

## EFL TEACHER EDUCATION PROPOSAL ADDRESSED AT PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN PARAGUAY

### PROPUESTA DE FORMACIÓN EN INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA DIRIGIDA A ESTUDIANTES DE FORMACIÓN INICIAL DOCENTE EN PARAGUAY

Original Research Article



Wilson Ruben Orrego Bogado\*

**Submission:** october 25, 2024

**Accepted:** december 15, 2024

**Published:** december 16, 2024

#### How to cite this article:

Orrego Bogado, Wilson Ruben. «Propuesta de formación en inglés como Lengua Extranjera dirigida a estudiantes de formación Inicial Docente en Paraguay». . ENLETAWA Journal, vol 17, n° 2, Dic de 2024, <https://doi.org/10.19053/uptc.2011835X.18697>

---

\* He holds undergraduate education in elementary school teaching education and in English and Guarani language teaching in junior and middle school education, a BA in Psychology, a specialization in ICT in teaching practices. Currently, he is enrolled in the MA in Language Teaching at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia UPTC. [wilsonorrego@yahoo.com](mailto:wilsonorrego@yahoo.com)  
com <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-8130-0914>

✉ **Correspondance:** Wilson Orrego, [wilsonorrego@yahoo.com](mailto:wilsonorrego@yahoo.com)

## Abstract

The purpose of this article is to describe the design process of an educational proposal for pre-service teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The main objective was to integrate language learning with teaching methodology so that pre-service teachers would be able to teach English in elementary schools by the end of their initial teacher training. This study was conducted at the Centro Regional de Educación Juan E. O' Leary, at Nivel Formación Docente in Concepción, Paraguay. The reflections, understandings, and experiences of the academic community members were examined through a thematic analysis. The results of the diagnosis revealed shortcomings in the current EFL training program, particularly in its curricular design. In response, a new design process was initiated, aimed at integrating language acquisition and teaching practices. This was achieved by increasing face-to-face classroom training time in the new syllabus, reconceptualizing teaching content, and reorienting pedagogical methods.

**Keywords:** initial teacher education, curriculum design, EFL, TEYL, loop input.

## Resumen

El propósito de este artículo es describir el proceso de diseño de una propuesta formativa de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) para estudiantes de formación inicial docente. El objetivo principal fue integrar el aprendizaje del idioma con la metodología de enseñanza, capacitando a los maestros en formación para enseñar inglés en escuelas primarias al finalizar su formación inicial docente. Este estudio se realizó en el Centro Regional de Educación "Juan E. O' Leary", en el Nivel Formación Docente en Concepción, Paraguay. Las reflexiones, comprensiones y experiencias de los miembros de la comunidad académica fueron examinadas por medio de un análisis temático. Los resultados del diagnóstico revelaron falencias en el actual programa de formación en EFL, particularmente en su diseño curricular. En respuesta, se inició un nuevo proceso de diseño, dirigido a integrar la adquisición del lenguaje y las prácticas de enseñanza. Para ello, se incrementó el tiempo de formación presencial en el nuevo sílabo, se reconceptualizaron los contenidos didácticos y se reorientaron los métodos pedagógicos.

**Palabras clave:** formación inicial docente, diseño curricular, inglés como lengua extranjera, enseñanza infantil del inglés, loop input.

## Ñemombyky

Ko kutia omombe'u tembiapo ombohekokatúva'ekue pytagua ne'ẽ inglés-pegua ñehekombo'e oñeikuave'ẽva mbo'chararãkuérape peteĩ mbo'chao tetã Paraguái. Hembipotápe ko tembiapo oñeha'ã ombojoaju katupyry inglés ñe'eme mbo'epy jepokuaa ndive, ombokatupyryvo mbo'ehararãkuérape ikatu haguãicha ha'ekuéra ombo'e inglés mbo'chao primaria-pe omohu'ãvo mbo'esyry. Ko tembikuaareka ojejapo Centro Regional de Educación "Juan E. O' Leary", Nivel de Formación Docente Concepción, Paraguái. Oñehesa'ỹijo hagua maymáva tapicha remiandu, remiarirõ ha rembiasakue oñembyatyva'ekue ko tembikuaareka rupive, ojeporu análisis temático. Ipahápe ko tembiapo ohechauka mba'éichapa pytagua ne'ẽ ingléspegua ñehekombo'e, oñemboquatáva ko'ágã Paraguái, ikangy ha oñembohekovai. Oñembohováivo umi mba'e ikangyva, oñemyatyrõ ha oñemombarete inglés ñehekombo'e. Upéicha oñembojoaju ñe'ẽ jehupyty ha mbo'epy jepokuaa. Péva ojeupyty haguã oñembohetave ñehekombo'e aravo peteĩ mbo'esyry pyahúpe, ha katu oñemyatyrõ mbo'esyry mbo'epy ha oñemoambue mbo'epy apo.

## Introduction

The ability to communicate in multiple languages is one of the most common demands of millions of people of all ages around the world today. For various reasons, ranging from traveling and exploring new cultures to better understanding or promoting one's own culture, to accessing new job opportunities, to acquiring technical and scientific knowledge, the interest in learning languages, particularly English, has surged and become a global phenomenon. The status of English as a lingua franca has reinforced the idea that learning is linked to better access to opportunities, allowing speakers to enjoy the benefits of globalization in terms of wealth, prestige, and social mobility. This perception has fueled the development of initiatives for teaching English as a foreign language in nearly every part of the world.

Latin America has not been an exception to this trend. Since the end of World War II, under the influence of the United States and Great Britain, various English as a Foreign Language (EFL) training programs have been implemented across the region. More recently, since the 1990s, at least ten countries in the region have introduced bilingual plans and programs, driven by government efforts to incorporate English into the educational system from the early grades of basic schooling (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017). Despite significant investments, these initiatives have not yielded the expected learning outcomes. Most of them, except for those applied in Costa Rica, Colombia, Chile, and Uruguay, have been largely dismantled.

In Paraguay, unlike in the rest of Latin America, the incorporation of English as a foreign language into the educational system is much more recent. Since 2013, when the Paraguayan Ministry of Education and Science (henceforth MEC) began gradually introducing English from preschool through secondary education, the initiative has faced similar challenges to those encountered in other countries in the region. The lack of contextualization in educational proposals, the scarcity of qualified teachers and material resources, frequent shifts in language policy priorities and the concentration of the best language teacher education programs in only certain regions of the country have hindered the initiative's success.

Despite the challenges and limitations posed by Paraguay's unique linguistic context, the need to provide English learning opportunities for students of all ages remains. In response, the Ministry of Education and Sciences initiated a curricular reform of teacher education in 2019. One of its strategic actions

includes integrating English language learning into the initial training of future teachers. The goal of this initiative is to equip teachers with strong communicative competence in English, enabling them to teach the language to primary school students effectively, once they enter professional teaching career (MEC, 2019).

However, four years after the Nueva Formación Docente reform implementation, English teaching in initial teacher education has not yielded the expected results. Members of the academic community at Centro Regional de Educación Juan E. O' Leary in Concepción, Paraguay, have expressed dissatisfaction with the current English language training program for pre-service teachers. This dissatisfaction has created an urgent need to propose changes to the original design through a process of diagnosis and curricular redesign.

In this context, the needs analysis process was initiated by problematizing the situation, identifying the population of the study, and designing and validating a set of data collection instruments. These tools aimed to capture the reflections, understandings, and experiences of students, trainers, coordinators, and graduates involved in the implementation of the program called *English Workshop*, which is part of the initial teacher education for primary school. The data collected during the diagnostic phase provided key insights that helped identify the areas of the training program to focus on during the subsequent curricular design phase.

Finally, a new curricular design for the *English Workshop* in initial teacher training has been developed to address the weaknesses of the original program and meet the demands of the academic community at this teacher-training center. This revised curriculum focuses on three key areas: enhancing in-person instruction, contextualizing teaching content, and reformulating the methodology.

The development of a training program that integrates the learning of English as a foreign language and the methodology for teaching it to future teachers is essential in a context rich in sociocultural and linguistic diversity. In Paraguay, speakers of the national languages —Guarani and Spanish— coexist alongside indigenous languages and foreign languages like English and Portuguese. This need arises for several reasons. Firstly, there is a gap in the training of English language teachers for primary education. Since university-level training programs are unavailable in the region, this proposal would make a significant contribution toward closing the gap between the number of qualified English teachers and the vacancies in schools in northern Paraguay.

Moreover, this teacher education proposal goes beyond being merely an English course for future teachers. It aims to “engage with the socioeconomic and political struggles” of the non-native English-speaking student population at this teacher education center (Granados Beltrán, 2018, p. 38). In other words, learning a foreign language like English provides students in initial teacher training with an opportunity for self-expression, allowing them to engage with the wider world from their own perspective (Acosta Padrón, 2018 falta la cita en REFERENCIAS). Additionally, the proposal aligns with Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UNESCO, 2017, p. 7).

The community of practice at the Centro Regional de Educación Juan E. O’Leary in Concepción can benefit from a teacher education proposal specifically designed for the linguistic needs and realities of the population of this center. In that sense, this teacher education proposal is aimed at trainee teachers to ensure that by the end of their program they will be competent users of the English language, capable of expressing themselves, share their culture and teach it to primary school children using both English and the official languages.

Finally, in response to the limitations of the 2019 curriculum —designed from a decontextualized, homogeneous, and methodologically vague framework that prioritized instruction over language acquisition— a new curriculum is being proposed. This updated design is shaped by the real training needs of both students and educators, aiming to break free from the prescriptive tradition that has long defined English as a foreign language programs in Paraguay. Unlike its predecessor, this new teacher education proposal fosters the development of an authentic curriculum, created collaboratively by and for pre-service teachers.

## **Context and Participants**

The northern region of Paraguay, home to the Department of Concepción, falls within the area of influence of the Centro Regional de Educación Juan E. O’Leary. Since 1968, the Center has been offering both initial and continuing teacher education programs. Located in Concepción, 458 km from Asunción, the center serves approximately one thousand students from various parts of Concepción as well as from the neighboring departments of San Pedro, Alto Paraguay, and Amambay. Of this student population, 213 are enrolled in initial teacher education programs: Basic School Education (primary education), Mathematics, and Natural Sciences. These students are the primary targets of this teacher education strategy

for developing communicative competencies in EFL, implemented as part of the New Teacher Education for Paraguay curricular reform (MEC, 2019), which is currently being carried out at this center.

In this context, the curricula mandate the completion of a series of courses titled *English Workshop I, II, III, IV, and V*, which are taught from the second through the sixth semester. Each course follows a hybrid format, with a total of 58 hours per semester. This includes 18 hours of in-person workshops focused on teaching methodology, and 40 hours of distance learning dedicated to enhancing English proficiency. What was initially planned as a workshop has instead become weekly one-hour classes accompanied by two and a half hours of independent work. This shift has placed the teacher education program in a situation where it relies heavily on the tutor's ability to provide follow-up and support through non-face-to-face methods. Similarly, the activities and teaching materials must be adapted for a hybrid-learning model, which is challenging to implement given the contextual constraints.

More specifically, English learning within the initial teacher education programs at this center faces several challenges, the most pressing of which is the urgent need to revise the curriculum. There is a clear disconnect between the curriculum's aim to be socio-constructivist and the outdated conditions and resources under which it is being implemented, reminiscent of more traditional, outdated teacher training practices. The teacher education curriculum can no longer ignore the profile and needs of future educators, nor the realities of the schools where they are expected to teach (Freeman, 2009).

## **Current Perspectives on Initial Teacher Education**

In recent decades, social demands have emerged worldwide, reflecting significant dissatisfaction with initial teacher training or education. According to Vaillant and Marcelo (2015), criticisms focus on the increasing bureaucratization of training, the persistent gap between theory and practice, the fragmentation of imparted knowledge, and the weak connection between academic training and practical application. Similarly, Bruns and Luque (2014) offer strong critiques, specifically targeting the initial training of teachers in Latin America. They highlight the low average quality of teachers in Latin America and the Caribbean as a key factor hindering educational progress in the region.

Berliner (2000) suggests that much of the current situation is due to the limited perspective on the impact of initial training-education on teacher quality. For too long—and even today—prejudices persist, such as the belief that there are no universal principles in teaching or that teaching is easy and simply requires knowledge of the subject matter. In this context, several authors agree that insufficient attention has been given to the developmental aspects of learning to teach, both during initial training-education and through continuing education (Berliner, 2000; Díaz Maggioli, 2012; Vaillant & Marcelo, 2015; Freeman, 2016).

Over time, the role of the teacher of teachers (ToT) has evolved from a passive process of transmitting fixed knowledge to a more reflective and dynamic approach to teacher education. This process is now seen as a participatory and continuous process in which all participants are regarded as contributors to knowledge. Consequently, the responsibilities of ToT have grown to include the design and development of curricula aimed at fostering teaching skills, progressively aligned with the demands of contemporary professional practice (Díaz Maggioli, 2012; Vaillant & Marcelo, 2015).

Regarding the components a teacher education curriculum should include, various perspectives highlight elements such as clearly defined training objectives, the development of teaching competencies, reflective practice both during and after action, and the cultivation of adaptive skills to meet the needs of a society that demands a learning-focused education. These elements are emphasized by multiple scholars (Landsheere, 1985; McNamara & Desforges, 1978; Edmundson, 1990; Braslavsky, 2002; Bredeson, 2002).

Vaillant (2005) stresses the need to reimagine teacher-training programs by considering both formal learning environments and informal contexts where training occurs. He argues that there is a disconnect between teacher education programs and the practical needs of schools, making it essential to place greater emphasis on learning through practice. Additionally, Vaillant questions the traditional approach to teacher education, which often relies predominantly on theoretical knowledge, resulting in a noticeable disconnection from the realities of professional teaching.

Finally, Korthagen et al. (2006) argue that a successful initial teacher education program should embody seven essential characteristics: a focus on learning through experience and constructing professional knowledge, an understanding of knowledge as continuously evolving, a shift in focus from curriculum content to the



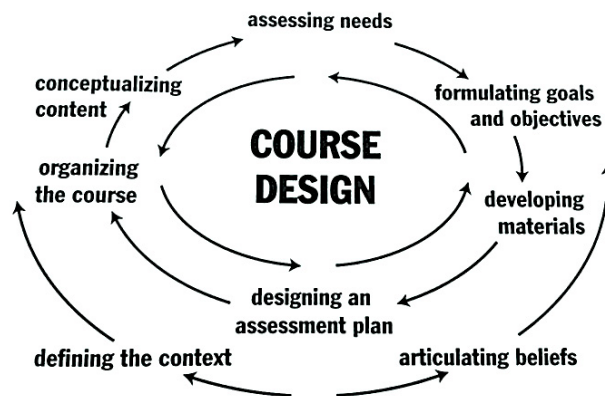
learners themselves, the promotion of trainee-led research, collaboration to break the isolation often associated with teaching, meaningful partnerships with schools, and the role of the teacher educator as a central model for aspiring teachers.

## Current Perspectives on Curriculum and Course Design

Towards the end of the last century, curriculum and course design was shaped by the work of a diverse group of specialists who set key trends in the field. These experts developed frameworks that conceptualized the design process as the realization of training proposals by assembling various components and sub-processes. This approach helped organize and clarify what had previously been a complex task, one that was largely handled by specialists alone (Dubin & Olshain, 1986; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Johnson, 1989; Nunan, 1989; Richards, 1990; White, 1988).

Building on the contributions of the aforementioned authors, Graves (2000) views curriculum design as the outcome of a reflective and organizational process through which a training proposal is developed. Rather than being a straightforward effort of technical systematization—often how it is characterized—course design is a complex and sometimes chaotic journey marked by progress, setbacks, and decision-making in response to the intricacies of reality. Consequently, a syllabus, along with all its components, serves as a roadmap resulting from a process of problematization, reflection, and conceptualization related to classroom practice (Graves and Xu, 2000).

**Figure 1.** Framework for course development



Source: based on Graves (2000).

Graves (2000) describes a circular design process characterized by the absence of hierarchies and a predetermined sequence, allowing designers to start at any point based on their understanding of the context and learners. He emphasizes the importance of problematizing the situation to identify challenges from a reflective perspective, which Zeichner (1996) defines as examining and confronting these challenges. Additionally, Graves highlights the systematic nature of this design approach, where all components are interdependent; modifying any element affects the entire system. For example, setting objectives influences the selection of content, which then impacts the design of assessment tools and procedures.

On the other hand, Wiggins and McTighe (2007), cited in Díaz Maggioli (2012), propose a design model that emphasizes a deep understanding of what learners will learn during the training process to be conceived. Unlike that proposed by Graves (2000), this approach, known as inverted design, proposes to start at the end of the curriculum design process in order to develop it retrospectively. With the end in mind, a roadmap is drawn up linking the destination, i.e. the goals and objectives of the program, with the starting point determined by the needs that emerge from the diagnostic process.

Finally, if we assume that true learning only occurs through deep understanding □when pre-service teachers fully understand what they must do to continue learning (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007)□ it is reasonable to conclude that such understanding is more likely to be fostered in environments that promote meaningful, experiential learning. Activities that engage participants in situations in which “the process is the content itself” (Woodward, 1988, p. 28) are particularly effective. In this context, the loop-input technique, which provides hands-on learning experiences by allowing teachers-in-training to experience the content as learners while mastering the didactic strategies necessary to teach it, has emerged as a valuable alternative in teacher education.

## **Towards an Eclectic Model in pre-service Teacher Education**

The essential aspects of preservice teacher education continue to be the subject of ongoing discussions among researchers and educators. In this sense, the contributions coming from the field of research and practice are so wide and varied in contrast to the increasingly reduced and specific teacher training programs. According to Cárdenas Ramos (2009), this situation highlights the need to offer training, education, and professional development proposals that combine varied, eclectic and complementary elements from multiple models, in accordance with

the diversity of existing practice contexts and the accelerated production of new knowledge in the field of foreign language training.

Similarly, designing a curriculum, course, or didactic unit requires constructing a cohesive framework that integrates elements from various perspectives. As Díaz Maggioli (2012) suggests, these elements must be organized to align with the goals, objectives, resources, and limitations of the specific context or target population. As noted by Wiggins and McTighe (2007), once the learning pathway is established—connecting the learning goals to the learners’ starting point—the next step is to select the essential components that will guide students from one point to the other.

According to Cárdenas Ramos (2009), a well-contextualized and thoughtfully problematized teacher education proposal should integrate elements from various teacher training models and traditions to leverage their strengths fully. In this way, methods such as microteaching, the competency-based approach, communicative skills development, and non-directed intervention can coexist alongside more innovative strategies like backward design and Loop Input. Careful planning that incorporates these diverse approaches, all geared toward the goal of developing skilled, motivated teachers, ensures that they are not only equipped to foster student learning but are also driven to expand their own professional horizons.

## **Method**

This research involves the implementation of a diagnostic inquiry as the foundation for designing a teacher education curriculum. Marí Mollá (2001) defines diagnostic research as “a process of inquiry that examines the entirety of subjects or entities in their complexity, considering their overall situation, and necessarily incorporating an educational intervention aimed at improvement” (p. 201). Similarly, Graves (1996) defines curriculum design—specifically for teacher training in English as a foreign language—as a contextualized, non-linear process that takes place within a specific time and setting, involving a particular group of individuals.

In this context, drawing on the frameworks of Arriaga Hernández (2015) and Berwick (1989), and primarily on the contributions of Graves (2000), this research aimed to design a new curriculum that integrates English language learning with teaching methodology for primary education. The study was conducted in two stages: a diagnostic phase and a design phase. Each stage involved a seven-phase

research design, which included problematizing the situation under study, defining the target population, designing data collection instruments, gathering data from the participants, and analyzing it through thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This process allowed for identifying key issues in the original training proposal, which ultimately prompted the research.

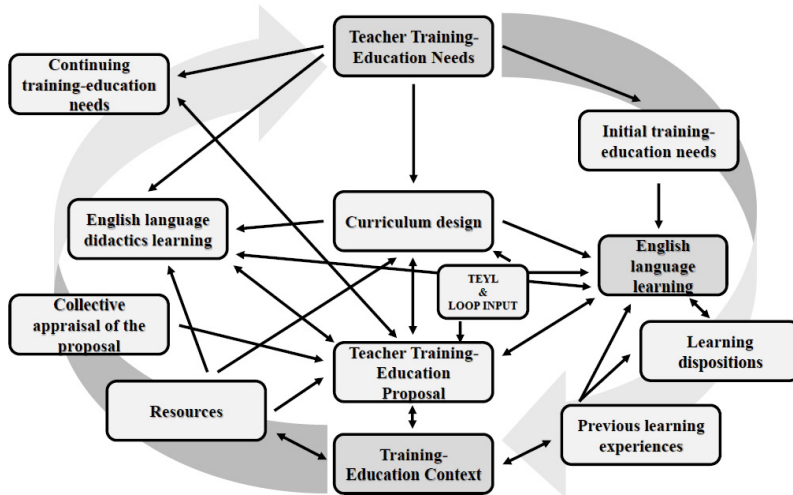
The diagnostic stage starts with the problematization of the situation that emerges from my own reflections, those of other EFL ToT colleagues and students of this teacher education center about the EFL teacher education program aimed at pre-service teachers that has been implemented in this center since 2020. After about four years of implementation of the aforementioned program all the actors involved have been dissatisfied with the design proposed by the MEC and the learning outcomes.

The research was subsequently narrowed to focus on the primary education teacher-training course, which currently has 124 enrolled students at various stages of the program. A random sample of 30 students was selected for the study. Following Graves' (2000) recommendation to gather information from multiple sources and not rely solely on students, the pool of informants was expanded. This included two English ToT, two academic coordinators, two graduates of the teacher- training program, and three teachers from the Escuela de Aplicación CRE where the students conduct their supervised professional practice.

Figure 2. Data collection instruments



Finally, the data collection instruments to be applied were defined: a student survey, interviews with ToT, coordinators and graduates of the teacher-training course studied and a focus group among informants from the teacher training-education center and the Escuela de Aplicación CRE. All these instruments were designed in order to triangulate the information obtained and submit it to Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis process, which was expected to identify the aspects of the curriculum that should be the object of interventions in the design phase.



The findings from the diagnostic phase revealed three key issues in the current English program for elementary school teachers at this teacher education center, which informed the subsequent design stage. Based on the data collected from the target population and its analysis, the identified needs were effectively linked to the training-education context, language learning, and teaching methodology. This process enabled a clear identification of the curricular elements that needed to be addressed in the design phase, ensuring a more targeted and effective curriculum development.

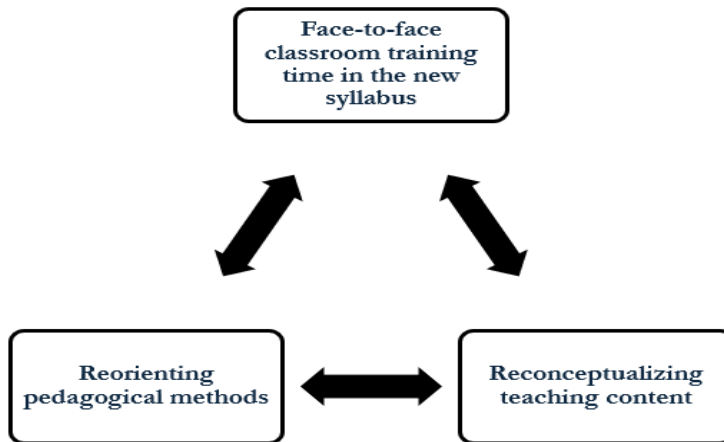
## A New EFL Teacher Education Proposal Addressed at Pre-service Teachers

Based on the findings from the diagnostic process conducted on the EFL teacher education program at the Centro Regional de Educación Juan E. O'Leary, a decision was made to propose an alternative design to the current curriculum. The proposal presented in this section is informed by the voices of the academic community,

where the teaching of English to pre-service teachers has been implemented since 2020. Through consultations during this research, several weaknesses in the original program were identified, highlighting needs arising from the training context, the instructional methods, and the limited learning outcomes in the target language.

Additionally, this initiative to review and adjust the curriculum is grounded in the premise that all members of the academic community play a role in designing training proposals. As Wiggins and McTighe (2007), cited by Díaz Maggioli (2012), emphasize, a core task of teaching is the design of curricula and learning experiences that lead to meaningful learning. In this regard, educators are also responsible for developing tools to assess student and contextual needs, ensuring that the goals they set are realistic and achievable. Moreover, the open nature of the *Nueva Formación Docente para el Paraguay* curriculum, implemented since 2020, grants the academic community the authority to review and, if necessary, adjust the curriculum within the local institutional framework.

Figure 4. Key aspects of the new curriculum

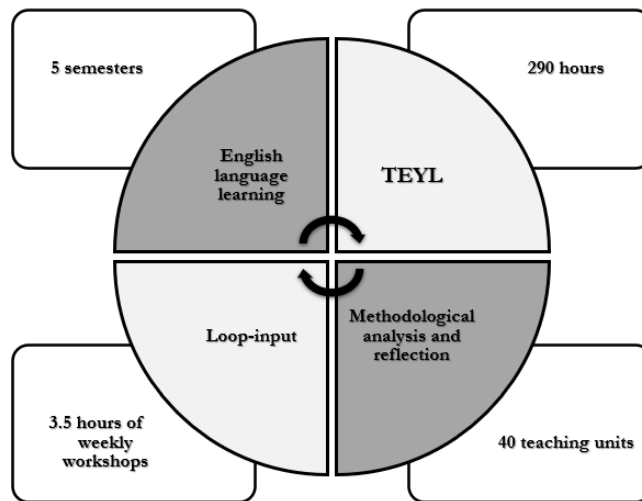


Following Graves (2000), the design of this teacher education proposal is a grounded process shaped by the specific context of needs, a defined timeframe, and the insights of those involved in its creation. In this sense, the new curriculum aims to address the weaknesses identified during the diagnostic phase. As a result, the proposed syllabus includes extending the duration of face-to-face workshops, reconceptualizing the learning content, and reorienting the teaching methodology to better align with the needs and demands of the informants from this teacher-training center.

The *English Workshop* course is designed to support pre-service teachers, from the second to sixth semester of the primary education teacher training program, in exploring innovative methods for learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at levels A1 to B1 of the CEFR. By the end of the course, participants are expected to have developed the ability to understand and use a range of expressions in the target language, enabling them to communicate effectively in most everyday situations. Additionally, the course provides both theoretical and practical knowledge of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) methodologies, preparing participants to introduce the target language in their communities' primary schools.

This teacher education proposal is grounded in the communicative approach, viewed through a sociocultural lens that emphasizes the construction of teaching knowledge via experience and the mediation of ToT and trainees within a community of practice (Díaz Maggioli, 2012; Freeman, 2016). The communicative approach provides a didactic framework for learning the target language, focusing on the development of comprehension and the production of speech for effective communication in the participants' immediate context. Meanwhile, the sociocultural approach introduces a mediation framework, where the professional knowledge presented in the course is internalized as a psychological tool. From this perspective, teacher learning is seen as a transformative process, mediated by cultural artifacts that move knowledge between social and psychological realms.

**Figure 5.** English Workshop Syllabus



The additional objective of the course is to unite the content taught with the learning process in a theoretical-practical reflection loop that allows participants to experience the learning proposal as if they were elementary school students and at the same time examine the didactic proposal as teachers who learn to gain competencies to make pedagogical decisions thinking about their own students (Woodward, 1991). Finally, the course has a duration of 58 hours, distributed in three and half hours per week, divided into approximately 8 units to be developed during the 17 weeks of each of the five semesters in which it will be implemented.

## **Conclusions**

Contrary to the common belief that curriculum design is solely the domain of experts, this research aimed to involve members of a teacher education center in Paraguay in the development of a teacher education proposal for learning and teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). By engaging these participants in the design process, the proposal reflects their unique experiences, values, and knowledge, and ensures that the approach meets with the needs of this academic community.

First of all, a process of problematization of initial teacher education in EFL within the scope of the institutional curriculum was initiated, from which the main question emerged, i.e., how to integrate the learning of the target language together with the didactics for teaching it in primary education in a new teacher training-education proposal. However, the design of a new teacher education proposal raises two other questions: on the one hand, what kind of formation needs should it address, and on the other hand, what elements should it incorporate to meet the needs identified in the training context.

Once the formative context was delimited, as Graves (2000) refers, a process of construction of the English language training-education proposal was carried out from the inside out, gathering the voices of the academic community about the situation, and from the outside in, putting into perspective those subjective visions of the community concerned with a broad and eclectic framework of theories about foreign language teacher education. During this phase, the research actions made it possible to articulate the beliefs about English language learning of the informants and to build a deeper framework of understanding of a context from which the training needs to be addressed during the design of the proposal emerge.



This research collects a broad range of education needs, including increased face-to-face learning time, greater support and scaffolding, better contextualization of content, and a focus on oral expression in the target language —emphasizing the principle of ‘learning to speak English by speaking.’ Additionally, the academic community supports the development of training-education actions for pre-service teachers to learn the didactics of English to young learners.

These demands from the academic community highlight the need for a new and more suitable training proposal. However, as Vaillant and Marcelo (2015) caution, the notion of ‘adequate training’ can mistakenly suggest that there is only one correct way to teach, learn, or educate teachers. Similarly, Korthagen et al. (2006) argue that the most effective initial teacher education programs, despite their differences, share certain common characteristics: experiential learning, viewing knowledge as a continuously evolving construct, focusing on the needs of students, promoting research, collaboratively building professional knowledge, fostering strong connections with schools, and emphasizing the role of the ToT as a model for pre-service teachers to follow

Therefore, a suitable proposal that responds to the needs of these pre-service teachers must adopt an eclectic framework that is nourished by the field of the English teaching to young learners, taking diverse elements from multiple theoretical perspectives but retaining the attributes cited by Korthagen (2006). In this sense, one of the key elements of the formative proposal in EFL should be the reflection in and on what is done in the sessions in the target language (Schön, 1983). The objective of opening spaces for reflection and methodological analysis on the didactic experiences implemented during the sessions, beyond the development of communicative competencies, is that the students gain expertise in the methodology experienced for making informed pedagogical decisions as teachers in a real context.

The key element that emerges in response to the central question, linking the learning content with the teaching process, is the integration of language workshop methodology with Tessa Woodward’s (1991) loop input model. Thus, the most significant contribution of this research was not merely increasing face-to-face teaching hours from one to three per week, nor eliminating decontextualized content for pre-service teachers, nor even shifting the focus of workshops to oral expression. Instead, it was the intentional inclusion of reflective spaces within the sessions, where students engage both as elementary school learners and as prospective teachers. This dual perspective allows them to experience the lessons

from a learner's viewpoint while simultaneously reflecting, discussing, and making informed decisions about the teaching process as future educators.

Finally, beyond the formal characteristics and elements of this teacher education proposal—designed to integrate EFL learning with the methodology for teaching it to primary school children—this research demonstrated the feasibility of uniting diverse perspectives, expectations, and capabilities within a community of practice. It showed that by collaboratively addressing a shared problem, meaningful improvement initiatives can emerge directly from the community's needs and take shape through active, engaged participation.

## References

- Arriaga Hernández, M. (2015). El diagnóstico educativo, una importante herramienta para elevar la calidad de la educación en manos de los docentes. *Atenas*, 3(31), 63-74.
- Berliner, D. C. (2000). A Personal Response to Those Who Bash Teacher Education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(5), 358-371.
- Berwick, R. (1989). Needs Assessment in Language Programming: From Theory to Practice. In R. K. Johnson (Ed.), *The Second Language Curriculum* (pp. 48-62). Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524520.006>
- Braslavsky, C. (2002). Teacher Education and the Demands of Curricular Change. In *42nd Charles W. Hunt Memorial Lecture*. AACTE Publications.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, B. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Bredeson, P. V. (2002). The Architecture of Professional Development: Materials, Messages and Meaning. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 37(8), 661-675.
- Bruns, B., & Luque, J. (2014). *Great Teachers: How to Raise Student Learning in Latin America and the Caribbean*. World Bank Publications.
- Cárdenas Ramos, R. (2009). Tendencias globales y locales en la formación de docentes de lenguas extranjeras. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura* 14(22), 71-106.

- Cronquist, K., & Fiszbein, A. (2017). *El aprendizaje del inglés en América Latina*. Centro de Investigación Educativa AIP. Díaz-Maggioli, G. (2012). *Teaching Language Teachers: Scaffolding Professional Learning*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Dubin, F. (1986). *Course Design*. Cambridge University Press.
- Edmundson, P. J. (1990). A Normative Look at the Curriculum in Teacher Education. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 71(9), 717-722.
- Freeman, D. (2009). The Scope of Second Language Teacher Education. *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Teacher Education*, 11-19.
- Freeman, D. (2016). *Educating Second Language Teachers*. Oxford University Press.
- Granados-Beltrán, C. (2018). *La interculturalidad crítica en los programas de formación inicial de docentes de lenguas extranjeras en el contexto colombiano contemporáneo*. Universidad Santo Tomás, Facultad de Educación, Doctorado en Educación. [https://repository.usta.edu.co/bitstream/handle/11634/15503/Granados-Beltr%C3%A1n Graves, K. \(1996\). Teachers as Course Developers. Cambridge University Press. Graves, K., & Xu, S. \(2000\). Designing Language Courses: A Guide for Teachers. Heinle & Heinle.](https://repository.usta.edu.co/bitstream/handle/11634/15503/Granados-Beltr%C3%A1n%20Graves,%20K.%20(1996).%20Teachers%20as%20Course%20Developers.%20Cambridge%20University%20Press.%20Graves,%20K.,%20&%20Xu,%20S.%20(2000).%20Designing%20Language%20Courses:%20A%20Guide%20for%20Teachers.%20Heinle%20&%20Heinle.)
- Hutchinson, T. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes*. Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, R. K. (1989). *The Second Language Curriculum*. Cambridge University Press.
- Korthagen, F., Loughran, J., & Russell, T. (2006). Developing Fundamental Principles for Teacher Education Programs and Practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(8), 1020-1041.
- Landsheere, G. (1985). Teacher Recyclage. (Por favor revisar la cita y anotar los datos completos)
- Mari Mollá, R. *Diagnóstico pedagógico*. Ariel.
- McNamara, D., & Desforges, C. (1978). The Social Sciences, Teacher Education and the Objectification of Craft Knowledge. *British Journal of Teacher Education*, 4(1), 17-36.

- Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias. (2019). *Nueva Formación Docente en Paraguay. Tareas para la mejora de la calidad*. MEC.
- Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (1990). *The Language Teaching Matrix*. Cambridge University.
- Schön, D. (1983). *Learning, Reflection and Change*. Infed Org.
- UNESCO. (2017). *Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives*. Division for Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development, Education Sector.
- Vaillant, D. (2005). *Formación de docentes en América Latina: re-inventando el modelo tradicional* (vol. 15). Octaedro.
- Vaillant, D., & Marcelo, C. (2015). *El ABC y D de la formación docente* (vol. 134). Narcea Ediciones.
- White, R. V. (1988). *The ELT Curriculum: Design, Innovation and Management*. Basil Blackwell.
- Wiggins, G., and McTighe, J. (2007). *Schooling by Design: Mission, Action, and Achievement*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Woodward, T. (1991). *Models and Metaphors in Language Teacher Training: Loop Input and Other Strategies*. Cambridge University Press.
- Woodward, T. (1988). Loop-Input: A New Strategy for Trainers. *System*, 16(1), 23-28.
- Zeichner, K. (1996). Designing Educative Practicum Experiences for Prospective Teachers. In K. Zeichner, S. Melnick, & M. L. Gomez (Eds.), *Currents of Reform in Preservice Teacher Education* (pp. 215-234). Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University.