contesté, ya ves, no que los maestros no trabajan?

Pero aparte yo creo que si es bien importante decirles a los chicos que es una gran responsabilidad ser docente y que lo tomen como tal. Es una gran responsabilidad porque estas formando gente. Por ejemplo el semestre pasado estuve trabajando en la Normal y ahí los chicos también van a ser maestros pero muchos de los chicos están ahí porque sus papás les van a heredar sus plazas, no porque realmente quisieran ser maestros, muchos tenían palancas y no le echaban ganas porque sabían que su trabajo era seguro. A mí me daba mucha tristeza y mucha frustración porque ellos van a ser docentes y no tienen la vocación. Yo aun así les dije realmente pónganse la camiseta, asuman el compromiso y más porque ellos van a llegar a una institución a ser parte de la planta docente donde van a tener a un grupo y ellos van a ser sus formadores y si no están bien preparados y no estas asumiendo el compromiso van a afectar mucho a esos alumnos que les toquen.

Jovanna: Si, yo creo que cualquiera que ejerza la profesión docente tiene un compromiso muy fuerte contigo mismo primero...=

Isabella & T3: Asientan con la cabeza

Jovanna: después con tus alumnos y con la institución. Bueno pues ya voy a la última pregunta, (0.2) hablando de ese compromiso que tiene primero, se sienten autónomos realmente? Yo sé que trabajamos dentro de una universidad y dentro de ella estamos en un instituto y dentro del instituto estamos en una licenciatura. (0.2) Ahora dentro de ese contexto, ustedes se sienten autónomos, sienten que tienen poder de decisión en sus clases, en su práctica, (.) en su trabajo, independientemente de que hay que cumplir con un programa y que hay que cumplir con las normas, ustedes pueden tomar decisiones propias basadas en lo que ustedes creen que es mejor para sus alumnos?

Isabella: No siempre puedes =

Monica: No siempre, tenemos varios limites, como terminar en tiempo y forma un programa, pero para las actividades y eso si somos como libres. =

Daniel: Pues realmente si tenemos libertad porque tú podrías ignorar el programa si quieres, jeje...

Jovanna: Ah caray!

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: Todos se ríen

Daniel: No estoy diciendo que lo hagamos pero me refiero a que aquí en esta licenciatura no son tan estrictos en realidad, no nos están evaluando ni diciendo a ver, vamos a ver como enseñan. (0.2) Por ejemplo la institución te dice que hay que enseñar por competencias pero ni los programas mismos están por competencias entonces, no te pueden decir nada! La parte administrativa si es la que nos aprieta un poco más. Por ejemplo eso de pasar lista y no dejar que entren tarde, a mí a nivel universidad no me parece correcto, pero así son las normas y hay que seguirlas.

Isabella: Y ahí es donde te van quitando tu autonomía y ahora acaban de incluir otra modalidad a la lista, vas a pasar lista en línea=

Montserrat: Pero no tenemos internet

T, Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: Todos se ríen

Isabella: Y tampoco computadoras... bueno pero par empezar no tenemos internet pero no te preocupes porque según esto, tienes hasta 5 días después para pasar lista en internet, mi clase es 4 días a la semana, el lineamiento dice: pasar lista por hora, en la plataforma hay solo una casilla que dice asistencia o falta, no vienen las dos casillas para las dos horas. Bueno luego dice, tienes que pasar lista a más tardar cinco días después, sale lo hacemos a más tardar 5 días después, pero que crees? Yo no tengo alumnos en mi lista, tú tienes alumnos en tu lista T4?

Lucia: No, yo tampoco

Isabella: Pues no están todos porque no se alcanzaron a inscribir a tiempo. Ah porque para inscribirse este semestre hubo problemas con los cursos inter-semestrales y entonces en las listas de los grupos de 5to y 6to solo hay 5 alumnos registrados, todos los demás no aparecen en la lista.=

Monica: Y no los puedes registrar tú a mano porque se enoja la trabajadora social quien es responsable de las listas de asistencia.=

Isabella: Exacto, no los puedes anotar tú porque es un verdadero desgorre. (0.2). Entonces para evitar problemas mando a todos mis alumnos que no están registrados con mi lista y les digo, díganle por favor a la trabajadora social que los registre o que si puedo registrarlos yo.

Monica: Y la trabajadora social les dice que, porque tienen ustedes las listas si solo las pueden tener los maestros.

Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: Todos se ríen

Isabella: =Y eso me mando decir, que porque los alumnos tenían las listas y que ellos no podían tener las listas y que me la regresaran y que los anotara yo.=

Jovanna, Montserrat, Isabella, Daniel, Lucia & Monica: Todos se ríen

Isabella: Si, y ahora quizá me va a levantar una acta con el señor director porque mis alumnos traían las listas? (0.2) porque yo los anote y porque llevaba una lista a parte?. Y es ahí donde dices, como decides? (0.2) Porque por mí, no paso lista. La lista es para el control de los sin derechos, entre menos asistencias tengan pues menos derecho a faltar tienen pero ella, la trabajadora social dice, ya paso un mes o dos y ella anota la fecha a partir de la cual está contando las asistencias que no concuerda con el número de clases dadas. Los dos meses anteriores los alumnos pudieron haber faltado sin pena ni gloria. Porque ella va a contar a partir de la fecha que ella anota, no de lo que realmente es.=

Monica: Bueno yo creo que también tiene mucho que ver quien es nuestra trabajadora social por que la nuestra es muy inflexible.

Daniel: Dentro del aula te repito, la institución no nos marca como debemos dar nuestras clases pero todas estas cuestiones administrativas que están fuera del aula son las que si te afectan y te limitan. (0.2) Por ejemplo ahorita con lo del rediseño curricular de la licenciatura, se supone que los alumnos deben entrar con un nivel A2 CEFR y están llegando así como sea, sin un nivel homogéneo...=

Isabella: Están llegando así como sea, como antes del rediseño.=

Daniel: Entonces el programa dice, saliendo de segundo ellos deben llegar a tal nivel, pero si desde que entran, no entran con el nivel establecido, nosotros tampoco podemos cumplir al 100 con los objetivos del programa. Ahora tengo que

dedicarme los jueves a practica de PET porque con eso los van a evaluar y sino digo, como van a pasar?

Isabella: Y estas consiente de que algunos alumnos no van a alcanzar el nivel! Y la institución te culpa, ellos dicen es toda su responsabilidad, quien les dio inglés 1?, quien les dio inglés 2?, pero no ven todos estos factores.

Lucia: Es como, (0.2) a veces son complacencias no? A ver acá las autoridades que quieren?, acá la coordinación que quiere? y mientras tanto partirte en dos para lo que quiera fulano y sutano, es una locura. Y es una presión porque aparte de estar preocupado por ser un buen maestro, hay que estar preocupados por cumplir con la parte administrativa. (0.3) Y tienes que quedar bien porque sabes que también a ellos les van a exigir no? Que no es por gusto y que también es una exigencia del instituto. Pero para nosotros no deja de ser complicado, como vas a complacer y cuando vas a complacer y a quien no?

Jovanna: Pues si realmente yo estoy de acuerdo en todo lo que dicen, me reflejo en sus opiniones y pues ya acabamos no sé si alguien más tenga algo más que quiera decir o compartir antes de que cerremos el grupo?

Isabella: Si yo sí, que independientemente de todo lo que dijimos, yo si me siento casada con lo que hago, porque no haría otra cosa...

Montserrat: Yo en mi caso, he tenido como oportunidades de trabajar en diferentes contextos no? Pero siempre regreso a la docencia y especialmente aquí en esta licenciatura porque realmente si te exigen mucho y pero realmente también trabajan y al final sientes satisfacción.

Lucia: Cuando no importa que te pidan o que te exigen, mientras tú te sientas feliz, eso es lo importante. (0.2) Habrá cosas que superar y preocupaciones pero eso no pesa tanto si estás contenta con lo que haces.

Jovanna: Como en cualquier relación, no? Hay compromiso porque me gusta!=

Montserrat: Si, realmente yo estoy de acuerdo con T4, si no me gustara no le pondría tanto esfuerzo como le pongo porque como dijimos antes, es mucha la responsabilidad....

Daniel: Si, si no me gustara, sería mucho el desgaste.

Monica: Yo creo que a todos los que estamos aquí nos gusta no? Y todos nos sentimos responsables.

Daniel: Yo también quiero decir algo, igual y me regreso tantito pero si lo quiero decir.

Jovanna: -adelante...

Daniel: Con respecto al estatus que tenemos los maestros de inglés, mucha culpa ha sido por como enseñaban antes, yo me acuerdo en la prepa el teacher nos decía, a ver lean este párrafo y tradúzcanlo. Y bueno tú piensas bueno a lo mejor era lo que estaba como que de moda pero tampoco había tanto awareness en esa cuestión de cómo enseñar. Y muchas personas se quedaron son ese concepto de que así se enseñaba y así han de seguir enseñando.

Jovanna: -Porque así les toco, no? Como a ti...

Daniel: Pues con que sepas inglés lo demás no importa, así te contrataban...

Montserrat: -Si es cierto, antes así era.

Daniel: Y repito, por eso quizá tienen ese concepto aquí en México hoy en día.

Jovanna: Eso es cierto cuando yo inicié a dar clases aquí en la universidad yo aún no tenía la licenciatura. (0.2) Iba saliendo de prepa, estaba en la licenciatura

pero en primer semestre. Y había cosas que yo hacía que ahora me acuerdo y digo, madre mía, como hacia eso con los alumnos?. O como evalué de esa manera si nunca lo vi en el semestre? porque venían exámenes departamentales y yo tenía que aplicarlos tal cual y pues yo lo aplicaba pero muchas veces eran cosas que yo no había visto en clase. (0.2) Entonces muchas cuestiones que efectivamente van cambiando y hay esa mentalidad del maestro de inglés es por todo el historial que llevamos y como sin formación se contrataba a la gente antes no? Pero ahora yo siento que hay gente comprometida, teachers preparados, muchas generaciones de ELT y la visión del maestro de inglés está cambiando. (.) Lo que también tengo que comentar es que conozco a gente fuera de nuestro contexto que es la universidad, dueños de escuelas, coordinadores de inglés en otros lugares y hay comentarios muy buenos de los egresados de ELT pero también comentarios muy malos.

Daniel: -Si es cierto.

Jovanna: Me dicen coas como, ¿Cómo es posible que se haya graduado? ¿Cómo esta titulado? Y esto me hace pensar que hay graduados de ELT que piensan que solo porque tienen el título ya, ya con eso...

Isabella: Asienta con la cabeza

Jovanna: Les falta compromiso con lo que son y con lo que hacen. Y ahí es donde pienso que hay que enseñarlos antes de que salga a la reflexión de cómo siempre ser o tratar de ser mejor docente y a partir de ser mejor docente también te vuelves una mejor persona!

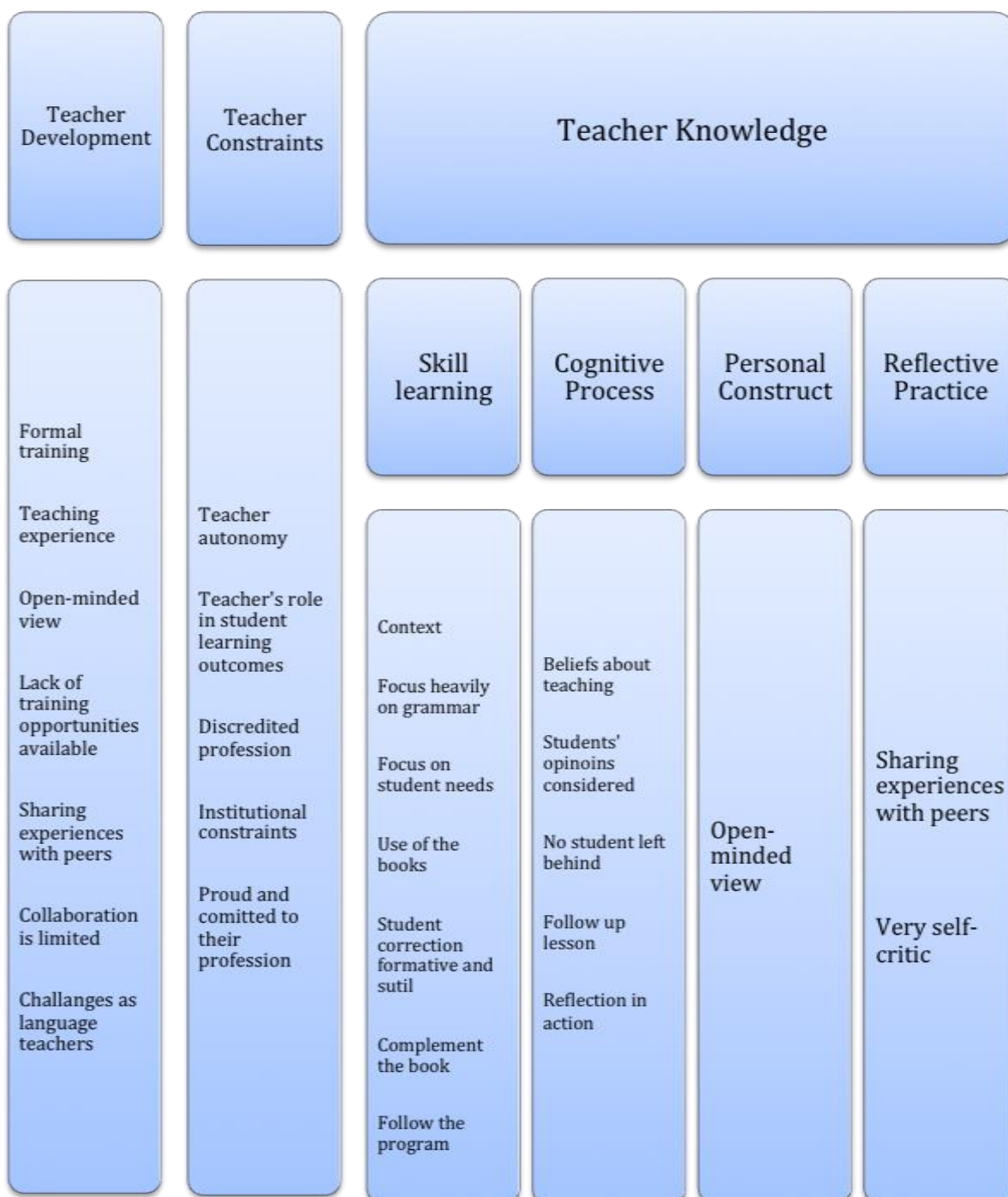
Pues finalmente solo quiero decir muchísimas gracias por su tiempo, por sus opiniones. Me llevo mucha información valiosa y yo estaré en contacto con ustedes para los siguientes pasos.

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS (Bucholtz 2000)

end of intonation unit; falling intonation
end of intonation unit; fall-rise intonation
"~ end of intonation unit; rising intonation
- self-interruption; break in the intonational unit
self-interruption; break in the word, sound abruptly cut off
: length
underline emphatic stress or increased amplitude
(.) pause of 0.5 seconds or less
(n.n) pause of greater than 0.5 seconds, measured by a stopwatch
h exhalation (e.g., laughter, sigh); each token marks one pulse
() transcriber comment
< > uncertain transcription
(()) nonvocal noise
[] overlap beginning and end

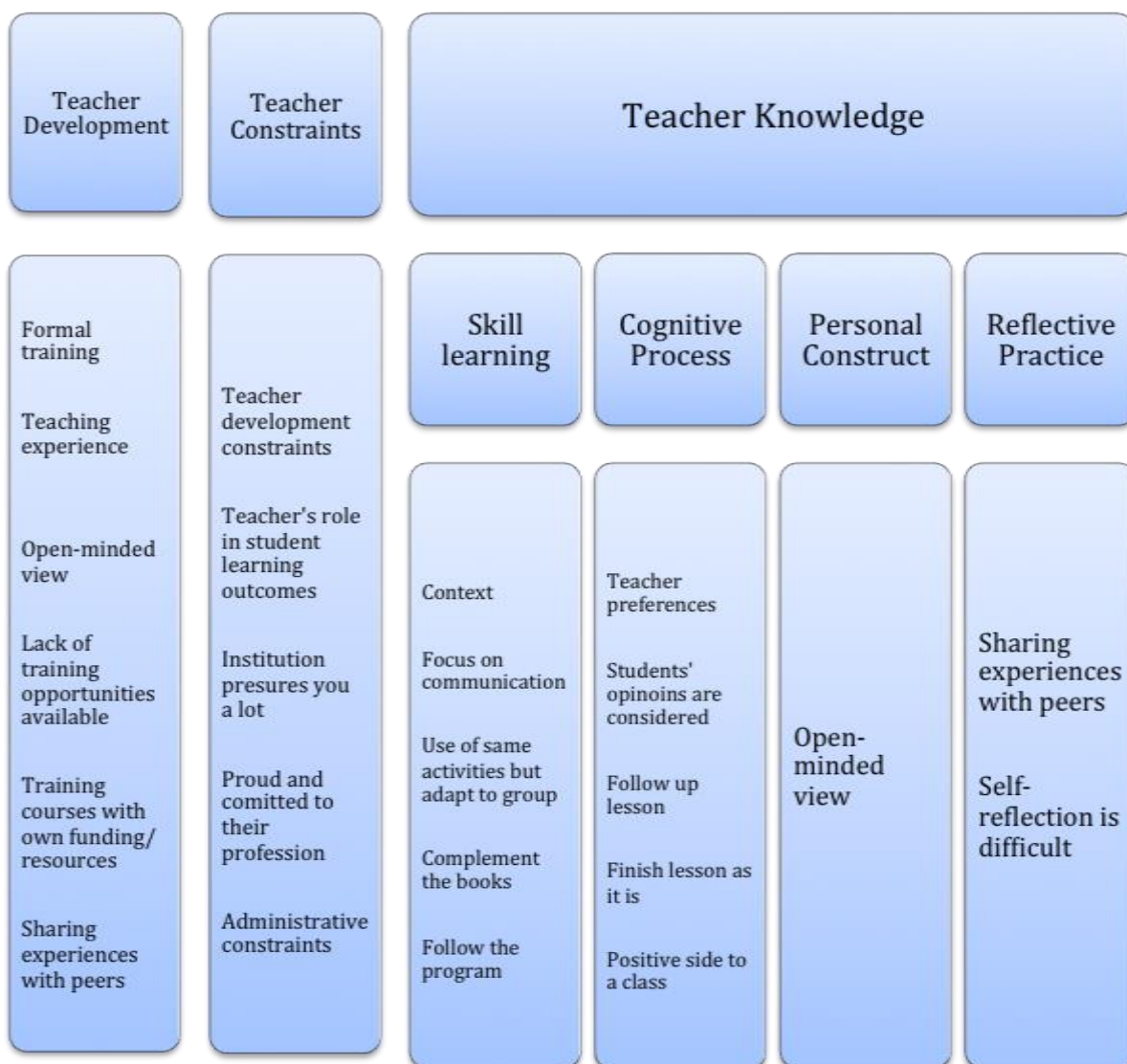
Appendix 14

Coding map for Teacher Isabella



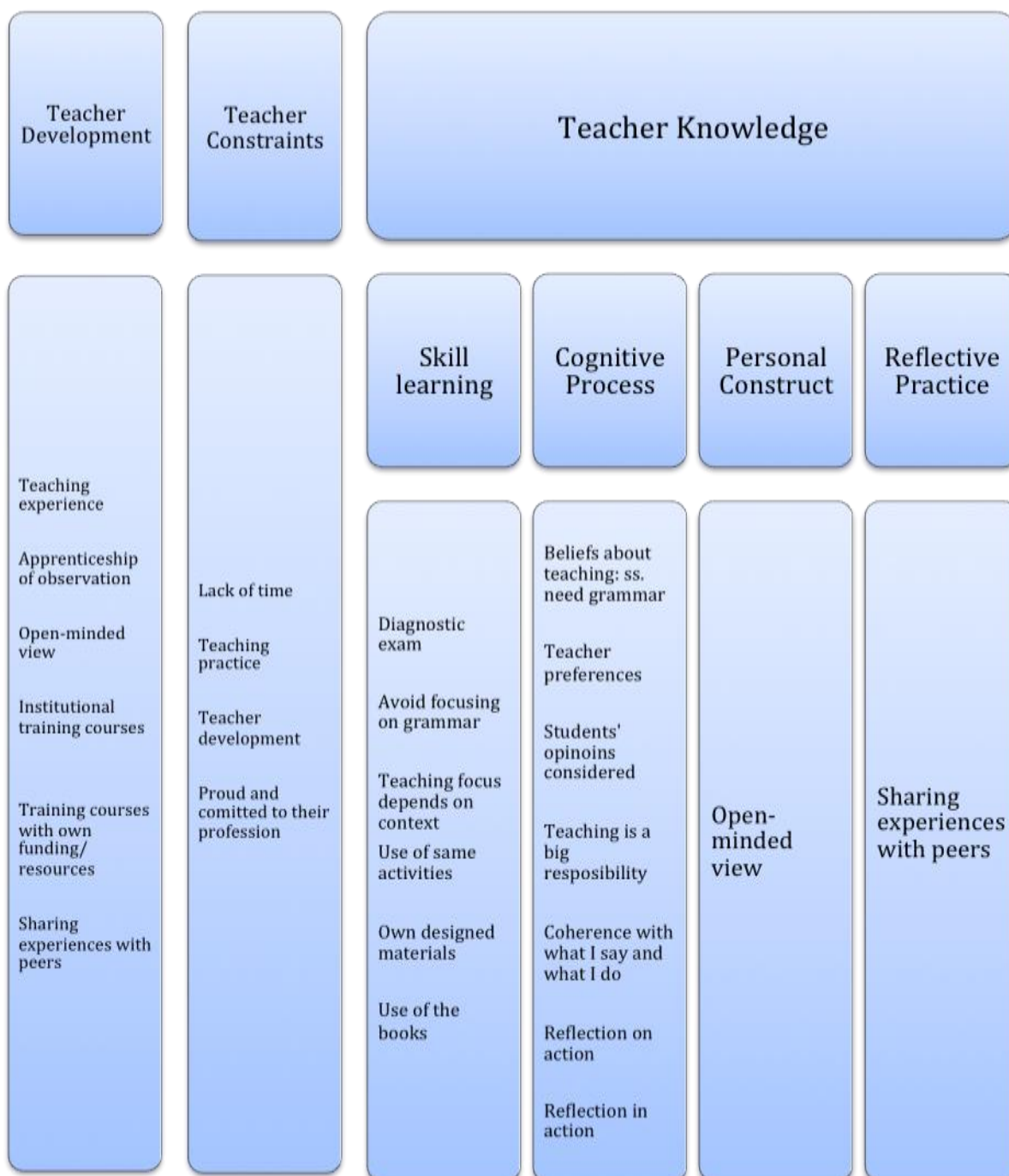
Appendix 15

Coding map for Teacher Lucia



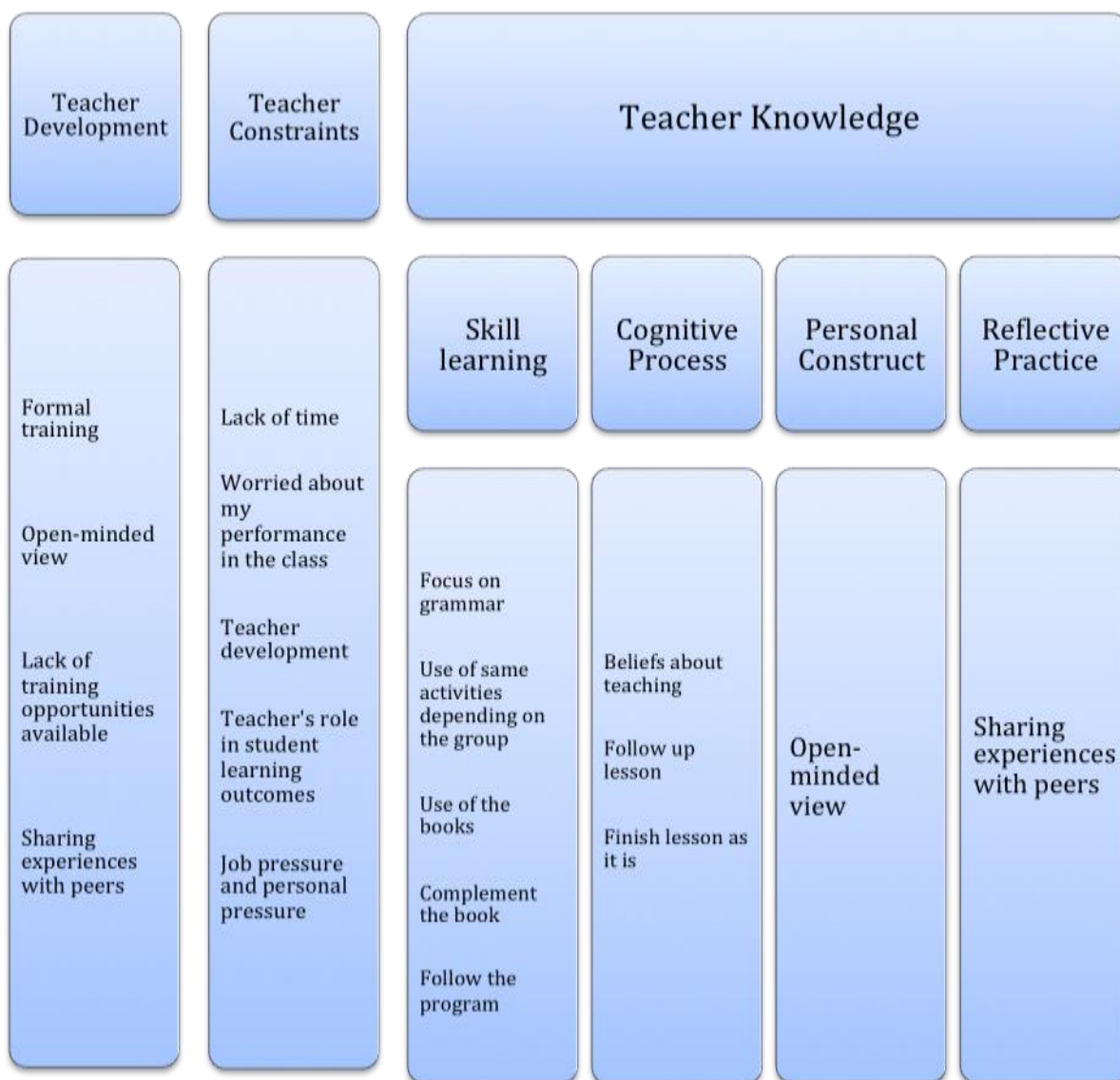
Appendix 16

Coding map for Teacher Montserrat



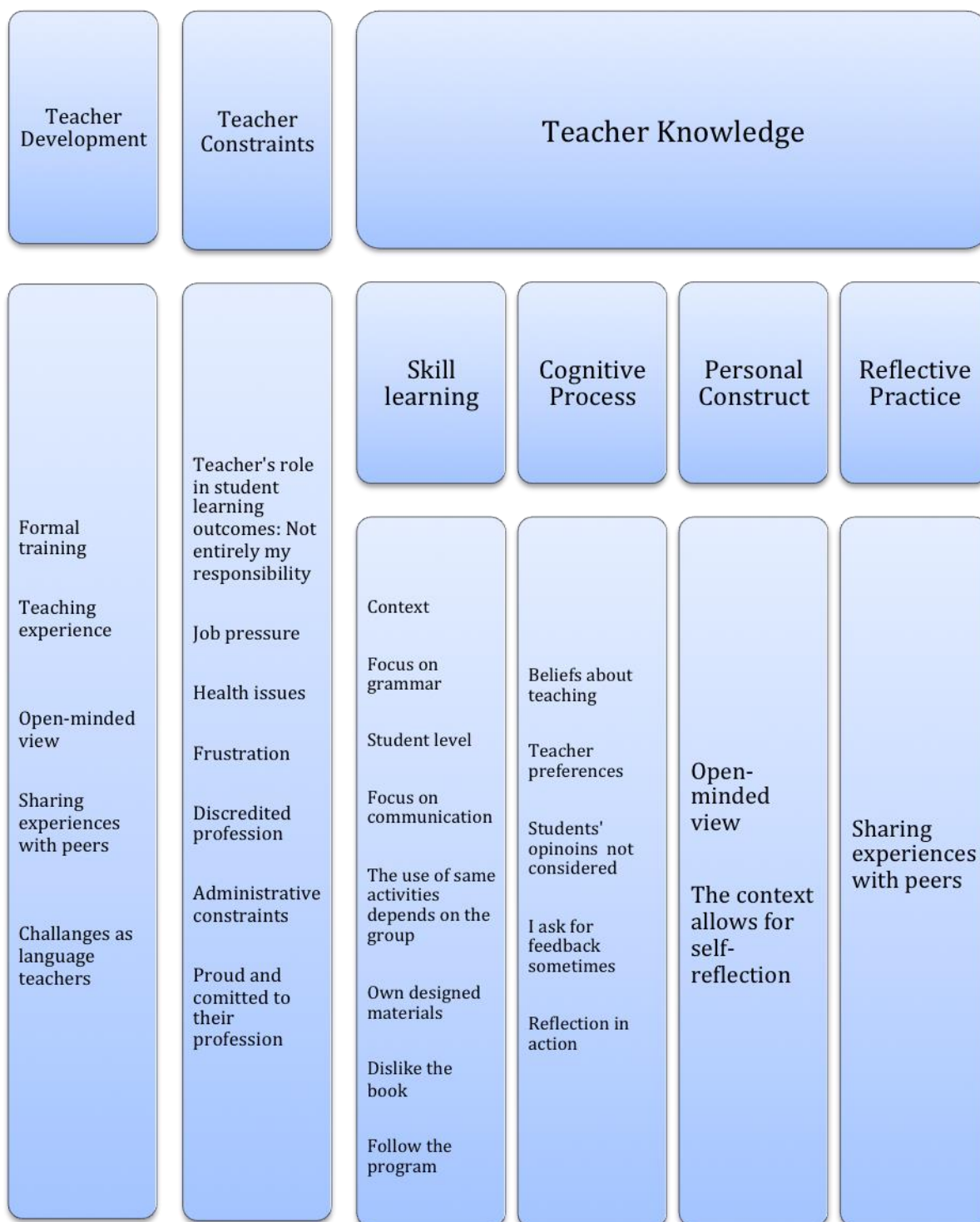
Appendix 17

Coding map for Teacher Monica



Appendix 18

Coding map for Teacher Daniel



Appendix 19

Syllabus of the undergraduate program in ELT

MAPA CURRICULAR DEL PROGRAMA EDUCATIVO: LICENCIATURA EN ENSEÑANZA DE LA LENGUA INGLESA

1 o .	Inglés I				Lectura y Redacción en Español				México Multicultural				Aprender a Aprender				Teorías del Aprendizaje				TOT AL	HOR AS		CRÉ DITO S			
	DELI011		NP	ET1	DELI018		NB	ET1	IMMC208		NB	ET2	IAAA208		NB	ET1	DELI032		NP	ET2		28		20.5			
	3	3	1	3	8	0	1	1	2	2	4	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	2	1		1	2	4	5		
	H T	H P	H A I	↓ H A P S	C	H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	C	H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	C	H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	C		H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	8	7

2 o .	Inglés II				Cultura y Civilización de Países Anglófonos				Psicología de la Educación				Lingüística Aplicada				Desarrollo Sustentable y Medio Ambiente				TOT AL	HOR AS		CRÉ DITO S					
	DELI012		NP	ET1	DELI003		NP	ET2	IPED109		NB	ET2	DELI019		NP	ET1	IDSM208		NB	ET2		34		25.5					
	3	3	1	3	8	0	1	1	2	2	4	0	3	2	2	3	7	5	1	2		1	1	4	0	1	0	1	0
	H T	H P	H A I	↓ H A P S	C	H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	C	H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	C	H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	C		H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	9	9	6	10

3 o .	Inglés III				Metodología de la Enseñanza del Inglés				Morfosintaxis del Inglés				Inglés como Lengua Internacional				Adquisición de una Lengua				TOT AL	HOR AS		CRÉ DITO S							
	DELI013		NP	ET1	DELI021		NP	ET2	DELI022		NP	ET1	DELI010		NP	ET1	DELI001		NP	ET2		37		28.5							
	3	3	1	3	8	0	2	2	1	3	6	0	2	1	1	2	4	5	2	1		1	1	4	0	2	2	1	3	6	0
	H T	H P	H A I	↓ H A P S	C	H T	H P	H A I	↓ H A P S	C	H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	C	H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	C		H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	1	9	5	12		

4 o .	Inglés IV				Enseñanza de la Gramática y el Vocabulario				Fonética y Fonología				Materiales y Recursos				Técnicas y Estrategias para el Aprendizaje Autónomo				TOT AL	HOR AS		CRÉ DITO S			
	DELI014		NP	ET1	DELI005		NP	ET2	DELI009		NP	ET1	DELI020		NP	ET2	DELI031		N	ET2		32		25.5			
	3	3	1	3	8	0	2	2	2	1	6	0	2	1	1	1	4	0	2	0		1	2	3	5		
	H T	H P	H A I	↓ H A P S	C	H T	H P	H A I	↓ H A P S	C	H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	C	H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	C		H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	8	7

	H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	C		H T	H P	H A I	H A P S	C		2	2	1	3	3
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Ejes Temáticos	1	Formación Lingüística	Núcleos de Formación	Básico	TO TA L MA PA	HO RAS	CRÉD ITOS	TOT AL PLA N	HOR AS	CRÉ DITO S				
	2	Formación Docente		Profesional		282	195.0		5276	205.0				
	3	Enseñanza y Gestión		Complementario		H T	H P		H A I	H A P S	H T	H P	H A I	H A P S
	4	Investigación		Terminal y de integración		6 9	5 6		3 4	1 2 3	1 1 0 4	8 9 6	5 4 4	2 7 3 2

Otras actividades con créditos	Núcleo	Programa Institucional	Horas totales	Créditos	Asignaturas	Períodos	Período en los que se oferta la convocatoria al estudiante para iniciar las actividades	Semestre en el que se puede registrar ante Administración Escolar para Generación de Acta-Calificación
	NC	Actividades Artísticas y Culturales	100	2	3	3 semestres o intersemestres	Todos	2-7 semestre o intersemestral
	NC	Actividades de Educación para una Vida Saludable	100	2	3	3 semestres o intersemestres	Todos	2-7 semestre o intersemestral

Clave	Programa Institucional (Lengua Extranjera)	Hrs totales x semana	H T	HP	HP	HAI	HAPS	Créditos	La asignatura se puede cursar en cualquiera de los siguientes periodos	Niveles	Semestres en los que se oferta el programa
ICIL209	NC Conversaciones Introdutorias. Lengua Extranjera	4	0	0	0	0	4	1	1-2 e intersemestral	6	Todos
IEPF209	NC Eventos Pasados y Futuros. Lengua Extranjera	4	0	0	0	0	4	1	1-3 e intersemestral		Todos
ILYE209	NC Logros y Experiencias. Lengua Extranjera	4	0	0	0	0	4	1	1-4 e intersemestral		Todos
IDPL209	NC Decisiones Personales. Lengua Extranjera	4	0	0	0	0	4	1	1-5 e intersemestral		Todos
ICYE209	NC Causa y Efecto. Lengua Extranjera	4	0	0	0	0	4	1	1-6 e intersemestral		Todos
IEOP209	NC En Otras Palabras...Lengua Extranjera	4	0	0	0	0	4	1	1-7 e intersemestral		Todos
TOTALES		24	0	0	0	0	24				

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