THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE CONTEXT IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' TEACHING IDENTITIES CONSTRUCTION

LAS COMPLEJIDADES DEL CONTEXTO EN LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DE IDENTIDADES DE MAESTROS EN FORMACIÓN

Original Research Article

✉ DANIELA ALEXANDRA YEPES GONZALEZ *
✉ YENY LUCÍA RINCÓN DUARTE **

How to cite this article:

Yepes Gonzalez , Daniela Alexandra, and Yeny Lucía Rincón Duarte. "The Complexities of the Context in Pre-Service teachers' Teaching Identities Construction". *ENLETAWA Journal*, vol 17, n° 2, Nov de 2024, ⓭ https://doi.org/10.19053/uptc.2011835X.18490

* Full time professor at Languages School at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia. She holds a M.A in Language Teaching from the same university. daniela.yepes@uptc.edu.c
ⓘ https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2041-0459

** Full time professor at Instituto Internacional de Idiomas UPTC. Sheis studying the M.A in Language Teaching at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia. Yenylucia.rincon@uptc.edu.co
ⓘ https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1117-5386

✉ **Correspondance**: Daniela Alexandra Yepes Gonzalez, Av Central del Norte 39-115, Tunja, Colombia, Daniela.yepes@uptc.edu.co

Abstract

The purpose of this case study is to portray how a group of five students teachers from the Modern Languages program at a public university in Tunja, Colombia, linked meaningful episodes with their identities construction as EFL teachers. Data were gathered through student teachers' audio journals and a focus group based on the critical incidents they faced during their final practicum. Data was analyzed qualitatively. Results indicated that the social, cultural and political context affected pre-service teachers' identities construction. The key aspects participants' judge as important events were the interactions with teachers, students, parents and the institution.

Keywords: Identity, student teachers, foreign languages, teaching process, teaching practice.

Resumen

En la segunda página debe estar resumen y palabras clave. El artículo debe El propósito de este estudio de caso es describir cómo un grupo de cinco maestros en formación de un programa de Lenguas Modernas de una Universidad Publica en Tunja, Colombia, conectaron episodios significativos con su construcción de identidades como profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera. La información se recolecto a través de audio-diarios y un grupo focal, enfocados en los incidentes críticos de los profesores en formación durante su práctica final. La información se analizó de manera cualitativa. Los resultados indicaron que el contexto social, cultural y político afectó la construcción de identidades de los profesores en formación. Los aspectos que los participantes consideraron primordiales fueron sus interacciones con os profesores, los estudiantes, los padres de familia y la institución.

Palabras clave: identidad, maestros en formación, idiomas extranjeros, proceso de enseñanza, práctica de enseñanza,.

Introduction

The Colombian General Education Law of 1994 establishes as one of the main purposes of teaching programs to foster competitive pre-service teachers with high teaching qualities. Pre-service teachers are expected to put together theory and practice in their final practicum. In fact, Law 115 (1994) and the Colombian Ministry of Education (n.d) state that the pedagogical practicum is a self-reflection process aimed at putting together theoretical, research and didactic components. As such, the pedagogical practicum attempts to comprehend the educative processes in real contexts. According to Danyluk, Luhanga, Gwekwerere, MacEwan, and Larocque (2015), the practicum provides pre-service teachers with the opportunity to make meaning of the theory they have studied for the past five years in the undergraduate program.

Price (1987) stated that, "the major purpose of the practicum is to link theory with practice by providing regular structured and supervised opportunities for student teachers to apply and test knowledge, skills and attitudes, developed largely in campus-based studies, to the real world of the school and the school community". (p. 109). Thus, the teaching practicum has been considered one of the most crucial and influential stages in teacher education (Trent, 2013).

During the teaching practicum, pre-service teachers experience moments of (re) discovery as they cope with the duties of their everyday work (Flores & Day, 2006). Therefore, the teaching practicum is a crucial moment for pre-service teachers because they will experience positive or negative events that will shape their identities as teachers. In fact, pre-service English teachers experience challenging situations when they start teaching at schools, such as having to face new and diverse realities. Those realities as stated by Johnston (1997) are permeated by complex contexts in which personal, educational, political, and socio-economical discourses influence teachers' lives.

Torres and Ramos (2019) stated that during the final teaching practicum a "transition occurs from student to teacher which is a dynamic, day-to-day process that implies changes, adaptations, and sometimes, dramatic experiences. These experiences make part of the construction and reconstruction of their selves as learners and future language teachers as well". (p. 8).For Norton (2000) that identity construction is based on "How a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 5). Thus, identity is an everyday

construction of the self, in which personal and social experiences can influence a subject's beliefs, thoughts, perceptions, and decisions about the world, context, and reality. In this sense, identity is shaped and reshaped depending on different factors, such as contexts, experiences, and interactions.

By the same token, Wenger (1998) suggests that identities are formed in the midst of the "tension between our investment of the various forms of belonging and our ability to negotiate the meanings that matters in those contexts" (p. 188). Identity construction is a process where identification and negotiation of meaning take place. When pre-service teachers enter the EFL classroom, they begin to identify what being a language teacher means in that new context. Meanwhile, they might be negotiating the meanings this experience provides their personal and professional lives. Meanings are negotiated through lived experiences and in interaction with others, which constitute who we are (Duff & Uchida , 1997) . Every time pre-service teachers live new experiences and take part of the interactions happening in the new context of their final practicum, for which they become community members, they start a continuous reflection about their values, beliefs, and attitudes. Also, they begin to understand others (e.g. students, colleagues, administrators, parents, etc.) and perceive the world in a different way. All of this is due to the processes of identity construction that bring new meanings to their lives. Quintero (2016) stated that academic experiences guide future EFL teachers to perceive themselves as part of society and shape their identities and roles as educators.

For this study, we worked with five pre-service teachers from the Modern Languages program at a public university in Tunja, Colombia. They were in their tenth semester and they were enrolled in their final teaching practicum at different public institutions in Tunja, Colombia. This practicum took place in the last semester of their undergraduate program.

We proposed the following research question: What do critical incidents during the final teaching practicum reveal about the construction of pre-service EFL teachers identities? In an attempt to better understand how these pre-service teachers linked meaningful episodes with their identity construction as EFL teachers. To do so, we considered Brookfield (1990) definition of critical incidents. "a critical incident is any unplanned and unanticipated event that occurs during class, outside class or during a teacher's career but is vividly remembered" (p. 84). In this sense, critical incidents are those meaningful moments or situations, whether positive or negative, which can impact a pre-service teacher's life during their final teaching practicum.

Method

This study followed a qualitative approach in which we paid special attention to the context and its participants. It was also participant-oriented, holistic, and inductive (Richards, 2009). We also situated the study because we focused on the realities of the participants and as such, conclusions cannot be generalized. It was also participant-oriented and inductive because pre-service teachers were the ones who provided the data that later on was organized and analyzed.

In terms of a research paradigm, we situated this study under a critical viewpoint, which states that reality is "shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198). Thus, we understood that reality was shaped by diverse and multiple factors.

Context

In the Modern Languages program at the public university where this study was conducted, the final teaching practicum takes place in the last semester of the degree (10th semester). In order for the pre-service teachers to begin their final practicum, they must have completed all of their previous courses. The Modern Languages program acquaints students to the way schools work, teaching approaches, methodologies, strategies, English and Spanish teaching and learning, research, and gradual immersion. One course is given each semester starting in the second semester that focuses on the pedagogical aspect of language teaching and learning. For the most part, these courses have a theoretical component, as well as a practical one, meant to encourage students to practice what they learned in class. The table below summarizes the pedagogical courses offered in each semester.

Table 1. Pedagogical Component in The Modern Languages Program at a public university in Tunja, Colombia

Semester	Course	General content	Practical component
2nd	Pedagogical and Research Project I	Pedagogic contemporary trends	Observations at schools
3rd	Pedagogical and Research Project II	Educative polices and management	Observations at schools
4th	Pedagogical and Research Project III	Pedagogy, curriculum, and didactics	Observations at schools

5th	Pedagogical and Research Project IV	Pedagogy, its recipients, and problems	Observations at schools
7th	English Didactics I	First and second acquisition theories, teaching methods, post-method pedagogy	Observations of english classes at schools, eight hours of assistantships.
8th	English Didactics II	How to teach language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing), research, and microteaching	Eight English teaching sessions at schools
9th	English Teaching Practicum	Classroom management in teaching practices, microteachings, research, and icts	Up to eight English teaching lessons at schools
1oth	Final Pedagogical and Research Practicum	Lesson planning and research	Teaching practicum at schools (the whole academic semester)

Note. Taken from Ramos, Aguirre, and Torres (2018, pp. 35-36).

When the student-teachers pass the abovementioned courses, they must enroll in the tenth semester to begin their final teaching practicum. Once enrolled and assigned a school, the pre-service teachers must attend the school during a 16-week period that corresponds to their university semester. Pre- service teachers are guided by a teacher educator and they are supervised by a school teacher. They must stay at the school during the morning or afternoon shift (8 -10 hours a day), and they are in charge of organizing lesson plans for the English and Spanish classes with the help of teacher-educators, administrators and teachers at the school. Depending on the number of groups the pre-service teacher is assigned (between three to four), content teaching can take up to 12 hours per week. Additionally, they have to carry out a mini-scale research project, which usually makes use of the action research approach. The pre-service teachers must submit their project at the end of the semester.

Participants

The participants for this study were Modern Languages students from tenth semester at this university, whose ages range between 21 and 29 years old. They were carrying out their final teaching practicum during the last semester of their undergraduate studies. It is important to note that the pre-service teachers had

previous teaching experience in earlier semesters, such as helping to teach at the school. In some cases, the pre-service teachers had worked at private institutions or as tutors. However, the final teaching practicum is much longer and complex than the previous experiences, especially because the pre-service teachers spend more time at schools interacting with the community.

As mentioned before, the pre-service teachers teach English and Spanish at different public high schools (6th to 11th grade) in Tunja. Pre-service teachers are required to design lesson plans, teach topics in English and Spanish, and utilize classroom management skills. Therefore, they must deal with unexpected situations and the specific characteristics of each context during the final teaching practicum. The following table summarizes the profile of our five participants. This information was provided by the pre-service teachers' demographic form at the beginning of our research study.

To collect information, each pre-service teacher was contacted personally, informed about the aims of the study, and then asked if he/she wished to participate. All four participants consented. To protect respondents' identities, pseudonyms were used.

Table 2. Participants' pseudonym, gender, age, major, previous experience in teaching, grades and type of school assigned during the final teaching practicum.

Pseudonyms	Gender	Age	Major	Previous experience in teaching	Grades assigned in Final Teaching Practicum	Type of School assigned in Final Teaching Practicum
Celeste	Female	24	Modern Languages	Yes	8th and 9th	Public
ThD	Male	22	Modern Languages	No	5th and 8th	Public
Paz	Female	21	Modern Languages	Yes	6th and 7th	Public
Cristal	Female	21	Modern Languages	Yes	7th and 8th	Public
J&J	Male	20	Modern Languages	No	5th and 6th	Public

Data Collection

Pre-service teachers' audio journals, which were the main source of data gathering, were used to elicit data about the critical incidents experienced by pre-service teachers during the final practicum. We asked the participants to register meaningful moments and reflect upon their lived experiences during their teaching practice (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). We asked them to recall critical incidents. Critical incidents have been studied in different fields and from different perspectives, such as teachers' professional development, teacher education, and ELT studies. Tripp (1993) defined a critical incident as an event that generates a mark in a person's life; this event does not need to be dramatic. It could occur in an everyday place or as part of a routine. Critical incidents can happen at any moment, and they may be a simple, ordinary event. However, their importance lies in the power they have on becoming a turning point in a person's decisions, thoughts, and motivations.

In addition, critical incidents are strongly connected to what a person may be living at that specific moment in their life. Consequently, critical incidents are particular, unique, and relevant to each specific person and reality. Lengeling and Mora (2016) affirmed that critical incidents "create opportunities for analysis in professional practice" (p. 78). This led us to comprehend that critical incidents also influence the perceptions we have of ourselves, not only as subjects, but also as professionals. In this sense, critical incidents are unique to each person's reflection and future transformation of that event into relevant meaning.

These audio journals with the critical incidents, were recorded and sent via WhatsApp in three moments: 1) at the beginning of the practicum, 2) in the middle of the process, and 3) the end of the experience.

There was also a focus group discussion to gather collective points of view and meanings behind the critical moments described in the audio journals (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008). We wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the pre-service teachers' collective view about their critical incidents during the final teaching practicum. The audio journals and the focus group were transcribed and qualitative data analysis conducted. Recurrent themes and characteristics in response to the question were coded and categorized.

Results and Discussion

Lengeling (2016) defined context as the place an individual interacts with others, as well as the circumstances and factors that affect that individual in that particular place and moment. We noticed that the critical incidents pre-service teachers recalled from their final practicum, where mostly related to the social, cultural and political context where the practicum took place. In other words, the critical incidents were related to the particular context -place, factors, and circumstances- in the final teaching practicum.

Social context. This became evident to us when analyzing the importance of interacting with others. From a sociological and anthropological perspective, the human being is a social creature that needs to interact with his or her peers. The previous explains the existence of societies in order to facilitate interaction. As members of societies, human beings communicate and live with other members (Maciver, 1959). The critical incidents that follow have to do with the interactions pre-service teachers had with students and teachers and how they felt recognized in those interactions.

Some critical incidents that led us to think that they depend on the social context were provided by Celeste and ThD during the second audio journal.

> One student came up to me and said: Teacher bring more activities like this one, **teacher, I liked it!** Those moments fill me up, they are beautiful (…) There are students for whom it is worth coming to class with more energy. It does not matter if there are only 5 students, these 5 students come to learn and that is fulfilling for me. It is great! This is how I want my future students to think of me. (Celeste, audio journal 2)

> **Students perceive me already as a teacher,** as someone they can trust. It is interesting because this makes me feel somehow like someone important, and that **I am doing my job right** to deserve the fact that they trust me. Trust is a quality I want to keep as a teacher. (ThD, audio journal 2)

In the two excerpts above, Celeste and ThD's critical incidents are related to the way students perceive them. In Celeste's case, a student valued her job and addressed her as a teacher, which made her feel proud of herself and her performance.

Thereby, she felt like she was a teacher already at that moment. She also underlined that she wanted her students to behave the same way when she becomes a teacher. As for ThD, his students recognized him as a teacher. This critical incident made him feel like he was doing his job right, as well as behaving and acting like a teacher. We can see that the students' approval and recognition are fundamental in the teaching identity construction process because as the pre-service teachers felt they were on the right path, they began to perceive themselves as actual teachers and they wanted to keep on the same track as future teachers.

In the example provided below, we analyzed two initial experiences with teachers who supervised pre- service teachers at schools. We noticed that these two incidents had to do with the interactions they had had with the schoolteachers at the beginning of the final teaching practicum. Cristal and ThD mentioned the following,

> We had to be in the cafeteria doing our assignments. We had a pile of work and everybody came in to eat. We were sitting there with all of our notebooks. We were waiting for a workspace, or even a desk to work on for the rest of the practicum, **at least to be able to sit down and be the teachers' slaves**. But they never gave us a space to work.] (Cristal, focus group)

> In the classes, you start to acquire experience, and you begin to gain respect and authority from students. That is, if the schoolteachers don't take that away from you. Sometime, if you do something that they don't like…it happened to me. A Spanish **teacher interrupted my class to say something that I was about to say**. So, **the kids paid more attention to her, and they stopped paying attention to me**. (ThD, Focus group)

In Cristal's case, she perceived that her assigned schoolteacher treated her like a slave, as someone who had to do her duties and tasks. For her, it was crucial that she did not have an adequate space to work. Her critical incident made her realize that the educational context is comprised of power relationships, where the pre-service teacher is below the schoolteacher. The schoolteacher's lack of approval toward her as a teacher was meaningful. In this case, she felt empowered to identify herself as a teacher, as she considered that she was able to do the same job as the schoolteacher. Therefore, she felt that she should be treated with the same respect and conditions as any other schoolteacher.

Regarding ThD's excerpt, the fact that the schoolteacher interrupted him while he was teaching made him feel like he lost all authority in the classroom. This led him to doubt himself as a teacher, which made him identify himself still as a student. For a pre-service teacher, it is evident that support and validation are necessary since it is a means of validating that they are on the right path. In the case of ThD, his teaching identity was questioned when he was interrupted, for which he would have needed the schoolteacher's approval.

Overall, the participants' critical incidents informed that all of the participants lived different events in which their identity as future teachers was validated through approval from students and schoolteachers.

Thus, it is fundamental for pre-service teachers to be approved and treated with respect by their students and schoolteachers in this essential moment. Receiving this support can help pre-service teachers feel confident and passionate about their future role as in-service teachers. Actually, as stated by Malm (2020) "social recognition (or the lack thereof) from significant others (including students and leaderships) is a vital resource" (p.11) in teachers´ professional development.

Cultural context. When we analyzed the participants' audio-journals, we noticed that most of the critical incidents had nothing to do with the content of the classes themselves or any other academic issue. Instead, most critical incidents were related to the students' backgrounds, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes. It is worth mentioning that Cultural context is conceived as the milieu of the participants and their students' cultures (Kluckhohn, 1949). In the next excerpts, we decided to contrast three different excerpts that showed the students as cultural individuals with different perceptions about their realities.

> In a parent meeting, **I was with my schoolteacher talking to one of my students and his mother, as he had problems at school** (…) At that moment, his mother started to ask about his behavior and what he wanted to do with his life, and **she started to slap him**. My student held on until the third slap, which sounded really hard. Then, the boy started to cry and left the teachers' room, and he was followed by his mother. Everyone was silent watching that scene, and **I was sitting there not knowing how to react.** I just thought that teaching is not just about content , it is about life.(Paz, audio journal 1)

> I was teaching the class alone when, suddenly**, two students attacked each other**, first verbally and then physically. They began to pull their hair and scratch themselves. I was in shock; **I didn't know what to do**. I wanted to pull them apart, but I remembered that someone had told me that we could not get into such situations. In my future I would like to stop them. I cannot just let them fight, I think that is part of my responsibility as a teacher (Paz, audio journal 1)

In the excerpts above, we see how the pre-service teachers realized that their roles as teachers go beyond the classroom. Rather, they must deal with different members of the community and issues that are part of the students' cultures, such as upbringing, socioeconomic inequality, family problems, backgrounds, and lifestyles. The pre-service teachers comprehended that there are cultural factors that they should be aware of in order to handle them appropriately. The following excerpt came from ThD's second audio journal. He reflected about the students' violent behavior toward themselves.

> I was shocked by the fact that children between the ages of 10 and 13 years old have begun to execute a series of dares, but these dares harm them integrally. They are hurting themselves either by burning their skin or cutting themselves. That incident really **affected me as a person rather than as a teacher** because I went through a similar experience. As in-service teachers we need to do something about it. Unfortunately I am just a pre-service teacher and I just talk to students and share my own experience . (ThD, audio journal 2)

This critical incident made ThD comprehend that students' life is characterized by violent attitudes that make teaching go beyond transmitting knowledge. Teachers have to deal with students' behaviors and accept that these situations can affect a teacher at a personal level. In this excerpt, we noticed that a concern for ThD was to understand students as a whole. Malm (2020) emphasized that it is through the interaction and the relationships between teachers and students, teacher educators and student-teachers help to see students as people to support in their development as human beings.

In the pre-service teachers' teaching identity construction process, the others' cultures were pivotal in shaping and reshaping themselves as future teachers. They needed to learn how to face different situations that go beyond teaching content. At the same time, the cultural context triggered reflection as the pre-service teachers

dove into a different environment. They began to understand that their students were each a different world with his or her own realities, histories and cultures. When the pre-service teachers think about the other, they construct their teaching identity with a respectful and mature mindset.

Political context. For our study, we understand the political context as the features that govern the context where the pe-service teachers carried out their final teaching practicum. As such, we mainly focused on the critical incidents related to the school's regulations. Pre-service teachers must follow school rules, just as any other member of that institution. The political context plays an important part in identity construction when it comes to assimilating situations, thoughts, and realities. As MacKuen and Brown (1987) claimed, the "political context has an important impact on individual attitude change" (p. 170). For our research study, the political context entailed the school's values, beliefs, norms, and goals set by the administrators.

The next excerpt demonstrated the importance of the school's political context when pre-service teachers began their practicum. The excerpt was taken from the first audio journal, which focused on the adaptation process at the beginning of the teaching practicum and its initial critical incidents. For ThD, a critical incident was adapting to the school's schedule and inconveniences. ThD shared the following,

> In the first orientation week at the institution, we were unable to get in. The first issue was that the ARL (insurance) certificate had not been loaded online. Second, the institution had some problems that prevented us from entering and staying there full-time. They did not have any established schedule, assigned courses, or schoolteachers (…) On Thursday, we were able to enter and meet our assigned headteachers, but it was too quick. So, **we had to adapt on our own**. We did not have the change to really see that reality and understand it but I noticed I was able to adapt to any situation easily. (ThD, audio journal 1)

We observed that ThD felt unaccompanied when having to face one of the most important moments in his academic and professional career. Going out in the field can be overwhelming for pre-service teachers because their success determines whether or not they can teach professionally. Given that the final teaching practicum is a critical incident itself, ThD experienced a feeling of having to start this new situation on his own. He had to empower himself in order to face the situation. This empowerment implied adapting quickly on his own. According to

Danielewics (2001), "the teaching practicum as a crucial period of teacher identity construction, where identity refers to our understandings of who we are and who we think other people are" (p. 10). In fact, ThD was learning about who he was and what he could do to overcome obstacles

One of the most prevalent school rules for the pre-service teachers during their final teaching practicum was wearing a white lab coat. They had to wear the lab coat all day at school, whether they were teaching class or carrying out their lesson planning. Participants shared critical incidents related to mandatory attire. Celeste, Cristal, and ThD discussed this topic in the focus group mentioning the following,

> **It is annoying to have to wear a white lab coat**, but that lab coat is so magical. When we had it on, the students respected you, dodged you, and did not walk over you. When we left school without the lab coat, the students pushed, shoved, and failed to see us. When I had the white lab coat on, they might shove us and say: **oh teacher**, I am so sorry, please excuse me! My moral lesson is: wear your white lab coat because it will change the way students look at you. (Cristal, focus group)

> That white coat is **the cap of pre-service teachers**. I just want to be a teacher and start wearing my own clothes that will represent who I really am as a teacher. (ThD, focus group)

> We compared the white lab coat to **traffic cones**. (Celeste, focus group)

Even though wearing the white lab coat was mandatory, the pre-service teachers had mixed feelings about it. They did not like wearing it, but they admitted that it was helpful in establishing authority among their students. The critical incidents that emerged from establishing the use of "teacher symbols" constructed their teaching identity. School rules actually helped the pre-service teachers perceive themselves as teachers. For example, the white lab coat decreased students' misbehaviors inside and outside of the classroom. The pre-service teachers' students looked up at them with respect as if they were already in-service teachers.

To sum up, we were able to identify those critical events that were considered "meaningful" for most of the pre-service teachers in their final teaching practicum. The main critical incidents are summarized in the table below.

Table 3. Pre-service teachers' main critical incidents.

Social Context	Cultural Context	Political Context
• Being treated by the schoolteachers as colleagues. • Being accepted and respected by students as an actual teacher and not as a "pre-service teacher". • Being discredited by schoolteachers in front of the students during class. • Being thanked by students for their work. • Feeling that students trust and believe in the pre-service teacher.	• Not knowing how to respond to students' physical and verbal aggression inside and outside the classrooms. • Not being prepared to face different unexpected situations that emerge during parent meetings. • Comprehending the students' sociocultural backgrounds and realities that they have to endure outside school.	• School staffs' lack of support, accompaniment, and organization when pre-service teachers begin the final teaching practicum. • The use of a required dress code (white lab coat) and its implications for pre-service teachers. • Community's acknowledgement of pre-service teachers as teachers based on school rules.

Conclusions

This study aimed at understanding what critical incidents during the final teaching practicum reveal about the construction of pre-service EFL teachers identities. In doing so, we noticed that the context was a key factor in pre-service teachers' identity construction. Their identities were shaped and reshaped based on their experiences at the schools and they were embedded in three specific contexts: social, cultural, and political.

The first dimension was related to the students, teachers, and administrators' approval. The second one had to do with the students and parents' cultural backgrounds, and the third dimension spoke about school rules. The pre-service teachers' critical incidents were highly dependent on the particular contexts they were interacting in, which would later shape and reshape their identities as future in-service teachers.

To answer the research question, we analyzed that the critical incidents demonstrate that pre-service teachers' teaching identities are constructed based on acceptance and respect from students and schoolteachers. Other factors that shaped and reshaped the pre-service teachers' identities included the realities students have to

face outside of school and the lack of support, accompaniment, and organization at the school.

All in all, it was evidenced pre-service teachers entered an evolutionary stage. As part of the social context, pre-service teachers started to see themselves as in-service teachers based on the approval and positive interactions with students and schoolteachers. They were also aware of their own capabilities that will nurture their future as in-service teachers. In fact, they began to grow in confidence. We noticed they voiced improved-self-confidence as teachers. They mentioned they felt more like teachers. From the perspectives of the cultural context, pre-service teachers began to make positive changes. They started to be aware of the complexities of teaching. They recognized that teaching implies a human perspective in which students cultural milieu should be at the core. Pre-service teachers realized that contents are not the only aspect that should be considered when teaching but, the careful understanding of the human being as a whole needs to be present. Pre-service teachers experienced holistic learning from a professional and personal sphere. Finally, from a political perspective, pre-service teachers were on the verge of awakening. They were challenged to either to resist or approve the rules stated by the institution.

The final teaching practicum provides a context for which pre-service teachers experience a myriad of challenging and meaningful events that construct and reconstruct their teaching identities. Therefore, the final teaching practicum is a fundamental stage for any pre-service teacher because it is a step from being a student to becoming a teacher. During the final teaching practicum, pre-service teachers face the realities of education, importance of students' formation and welfare, community backgrounds, and lack of support. The critical incidents that pre-service teachers live during this relevant process of their personal, academic, and professional life shape and reshape their beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes towards educating others and being a well-rounded teacher. The results of this teaching identity construction will accompany them for the rest of their lives as in-service teachers and human beings. Thus, comprehending how this teaching practicum takes place is of paramount importance for teaching programs.

When we asked the participants about the challenges language teachers face today, they mentioned that one of the issues was adapting to a new classroom. For them, managing a large group of students in the EFL classroom was a problem. In addition to handling students, they also mentioned having to deal with colleagues and administrators inside and outside the classroom. For the most

part, interacting with these groups result in challenging situations, and pre-service teachers are not always experienced in responding appropriately. In the case of public schools and their heterogeneous nature, the participants were concerned with the different backgrounds that each student may have. In their opinion, the didactics and practice courses do not focus on coping mechanisms to deal with the previously mentioned. Rather, these teaching courses emphasize effective classroom procedures and methodologies. We think that methodology classes still need to be re-oriented to focus more on the realities that take place inside schools.

Contribución de los autores: Autor 1: conceptualización, recolección de datos, investigación, metodolo-gía, redacción del manuscrito original, revisión y edición; Autor 2: re-colección de datos, investigación, redacción del manuscrito original, revisión y edición.

Declaración de fuentes de financiación: Los autores declaran que este estudio fue autofinanciado.

Conflictos de interés: Los autores declaran no tener conflictos de interés.

REFERENCIAS

Brookfield, Stephen D. *The Skillful Teacher*. Jossey-Bass, 1990.

Castellanos, Judith. "The Role of English Pre-Service Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching in Teacher Education Programs." *Profile Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2013, pp. 195-206.

Danyluk, Patricia., et al. "Failure to Fail in a Final Pre-Service Teaching Practicum." *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2015, http://dx.doi.org/10.5206/cjsotl-rcacea.2015.3.5.

Danielewicz, Jane. *Teaching Selves: Identity, Pedagogy, and Teacher Education*. State University of New York Press, 2001.

Duff, Patricia A., and Yuko Uchida. "The Negotiation of Teachers' Sociocultural Identities and Practices in Postsecondary EFL Classrooms." *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 3, 1997, pp. 451-486.

Farrell, Thomas S. "English Language Teacher Socialization during the Practicum." *Prospect*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2001, pp. 46-62.

Fajardo, Alberto, and Iván Miranda. "The Paradox of the Practicum: Affinity to and Resistance Towards Teaching." *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2015, pp. 329-341, doi:10.17533/udea.ikala.v20n3a04.

Ferrier-Kerr, Jenny L. "Establishing Professional Relationships in Practicum Settings." *Teaching and Teacher Education*, vol. 25, no. 6, 2009, pp. 790-797.

Flores, Maria, and Christopher Day. "Contexts Which Shape and Reshape New Teachers' Identities: A Multi-Perspective Study." *Teacher and Teaching Education*, vol. 22, 2006, pp. 219-232.

Gill, Paul, et al. "Methods of Data Collection in Qualitative Research: Interviews and Focus Groups." *British Dental Journal*, vol. 204, no. 6, 2008, pp. 291-295, doi:10.1308/bdj.2008.192.

Guba, Egon G. ,et al. "Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences." *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 3rd ed., Sage, 2005, pp. 195-196.

Hargreaves, Andy, and Michael Fullan. *Understanding Teacher Development*. Teachers College Press, 1992.

Johnston, Bill. "Do EFL Teachers Have Careers?" *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 4, 1997, pp. 681-712.

Johnson, Karen E., and Paula R. Golombek. "'Seeing' Teacher Learning." *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 4, 2003, pp. 729-737.

Johnston, Bill, et al. "The Professional Development of Working with ESL/EFL Teachers: A Pilot Study." *Interpreting Communicative Language Teaching*, edited by Joan Savigñon, Yale University Press, 2002, pp. 53-72.

Kluckhohn, Clyde. *Antropología*. 2nd ed., Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1949.

Lankshear, Colin, and Michele Knobel. *A Handbook for Teacher Research*. McGraw-Hill Education, 2004.

Lengeling, Martha. *Becoming an English Teacher: Participants' Voices and Identities in an In-Service Teacher Training Course in Central México*. Universidad de Guanajuato, 2016.

Lengeling, Martha., and Irasema Mora Pablo. "Reflections on Critical Incidents of EFL Teachers during Career Entry in Central Mexico." *HOW*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2016, pp. 75-88, http://dx.doi.org/10.19183/how.23.2.158.

Maciver, Robert M. *Society: An Introductory Analysis*. 1959, https://archive.org/details/ SocietyAnIntroductoryAnalysis1959R.M.Maciver/page/n27/mode/2up.

MacKuen, Michael, and Courtney Brown. "Political Context and Attitude Change." *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 81, no. 2, 1987, pp. 471-490, doi:10.2307/1961962.

Malm, Birgitte. "On the Complexities of Educating Student Teachers: Teacher Educators' Views on Contemporary Challenges to Their Profession." *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 2020, pp. 1-14.

Ministerio de Educación Nacional, MEN. *Ley 115* [por la cual se expide la Ley General de Educación]. Diario Oficial, N. 41.214, 8 de febrero de 1994.

Norton, Bonny. *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Change*. Pearson Education Ltd, 2000.

Price, David A. "The Practicum and Its Supervision." *Australian Teacher Education in Review*, 1987, pp. 105-133.

Quintero, Alvaro. "Creating a Pedagogical Space That Fosters the (Re)construction of Self through Life Stories of Pre-Service English Language Teachers." *HOW*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2016, pp. 106-124, http://dx.doi.org/10.19183/how.23.2.293.

Ramos, Bertha, et al. "Student-Teachers' Identity Construction and Its Connection with Student-Centered Approaches: A Narrative Study." Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, 2018.

Ramos, Bertha, and Nancy Torres. "Becoming Language Teachers: Exploring Student-Teachers' Identities Construction through Narratives." *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, no. 18, 2019, pp. 6-27, https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.441.

Richards, Keith. "Trends in Qualitative Research in Language Teaching since 2000." *Language Teaching*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2009, pp. 147-180.

Trent, John. "From Learner to Teacher: Practice, Language, and Identity in a Teaching Practicum." *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, vol. 41, no. 4, 2013, pp. 426-440.

Tripp, David. *Critical Incidents in Teaching*. Routledge, 1993.

Vanassche, Eline, and Geert Kelchtermans. "Teacher Educators' Professionalism in Practice: Positioning Theory and Personal Interpretative Framework." *Teaching and Teacher Education*, vol. 44, 2014, pp. 117-127.

Wenger, Etienne. *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.