

ELT in Escuelas Normales: Our Vision Brought to Life




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ÍNDICE

Beneficios de la observación entre pares (OEP) para la mejora de la práctica docente entre los maestros de inglés del CREN “Benito Juárez” 1

Leonora Estrada Flores

Mabel García Mendoza

Esmeralda Irais León López

Miembros del Cuerpo Académico en Formación TPDELI (Transformación de la Práctica Docente en la Enseñanza de la Lengua Inglesa)

Centro Regional de Educación Normal (CREN) “Benito Juárez”

Aprendiendo a enseñar inglés a niños preescolares: Las experiencias de nuestros estudiantes 17

Maria Teresa Miranda Vallejo

Hercy Báez Cruz

Centro Regional de Educación Normal "Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán"

Fortalecimiento en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés a partir del uso de la lengua materna y de la aplicación de una gramática comparada 33

Mónica Escalera de la Hoz

Benemérita Escuela Nacional de Maestros

Experiencia de alumnos normalistas en el programa de inglés por niveles en el IESEN 50

Mónica Paola De Anda García

Hebert Erasmo Licona Rivera

Luis Humberto Tarango Ávila

Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Educación Normal, “Gral. Lázaro Cárdenas del Río” Ciudad Lerdo Durango (IESEN)

Factibilidad del uso del español en la clase de inglés en el Centro Regional de Educación Normal “Benito Juárez”	62
--	----

Esmeralda Irais León López

Mónica Loya Rangel

María Sánchez Santiago

Centro Regional de Educación Normal “Benito Juárez” (CREN)

Explorando Nuevos Horizontes: La Enseñanza del Inglés en Segundo Grado de Preescolar.....	76
---	----

Marco Antonio García Vázquez

Haydeé Tamara Sánchez Velázquez

Escuela Normal de Jilotepec

Estrategias de enseñanza y aprendizaje de inglés como segundo idioma para mejorar la memorización y recuperación	94
--	----

Gabriela Alejandra Morales García

Escuela Normal de Rincón de Romos “Dr. Rafael Francisco Aguilar Lomelí” (ENRR)

Curriculum Co-design – an experience	110
--	-----

Angelica Velez Atanacio

Escuela Normal de la Huasteca Potosina (ENOHUAPO)

Using QR codes and gamification to engage ubiquitous English learning ..	132
--	-----

Teresita Elizabeth Fernández Franco

Escuela Normal Rural “Gral. Matías Ramos Santos” (ENRMRS)

Generation Z: Digital divide in Escuelas Normales 141

Noe Vargas-Betancourt

Benemérita y Centenaria Escuela Normal del Estado de Sonora "Prof. Jesús Manuel Bustamante Mungarro" (ByCENES)

English Language Fellow Teacher Program in Huejutla and Tuxpan. Shared reflections on the effect of intercultural interaction on speaking skills development and motivation 157

Katty Alexandra García Herreros Ovalle

Karla Dafne González Pérez:

Escuela Normal "De las Huastecas"

María Teresa Miranda Vallejo

Centro Regional de Educación Normal "Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán"

How weak is schwa (ə)? Let's find out! 174

Luis Angel Orozco Escalera

Beatriz Eugenia Valdés Rodríguez

Escuela Normal Regional de Especialización (ENRE)

Intervention on the English Teaching Practice during the Pandemic: "Teacher Trainees Innovating from Home" 186

Luis Humberto Tarango Avila

Monica Paola De Anda García

Laura Olivia Jáuregui García

Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Educación Normal "Gral. Lázaro Cárdenas del Río"

Peer-tutors program: A creative aid to multilevel groups at the Escuela Normal Rural "Miguel Hidalgo" 199

Claudia Paulina Navarro Núñez

Frida Citlali Jaime Franco

Rubén Jacob Sánchez Nájera

Escuela Normal Rural "Miguel Hidalgo" (ENRMH)

The use of ICT in the English teaching program for Normal Education university students in the frame of the pandemic 2020. 212

Reyna Amalia Martínez Muñoz

Lilliana Martínez Mejía

Alejandra Lucero Bonilla Robledo

Benemérita Escuela Nacional de Maestros

The role of reflection in teacher education 232

Rocío Doení Bolado Ornelas

Benemérita Escuela Normal Federalizada de Tamaulipas

Implementation of the PPP (presentation, practice, production) methodology in primary schools located in rural areas 243

Ofelia Elizabeth Llanas Rangel

Mildred Urueta Cárdenas

Hugo Alonso Morales Saldaña

Centro Regional de Educación Normal "Profra. Amina Madera Lauterio, (CRENAML) Cedral, S.L.P, México

Strategy of English in Normal Schools of Mexico...a comparative study between 2018 and 2022 syllabi 253

Luis Angel Orozco Escalera

Beatriz Eugenia Valdés Rodríguez

Escuela Normal Regional de Especialización (ENRE)

Teacher talk: how do I talk in the classroom? 264

Rocío Doení Bolado Ornelas

Benemérita Escuela Normal Federalizada de Tamaulipas

Teaching English through Mexican history..... 277

Cynthia Ramírez Pérez

Escuela Normal de San Felipe del Progreso (ENSFP)

The Wisdom Treasure Hunt: Reading for ESL students 291

Yukiko Yanome Gutiérrez

Lydia Samantha León Benavides

Centenaria y Benemérita Escuela Normal del Estado de Querétaro Andrés Balvanera
(CBENEQ)

Beneficios de la observación entre pares (OEP) para la mejora de la práctica docente entre los maestros de inglés del CREN “Benito Juárez”

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Centro Regional de Educación Normal (CREN) “Benito Juárez”

Resumen

Cuando se cuenta con un trayecto docente amplio, se puede asumir que también se tiene mucha experiencia, lo cual puede tener múltiples ventajas. Sin embargo, también se puede caer en la repetición de patrones y estrategias, sin reflexionar sobre su efectividad. Por otro lado, cuando un grupo de docentes imparte la misma materia, que en este caso es el idioma inglés, es muy probable que cada uno de ellos aborde la enseñanza de manera diferente, por lo que puede haber variedad de estrategias, técnicas, materiales, etcétera. En estos casos, esa diversidad sólo puede ser aprovechada si los docentes son capaces de compartir y adoptar técnicas innovadoras o exitosas y aprender los unos de los otros.

Es por estas razones que la academia de inglés del CREN “Benito Juárez” ha generado el presente proyecto de investigación, el cual consiste en aplicar la estrategia de observación entre pares (en adelante, OEP), para así enriquecer y mejorar la práctica docente de los participantes mediante la observación y la reflexión. Por el momento, sólo se cuenta con resultados preliminares, provenientes de la revisión documental, que consisten en diferentes conceptos de la OEP, sus objetivos, componentes, modelos y procedimiento, los beneficios que aporta esta

práctica, las posibles dificultades que existen al momento de aplicarla y las sugerencias que diversos autores dan para llevarla a cabo con mejores resultados. El documento también incluye la descripción de la metodología que se pretende utilizar, así como el diseño de investigación. Finalmente, se presenta la discusión de resultados y las conclusiones parciales a las que se ha llegado en esta etapa.

Palabras clave: observación entre pares (OEP), práctica docente, enseñanza de inglés

Introducción

Como parte de la Estrategia Nacional de Inglés implementada en 2017, cuatro docentes de inglés se integraron al *CREN "Benito Juárez"* a partir de mayo de 2018. La institución ya contaba con una docente de inglés y en 2021 se integró un nuevo colaborador a la academia. Aunque los seis docentes que actualmente pertenecen a la Academia de Inglés tienen relativamente poco tiempo laborando en la institución (la docente de mayor antigüedad se integró en 2011), todos ellos habían trabajado en otras instituciones de educación superior con anterioridad. El cuerpo docente de inglés del *CREN "Benito Juárez"* suma 95 años de experiencia.

Ahora bien, aunque contar con una experiencia amplia puede tener muchas ventajas, los docentes que tienen mucho tiempo realizando la misma labor tienden a repetir y reutilizar los materiales, técnicas y estrategias de enseñanza que les han funcionado en el pasado y con los cuales se sienten cómodos. Asimismo, pueden ser que lleven a cabo prácticas docentes que no sean tan efectivas como ellos imaginan, o bien, que no tengan los resultados que esperan.

Por otro lado, aunque se trata de docentes que imparten la misma asignatura y los mismos temas, cada uno de los integrantes de la Academia de Inglés del *CREN* utiliza diferentes estrategias, materiales y métodos de enseñanza. Esta variedad puede convertirse en una gran riqueza si los docentes son capaces de compartir y adoptar técnicas innovadoras o exitosas que puedan aprender unos de otros.

Por todo lo anterior, la academia de inglés del *CREN "Benito Juárez"* considera que la OEP es una opción que puede ser de provechosa para, por un lado, evitar caer en prácticas rutinarias y, por otro, enriquecer la práctica docente de los maestros que participen en las observaciones. A tal fin, se ha realizado una revisión bibliográfica sobre la observación docente, la OEP y sus diferentes modelos. Se planea que gracias a esta revisión documental se pueda encontrar una guía de observación adecuada a los objetivos específicos de los docentes adscritos a la coordinación de inglés del *CREN "Benito Juárez"*, o bien, se obtengan los elementos necesarios para crear una guía propia.

Posteriormente, se organizará una serie de observaciones entre pares, con su correspondiente retroalimentación y entrevista, para establecer acuerdos y que los docentes que lo consideren necesario, puedan redirigir, corregir o implementar nuevas estrategias de enseñanza, basadas en las observaciones realizadas durante este proceso. Finalmente, se planea ejecutar una segunda serie de observaciones y retroalimentaciones, para confirmar si los docentes han logrado mejorar su práctica gracias a la estrategia de OEP.

De esta forma, el objetivo general de este proyecto de investigación es: conocer los beneficios de aplicar la OEP en el mejoramiento de la práctica docente de los maestros de inglés del Centro Regional de Educación Normal "Benito Juárez" de la ciudad de Pachuca, Hidalgo. Por otro lado, el objetivo específico consiste en: establecer y aplicar un modelo adecuado de OEP para ser usado entre los docentes de la academia de inglés del *CREN "Benito Juárez"*.

Método

Para llevar a cabo esta investigación, se ha elegido el enfoque cualitativo, ya que está orientado a comprender los fenómenos, examinándolos desde el punto de vista de los participantes en un ambiente natural y en relación con su contexto (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2014). En este caso, los participantes son los docentes que imparten la asignatura de inglés del *CREN "Benito Juárez"*, quienes estarán conduciendo las observaciones entre pares.

Igualmente, se decidió llevar el método de investigación-acción, dado que éste comprende un tipo de indagación práctica y colaborativa, que tiene como objetivo mejorar la práctica educativa del profesorado a través de ciclos de acción y reflexión. (Latorre, A., 2003) Además, como se menciona en el marco teórico, la práctica de OEP sugiere que se lleven a cabo varios ciclos de observación, no solamente uno. Asimismo, se considera ésta una investigación del tipo aplicado, ya que pretende resolver un problema práctico en el ámbito de la Evaluación en la Educación apoyándose en la investigación para conseguirlo.

Las principales técnicas de recolección de datos serán: el análisis documental acerca de la OEP y su proceso, instrumentos para realizar la OEP e instrumentos para evaluar dicha observación. Por último, para la realización de esta investigación se desarrollarán las siguientes actividades: sistematización de información para conocer el estado del arte a partir de fuentes de consulta; revisión de bibliografía sobre la OEP, sus ventajas y desventajas, proceso de realización y sugerencias para llevarla a cabo; registro del proceso de OEP llevado a cabo durante el periodo estudiado; evaluación de la práctica de la OEP; y finalmente, reflexión y puesta en marcha del siguiente ciclo de observaciones.

Resultados

Hasta el momento, los resultados parciales de esta indagación solamente cubren la investigación documental que se realizó para la construcción del marco teórico. Esto incluye: conceptos de técnicas, estrategias y prácticas docentes; diferentes definiciones o conceptos de la OEP, los objetivos de la OEP según diferentes autores, los componentes de la OEP, sus beneficios, modelos de OEP, procedimientos para realizar la OEP, las posibles dificultades al utilizar la OEP y sugerencias para su aplicación. De manera muy breve, se presentan aquí los principales hallazgos:

Diferencia entre técnicas, estrategias y prácticas docentes

En el ámbito educativo, las técnicas, estrategias y prácticas docentes son conceptos interrelacionados, pero con significados específicos. Las técnicas se

refieren a procedimientos específicos utilizados por los profesores para alcanzar una meta hacia el aprendizaje; por otro lado, las estrategias docentes son conjuntos de procedimientos didácticos, esto es, planes de acción más amplios que los profesores emplean para alcanzar objetivos educativos a largo plazo (Euroinnova, s.f.); finalmente, la práctica docente se define como la “actividad social que ejerce un maestro o un profesor al dar clase” (Pérez y Gardey, 20201, p. 1), es decir, el conjunto de acciones y decisiones que los profesores llevan a cabo en el aula, influenciadas por su filosofía educativa y métodos de enseñanza.

Conceptos de OEP

La OEP puede definirse como “el proceso de colegas observando a otros en su enseñanza, con el objetivo general de mejorar la práctica docente” (Hendry & Oliver, 2012, p. 3). Por su parte, Laurie Lomas e Ian Kinchin señalan que la OEP es vista como “un medio para mejorar la calidad de la enseñanza a través del intercambio de buenas prácticas entre el personal académico” (Lomas & Kinchin, 2006, p. 53), la cual involucra a “un profesor universitario que asiste a la sesión de enseñanza de un colega con la intención de ofrecer retroalimentación como un ‘amigo crítico’” (Lomas & Kinchin, 2006, p. 53). Es decir, esta actividad no es vista como una labor de juicio o evaluación, sino un proceso a través del cual un colega ayuda a otro a mejorar.

La revisión de otros autores ayuda a determinar que la OEP es, además, una práctica colaborativa, ya que la mejora docente no solamente se da cuando el observado recibe los comentarios o sugerencias, sino que el mentor también puede mejorar su práctica mediante el mero acto de observar.

Objetivos de la OEP

Se puede considerar que existen tres razones por las cuales la OEP debería ser considerada útil dentro de la comunidad académica (Hutchings, 1994): En primer lugar, para motivar la colaboración entre el personal académico, con la finalidad de compartir ideas y buenas prácticas. En segundo lugar, para asegurar que la mejora

de la práctica docente se dé dentro del área de profesionales, y no en manos de miembros de agencias externas. Finalmente, para complementar las evaluaciones hechas por los estudiantes acerca de la labor de sus docentes con comentarios de colegas respetados y, así, proveer múltiples fuentes de información.

Otros autores, entre ellos Freeman (1982), Hutchings (1994), Biggs (2003), Lomas y Kinchin (2006) y McMahon (2007), indican que la OEP sirve para que los docentes con poca práctica o en entrenamiento tengan oportunidad de observar a los docentes experimentados; que los docentes en servicio lo adhieran al proceso de supervisión, que sea un mecanismo para garantizar la calidad, usándola como una herramienta para mejorar la calidad, pues ayuda a los académicos a examinar su práctica con el propósito de la auto-mejora y para establecer las buenas prácticas como un medio para mejorar el aprendizaje de los estudiantes, es decir, que el fin último de la OEP no es la mejora de la práctica docente, sino de los aprendizajes.

Asimismo, la OEP se usa para “ayudar a los colegas a desarrollar su enseñanza. El proceso a menudo se realiza como un ejercicio recíproco, con el personal observándose entre sí, compartiendo ideas y brindándose apoyo mutuo” (Bell 2005, citado por Hendry & Oliver, 2012, p. 3).

De esta forma, se puede afirmar que la OEP es un proceso colaborativo y formativo mediante el cual el personal académico intercambia y reflexiona sobre las buenas prácticas docentes, con el objetivo de mejorar la calidad de la enseñanza y, por ende, de los aprendizajes. Además, los objetivos pueden ser institucionales, grupales, o incluso individuales.

Componentes de la OEP

De acuerdo con Lomas y Kinchin (2006) para aplicar el modelo de OEP, se elige entre tener un pequeño equipo de observadores dentro del departamento, o que todos actúen como observador y observado. Por lo tanto, los principales componentes de la OEP son: observador, observado, propósitos de la observación, y el enfoque.

Los propósitos de la observación, según Malderez (2003), pueden ser cuatro: observación para la formación, observación para el desarrollo, observación para el desarrollo del propio observador y observación para la evaluación.

El enfoque, de acuerdo con Good, et al. (1987) debe contener tres elementos: (1) El valor de la observación aumenta si el observador sabe qué buscar, (2) los observadores deben utilizar procedimientos específicos y (3) el observador debe seguir siendo un observador.

Beneficios de la OEP

Entre los muchos beneficios que provee la OEP, destacan: aumento en los niveles de autoestima profesional de los docentes y en el dinamismo de los procesos de autonomía, protagonismo y anhelos de profesionalización; integración de teoría y práctica, conocimiento de diferentes herramientas de aprendizaje, mejora de la práctica pedagógica, mayor uso de lenguaje técnico, mayor capacidad autocrítica, mejora de la comprensión del proceso de enseñanza, mejora continua, mayor lealtad institucional gracias a una mejora del desempeño individual, del departamento y del colegio; aprendizaje vicario, fortalecimiento de la autoeficacia, entre otros.

Modelos de OEP

Gosling (2002, citado por Lomas y Kinchin, 2006) identifica tres modelos de OEP, cada uno enfocado a mejorar la calidad de la enseñanza en las instituciones de educación superior: modelo de evaluación, modelo de desarrollo y modelo de revisión por pares. Con el modelo de evaluación, el personal de mayor experiencia observa al resto del personal, mientras que con el modelo de desarrollo los desarrolladores educativos observan a los profesores.

El modelo de revisión por pares implica que los profesores se observen entre sí. El estado de la evidencia también es muy diferente. El modelo de evaluación más jerárquico se basa en la autoridad del personal superior (Lomas y Kinchin, 2006).

Procedimiento para realizar OEP

Existen múltiples maneras para llevar a cabo la OEP. En el caso de esta investigación, tomaremos en cuenta dos modelos particulares: el primero es el propuesto por los autores Richards y Lockhart, y el otro es el de Newman, Roberts, y Schwartzstein.

Modelo de Richards y Lockhart

Richards y Lockhart (1992) indican que, en primer lugar, se debe llegar al acuerdo de que cada participante será tanto observador como observado. Los docentes trabajarán en parejas y tomar turnos observando sus clases mutuamente. Además, los autores proponen dividir el proceso en tres partes: la pre-observación, observación y post-observación.

Acerca de los métodos para recolectar información, los autores describen cuatro: muestras temporales, formularios codificados, narrativa descriptiva amplia y narrativa descriptiva corta. Asimismo, los autores proponen cuestionarios para el observado y para el observador, a ser utilizados al final de la OEP, para evaluar el proceso en sí.

Modelo de Newman, Roberts, y Schwartzstein

Aunque se trata de un modelo dirigido a docentes del área de medicina, el modelo de Lori Newman, David Roberts y Richard Schwartzstein de la Universidad de Harvard (2012) resulta sumamente útil para docentes de cualquier otra área del conocimiento. Los autores dividen el proceso de OEP en diez pasos: clarificar expectativas, revisar la logística, planear la reunión de retroalimentación, enfocar el lente, conducir la observación, reunirse pronto después de la sesión de clase, comentar la sesión de clase, dar retroalimentación que sea útil, evitar inconvenientes comunes en la retroalimentación, cosechar los beneficios de dar retroalimentación.

Posibles dificultades de aplicar la OEP

Hutchings comenta que en muchos casos "...es conveniente enfrentar la percepción de que la enseñanza es una práctica privada, no compartida con los colegas" (1994, citado por Lomas & Kinchin, 2006, p. 54). Por otro lado, Parra (2012) señala que las desventajas percibidas se asocian principalmente a la escasa disponibilidad de tiempo, ya que la OEP y el posterior análisis conjunto de las observaciones requieren de tiempo que es algo escaso en la cargada agenda docente.

Por su parte Lomas y Kinchin comparten que la observación formativa alentará a los participantes a identificar las necesidades de desarrollo, pero esto debe ser objeto de seguimiento. Los autores añaden que "hay muchas razones por las que el personal académico podría oponerse a las innovaciones educativas o mostrarse indiferente ante la perspectiva." (Lomas & Kinchin, 2006, p. 54) Cabe, entonces, preguntar a los participantes acerca de sus inquietudes al llevar a cabo el proceso de OEP.

A este respecto, Keig y Waggoner (1995) citan algunas de las razones de la falta de participación o compromiso de los académicos: la observación entre compañeros puede verse como un desafío a la libertad académica; variaciones en las percepciones de la representatividad, precisión y generalización de lo que se observa; preocupaciones sobre la objetividad de quienes observan; valores relacionados con las recompensas e incentivos de la institución: los incentivos se perciben como mucho mayores para la investigación que para la enseñanza; y que los profesores pueden estar preocupados por la sobrecarga de cambios que, junto con la presión interna para enseñar y publicar más mientras aumenta la diversidad y el número de estudiantes y disminuyen los recursos, ha hecho que muchos académicos sospechen y consideren la OEP como otra iniciativa de gestión que consume mucho tiempo. (Evans & Nación, 2000, citados por Keig, et al., 1995).

En cuanto a la OEP entre el cuerpo docente de un programa de idiomas, se recomienda a menudo como un medio para mejorar la eficacia de los docentes y

promover el desarrollo del personal. En la práctica, sin embargo, puede ser difícil de implementar porque: (1) los maestros tienen muchas demandas de su tiempo, (2) a veces son reacios a permitir que sus colegas entren a sus aulas y (3) es posible que no vean ningún beneficio potencial de observación de compañeros (Richards y Lockhart, 1992).

Finalmente, Martin, Smith y Double (1999, citados por Lomas & Kinchin) plantean la objeción de algunos profesores de que la observación de su enseñanza es una intrusión en una parte íntima de su trabajo. Blackwell y McLean (1996) continúan argumentando que esto se percibe como una amenaza a su autonomía profesional (citados por Lomas y Kinchin, 2006).

Sugerencias para la OEP

Sabiendo que la OEP tiene múltiples beneficios, pero también puede generar tensiones entre los docentes participantes, es conveniente tomar en cuenta los consejos que diversos autores indican para que esta práctica se lleve a cabo de la mejor manera posible.

Lomas y Kinchin nos dicen que la mejora de la calidad de la enseñanza sólo será posible si se abordan adecuadamente las preocupaciones del personal académico: “La investigación demuestra la importancia de implementar la OEP con sensibilidad (...) y siendo plenamente conscientes de las ansiedades y preocupaciones del personal académico.” (Lomas y Kinchin, 2006, p. 53) Es decir que, en la fase de acuerdos previos o pre-observación, deberá haber un momento para discutir las inquietudes de los participantes, sobre todo del personal observado, destacando el valor que las observaciones pueden agregar a su práctica docente.

Por su parte, Bell (2001), Ferren (2001) y Keig y Waggoner (1995) (citados por Lomas y Kinchin, 2006) señalan que cuando se realiza un proceso de observación formativa entre pares, se logra un aumento en los niveles de comprensión y participación en la innovación en entornos de enseñanza y aprendizaje. Además, argumentan que es más probable que ésta práctica sea

aceptada por el personal si se cumplen las siguientes condiciones: la evaluación es realizada sin juzgar e indica áreas de oportunidad o de crecimiento del observado; la OEP se realiza de manera regular, en ciclos anuales o bianuales; el departamento es quien guía el diseño e implementación de la observación formativa entre pares; el departamento otorga oportunidades de capacitación en las habilidades necesarias para conducir la observación formativa entre pares y existen recompensas institucionales e incentivos estructurados para demostrar que la participación en la observación formativa entre pares es valorada.

Una manera de lograr esto es introducir la OEP como un mecanismo de apoyo que involucra a otros miembros de la comunidad de aprendizaje particular y que son "amigos críticos" (Melrose, 1998). Es decir, no se trata de un proceso inquisitorio, sino de un proceso colaborativo. Por otro lado, Martin et al. (1999) argumentan que la honestidad y la confianza son elementos clave para el éxito de cualquier esquema si un "amigo crítico", por ejemplo, sugiere formas de lidiar con los problemas de un colega para enfrentar grupos numerosos de estudiantes, o posibles estrategias para alentar a los miembros de un grupo de a contribuir a la discusión. En el caso particular de la materia de inglés, estas sugerencias pueden ser en la línea de lograr que los estudiantes pierdan el miedo a hablar frente a sus compañeros, encuentren mayor motivación para estudiar el idioma fuera del salón de clases, y un largo etcétera.

Por su parte, Richards y Lockhart (1992) indican que los docentes con quienes ellos trabajaron dieron las siguientes sugerencias para implementar la OEP: En primer lugar, con el objeto de maximizar la efectividad, la OEP debe llevarse a cabo de forma regular. La mayoría de los participantes consideraron que dos veces durante un ciclo de enseñanza de 10 semanas sería óptimo.

Además, debería establecerse un calendario para las actividades de OEP, de modo que los docentes se sientan cómodos con él, considerando sus actividades de enseñanza y otros compromisos de su labor. Dependiendo del enfoque de la

observación, a veces sería útil que el observador grabara en audio la lección. Esto podría ser útil al revisar las notas de los observadores.

Asimismo, es más probable que el maestro se beneficie de la OEP si hay una necesidad o problema específico que el maestro desea revisar con más detalle. Por ejemplo, un maestro puede estar preocupado de que algunos estudiantes estén recibiendo muy poca práctica lingüística durante las lecciones y podría invitar a un colega a recopilar información sobre la producción de los estudiantes durante una lección.

Acerca de esto, Richards y Lockhart (1992) proponen recolectar información a través de varios instrumentos, entre los cuales están las narrativas descriptivas. Éstas se refieren a una narración escrita con el propósito de resumir los eventos principales de la lección o sesión de clase. Las narrativas descriptivas amplias son acerca de todos los participantes de la clase, mientras que las narrativas descriptivas cortas se enfocan en un aspecto específico de la lección, por ejemplo: un estudiante particular (Richards, & Lockhart, 1992).

Las narrativas descriptivas son útiles como punto de partida, ya que pueden ayudar a identificar áreas que un maestro desea explorar con más detalle. Sin embargo, las observaciones de seguimiento deben centrarse más en el uso de formularios o procedimientos de observación específicos.

Finalmente, aunque se había pedido a los participantes que no evaluaran las lecciones que observaban, sentían que una vez que se había desarrollado una relación de apoyo y colaboración entre los dos maestros, la retroalimentación a veces podía incluir un componente evaluativo. Se sugirió que el observador se centrara en las siguientes cuestiones en el debate posterior a la observación: ¿Qué funcionó mejor en la lección? ¿Cuál fue la parte menos efectiva de la lección? y ¿Qué habrías hecho diferente si tú hubieras enseñado la lección?

Los autores también proponen que es esencial que existan líneas claras de comunicación acerca de la naturaleza y el propósito de la OEP desde el principio

del proceso. Además, la OEP debe abordarse como una oportunidad para que los maestros se ayuden mutuamente a recopilar información que les sería útil y que no podrían obtener por sí mismos. En lugar de ver la OEP como un procedimiento de evaluación, los maestros deben verse a sí mismos como co-investigadores que colaboran para el beneficio de los demás. (Richards y Lockhart, 1992)

Finalmente, Hendry y Oliver (2012) hablan de una observación distinta, donde el observador no evalúa ni critica, sino que más bien aprende a través de observar a un compañero de mayor experiencia. Los autores apuntan que se deben tener las siguientes consideraciones:

Primeramente, el riesgo en este proceso es que los maestros pueden carecer de suficiente motivación y/o conocimiento práctico para implementar recomendaciones verbales. En el peor de los casos, su autoeficacia para la enseñanza puede verse debilitada por una retroalimentación mal encuadrada.

Por otro lado, el observador aprende sobre cómo realizar cierta práctica de manera vicaria, en lugar de que se le diga cómo hacerlo, y llega a creer (fortaleciendo su autoeficacia) que también puede enseñar de esta manera, por lo que está motivado para intentar llevarla a cabo.

En último lugar, ver a alguien enseñar bien nos inspira a probar la estrategia, y cuando nosotros también tenemos éxito, nuestra creencia en la utilidad de lo que vimos y de lo que somos capaces se ve reforzada.

Discusión

La OEP es un proceso en el que los docentes se observan mutuamente para mejorar su práctica docente. Implica el intercambio de buenas prácticas y la retroalimentación constructiva. No se trata de evaluación, sino de ayudarse mutuamente a través de conversaciones y colaboración. En lugar de señalar defectos, se busca indicar cómo mejorar.

La OEP en la comunidad académica es útil para fomentar la colaboración, asegurar la mejora de la práctica docente dentro del área de profesionales y complementar las evaluaciones de los estudiantes. Se busca incrustar esta práctica a la cultura del departamento e incluso podría formar parte de programas de desarrollo docente. El enfoque principal es ayudar a los colegas a desarrollar su enseñanza a través de un proceso recíproco de observación, intercambio de ideas y apoyo mutuo. La OEP promueve la reflexión crítica y la exposición a diferentes estilos de enseñanza, beneficiando tanto al observado como a los observadores. Es un proceso colaborativo y formativo para mejorar la calidad de la enseñanza y los aprendizajes.

La OEP en la comunidad académica puede realizarse mediante equipos de observadores o con todos los miembros actuando como observadores y observados. Existen diferentes propósitos para la observación, como la formación, el desarrollo individual, el desarrollo del propio observador y la evaluación. La OEP ofrece beneficios significativos, como el desarrollo profesional, el aumento de la autoestima y la mejora de la práctica docente. Los docentes pueden integrar teoría y práctica, adquirir nuevas herramientas de aprendizaje y mejorar sus competencias pedagógicas. Además, se promueve el uso del lenguaje técnico, la autocrítica y el conocimiento más profundo de las herramientas didácticas.

Hasta el momento, no se han aplicado instrumentos en la investigación, pero se identificaron diferentes modelos y procedimientos de OEP, así como sugerencias para su implementación. Entre los modelos, se enlista el de evaluación, desarrollo y revisión por pares, cada uno con su propio enfoque y estructura. Se destacan dos modelos particulares: el propuesto por Richards y Lockhart, y el de Newman, Roberts y Schwartzstein. Además, se brindan cuestionarios para el observador y el observado, así como recomendaciones para una observación efectiva entre pares. Se prioriza abordar las preocupaciones y ansiedades de los participantes y establecer en el departamento una cultura de observación formativa entre pares. También se menciona que la participación regular, el apoyo institucional y las oportunidades de capacitación son clave para el éxito de la OEP.

Hasta ahora, el proyecto de investigación ha avanzado en el estado del arte, el marco teórico, la metodología y el diseño. Aunque los datos aún no se han recolectado, se puede llegar a conclusiones preliminares: La OEP es un proceso colaborativo que busca mejorar la práctica docente mediante el intercambio de buenas prácticas y retroalimentación. Tiene diversos objetivos, como promover la colaboración, compartir ideas, complementar la evaluación de los estudiantes y fomentar el desarrollo profesional. Se identificaron características clave, como la confidencialidad y la reflexión crítica. La OEP tiene múltiples beneficios, incluyendo la mejora de la práctica pedagógica y el fomento de la colaboración. En conclusión, es una práctica valiosa y viable para los docentes de inglés del CREN "Benito Juárez".

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Aprendiendo a enseñar inglés a niños preescolares: Las experiencias de nuestros estudiantes

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Resumen

El presente escrito expone los resultados de una investigación desarrollada en el Centro Regional de Educación Normal "Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán" en la ciudad de Tuxpan, Veracruz, la cual tuvo como propósito el implementar las estrategias de Presentación, Práctica y Producción (PPP), así como Respuesta Física Total (TPR, por sus siglas en inglés), para favorecer el aprendizaje de la didáctica y diseño de planeaciones para la enseñanza del idioma inglés con niños en edad de preescolar. Se trabajó una metodología cualitativa con un alcance exploratorio, considerando una muestra intencionada de 28 estudiantes de la Licenciatura en Educación Preescolar, de la generación 2019-2023.

Al finalizar el estudio, se encontró que la totalidad de alumnas consideraron que su desempeño como docentes practicantes mejoró después de aprender la metodología de enseñanza del idioma inglés, pues afirmaron que el modelaje en las clases y el ver a los niños motivados por la forma en la que les presentaban los contenidos, las hizo sentir mayor seguridad al trabajar la enseñanza de una segunda lengua. Además, aunque la mayoría señaló sentirse preparada para diseñar e implementar sesiones de clase en inglés, también reconocieron que necesitan fortalecer su conocimiento gramatical, de pronunciación y de escucha.

Palabras clave: Inglés, Estrategias, Planeación

Planteamiento del problema

Los planes de estudios 2017 para educación básica y 2018 para Educación Normal, fueron únicos en su tipo, ya que se diseñaron correlacionados, es decir, los contenidos que los alumnos de educación normal aprendían, estaban orientados para trabajar los contenidos del plan de estudios de educación básica. Por lo anterior, se buscó sistematizar la enseñanza del idioma inglés en las licenciaturas que ofertan las escuelas normales.

Sin embargo, a pesar de los esfuerzos del gobierno federal por dotar a las escuelas normales con docentes especializados en el idioma inglés para dar continuidad a los planes de estudio establecidos, tanto la educación normal como la de todos los niveles educativos, enfrentó un reto a nivel mundial, debido a la pandemia del COVID-19, misma que originó un aislamiento social y por ende el cierre de las escuelas en todo el mundo, hecho que afectó la adquisición de aprendizajes de los estudiantes, pues como señala McKinsey citado en Delgado (2022), gran parte de los alumnos tuvieron aprendizajes inconclusos, dado que aprendieron menos de lo que hubieran aprendido en las clases normales.

Derivado de lo antes expuesto, en el año 2022 cuando se regresó a las clases presenciales en su totalidad, se decidió hacer una investigación con estudiantes normalistas que cursaban el 6º semestre de la Licenciatura en Educación Preescolar en el Centro Regional de Educación Normal "Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán" y que habían estado realizando sus prácticas profesionales solamente en modalidad virtual, cabe señalar que, de acuerdo con Peña, et al. (2016), las prácticas profesionales hacen referencia a un componente curricular que se orienta de manera inicial con la finalidad de fortalecer el perfil de egreso a partir de la ejecución de actividades profesionales orientadas por tutores expertos, dichas prácticas tienen además el propósito de que los estudiantes validen la información recibida en las escuelas a partir de la reflexión sobre su actuar profesional.

Por lo antes expuesto, es posible señalar que el trabajo virtual que vivieron las estudiantes al llevar a cabo sus prácticas profesionales, no les permitió contar

con experiencias presenciales que incluyeran la retroalimentación de las tutoras de las escuelas de práctica, a fin de que ejecutaran sus planeaciones didácticas con los conocimientos y habilidades suficientes para enseñar a la niñez mexicana. Por otro lado, partiendo del hecho de que a principios del año 2022, seguía vigente el plan de estudios de educación básica 2017, en el que se establecía la enseñanza del inglés desde el 3er. grado de preescolar, con el propósito de que “los estudiantes se sensibilicen y familiaricen con una lengua distinta a la materna, y puedan reaccionar y responder a necesidades de comunicación básicas y personales en contextos rutinarios definidos” (Secretaría de Educación Pública [SEP], 2017a, p. 266), así como tomando en cuenta que los rasgos del perfil de egreso de la educación preescolar incluían el que los infantes comprendieran algunas palabras y expresiones en inglés (Secretaría de Educación Pública [SEP], 2017b), se tuvo la dificultad de que las estudiantes normalistas en su mayoría no contaban con los conocimientos suficientes del idioma inglés para su enseñanza con los preescolares de acuerdo a lo requerido en el plan de estudios vigente en ese momento, situación que les generaba incertidumbre y principalmente inseguridad al momento de enseñar esta segunda lengua a los infantes.

Fue así, como al comenzar el 6º semestre del ciclo escolar 2021-2022, se aplicó un examen diagnóstico a las estudiantes normalistas para conocer el nivel de inglés que poseían, mismo que mostró los resultados expuestos en la Tabla 1, de acuerdo con el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia (MCER) para las lenguas.

Tabla 1

Resultados de evaluación diagnóstica

Nivel	Alumnas
A1	4
A2	20
B1	2
B2	2
C1	0
C2	0

Con el instrumento diagnóstico aplicado, se comprobó que la mayor parte de las alumnas, se encontraban en un nivel básico del idioma inglés. Sin embargo, a pesar de dichos resultados y partiendo de los contenidos que el Plan de Estudios de Educación Básica 2017 presentaba, se consideró que existía la posibilidad de enseñar el idioma inglés, debido a que la etapa de enseñanza en preescolar se denominaba: de contacto y familiarización, donde el principal objetivo era propiciar un primer acercamiento al idioma de forma placentera para los alumnos y que los motivara a adquirir el gusto por el inglés. Cabe señalar que, aunque el plan de estudios 2018 de Educación Normal, comparado con planes de estudios anteriores, incluía más horas de instrucción de la lengua inglesa, no contemplaba entre sus contenidos, ningún tema relacionado con la metodología de la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera.

Por lo antes expuesto, se estableció la pregunta de investigación ¿de qué manera el uso de las estrategias de enseñanza de Presentación, Práctica y Producción (PPP) y Respuesta Física Total (TPR, por sus siglas en inglés), contribuirán al aprendizaje de la didáctica y diseño de planeaciones para la enseñanza del idioma inglés en estudiantes del 6º semestre de la generación 2019-2023 de la licenciatura en educación preescolar del Centro Regional de Educación Normal "Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán"?

Marco teórico

La habilidad para comunicarse es fundamental en la vida del ser humano, pero lograr hacerlo en dos idiomas, le da la posibilidad de incluirse en el mundo globalizado en el que se vive actualmente y que exige intercambios e internacionalización en entornos educativos, económicos, tecnológicos y otros. Por lo antes expuesto, educar en un segundo idioma desde temprana edad, abre un abanico de posibilidades para su aprendizaje, ya que Rueda y Wulburn (2014), señalan que, si una persona inicia el estudio de un nuevo idioma desde la primera infancia, podrá adquirirlo como una segunda lengua.

Es así, que para lograr una mejor comprensión de cómo el niño aprende un segundo idioma existen diversas posturas teóricas, pero para el caso de la presente investigación, se consideró lo propuesto por Krashen (1982), quien desarrolló una teoría sobre la adquisición del lenguaje, la cual se basa en cinco hipótesis, tales como:

1. La hipótesis de distinción, en la cual se establece una diferencia entre adquisición y aprendizaje, ya que señala que la primera es un proceso subconsciente similar a la forma en la que los niños desarrollan las habilidades en su primera lengua, mientras que el aprendizaje, se refiere al conocimiento consciente de las reglas gramaticales de la segunda lengua y a su aplicación en la producción.
2. La hipótesis del orden natural, hace alusión al hecho de que la adquisición de estructuras gramaticales sucede en un orden predecible cuando la adquisición es natural, es decir, cuando no se aprende de manera formal o siguiendo reglas específicas. Señala, además, que hay similitudes entre el orden en que esto sucede en la primera lengua y en los lenguajes siguientes.
3. La hipótesis del monitor, considera que tomando en cuenta que, la adquisición es la responsable de la fluidez del idioma, el conocimiento sobre las reglas del mismo (aprendizaje), juega el papel de “monitorear” el lenguaje que se produce. Esto solo sucede cuando hay suficiente tiempo y cuando el enfoque se hace hacia la forma o estructura correcta del idioma, teniendo en cuenta que el usuario debe conocer la regla que se está aplicando. De esta manera, los individuos se autocorrigen al producir el idioma, contrastando las reglas que conocen con las cosas que escriben o dicen.
4. La hipótesis del input, hace alusión a la importancia de que los inputs aportados al inicio de la lección sean comprensibles, es decir, que solo estén un nivel por arriba del que se tiene en la competencia actual de los alumnos, pero que puedan ser entendibles por el contexto. De la misma manera, para alcanzar la

competencia deseada en el idioma, hay que enfocarse en el significado, más no en la forma en que se dice, que es igual a como se aprende el primer idioma.

5. La hipótesis del filtro afectivo, establece que solo se puede adquirir un input comprensible cuando las condiciones afectivas son las óptimas; es decir, cuando el estudiante está motivado, tenga confianza y una buena imagen de sí mismo, así como un bajo nivel de ansiedad. El filtro afectivo funciona como una puerta de control sobre el input que se recibe, ya que cuando los alumnos se encuentran a la defensiva, este suele ser alto y se evita la comprensión del input; por el contrario, si están relajados y en un ambiente placentero, habrá mayor adquisición del lenguaje.

Para la enseñanza del inglés, se hace necesario diseñar planeaciones que consideren los procesos de adquisición del lenguaje, pero además que se pongan en práctica estrategias con enfoques comunicativos de la enseñanza de lenguas (Communicative Language Teaching, CLT por sus siglas en inglés), por lo que resulta importante señalar que dicho método se basa en enfatizar la competencia comunicativa de los alumnos, más allá de las estructuras gramaticales; es decir, si el lenguaje es un medio de comunicación, entonces el aprenderlo debe basarse en aprender a comunicarse, por lo que el enfoque se basa en transmitir el mensaje más que en hacerlo utilizando las estructuras correctas. De esta manera, los alumnos deberán involucrarse en un proceso gradual de “construcción creativa” del lenguaje.

Por otra parte, de acuerdo con Ausubel (1963, como se citó en Moreira, s.f.), un aprendizaje significativo se define como “(...) el proceso a través del cual una nueva información (un nuevo conocimiento) se relaciona de manera no arbitraria y sustantiva (no-literal) con la estructura cognoscitiva de la persona que aprende” (p. 2). De esta manera, una adecuada adquisición del conocimiento del idioma inglés requiere de un aprendizaje significativo, para que sea efectivo y permanente, también se hace necesario que sea relacionable al conocimiento existente que el alumno posee. Es así, que las experiencias personales resultan ser elementos que

contribuyen a ello y se les debe alentar a expresarse de la forma más clara posible, de preferencia en contextos predecibles y cotidianos cuando son principiantes.

Por lo anterior, es posible mencionar que las actividades de clase deben planearse y diseñarse para emular al lenguaje real utilizado en contextos cotidianos, significativos y contextualizados; por lo que deben ser lo más auténticas posible. Cabe señalar que también es necesario tener en cuenta la importancia de evitar actividades repetitivas y mecánicas, ya que se debe priorizar la motivación intrínseca y extrínseca del estudiante, evitando que caigan en el aburrimiento y la monotonía (Ricoy y Álvarez, 2016).

Resulta importante señalar que, dentro de la metodología para enseñar el idioma inglés, existen diferentes modelos para organizar una planeación, uno de ellos lleva por nombre Presentación, Práctica y Producción (PPP), el cual de acuerdo con O'Hagan y Jones (2004), consta de tres momentos durante los cuales se pretende enseñar algo a los alumnos, sus etapas se desarrollan considerando que en un primer momento, se presenta el tema a los estudiantes, ofreciendo inputs previamente seleccionados con el objeto de ejemplificar el tema de estudio; en un segundo momento, estos nuevos elementos que conforman el tema, requerirán ser practicados, enfocando la lección en la correcta aplicación del nuevo tópico, logrando que los alumnos se familiaricen con él; finalmente, se requiere que los estudiantes sean motivados a usar el lenguaje de forma más libre en actividades productivas, tales como hablar o escribir, con el objetivo de que lo puedan utilizar para expresarse junto con el conocimiento previo que posean. Por lo antes citado, es posible mencionar que el enfoque PPP, simboliza un modelo de enseñanza orientado a desarrollar la fluidez del idioma.

Adicionalmente, existe el método Total Physical Response (TPR, por sus siglas en inglés), mismo que puede ser traducido como Respuesta Física Total y que fue desarrollado por James Asher, el cual, de acuerdo con la Universidad Internacional de la Rioja [UNIR] (2020), refiere a un conjunto de métodos para favorecer el aprendizaje del lenguaje, mismos que se basan en el hecho de que el

cerebro humano está biológicamente preparado para aprender cualquier lenguaje de forma natural, de esta forma se interioriza. Este método se fundamenta en cómo los niños aprenden su lengua materna, combinando lo verbal con lo motriz y recurre al sistema kinestésico-sensorial de los estudiantes, por lo que la forma en que los niños aprenden su lengua materna es mediante la escucha activa, que después combinan con movimientos relacionados a lo escuchado. De esta forma, las primeras habilidades que se practican son las receptivas.

Cabe mencionar que Asher (2009), hizo tres suposiciones relevantes sobre la base de sus observaciones: la primera refiere al hecho de que el idioma se aprende principalmente escuchando; la segunda, señala que la enseñanza de idiomas debe involucrar al hemisferio derecho del cerebro; y la tercera hace alusión al hecho de que el aprendizaje de idiomas no debe significar ningún tipo de estrés. Es así, que el método de TPR, refiere a una acción física y es excelente para ocuparse con los niños desde muy pequeños, por lo que este procedimiento destaca la relevancia de la destreza auditiva en los infantes, ya que, a partir de eso, adquieren el vocabulario fundamental, para luego usarlo.

Metodología

Para el desarrollo de la investigación se consideró el trabajo con una metodología cualitativa, misma que tuvo un alcance exploratorio, a fin de disponer de elementos que en el futuro ayuden en el desarrollo de nuevas investigaciones que contribuyan a mejorar la enseñanza del idioma inglés en el Centro Regional de Educación Normal "Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán".

Se trabajó una muestra intencionada compuesta por 28 estudiantes del sexo femenino que cursaban el sexto semestre grupo A de la generación 2019-2023 en la licenciatura en educación preescolar, con quienes, a partir de sesiones de clase presenciales, se implementaron las estrategias de enseñanza de Presentación, Práctica y Producción (PPP) y Respuesta Física Total (TPR, por sus siglas en inglés), teniéndose el objetivo de lograr que las alumnas planearan una clase de

inglés en una sesión de 20 a 30 minutos, creando material didáctico e instrumentos de evaluación pertinentes a sus planeaciones.

Se comenzó la clase revisando los saberes previos de las estudiantes con relación al cómo aprenden los infantes el lenguaje, se hizo una lluvia de ideas sobre autores, teorías, estrategias, conceptos, etc., que ya habían abordado en cursos anteriores, incluyendo en este análisis el hecho de que los pequeños requieren que primero se les hable, a fin de darles la posibilidad de escuchar, para luego permitirles producir palabras y/o sonidos vinculados con lo que se les mencionó, ello fundamentado en el estudio de las etapas del desarrollo cognitivo de Piaget, la teoría sociocultural de Vygotsky y la teoría de adquisición de lenguaje de Stephen Krashen, así como en el enfoque comunicativo en la enseñanza de lenguas.

Posteriormente, se analizó lo que decía el programa de estudios de educación básica 2017 en relación con la enseñanza del inglés, a fin de llevar a las estudiantes al reconocimiento del tipo de teorías de enseñanza que estaban inmersas en el plan de estudios, entre ellas la teoría de adquisición del lenguaje de Krashen, así como las estrategias de Presentación, Práctica y Producción (PPP) y Respuesta Física Total (TPR), por sus siglas en inglés.

Seguidamente, en tres sesiones de clase de dos horas cada una, se procedió a trabajar con las estrategias PPP y TPR, por lo que primero se analizó el cómo estaban acostumbradas a planear, para luego guiarlas en el hecho de relacionar esto con la forma de hacerlo en inglés, destacando en ello las variantes que existen para enseñar una segunda lengua. Es preciso señalar que, para reducir el estrés y la incertidumbre de las alumnas ante la experiencia de enseñar el idioma inglés, se les instruyó a planear en español y, se les dio la opción de hacerlo en parejas, siempre y cuando se adecuarán los contenidos y las técnicas propuestas a las necesidades particulares de cada grupo con el que implementarían la clase.

Adicionalmente, se les hizo mención, a partir del TPR, que la kinestesia jugaba un papel importante en la enseñanza del inglés, razón por la que debían llevar a los infantes a la repetición de palabras, con la finalidad de que las

aprendieran; en este sentido, resulta importante señalar, que se destacó la importancia de la motivación, a fin de que los preescolares se mantuvieran interesados por el aprendizaje del idioma inglés.

Es preciso señalar que para la enseñanza de cómo hacer planeaciones en inglés, se diseñó un formato específico que incluía los elementos propuestos por el programa de Aprendizajes Clave y las tres etapas del método PPP, mismo que fue el elegido para diseñar las secuencias didácticas (ver Figura 1).

Cabe mencionar que, aunque el programa de Aprendizajes Clave solo proponía la enseñanza del inglés a partir de 3er. año de preescolar, se instruyó a todas las alumnas a adaptar los contenidos propuestos por dicho programa a los grados inferiores, ya que muchas de ellas implementarían sus planeaciones con grupos de 1º y 2º grado o, incluso, había quienes darían la clase en escuelas unitarias, dichos casos necesitaron hacer adecuaciones a sus planeaciones para poder adaptarse al contexto.

Figura 1

Propuesta de formato para diseño de planeaciones de la enseñanza del inglés

<p>Centro Regional de Educación Normal "Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán"</p> <p>JARDÍN DE NIÑOS:</p> <p>EDUCADORA:</p> <p>EDUCADORA PRACTICANTE:</p> <p>Grado y Grupo:</p> <p>Campo de formación académica: Lengua extranjera. Inglés.</p> <p>Aprendizajes esperados:</p> <p>Propósito de Educación Preescolar:</p> <p>Reconoce y reacciona ante algunas palabras aisladas y expresiones muy sencillas de uso rutinario y muy frecuente en interacciones sociales básicas propias de sus contextos cotidianos (escuela, hogar). Responde con monosílabos y lenguaje no verbal a modelos orales y escritos relacionados con necesidades de comunicación inmediata, con una finalidad y un propósito concretos. Se relaciona con otros mediante juegos y actividades lúdicas (SEP, 2017b, p. 180).</p>		
<p>Ambiente Social de Aprendizaje:</p>	<p>Práctica social de lenguaje:</p>	<p>Tiempo estimado:</p>

Actividad Comunicativa:			30 min
Recursos o Materiales:			
Presentación:			
Práctica:			
Producción:			

Por lo anterior, se hizo necesario instruir a las alumnas para realizar sus planeaciones, instrumentos de evaluación y materiales, por lo que se les dio libertad de escoger el tema a enseñar según las necesidades de aprendizaje de sus estudiantes y, por supuesto, conforme a lo pactado con la educadora tutora. De esta manera, se tomaron acuerdos para enseñar temas agrupados en campos léxicos, los cuales de acuerdo con Martínez (2003), refieren a la “totalidad de palabras que pertenecen a la misma esfera conceptual” (p. 105), por lo que se consideró que de esta manera el proceso de enseñanza sería más significativo para los preescolares, a diferencia de solo enseñarles palabras aisladas.

Es así, que una vez que las alumnas tenían sus planeaciones listas, se procedió a llevarlas a vivir la experiencia de su aplicación en el aula, aplicándolas a sus compañeras, quienes a su vez simularon ser niñas de preescolar, ello con la finalidad de que las estudiantes mejorarán su seguridad al momento de dirigir una clase de inglés, y principalmente que tuvieran la retroalimentación de la docente en función de las estrategias de enseñanza trabajadas para la implementación de planeaciones orientadas a la adquisición de saberes en una segunda lengua.

Finalmente, para valorar la funcionalidad de las estrategias de enseñanza trabajadas, se aplicó una encuesta virtual a partir de un formulario de Google, en donde se hicieron 14 cuestionamientos, de los cuales cuatro fueron cerrados y diez abiertos. El periodo que se estableció para responder dicho formulario fue durante la primera semana del mes de julio del 2022, lográndose la respuesta de las 28 estudiantes con quienes se desarrolló el estudio.

Resultados

Los resultados obtenidos en la investigación fueron importantes, ya que, hasta ese momento, en el Centro Regional de Educación Normal "Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán", no se había sistematizado la práctica docente del inglés y las alumnas no se habían expuesto a aprender a partir de los procesos trabajados, razón por la cual no se había solicitado en la práctica de estudiantes normalistas, el diseño de propuestas para la enseñanza de una segunda lengua.

Por lo anterior, a partir de la encuesta aplicada, se encontró que el 100% de las alumnas consideró que las estrategias didácticas para la enseñanza del inglés, basadas en los métodos PPP y TPR, así como en las hipótesis de Krashen, permitieron que sus grupos de práctica alcanzaran los aprendizajes esperados en las sesiones que involucraron la enseñanza del idioma, además de que consideraron que su desempeño como docentes practicantes mejoró después de aprender sobre la metodología de enseñanza del idioma inglés. Cabe señalar que, varias de ellas mencionaron que el modelaje en clase y el que los niños se sintieran motivados por la manera en que se presentaban los contenidos las hizo sentir más seguras en su trabajo docente.

Al cuestionarlas sobre el hecho de haber comprendido la mayor parte de las teorías, métodos y estrategias para la enseñanza del inglés con preescolares, 27 estudiantes señalaron que sí lo comprendieron, ya que fueron capaces de alcanzar los aprendizajes esperados para cada sesión y, esto lo lograron, debido a la correcta comprensión de las metodologías de enseñanza. Sin embargo, una alumna

mencionó que no alcanzó a comprender las teorías, métodos y estrategias, debido a que le faltó más tiempo para poder llevarlas a la práctica.

En cuanto a ¿qué fue lo más difícil de comprender o realizar en relación con la enseñanza del inglés?, la mayor parte de las normalistas refirió a problemas sobre su propio conocimiento del idioma, tales como la gramática, la pronunciación, la habilidad auditiva, etc., lo cual citaron como aspectos que se les dificulta enseñar porque, consideran que les falta fortalecerlo en ellas mismas.

Cabe señalar que un par de alumnas refirieron al hecho de que seguir el método PPP propuesto para planear una sesión de enseñanza del inglés, fue lo más difícil para ellas, puntualizaron que no fue por la dificultad que este pueda tener, sino porque resultó ser un poco diferente a la manera en la que estaban acostumbradas a planear para trabajar un tema.

Finalmente, al cuestionarlas sobre si se sentían preparadas para enseñar inglés a los preescolares, 24 jóvenes respondieron afirmativamente, mientras que otras 4 lo hicieron de forma negativa, argumentando que no se sentían preparadas aún y que les gustaría estudiar más sobre el idioma para poder enseñarlo.

Discusión

Considerando que el 100% de las estudiantes sintieron una mejoría en su forma de planear e implementar una clase en inglés después de recibir la preparación dada por la docente a partir de la implementación de las estrategias PPP y TPR, resulta primordial que como próximas educadoras, estén dispuestas a continuar capacitándose y actualizándose con la finalidad de implementar con los infantes, estrategias de aprendizaje atractivas e interactivas que les ayuden a lograr un verdadero aprendizaje del idioma inglés por parte de sus futuros alumnos (Rueda y Wilburn, 2014).

Por otro lado, en relación con el hecho de que la mayor parte de las estudiantes señaló como dificultad para dirigir una clase de inglés, al hecho de no contar con suficiente dominio de la gramática y la pronunciación, es posible

mencionar que de acuerdo con Ramírez, Pérez y Lara (2017), en la educación superior Mexicana, se ha requerido que los alumnos egresen con un nivel mínimo B2 de acuerdo con el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia, por lo que existe una tarea pendiente como escuelas normales, para brindar y garantizar que los estudiantes normalistas, alcancen los saberes requeridos para dominar y perfeccionar su impartición de clases en una segunda lengua.

Conclusiones

Se concluye que el objetivo de la investigación fue alcanzado, ya que las estudiantes lograron planear una sesión de clase para la enseñanza del idioma inglés, además de que crearon material didáctico para lograr dicho propósito, así como instrumentos de evaluación para valorar si los objetivos planteados fueron alcanzados de acuerdo con lo planeado.

La comprensión de la teoría de adquisición de lenguaje de Krashen, la estrategia Presentación, Práctica y Producción (PPP) y el método Respuesta Física Total (TPR, por sus siglas en inglés), fueron de gran ayuda para que las alumnas comprendieran de qué manera se debe enseñar inglés a niños en edad preescolar. Por consiguiente, una vez abordados estos temas en clase, pudieron seleccionar el tema a enseñar, los objetivos a alcanzar y diseñaron una planeación siguiendo las metodologías propuestas para lograrlo.

La falta de experiencia de las estudiantes normalistas en cuanto a las prácticas profesionales de manera presencial representó un obstáculo que influyó en su seguridad al enseñar el idioma inglés, lo cual pudo solventarse en gran medida a partir del trabajo con la estrategia PPP y el método Respuesta Física Total (TPR, por sus siglas en inglés), ya que les permitieron realizar planeaciones coherentes y con conocimiento del orden y forma en que se abordarían los contenidos.

El corto tiempo con el que se contó para la preparación de la jornada de práctica también fue un factor decisivo, ya que, aunque se logró dar una imagen

muy general y breve a las alumnas sobre la metodología de enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera, no fue posible asegurar su dominio verbal de los temas a estudiar con los preescolares, especialmente en las áreas relacionadas con la pronunciación o la gramática.

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Fortalecimiento en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés a partir del uso de la lengua materna y de la aplicación de una gramática comparada

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En una urbe multicultural, como es la Ciudad de México, todo docente es un mediador cultural que busca entre sus alumnos apreciarse mutuamente y reconocer sus diferencias. Hoy en día, esta función se ha convertido en la necesidad de formar nuevos profesores debido a un creciente interés por la diversidad cultural del país además de añadir a la formación de los estudiantes un segundo idioma como el inglés, tal como lo mencionan en su artículo Szczupak de Linetzky (s.f.).

El proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje de un segundo idioma como el inglés requiere más que el conocimiento y desarrollar las habilidades como leer, escribir, escuchar y hablar; este proceso es complejo ya que entiende y utiliza las estructuras del lenguaje o el vocabulario correcto cuando se habla. El proceso de introducción de una nueva lengua requiere ser consciente de todo el contexto sociocultural que rodea a la lengua utilizada para conceptualizarla en diferentes situaciones de la vida real.

En la actualidad, los docentes se han convertido en profesionales capaces de vincular los contenidos de manera transversal a modo de un eslabón invisible. Se requiere generar un cambio educativo para motivar e impulsar su labor en el campo no solo de la educación sino también en la investigación y el uso de la tecnología como herramienta de apoyo e innovación, así como el estudio y manejo del idioma inglés. Tal cual lo mencionan Reyábal y Sanz (1995) las contribuciones específicas del docente frente a grupo incluyen explicar un abanico de aspiraciones de cambio en la práctica educativa y en el perfil de futuros ciudadanos, acercándolos y dándoles espacio en las concepciones actuales del currículo que facilite su desarrollo, tanto en la teoría como en la práctica.

De lo anterior resulta que después de cinco años dedicándome al apasionante mundo de la docencia, me surge el requerimiento de volver a caminar mis propios pasos y plantearme verdaderamente la importancia de la adquisición previa de la lengua materna español que un docente en formación normalista debe poseer fundamentalmente en relación con la habilidad lectora, la ortografía y la redacción, ya que he detectado un importante rezago referente a su idioma nativo y esto crea una barrera al momento de impartir la cátedra de inglés. Esto último para incrementar principalmente sus competencias profesionales y construir puentes en relación con lo sociocultural al momento de implementarlo dentro y fuera del aula.

En este escenario, producto de las continuas transformaciones que atraviesa nuestra sociedad, lo que propone Pérez (2007) me parece adecuado para referirnos a los efectos de todo este proceso para la escuela. Precisamente, este autor argumenta que estos profundos cambios -sociales, culturales, políticos y económicos- han hecho que formas y modelos escolares arcaicos y estériles parezcan efectivos hasta hace poco tiempo. El mismo autor, ante esta complicada situación, piensa que es obvio que la escuela ahora presentará serias grietas y desequilibrios en varios países del mundo.

El proceso de aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera es un reto difícil de afrontar cuando se trata de relacionarse con hablantes nativos de español. La mayoría de las veces, la gente compara las estructuras y usos de ambas lenguas (la nativa y la de destino), lo que provoca una interferencia en el proceso de aprendizaje y puede dar lugar a un fracaso o a resultados poco satisfactorios (Beltrán, 2017).

De hecho, Rueda y Wilburn (2014) mencionan que la adquisición de una lengua extranjera por parte de los alumnos dependerá de diferentes factores, tanto externos como internos, así como del acercamiento y la experiencia de los alumnos con la lengua. Por lo tanto, los relatos sobre el éxito de la adquisición de una lengua extranjera como el inglés han hecho hincapié en la influencia de la calidad del contexto educativo que se proporciona a los alumnos, ya que cuenta como uno de los factores externos.

Sin embargo, el docente por sí solo no puede facilitar el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera, ya que una mayoría de los alumnos no pueden desarrollar una capacidad lingüística completa en la lengua meta sin procesar y practicar la información transmitida a través de la interacción, constatan Rueda y Wilburn (2014).

El presente documento consta de una breve revisión de la importancia de la aplicación de estrategias y técnicas tomadas de un enfoque de Gramática Comparada entre inglés y español, para fortalecer el aprendizaje del inglés en alumnos de la institución, y a partir de ello brindarles herramientas que favorezcan la comprensión de la forma y estructura de la lengua meta y de la propia lengua materna.

En general, en el aprendizaje de un idioma extranjero, los obstáculos primordiales que encuentran los docentes en formación y académicos derivan del estilo docente y del método didáctico. A pesar de existir una gran diversidad no es frecuente la utilización de metodologías innovadoras o que le resulten atractivas al alumnado (Ricoy y Álvarez, 2016).

Cabe mencionar que las pretensiones de este documento no se inclinan hacia la imposición de una idea como una verdad absoluta y terminada, sino que es una visión de tantas existentes, además de que la investigación aún requiere de ampliarse, sin embargo, por la escasez de tiempos se aporta ahora un primer acercamiento.

Planteamiento del problema

Con el paso del tiempo, la sociedad en general se ha cuestionado sobre el papel que realizan los docentes en el aula, particularmente el quehacer académico en cuanto a su enseñanza en el contexto de las escuelas normales. Para Figueroa (2000) conseguir que un alumno de una Escuela Normal pública como la Benemérita Escuela Nacional de Maestros alcance un nivel B2 en inglés en 3 años de su formación no es tarea fácil, principalmente si pensamos en quienes llegan a la educación superior con una terrible precariedad lingüística.

Ahora bien, si hablamos de formación, se sabe que es entrar en un terreno controvertido y, a nivel teórico, todavía en construcción. Sin embargo, para Ferry (1997), la formación es un motor de desarrollo personal que incluye el aprendizaje, el descubrimiento, encontrar personas, desarrollar habilidades de razonamiento y también descubrir las propias capacidades y recursos. En definitiva, la formación es un proyecto de vida. Es entonces que el recurso humano al que imparto clases son alumnos en formación inicial y por ello mi labor es brindarles las herramientas que posibiliten esta capacidad autónoma de mantener en continuo su formación.

En mi caso, reconozco que nuestro país, México, es diverso y multicultural. En él convergen distintas formas de ser, vivir, comunicarse y pensar. Dicha pluralidad genera una situación lingüística llena de complejidad, que se ve reflejada en la enseñanza de las lenguas, tanto de índole nacional como extranjeras. Pérez, Bellatón y Emilsson (2012) explican que la enseñanza de idiomas existe en todas las modalidades y niveles educativos en nuestro país, con un enfoque principal en el español (como primera y segunda lengua de los estudiantes nativos), inglés, lenguas nativas, y francés.

Con respecto al idioma inglés, en México, por bastante tiempo su enseñanza se encaminó a la educación media superior y superior, para después tomar en cuenta su enseñanza en secundaria. Alrededor del siglo pasado, algunos estados de la República Mexicana iniciaron proyectos de inglés en primaria y en 2009 la enseñanza del inglés en educación básica trasciende con la implementación del Plan Nacional de Inglés para la Educación Básica (PNIEB) (García, Martínez y Killian, 2011). La inserción del programa trajo consigo desafíos con relación a la puesta en marcha de los programas, el currículum para la enseñanza del inglés, los catedráticos, las metodologías y prácticas docentes y los recursos educativos (Ramírez, Pamplón y Cota, 2012). Estudios recientes indican que, en nuestro país, la enseñanza del inglés posee dificultades serias explica O'Donoghue, (2015) y sobresale la calidad de los docentes para afrontar el rezago, poniendo especial énfasis en contar con maestros idóneos, que tengan una formación inicial adecuada, con actitudes y valores que promuevan el aprendizaje y continúen con

su actualización docente, para el beneficio de sus alumnos.

En este sentido, el alfabetismo del siglo XXI no consiste en desarrollar e incrementar la lectoescritura sino en dominar las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (TIC) y los idiomas adicionales, en términos estandarizados por el sistema educativo mexicano, el inglés se vuelve un requerimiento social que se ha visto reflejado en lo académico, con las reformas y propuestas educativas.

Dentro del contexto mexicano cabe destacar que, en una mayor parte de la población mexicana, el aprendizaje de una Lengua Extranjera como el inglés, comienza relativamente tarde y esta es una de las razones por la cual se dificulta su aprendizaje debido a que no hay una disciplina aplicada al estudio de las barreras del aprendizaje y comunicación del idioma.

El estudio de una lengua extranjera como el inglés, para hablantes nativos de idioma español puede fomentarse y nutrirse a través del uso de la gramática comparada, la cual es aquella que permite hacer uso de la gramática de dos lenguajes con ejemplos que se basan en comprender dicho contraste al ir desmenuzando las partes dentro de una oración o frase. Varios autores, pero específicamente Gross (2010) quien creó el término de Gramática Contrastiva y diferentes estudios han analizado y demostrado su uso en diversas poblaciones estudiantiles y han encontrado que se vuelve próspera si se utiliza en un entorno adecuado. Una gramática contrastiva pedagógica de dos lenguas no necesita basarse en una teoría lingüística en particular. La gramática contrastiva es un método lingüístico para la enseñanza/aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera. Las características gramaticales de la lengua meta (inglés) se introducen comparándolas explícitamente con estructuras relacionadas de la lengua materna (español). El docente que transmite esta técnica debe de tener la libertad de basar su enseñanza en una variedad de teorías, siempre que encuentre un formato pedagógicamente adecuado para presentar sus hallazgos (Fisiak, 1990).

Por ejemplo, he detectado que existe un rezago académico, en la habilidad escrita y hablada del español, por tanto, resulta un camino sinuoso el querer lograr

aprendizajes significativos en lengua extranjera inglés además de que la gran mayoría no le ve utilidad o ignora que podría serle útil para su actualización y profesionalización docente. En consecuencia, para mí ha sido un reto lograr aterrizar los temas que se enfocan a la gramática, ya que de igual manera los alumnos poseen lagunas sobre el uso de la gramática del español.

También el número de horas de inglés es un detonante de esta problemática. Mientras que dentro del sector privado el estudiantado posee conocimientos de inglés desde preescolar, y alcanza un nivel de inglés suficiente en educación media superior, pues cursa preparatoria bilingüe o inclusive totalmente en inglés, en escuelas normales públicas nos hemos aún de conformar con una carga horaria de escasas cuatro horas a la semana en el plan 2012, a las cuales hay que añadirles que en muchas ocasiones, docentes sin perfil y periodos sin sesión debido a las prácticas profesionales, días de asueto, etc., que en lugar de generar un avance representan un auténtico reto a superar y que es: lograr que en menos tiempo el estudiante alcance un nivel adecuado de inglés, similar a un nivel intermedio (B2) dentro del sistema de medición mexicano: Certificación Nacional de Nivel de Idioma (CENNI). Evidentemente es una carrera contra el tiempo.

Dicho así en mi labor cotidiana como docente frente a grupo de la Benemérita Escuela Nacional de Maestros a través de 4 años de servicio dentro del sector público, he ido detectando cada semestre que un porcentaje mayor de alumnos en formación docente inicial poseen escaso uso, tanto del idioma materno español como del uso y aplicación no solo de la redacción y expresión oral y escrita. También al momento de verse inmersos en ejercicios que conllevan a aplicar la gramática del inglés, por lo general, hay que hacer una regresión y repaso del uso de la gramática del español, para lo cual la aplicación de algunas técnicas y estrategias basadas en la Gramática Comparada dentro del aula de inglés ha sido de utilidad para fortalecer la competencia gramatical de los estudiantes tanto en su lengua materna, el español, como en la lengua extranjera meta, el inglés.

Para ilustrar esto, hay un tema llamado “partes de la oración” (parts of

speech) y a los alumnos les cuesta trabajo identificar un verbo, adverbio, pronombre posesivo, etcétera. No solo en inglés, sino que también en español. Esto refleja el desinterés e indisciplina que tenemos los mexicanos para la lectura, ya que los registros arrojan que un mexicano en promedio ha leído 4 libros en el último año según reporta el INEGI (2023). Este hecho es realmente preocupante ya que ilustra a la perfección el origen de este problema, el cual seguramente se agravó en los últimos años de la actual emergencia sanitaria. Es por esto y otros motivos que se obstaculiza que los alumnos normalistas busquen y apliquen nuevas técnicas para el fortalecimiento en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera inglés, sumado a que no ven con claridad la finalidad del aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera como el inglés para su formación inicial como docentes de educación primaria. Esto, desde su mirada, pone a su vez en entredicho la finalidad de la formación de docentes en las escuelas normales.

En lo personal, me parece importante destacar que el contraste de ambas lenguas es pertinente al momento de enseñar y aprender la forma y uso de una lengua que se está aprendiendo. Es decir, buscar implementar estrategias o herramientas que ayuden a contrastar y comparar la lengua meta con la materna a fin de generar un andamiaje significativo. Además de que así lograrán digerir los nuevos tópicos del inglés, ya que aproximadamente un porcentaje muy reducido de la población estudiantil de la institución poseen un nivel avanzado de conocimiento del inglés. Entonces lo que busco con esta propuesta es motivar a los estudiantes normalistas a continuar con sus estudios en lengua extranjera inglés sustentando que su aprendizaje no tiene que ser memorizado y repetitivo, más bien fomentar en ello el gusto por el desarrollo de las cuatro habilidades del idioma sumando el uso de la gramática comparada para que puedan entenderlo tomando de base su lengua materna, el español. Sin embargo, como docentes, nos importa más que nuestro grupo sea destacado cuantitativamente hablando y para lograr esto, mayoritariamente se priorizan a los alumnos que poseen una habilidad lingüística más sobresaliente que otros dejando de lado a los alumnos con cierto rezago dando como resultado un bajo nivel y desempeño académico de estos mismos.

Mi meta específica como docente en una escuela normal de prestigio, como la institución, es formar a los mejores docentes con un nivel de dominio intermedio-avanzado (B2) en inglés (ver Anexo 1), que les permita ejercer también la docencia de cursos de inglés con los saberes que les garanticen lograr los objetivos planteados de acuerdo a la impartición de sus sesiones en educación primaria, promoviendo y fomentando en ellos mismos la búsqueda de estudiar especialidades, maestrías, aplicar para becas y/o intercambios a países de habla inglesa.

Preguntas

De investigación

¿Cómo interviene el uso de la lengua materna español en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés de alumnos en formación docente inicial?

De intervención

¿Qué estrategias de enseñanza aprendizaje basadas en el uso de la lengua materna pueden implementarse con alumnos en formación docente inicial para mejorar el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera?

Objetivos

General

Dar cuenta de aquellos factores que interfieren de su lengua materna, el español y afectan el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera en estudiantes de la benemérita escuela nacional de maestros y, a partir de aquí, proponer técnicas y actividades que ayuden a contrastar ambas lenguas y despierten una conciencia de la forma y uso de ambas lenguas.

Específicos

- Observar los errores de interferencia en alumnos de la institución cuando aprenden inglés y clasificarlos según su naturaleza pronunciación

estructura y vocabulario.

- Diseñar actividades a partir de estrategias de gramática comparada, traducción pedagógica, entre otros, para despertar una conciencia de la forma y uso de ambas lenguas.
- Reflexionar sobre la propia práctica docente a la luz del diseño de esta propuesta con la finalidad de mejorar los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés en alumnos cuya lengua materna es el español.
- Ponderar el aporte de la propuesta de mejora con base en las condiciones que se quieren resolver a partir de la propuesta de una rúbrica.

Justificación

Ante los requerimientos dentro del contexto pluricultural y multicultural globalizado al que se enfrentarán los docentes en formación de la institución, la problemática que se pretende abordar en el presente trabajo es la de identificar las necesidades y carencias del alumno de la institución en cuanto a su dominio de la gramática del español y como esto interfiere en el proceso de aprendizaje del idioma inglés.

La lengua materna español es un idioma sumamente complejo, por lo tanto, es de vital importancia dotar al alumno con las habilidades lingüísticas apropiadas para su correcto desenvolvimiento en el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma o, como en nuestro caso, una lengua extranjera. El alumno de la escuela debe contar con un dominio pleno de su lengua materna y emplearla para poder comprender de una forma más estructurada y formal cómo funciona el idioma inglés, sin dejar de lado los factores y variaciones a nivel académico, la situación demográfica y contexto socio económico/cultural de los docentes en formación inicial.

Las lenguas son la forma más importante de mantener viva nuestra cultura. A menudo, la traducción directa de una lengua a otra puede no transmitir la misma esencia que en la lengua de origen. Por eso, la mejor manera de conocer una

lengua es el mirarla a través de su cultura, pero mantengo la hipótesis de que la lengua materna nos ayuda a mantenernos conectados con nuestra cultura, nuestras raíces, y de aquí partimos para reconocer las otras culturas. De ser así, el conocimiento formal de una lengua puede también partir de la comprensión y conocimiento profundo de la propia lengua materna.

Estado del arte

El actual Estado del Arte se agrupa tanto las investigaciones internacionales, así como, las nacionales, que se han realizado considerando diferentes cambios del problema como son la influencia del contraste de la gramática del español dentro del aula de inglés, el enfoque metodológico en el aprendizaje de la habilidad comunicativa y el uso del idioma español en el aula de inglés.

Se pretende mostrar cómo se ve reflejado el uso de la Gramática Comparada dentro de las sesiones de inglés y el desenvolvimiento de los estudiantes en su entorno. Se analizaron un total de 19 artículos y estudios desde el año 1991 al 2019.

Con dicho estado del arte, se busca localizar tanto en México como en otros lugares del mundo, qué factores afectan el desempeño académico de los estudiantes de inglés dentro de la Benemérita Escuela Nacional de Maestros al utilizar la Gramática Comparada en la enseñanza-aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera como lo es el inglés.

Gross (2010) la utiliza como una técnica para ayudar a comprender a los estudiantes de una segunda lengua las nuevas características gramaticales, al contrastarlas con la gramática del idioma que se adquiere como primera lengua. Las preguntas sobre gramática no son lecciones de gramática en un sentido tradicional; es una técnica que se basa en el significado y que promueve la comprensión. Dado que todas las palabras se utilizan en contexto, los estudiantes ven que las formas gramaticales poseen diferentes significados. Esta técnica es

efectiva y toma poco tiempo para su implementación y el llevarla a cabo, se toma ventaja de su significado en el aula de clase al momento de su aplicación. Rodríguez (2013), presenta una guía didáctica para la enseñanza del uso del pronombre “se” al sustituir a la 3ª persona en oraciones simples del español, así como su equivalente en inglés, apoyándose en la gramática de Llorach (1996) y el enfoque comunicativo de Rodríguez (1997). En lo que respecta al uso de la Gramática Comparada como estrategia de aprendizaje y comunicación, Ciesielkiewicz (2009), dentro de su tesis doctoral, retoma el resurgir y la vigencia de la lingüística contrastiva especialmente de la gramática contrastiva, la cual siempre ha sido una de las estrategias de aprendizaje más útil para estudiantes adultos ya que, la gramática de la lengua materna constituye el punto de partida y un gran apoyo en el estudiante de lenguas extranjeras. La lengua nativa parece ubicar, e incluso controlar, el desarrollo de un nuevo proceso de aprendizaje lingüístico, puesto que el nuevo conocimiento parece someterse a un estricto control bajo los parámetros o esquemas del idioma nativo. La lengua materna constituye un potencial de conocimiento lingüístico fundamental para el alumno. De igual manera Ramón (2001) confirma que la Gramática Comparada y su aplicación en el aula mejora la enseñanza de lenguas en general, llevando a cabo un análisis contrastivo inglés- español centrándose en sus aplicaciones prácticas en el campo de la enseñanza de lenguas. Por consiguiente, Martínez (1996), hace mención dentro de un grupo de trabajos de investigación acerca de distintos aspectos gramaticales de la lengua inglesa y española, orientada al aprendizaje de una segunda lengua a lo cual se facilita para ello el contraste con su lengua materna.

Valenzuela (2002), aclara que la lingüística contrastiva forma parte de la lingüística general, pretende comparar desde un punto de vista descriptivo dos lenguas diferentes observando sus similitudes y diferencias. La lingüística contrastiva no debe ser confundida con otra disciplina, denominada “Análisis Contrastivo” (AC), el cual surgió como un movimiento dentro de la Lingüística Aplicada, a finales de los años 60. La idea era que al comparar dos lenguas surgen zonas de similitud y de diferencia, y que esas zonas de diferencia eran las

que de manera lógica causarían los errores al aprender una lengua extranjera. Al aprender una lengua extranjera (L2), tendemos a “traspasar” de alguna manera nuestro conocimiento sobre las estructuras y rasgos de nuestra lengua materna (L1) a esa L2. A esta influencia de la L1 sobre la L2 se llama “transferencia”. Sin embargo, con frecuencia esa transferencia provoca errores; en este caso, a esa “transferencia de efectos negativos” se la denomina “interferencia”.

Bernal (2019), nos habla de la competencia comunicativa intercultural y de la influencia del enfoque metodológico al momento de la enseñanza del inglés. Llevó a cabo un rastreo con base a los datos disponibles en la Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, los resultados arrojaron las dificultades en el aprendizaje del inglés deduciendo que el enfoque gramatical de enseñanza del inglés no surte eficacia para desarrollar competencias comunicativas ni para obtener altos puntajes en pruebas estandarizadas. De igual forma evidenció que los docentes de inglés poseen una visión acrítica del mundo y reconocen con mayor prestigio a los profesores nativos. Este rastreo demostró la falta de estudios con relación a la metodología de la competencia comunicativa intercultural.

De igual manera Bentsen (2017), aplicó un análisis descriptivo con base a lecciones de inglés grabadas que fueron impartidas por 7 docentes a nivel secundaria. Categorizó errores gramaticales orales de los estudiantes observados, así como la corrección de estos por parte de cada docente. Los resultados apuntalan que puede justificarse una integración de la enseñanza de la gramática en la enseñanza del inglés, en lugar de enseñar la gramática fuera de contexto; teniendo en cuenta las fortalezas y requerimientos de los estudiantes para desarrollar su habilidad comunicativa.

En su artículo, Santos-Díaz (2017) da a conocer el cómo influye la incidencia de la frecuencia de la lectura con la competencia léxica en español y en Lengua Extranjera inglés. Los resultados comprobaron su hipótesis, por medio de la lectura el receptor refuerza su caudal léxico y vocabulario; la lectura cobra un papel primordial favoreciendo tanto la actualización de un mayor número de palabras como el reconocimiento de tecnicismos.

Tanaka (2005), dice que el estado de la gramática en la enseñanza de una segunda lengua no se ha fundamentado de forma segura. El término “gramática” a menudo conlleva discrepancias como: 1. Saber sobre gramática no ayuda cuando se trata de usar el idioma de destino. 2. La enseñanza de la gramática incluso obstaculiza explícitamente el proceso de desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa. 3. Los niños llegan a su idioma nativo sin saberlo. Sin embargo, la práctica de la enseñanza comunicativa de idiomas en Japón y en el extranjero durante las últimas dos décadas ha dejado un mensaje de que la enseñanza de la gramática debe reconsiderarse, ya que dejar de lado la gramática en la enseñanza ha provocado una marcada disminución en el nivel general de dominio del inglés por parte de los alumnos (Widdowson, 1986).

Kajan (2012) compara la disponibilidad léxica de los estudiantes en lengua extranjera y lengua materna, detectando las diferencias o similitudes léxicas entre hablantes extranjeros y nativos por medio de diversos campos semánticos, exponiendo ciertas discrepancias entre los léxicos mientras que Roca y Manchón (2007) indagaron por medio de un estudio en qué medida la competencia en lengua extranjera de los escritores configura el tiempo que éstos asignan a los procesos de formulación en el transcurso de la composición.

En su artículo, Farrell et al., (2005), presentaron un estudio de caso que investigó y comparó las creencias y las prácticas reales en el aula de dos profesores de inglés experimentados con respecto a la enseñanza de la gramática. Se examinan y discuten las áreas donde las prácticas convergieron o divergieron de las creencias sobre la enseñanza de la gramática, así como los factores que han influido en las prácticas reales de los maestros en el aula. A raíz de su experimento, Martín (2000) exploró las ventajas del uso de la lengua materna español en el aula de inglés en actividades enseñando estructuras gramaticales específicas. Entre las cuestiones que han suscitado el interés por el tema son: (1) la similitud o diferencia entre el aprendizaje de la L1 y otro idioma; (2) el grado de influencia de aquella sobre este y (3) la conveniencia de la utilización de la L1 en la E/A de una L2. Aún no existen suficientes investigaciones

empíricas que hayan arrojado resultados irrefutables, por lo que con frecuencia se han tomado como aforismos ciertas ideas más fundamentadas en creencias o suposiciones que en hechos constatables. Por otro lado, Proskawer (2008) remarca que el uso de la lengua materna español en el aula de inglés ha generado controversia por muchos años. Constatando que cada enfoque posee fundamentos pedagógicos para justificar la inclusión o exclusión de la lengua materna, habiendo investigaciones cuestionando los fundamentos de aquellos que la excluyen y destacan los beneficios de su uso en el aula de inglés. Esta investigación sirvió de guía para los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera sobre el uso efectivo que se le puede dar a la lengua materna dentro del salón de inglés sin abusar de ella y que se vuelva un recurso útil para la enseñanza del idioma inglés.

De manera general, los aspectos en los cuales se interviene prioritariamente son la gramática comparada, haciendo uso de la traducción pedagógica y así poder concretar que el estudiante entienda diversas categorías estructurales del idioma inglés. Después se precisa de la enseñanza de la fonología que contiene las reglas de estructura y secuencia de los sonidos o fonemas del lenguaje meta, en este caso el inglés, de cierta manera se pretende ampliar el vocabulario de los estudiantes y mejorar su pronunciación lo cual generará en cada uno de ellos sentirse confiados al expresarse en lengua extranjera. A modo de cierre, leímos que a lengua materna español es un idioma sumamente complejo, por lo tanto, es de vital importancia dotar al alumno con las habilidades lingüísticas apropiadas para su correcto desenvolvimiento en el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma. El alumno debe desarrollarse plenamente en su lengua materna, para poder comprender de una forma más estructurada cómo funciona el idioma inglés, sin dejar de lado los factores y variaciones a nivel académico, la situación demográfica y contexto socio económico/cultural.

Hasta aquí, lo que se puede concluir y resumir del presente estado del arte son los aportes lingüísticos como parte crucial para la adquisición de una segunda lengua. En otras palabras, independientemente de su tipo, a pesar de que

algunos autores no reconocen a la gramática comparada como una técnica de apoyo en la enseñanza del inglés, considero que es indiscutiblemente necesaria para fomentar el desarrollo de las habilidades del idioma como son la escritura y lectura en primerainstancia. En consecuencia, varios autores que se debaten en la literatura, y los diferentes estudios realizados apoyan Gross (2010) y coinciden en aplicar la gramática comparada para la mejora de la adquisición de la lengua extranjera inglés.

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Experiencia de alumnos normalistas en el programa de inglés por niveles en el IESEN

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Introducción

Ante los retos que impone el vertiginoso desarrollo tecnológico, industrial, intelectual y científico, el aprendizaje del idioma inglés es indispensable tal y como se estableció en la meta México con Educación de Calidad derivada del Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2013-2018, la cual originó la Estrategia de Fortalecimiento y Transformación de las Escuelas Normales integrada por 6 ejes, siendo el tercero de ellos el Aprendizaje del inglés. Así que, el 20 de agosto del 2018 entraron en vigor los Planes de Estudio 2018 para la formación inicial de los futuros profesores en Educación Básica.

Debido a que el dominio y uso del inglés se presentan como condiciones necesarias para el desarrollo de una educación de calidad, la enseñanza del inglés ocupa un relevante lugar en los Planes de Estudio 2018 para la educación normal. El propósito de enseñar y aprender inglés en las Escuelas Normales del país es que los estudiantes desarrollen progresivamente habilidades, conocimientos, actitudes y estrategias de aprendizaje que les permitan interactuar en prácticas sociales del lenguaje orales y escritas con un mayor número de personas y de orígenes diversos. El que los futuros maestros egresen con un dominio importante del idioma permitirá hacer del inglés un valioso recurso para el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, pues les facilitará el aprovechamiento de recursos y herramientas en el idioma inglés para potenciar el aprendizaje de los alumnos. Lo anterior implica reconocer lo indispensable que resulta el dominio del inglés tanto a la educación normal como a

la educación obligatoria para la construcción de una sociedad democrática, intercultural, e inclusiva.

Como parte del esfuerzo de la puesta en marcha de la Estrategia nacional para el fortalecimiento de la enseñanza del inglés en las Escuelas Normales, se emitió la convocatoria del Concurso para las Selección y Contratación de Docentes para el Fortalecimiento del idioma inglés en Escuelas Normales. Se concursaron 646 plazas de “formador de inglés C”. El IESEN obtuvo el recurso de 6 plazas de formadores, que se incorporan a laborar a partir del 16 de febrero del 2018.

Entre las principales funciones que se desempeñaron en los primeros meses fue realizar un examen diagnóstico del nivel de inglés tanto de los alumnos que cursaban el último ciclo de los anteriores planes de estudio, 2012 y de los que ingresarían en el ciclo escolar 2018-2019.

Cabe destacar que la Universidad de Cambridge extendió un reconocimiento, posterior a la revisión del currículo de la asignatura Lengua Extranjera Inglés, destacando el balance entre las cuatro habilidades lingüísticas, así como la alineación directa a los estándares del Marco Común Europeo de Referencia (MCER) que es el estándar internacional que define la competencia lingüística y que usado en todo el mundo para definir las destrezas de los estudiantes en una escala de niveles que va desde un A1, nivel básico de inglés, hasta un C2, dominio excepcional.

En la mayoría de las mallas curriculares está contemplada la enseñanza del inglés, misma que comprende seis horas a la semana del idioma desde el primer semestre de la licenciatura, salvo en los programas interculturales bilingües, en los que se da mayor énfasis a los cursos en la lengua indígena.

En este sentido, el aprendizaje de inglés por parte de los alumnos de las Escuelas Normales tiene como meta la formación de profesores bilingües, independientemente de la licenciatura que estos realicen. En efecto, a lo largo de su formación normalista, los estudiantes adquirirán competencias en el idioma inglés que les servirán en el ámbito personal y profesional, una vez que se incorporen a la profesión docente. El aprendizaje del idioma se llevará a cabo de

manera progresiva, asegurando la consolidación de conocimientos y habilidades a lo largo de los semestres que comprenden las licenciaturas de la educación normal.

La academia del Programa de Inglés del instituto, para lograr esta visión a mediano y corto plazo, estableció una propuesta de carga curricular que permitiera a los estudiantes participar en diversos contextos de comunicación canalizados y unificados de acuerdo con el Marco Común Europeo referentes al dominio de un segundo idioma, así como a la propuesta nacional de Inglés en Escuelas Normales en colaboración con DGSuM, en su momento DGESPE y el Centro Virtual de Innovación Educativa (CEVIE).

Los niveles establecidos por DGSuM como parte de la estrategia y fortalecimiento de Escuelas Normales en el campo de formación bilingüe de los alumnos fueron presentados de la siguiente manera:

A1.1 Starting Basic Communication

A1.2 Developing Elementary Conversations A2.1 Sharing Information and Ideas

A2.2 Building Confidence in Communication

B1.1 Opening New Global Perspectives

B1.2 Becoming Independent Communicators

En referencia al aspecto curricular, se estableció contar con grupos de aproximadamente 20 estudiantes, atendiendo cada docente 4 grupos dentro de la carga semestral. La sugerencia en cuanto a la cantidad de alumnos por clase atiende la necesidad de un proceso de enseñanza y adquisición del idioma efectivo y de manera personalizada.

El proceso de implementación de este programa se integra en diferentes fases, desde la fase diagnóstica hacia la gestión de instrumentos de certificación internacional en el dominio de una segunda lengua que puedan enriquecer el perfil de egreso de los alumnos normalistas.

Las Normas Específicas de Control Escolar relativas a la selección, inscripción, reinscripción, acreditación, regularización, certificación y titulación de

las licenciaturas para la formación de docentes de Educación Básica, en la modalidad escolarizada planes 2018 en su capítulo 5 Acreditación, apartado 5.5 Organización del plan de estudios incisos b y c, establece:

b) En los cursos de inglés, el estudiante podrá solicitar la acreditación a través de un examen diagnóstico, tomando como base los niveles referenciados al MCER y a través de la Certificación Nacional de Idioma (CENNI) de la SEP.

c) La certificación permitirá ubicar al estudiante en el curso que corresponda de acuerdo con su nivel de competencia obtenido, los resultados del proceso de certificación deberán considerarse para acreditar los cursos previos con 10.

Como resultado del diálogo con las autoridades del IESEN se logró implementar la enseñanza de inglés por niveles en el total de los grupos a partir del semestre febrero-julio 2019. La generación que ingresó en agosto del 2018 a la Licenciatura de Educación Primaria se encuentra cursando el octavo semestre al momento de diseñar el estudio que aquí se presenta.

El objetivo general de la presente investigación es valorar desde la experiencia de los alumnos de la licenciatura de Educación Primaria, la implementación del modelo de enseñanza de inglés por niveles para responder las preguntas de investigación:

¿Cuál ha sido la experiencia de los alumnos con respecto a los procesos didácticos empleados en la enseñanza de inglés por niveles en la Licenciatura de Educación Primaria?

¿Cómo valoran los estudiantes el modelo implementado en la enseñanza por niveles del idioma inglés?

Se establecen los siguientes objetivos específicos:

Conocer la experiencia de los alumnos con respecto a los procesos didácticos empleados en la enseñanza de inglés por niveles en la licenciatura de Educación Primaria.

Conocer la apreciación que tienen del modelo implementado en la enseñanza por niveles del idioma inglés.

Los objetivos planteados en esta investigación están fundamentados con los principios del socioconstructivismo, teoría del aprendizaje que enfatiza la construcción activa del conocimiento a través de la interacción social y la participación del individuo en su propio proceso de aprendizaje.

Esta teoría propone una idea de ser humano competente, con potencial, capaz de dar forma a su experiencia de aprendizaje, de construir conocimiento, reconoce la importancia del contexto social y cultural en el proceso de aprendizaje.

Para el socioconstructivismo, el ser humano nace con la disposición para hacerse preguntas y buscar información para así interpretarla y construir significados propios como resultado de la interacción. Aprender es, por lo tanto, un proceso dinámico y original.

Por lo antes expuesto, el Programa de Inglés por Niveles en el IESEN se alinea con los principios socioconstructivistas al tener las siguientes características:

1. Toma en cuenta el nivel de desarrollo de los alumnos.

El alumno cuenta con una zona de desarrollo real que se define como las acciones que él mismo está en capacidad de desarrollar de manera independiente (Vigostky, 1978).

2. Fomenta un rol activo del alumno en su aprendizaje.

El alumno no es pasivo respecto al proceso de su desarrollo, sino que es él quien, estimulado por el medio, compone su propio tejido, conceptual y simbólico, y desarrolla así las propias condiciones de su aprendizaje (Tunnerann Bemheim, 2014).

3. Hacer énfasis en la reestructuración y reorganización del conocimiento.

El conocimiento se adquiere de esta manera, ya que el factor social juega un papel determinante en la construcción del conocimiento (Vigostky, 1978).

Método

Como método de investigación se selecciona el fenomenológico, el cual se fundamenta en el estudio de las experiencias de vida, respecto de un suceso, desde la perspectiva del sujeto.

El método fenomenológico pertenece al enfoque cualitativo de la investigación, que se caracteriza por un enfoque multimetódico en el que se incluye un acercamiento interpretativo y naturalista al sujeto de estudio, lo cual significa que el investigador estudia las cosas de sus ambientes naturales, pretendiendo darles sentido a los fenómenos con base en los significados que las personas les otorgan (Fuster Guillen, 2019).

Se seleccionó como técnica de recolección de datos la entrevista y como instrumento una entrevista semiestructurada en conformidad con la teoría socioconstructivista debido a que las actividades en el programa tienen su base en dicha teoría.

Resultados

Se aplicó la entrevista semiestructurada con 4 alumnos de la Licenciatura en Educación Primaria, un hombre y una mujer con un nivel de dominio intermedio, participantes en el programa de Inglés por niveles; y una estudiante y un varón con un nivel de dominio básico de entre los que cursan el programa. El entrevistar a dos alumnos del nivel intermedio y dos del nivel básico, permitirá conocer una mirada representativa del grupo.

El guion de entrevista para este proceso estuvo compuesto de 12 preguntas relacionadas con la teoría socioconstructivista y el percibir de los estudiantes al respecto; 3 de las preguntas estuvieron orientadas a la categoría de comunicación y al lenguaje, 3 a la zona de desarrollo próximo, 3 a la internalización del conocimiento y 3 al proceso (véase guion de entrevista).

En el grupo se cuenta con un total de 60 alumnos de la licenciatura, del Plan de Estudios 2018, que han participado durante 6 semestres, y que han permanecido

constantemente. Del total de los alumnos, representativamente se seleccionaron a 4 alumnos cuyas características ya se describieron.

Se convocó a los 4 participantes a una sesión individual vía Google Meet, a contra turno, para no interrumpir sus actividades de práctica. Se les señaló una hora específica para tal evento y se les explicó tanto la finalidad del proyecto de investigación como el procedimiento de la entrevista. Se solicitó la autorización para grabar la sesión. La entrevista fue dirigida por un integrante del equipo de investigación que no es formador de inglés con el fin de evitar un sesgo en la información.

Posteriormente se procedió a la transcripción de la grabación de cada entrevista para proceder a su análisis a través del programa Atlas TI, en su versión 22. Por ahora se presenta en este documento un resumen de resultados parciales de la investigación después de un análisis a priori de los datos obtenidos.

En lo que respecta a la categoría de Lenguaje y comunicación los alumnos coinciden en que se favoreció la comunicación entre compañeros por el hecho de tener el mismo nivel de dominio del inglés, aclarando que no sucedió desde un inicio dado que los grupos se integraron por alumnos de diversos semestres. Añaden que la educación a distancia derivada del confinamiento por la pandemia obstaculizó en cierto grado la comunicación fluida con el docente y los demás compañeros. Concuerdan en que el hecho de tener la impartición del inglés por niveles es positivo, ya que los hace esforzarse más por avanzar en el proceso de adquisición de la lengua.

En lo referente a la Zona de desarrollo próximo destacan, por un lado, que el trabajo colaborativo favoreció mucho no solamente la integración social, sino también el apoyo académico para ir entendiendo y consolidando los aprendizajes; por otro lado, mencionan que el trabajo colaborativo variaba según el maestro de inglés ya que algunos docentes se enfocaban en que desarrollaran habilidades de comunicación y fluidez y otros en la gramática. En gran medida los alumnos entrevistados valoran las experiencias dentro de los cursos de inglés, debido a que les permitía vislumbrarlas para sus propias prácticas.

Con respecto a la categoría de interiorización, los alumnos afirman que aprendieron más por el uso frecuente del idioma, escuchando música, viendo películas y sobre todo interactuando en inglés, consideran que fue más significativo y eficaz que aprender por medio de memorización. Destacan la importancia de las clases “llamativas” en las cuales tenían la oportunidad de utilizar materiales de su elección y expresarse de la manera que ellos quisieran, porque así se “encontraron a ellos mismos” en dichas actividades, dando a entender que disfrutaron más su rol de aprendices en el programa. Reconocen que a pesar de cursar algunos semestres a distancia se vieron favorecidos al verse obligados a salir de su zona de confort y tener que buscar nuevos recursos, especialmente tecnológicos, como aplicaciones para edición de videos para realizar sus productos. Mencionan que ven reflejado su avance al poder comunicarse en viajes al extranjero.

Por último, en lo que refiere a Enfoque en el proceso los alumnos comentaron que las actividades de aprendizaje fueron “muy buenas, muy amenas” eso los impulsaba a participar ya que eran muy divertidas e implicaban que todos hicieran algo, principalmente mediante juegos. Incluyen que las actividades para conocer las festividades en las culturas angloparlantes, pre-pandemia, tales como los concursos de disfraces en Halloween, los eventos de países alrededor del mundo que incluía la elaboración de platillos típicos con su explicación en inglés, solo por mencionar algunos fueron altamente significativas en su trayecto de aprendizaje del idioma y la cultura que lo rodea. Reiteran que de lo aprendido “puede repetir lo que hicieron con él... de la misma manera que ha ayudado en sus prácticas.”

Discusión

En general se puede concluir que el programa de inglés por niveles de dominio en el IESEN ha sido bien valorado por los participantes, que a pesar de ser compleja la aplicación, ha ocasionado resultados importantes desde la percepción del estudiantado.

Resulta de mucho valor para los investigadores el interés que los alumnos han destacado con respecto a los procesos didácticos implementados por cada uno

de los docentes participantes de los diferentes grupos del programa, lo cual puede incidir en otras investigaciones.

Con respecto a su formación como docentes, los participantes comentaron que se sienten más seguros en su proceso de práctica con el Inglés y con otras materias, por motivo de que se les ejemplificó con las actividades cómo ellos podrían desarrollar sus sesiones de clase con sus propios alumnos.

Si bien este trabajo de investigación está centrado en la experiencia de los estudiantes en el programa de Inglés por niveles, los normalistas reconocen una mejoría en su comunicación en su lengua materna, con el dominio de habilidades del lenguaje mediante la exposición de temas de interés, así como el uso de recursos a su alcance para promover la didáctica y el diseño de materiales de forma eficiente y ecológica.

Otro aspecto importante a evaluar es que el programa se aplica en esta metodología en contadas instituciones en el país, por lo que sería de gran interés para los investigadores conocer su aceptación en otras normales de los diferentes estados, así como buscar su implementación en otras instituciones.

Quedan pendientes trabajos de investigación derivados de éste, sobre la percepción del programa a través de la perspectiva de los docentes que participaron, tanto en su diseño como implementación, así como la mirada de los directivos al respecto.

En proceso se encuentran dos investigaciones adicionales para conocer el punto de vista de los estudiantes de las Licenciaturas en Educación Preescolar y Enseñanza y Aprendizaje de las Matemáticas en Educación Secundaria. De la misma forma, queda pendiente una investigación con alumnos de la Licenciatura en Enseñanza y Aprendizaje del Inglés en Educación Secundaria cuya primera generación egresará en el siguiente ciclo escolar.

Finalmente hacemos referencia a la investigación en proceso sobre el impacto del programa de inglés por niveles en los estudiantes de la licenciatura en Enseñanza y Aprendizaje de las Matemáticas en Educación Secundaria, de la cual

ya se tienen resultados parciales, a través de un estudio preexperimental de corte longitudinal.

Conclusión

Los resultados obtenidos en el presente estudio revelan que, el Programa de Inglés por Niveles en el IESEN, en general, ha sido bien valorado por los participantes. Se destacan los aspectos positivos como la mejora en la comunicación entre compañeros, el trabajo colaborativo y las actividades significativas y motivantes. El uso frecuente del idioma contribuyó al desarrollo de habilidades comunicativas y a la consolidación de aprendizajes. Sin embargo, reconocen ciertas dificultades como los retos de la educación a distancia durante el confinamiento por la pandemia.

Estos hallazgos sugieren que además de la perspectiva positiva que los alumnos tienen de su experiencia en la participación en el programa queda el planteamiento de la importancia de continuar investigando y evaluando este enfoque en otras instituciones educativas, así como la necesidad de explorar la percepción de los docentes y directivos involucrados en su diseño e implementación.

En conclusión, este trabajo de investigación proporciona una base sólida para futuras investigaciones de enseñanza de inglés por niveles en el contexto de profesores en el IESEN y otras instituciones educativas.

Tablas

Tabla 1

Cursos de la asignatura de inglés en Escuelas Normales

Clave	Curso
A1.1	Starting Basic Communication
A1.2	Developing Elementary Conversations
A2.1	Sharing Information and Ideas
A2.2	Building Confidence in Communication
B1.1	Opening New Global Perspectives
B1.2	Becoming Independent Communicators

Tabla 2

Guion de entrevista

Lenguaje y comunicación	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ¿Cuáles dificultades experimentaste en la comunicación con tus compañeros durante el desarrollo de los cursos de inglés por niveles?• ¿Cómo te sentiste con el cambio de medio de comunicación debido a la pandemia?• ¿Cuál fue tu experiencia del inglés por niveles en comparación con grupos donde todos llevaban los mismos contenidos (por ejemplo, los grupos de secundaria)?
Zona de desarrollo próximo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe cómo fue el trabajo colaborativo entre tus compañeros y tú para haber desarrollado las habilidades de un segundo idioma.• ¿Sentiste que el trabajo con tus compañeros te ayudó a desarrollar mejor las actividades de aprendizaje dentro de la clase? ¿Cómo?• En comparación con otras materias, ¿cómo comparas las interacciones que se realizaron con los compañeros durante las clases?
Interiorización	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ¿Cuáles actividades y cómo favorecieron el descubrimiento de las funciones del lenguaje?• ¿Qué tipo de reflexiones tuviste que realizar para aprender el segundo idioma?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Cómo valoras tu aprovechamiento de los cursos en el programa de inglés por niveles?
Enfoque en el proceso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Cuál fue tu experiencia con las actividades que implicaron el uso de un segundo idioma en presencia del profesor? • ¿Sientes que fue beneficioso para ti la realización de materiales de trabajo?, ¿cómo? • ¿Consideras que los procesos didácticos que formaron parte de tu aprendizaje del inglés te serán útiles en algunos aspectos de tu futura labor docente?

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Factibilidad del uso del español en la clase de inglés en el Centro Regional de Educación Normal “Benito Juárez”

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Resumen

Uno de los principales debates sobre la enseñanza de inglés durante muchas décadas se ha enfocado en si es o no correcto, necesario o útil el uso de la lengua nativa en un salón donde se enseña el inglés como segunda lengua. En este sentido existen dos posturas; hay quienes defienden el uso de la lengua materna o primera lengua (L1), argumentando que su uso es inevitable y que de hecho puede tener aportes positivos en el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua (L2); también hay quienes firmemente replican que su uso debe ser nulo o limitado ya que podría interferir en aquellos que se encuentran en proceso de adquisición de dicha segunda lengua.

Este estudio explora las percepciones y actitudes de los profesores de inglés y de los estudiantes del Centro Regional de Educación Normal “Benito Juárez” (CREN) con respecto al uso de la lengua materna, en este caso el español, en el aula de inglés y analiza las razones para excluir o incluir su uso como recurso didáctico. De igual manera se pretende evaluar su pertinencia como estrategia de enseñanza. La presente investigación tiene un enfoque cualitativo, obteniendo datos mediante un cuestionario y entrevistas semiestructuradas.

Los resultados indican que la mayoría de los docentes de inglés en el CREN utilizan el español como herramienta de enseñanza. Esta práctica facilita el aprendizaje

para estudiantes en niveles iniciales, mientras que quienes están más avanzados indican que el uso de la L1 en el aula limita la adquisición de la L2.

Palabras clave: *estrategia didáctica, segunda lengua, adquisición*

Introducción

La adquisición de una segunda lengua extranjera es un proceso que va más allá de la simple memorización de vocabulario y reglas gramaticales donde la lengua materna juega un papel fundamental como cimiento sobre el cual se edifica el nuevo idioma. La lengua materna, al ser el primer sistema lingüístico con el que una persona entra en contacto, influye de manera profunda en el proceso de aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera. Esta influencia puede manifestarse en aspectos como la pronunciación, la estructura gramatical, la comprensión y hasta en la forma en que se asocian conceptos culturales. En el presente trabajo, exploraremos cómo la lengua materna puede ser tanto un recurso valioso como un desafío en la búsqueda de dominar una nueva lengua, destacando la importancia de comprender cómo ambas lenguas interactúan en este proceso de adquisición.

Es preocupante cómo, a pesar de los esfuerzos de los docentes de inglés por lograr que los estudiantes aprendan una segunda lengua, se han obtenido resultados poco significativos. Con base en las evaluaciones anuales que se realizan en el “Centro Regional de Educación Normal “Benito Juárez” (CREN) por parte de la Coordinación de inglés a todos los estudiantes para conocer su progreso en el aprendizaje de inglés, sabemos que se necesita un cambio para obtener resultados más satisfactorios.

El problema que identificamos se centra en el uso del español en el aula cuando se está aprendiendo inglés como segunda lengua. De acuerdo con los resultados de los exámenes de ubicación aplicados antes de iniciar su primer curso de inglés, los estudiantes que ingresan al CREN ostentan un nivel de inglés menor al mínimo esperado según el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia de las Lenguas

(MCER). El nivel A1 es el más básico de los niveles en el MCER, y los estudiantes del CREN ni siquiera poseen esas habilidades básicas en el manejo del idioma inglés. Este es el primer problema.

Se imparte inglés a estudiantes de primero a sexto semestre del CREN como curso obligatorio marcado en las mallas curriculares de las Licenciaturas en Educación Primaria, Preescolar, Inclusión Educativa y Educación Física. El segundo problema es que se enseña inglés con el método comunicativo. Este método se basa en la idea de que el idioma debe usarse para fines comunicativos y que aprendemos mejor a través de procesos similares a los que usamos cuando aprendemos nuestra primera lengua (Ur, 2012).

La situación particular de la institución donde se llevó a cabo esta investigación es que los estudiantes no se comunican con facilidad en un segundo idioma. Para que logren hacerlo es necesario implementar actividades guiadas con modelos claros para que los estudiantes imiten y se comuniquen, pero de manera básica.

Otro problema es la falta de motivación intrínseca de los estudiantes por aprender inglés. Este problema es causado por diferentes factores; el más común se refiere a las experiencias previas que los estudiantes han tenido con el aprendizaje de inglés. Incluso quienes se han enfrentado a situaciones de aprendizaje de inglés desde el nivel Preescolar, siguen sin lograr obtener las habilidades básicas en el dominio del idioma. Tales experiencias los han frustrado. Según Santana, García-Santillán y Escalera-Chávez (2016) “Las actitudes que se tienen hacia la lengua son de particular importancia ya que, cuanto mayor sea el interés del aprendiz en el idioma y su cultura, más fácil será su aprendizaje” (p. 83). Nuestros estudiantes carecen de interés y esa es una de las razones que complica el aprendizaje.

Por lo anterior, surge la inquietud de no ver al uso del español en el aula de inglés como una prohibición total, sino como una herramienta que permita a

docentes y estudiantes comunicarse de manera más efectiva para llevar a cabo las actividades y lograr aprendizajes significativos.

Marco Teórico

Por décadas, uno de los temas que ha dividido opiniones de expertos en el ámbito de la enseñanza de un idioma como segunda lengua ha sido el uso de la lengua materna como herramienta para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje. La lengua materna se puede entender como lengua nativa o primera lengua y es la lengua que una persona aprende desde su nacimiento y cuya habilidad para adquirirla está relacionada biológicamente a la edad y por ello representa su identidad social. De acuerdo con Burdujan (2020), la lengua materna es la primera lengua que un niño aprende de manera natural y automática y que adquiere de otros hablantes y ambientes que lo rodean.

Por otro lado, se conoce como L2 a la lengua que se aprende después de la primera o lengua materna ya sea en un ambiente natural o en un contexto escolar. También es conocida en la literatura como lengua segunda, lengua no materna, lengua no nativa, lengua extranjera o lengua meta. En inglés *second language*, *non-native language*, *foreign language*, *target language*, *secondary language* (Quintero, 2021).

Es importante hacer la diferencia entre segunda lengua y lengua extranjera. Mientras que la primera se aprende en un país o ambiente donde dicha lengua es hablada, la lengua extranjera se aprende y se usa donde tal lengua no se habla (Mustapha, 2019). Es decir, que la segunda lengua se aprende porque el aprendiz se encuentra inmerso en un ambiente donde la lengua es usada, está rodeado de la lengua; y la lengua extranjera no es la lengua nativa del lugar donde el aprendiz la está aprendiendo.

En el caso particular de esta investigación, y con base en las definiciones anteriores, la L1 del contexto es el español y el inglés se enseña como lengua

extranjera (L2), pues los estudiantes no escuchan, ven o tienen contacto con la lengua en otro lugar que no sea el aula de clases.

Posturas frente al uso de la L1

Hay diversidad de opiniones respecto al uso de la L1 en el aula de la L2. Quienes están a favor del Método Comunicativo afirman que el uso de la L1 entorpece el aprendizaje de la L2, mientras que los oponentes argumentan que el uso de la L1 puede incluso facilitar la adquisición de la L2 (Schweer, 1999, como se citó en Zulfikar, 2018).

El principal promotor de la teoría monolingüe de la enseñanza de lenguas es Krashen, quien afirma que se aprende una lengua extranjera de la misma manera en la que se adquiere la lengua materna y que su uso debe minimizarse (Krashen, 1981, como se citó en Burdujan, 2020).

Otros autores también señalan que el uso de la L1 interfiere en el aprendizaje de la L2 creando algo llamado “error de transferencia” (Miles, 2004, como se citó en Zulfikar, 2018). Lo anterior indica que, al usar la lengua materna durante el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua, los elementos lingüísticos de la L1 son llevados a L2, y usados como iguales y en ocasiones no son equivalentes, lo que conduce a errores en L2 debido a interferencia de la L1.

En el otro lado de la discusión se encuentran autores a favor del uso racional de la L1. Burdujan (2020) señala que los estudiantes llegan a la clase con un bagaje de su lengua materna y herencia cultural que no debe negarse o desestimarse, y que la prohibición de la L1 con clases de niveles bajos no es posible. También apunta que los docentes debemos considerar a la L1 no como una fuente de errores, sino como un recurso que se puede usar de diversas maneras para promover el aprendizaje de la L2. Atkinson (1993, como se citó en Quinn, 2019) admite que la L1 puede ser un recurso positivo si se usa sensatamente y en ciertas situaciones.

También se propone que los profesores de la L2 deben emplear la lengua materna de los estudiantes para ayudarles a mejorar sus destrezas lingüísticas de la L2 y que, al hacerlo, se da seguridad y validación a sus experiencias lo que les permite expresarse y tomar riesgos con el idioma (Aurebach, 1993, como se citó en Quinn, 2019).

Existen otros estudios que muestran cómo el uso de la L1 fomenta entornos de aprendizaje propicios, y afirman que obligar a los alumnos a interactuar en un ambiente donde la L2 es la única lengua puede estresarlos, sobre todo si pertenecen a niveles básicos o intermedios (Tang, 2002; Wells, 1999; Schweers, 1999, como se citaron en Quinn, 2019).

En el ámbito sociocultural, Yaoneska (2005, como se citó en Quinn, 2019) indica que el uso exclusivo de la L2 expone a los estudiantes a una lengua que no pueden entender generando una situación donde el docente tiene el poder y los estudiantes deben adaptarse a él, lo que puede crear experiencias insatisfactorias para ambos.

En cuanto a las metodologías de enseñanza del inglés, el uso de la L1 ha sido tratado de manera diferente. El método *Grammar Translation* propone hacer traducciones a la lengua del estudiante. El *Direct Method* no promueve el uso de la L1, más bien sugiere que los estudiantes deben asociar directamente el significado con la lengua meta. El *Audiolingual Method* cree que la L1 puede limitar los esfuerzos de los estudiantes para dominar la L2. Los métodos humanísticos como *Silent Way* y *Desuggestopedia* son menos estrictos y ven la L1 como medio para dar instrucciones, apoyar a los estudiantes a mejorar su pronunciación y entender significados. El *Total Physical Response* se presenta de forma inicial en la L1. Finalmente, el *Communicative Language Teaching Approach* rescata un uso sensato de la L1.

Además de estas dos posturas, a favor y en contra de la L1, Nation (2003, como se citó en Nazary, 2008) presenta una nueva metodología llamada *Balance*

Approach. Él señala que los docentes deben respetar la lengua materna de los estudiantes y evitar minimizarla frente al inglés y que la función del maestro es ayudar al estudiante a desarrollar sus competencias en el idioma reconociendo la importancia de maximizar el uso de la L2, pero dar crédito al uso de la L1 en el aula. No significa que la L1 deba ser la lengua dominante, sino usarla dentro de límites con fines pedagógicos (Galindo, 2011).

Situaciones para el uso apropiado de la L1 en el aula

Burdujan (2020) propone usar la L1 para explicar conceptos difíciles de entender, para hacer traducciones de una lengua a otra, explicar estructuras gramaticales, dar indicaciones, manejar conflictos en el aula, discutir errores y enseñar a estudiantes de bajo nivel.

Ernesto Macaro (1997, como se citó en Khetaguri et al., 2016) sugiere su uso para indicar cuáles actividades se deben realizar, para traducir, para revisar comprensión, para dar retroalimentación a los estudiantes y para mantener la disciplina en el aula. Cook (2001, como se citó en Khetaguri et al., 2016) aconseja usar la L1 para facilitar procesos de comprensión donde la L2 no es suficiente, construir una relación entre la L1 y la L2 en la mente de los estudiantes, completar tareas sin confusiones y/o para desarrollar actividades usando la L2 para uso posterior en contextos reales.

Mattioli (2004, como se citó en Nazary, 2008) refiere como funciones de la L1: explicar vocabulario, dar instrucciones, explicar reglas gramaticales, reprender a los estudiantes y hablar de manera individual con los estudiantes. Aunque la utilidad de la L1 es innegable, se debe priorizar el uso de la L2 considerando que ésta es la lengua meta de la clase y usar únicamente la L1 cuando sea necesario (Burdujan, 2020).

Algunos autores establecen algunas razones por las que no debemos usar la L1. Krashen (1982, como se citó en Quinn, 2019) sugiere evitar el uso de la L1

porque al no usar la lengua meta se reducen las oportunidades de recepción de la L2, también porque los estudiantes pueden hacerse dependientes de la L1, porque priva a los estudiantes de escuchar la L2, debido a que no motiva a los estudiantes a aprender la L2 y porque no fomenta la fluidez en ella.

Sharma (2006, como se citó en Quinn, 2019) indica que debemos evitar usar la L1 porque los estudiantes aprenden más rápidamente si están expuestos a la L2, además de que interiorizan la L2 y comienzan a pensar en ella y se sienten forzados a usarla, lo que los lleva al aprendizaje.

Una vez conociendo las situaciones en las que podemos o no usar la L1, es indispensable saber cómo actuar en el aula para promover el uso de la L2 y lograr los objetivos de aprendizaje. Por ejemplo, debemos empezar por establecer normas claras de cuándo sí o cuándo no usar la L1, planificar tareas apropiadas al nivel de la clase para que el uso de la L2 sea suficiente para realizarlas, crear un ambiente de inglés y utilizar técnicas que permitan el uso máximo de la L2 (Harmer, 2001, como se citó en Quinn, 2019).

Metodología

La presente investigación de corte cualitativo busca encontrar las razones por las que estudiantes y docentes del CREN utilizan el español, que es la lengua materna de ambos, durante la clase de inglés. De igual forma, esta investigación busca dar respuesta a cuáles son las situaciones en las que la lengua materna es usada en el aula y concluir si es factible aprender inglés usando la lengua materna de los estudiantes para facilitar el aprendizaje. Para ello se utilizaron técnicas e instrumentos de carácter cualitativo.

Participantes

Los participantes son 6 docentes que enseñan inglés y 264 estudiantes de las Licenciaturas en Educación Primaria, Educación Preescolar, Inclusión Educativa

y Educación Física cursando inglés en el Centro Regional de Educación Normal “Benito Juárez”. Los docentes tienen experiencia en la enseñanza del inglés, 2 de ellos con entre 20 y 24 años de experiencia, 2 con entre 15 y 20 años y 2 con menos de 10 años. Todos tienen preparación diferente, 2 de ellos con Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés, 1 con formación en el área de Tecnologías, 1 en Comunicación, 1 en Finanzas y 1 en Mercadotecnia. Del total de docentes, 5 cuentan con Maestría, 4 de ellos están actualmente estudiando Doctorado en Educación, 1 cuenta con una maestría en Finanzas y 1 más se encuentra inscrito en una Maestría también en Educación. Todos cuentan con certificaciones que avalan su dominio del idioma de B2, C1 y C2 de acuerdo con el MCER, además de certificaciones en la enseñanza del inglés, tales como TKT y el ICALT.

Por otro lado, los estudiantes involucrados están inscritos en alguna de las 4 licenciaturas, en Educación Primaria, Preescolar, Física e Inclusión Educativa, en diferentes grupos y ubicados en diferentes niveles de acuerdo con los resultados del examen diagnóstico aplicado al inicio del ciclo escolar 2022 – 2023. El rango de sus edades está entre los 18 y los 29 años.

Instrumentos para recolección de datos

Para llevar a cabo esta investigación cualitativa se determinó utilizar entrevistas y cuestionarios a docentes y estudiantes. Los instrumentos son de elaboración propia.

Resultados

Con base en el análisis de los resultados se concluye que los 264 estudiantes mencionan que sus maestros usan la L1 en la clase solo algunas veces, y lo hacen para explicar una estructura gramatical, para dar instrucciones, para dar significado de alguna palabra, para explicar errores, para dar retroalimentación, para mantener la disciplina, para explicar asuntos culturales, para establecer contextos, para dar retroalimentación, y para aclarar dudas. Los estudiantes entrevistados inscritos en

niveles básicos afirman sentirse muy bien cuando su maestro usa L1 en el aula porque dicen que así entienden mejor la clase, otros mencionan que a veces es necesario y se sienten bien, para algunos pocos es indiferente y para la minoría, que son los inscritos en cursos avanzados, les agrada poco pues creen que la clase debería ser totalmente usando la L2.

Figura 1

Uso de la L1 en clase por parte del maestro

¿Tu maestro usa español en tu clase de inglés?

276 respuestas

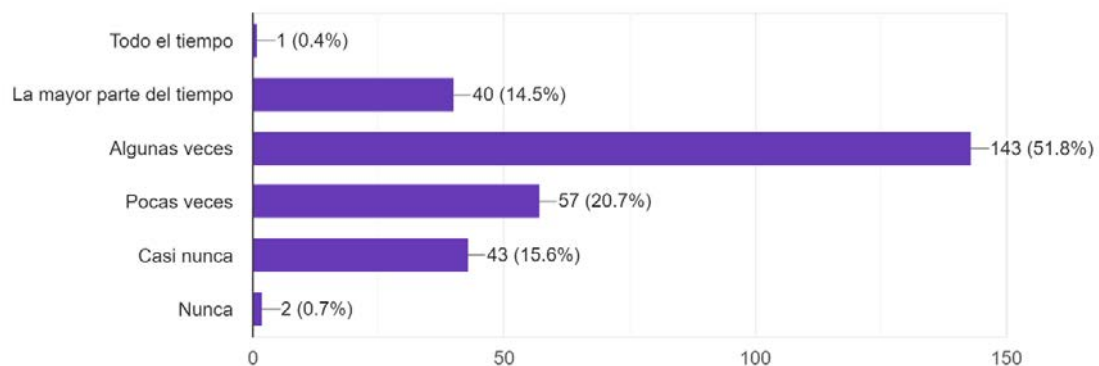


Figura 2

Finalidad del uso de la L1 en clase por parte del maestro

¿Para qué usa tu maestro el español en la clase de inglés?

276 respuestas

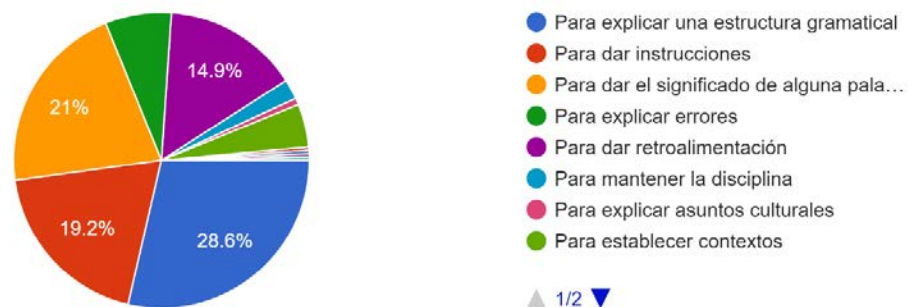


Figura 3

Opinión sobre el uso de la L1 en clase por parte del maestro

¿Qué piensas respecto a que tu maestro de inglés use español en el aula?

276 respuestas

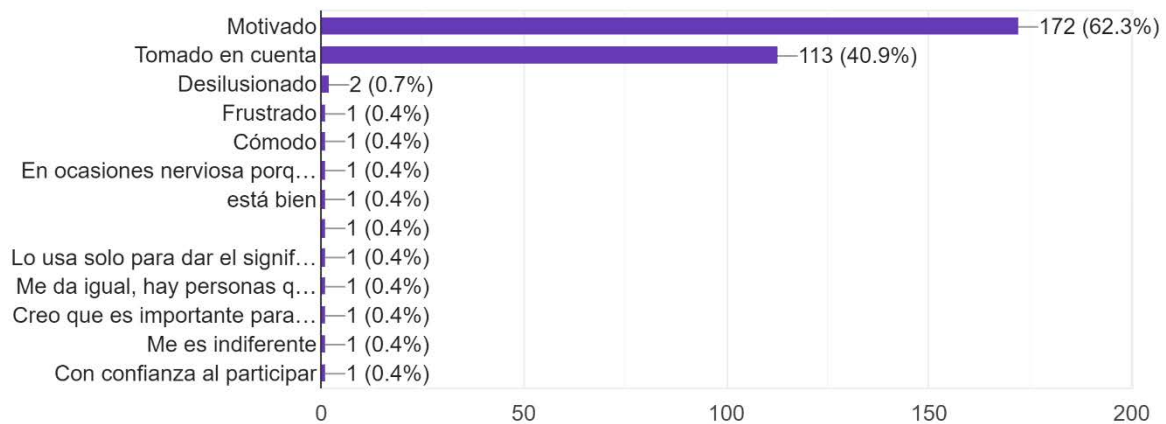


Figura 4

Sentimiento del estudiantado acerca del uso de la L1 en clase por parte del maestro

¿Cómo te sientes respecto a que tu maestro de inglés use español en el aula?

276 respuestas



En lo que se refiere a los docentes, la mayoría respondieron que usan la L1 en el aula la mayor parte del tiempo, mencionan que lo hacen para dar instrucciones, para explicar estructuras gramaticales, para aclarar dudas de vocabulario, para dar

retroalimentación y para dar información importante sobre el curso. Los docentes creen que no se debe evitar el uso de la L1. Los docentes describen que los beneficios del uso de la L1 para el aprendizaje es que los estudiantes entienden instrucciones y pueden ejecutar las tareas sin problemas, que se crea un ambiente amigable en el aula que libera a los estudiantes de sentimientos de estrés y que al usar la L1 en algunas situaciones particulares permite que el tiempo efectivo de clase sea mayor. La respuesta que mencionan los docentes sobre una desventaja del uso de la L1 es que limita a los estudiantes ya que abusan del uso de la L1, se quedan en una zona de confort y no se esfuerzan por comunicarse utilizando L2. Finalmente, en cuanto al sentimiento que les provoca usar la lengua materna en el aula las opiniones se dividieron, una mitad de los docentes respondió que se siente estresado o incompetente, y la otra mitad se siente cómodo o satisfecho.

Conclusión

En conclusión, el uso de la lengua materna durante el proceso de aprendizaje de una segunda lengua revela su relevancia en múltiples aspectos. Esta conexión entre la lengua materna y la lengua extranjera no solo es inevitable, sino que puede ser explotada de manera estratégica para potenciar el aprendizaje.

La lengua materna puede funcionar como un puente cultural, permitiendo la transferencia de conocimientos y conceptos de un idioma a otro. Al comprender y adaptar analogías culturales y expresiones idiomáticas, el aprendiz puede ganar una comprensión más profunda de la nueva cultura y comunicarse de manera más efectiva.

No obstante, es importante abordar este enfoque con precaución, ya que el uso excesivo de la lengua materna puede llevar a la interferencia lingüística y a la dificultad para pensar y expresarse directamente en la lengua extranjera. Por lo tanto, encontrar un equilibrio entre aprovechar los recursos que ofrece la lengua materna y sumergirse en la nueva lengua es esencial para un progreso exitoso.

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Explorando Nuevos Horizontes: La Enseñanza del Inglés en Segundo Grado de Preescolar

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Escuela Normal de Jilotepec

Resumen

Este estudio se enfoca en el desarrollo de la expresión oral en inglés a nivel básico en niños de segundo grado de educación preescolar la cual surge como respuesta a la disminución del nivel de aprendizaje del inglés en México. La intervención se basa en la premisa de que enseñar una lengua extranjera desde el segundo grado favorecerá el desarrollo de la expresión oral a nivel interpersonal, estableciendo bases sólidas para la comunicación efectiva en ciclos educativos posteriores. La estrategia se divide en dos momentos de aplicación que se resumen en la implementación de actividades de trabajo mediante el método de respuesta física total (TPR), rutinas y títeres. Esta investigación, bajo la metodología de investigación-acción, busca contribuir al área de enseñanza de lenguas, ofreciendo innovaciones y propuestas respaldadas por la práctica docente documentada y fundamentada. Se espera que inspire nuevas perspectivas y enriquezca el panorama educativo en la enseñanza de inglés en preescolar.

Palabras clave: *Expresión oral en inglés, Educación preescolar, Metodología de investigación-acción, Estrategias pedagógicas, Desarrollo del lenguaje en niños*

Abstract

This study focuses on the development of oral expression in English at a basic level in second-grade preschool children, which arises in response to the decrease in

English learning levels in Mexico. The intervention is based on the premise that teaching a foreign language from the second grade will promote the development of oral expression at an interpersonal level, establishing solid foundations for effective communication in later educational stages. The strategy is divided into two application moments summarized in the implementation of work activities through total physical response (TPR), routines, and puppets. This research, using the action research methodology, aims to contribute to the language teaching field by offering innovations and proposals supported by documented and grounded teaching practice. It is expected to inspire new perspectives and enrich the educational landscape in English teaching in preschool.

Keywords: *Oral expression in English, Preschool education, Research-action methodology, Pedagogical strategies, Language development in children*

Introducción

En la actualidad, el sistema educativo mexicano ha trazado un ambicioso camino hacia la formación de estudiantes prácticamente bilingües al concluir la educación básica. Este trayecto, que comienza en preescolar y culmina en secundaria, busca equipar a los alumnos con las habilidades lingüísticas necesarias para destacar en una sociedad cada vez más globalizada. Sin embargo, a pesar de los esfuerzos y las políticas implementadas, numerosas investigaciones sugieren que la meta del bilingüismo está lejos de alcanzarse.

En 2009, la Secretaría de Educación Pública de México implementó el Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica (PNIEB) con el objetivo de preparar a los estudiantes con las habilidades necesarias para hablar una lengua extranjera. A pesar de este y otros esfuerzos, la realidad muestra que el dominio del inglés en la población mexicana dista de su meta. Aunque la enseñanza del inglés se percibe como una puerta hacia oportunidades, especialmente en el ámbito laboral, son pocos los individuos que pueden considerarse verdaderamente bilingües y aptos para empleos que demandan estas habilidades.

Ante este escenario, surge la necesidad de explorar nuevas estrategias en la enseñanza del inglés, considerando factores clave como el perfil del alumnado, las horas disponibles para la enseñanza, el perfil docente y la contextualización del aprendizaje. Esta investigación se centra en la propuesta de iniciar la enseñanza del inglés desde el segundo grado de educación preescolar, a pesar de no estar presente en el currículo actual.

El presente trabajo busca arrojar luz sobre la viabilidad de esta propuesta mediante un enfoque cualitativo, examinando un grupo de niños de segundo grado de educación preescolar. La contingencia sanitaria derivada de la propagación del SARS-COV-2 condicionó algunos aspectos metodológicos, enfocándose en la mitad del grupo, pero la intención fue clara: explorar y potenciar el aprendizaje del inglés desde las primeras etapas del desarrollo educativo, contribuyendo así a elevar el nivel de dominio del inglés en México.

El Inglés en la Educación Básica en México: Un Análisis Crítico

En México, la enseñanza del inglés ha trascendido la categoría de "materia extra" en el currículo educativo, integrándose al plan de estudios a través del Programa Nacional de Inglés en la Educación Básica (PNIEB), que estableció estándares internacionales de dominio del idioma desde el último año de preescolar hasta el último año de secundaria, con el objetivo de alcanzar niveles de dominio A1, A2 y B1 al finalizar este período (SEP, 2011). Sin embargo, los resultados prácticos han sido decepcionantes. El Examen del Uso y Comprensión del Idioma Inglés para Egresados de Secundaria (EUCIS) reveló que más del 80% de los egresados carecen de cualquier dominio del inglés, y solo un pequeño porcentaje alcanza los niveles A1, A2 y B2. Es relevante señalar que quienes logran el nivel B2 admiten haber tomado clases particulares durante su educación básica (Vértigo, 2015).

El posicionamiento de México en el EF English Proficiency Index en 2018 refleja esta problemática, ubicándose en el puesto 57 de 88 países evaluados, lo

que lo clasifica como un país de "nivel bajo" en dominio del inglés. Aunque ciertas regiones como la Ciudad de México y Jalisco muestran puntajes destacados, el Estado de México tiene un desempeño considerablemente inferior (Vidal, 2019).

Ante esta disparidad entre la propuesta educativa y los resultados prácticos, es necesario revisar y replantear los enfoques de enseñanza del inglés en la educación básica mexicana. En este marco, la investigación se enfocó en los primeros grados de la educación básica, con una atención particular en el nivel de preescolar como punto de partida para comprender y mejorar los procesos educativos en la enseñanza del inglés en México.

El Aprendizaje del Inglés en Preescolar: Explorando las Bases Educativas

La inclusión de la asignatura "Lengua Extranjera Inglés" en el plan y programas de estudio actuales marca un hito importante en la educación preescolar mexicana. Este componente, introducido en 2009, busca familiarizar a los estudiantes con el inglés como lengua extranjera en los grados iniciales de educación básica (SEP, 2017).

Aprendizajes Clave para la Educación Integral (SEP, 2017), menciona que el propósito general de la asignatura Lengua Extranjera Inglés para la educación básica es:

[...] que los estudiantes desarrollen habilidades, conocimientos, actitudes y estrategias de aprendizaje para participar e interactuar en prácticas sociales del lenguaje, orales y escritas, propias de diferentes contextos comunicativos y culturales rutinarios, habituales y conocidos, con hablantes nativos y no nativos del inglés. (p. 165)

Esta finalidad apunta no solo a la adquisición del idioma, sino también, a la integración efectiva en contextos comunicativos y culturales diversos.

El currículo de "Lengua Extranjera Inglés" se organiza en ciclos, para efectos de esta investigación nos enfocamos en el Ciclo 1, que abarca el último año de preescolar. En este ciclo, el propósito fundamental es que los estudiantes se sensibilicen y familiaricen con una lengua distinta a la materna, permitiéndoles reaccionar y utilizar la lengua extranjera para expresar ideas y pensamientos con confianza y eficacia hacia personas de otras culturas (SEP, 2017), por lo cual, exploramos cómo se lleva a cabo la implementación de estos principios y propósitos en el aula de preescolar, centrándonos en estrategias pedagógicas y desafíos particulares.

Factores que Influyen en la Enseñanza y el Aprendizaje del Inglés en Niños

La adquisición de una lengua extranjera, específicamente el inglés, ha experimentado un auge significativo en las últimas décadas. Esta tendencia ha contribuido a que el inglés sea considerado una lengua franca (Vargas, 2017). Sin embargo, aprender una lengua extranjera, como el inglés, es un proceso complejo y multifacético, influenciado por diversas variables individuales y sociales.

Entre las variables individuales de corte cognitivo podemos destacar la inteligencia, la aptitud y el uso de estrategias de aprendizaje, las cuales son factores clave que influyen en la adquisición del inglés (Santana et al., 2016). La dimensión afectiva, que incluye factores como la empatía, la autoestima, la extraversión, la inhibición, la imitación, la ansiedad y las actitudes, también desempeña un papel crucial en el aprendizaje del inglés. La actitud, vinculada a la motivación y el deseo de alcanzar metas, emerge como un factor determinante.

En el ámbito social, el contexto emerge como un factor determinante en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés en niños. El contexto, entendido como el entorno físico, político, histórico, cultural u otro que rodea la situación de aprendizaje, influye significativamente en el éxito o fracaso del proceso (Santana et al., 2016). Por lo cual, nos enfocamos en estrategias pedagógicas que aprovechan

estos factores para enriquecer la experiencia de aprendizaje del inglés en el nivel preescolar.

¿Cómo Enseñar Inglés a los Niños?

El habla se desarrolla en los niños a partir de interacciones sociales, proporcionándoles diversas oportunidades para ampliar su vocabulario, construir significados y estructurar sus pensamientos. Las actividades como jugar, experimentar, explorar y comentar les permiten desarrollar la capacidad de expresar ideas y pensamientos de manera efectiva. El lenguaje no solo es una herramienta comunicativa, sino también una herramienta del pensamiento que facilita la comprensión y la reflexión (SEP, 2017).

Iniciar el aprendizaje del inglés en la infancia ofrece beneficios significativos, ya que la plasticidad cognitiva de los niños les permite adquirir una lengua extranjera con mayor facilidad. La capacidad de pronunciar palabras en un nuevo idioma se ve menos afectada, ya que no se contrapone con una lengua materna previamente establecida (Villena y Cisneros, 2016, citados en Bolaño y Trujillo, 2021).

De esta manera, enseñar inglés a niños implica crear un entorno educativo que aproveche sus capacidades naturales, promoviendo el desarrollo integral a través de interacciones sociales, comprensión intercultural y atención a factores individuales y contextuales. Estas estrategias no solo facilitan el aprendizaje del inglés, sino que también enriquecen el proceso educativo global de los niños.

TPR, rutinas y títeres

El enfoque TPR, o Respuesta Física Total, es una metodología de enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras desarrollada por el Dr. James J. Asher. Este método se basa en la premisa fundamental de que "se aprende haciendo" (Hollerbach et al., 1986, citado en UNIR, 2020). Inspirado en la forma en que los padres enseñan a sus hijos

la lengua materna mediante instrucciones corporales, el TPR busca replicar este proceso en el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras.

Este método se basa en la idea de asociar las estructuras mentales entre el lenguaje y el movimiento para lograr una mayor eficacia en el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera (Frost, 2016). La respuesta física total resulta adecuada para trabajar con niños en edad preescolar, ya que se alinea con sus características y necesidades.

Al emplear esta metodología, se aprovechan las naturales habilidades empíricas y motoras de los niños, permitiéndoles aprender a su propio ritmo, evitando situaciones estresantes y maximizando sus habilidades y competencias en el área del inglés (Bolaño y Trujillo, 2021).

Sánchez (2014) sugiere que, para el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera en edades tempranas, se puede considerar un enfoque comunicativo y un método directo o natural. Esto implica el uso cotidiano del lenguaje como sistema de aprendizaje, desde la escucha hasta la reproducción del lenguaje, culminando en la producción y habla de la nueva lengua.

Moya et al. (2003), citados en Sánchez (2014), enfatizan que la adquisición de una lengua requiere una interacción constante. Por lo tanto, al hacer del uso cotidiano del inglés una práctica regular, se promueve la adquisición del idioma. La relación entre rutinas y el aprendizaje de inglés se fortalece al considerar los *cronotipos de Breus* (Breus, 2019), donde los niños en edad preescolar, clasificados como "leones", tienen un periodo óptimo para aprender nuevas cosas al inicio de su jornada.

El uso de títeres en el aula es una estrategia didáctica con amplio respaldo en el ámbito educativo. Los títeres han sido empleados como herramienta para la enseñanza y la transmisión de información. Mendoza (2010) destaca la importancia de limitar el uso de títeres, ya que, aunque son un recurso poderoso, su aplicación

debe realizarse con respeto tanto al acto de los títeres como al público al que se presenta. Además, la actividad debe llevarse a cabo dedicando el tiempo y los esfuerzos necesarios para garantizar su efectividad.

El Niño Preescolar: Consideraciones para una Propuesta Educativa

Para desarrollar una propuesta educativa adaptada a las necesidades actuales, es esencial comprender las características específicas de los niños en la etapa preescolar. Al considerar estos aspectos, se puede diseñar un plan que estimule el aprendizaje cognitivo y emocional, proporcionando desafíos apropiados para su desarrollo sin generar frustración.

La comprensión de las emociones en el niño preescolar es esencial para su desarrollo integral. Las emociones, definidas como estados complejos del organismo en respuesta a estímulos externos o internos, desempeñan diversas funciones adaptativas, motivacionales y sociales (Muslera, 2016). En la actualidad, se reconoce la importancia de la dimensión socioemocional en el proceso educativo. Las emociones impactan directamente en la respuesta de los individuos a diversas situaciones, incluido su proceso de aprendizaje. La inclusión de esta dimensión en el currículum refleja una visión humanista de la educación, centrada en las relaciones y el entorno (SEP, 2017).

En síntesis, diseñar una propuesta educativa efectiva para niños preescolares implica considerar tanto los procesos cognitivos propios de esta etapa como la dimensión socioemocional. La integración de actividades lúdicas, simbólicas y adaptadas a sus habilidades cognitivas, junto con la atención a su desarrollo emocional, contribuirá a un aprendizaje significativo y equilibrado.

Metodología de la Investigación

Esta investigación se origina al identificar el interés del preescolar en instruir a sus alumnos en el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua. A pesar de que el perfil de

egreso para preescolar establece la comprensión del inglés, pocos planteles cumplen con este requisito. La contribución principal de este trabajo radica en proporcionar herramientas para el desarrollo oral del inglés a nivel básico desde el segundo grado de Educación Preescolar, ampliando el enfoque más allá del tercer año según el plan de estudios vigente. Se emplea un diseño cualitativo centrado en explicar el comportamiento del grupo con el que se implementó el trabajo, utilizando la metodología de investigación-acción para desarrollar la propuesta ya que es una indagación a pequeña escala para resolver un problema (Bell, 2005).

El proceso incluyó un diagnóstico inicial, el diseño de un plan de acción, implementación y observación de estrategias, seguido de reflexiones para una nueva planificación. Esta metodología fomenta la innovación y la mejora continua en el proceso educativo, con herramientas como observación, diario de clase y semáforo de evaluación para recopilar información relevante. La investigación-acción permite la reflexión sobre los resultados y la adaptación constante de las estrategias propuestas, promoviendo un análisis profundo de la comprensión del problema.

Objetivos y supuesto

El objetivo general de esta investigación fue desarrollar la expresión oral en una lengua extranjera en estudiantes de segundo grado de preescolar. Para alcanzar esta meta, se establecieron objetivos específicos que incluyeron el diseño de actividades destinadas a fortalecer el desarrollo de la expresión oral en inglés y la investigación de estrategias y técnicas apropiadas para la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera.

Asimismo, se diseñaron, adaptaron y emplearon recursos didácticos pertinentes para la creación de secuencias didácticas que favorecieron el aprendizaje de la expresión oral en el contexto preescolar, a partir de los cuales se deriva el siguiente supuesto:

La enseñanza de una lengua extranjera, a partir del segundo grado de educación preescolar, favorecerá el desarrollo de expresión oral y será la base para que los alumnos puedan comunicarse más eficientemente a lo largo de los siguientes ciclos de inglés en educación básica.

El contexto de estudio

El jardín de niños donde se llevó a cabo la investigación se encuentra al norte del Estado de México. Este trabajo se enfoca en el grupo de segundo grado, compuesto por 28 alumnos, 24 asistían presencialmente y 4 de manera remota. Los estudiantes tenían entre 4 y 5 años, originarios del municipio. Al iniciar la intervención, los aprendientes ya conocían algunas expresiones de inglés de manera informal, aprendidas en su entorno familiar o social, principalmente a través de plataformas digitales. La mayoría muestra interés en aprender más inglés, y este acercamiento previo informal ha resultado en una mayor motivación para interactuar con la lengua inglesa en el entorno escolar.

La propuesta

Este trabajo de investigación se enfoca en el desarrollo de la expresión oral en inglés a nivel básico en niños de segundo grado de educación preescolar. Ésta se sustenta en un marco teórico y se manifiesta en un producto que representa el progreso de un grupo de segundo grado de educación preescolar. La relevancia de esta propuesta se fundamenta en el supuesto teórico presentado anteriormente.

La propuesta se dirige a intervenir en el segundo grado de educación preescolar, basándose en la premisa de que las estrategias significativas implementadas durante esta etapa favorecieron el desarrollo de la expresión oral en inglés. La relevancia de esta intervención radica en la búsqueda de contrarrestar las dificultades observadas en el aprendizaje del inglés y sentar bases para continuar con el desarrollo de esta habilidad.

Implementación y Ajustes

La propuesta se desglosa en dos momentos, derivados de la metodología de investigación-acción. En el primer momento, se diseñaron secuencias didácticas, cuyo fin era un producto gráfico. Estas actividades se trabajaron como complementarias a las clases regulares y los contenidos que se estaban llevando a cabo con los niños; su construcción se basó en las clases de inglés impartidas para tercer grado, pero con una duración reducida. Se centraron en el uso de palabras de cortesía para abordar una problemática identificada en las interacciones entre los alumnos.

Sin embargo, tras un proceso reflexivo resultado de la evaluación recogida mediante el semáforo, que es un instrumento con indicadores en donde se registran observaciones según el desempeño y logro de los alumnos, se determinó que esta primera intervención presentó limitaciones. Es aquí donde cumple su función la investigación-acción, ya que se determinó que el tiempo asignado resultó insuficiente para lograr el aprendizaje de la lengua.

Se identificó que el momento de aplicación, al final de la jornada, no era el más propicio, ya que los niños estaban llenos de energía después del recreo y el almuerzo, entonces se emprendió de nuevo un proceso de planificación, que continuó en una nueva planificación y acciones para culminar en una nueva reflexión.

Luego de este primer momento y posterior a un proceso reflexivo y documentado, se ajustó la estrategia de intervención. Se rescataron actividades lúdicas del primer momento de intervención, las cuales demostraron ser motivadoras. Para la segunda intervención, se replanteó la aplicación de las acciones, considerando los momentos óptimos de atención cognitiva, situando la aplicación al inicio de la jornada.

Se adoptó una perspectiva transversal, es decir, una vinculación entre varios campos formativos, derivada de un proceso de análisis, incorporando actividades de inglés en situaciones didácticas semanales, de otros campos formativos, relacionadas con la adquisición de expresiones lingüísticas correspondientes a palabras de cortesía, expresión de emociones y partes del cuerpo en inglés. Es aquí en donde entra el uso del método Respuesta Física Total, la implementación de actividades rutinarias y el uso de títeres como estrategias principales de enseñanza mediante las cuales los niños lograron avances en la expresión oral en inglés a nivel básico.

Estos cambios permitieron una mayor atención de los niños a las actividades, vinculando el aprendizaje de inglés con situaciones cotidianas y logrando mayor interés a comparación de la primera aplicación. El uso del títere Tommy los hizo involucrarse más en las actividades generando incluso empatía con el personaje y sentimientos de agrado y cariño hacia el mismo. Del mismo modo, usar el método de Respuesta Física Total apoyó a que los niños comprendieran mejor los conceptos sin necesidad de traducirles la palabra que se intentaba comunicar, pues los niños relacionaron los movimientos y acciones con lo que se quería dar a entender, interiorizando el vocabulario con mayor facilidad.

Estas actividades aunado a una constante práctica mediante el establecimiento de rutinas, resultaron mayormente favorables y se observó un avance considerable respecto al primer momento, elaborando un registro con el mismo esquema de evaluación del semáforo.

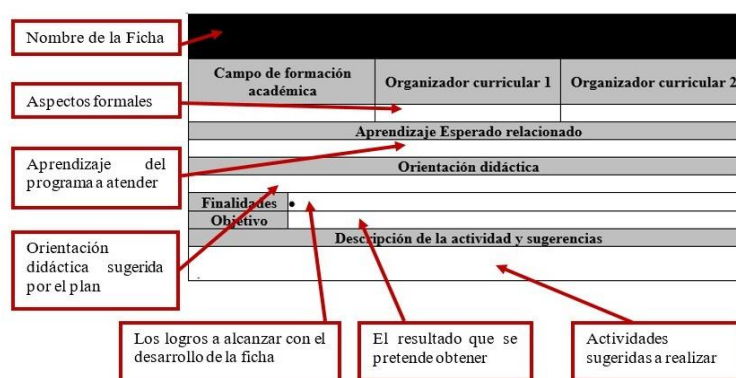
La intervención se presentó como un proceso dinámico, donde la planificación, las acciones emprendidas, la observación recuperada de cada momento y la reflexión de la evaluación se consideraron esenciales. La estrategia final se enfocó en integrar actividades de inglés de manera transversal, enfatizando la utilidad práctica de la expresión oral en inglés a nivel inicial, y fomentando la participación activa de los niños.

Resultado y propuesta

A partir de las acciones realizadas y la bibliografía consultada se presenta la siguiente propuesta, la cual consta de fichas didácticas con actividades que se aplicaron en el trayecto de este trabajo de investigación y resultaron exitosas, mostrando el resultado de la investigación-acción.

Figura 1

Ficha didáctica



Siguiendo este formato se construyeron 3 fichas didácticas en donde se incluyeron algunas actividades que resultaron altamente funcionales durante su aplicación, en un grupo de segundo grado, de Educación Preescolar,¹ mismas que incluyeron las estrategias antes mencionadas como la implementación de rutinas, el uso de títeres y actividades que incluían en enfoque del método Respuesta Física Total, las cuales resultaron más adecuadas para el aprendizaje de los niños puesto que fue notable un avance respecto al primer ciclo de intervención en donde se aplicaron secuencias didácticas con hojas de trabajo.

¹ Fichas didácticas: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VGmKpwrBs2UtuP29AmnALRPODV6ZT-AD/view?usp=drive_link

Las fichas presentadas se construyeron a partir de la aplicación de actividades durante el proceso de investigación y se recomienda que de ser necesario la educadora de segundo grado las modifique en razón de las características de sus alumnos y entorno, considerando estas fichas como parte de su plan de clase permitiendo la flexibilidad curricular, la cual está avalada y justificada en el plan de estudios actual, pues como lo menciona la SEP (2017) “...los alumnos de un mismo grado escolar tienen los mismos objetivos curriculares, pero la forma de alcanzarlos no tiene por qué ser única” (p. 122). Por lo tanto, las educadoras pueden tomar como referencia la implementación de estas fichas didácticas para diseñar materiales y estrategias que permitan el desarrollo de la expresión oral en inglés.

Figura 2

Ejemplo de ficha

My emotions and me		
Area de Desarrollo	Organizador curricular 1	Organizador curricular 2
Personal y Social		
Educación socioemocional.	Autorregulación.	Expresión de las emociones.
Aprendizaje Esperado relacionado		
Reconoce y nombra situaciones que le generan alegría, seguridad, tristeza, miedo o enojo y expresa lo que siente.		
Orientación didáctica		
Proponga frases para que los alumnos las completen con experiencias personales, por ejemplo: “En la escuela estoy alegre si...”, “en el salón me enojo cuando...”, “me pongo triste cuando mis amigos y amigas...”, “tengo miedo cuando...”, “me siento bienvenido cuando...”. Ayúdelos a construir frases que expresen orgullo, alegría, temor, vergüenza.		
Finalidades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Que el alumno reconozca el nombre de cada emoción y lo exprese de manera oral apoyándose del uso de títeres. • Que el alumno nombre sus emociones en inglés a partir de la interpretación de las mismas por medio de T.P.R. • Que el alumno identifique acciones que le generan alguna emoción a partir de la interpretación por medio de T.P. R. de situaciones descritas en inglés. • Que el alumno reconozca cómo se siente y sea capaz de expresarlo en una segunda lengua: inglés. 	
Objetivo	Desarrollar en el alumno la expresión oral de una lengua extranjera a partir de establecer situaciones que le permitan identificar sus emociones y comunicarlas mediante el habla.	

Conclusiones

Hay razones válidas para abogar por la enseñanza del inglés desde un grado anterior al actualmente previsto, especialmente considerando que en México el nivel de competencia en inglés de los estudiantes jóvenes es muy limitado. Al comenzar la instrucción en inglés en etapas más tempranas, se brinda a los estudiantes una mayor exposición al idioma y se establecen bases sólidas para un dominio más profundo en etapas posteriores de su educación.

Las fichas propuestas son una alternativa que la misma educadora de grupo puede utilizar para introducir a los pequeños de segundo grado de preescolar en un ambiente bilingüe desde una edad temprana, ya que los niños tienen un alto potencial entre los 4 y 5 años para la adquisición de una lengua extranjera favoreciendo incluso las prácticas sociales de lenguaje.

La estrategia basada en el método de Respuesta Física Total resultó favorable para los niños de segundo grado, debido a que, desde inicio, y como lo sugieren algunos teóricos, es una estrategia simple en la cual se recupera la manera en que se aprendió la lengua materna, familiarizando al niño con un proceso que ya ha hecho anteriormente mediante la interpretación del lenguaje corporal.

El trabajo con títeres resultó una estrategia que favoreció el desarrollo de la expresión oral en una lengua extranjera, pues los niños se mostraron entusiasmados por el trabajo con este tipo de materiales, que además permitieron mostrar una participación con mayor seguridad, comprobando el supuesto de algunos estudiosos en el tema, quienes mencionan que los títeres causan gran interés en los infantes, permitiendo que la información que se quiera transmitir sea aceptada por el receptor.

El establecimiento de actividades rutinarias permitió al alumno apropiarse del inglés de manera gradual mediante su uso cotidiano, pues de esta forma, fue familiarizándose paulatinamente hasta que, por procesos naturales,

correspondientes a su edad, el niño comenzó a utilizar expresiones orales en inglés para comunicarse con sus compañeros.

Cabe mencionar que la evaluación es un momento determinante para esta investigación, puesto que es un lapso importante en el que se permite reflexionar sobre las estrategias aplicadas, por lo que el semáforo de evaluación se vio como uno de los insumos más útiles, en el cual se pudieron registrar logros de los alumnos en razón de las estrategias aplicadas y su avance en distintos momentos, respetando la forma de evaluación en nivel preescolar.

Es crucial tener en cuenta que este estudio representa un primer acercamiento para comprender cómo se puede abordar la enseñanza del inglés en el segundo grado de educación preescolar. Dado que la información sobre el desarrollo del lenguaje oral en inglés en este nivel es escasa hasta la fecha, se aspira a brindar a la comunidad académica una visión más amplia sobre el significado del aprendizaje de un idioma extranjero para nuestra sociedad y su importancia.

Se espera que esta investigación sirva como aportación al área de la enseñanza de lenguas, permitiendo otorgar innovaciones y propuestas en aras de mejorar, además, se sugiere enriquecer cualquier puesta en práctica con otras investigaciones y experiencias dentro de esta área que permitan ejercer una práctica docente documentada, bien fundamentada y analizada para brindar el mejor de los servicios educativos posible a los niños de preescolar.

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Estrategias de enseñanza y aprendizaje de inglés como segundo idioma para mejorar la memorización y recuperación

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Introducción

El proceso de aprendizaje requiere del trabajo conjunto de varias partes del cerebro, desde la forma como se recibe la información a través de los sentidos, cómo se percibe, clasifica, recuerda, utiliza e, inclusive cómo se olvida. Aunado a esto, mucho de lo que se aprende llega a través del lenguaje mediante la comunicación de conocimientos y experiencias de otras personas. Por ello, es fundamental para el aprendizaje, la comunicación en un segundo idioma, como es caso del inglés que forma parte de las mallas curriculares en diversas licenciaturas en educación impartidas en las Escuelas Normales de México.

Más allá de cómo adquirimos conocimientos, resulta vital recordar lo aprendido, es decir lo que ya se sabe, para usarlo en el momento que lo necesitemos y es justo ahí, donde se hacen patente los procesos mentales que conforman nuestra memoria.

Como formadora de Inglés “C”, impartiendo las diversas asignaturas de inglés de los planes y programas 2018 y 2022 en las licenciaturas de Educación Primaria (LEP) y de Educación Física (LEF) de la Escuela Normal de Rincón de Romos “Dr. Rafael Francisco Aguilar Lomeli” (ENRR), he observado que un problema recurrente que presentan varios alumnos es la dificultad para hacer la recuperación (*recall*, en inglés) del vocabulario y las estructuras gramaticales vistas durante sesiones de clase anteriores.

A cada uno de los alumnos de la ENRR se le aplica una evaluación para estimar el nivel de inglés que tienen los alumnos al inicio del primer curso de inglés. El resultado de dicha evaluación se ajusta a la escala del Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas (MCERL). Los ítems que incluye esa evaluación son una adaptación de la prueba diagnóstica de los materiales para el docente de la serie *Interchange*, 5ª edición, de la editorial Cambridge con los que se ha trabajado desde el 2018 en la institución. La adaptación fue realizada por las formadoras de inglés de la ENRR para poder aplicarla a través de un formulario de Google de manera local con el único fin de agilizar la obtención de los resultados. Al analizar los resultados de estos formularios cada inicio de ciclo escolar, se ha observado de forma consuetudinaria que un alto índice de estudiantes no logra recordar muchos de los conceptos estudiados durante el curso, o cursos, anteriores.

La primera etapa del presente trabajo es conocer la relación que se da entre los procesos de memoria y aprendizaje y aplicar las estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje que mejoren la memorización y recuperación de palabras, significados y estructuras gramaticales con el propósito de que se puedan aplicar de forma cotidiana en las clases de inglés como segundo idioma.

En consecuencia, el interés principal para realizar una propuesta de intervención que mejore los procesos de memoria y mejorar la recuperación de los aprendizajes es disminuir el recursamiento así como reducir el tiempo dedicado a realizar repasos de temas anteriores para poder aprender los que siguen; así como proponer las estrategias y actividades que puedan coadyuvar a este fin.

Delimitación y planteamiento del problema de intervención

Se realizó una investigación documental sobre los procesos de memoria, así como las estrategias didácticas que inciden en el registro de los aprendizajes en la memoria a largo plazo y, por supuesto, la recuperación de los conceptos adquiridos. Posteriormente se elaboró un plan de intervención educativa con la finalidad disminuir el retroceso en los temas ya estudiados y, por consiguiente, reducir

también el tiempo dedicado a retomar y repasar conceptos ya vistos con anterioridad esperando alcanzar así un mayor avance en los programas de estudio anteriormente mencionados.

Objetivo general

Aplicar diversas estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje que incidan en el desarrollo de la memoria a largo plazo y la recuperación de aprendizajes en las asignaturas de inglés.

Objetivos específicos

- Analizar el proceso de memoria en sus distintas dimensiones, principalmente la memoria a largo plazo y su relevancia en el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma.
- Definir, proponer y aplicar estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje que estimulen y desarrollen la consolidación y recuperación a largo plazo de los aprendizajes.

Metodología

En la primera fase del presente trabajo se llevó a cabo un proceso de investigación documental en el cual comprendió la búsqueda, selección, organización y análisis de documentos de investigación científica y libros sobre la memoria, la relación entre la memoria y el proceso de aprendizaje en general y, entre la memoria y el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua, en lo particular. Posteriormente, se hará la elección de las estrategias y actividades que conformarán el plan de intervención y se harán ajustes de forma semestral mediante un plan de investigación-acción.

Para iniciar, se consultaron distintas bases de datos y bibliotecas electrónicas disponibles a través de la biblioteca electrónica de la Universidad Internacional de la Rioja utilizando, dentro de la búsqueda avanzada, los operadores booleanos para

limitar los términos memoria e idioma como palabras clave. Se filtraron los resultados por los idiomas español, inglés y francés por ser los que puedo comprender con facilidad. El resultado obtenido fue de seis trabajos con diversos enfoques, aunque ninguno de ellos trata el tema que se pretende investigar en esta ocasión.

Posteriormente se realizó la búsqueda de artículos en Dialnet, Redalyc, Eric, Scielo y diversos compendios de libros compilados en sitios especializados en educación, neurociencias, lingüística y enseñanza de idiomas como segunda lengua o lengua extranjera. Al seleccionar los textos de investigación se tomó en cuenta que estuvieran dentro del área de la neuroeducación para poder considerar también los factores biológicos que intervienen en los procesos de memoria.

Los documentos se organizaron en tres categorías que van de lo general a lo particular y de las aportaciones más antiguas hasta las más recientes: a) los que hablan de los modelos de memoria en relación con el aprendizaje, c) los que tratan sobre la adquisición de un segundo idioma y los procesos de memoria a largo plazo y finalmente, e) los que proponen estrategias de aprendizaje que mejoren la consolidación de la información y su recuperación en el largo plazo.

Posteriormente se eligieron aquellas estrategias actividades que coadyuven a la consolidación y recuperación -específicamente en la memoria a largo plazo-, del aprendizaje de inglés como segundo idioma, mismas que se pusieron en práctica en dos grupos de cuarto semestre de la de la Licenciatura en Educación Primaria, que cursan el plan de estudios 2018, con un total de 58 alumnos con nivel pre-A1 según el MCERL.

El proceso de intervención dio comienzo a principios del semestre “B”, que se cursó en los meses de febrero a julio del 2023. Posteriormente, la intervención educativa se realizará a lo largo de tres semestres, iniciando en cuarto semestre y finalizando cuando los alumnos concluyan el sexto semestre de la licenciatura. Se realizarán comparativos de las evaluaciones académicas grupales que se llevan a

cabo de forma ordinaria al final de cada semestre para ver si el promedio de ambos grupos se incrementa en cada uno de los tres periodos y, en julio del 2024 se aplicará la misma evaluación en formulario de Google que realizaron de forma previa a la implementación de las actividades de intervención.

Al inicio del quinto y sexto semestre se analizará, desde un enfoque cuantitativo, si el desempeño mostrado en las evaluaciones académicas ordinarias ha mejorado. Por otra parte, se evaluará de forma cualitativa la participación activa y asertiva durante las sesiones de clase. De igual forma se aplicará un instrumento de evaluación para que los alumnos evalúen tanto al docente como a sus clases al final de cada uno de los semestres para determinar su percepción en cuanto a la calidad de los cursos.

Marco teórico

Inicialmente se han investigado las funciones que conocemos de los procesos del cerebro en relación con la memoria en general, así como los constructos relacionados con las diferentes maneras que tenemos de concebir la memoria. Posteriormente se presenta la relación entre la adquisición del lenguaje con los procesos de memoria buscando hacer énfasis en la memoria a largo plazo. Finalmente, se presentan algunas estrategias de enseñanza específicas, propuestas por diversos autores, para favorecer la memorización a largo plazo tanto de vocabulario como de estructuras gramaticales en el aprendizaje de inglés.

1. Memoria, aprendizaje y las estructuras cerebrales

La memoria es “el proceso cognitivo a través del cual se codifica, almacena y recupera una información determinada o un suceso concreto, es el proceso psicológico que nos permite aprender” (González Rodríguez & Muñoz Marrón, 2008, p.13). De ahí que los conceptos de aprendizaje y memoria vayan siempre de la mano y que a veces los utilicemos de manera indistinta fuera del ámbito académico. Cuando decimos que sabemos algo es porque tenemos guardado en la memoria

los conceptos y/o las acciones relacionadas con esa idea y que consideramos que ya no lo vamos a olvidar.

1.1 Distinciones de la memoria según su duración

Una forma en la que se han hecho distinciones de la memoria es con relación al tiempo de retención de la información en nuestro cerebro. La de menor duración es la memoria sensorial, la cual dura algunos milisegundos. A ésta le sigue la memoria inmediata en la cual retenemos la información por uno o dos minutos; también se le puede nombrar como amplitud de memoria (en inglés memory span).

La memoria a corto plazo o memoria primaria es aquella en la que los recuerdos no están consolidados, son transitorios y son susceptibles a ser modificados por estímulos que interfieran en su almacenamiento.

Finalmente, tenemos la memoria a largo plazo o memoria secundaria, la cual se puede extender incluso hasta años de duración después de pasar por un proceso de consolidación (Ardila & Rosselli 2007).

1.2 Recuperación automática y controlada de la memoria

La memoria a largo plazo es la información que almacenamos y que podemos recuperar incluso después de que han transcurrido varios años. Esta recuperación puede realizarse mediante dos procesos: el recuerdo automático y el controlado. El primero no requiere de mucha atención ni de hacer un esfuerzo consciente, se adquieren mediante el aprendizaje y una vez adquiridos son difíciles de modificar. En cuanto al recuerdo controlado, éste consume la atención, no son rutinas aprendidas, son flexibles y se adaptan a situaciones nuevas (De Vega, 1984).

1.3 Aprendizaje emocional y memoria

En un experimento llevado a cabo por Cahill y McGaugh (1995), se encontró que, un grupo de personas, a quienes se les contó un relato incluyendo elementos

emocionales, logró recordar un mayor número de detalles de los hechos de la narración en comparación con otro grupo a quienes se les contó la misma historia sin elementos emocionales.

Además de que la emoción incide en el proceso de almacenamiento en la memoria, también lo hace durante la recuperación de esos recuerdos. Entre más intensa sea la emoción más detalles se quedarán guardados en la memoria, esto sucede con las memorias repentinas que se originan con eventos que conllevan una gran carga emocional. Esto se debe a la respuesta fisiológica de nuestro cuerpo ante alguna emoción. Según Bisquerra (2011), “las emociones producen respuestas neurofisiológicas diversas, incluyéndola secreción de hormonas y neurotransmisores. Con las emociones positivas, el cerebro puede producir sustancias como la dopamina... la cual induce sensaciones agradables en el cerebro, de excitación y euforia” (p. 59).

De esta forma, cuando se realiza una actividad que provoque una emoción positiva que incremente la producción de dopamina, ésta genera el deseo repetir de nuevo dicha actividad; de tal forma, se crea un sistema de recompensa que impulsa a la persona a repetir la actividad varias veces. La repetición es una de las estrategias básicas para lograr la memorización de algún concepto; de aquí la importancia de incluir actividades de aprendizaje emocional.

2. La memoria semántica y su relación con la adquisición de vocabulario

Martin y Chao (2001) denominan memoria semántica a “la información almacenada sobre las características y atributos que definen los conceptos, así como los procesos que permiten su recuperación de forma eficiente para su utilización en el pensamiento y el lenguaje” (p.194).

2.1 Diferencias en la memorización en el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma en niños y adultos

Las investigaciones han prestado especial atención al nivel de bilingüismo dependiendo de la edad a la que adquiere el segundo idioma. Las imágenes cerebrales indican que hay diferencias en las representaciones del léxico en la memoria declarativa. Se encontraron diferencias en aquellos que adquirieron un segundo idioma antes y después de los siete años de edad en relación con los aspectos gramaticales. Esto sugiere que los aprendices adultos utilizan más la memoria declarativa porque su proceso de aprendizaje tiene mayor explicación de la gramática que en los estudiantes más jóvenes (Randall, 2007, p.122).

2.2 Memoria a largo plazo, las evaluaciones y la retroalimentación

En una investigación realizada por J. Karpicke y Henry Roediger, se mostró que los exámenes no sólo evalúan los contenidos de la memoria sino que también mejoran los aprendizajes así como la retención a largo plazo. A este fenómeno en el que se afecta de forma positiva la retención de la información en la memoria a largo plazo se le ha llamado Efecto de Prueba (Karpicke & Roediger, 2007). Este efecto se ha verificado al hacer que los participantes del estudio pasen por tres fases: la primera es la fase en la que los alumnos estudian los contenidos, en la segunda fase se les aplica una evaluación inicial o hacen una actividad para reforzar el estudio y, finalmente en la última fase se aplica una evaluación sumativa del material estudiado.

En las pruebas que llevaron a cabo, el acordarse de información previamente recordada incrementaba la retención hasta un 100% en comparación con aquella información que solo se preguntó en una prueba posterior. Estos investigadores consideran que la clave para una retención en la memoria de largo plazo está en recuperar de manera repetida la información. Asimismo, el efecto de prueba en el aprendizaje ha sido plasmado en la revisión sistemática de artículos publicados entre el 2006 y 2012, realizada por Eisenkraemer, Jaeger y Milnitsky Stein (2013).

En ella, los investigadores encontraron que “las pruebas producen efectos significativos en beneficio de la retención de información a largo plazo”.

Una de las formas de mejorar los beneficios de los exámenes y reducir los efectos negativos de la exposición de los estudiantes a información errónea es proporcionar una retroalimentación a su desempeño. El uso de la retroalimentación sugiere que refuerzan las respuestas correctas. El Efecto de Prueba es muy favorable por sí mismo, pero cuando se acompaña con su retroalimentación el efecto tiende a ser aún mejor (Smith & Kimball, 2010).

3. Estrategias de memorización y recuperación en el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma

El debate entre memorización y aprendizaje ha sido frecuentemente abordado entre docentes e investigadores de educación sobre todo cuando se quiere evaluar los conocimientos que un alumno tiene sobre alguna cuestión. Por ejemplo, se considera que la simple memorización de datos, palabras o conceptos no significa que el alumno realmente haya comprendido la información o que la haya aprehendido y que formen parte de sus competencias alcanzadas. Incluso hay autores como Thompson (1987) quien cuestiona si las estrategias de memorización alejan al estudiante de los significados.

En el curso online masivo y abierto (MOOC, por sus siglas en inglés) de Neurodidáctica, impartido por la Fundación Telefónica en México, se hace referencia en su módulo tres a que, cuando la memorización de datos se realiza sin proporcionar un contexto, sin otra información con la cual asociarlos y se hace a través de la repetición de la información en una cierta secuencia no es posible que se dé una memoria significativa para el estudiante y, en consecuencia, su duración en nuestro almacén de recuerdos no se consolida a largo plazo: Luego de tres días ya se ha perdido un 50% y después de una semana ya queda tan solo el 10%.

Se añade, además, que el uso correcto de las estrategias de memorización significativa en el aprendizaje, aplicando actividades que incidan en el desarrollo neurocognitivo, tiene como resultado la retención a largo plazo de los significados ya que en eso consiste, precisamente, la memoria semántica lo cual es importante en todas las áreas, pero en particular para el estudio de idiomas (Fundación Telefónica Educación Digital, s.f.)

3.1 Estrategias de memorización

Si bien todas las estrategias de aprendizaje son necesarias, para fines de este trabajo de investigación el enfoque se hará específicamente sobre las de memorización.

Las dos funciones principales que tienen las estrategias de memorización son el almacenamiento en la memoria de lo que los alumnos escuchen y lean en el segundo idioma que están estudiando para ampliar poco a poco su conocimiento y, también, la recuperación de la información cuando la necesiten para comprender y producir en ese idioma. “Son acciones intelectuales que se concentran en la creación de enlaces [...]que favorecen el recuerdo de la información aprendida” (Orrego & Díaz, 2010, p. 112). La clave inicial para el aprendizaje está en el almacenaje de la información nueva y las estrategias que se describen en este apartado se enfocan en ese proceso principalmente.

A continuación, se describen algunas estrategias de memorización en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de un segundo idioma.

3.1.1 Crear relaciones mentales

Las actividades de enseñanza deben propiciar nuevas conexiones sinápticas o formación de redes neuronales para la elaboración de asociaciones entre la información que se está adquiriendo. Asimismo, se debe estimular la creación de relaciones de los nuevos conceptos adquiridos con los ya preexistentes. De esta

forma se espera que los aprendizajes más recientes se guarden en la memoria a largo plazo de forma que, más adelante, estos recuerdos “puedan ser activados y sirvan de sustento para la consolidación de un nuevo conocimiento” (Betancur,2017, p.87).

3.1.2 Aplicar imágenes y sonidos

Las estrategias de asociación de las palabras nuevas del segundo idioma con una imagen y/o un sonido resultan muy útiles para el proceso de memorización y recuperación del vocabulario. Oxford recomienda, dentro de estas estrategias: la visualización, los mapas semánticos, palabras claves y la representación de sonidos en la memoria (Oxford, 1990).

3.1.3 Repasos estructurados

El repaso estructurado en espiral (*spiraling*, en inglés) es otra estrategia sugerida por Oxford (1990) que consiste en hacer repasos del vocabulario en intervalos que se van espaciando poco a poco entre uno y otro hasta que se alcanza la etapa de automatización. El objetivo es retener las palabras nuevas en la memoria a largo plazo y su recuperación pronta y automática cuando sea requerida. La autora sugiere que en cada repaso se use el vocabulario de forma significativa, por ejemplo, utilizándolo en enunciados (Oxford, 1990, p. 67).

3.1.4 Emplear acciones

En esta categoría de las estrategias de memorización se proponen dos tipos de actividades, aquellas en las que se espera una respuesta física o sensorial y las técnicas mecánicas.

Estrategia de respuesta física total

En esta estrategia el alumno puede realizar las acciones de las frases o expresiones que se están estudiando, puede ser que los alumnos lleven a cabo las acciones que les vaya diciendo su profesor (Asher, 1966), por ejemplo, en la indicación en inglés *Open the window*, el alumno tiene que abrir la ventana; o en la instrucción *Go to the back of the classroom and give a pencil to Ana*, se espera que el alumno vaya hasta la parte de atrás del salón y le dé un lápiz a dicha compañera.

Otra manera de utilizar la respuesta física total es utilizando mímica para las acciones y se puede realizar con juegos como el de *Simón dice* haciendo la acción que el profesor indique, o *Dígalo con señas* en la que un alumno lee la frase en privado y luego actúa la frase mientras sus compañeros tratan de adivinar diciendo las frases posibles en el segundo idioma.

Técnicas mecánicas

Estas técnicas pueden ayudar a desarrollar las habilidades de escritura, escucha y lectura del segundo idioma mediante el uso de tarjetas de doble vista en las que viene la palabra en un lado y la definición o ilustración correspondiente en el otro lado.

3.2 Estrategias de recuperación de la memoria

Los alumnos pueden utilizar algunas estrategias para recordar rápidamente la información almacenada en la memoria para emplearla en la comunicación en cualquiera de las cuatro habilidades del lenguaje.

De forma general, el estudiante puede usar el mismo mecanismo que utilizó inicialmente para memorizar el concepto cuando quiera recuperarlo. Por ejemplo, si se realizó una asociación con una imagen o sonido se puede recordar éstos estímulos visuales o sonoros para recuperar el recuerdo; esto es para acordarse. De igual manera, el pensar en el contexto en el que se emplea la palabra o la frase

ayuda, por asociación, a la recuperación de los vocablos por la asociación que se tiene en la memoria de campos semánticos.

Actividades y estrategias de intervención

En el aprendizaje de inglés como segundo idioma, se pretende que el proceso de recuperación de los conocimientos pase de ser un recuerdo controlado a un recuerdo automático que, aunque se haya adquirido mediante el aprendizaje reiterado ya no requieran de un esfuerzo consciente ni de poner demasiada atención.

Para lograr que los estudiantes de la LEP consoliden el almacenamiento en la memoria a largo plazo y la recuperación de lo aprendido de forma automática de los aprendizajes de la asignatura de inglés, es necesario hacer el esfuerzo en cada fase del proceso, desde la atención consciente en lo que se quiere aprender, la repetición, la motivación tanto intrínseca como extrínseca, hasta el reconocimiento de que el alumno debe ser responsable de su propio aprendizaje.

Al considerar, como el fin último del proceso educativo, el maximizar la retención de los conceptos y la transferencia del conocimiento en la memoria a largo plazo, se han implementado las siguientes estrategias desde que los alumnos estaban en cuarto semestre pretendiendo mejorar la retención y recuperación de los aprendizajes en la memoria a largo plazo:

1. Estrategias que incrementen la atención de los alumnos. La atención es fundamental para que se inicie con el proceso de la memorización por lo tanto hay que emplear estrategias y materiales didácticos novedosos que generen curiosidad en el alumno e incrementen su motivación, por ejemplo, llevar materiales u objetos auténticos (en adelante, *realia*). Se puede crear una atmósfera de curiosidad o misterio si los materiales se llevan ocultos en una maleta, bolso, caja, etc.

2. Actividades que estimulen la memoria sensorial como el uso de *realia*, música, sonidos, movimientos (como los que se utilizan la estrategia de respuesta física total), fotografías, alimentos, etc. en fin, cualquier material que estimule los sentidos de manera que se favorezca la consolidación en los almacenes léxicos visual y auditivo.

3. Actividades repetitivas, como ensayar varias veces el diálogo para una obra de teatro, practicar una canción, juegos de repetición (como una cadena de palabras, por ejemplo), etc. para que los aprendizajes pasen secuencialmente de la memoria de trabajo a la de corto plazo y, finalmente a la de largo plazo.

4. Incorporar elementos que generen emociones positivas con el objetivo que el alumno quiera experimentar de nuevo esa emoción incrementando la consolidación de lo aprendido en la memoria a largo plazo. Un ejemplo sería convertir en una competencia o incluir elementos de gamificación.

5. Utilizar el enfoque comunicativo en el que los alumnos utilicen el lenguaje en contexto lo cual favorece la memorización y recuperación de los conceptos.

8. Aplicar estrategias de aprendizaje orientadas a la memorización como relacionar conceptos nuevos con anteriores, ponerlos en contexto o asociarlos con imágenes, sonidos o con conceptos comunes a través de la creación de historias, dibujos, cadenas de palabras, por mencionar algunos.

Resultados parciales

A la fecha de la redacción del presente trabajo, aún no se ha concluido la intervención a ambos grupos de la LEP ya que aún no concluyen el sexto semestre, que es el último en el que llevan una asignatura de inglés.

Se han ido incorporando diversas actividades que favorezcan el aprendizaje significativo de los contenidos de acuerdo con los ocho tipos de estrategias anteriormente descritas procurando que no se repitan o que incluyan alguna

variante para mantener el interés, la motivación y, sobre todo, la atención de los estudiantes.

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Curriculum Co-design – an experience

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Abstract

This writing aims to share my experience as curriculum co-designer as a most recent educative dynamic to create new academic programs at most academic levels in México is taking place. Curriculum refers to the subjects, materials, and plan of study for an academic course. For Normales Schools, the curriculum has been a matter of transformation since 2017. Current developments in education state that education needs to be inclusive, intercultural, and sustainable. With these principles and with a national goal to strengthen Normales Schools, curriculum 2022 is on the table now. This paper is built upon documentary research in which the development of the curriculum is currently taking place and historical data, successive cycles of design, and enactment are analyzed. The main purpose of this work is to share personal experience on the 2022 curriculum design to have an overview of its main purpose as well as to understand better how English is considered in the “*tejido curricular*”, a brief description of a timeline is presented to get to understand process, content, time, dynamics and participants. A short reflection of expectations versus frustrations is given and finally, conclusions on participation are shared.

Keywords

Dialogue of knowledge; base curriculum document; study subject²; “*tejido curricular*”; thematic universe.

² Defined by the National Collective of Schools as an organizer that describes comprehensive planning of the components of Base Curriculum Document. It is developed gradually from common

The co-designing curriculum is a current reform-based dynamic in most educative levels in Mexico. It is based on a situated approach where the curriculum is linked together with the classroom, school, context, and community including “content pedagogy, organization, assessment, and extracurricular elements” (Cohen, 2004, p. 34). Sacristán (2005) states that “curriculum refers to multiple contexts and diverse practices” (p.14). Another characteristic of this current dynamic is the use of a collaborative approach to designing curricula, national educative curricula are being co-designed in close partnership with teachers, local educative authorities, and the national educative department (DGESuM). It also aims in its development to a “more integrated and communicative team approach” Goode (2018, p. 3) including parents, community, and local authorities in the educative process.

This experience takes place in Normales schools, more specifically in an Intercultural Normal School ENI and its two branches together with state and national education departments to create the curriculum 2022. This paper provides personal experience along with documents, data, and a historical path on how the co-designing process is currently being developed (Appendix 6).

It has been argued for some years now, that the national curriculum does not align to the national context and that it has been based on more Eurocentric reforms for developed countries making it impossible to reach or even accomplish. Co-designing is relatively a new practice in our country, the importance of documenting the experience is vital to set a basis for informing how a new curriculum is developed from collaboration, new cultures of learning, context, and community, both English

equitable, inclusive and intercultural practices that transform from a critical perspective teaching work; that is to say, it articulates learning and teaching contents from community contexts and disciplinary knowledge. The total of study subjects shape “tejido *curricular*”. (Propuesta Curricular Base. DEGESuM 2021, p. 68)

language and indigenous languages are part of the 2022 curriculum for ENI and they are considered as part of the new curriculum where interculturality is a key element.

Co-designing curriculum 2022 for ENI is relatively a new practice and the first time the activity takes place in our country. Materials and meetings have not been documented yet. This text was developed as a way of mapping from a domain that has not been formalized to assemble experience through description and explanation. Information is collected from pure “data summarizing and historic time line description” (Atzmueller, 2017, p.17).

The invitation to participate on curriculum design came from a “*Representante de carrera de preescolar*”. It was the first time teachers were going to be part of curriculum design in Normales Schools’ history. It was not an easy decision to accept and I declined the invitation at first as there were a lot of reasons to do so, here are some valid reasons:

The first was that I did not have previous experience in the matter. My area of expertise has been the teaching of English as a second language for more than twenty years and I did not have enough experience teaching subjects other than this foreign language. Even though I have been teaching other subjects regarding education and I did have the knowledge to accomplish the task, I still lacked the experience to decide on what future teachers need to be instructed on in 4 years.

A second reason, my area of expertise has been TESOL³ but before entering the system (Appendix 2) such experience had been mostly in private schools, and needless to say public system in México is completely different.

A third reason was I have not been in *Normales* system long enough to get to decide on information on curriculum; in three years of experience in *Normales* I have gotten to teach around 4 courses out of 35 preschool subjects and 5 out of 42 of

³ TESOL (Teaching English as a Second or foreign Language)

primary degree 2018 program (DGESuM 2022), it is pretty obvious that to participate on such a demanding task, an individual should have more experience in teaching to approach this task having the big picture on curriculum, whose goal is to provide the best and most thorough education for students.

The path of experience in curriculum design has gone through changes and adjustments, mostly in the conformation of working teams. As it can be seen in the timeline (Lecona, 2022) (Appendix 3) and in some charts below, not every normal school has been participating since the very beginning or even the number of participants; as it happens, there are schools with only one participant. Next, we intend to give a brief overview with a timeline of how the process started, the development and where we are now.

A bit of a description on a timeline

I will start by stating that teachers and educational authorities have been working on curriculum design for two types of schools “Escuelas Normales Generales” – ENG and “Escuelas Normales Interculturales”- ENI for about four years already. The co-designing curriculum is a new practice that started with the dynamics that the national government has set on consulting citizens on national matters. Filters of representativity had been set and with such big goals on the table, they started. However, the first steps date some years before, around 2006 when bilingual and intercultural primary and preschool degrees were designed by Colectivo Nacional de Normales Interculturales Bilingües (CNNIB, 2021).

2019 – Agreements set on a national congress, among them, the conformation of CONAEN (*Consejo Nacional de Autoridades de Educación Normal*- National Committee of Normal Education Authorities), an alternate organism to DGESuM. Its main task has been to guard proposals, lines of action, and curriculum design from state and schools’ perspectives and needs.

Since ENG was open to working on a new curriculum, they allowed ENI (Escuelas Normales Interculturales) to participate; the latter was convinced of the fact to create a curriculum that respects culture and diversity and continued working on their own once ENG stopped working because of pandemics. There was a slight pause in the work of ENG (Escuelas Normales Generales) but in the meantime, ENI continued working and they got to formulate a base curriculum document to safeguard culture and diversity (CNNIB, 2021).

DGESPE found out that ENI did not stop working on curriculum construction and as an action plan, they started getting involved and supported ENI's work, therefore current work at the time started getting formalized. The first action that started to appear was the invitation to specialists on the matter. Here is where teachers started getting involved, attending online workshops regarding co-curriculum design from October 25th to November 29th, 2021. Experts on the matter were invited, and one of the main speakers was Benjamin Berlanga from UCIRED. Appendixes 3, 4, and 5.

By the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, Coordination Units get formed – CGA (*Comunidad de Gestión Académica*). From the very beginning, only main authorities from schools started participating; like directors and academic secretaries. They sort of explained internally the purpose and the work to be done on a new curriculum construction in regular meetings. Then all teachers from our three schools – ENOHUAPO Tamazunchale, Armas, and Rayón started getting involved. We were all of a sudden being summoned. Hearing reluctant and disappointing comments on the matter such as “we work and up there will end up doing something different”, teachers did not take activities seriously. With time teachers continued being summoned and then is when we realized this was going to be long-term work and we became more committed to do designing Appendix 6.

It has been four years up to now. On June 24th, 2019 – in Mexico City, 30 participants took the big decision. It was on a 4th national meeting towards curricular construction, transformation, and strengthening of ENI that 4 written consensuses

came along as a product stating that DGESE acknowledges work that ENI has been doing. First, this action would allow teachers hereafter to be part of direct participation in curricular design for degrees they offer. A new beginning in the discussion was set to start building a curriculum proposal.

Commitment as a collective of schools to build up a new curriculum proposal was ratified. Acknowledgment that from 2004 to 2018 curriculum, schools have different experiences, different needs, and different characteristics, all these main aspects to guide a new curriculum construction. A plus of this meeting was the establishment of a working path on curricular construction. The following table describes the working path on curriculum construction, stages, products, and analysis axes as well as places, dates, and times that the Collective of ENI schools set to work three years ago up to now.

Table 1

Work route to curriculum construction. 4th reunion DEGESPE México. Work document

WORK ROUTE TO CURRICULA CONSTRUCTION				
Stages	Product	Analysis Axes	Time	Place and Dates
First	Diagnostic	Interculturality, bilinguism, adaptations	3 days	September 23, 24 and 25 2019 Saltillo Coahuila
Second	Profile: admission, permanency and graduation	Approaches, finalities, purposes, principles	2 days	October 24 and 25 2019 Valle de Mezquital Hidalgo
Third	Model to build-up	Epistemological, psychopedagogical, anthropological, sociological studies, linguistics, philosophy, and politics.	3 days	January 15, 16, and 17 2020 Tamazunchale SLP

	Guiding document	Approaches, finality, purposes, principles	3 days	
Fourth	Organization of curricula structure organization	Contents, areas/fields knowledge journey Contextual and theoretical tools	3 days	February 12, 13, and 14 2020 Oaxaca
Fifth	Curriculum	Courses, subjects/fields, thematic organization, materials, obtaining the academic degree, credits	5 moments of 3 days	
Sixth	Condition of every normal school to implement the curriculum	Administrative problems, relationships with schools from basic levels, academic exchanges, working, and human resources.	2 days	
	New national curriculum presentation		1 day	June 30 2020 DGESPE

Source: own elaboration. This table describes the sixth stages of the work route to curriculum construction the analysis axes to set the basis on work and the dates when this was carried on.

As it can be observed in the chart and up to here, even though interculturality and bilingualism are present, foreign languages are not figurative as are indigenous languages.

September 23rd, 2019 – 5th meeting, Saltillo Coahuila. 24 participants of 16 ENI from 14 states. The main target was to carry out a diagnosis of such schools. Some of the background information is the implementation of 2004 curricula with a secretarial agreement 492 published in DOF on August 31st, 2009 which main purpose was to train teachers who would provide quality education with equity and relevance to cultural and linguistic diversity to children from the basic level of education. Curricular reform of 2012 generated 2 curricula with the foundation of the 652- agreement for intercultural and bilingual preschool and primary school as an answer to the competency-based educational model. Three national congresses for ENI: Oaxaca 2012, Quintana Roo 2017 and Guerrero 2018. The National Collective of Intercultural Normal Schools emerged out of these national congresses. The following chart states some of the problems identified in all schools.

Problems identified

Table 2

Identification of problems. / Strengths and weaknesses. 5th reunion Saltillo México

Similarities	Differences	Proposals
<p>Workshops on language teaching</p> <p>There is an Intercultural Normal per state</p> <p>Outstanding number of graduates and degree-obtaining</p> <p>Bilingual competencies are not achieved.</p> <p>Not enough indigenous native speaker teachers to teach</p> <p>No graduating degree products regarding indigenous language</p>	<p>Not every ENI uses 2018 curricula</p> <p>There are Normal Schools that have more than one indigenous language</p> <p>Not every NS offers an indigenous language as optative</p> <p>Normal Schools with zero or scarce school enrollment</p> <p>Diversification in the use of terms such as intercultural, bilingualism, culture, identity</p>	<p>Habilitation according to the bilingual intercultural approach</p> <p>Workshop implementation for indigenous languages</p> <p>Design of an optative course for indigenous language teaching-centered</p> <p>Creation of full-time school places.</p>
Strengths	Weaknesses	
<p>14 states – 12 languages</p> <p>Creation of National Collective Schools</p>	<p>Lack of homologates school places</p> <p>Minimum achievement of intercultural teaching competencies</p> <p>Lack of curricular formation to strengthen personal identity, cultural and professional</p>	

Outstanding number of graduates with titles and into the National Teaching Service	A few native indigenous speakers on matricula
Raise of matriculants 2019	Not enough curricular spaces to attend multigrade schools, and teach the intercultural practice
Outstanding professional habilitation of teachers	Lack of research work on interculturalism
Implementation of workshops to target indigenous languages	No relationship on training paths
New experience generated from school exchanges and school mobility with other EN	Lack of financial support to strengthen professional profile
	Lack of certification in indigenous languages communicative competencies
	Lack of spaces for indigenous language labs
	Lack of intercultural formation
	Teaching practices in non-indigenous schools

Source: own elaboration. This content summarizes strengths and weaknesses that ENIs have as to set basis to curriculum design.

Here are some key aspects of the chart above:

1. Unified conceptualism on interculturality, initial teaching training, culture, bilingualism, personal and ethical identity.
2. Attention to cultural and linguistic diversity.
3. Teaching practice in cultural and linguistic diversity contexts.
4. A methodology for forming the person as a future teacher.
5. Pedagogical approaches relevant to bilingual formation.
6. Cross bilingual intercultural approach to formation areas.
7. Academic degree titles are bilingual-centered.
8. Co-curricular or extra-curricular activities bilingual-centered.
9. Indigenous languages certifications.
10. Academic mobility, academic exchanges, and entailment with other IES.
11. Link-up language and culture- nodal point, community knowledge, worldview as pedagogical principles.

With the information above the final agreement was to discuss and analyze in each normal school the approach or approaches, and general purposes for the new curricula such as interculturality, bilingualism, plurilingualism, and other key concepts to define in the next meetings in Mexico City on October 23 and 24 2019. Philosophical, pedagogical, and linguistic dimensions were considered. Still, although interculturality and bilingualism were present, the main emphasis was on indigenous languages and English seemed to be off the table.

The following chart called attention while working on this paper because it targets one of the main purposes of a new curriculum construction which is intercultural and multilingual education, however, as the process of construction is carried on, this information does not seem to be taken into account while working on descriptors or other areas. Intention stays away from reality, lack of knowledge, lack of participation, lack of interest, attention centered on indigenous languages, and being more focused on the what but not on the how. Second languages are in the chart, but English is not a matter of discussion unless a FIC brings it on.

Table 3

Linguistic Dimension. 5th reunion Saltillo, México.

Language learning	Language teaching	Indigenous Language Teaching	Skills developments
Of immediate contexts (Second and third languages)	(First, second and third languages)	(L1, L2, and L3)	(Linguistics, signals)

Source - own elaboration from base documents.

October 24th and 25th 2019 – 6th meeting, Ixtlahuaca Mexico. 17 participants of 11 ENI. The main purpose was to define and establish philosophical, pedagogical, and linguistic dimensions of the national curriculum. Among the main purposes was the formation of teachers' diversity acceptance, humanistic vision, and generation of knowledge regarding cultural and linguistic diversity.

November 25th to 27th 2019 – 7th meeting, Progreso de Obregon Hidalgo. 22 participants of 15 ENI.

Up to here, work and meetings started to get more frequent as pandemics allowed it, it appeared to be more substantial, with more participation, the integration of other schools, the integration of more colleagues, and the abandonment of others. Regarding time, the workload has been added as we are mostly working every day from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. or sometimes 10:00 p.m. As this paper is written, today we are having our 16th National Plenary to do current work which is to create content of study units for the basic stage of the *"Tejido Curricular"* – having a working day from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (no working load taken off but working regular hours from 8:00 to 4:00).

The dynamics of work has been that information gets to CONAEN and national education authorities, CGA – a working team with representatives from now DEGESuM, ENI and ENG work together on current aspects and then they download information with comments and recommendations to the other work teams with participant teachers.

For ENG there is a team work with national and state representatives, *"delegados"*, *"representantes de Carrera"*. It is important to recall that ENI does not have teamwork or intermediaries but participation is direct, certain people coordinate activities, and the team works organized according to activities. Depending on the information to be done and shared, it is done in National Plenaries or CGA meetings. Teamwork, where I have participated, has to do with the review of some aspects of graduation profile, review of study units for basic, intermediate, and professional

stages, grouping thematic universe by areas or field of knowledge, deciding on nomenclatures or names for thematic core, reviewing descriptors of basic stages and developing and writing descriptors of intermediate and professional stages, and currently developing and writing study units. This work is done in teamwork, information is sent to the Collective and then they return it “improved” or modified to continue working.

To carry out the above-mentioned activities, it is necessary to always take into account the thematic universe, graduation profile document, curriculum base proposal, and study unit descriptors by stage. To describe every study unit from “*Tejido Curricular*”, the dynamics was to fill out an online Google form to diagnose areas of expertise so teams would be made. The team where we participated was Languages and cultural uses and functions in the teaching process and Childhood in Mexico.

Basic considerations on schooling. Descriptors for the first semester were made by CEN to start work and set an example to follow. Here I would like to stress that at the beginning of this paper I argued that I did not have the knowledge or the experience to participate in the process. By this stage is where I came to realize that I did have not only have the knowledge and the expertise to do the task but also the willingness to improve the system as once I expressed on my letter of reasons to get the job – “It is my wish to provide a quality education where it is needed”. Furthermore, when in the team describing the study unit “Languages and cultural uses and functions in the teaching process”, we realized that the area of expertise in teaching a language is present and useful at this stage. As we could see that this was the moment when experienced teachers in other areas started to appear and not only knowledge but expertise enhances curriculum design 2022.

Expectations versus frustrations on English as a study unit in curriculum 2022

As an English teacher of a second language, I came to Huasteca with a lot of expectations since I was part of the program or project *Fortalecimiento del inglés en*

Escuelas Normales or as the announcement to become an FIC stated “SEP is looking for the best English teachers” (Appendix 2). When I got to the SEP department, I felt like a super teacher willing to change the world through English. Little by little my expectations vanished. First, because English in Huasteca is not a priority as there are other educational needs, and second, because English in a bilingual context with different Indigenous languages is seen as a global language that displaces or polarizes Indigenous languages and cultures. Third, just when we FICs were trying to do our best and swim upstream in English teaching, things appeared to be more complicated as English did not seem to be considered in the new 2022 curriculum.

On the other hand, a big emphasis was given to Indigenous languages, however, the emphasis was not well balanced as it was intended to treat it just like English as a foreign language but here in our context Tenek and Xi'iu'y both indigenous languages still do not have conventional writing and it is way too far to consolidate it, as it can be perceived now, intercultural and multilingualism methods and approaches seem to be the way to teaching.

At first, I was doubtful, I would think “That is not why we FICs were hired” it is not possible that all of a sudden, we stop doing what we were supposed to do in the first place. Just when taking the online meetings our representative would put some pressure through WhatsApp and say “If you want to do something about English, this is the time”. From that moment I tried to participate more and to “defend” (if one could choose a word to state the need), if not prioritize the language at least to have it as part of the curriculum. We (myself, and some of my colleagues who surprisingly support English) would use some strong arguments for English to be considered in the curriculum.

The first argument was interculturality, a school cannot be intercultural or we cannot talk about multilingualism if English is not included. A second argument was the fact that through English learning, students learn not only English but pedagogy and didactics of language teaching. A third argument, that withdrew some polemics

was the fact that students seem to be more interested in English learning than in learning their language, and to be true, most students seem to be more proficient in some English skills than in their native language or even in Spanish.

There was a period of disappointment and frustration at some point, for many reasons; first, It would seem that I would be teaching the eternal “Verb To Be” and not going further, and second, it appears that the purpose of strengthening English in Normales wouldn’t be accomplished, third, because when working in curriculum construction authorities say one thing, like giving freedom of work but when working at the bottom line people seem to be frightened to act or to contradict authorities, and finally, because at some point the main purpose of the work gets lost somewhere due to lack of interest, commitment, compliance, lack of expertise, lack of follow up, workload, among other matters.

I recovered from disappointment just recently when all schools presented their “*Tejidos Curriculares*” and I could see that not only ENI but also ENG have only four spaces for English (not that I was being a conformist but the fact that we all are going to do something about it). Another fact that made me change my point of view was that truly future teachers have other more basic important areas, areas of opportunity to work on that are crucial rather than English, things like becoming proficient in their native indigenous language and Spanish, acquiring basic knowledge of technology, enhancing reading and writing, developing and strengthening identity, just to mention some.

Current developments and conclusions

Current developments on co-curriculum design up to today for ENG and ENI have to do with; the acknowledgment of the hard work of every co-curriculum design team, the approval of the 18 “*Tejidos curriculares*” (Appendix 7 and 8), as well as the statement that normal schools become national collegiate spaces per school degree to follow up on new curriculum implementation. All these developments were stated by educational authorities like the President of CONAEN, Mario Chavez general

director for DEGESPE, Luciano Concheiro Borquéz – Subsecretary of the high level of education (Appendix 1).

As it was mentioned in the introduction, this work's objective is to share experience on curriculum construction, and it started with how at the beginning we were reluctant to participate arguing a lack of knowledge; it is now possible to state that after the experience, knowledge on curriculum construction is present. There is a clearer idea of what is expected from an Intercultural Normal graduate; but after all, we became aware that being part of the process allows each and every one of the participants to share his bit which is huge, and this is what makes this kind of work of the greatest importance. Certainly, knowledge has been acquired while being at Normales and through the fact of experiencing this process. The importance of collaborative work is crucial, working with your colleagues is vital but it is incomparable to socialize knowledge, experience, and expertise with teachers nationwide. Another point of reflection is that there is more openness not only to learning about school policies but to using them in practice. Even though English is not present in the 2022 curriculum as it would be expected to have it, intercultural teaching methodology seems to be the path to take to strengthen indigenous language through the teaching and learning of English.

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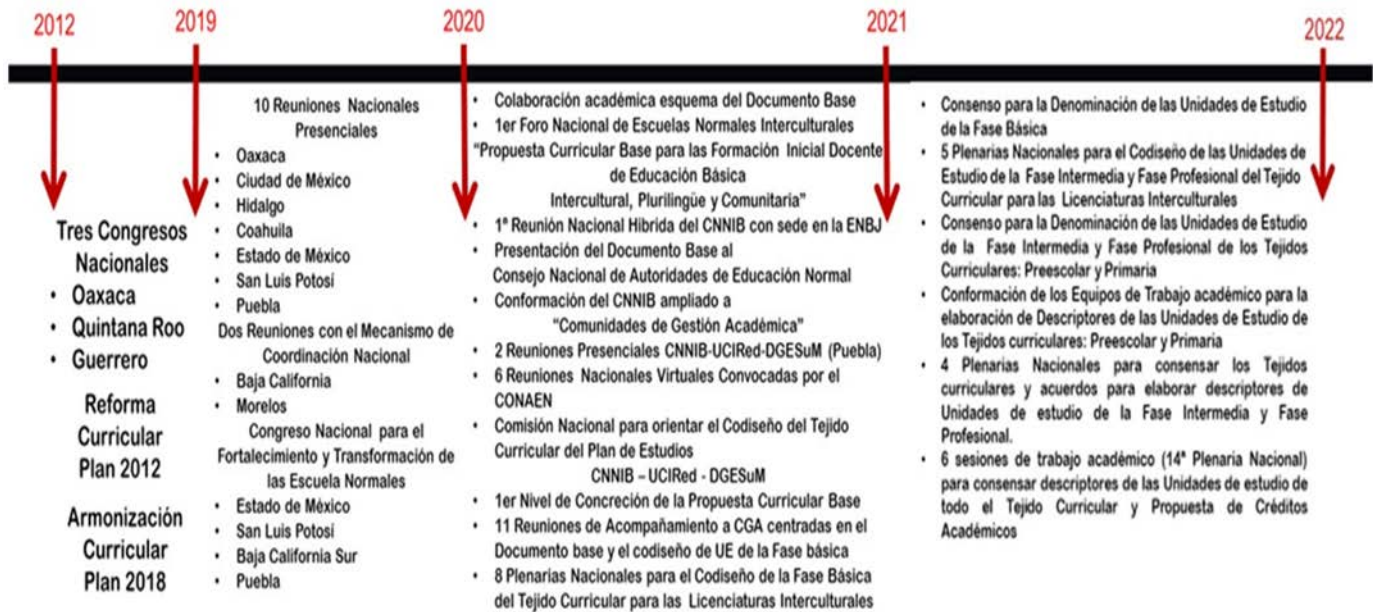
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Appendix 1

Time Line 2022 Co-Curriculum design

Histórico del Trabajo Académico Colaborativo para la construcción del Tejido curricular de las Licenciaturas: Colectivo Nacional de Normales Interculturales Bilingües Preescolar Intercultural, Plurilingüe y Comunitaria Primaria Intercultural, Plurilingüe y Comunitaria



Histórico del colectivo. Fuente: Juan José Lecona, 2022.

Appendix 2

SEP announces recruiting new English teachers



Appendix 3

Youtube link – CONAEN meeting 23/6/22

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQzB6g7Bwfk>

Appendix 4

17th Co-curriculum National Plenary



14ª Plenaria Nacional

Comunidades de Gestión Académica.

Licenciatura en Educación Preescolar Intercultural, Plurilingüe y Comunitaria, Plan 2022
Licenciatura en Educación Primaria Intercultural, Plurilingüe y Comunitaria, Plan 2022

Agenda de Trabajo

Propósito:

Elaborar descriptores y contenidos de las Unidades de Estudio Fase Básica del Tejido curricular de las Licenciaturas en Educación Preescolar y Primaria Intercultural, Plurilingüe y Comunitaria.

26 de mayo de 2022	
Hora	Actividad
11:00 a 11:15 hrs	Plenaria General Bienvenida y encuadre general de la reunión por el Dr. Julio Leyva. Director de Diseño Curricular de la DGESuM.
	Trabajo por salas: Revisión de los 12 descriptores de la fase básica. Grupo 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saberes del contexto sociocultural y escolar (1er. semestre) • Diálogo de saberes en la educación intercultural (2do. Semestre) • Lenguas y lenguajes, usos y funciones culturales en los procesos educativos (1er. semestre) • Las habilidades lingüísticas en contexto plurilingüe e intercultural (2do. Semestre) Coordinadores: Mtro. Roberto Padilla Pérez, Mtro. Adán Lora Quezada y Mtro. Leodegario Hernández Hernández

Appendix 5

16th Co-curriculum design working day

Would you like to set Microsoft Edge as your default browser? [Set as default](#)

SEP
SECRETARÍA DE EDUCACIÓN PÚBLICA

DGESuM
Dirección General de Educación Superior para el Magisterio

CONAEN
Consejo Nacional de Autoridades de Educación Normal

Integrantes de las Comunidades de Gestión Académica del Colectivo Nacional de Normales Interculturales Bilingües

16ª Plenaria Nacional
3er Jornada de Trabajo
23 de Junio de 2022 **16:00 hrs.**

Elaboración de las Unidades de estudio del Tejido curricular Fase Básica

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/4311015041?pwd=WjFYcTdaWFppUHBwTjNkSE11R0tYdz09>

Appendix 6

CODISEÑO WORKSHOPS




TALLER

EL CURRÍCULO COMO CONSTRUCCIÓN COLABORATIVA, COMO CODISEÑO. UNA APUESTA RADICAL: DISEÑAR DESDE LA EXPERIENCIA

Todos los lunes a las 17 hrs


Únase a la reunión Zoom
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8316128751?pwd=ZUo0d0Zlc0h0b0l1bnVlRCVGS0ZlOj09>
 ID de reunión: 831 6129 7519
 Código de acceso: 637696

Cupo Límite
800
Participantes

Sesión 1	Lunes 25 de Octubre de 2021
Definiciones Básicas: Currículum, Codiseño, Diseño Invertido. Signos de un proceso de Co-Diseño Potente. Seis condiciones/ Características que hacen viable un proceso de Codiseño.	
Sesión 2	Lunes 1 de Noviembre de 2021
El Codiseño como proceso Conversacional. Los registros de la conversación. Los modos de la conversación. La cosecha de la conversación.	
Sesión 3	Lunes 8 de Noviembre de 2021
La Sábana Curricular como despliegue de un Diseño Invertido: La idea de Bucle de Diseño Curricular.	
Sesión 4	Lunes 15 de Noviembre de 2021
Imágenes del deseo: Perfil de egreso, rasgos y capacidades: saber, saber hacer e ir siendo	
Sesión 5-6	Lunes 22 de Noviembre de 2021
El Tejido/ Malla Curricular: ¿Cómo llegamos a ello? ¿Qué es una Matriz Curricular?	
Sesión 7	Lunes 29 de Noviembre de 2021
El Desarrollo de la Sábana Curricular. La verificación del proceso.	

CORREO DE INSCRIPCIÓN <https://forms.office/c2uxxkzAm4E6eENh46>


Appendix 7



SEGE
SECRETARÍA DE EDUCACIÓN
DE GOBIERNO DEL ESTADO

Tejido Curricular Preschool

ESCUELA NORMAL DE LA HUASTECA POTOSINA



Tejido curricular: Licenciatura en Educación Preescolar Intercultural, Plurilingüe y Comunitaria 2022

Desarrollo didáctico de los conocimientos comunitarios 6 hrs / 6.75	Pensamiento matemático del niño desde su contexto cultural y científico 6 hrs / 6.75	Iniciación de la docencia intercultural plurilingüe y comunitaria 6 hrs / 6.75	Diálogo de saberes en la educación intercultural 6 hrs / 6.75	La indagación del contexto comunitario y educativo 4 hrs / 4.5	Docencia intercultural, plurilingüe y comunitaria 6 hrs / 6.75	Inicio de la vida profesional docente con la comunidad
Cuidado de la salud, alimentación y actividad física en el niño 4 hrs / 4.5	Procesos para la comunicación oral y escrita 6 hrs / 6.75	Introducción al estudio de las lenguas 4 hrs / 4.5	Las habilidades lingüísticas en contexto 6 hrs / 6.75	Infancias en México. Consideraciones básicas en la escolarización 6 hrs / 6.75	Pedagogías y perspectiva decolonial 4 hrs / 4.5	
Inglés I: Información personal para la comunicación intercultural 4 hrs / 4.5	Fase intermedia Tercer semestre		Proyectos de educación ambiental para la sustentabilidad 4 hrs / 4.5	Fase básica Segundo semestre		Trabajo profesional docente sociocultural y educativo 20 Hrs / 22.5
Mundo natural y social. Su comprensión en el aprendizaje infantil 6 hrs / 6.75	Usos comunitarios y escolares de las matemáticas 6 hrs / 6.75	Trabajo docente en grupo preescolar multigrado 6 hrs / 6.75	Saberes del contexto sociocultural y escolar 6 hrs / 6.75	El trabajo docente y las perspectivas de la investigación en educación 4 hrs / 4.5	El docente, su identidad sociocultural y profesional 6 hrs / 6.75	
Habilidades lingüísticas para el desarrollo del lenguaje en contextos de diversidad 6 hrs / 6.75	Arte, juegos tradicionales y expresiones culturales en la niñez 4 hrs / 4.5	Diálogos y conversaciones elementales en lengua indígena 4 hrs / 4.5	Lenguas y lenguajes, usos y funciones culturales en los procesos educativos 6 hrs / 6.75	Infancias y prácticas de crianza comunitarias desde la cultura de pertenencia 6 hrs / 6.75	La diversidad cultural y lingüística en la historia de la educación básica en México 4 hrs / 4.5	Análisis sistemático del trabajo docente y proceso de titulación 16 Hrs / 18
Inglés II: Interacciones básicas en contextos plurilingües 4 hrs / 4.5	Fase intermedia Cuarto semestre		Convencionalidad de la comunicación escrita del español 4 hrs / 4.5	Fase básica Primer semestre		Fase Profesional: Octavo semestre
Mediación epistémica de saberes de la naturaleza y territorio 6 hrs / 6.75	Uso cotidiano y académico de la probabilidad y estadística 4 hrs / 4.5	Propuestas de intervención pedagógica y plurilingües en contextos diversos desde la investigación 6 hrs / 6.75	Saberes culturales y escolares en diversas metodologías didácticas 6 hrs / 6.75	Mundo ceremonial y espiritual del contexto comunitario 4 hrs / 4.5	Diseño de proyectos de innovación para la transformación de trabajo docente intercultural 6 hrs / 6.75	Trabajo profesional docente sociocultural y educativo 20 Hrs / 22.5
Fortalecimiento de habilidades lingüísticas del plurilingüismo y otros sistemas comunicativos 6 hrs / 6.75	Promoción de la salud socioemocional y práctica de valores culturales en la infancia 6 hrs / 6.75	Convencionalidad de la escritura y vitalidad de la lengua indígena 4 hrs / 4.5	Estrategias de revitalización y fortalecimiento lingüístico en contextos plurales 6 hrs / 6.75	Estrategias de inclusión educativa en la diversidad 6 hrs / 6.75	Producción de material educativo en lengua indígena 4 hrs / 4.5	Análisis sistemático del trabajo docente y proceso de titulación 16 Hrs / 18
Inglés III: Diálogos elementales para la escuela y la comunidad 4 hrs / 4.5	Fase intermedia Quinto semestre		Bases Legales y organizativas del sistema educativo mexicano y derechos culturales 4 hrs / 4.5	Fase intermedia Sexto semestre		Fase Profesional: Séptimo semestre

Appendix 8

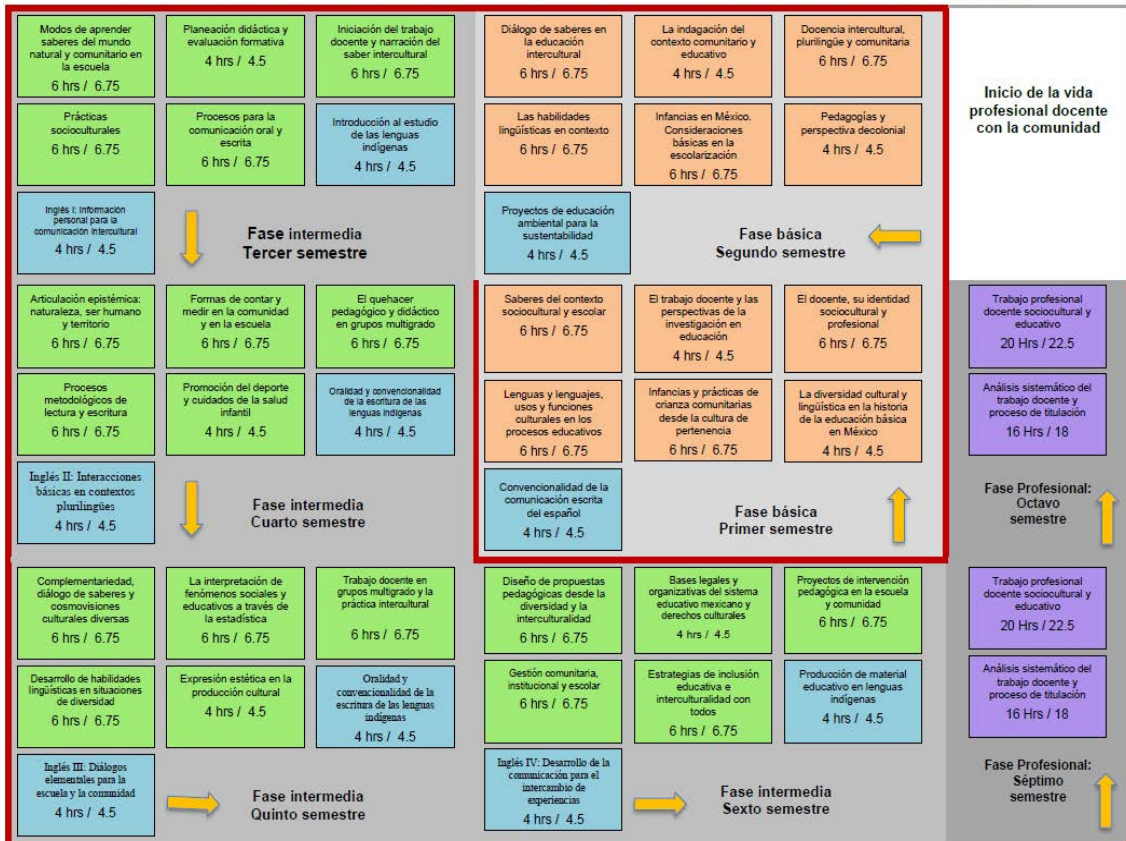
Tejido curricular primary school



ESCUELA NORMAL DE LA HUASTECA POTOSINA



Tejido curricular: Licenciatura en Educación Primaria Intercultural, Plurilingüe y Comunitaria 2022



Using QR codes and gamification to engage ubiquitous English learning

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Escuela Normal Rural “Gral. Matías Ramos Santos” (ENRMRS)

Abstract

In our interconnected world, proficiency in English has become more than just a valuable skill; it is a necessity for global communication and collaboration. While classroom sessions are a foundational component of language education, their limited exposure may not suffice for acquiring, learning, and developing the essential competencies in the four skills of English: listening, writing, speaking, and reading.

This essay mentions the importance of extending English exposure beyond the confines of traditional classroom settings, emphasizing the need for immersive experiences to foster holistic language development. It also refers to the promotion of the use of English outside the classroom to increase motivation through the gamification of a huge type of activities that engage students in learning English and in an easy and fast way with the implementation of QR codes placed around the school and even around the institution on the streets.

Finally, the use of mobile devices as powerful tools for English language learning among today's youth. With a generation that thrives on connectivity and engaging activities, integrating language learning into their digital world not only aligns with their preferences but also offers a dynamic and enjoyable approach.

Introduction

English, as a global lingua franca, plays an important role in international communication, business and education. Traditional language classes, often fall short in providing the extensive exposure required to proficiency the language. This

essay explores the multifaceted importance of embracing English beyond the classroom.

Classroom sessions are fundamental for learning grammar rules, vocabulary, and basic communication skills. However, the limited time and controlled environment limit the depth of exposure necessary for mastering the intricacies of the language. Real-world scenarios, varying accents, and diverse communication styles are often absent in classroom settings.

The crucial role of extracurricular activities in fostering English language proficiency integrates gamification to make these exercises and materials engaging and effective. Students must seek immersive experiences outside the classroom. Watching authentic English media, engaging in conversations with native speakers, and participating in cultural activities can significantly enhance language skills. Exposure to real-world language nuances aids in mastering the art of listening, speaking, writing, and reading.

Language proficiency extends beyond mere memorization of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Immersive experiences provide a context for understanding cultural nuances, idiomatic expressions, and diverse communication styles. Classroom sessions, although essential, have inherent limitations. They often focus on formal language structures and academic contexts, leaving gaps in practical application. To bridge this divide, extracurricular activities offer a dynamic platform for students to immerse themselves in authentic language scenarios.

Engaging in extracurricular activities that promote the application of English outside the classroom is pivotal. Activities such as drama clubs, debate teams, language clubs, and collaborative projects not only enhance language skills but also provide exposure to diverse contexts and communication styles.

In the age of technology, mobile devices have become ubiquitous among today's youth. With the majority of young individuals immersed in the digital realm, there exists a tremendous opportunity to harness the power of mobile devices for

effective English language learning. In addition, it is important to highlight the advantages and possibilities that arise when connecting language education with the digital preferences of contemporary youth. Integrating gamification into extracurricular language activities can make the learning experience meaningful and enjoyable. The inherent appeal of games, with their challenges, rewards, and competitive elements, captivates students' attention and motivates them to actively participate in language practice.

Benefits of Gamification in learning English as a Second Language (Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M., 1985)

Intrinsic motivation

Students feel satisfied when completing the different challenges achieved in gamified activities. Additionally, earning badges or awards makes them want to continue playing to gain greater recognition.

Real-world application

Gamified activities include materials and exercises in different contexts that are pretty similar to the students' lives or contexts. So, the participants feel interested in solving the problems or activities presented.

Adaptive learning

The activities integrated into gamification are generally sequenced or graduated from lowest to highest degree of complexity, which allows the student to progress without feeling frustration or confusion. What also makes the student feel comfortable is that they go at their own pace without feeling time pressure in achieving the activities, so they satisfy their needs individually.

Incorporating gamified elements into extracurricular language activities can be achieved through online platforms, language apps, or custom-designed games.

Monitoring and assessment mechanisms should be integrated to track progress and provide constructive feedback.

The innovative integration of QR codes to provide instant access to engaging activities, videos, songs, and gamified exercises aimed at enhancing English language learning. By capitalizing on idle moments in teacher training schools (Escuelas Normales), and public spaces, this approach seeks to fortify language skills and create a continuous immersive experience, and the psychological impact of sustained practice, fostering a sense of total immersion that elevates motivation and confidence in real-world English language application.

There are some great benefits of this project for the future teachers because they are going to be able to:

- Integrate of QR codes into daily routines within teacher training schools and normal schools.
- Maximize language learning opportunities within the school environment.
- Students learn new strategies for using QR codes in public spaces while waiting for transportation or in various daily scenarios.
- Simulate of real-world language scenarios through QR code-linked materials.
- Identify the role of gamification in making language practice enjoyable and effective.
- Feel of the motivational impact of engaging, gamified language activities.
- Increase student confidence in applying English language skills in real-world contexts.
- Build positive attitudes towards language learning through sustained practice.
- Propose solutions and strategies to overcome challenges.
- Explore the potential future developments in QR code-based language learning.
- Know the role of emerging technologies in enhancing language acquisition.

All these advantages mentioned before, and the integration of technology mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, have revolutionized the way individuals access information and engage with educational content. The

convenience and portability of these devices make them ideal companions for learners, providing (providing??) a flexible platform for language practice anytime, anywhere. Moreover, one of the key advantages of integrating mobile devices into language learning is the availability of engaging activities and language apps. Numerous applications cater specifically to English language learners, providing interactive exercises, vocabulary games, and pronunciation tools.

Mobile devices facilitate connectivity and social learning, allowing students to engage in collaborative language practice. Social media platforms, language exchange apps, and online communities enable learners to interact with native speakers and fellow learners, fostering a sense of community and providing real-world language exposure.

Later on, they enable personalized learning experiences, allowing learners to tailor their language practice to their specific needs and preferences. Language learning apps often use adaptive algorithms to adjust difficulty levels based on individual performance, ensuring a customized and efficient learning path.

While the benefits of mobile-assisted language learning are substantial, it is essential to address challenges such as potential distractions, screen time concerns, and the need for reliable internet access. Educators and developers must strike a balance between engagement and responsible use to maximize the positive impact of mobile devices on language learning.

Finally, ubiquitous learning, that refers to all the independent or asynchronous learning directed by an expert, through mobiles or personal computers at any time and anywhere, ubiquitous learning, in the context of English language acquisition (Sharples, M., Taylor, J., & Vavoula, G., 2010). Through the integration of mobile devices, learners can harness the power of anytime, anywhere education, fostering a deeper and more practical understanding of the English language. Characterized by the omnipresence of learning opportunities in various contexts, it represents a paradigm shift in education. This essay explores how the integration of ubiquitous

learning principles with mobile devices can significantly enhance the practice and mastery of the English language, because it emphasizes the continuity of the learning experience, allowing individuals to seamlessly transition between formal and informal learning contexts. When applied to English language acquisition, this approach ensures that learning becomes a constant companion, rather than a confined activity within the walls of a classroom.

One of the greatest benefits of ubiquitous learning through mobile devices is the enhanced accessibility and inclusivity it offers. Learners from diverse backgrounds and varying schedules can access English language materials without constraints. This inclusivity fosters a broader and more diverse community of English language learners.

Another advantage of mobile devices is that they provide students with a huge variety of materials, engaging multiple senses in the language learning process. Through the integration of videos, interactive exercises, and audio materials, learners can immerse themselves in a diverse range of linguistic experiences. This integration of different sources and materials enhances retention and deepens understanding by providing opportunities to various learning styles (Brown, 2020). Moreover, it allows for continuous assessment and feedback. Learners receive instant feedback on their language exercises, enabling them to identify areas for improvement and track their progress over time. This iterative feedback loop is crucial for refining language skills and building confidence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while classroom sessions remain the cornerstone of language education, their limitations in providing comprehensive exposure cannot be ignored. To master English, students must actively seek immersive experiences beyond formal education. By embracing real-world communication scenarios, learners can hone their listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills, ensuring a well-rounded and nuanced understanding of the English language.

Extracurricular activities that facilitate the natural use of English outside the classroom are indispensable for language mastery. By incorporating gamification, educators can harness the motivational power of games to make language practice enjoyable and effective. As we navigate the evolving landscape of language education, embracing innovative approaches is key to preparing students for a future where language proficiency is not just an academic achievement but a practical skill essential for success.

The use of QR codes outside the classroom will have a great impact not only on the students' learning but also on their future practice at elementary or middle schools, as they can apply and adapt this idea to their specific contexts or needs.

Also, the integration of mobile devices into English language learning offers a wealth of opportunities for today's youth. By aligning educational practices with the preferences of digital natives, educators can create dynamic and engaging language learning experiences. As technology continues to evolve, leveraging mobile devices in language learning will play an increasingly vital role in shaping the language skills and global communication capabilities of the next generation.

Other benefits of ubiquitous learning through mobile devices are substantial in addressing potential challenges. Concerns related to screen time, digital distractions, and the need for reliable internet access require thoughtful consideration. Balancing engagement with responsible use is paramount to maximizing the positive impact of ubiquitous learning. Moreover, it holds immense potential for revolutionizing English language acquisition. By seamlessly integrating language learning into the fabric of daily life, learners can transform idle moments into opportunities for language practice. The flexibility, accessibility, and personalization afforded by mobile devices create an environment where English language learning becomes a continuous and enriching journey.

Finally, the use of technology in the teaching practices and in the learning process will improve the possibilities to engage students in English classes and feel motivated to continue learning the second language by themselves.

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Generation Z: Digital divide in Escuelas Normales

Noe Vargas-Betancourt

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Abstract

The pandemic that struck the world in 2020 highlighted many of the complex and intricate forms of social inequality; overnight, educational institutions and universities closed their doors and were forced to implement urgent measures to continue with curricular plans and content under new pedagogical, social, and family dynamics. The *objective* of this work is to discuss the impacts of the digital divide on the learning and formative trajectories of in-training teachers [normalistas]. *Methods*: This is a mixed longitudinal study that analyzes the digital divide with an adaptation to van Dijk's model. *Participants*: 143 first-semester *normalistas*, on the 2022 plan. Data is collected through *The Youth Digital Skills Indicator*, adapted to the context of Escuelas Normales in Mexico. The discussion and data analysis establish causal relationships between the variables of academic achievements, digital competencies, connectivity and ICT use, and marginalized conditions, for which the R statistical software will be used. *Conclusions*: sustainable, democratic, and quality education will only be possible to the extent that articulated and comprehensive digital inclusion policies are implemented to mitigate the inequalities exacerbated by the digital divide.

Keywords: digital literacy, normalismo, generation Z, digital divide, formative trajectories.

Introduction

The access and exercise of the inalienable right to education by vulnerable and marginalized groups is particularly questionable and criticized. During the

pandemic lockdown, the debate around mechanisms to deal with the contingency and ensure access to education focused on varying aspects: on one hand, there has been severe criticism around the lack of response from political and educational authorities at different levels of government, the absence of concrete and specific institutional guidelines, or systematized plans of action and intervention that could provide a clear vision to teachers, parents, and students on how to respond to the health emergency; and also around the educational exclusion caused by the digital divide (Audrain et al., 2022). On the other hand, part of the public and academic opinion has positively embraced community and individual initiatives to implement remedial measures that ensure the continuity of educational processes (Bellei et al., 2022; Campos & Rojas, 2020).

The discordance and disarticulation of efforts to achieve common objectives became evident, we are faced with a critical situation that must be dealt with to guarantee the right to quality and sustainable education for all (Pasara et al., 2021).

The concept, and especially the notion of the digital divide, is a controversial topic for which no consensus has been agreed upon in Academia; however, a linear development in time can be identified in the literature, first about the perception and acknowledgement of the phenomenon itself, and later on about the different ways to define it. The concept of digital divide has been incorporating new elements as science reveals and associates new variables in its composition and it has also been evolving on par with technology. It is necessary to review, reflect, and redefine the concept of digital divide constantly, in such a way that its understanding is consistent with technological advances, its integration and implications in the daily lives of individuals, and specifically for this research work, in the effects it has on the learning process of students.

In its most basic definition, the digital divide is the gap that exists between those who have access to the internet and ICTs and those who do not (Lago Martínez, 2020). In this sense, rural education suffers from substantive deficiencies in infrastructure and access to digital resources, as stated by the Instituto Nacional

para la Evaluación de la Educación [INEE (2020)], the situation is visibly more critical in schools located in marginalized and highly marginalized areas, such as those in rural areas. This gap is not fortuitous or limited to a specific event but is part of a series of systematic inequalities that promote, maintain, and perpetuate a lag in the educational development of marginalized groups (Hampton et al., 2021).

Conceptual and theoretical framework

The EN [Escuela Normal] has a new stock of students in its lines, these individuals are noted for their professional calling and their commitment to public service, undeniably marked by the social and health phenomenon that has been the pandemic. Beyond the direct effects it has had on their formative processes within and outside the EN, *normalistas* are also determined by the fact that they belong to a generation that was born and has grown up immersed in the Information and Knowledge Society. Normalistas are part of Generation Z or digital natives, who differ from previous generational cohorts in attitudes, behaviors, and professional and family expectations (Moore et al., 2017).

Generation Z is composed of individuals born between 1995 and the end of the first decade of the 21st century; in other words, the majority of the normalista population belongs to this generation, and it will remain so for at least the next 10 years. Generation Z is characterized, among other things, by progressive and egalitarian ideologies, often actively engaging in social causes. They find more professional fulfillment from the impact they can have on their surroundings as agents of social change than in obtaining a bachelor's degree or a full-time permanent position in education.

However, undoubtedly, one of the emblematic characteristics of this generation is having grown up permanently connected to the internet. Nevertheless, this assertion does not apply universally. Some studies argue that the notion that digital natives – Generation Z – are naturally and organically competent in managing digital resources and tools is not entirely true. At least, in what it concerns the

educational field, students must be trained in these areas since there is a risk that they will be affected by a digital divide, not because of a lack of access to resources and devices, but due to a poor skill set to manage ICTs efficiently and productively, which tacitly becomes the second level of the digital gap (Fandos-Igado et al., 2016; Van Dijk, 2020).

Pre pandemic context

Among the many impacts highlighted by the pandemic, the inequality in internet access, especially in digital competencies, has reverberated in various spheres of the educational domain. The reprogramming and restructuring of curricular content in the plans of EN include spaces dedicated exclusively to the teaching and use of digital and virtual media from diverse pedagogical, practical, and systemic approaches. The aim is to set effective communication channels and meaningful teaching that promote and solidify digital competencies, which are already an essential part of an individual's development in all areas of life (DGESuM, 2022).

Before the health emergency caused by the pandemic, the use of digital resources was scarce and marked by the lack of technical skills of teachers, there were also negative attitudes towards its implementation that sometimes led to technophobia, there were feelings of uneasiness that ICTs would take a leading role in the classroom to the detriment of teachers, or even replace their work completely, and thus configure a digital gap of a psychological order or a first level gap, the motivational digital divide (González Elices, 2021; Mortis Lozoya et al., 2021; van Dijk, 2020). Ironically, this fear, which was particularly accentuated in teachers of rural areas, suggests that the teachers themselves already recognized ICTs as an important pedagogical tool and its potential to revolutionize teaching processes (Alvarez-Quiroz & Blanquicett Romero, 2015).

Furthermore, during pre-pandemic times, most educational centres were not equipped to incorporate ICTs effectively and permanently in their teaching

processes; there were obvious deficiencies in infrastructure, facilities, and devices that hindered it (INEE, 2020), however, SEP urged all the institutions that did have the human capital and infrastructure conditions to use ICTs whenever it was deemed appropriate, and to exploit their potential as a driver of inclusion, cohesion and collaborative social participation (SEP, 2017).

In respect to students, the digital technical skills they exhibited before the pandemic were generally related to leisure and social communication, and much less frequently linked to academic learning or schoolwork (Baca-Pumarejo et al., 2018). In this tone, digital literacy gaps were observed between urban and rural students (Cedeño Alcívar et al., 2017; Morales Romo, 2017); and in yet another recurring aspect found in research, the existence of a gap related to digital skills - or second level gap - between those students who had access to a computer and an internet connection from home and those who did not (Selwyn, 2004; Villegas Pérez et al., 2017; Mortis Lozoya et al., 2021).

Literacy is a term commonly associated with writing, reading, interpreting, and producing information in different formats. In the field of ICT, the meaning is broader and also encompasses a set of skills and competencies related to the use and management of various digital resources; that is, apart from the basic cognitive skills of literacy, digital literacy also requires critical reflection and the pragmatic application of knowledge, devices, processes, and other informative resources through digital channels of communication (Huvila, 2012; Fulton & McGuinness, 2016). Oftentimes, in the educational sphere, digital literacy is defined concerning operational standards that list a series of functions and tasks that a person must be able to perform effectively in digital work and learning environments (Rantala, 2010).

Even though the current national curricula do not establish specific objectives or expected key learning outcomes related to digital skills, as they do for other disciplines; the importance and benefits of ICT in education are widely recognized and considered in the educational content of different programs, ICT skills must be developed and nourished from the intakes of different fields of academic training.

National education policy encourages teachers to use ICT efficiently as a tool for inclusion and diversification of pedagogical strategies, and also "as a means to transcend the boundaries of the classroom", a statement that would be put to the test during the pandemic caused by COVID-19 (SEP, 2017).

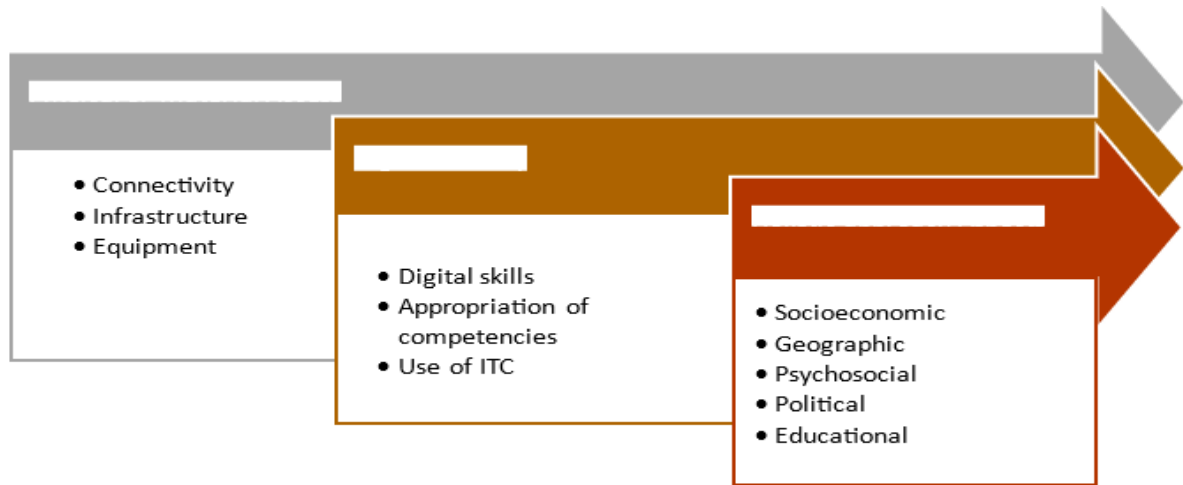
Education guidelines link ICT usage with the development of other skills and competencies, mainly soft skills such as critical and creative thinking, collaborative and participatory communication, self-monitoring, responsible and dignified use of technologies, and even as an aid in building ethical values for healthy social coexistence and digital citizenship (SEP, 2017; Calle Álvarez & Lozano-Prada, 2019).

Several authors and organizations have documented the inequality that exists in Mexico regarding access to the internet and other digital resources, there is ample evidence of how this digital gap is at the same time impacted and determined by multifactorial aspects such as age, gender, purchasing power, the sociodemographic environment, among others (Lloyd, 2020; Velázquez Contreras et al., 2020).

In this regard, various indicators have been designed and outlined to measure and determine inequality in access to digital resources (Gómez Navarro et al., 2018). Initially, analyses focused solely on connectivity and infrastructure; later, literacy and digital competencies were considered. Currently, the digital divide is analyzed with a holistic approach that also takes into account psychosocial, geographical, socioeconomic, and political aspects, among other characteristics as shown in Figure 1 (González Lizárraga et al., 2015; Ragnedda & Muschert, 2017; Toudert, 2015).

Figure 1

Evolution in the Analysis of the Digital Divide



Source: Prepared by the author based on the Van Dijk model (2005).

Methods and materials

This research work constitutes a mixed methods study as considers the inclusion of quantifiable data such as school promotion rates, percentages of internet connectivity and access to ICTs, school retention rates, academic production, and participation in school conferences; but also, qualitative information concerning the personal experiences of the participants through their academic journeys and their educational environment. The study is also exploratory and correlational in design, its main objective is to establish a causal dependency between the digital gap, the factors that drive it, and the consequences derived from it.

Information is collected using an adaptation of *The Youth Digital Skills Indicator* (Helsper et al., 2021), a survey-type instrument made up of 91 items grouped in five dimensions, four of which are related to digital skills: 1) *technical and operational skills*; 2) *information, navigation, and processing skills*; 3) *communication and interaction skills*; 4) *content creation and production skills*. The fifth dimension comprises attributive aspects of participants and general details of users' profiles.

Participants

143 normalistas enrolled in the first semester under the 2022 Curriculum at one Escuela Normal in Sonora are considered, out of this number 122 are women and 18 are men. Additionally, 3 students self-perceive as either male or female.

Procedure

The recruitment of participants initially took place with the support of the directors of the EN, and subsequently with the teachers in charge of ICT disciplinary areas. The instruments were applied through questionnaires on Google Forms; it was determined that data collection would take place with students gathered in their group classrooms during school hours and in person to ensure the highest number of responses. This approach also allowed that a surveyor was present in case students had questions or needed further guidance.

Before starting, the surveyor provided a general explanation of the procedure on how to complete the questionnaire, the study objectives, and the utility of the data. Students were informed of the relevance of their participation and the confidentiality with which their information would be treated. Additionally, a confidentiality and informed consent clause was included directly in the questionnaire. Responses were obtained in October 2022, in total five groups were surveyed, each in a single session. The data processing was done using the statistical software SPSS.

This project intends to expand the research to other ENs in the state and include all majors under the 2022 curricular Plan. Due to the longitudinal nature of this study and some of the established variables, the results will be processed in semester aggregates throughout the entire formative trajectory of the generational cohorts of the EN.

Discussion and results

In recent years Sonora has stood out as one of the states with the highest internet connectivity in Mexico; In 2020, 82.9% of the Sonoran population declared having access to the internet as compared to 72% of the national average (Ávalos, 2021). However, this is not true for everyone, there are substantial differences in access to digital resources and connectivity between urban and rural areas, according to Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía [INEGI] in 2020 78.3% of the urban population nationwide had access to the internet, whereas the figure was 50.4% in rural areas (SCT et al., 2021).

This scenario is even more critical and disparate when home internet access is measured. As summarize in Table 1, data collected from the same survey indicate that out of the total number of households with internet access nationwide, only 11% are found in rural areas (INEGI, 2021).

Table 1

Households with Internet Access

Element	Rural	Urban	National Average
Connectivity and Internet access	50.4 %	78.3%	72 %
Internet access at home	11 %	89 %	60.6 %

Source: Prepared by the author with data from ENDUTIH (Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes, et al., 2021)

In the face of this imminent social problem, attempts have been made to develop quantifiable standards to measure the digital gap (Gómez Navarro et al., 2018). In 2008, the International Telecommunications Union – a specialized agency of the UN for monitoring the availability and use of ICTs – developed an index to measure certain important aspects of the gap. Although it did not cover all the elements, it was an important step to having a unified and quantifiable instrument

that would allow comparisons to be made between different regions, that would observe the evolution of the gap over time, and could make visible the interrelationships of some of its components so that it would serve governments to make more accurate decisions in this area (UIT, 2009). Due to methodological obstacles and the unavailability of information the index is no longer used, attempts to start the project again have so far been unsuccessful (UIT, 2020).

There is limited literature that addresses specifically and in-depth the effects that the digital divide has on the learning process of students in rural areas, and although the consensus seems to indicate that there is a systematic lag in the technological skill-set and competencies of these students when compared with their peers in urban settings, this hypothesis has not yet been fully explored and, in broad terms, is limited to studying the access and use of ICT, but does not encompass the learning outcomes of specific curricular content that could be affected by the gap. Current research overlooks its linkage to other variables that define normalistas and that might determine their academic future (Baca-Pumarejo et al., 2018; Cedeño Alcívar et al., 2017).

The literature consulted does not establish nor explore a direct relationship between the existing digital gap in rural areas and a presumed lag in the academic performance of students that can be expressed in quantifiable terms such as levels of academic promotion, grade-point average, school performance, school retention rates, grade completion or scores in key learning components.

The vulnerability and exclusion faced by students in less privileged areas are worsened by the digital divide, it is presumed that limited access to digital resources and the lack of adequate skills to manage them have direct effects on learning and knowledge appropriation of core curricular elements, it can even be considered a barrier to learning in so far as it conditions access to a full educational process and makes representation in the digital arena difficult, hinders participation in democratic processes, and, in effect, compromises the visibility of vulnerable groups (Selwyn, 2010)

The digital divide is a complex phenomenon with intricate intersections, which affects and is in turn affected by a multifactorial system of interdependent relationships (Thiri3n & Valle Z3rate, 2018). Estimating the direct impact it has on the learning and academic life of students requires a deeper analysis that includes variables such as family income, educational level of the parents, and socio-emotional factors.

Digital competencies are pivotal in the life trajectories of students; whether linked to curricular learning or not, technological skills serve as a gateway to opportunities and represent a technical-cultural asset that facilitates access and mobility within many other spheres of personal and professional development (Baca-Pumarejo et al., 2018; Lloyd, 2020). Digital literacy is, in the words of Hobbs (2017), "a constellation of life skills" that empowers and protects the individual, paving the way for the mitigation of social exclusion and inequality (Alva de la Selva, 2015; Cheshmehzangi et al., 2022).

It is essential to establish these causal relationships, if any, to generate knowledge and information that will help build educational public policy to mitigate the digital divide and inequality in access to technological resources. This should effectively result in tangible improvements in the learning of curricular content, formative trajectories, and academic performance of normalistas.

Conclusions

The digital divide is, first and foremost, a manifestation of inequality in the use and access of ICTs, and as an element of inequality, it fosters and catalyzes the processes of social exclusion. The causes of the digital divide are multiple, so, in reality, we can speak of "digital divides", since various interrelated elements are involved in their composition and configuration, including barriers of different types (Mart3nez L3pez, 2020). As a result, the digital divide is both the cause and the effect, it lingers on in a cyclical process of exclusion and inequality, which at the same time is caused by, and the cause of, various negative impacts and social deprivation (Thiri3n & Valle Z3rate, 2018).

The appropriation and effective use of ICT in education, the economy, and institutions, as well as its role in the participation of individuals in society gives rise to opportunities but also great challenges. The ever-changing nature of technology means that any progress in this area is not really such or is only partially so. Public policy must have permanent goals for digital inclusion as well as updated and improved mechanisms to mitigate the digital gap and the inequalities magnified by it. The pandemic has left valuable lessons on how to manage various aspects of the digital divide, this experience must be put into the creation and immediate incorporation of long-term public policies for digital inclusion, based on the certainty of the enormous potential that ICTs have as a mitigating agent of many social inequalities (Reimers, 2022).

In what concerns ENs, policies for digital inclusion have been designed in the construction and current implementation of the Planes de Estudio 2022, which are a set of curricula that explicitly includes digital skills as a core learning element for normalistas. It is envisioned that students at ENs will develop competencies to benefit their own learning and academic progress, but also as a professional toolset to further use in the classroom when they become in-practice teachers.

Although this study was aimed at normalistas, the findings presented may be used as a glimpse of a broader scenario that includes other students in higher education, so far as in they are all part of Generation Z and share certain peculiarities when it comes to technology exposure regardless of their vocational leanings or geographical location. The digital native profile accounts for both their shortcomings and abilities concerning use of virtual and electronic resources.

For education to be truly of quality, inclusive, and sustainable, it is necessary to implement comprehensive and coordinated public policies, ensuring continuity in initiatives that are subject to ongoing review and improvement.

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English Language Fellow Teacher Program in Huejutla and Tuxpan. Shared reflections on the effect of intercultural interaction on speaking skills development and motivation

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Abstract

"If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door." For students from teacher training schools in indigenous areas, traveling abroad is a very remote possibility. For English teachers who understand the countless opportunities that cross-cultural exchanges offer to their students, promoting international mobility becomes almost a dream. In this academic article, two normal schools from similar contexts, Escuela Normal "De las Huastecas" and Centro Regional de Educación Normal "Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán", share successful experiences and final reflections on the implementation of the former English Language Fellow program (now known as Virtual English Language Fellow), offered by the Regional English Language Office from the United States of America Embassy in Mexico. This program aims to promote motivation toward English learning through interculturality. We will detail how we managed to provide our students with the opportunity to participate in English conversation clubs led by highly qualified U.S. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). This experience allowed them to engage in authentic and meaningful use of the foreign language in a safe, fun, and friendly space for oral expression.

Introduction

The former English Language Fellow (ELFT), today Virtual English Language Fellow (VELF) Program, is offered by the Regional English Language Office from

the United States of America Embassy in Mexico (RELO-USA Embassy) to support schools from around the globe that teach English as a foreign language. This initiative involves a 10-month-long collaboration of highly qualified TESOL educators from the United States, who are carefully selected for their expertise in the field.

The primary goals of this program are to foster mutual understanding, promote English language learning by carrying out a wide range of activities with the pupils of the beneficiary school. EL Fellows play a pivotal role in advancing English language education globally and facilitating cross-cultural exchange.

The two teacher training schools where this project was implemented belong to the region of Mexico known as Huasteca, with one located in Huejutla, named Escuela Normal "De las Huastecas", in the state of Hidalgo, and the other in Tuxpan, named Centro Regional de Educación Normal "Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán", in the state of Veracruz. The contexts of these schools are very similar, as most of the students come from indigenous or rural areas, and their exposure to the English language is limited to the time spent in class. However, with the onset of the pandemic in 2020, this time was severely compromised as classes shifted online, further limiting exposure to English. Students faced challenges such as technological issues hindering their ability to connect to classes, financial constraints preventing them from participating in online classes, and a lack of motivation as they found online classes less appealing than face-to-face instruction.

Kim and Frick (2011), mentioned in the work of Beltrán Baquerizo et al. (2020), identified key factors for students' lack of motivation as cognitive overload, perceived difficulty in learning tasks, and technical challenges. In addition, the authors highlight other influencing factors, such as the appropriateness and flexibility of course design, the presence or absence of social interaction, and the quality of learning materials. These determinants shape variations in student motivation between virtual classes and traditional face-to-face teaching.

Our primary objective with this project was to provide students with a safe, enjoyable, and welcoming space for oral expression, fostering an environment that transcended traditional language learning. In this enriched setting, students had the

unique opportunity to not only enhance their use of meaningful and authentic English but also to cultivate a deeper understanding of the English-speaking culture through direct interaction with a native teacher. The exchange of cultural information became a vital component, allowing students to broaden their perspectives, break down linguistic barriers, and develop a more comprehensive grasp of the language. Through this initiative, we aimed not only to improve language proficiency but also to promote cross-cultural communication, encouraging a holistic and immersive language-learning experience for our students.

Literature review

As the main basis for this initiative, we considered what Holmes (2013) states in the field of interactional sociolinguistics, placing particular emphasis on the contextual elements within interactions, exploring their underlying meanings and the consequent impact on interpretative processes. He also stresses the importance of participants' repertoires, shared knowledge, and community norms necessary to interpret these crucial cues for interaction.

Moreover, in constructing an inclusive literature review for our language-learning initiative, we have integrated a synthesis of diverse theories. This amalgamation collectively informs and enriches our pedagogical approach by incorporating key theoretical perspectives, which enabled us to cultivate a dynamic and culturally enriched language-learning experience for our students:

Cross-Cultural Communication Theory focuses on how people from different cultural backgrounds can effectively communicate and interact. Understanding the principles of cross-cultural communication would be beneficial for the project, as it delves into strategies for overcoming cultural barriers and promoting successful intercultural exchanges (Hurn & Tomalin, 2013).

On the other hand, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emphasizes the use of language as a tool for communication and learning. Structuring language learning activities around meaningful tasks, such as the exchange of cultural information, aligns with this approach. It supports the idea that language is best acquired through authentic and purposeful use.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) theory refers to the ability to function effectively in different intercultural contexts. Integrating the concepts of CQ theory helps us to design activities not only to teach the foreign language, but also to develop learners' ability to cope with and understand a diverse cultural environment. On motivational cultural intelligence, for example, research shows that the individual characteristics of learners and their contexts can be particularly valuable in helping those with strong cultural identities to overcome their resistance and engage in learning processes that facilitate cultural efficacy (Ang et al., 2007).

Concerning motivation, English teachers in this project faced challenges during the pandemic, particularly influenced by the characteristics of the two contexts where our schools are situated, as previously explained. As proposed by Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2000), in the work of Beltrán Baquerizo et al. (2020), an important methodological framework for creating motivational strategies toward learning consists of four principles: establishing inclusion, developing attitudes, increasing meaning, and developing competence. This framework holds the potential to cultivate high-quality motivation for all learners (Beltrán Baquerizo et al., 2020).

Motivation plays a pivotal role in the dynamics of teaching and learning, as underscored by Filgona et al. (2020). The success of the learning process is intricately tied to the level of motivation among learners. Motivation serves as the driving force that propels learners toward achieving their educational objectives. Recognizing the centrality of motivating learners becomes a fundamental aspect of effective teaching. In essence, learners' motivation emerges as arguably the most crucial element influencing the learning journey. It falls upon teachers to not only impart knowledge but also to inspire learners, fostering an intrinsic desire to engage in the tasks necessary for academic success (Filgona et al., 2020).

The British Council web page emphasizes personalization as an effective strategy for enhancing motivation in language learning. According to the Council, personalization involves making language relevant to learners by incorporating true communication. Focusing on topics or activities related to students' lives and interests increases the meaningfulness of the learning experience. This approach

fosters a sense of connection, encouraging students to eagerly participate in discussions about themselves and/or to find out about others' opinions (British Council, n.d.).

Al-Ta (2018) conducted a study on integrative and instrumental motivations among English language learners based on Brown's (2000, as cited in Al-Ta, 2018) classification: Instrumental motivation, as defined by Gardner and Lambert (1992, as cited in Al-Ta, 2018), emphasizes the pursuit of social and economic rewards through second language learning; and integrative, defined by Chalak and Kassaian (2010, as cited in Al-Ta, 2018) as the desire to learn a second or foreign language in order to communicate with people from a different linguistic community and immerse oneself in their culture.

Tianjuan (2019) emphasizes interest as a primary motivator for stimulating students' learning. Improvement in English proficiency occurs when students find joy and interest in the learning process. To foster this interest, creating an engaging language environment through diverse activities and incorporating media is crucial. Additionally, helping learners build confidence with constructive feedback and consistent recognition of their achievements and progress holds equal importance in enhancing motivation.

Conception of the innovation

In September 2019, a teacher from Escuela Normal "De las Huastecas" (ENDH) attended the first Congreso Nacional de Formadores de Inglés en Escuelas Normales (CONFIEN). It was during this event that she witnessed the participation of Dr. Ruth Petzold, then Director of RELO-USA, who unveiled the details of the program among other initiatives of the office under her charge. Aware of the important benefits that the teachers in training at her normal school could obtain, she presented the information to the authorities of the educational institution.

Once the approval was obtained in October, the English Academy of the ENDH prepared a formal request accompanied by a work proposal to participate in the English Language Fellow Program, hoping confidently to be favored with the 10-

month stay of a professional native speaker of English teacher in the city of Huejutla, Hidalgo.

In December of the same year, the ENDH received a visit from the staff of RELO-USA Mexico who were surprised by the genuine interest of a public institution located in a distant and underdeveloped region of the state. Their visit was not a mere superficial exploration, but a detailed effort to familiarize themselves with the geographic location of the Huasteca Hidalguense and get to know the working conditions and its facilities, thus deepening their understanding of the potential impact and scope of the impending educational collaboration.

In the month of February 2020, the official approval to host a distinguished Fellow Teacher for the following school year beginning in August 2020 was received. This announcement signified the school's inclusion in the program supporting the expectation of enriching the academic landscape with the experience and expertise of an English language fellow teacher.

However, fate had an unexpected twist in store, in March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO), characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic. Making a big effort, the teacher training school had the ability to adapt to the changing circumstances, transforming the initially planned face-to-face collaboration into a virtual modality. This strategic shift was a testament to the commitment not only to the safety of all stakeholders, but also to the continued pursuit of educational excellence in the face of unprecedented challenges.

June 2020 marked a virtual appointment of educational minds, as ENDH had the great pleasure of meeting not one but two assigned teachers - Erin Vanacore and Maureen Rooney. These dedicated educators embarked on a unique journey of collaboration, navigating the challenges posed by the pandemic with innovation and determination. The virtual format was an important bridge for maintaining communication, highlighting the resilience and adaptability of the ENDH educational community, demonstrating that even during a global crisis, the pursuit of knowledge and cultural exchange prevailed.

In June 2021, during the 2nd CONFIEN, held online, and following a pause due to the pandemic, teaching professionals engaged in interactions. It was during this event that a teacher from Centro Regional de Educación Normal (CREN) "Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán" in Tuxpan learned about the activities of the ELFT program in Huejutla and decided to introduce it to her educational institution.

Methodology

Each school initiated the project at different times but converged in carrying out meticulous planning, outlining clear objectives, scope, and desired outcomes. Both organizational processes had to address the natural differences of each institution, which involved identifying key stakeholders, assigning roles, and establishing effective communication channels specific to their unique contexts. Continuous assessment and feedback mechanisms were seamlessly integrated, ensuring a dynamic and responsive teaching environment that respected the individual nuances of both educational settings.

The methodology aimed to cultivate linguistic and cultural competence within the academic community through dynamic weekly evening sessions via the Zoom platform, each lasting 60 minutes. These conversation clubs accommodated a maximum of 20 students with similar language proficiency levels, aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Serving as secure spaces for social interaction, the clubs not only enhanced linguistic competence but also facilitated the exchange of diverse experiences and ideas, acknowledging and leveraging the natural differences between the schools.

Participation in this program sought to create a nexus of social and academic interaction, fostering an environment conducive to language learning through meaningful dialogues. The initiatives were inherently aligned with the promotion of language proficiency and the instillation of civic values, in harmony with the broader educational objectives of each institution. The inclusion of professional native speakers of English as a foreign language within each unique environment presented an opportunity to transcend regional borders without necessitating

relocation or resource-intensive commitments, thereby enriching the educational experience for students in distinct ways.

At ENDH, recognizing the richness of diversity within our academic community, our methodology for implementing the ELFT project focused on actively promoting interculturality while developing communication skills. In the conversation club sessions, participants had the opportunity to hear first-hand experiences from professors Erin and Maureen, who graciously shared images, anecdotes, and lifestyle experiences in real time. The workshops and clubs were designed to provide an overview of successful teaching-learning strategies in the field of foreign language teaching. This perspective, presented through the lens of a native speaker, added a unique dimension to the academic discourse.

The careful combination of talking about students' and teachers' lifestyles and traditions along with the use of technology, created an environment conducive for participants to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts in a natural way. This fostered interpersonal connection and meaningful learning, thus facilitating the exchange of ideas.

Starting with an open call that was issued at the beginning of the semester, we invited students to voluntarily register for conversation clubs, catering to personal interest and motivation as ensuring inclusiveness and broad representation within the linguistic learning community. The systematic organization of schedules was meticulously carried out, considering the various commitments of students, teachers, and school staff to facilitate maximum participation. The selection of discussion topics was done with precision, considering the diverse interests and academic needs of the participants, the contents of the programs and even the coincidence with local or American cultural festivities, thus guaranteeing relevance and commitment.

To ensure the sustainability of our initiatives, meticulous planning, and follow-up meetings between ENDH English teachers and fellow teachers were integral components of our methodology. These sessions facilitated continuous

improvement, addressing changing needs and optimizing the impact of our educational efforts.

At CREN “Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán”, the idea of implementing the VELF program arose after attending an online conference that teachers from ENDH presented at the second edition of CONFIEN, in June 2021, where they talked about the outcomes this project has brought to their students. The idea was presented to the school authorities and after its approval, the teacher contacted the RELO representative to know the requirements for the project. In mid-June, the project proposal was submitted for approval and, one month later, it was accepted.

The school project only included conversation club sessions for the students. Once the project was accepted, a call for participation was made and distributed among all students. The resulting candidates were given a link to do a placement test which told us the proficiency level they had. According to this, they were organized in groups to take the classes.

A kick-off meeting with English teachers from CREN, RELO staff and the VELF teacher was held at the beginning of September to get to know each other, to establish agreements, to set timelines and to agree on protocols for the implementation of the project. At the end of September, the project started to be implemented, with 4 groups of conversation clubs between 15 or 20 students each, taking 2 hours of classes every week via Zoom. These groups were organized by English proficiency level, we had 3 groups for students in level A2 and 1 group for students who had level B1 or above.

Innovation description

As outlined by Amin (2011), innovation in English teaching is characterized by proposals for qualitative changes in pedagogical materials, approaches, and values within the formal language education system. It involves introducing novel perspectives and methodologies that are perceived as new by individuals actively engaged in the educational process.

Innovative practices in EFL teaching often aim to address evolving learner needs, foster dynamic language acquisition, and create a more enriched, interactive educational environment. The implementation of this project in both schools was innovative because students had never experienced classes with a native speaker before. They could not interact with the native teacher in Spanish, requiring them to use all available elements to convey their thoughts. Most times, when interacting with the ELFT/VELF teacher, students had to explain various aspects of their daily lives unfamiliar to the teacher due to different cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, despite the predominant use of the Internet for classes, most sessions during the lockdown were asynchronous. However, in the conversation clubs, students actively engaged with peers and the foreign teacher, socializing and exchanging information in real-time through video calls. In contrast, in their regular classes, students were less frequently involved in peer interactions via video calls, as activities were typically conducted asynchronously.

Materials

The work materials used during the online sessions were chosen and implemented by the fellow teachers in charge, who spared no effort to design strategies and teaching resources according to the interests, ages, and levels of linguistic proficiency of the participants. It was never necessary to request the acquisition of any additional elements other than stationery that can be found at home or accessed on the Internet. This same situation was a trigger for students to acquire new knowledge and skills in the management of educational digital applications.

Digital communication tools, such as email, Zoom, or WhatsApp, were of great help in maintaining frequent and effective communication. Students used their own internet connection and their own devices. The fellow teachers created the session link in advance and shared it with the participants via email or WhatsApp, which facilitated smooth access to the virtual meetings, while the teachers tracked the groups via WhatsApp and logged into the session from time to time, to check attendance and interaction. To ensure an immersive and interactive English learning

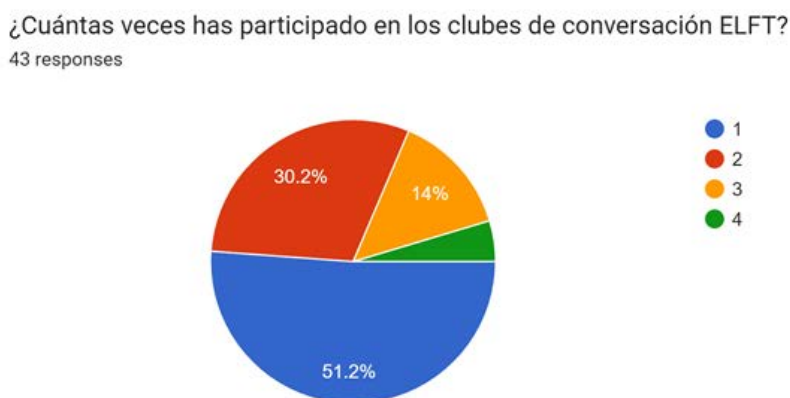
experience, the fellow teachers implemented a wide variety of digital educational resources, including online articles, videos, and playful apps. Overall, a combination of various digital tools and resources contributed to the success of the Online Conversation Clubs.

Results

To analyze the effectiveness of this innovative project, we conducted surveys in both schools. Commencing at ENDH, students' responses provided insights into their experiences with native speakers in the ELFT/VELF project. Transitioning to CREN, the survey results offered a comparative analysis, shedding light on diverse outcomes across educational settings. The interpretation of these findings delved into aspects such as students' language satisfaction and engagement levels. ENDH applied a satisfaction survey, which was answered by 43 students who participated in this program. The following are the results obtained.

Figure 1

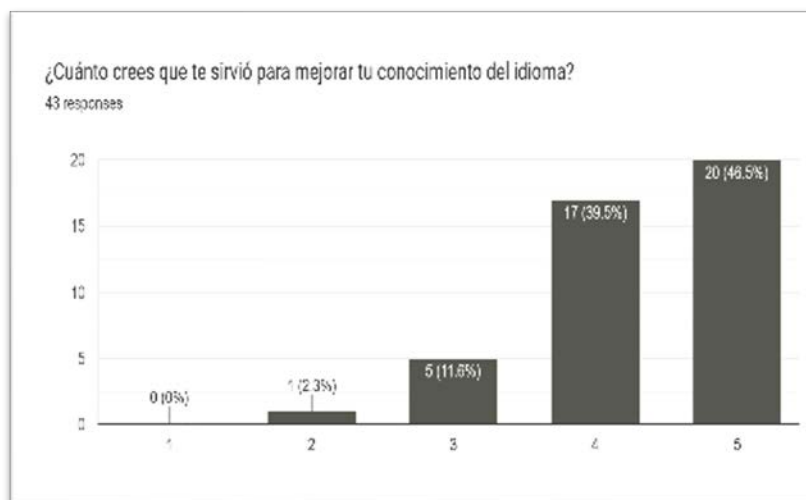
Times students participated in the ELFT conversation clubs



According to the survey made and applied by this research group, 51.2% of the respondents stated that they were participating in the ELFT conversation clubs for the first time and 48.8% answered that they had participated in previous semesters, which demonstrates that this percentage kept the interest in joining. This also means that the program is attractive and beneficial for developing their language skills.

Figure 2

Perceived Contribution of the Conversation Club to Students' Language Knowledge Improvement



On a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 represents “completely satisfied”, 20 students gave a punctuation of 5 which means they considered that the conversation club was completely useful to improve their language knowledge. Only 1 student expressed dissatisfaction with the sense of achievement. The respondents provided interesting answers about the topics they considered the most important they learned during the conversation clubs like pronunciation, culture, traditions, vocabulary, giving directions, and “native speaking”.

At CREN, to know the perceptions of the students and their opinions about having the conversation club sessions, a survey in Google Forms was created and the link was sent to the participants. It is important to mention that the survey was written in Spanish to avoid misunderstandings. The answers to some of those questions are presented next.

Figure 3

Perceived Impact of the Conversation Club on English Knowledge Improvement



In a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 was “a lot” and 1 “a little”, out of 53 students, 39 said it helped them a lot. The rest placed themselves in some other categories but none of them chose option 1.

Figure 4

Willingness to Continue in the Conversation Club



When asked if they would like to continue taking the conversation club sessions the following semester, out of 53 students, 90.6% of the students replied “Yes” and only 9.4% of them said “No”, as shown in the graph above. The reasons

for the negative answers shown previously concentrated mainly on less time available. Some of the students said they had to work, or they would be busy working on some other projects for school. Meanwhile, some of the affirmative answers highlighted as reasons to continue were: because they wanted to keep on practicing the language or to learn more about it; because they had fun; because they wanted to continue getting to know the native teacher and their classmates; because they wanted to keep on learning about another culture; etc. When asked: "What is the most important thing you learned from this course?", some of the most common answers were: not being afraid of speaking in English; being more confident when speaking; improving pronunciation; understanding a native speaker; interacting with others; about traditions and/or culture; etc.

Discussion

We need to highlight that most of the activities carried out during the conversation clubs were task-based since the teachers seek a way to have students interact with each other, in pairs or small groups, to favor the exchange of points of view or information to complete a task. This also promoted meaningful learning for the students since they were talking about real situations and expressing their own points of view.

The results presented earlier demonstrate that implementing this project in our schools significantly contributed to improving our students' knowledge of English. Furthermore, we observed how the integrative motivation of students increased since most of their answers to the surveys revealed they enjoyed getting to know more about American traditions and culture, talking to a native speaker, getting to know more facts about the native teachers, etc. The effective use of technology and available resources by the native teachers played a pivotal role in promoting personalization, raising the students' interest, and providing appropriate feedback and recognition.

Most of the students showed curiosity to get to know American traditions and the differences between their culture and ours. In the same way, they showed enthusiasm when they had to explain holidays, traditions, or regional food to the

teachers. Also, foreign teachers were always interested in getting more information from students' backgrounds, and that always translated into meaningful and enjoyable sessions. It is important to highlight that a respectful environment was always promoted during the project and even if there were different points of view during the class, this never resulted in arguments or misunderstandings. With the implementation of this project, besides improving their language proficiency level and promoting our students' motivation, they were also able to broaden their knowledge of the world and keep an open mind to cultures and traditions different from their own. After the data presented earlier and the conclusions presented here, we can state that our primary objective was met.

Challenges and lessons learned

One of the biggest challenges both schools faced during the implementation of these projects was connectivity problems, since both contexts are mostly rural, the Internet in these areas was still not very stable or had poor speed, which complicated the interaction of our students.

One of the greatest lessons we learned while implementing this project was how important it is to share the results we have had or socialize our project with some other colleagues. This is because CREN at Tuxpan was motivated to create its own project due to a presentation of results that teachers from ENDH Huejutla made at the first CONFIEN. On the same way, in 2022, when this comparison of results was presented in the 3rd CONFIEN, some other teachers were also motivated to implement it in their schools. They asked for our help concerning to the crafting of the projects, to contact RELO staff, to organize their paperwork before submitting it, etc. Some of them also got their projects approved and implemented them at their schools.

Another thing to consider when implementing a project like this is to always maintain close communication with the native teacher, since they are the ones in charge of these types of workshops but we, as teachers, are the ones who are closer to the students and who know them better. Our recommendation is to have at least two virtual meetings with them every month to talk about the students who are

struggling, or some other suggestions in-school teachers may have to strengthen the outcomes of these projects. If this is not possible due to time constraints, we highly recommend the native teacher could write weekly reports of the sessions and then, the in-school teacher could read them and provide feedback.

Conclusion

To summarize, we can conclude that the implementation of these projects in both schools has been of great help in increasing students' motivation and improving their language skills, especially during the pandemic, when the circumstances were highly challenging to keep them engaged in English learning. Besides, it has raised awareness of interculturality among a group of students who were not able to interact with foreign people during those times and had hardly ever done it before due to the characteristics of their contexts.

The use of technology to interact with their peers and foreign teachers on meaningful, purposeful, and personalized tasks while learning added a whole new sense to online education for them. They were motivated to show their own culture and traditions to the teachers and eager to learn more about the American culture, too. The environment promoted in the sessions was fun, respectful, and encouraging, so all the students felt confident to participate.

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How weak is schwa (ə)? Let's find out!

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Introduction

English is an unusual language since it takes inspiration from Latin, Germanic, and even old Nordic languages. As a result, the rules of the language are a bit of a mess. Even native-born British people make mistakes while speaking and writing English, so it shouldn't be a surprise that others, such as us, Spanish natives, find it hard (Serlin, n.d).

One of the toughest challenges in speaking English has to do with pronunciation, and while mispronunciation isn't necessarily a barrier to being understood, it can make it harder to integrate into the workplace (Serlin, n.d.). Therefore, for us English teachers, it is of great importance to understand and differentiate sounds both English and Spanish, identify the ones that are non-existent in our mother tongue and thus, teach them accurately to students.

There are tricks to mastering the English language that are often overlooked by Spanish speaking teachers of English (Serlin, n.d.), especially if they do not have a qualified English teacher training. Once they become aware of the peculiarities of English sounds and variations, language becomes less confusing, and teaching pronunciation efficiently becomes more natural.

Different languages encourage us to place our tongues in different positions to make the correct sounds. There are a number of sounds present in English that don't even exist in Spanish. For example, there are only twelve vowel sound positions in Spanish versus nineteen in English. These sounds are the building blocks or foundations of each language. Every language has them, and they're always different, but unless these can be mastered, it is very difficult to achieve true fluency (Serlin, n.d.).

As Serlin (n.d.) states, many vowel sounds can confuse the Spanish ear as they look and sound very similar but might require the tongue to be placed in a different position or for the sound to be elongated. Here are some examples where these sound differences become evident:

- *I love Sam's fast car* – three 'a's and each of them sounds a little bit different. The lesson here is that English vowels on the page are different from the vowels spoken. Don't worry much about it though. Ask a Northern English person to say this phrase and they'll pronounce it totally differently to a Southerner.
- *The book was full of food* – the 'oo' spelling can produce two different sounds in British English, both of which are different from the Spanish pronunciation of this sound. The first 'oo' sounds like a caveman grunt, the second like an audience booing an evil character on a stage.
- *Don't burn the shirt* – 'ur' as in *turn*, 'ir' as in *bird*, 'ear' as in *earth*, and 'or' as in *worth* all spell the same vowel sound - hard to believe right? Sometimes English spellings don't make any sense at all, even to English people! Focusing on the meaning of the word, rather than the spelling, can make things easier (Serlin, n.d).

Vowels can be difficult.

Because Spanish does not have as many vowels as English, vowel sounds are often overgeneralized by native Spanish speakers. In order to address this, native Spanish speakers may want to consider the following vowels in English: /ɔ/, /ɪ/, /ə/, and /ʊ/.

The /o/ sound can take on many different pronunciations. It does not just take the "oh" pronunciation like you would think ("so", "only"), but also can sound like "a" as in "stop" or "lot", "uh" as in "love" and "monk".

The /i/ sound should be pronounced as "ih", but because this sound does not exist in Spanish, it may be pronounced as "ee" instead. For example, common

mispronunciations may include “seat” for “sit”, “leave” for “live”, and “feel” for “fill” among others.

/ə/, known as the “schwa” sound, sounds like “uh” in English. Again, because this sound does not exist in Spanish, it may be produced as “ah” instead. For example, a native Spanish speaker may produce “shut” with an “ah” sound instead of the correct “uh” sound, and it might end up sounding like “shot” (Darren, 2023).

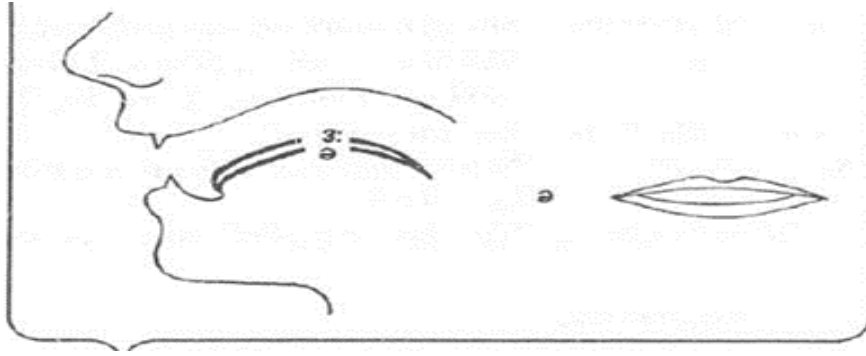
The schwa (ə) phoneme is the most occurring sound in all the main varieties of English: GenAm (General American) and RP (Received pronunciation) (Davenport & Hannahs, 2010), therefore our students must be explicitly taught about it, so their pronunciation can be as accurate as possible, and this allows them to have better communication skills, which is probably the primary goal of every English learner.

It is important to know the phonological basis that underlies this sound, so the explanation and model to the students can be pertinent and help select the best strategies and techniques to work with.

The most general data of the articulation of this sound is that it is a vowel; thus, it is always voiced (Roach, 2009); vocal cords will vibrate in its articulation. Another fact about it is that it is short and unstressed which is probably the most important aspect to bring on, it is barely audible when we produce it, which is why it is also known as the weakest vowel. Vowels, in general, are classified by height, backness, and roundness (Davenport & Hannahs, 2010). This sound is central when it comes to backness, but also in height and it is slightly spread as the following figure shows.

Figure 1

Mouth representation of schwa realization. Retrieved from Baker 2006



Intervention proposal within the classroom

One of the very first strategies to use with our students when modeling and teaching sounds is to have visual aids to support what we say (Davis, 2018). We can use the IPA chart shown below to illustrate the position of this vowel sound, or any other.

Figure 2

Phonemic chart. Retrieved from Alba English (2017)

		Vowels						Phonemic Chart	
		i:	ɪ	ʊ	u:	ɪə	eɪ		
		sheep eagle field	ship busy started	good put should	moon grew through	ear here career	train say plane		
		e	ə	ɜ:	ɔ:	ʊə	ɔɪ	əʊ	short
		bed dead said	about police the	bird hurt work	door walk saw	your sure tourist	boy point oil	coat low note	long
		æ	ʌ	ɑ:	ɒ	eə	aɪ	aʊ	diphthongs
		apple cat mat	up money cut	car bath safari	not what because	hair careful there	by high fine	now our house	voiced
Consonants		p	b	t	d	tʃ	dʒ	k	g
		pen hopping jump	ball hobby herb	table little watched	dog added played	chips itch picture	jam danger fudge	key car luck	green hug league
		f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ
	fire laugh phone	video moye of	thick healthy teeth	mother this with	see city notice	zebra cosy has	shop nation special	television visual leisure	
	m	n	ŋ	j	l	r	w	h	
	man	no	sing	yes	light	right	win	house	

If we look at Figure 2 for instance, we will observe the position of the vowel sounds. We can use this to teach our students that their placement there is assigned due to height and backness. The first line contains high vowels like /i/ and /u/, the

second line is room for mid vowels such as /e/ or /ə/, the third line of vowels is for low vowels or a sounds, /æ/ is front a /a:/ is a central one and /ɒ/ is a back one. Then we can point that this chart helps them see that the schwa is a mid-central vowel, and we can even use this chart to compare with higher or lower vowels or with vowels that are either at the front or in the back of our mouth.

Another vital visual aid is a mouth representation, so they can look at how spread lips are, and how the tongue remains in rest position, just as we can tell by looking at Figure 1.

Something that is quite beneficial for learners, especially for Spanish speakers, whose language is spoken exactly as it is written, is to relate sounds to spelling. In the case of schwa, this is not that simple because there are too many patterns. The most common syllables with this sound are: *a, ar, ate, o, or, e, er, u, ough, ou*. Therefore, what it is recommended instead is to let them know, that unlike other sounds, this is found in all five vowels, and you can provide them with examples of each. For example: about, teacherer, responsibility, caution, focus.

Guiding them with this information on spelling patterns, it is still just a starting point because by checking these and a couple of extra examples, it is still not very enlightening on how to identify or predict this sound. Examples above are different in length, part of speech, and number of syllables, so one technique that works wonders is to use syllable division to find the schwa within words.

First, we make our students aware that in English every syllable is determined by the presence of a vowel sound, so in the case of one-syllable words, there is only one vowel sound, regardless of the spelling. This can be worked in many ways, and one of the easiest ways is to clap when saying the words, so syllables are identified virtually effortlessly. Most students end up dividing words in syllables correctly with truly little practice. Here it is also helpful to point out that there are many spelling patterns in English because in Spanish, it is very common to have a consonant followed by a vowel, and so on, and we usually get a syllable every two letters, which is completely different to what happens in English. For example, Spanish *cama* has

two syllables: ca-ma, but English *eight* has one syllable with two spelt vowels and three consonants in a row from which only one is pronounced.

Then we start helping them identify how to find schwa through syllables. In one-syllable words, we will not encounter schwa in content words because schwa is a very weak, unstressed sound, and if we do not stress the only vowel sound, the word will be barely audible. Hence, we find schwa in one-syllable words which are function words. We must not forget that one-syllable function words such as articles, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs among others own a standard stressed pronunciation and alternate unstressed which is highly common in casual, rapid, everyday speech (Raihan & Deterding, 2017). For instance, the word *to* can be pronounced either as /tu:/ or as /tə/.

We can approach this in our classroom with less technical jargon by eliciting quite simple sentences from our students, even short sentences that our A1 students are already producing. Take for instance the sentence: *I go to school*. There we could point out that we will not find schwa in the words *go* and *school* because they are content words. Is it necessary to label all this with the grammar names like content or function words? It is not recommended at lower levels either. So, the following will be a very friendly way to go over this. Write the sentence as many times as the number of words it is composed of and cross out a different word each time. Have students read all the versions aloud, and this will help them notice, which words are necessary for the message (content words), and which are only there for the sentence to be complete (function words). For instance:

I go to school.

I ~~g~~o to school.

I go ~~t~~o school.

I go to ~~sch~~ool.

In the first version, if we only read and *go to school*, the message is still transmitted, especially if we use body language such as pointing at ourselves. In the

second version, if we read aloud *I to the school*, the message becomes unclear, and the students grasp that the word *go* is necessary. We repeat this until we read the four of them, and students will understand that the content, thus stressed words, are *go* and *school*, without the need to point them as verbs and nouns which are content words.

Students will also get from here that the least necessary word is *to*, and that it can be unstressed and can have an alternative pronunciation of schwa. The more we expose them to these kinds of exercises, the more likely they will be able to predict the schwa appearance in one-syllable function words in connected speech. Eventually, even lower-level students will be able to produce this sound accurately within these types of phrases (Chard & Dickson, 1999).

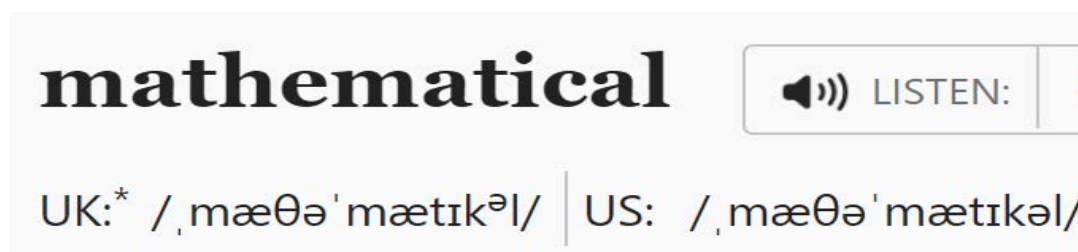
Moving on with syllable division, we help our students with two-syllable words which are the easiest for the matter. At this point, we let students know that in these words, one syllable is stressed, and the other is not, we can do this by having them drill some two-syllable words and exaggerate a little bit the pronunciation of the stressed syllable.



What happens with these types of words is that most of them will have the unstressed, weaker syllable pronounced with schwa. Take the words *castle* and *arrive* for instance. The unstressed syllable in each case is pronounced with the schwa /'kæsəl/ and /ə'raɪv/. Make sure you point out to your students that this is just a pattern immensely helpful to predict, nonetheless, it is not a rule for every case, such as in the word *laptop* /'læptɒp/.

Something that can be brought in the classroom with this is that they predict if certain two-syllable words have schwa and where it is found. Students can be encouraged to confirm in a dictionary with pronunciation tool and phonemic transcript and have them imitate the pronunciation. At that point it is extremely beneficial to teach that the apostrophe found on top of some syllable indicates the main stress as seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Dictionary entry from WordReference.com (2023)



mathematical  LISTEN: 

UK:^{*} /,mæθə'mætɪkəl/ | US: /,mæθə'mætɪkəl/

Try to write down the examples the own students propose with this sound, so whenever you encounter the same word once again in a written or oral text, or even in their own productions, you encourage them to be accurate in this precise sound which they had earlier identified.

Finally, as part of this technique of syllable division, you can work simultaneously with words of three syllables or more. For this matter, provide plenty examples, so students can identify that there is still a main stress and very commonly a secondary stress, especially in four or five-syllable words. Provide them with transcripts and model pronunciation, so they can indirectly be working with other sounds. For instance, the word *hypocritical* (,hɪpə'krɪtɪkəl), or the word *eventually* (ɪ'ventʃuəli).

In this stage you might explain as well that the apostrophe which is now placed on the bottom of the syllable means secondary stress, refer to figure 3. Another hint worth sharing with your students about this is, that the weakest syllable is commonly placed right next to the main stress or in suffixes. For example, in the word *mathematical* whose transcript is in Figure 3, you will find a perfect example of a long word with both main and secondary stress and the schwa sound found next to the main stress and in a suffix. Being aware of this and practicing it every so often makes students be able to predict where to find schwa and getting to a point in which they acquire it.

Something else that ought to be explicitly pointed out is the use of non-rhotic diphthongs in British English. The term rhotic refers to the types of languages which pronounce the *r* in any word position such as French, Spanish or American English

(Davenport & Hannahs, 2010). Whereas non-rhotic is a type of language that does not pronounce middle or final *r* like Australian or British English. If we refer again to Figure 2, we can easily see how schwa appears in several diphthongs in British English, also known as received pronunciation.

Most of these diphthongs are there to prevent a rhotic pronunciation; take the word *here* for instance, which is clear to most of our students it is pronounced differently in American and British English. Go through both transcripts with them /hɪə/ and /hɪr/ and be specific with them about such differences. Elicit and provide more examples with these types of words, so students can acquire these sounds simply.

In addition, in some words, you are likely to encounter these kinds of transcripts /'tɪtʃə/, this is for the word *teacher* in US English. What we find within this example is a slightly different realization of the phoneme /ə/; this occurs because the schwa enlengthens to merge with the /r/ and be produced as just one sound. This is useful for students to know, so they can pronounce more accurately.

As with any other topic that we want our students to approach to in a meaningful way, games and songs are always a clever idea (Sylla, 2010). The authors of this proposal adapted the famous song *The wheels on the bus* by Ristic and Dykeman (n.d.) to work with these sounds with students. The adaptation is found in the annex. There you can see how this can be introduced interactively by having students change the last verses with their own sample words.

Discussion

When these techniques are presented to colleagues, the following question always arises: When do I implement them with my students within a rigid syllabus that does not cover individual sounds? We could say that there are two main signs that can tell us it is time to explicitly show this sound or any other individual sound, especially those not shared within students' first language.

One moment is when students in class are constantly making the same inaccuracy mistake, so their production is indicating that certain sound or sounds

need to be modeled and reinforced. But still, we do not have to wait until students have probably mistakenly learned certain sounds. Then, the second moment we refer to is whenever we work with vocabulary. As teachers, we know that learning a word implies learning, its meaning, pronunciation, and form (Whatiselt, 2019). Therefore, whenever we are introducing vocabulary sets, it is advised that we look for common patterns, sounds, or pronunciation rules among the words making up the set, to model this or any other sound.

Take for instance *occupations* or *family members*. In those lexical sets, there are a lot of words ending in *er* and *or* such as *operator*, *painter*, *father*, and *mother* among many others. These words have a schwa in their final syllable, so you can teach this spelling and pronunciation pattern when you go through the vocabulary. Students can also predict more words with the same ending sound. This is something simple and reachable that can work even within A1 groups.

Pronunciation can be as well taught on demand. Learners very commonly bring to the class things that call on their attention while they are probably watching a movie or listening to a song on their own, and very often the inquiries they have are related to pronunciation of certain sounds. Thus, whenever this happens, we do not have to merely answer the question, but if we see an opportunity, we can elaborate on that and give students a brief, but comprehensive explanation of sounds or patterns involved in the specific aspect they asked about.

Finally, before our readers go on to implement all the strategies presented here, and in the order presented as well, it is important to take a step back and reflect on which of these are effective for their own students, considering which suit their learning preferences and ways of approaching things. Knowing our students and trying different things will enable us teachers to make the best decisions on which strategies to apply, when to, how to prioritize them, and how to adapt them to different levels or even to different groups from the same level.

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Appendix

Wheels on the bus adaptation (Valdés, 2022).

The lazy schwa says uh, uh, uh,

Uh, uh, uh,

Uh, uh, uh,

Yes, the lazy schwa says uh, uh, uh,

Not feeling stressed (2)

The tongue, the lips, and the jaw are relaxed.

Feeling relaxed, feeling relaxed

The tongue, the lips, and the jaw are relaxed.

Not feeling stressed

The schwa is displayed

By an upside-down e, upside-down e, upside-down e,

The schwa is represented by an upside-down e,
too lazy to sit up.

The schwa sound is found in away and again,

Away and again, away and again,

The schwa sound is found in away and again,

Not feeling stressed

Substitute other two-syllable words for 'away' and 'again' for other verses.

Intervention on the English Teaching Practice during the Pandemic: “Teacher Trainees Innovating from Home”

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The confinement at home, which began at the end of March 2020, has represented a change in the way in which education and the learning process are carried out in our country and worldwide. For most teachers, schools closing all around the world became the first challenge to overcome. Normal schools, and therefore their entire agenda rely heavily on elementary and middle schools for practice spaces. Internships at Normal Schools are necessary and important for the performance of a teacher in training. One of the fundamental actions of the professional practice training path in the face of the current health emergency is to look for spaces where future trainers could practice and develop teaching skills while adjusting to a new reality in our society. This intervention proved to be successful for most of the students that were involved, in its process the theoretical background and skills to teach in the classroom were used and adapted, the same as the internships during the pre-COVID-19 era.

Schools closing in Mexico forced SEP to integrate an alternative for thousands of students all around our territory creating a modality called “learning at home” for all basic education. As a result of this, Normal Schools faced a new challenge in order to ensure academic training and the pandemic’s impact on future teachers, the challenge was even harder in the vast diversity of our schools like the outskirts of towns and rural areas. Significant challenges such as reaching out to school administrators and principals, since most of them were staying safe at home and protocols demanded strictly social distancing actions. Social distancing would end up in blocking all possibilities for the teacher trainees to immerse in these

communities and different contexts. Scanning schools and their characteristics for suitable spaces for practice was something that was left out of the project as well, since physically being in one school was something far from happening for our entire agenda, and for public schools, suddenly, all schools were in the exact same conditions, taking place in each student's homes, in their bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens, etc. Surprisingly, the contexts were now classified according to virtual characteristics, access to computing or mobile devices, functionality, connectivity, internet speed, and in some cases efficient home electrical systems. Teaching became some sort of self-learning process to start working from home and so teaching training, the idea was clear, how to create and be a community through a screen even in the most remote places.

We are facing one of the greatest historical events of the modern era, which will create permanent social changes and open new paradigms in different branches of knowledge such as medicine, sociology, education, and public health. The magnitude of these changes inevitably permeates society's education scenario and is directly related to the work carried out by Normales Schools. Therefore, our work within these institutions must move towards new procedures and strategies that would allow us to continue monitoring and responding to the needs of a changing society, of an educational system in crisis, and with wide windows of opportunity for those teachers in the future ahead of us. Looking for accurate spaces for teaching practice and constant monitoring of their conditions must be permanent actions in each Normal School, regardless of whether during a global pandemic or not, collaborative work among authorities, administrators, and local schools is needed when it comes to creating efficient environments for the teacher trainees soon to take leading roles in classrooms all around basic education schools in Mexico. Generating an innovative project that would suit practices in the third semester, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, relies on the fulfillment and passion that only Normal Schools create within their communities, relationships among teachers and teacher trainees, and their shared vision for an educational system held by teacher's passions and commitment.

There are two fundamental causes behind this project. One is the tangible and non-tangible challenges of society and the educational community in the face of a historical event such as a pandemic. The other one is an interest in creating an effective practice space where Normales' students can look for solutions or rethink scenarios from their experience in school communities.

This project was developed to establish operational aspects of high importance that need to be considered when placing students in elementary education schools. The performance monitoring process of future teachers should not be taken lightly, since each educational campus entails different challenges for them. As teachers in charge of this type of training, we need to ensure an effective schedule of practice that has sufficient elements to promote in the student a constant teaching reflection. The goal is to familiarize them with research methodologies, specifically the action-research method, for them to achieve their professional, disciplinary, and attitudinal competencies.

The project that gives space to internships during the semester is also based on the fact that the teachers in training will elaborate instruments to diagnose personal, social, and economic problems that in this case, middle school students are going through because of the home confinement. Before the pandemic, establishing diagnostic tests would be based on the fact of academic performance observation and educational phenomena within the classroom, but right now, a new reality hits the project and demands from the teacher trainees new methods to investigate and observe like digital ethnography. Digital ethnography outlines an approach to ethnographic work in today's world. It invites researchers to consider how we live and research in a digital, material, and sensory environment. When ethnography becomes digital, certain aspects of the definition depend on how we observe what happens, listen to what is said, and ask questions based on it. The challenge is to migrate these actions to the digital approach without losing the conventions of field ethnography and not losing sight of the real contact on which this research method is based. (Pink et al. p17). During the teaching practice, observations and diagnosis represent clear areas whereas teacher trainees can

develop new skills and use resources that have been granted throughout different study field subjects, despite the interruption in the face-to-face academic activities, they have adequate training to overcome possible challenges or difficulties within this experience.

Description of the Project

The driving force behind the internship is for students to be able to apply the knowledge acquired throughout the different courses that are part of the teaching training path. The actions of this project involve working individually with a middle school student, so the teacher trainee can establish a route of actions and personalized class contents, individual tutoring offers a new vision and planning for future teachers to reflect more on the actions needed to effectively tutor a student through their learning process on a second language and at the same time dealing with the real context of learning from home, both isolated from the school scene. A schedule of specific activities is established throughout the project that comprises four weeks, as well as linkage and prior accompaniment for the effective collaboration between Normal School teachers, teacher trainees, and parents who will closely follow the contact established with each of their children. The actions within the project include in-between sessions monitoring each teacher trainee's first contact with these families and how they would respond to whatever their kids will need to take part in the project. As far as the teacher trainees, in-between sessions are held to reflect and revise the theoretical and methodological aspects of the actions in this project, as well as the research conducted simultaneously. Teaching is conceived as a research activity and research is a self-reflective activity carried out by the teacher with the aim of improving his or her practice. Teaching ceases to be a natural phenomenon and becomes a social and cultural phenomenon, a complex social practice (Latorre Beltrán & Latorre p.10).

Technical Action-Research methodology, is a process under a controlled environment with a scheme drawn up by someone else that will mark the route to be followed by the teacher, Within this scheme, teaching is conceived as a rational and

technological process of searching for teaching effectiveness and the effectiveness of the school to achieve institutionally defined educational objectives. (Latorre Beltrán & Latorre p.11) Although technical action research maintains a rigid scheme, it does not mean that it leaves out the opportunity for the educational phenomenon to be observed, described, and analyzed. By doing this type of action, the future teacher contrasts the rigorous scheme of this form of research against the reality outside the classroom. The system indeed continues to demand that we conclude with a study plan, with measurable and achievable objectives, but it is also true that The exodus from the classroom to homes requires more practical teachers with broad paradigms about what it means to achieve educational success in this pandemic context. In the case of this project, future teachers approach realities and everyday situations by keeping in touch with their assigned students, something like a one-to-one correspondence where real connections can allow individuals to add significant interactions with the other, in this case, students at home would experience positive emotions about the fact of maintaining communication with an external figure and besides that, learning a new language.

Secondly, as has been stated before, these interactions would allow future teachers to reflect on the importance of teaching roles within different realities and contexts, proving that teaching skills can be easily adapted as long as teachers stay close to the reflecting aspects of their own actions. Lastly, evaluating the results and outcomes of this project would be something viable to do since both, secondary students at home and future teachers, will constantly revisit their work and evidence in order to contrast initial actions, challenges, short-term problems, establishing routines for everyday sessions, creating an internal protocol for their interactions and maybe without even noticing it, creating a community between student and teacher which is one of the core actions within this project.

Context of the Project

The Intervention in the English teaching practice during the pandemic: “Teacher trainees innovating from home” started as an alternative response as the

internship programs at Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Educación Normal “IESEN” were heading in a different direction due to the closing of schools in our immediate communities. IESEN offers different BAs in preschool, elementary, and middle school education, being the BA in English for middle school the one where this project was first presented and conducted during the entire semester. From the beginning of the current semester, August 2020 until January 2021, approximately 23 students from this Bachelor became the living part of the project by applying and executing the different stages of the project and its strategies. Even though the internship itself was programmed to develop within 4 weeks of the semester, there was previous and after work to be done by the teacher trainees, which is why the project was considered to be ambitious and time demanding, since it was the first time internships were being organized collaboratively with Normal School students, they were not acting passively and receiving orders, they were taking part in the conversations to achieve everyone’s objectives including theirs as individuals and students who were also experiencing a global pandemic and its aftermath.

Strategies of the Project

1. The challenge of identifying virtual scenarios and ways of communicating with schools where teacher trainees could practice, holds the implementation of this project. It includes well-defined strategies for development, evaluation, and data collection. The neuralgic strategies of this project are:
2. Restrict observation day to either a virtual school setting or the family environment of the teacher trainee, in case he/she has access to an individual who is in middle school.
3. Establish a timetable of actions to monitor and analyze the practice, which includes parents, English teachers, and school personnel.
4. Present the project and schedule to the academy of teachers of the bachelor's degree to integrate and unify criteria for participation in the different subjects.
5. Identify students who do not have the necessary elements and tools to develop an observation process in virtual environments, in order to provide them with new strategies.
6. Upload all of the relevant documents, such as the planning and field diaries, to Google Drive, WhatsApp, or YouTube.

	<p>second week of practice.</p> <p>Syllabus adaptations and selected materials by school administrators/head teachers</p> <p>Integrate entries into the digital diary regarding the diagnostic exam.</p>	Teacher trainee
November	<p>Set and organize first meeting with school administrators, tutor teachers and trainee teachers.</p> <p>Present drafting for the project`s main strategies and core diagnosis results.</p> <p>Establish intervention reports for each week`s performance.</p> <p>Revise early-stage projects with each teacher trainee.</p> <p>Select and revise main resources of communication and integration of ICTs.</p> <p>Select the methodology and resources for the development of the project, derived from the diagnosis applied to each assigned student.</p> <p>Integrate a schedule for each secondary student to have a follow-up on online sessions.</p> <p>Establish an initial and final session with the assigned student and parents to socialize the start of the project and its characteristics</p> <p>Inform about the different activities that the student will be carrying out during the sessions and follow-up activities to perform once sessions are finished.</p> <p>Select the template for lesson planning with added features for the nature of the tutorship in the project.</p> <p>Select resources for online sessions of the project and share them in an online database with the rest of the class.</p> <p>Review didactic suggestions according to the subject`s outcomes and expected learnings.</p>	<p>Subject teacher</p> <p>Trainee teacher</p> <p>Subject teacher and teacher trainee</p>

	Establish micro-sessions in order to review goals and objectives for each session and final activities or products per session.	
December	Define and develop assessment tools and learning indicators for each session applied. Define evidence collection (videos, portfolio, images, Google Classroom, etc.) Final analysis of didactic sequences, temporality, efficiency, effectiveness for the application of rubrics	Subject teacher Subject teacher and teacher trainee
January	Presentation of evidence within the course. Virtual colloquy and presentation of evidence	Trainee teachers

Resources

The next chart integrates resources that were necessary to use to assure positive systematization of this project all along the semester. Human resources are all the individuals that in a low or high performance, contributed to the effective collaborations and networking process in order to maintain clear communication and clear objectives for this project. Technological resources include mostly skills and training on how to obtain better performance and systematization of information within virtual environments such as online portfolios, file compilations, shared files for prior or post-analysis of sessions held during the project, elaboration of research instruments and online gathering for results and outcomes of diagnostics, tests, questionnaires, interviews, etc. Finally, controlling resources to revisit relevant dates and deadlines during the whole project.

Table 2*Research , field and human resources for the execution of the project*

Human resources	Technology resources	Controlling resources
Population of students in the third semester of the Bachelor's Degree in Teaching and Learning of English in Secondary Education.	Create of digital field diaries within various writing platforms and publication of written content on the web.	Present the project for the semester calendar within the work plan
Teacher Academy of the third semester of the bachelor's degree.	Manage communication interfaces such as WhatsApp, Watsapp, Messenger, and Hotmail.	Promote publicity purposes to call for the closing of the project through the analysis of the day
Students from secondary schools were selected to participate in the project.	Know how to manage and adapt video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, Meet, and video Messenger	Integrate databases with virtual links for self-access to online sessions with teacher trainees and their assigned students.
Parents/tutors for underage students	Integrate digital repositories containing data collection instruments and interview and survey formats.	
Elementary education teachers who wish to collaborate in a data collection instrument.	Use and management of Google Forms for data collection.	
Educational authorities that accompany the closing of the project.	Use and management of software for the elaboration of documents, slides and data analysis.	

Evaluation

The follow-up and summative evaluation of the student's performance was assessed using different instruments especially those about research methods, interpretation of information, and observation as main sources of reflections during the project. These instruments were effective when it comes to time management since allowed the subject teacher and collaborative teachers of the project to create more assertiveness and significant conversations with teacher trainees derived from their own reflections and observations. Students also used a field diary, which included academic writing, summarizing, and writing skills in order to incorporate truth observation of the educational phenomena.

Conclusion

The readiness to convey to teaching online was higher in some specific contexts and fields than others, Normal Schools I would say established a new level of complexity and field-specific characteristics. It is precisely due to its main features, that teacher training at IESEN and so many more Normal Schools became a reflection of approachable and relatable methods that would be immediately proven to fail or succeed in the reality of a global pandemic. During the pandemic, teacher trainees from the BA of Teaching English in Secondary Schools at IESEN were brave and creative in order to bring solutions transformed into didactic and innovative strategies to be performed through a screen and being able to be received by students at their homes. Future teachers reported and shared that most of their joyful and meaningful experiences during this project were those when interactions, spontaneous communication, and engagement from their students happened. It is proven then that an active learning invitation breaks all digital barriers and allows teachers to overcome the most complex adversities when sharing knowledge. Most of these strategies were effective according to the teacher trainees since they were in charge of the whole scenario, conditions, timing, syllabus selection, and resources, elements that in a day-to-day classroom situation would not happen at all, since local administrations, principals, and even government permeate their own

agenda into a teacher's classroom and therefore into their practice. The pandemic was the perfect scenario for these young future teachers to prove that being in control of their own teaching practice from scratch creates a sense of commitment and belonging that most of the time teachers do not experience in for example, pre-pandemic times. The challenge now is to continue this path of setting innovative and creative scenarios for our future teachers, making sure we work with effective pedagogical methods that they know they could use in any sector with a positive outcome reassuring their teaching abilities. Now, teachers must employ new online tools and developed working methods in order to enhance any learning process to its limits. Lastly, remote teaching during the pandemic showed us the need to strengthen and develop a collaborative and active learning culture, teamwork was key during this project, whether was peer work, subject teacher and trainee teacher alone, group work, etc. In their open responses during the final colloquy that was held as part of the evaluation of this project, trainee teachers shared that the most effective pedagogical solutions had been various practically oriented webinars, working in small groups using different tools, and both real-time and asynchronous online guidance and feedback. In addition, learning design and their insights into new implementation methods was something that remained significant during each stage of the project.

Evaluating this project throughout the final analysis like a colloquy where even Dr. Mario Chavez Campos joined us, was part of this experience; there everyone could reflect on the fact that different educational fields were also challenged during COVID-19, transitioning to remote teaching and learning was a double challenge for all Normal Schools. As the conversation and discussion continues during our post-pandemic era, it is clear that early-career teachers, trainee teachers or very experienced teachers all struggled in different ways but at the same time with the same commitment. The gift of this is teachers and teacher trainees all around our territory understand each other, that is what makes Normal Schools so special and important for our education. Teachers and future teachers share each other's ideas and face the fact that schools, local administrators, principals, and government play

a key role in helping teachers address these challenges, especially in schools where supportive working and study conditions are needed the most, like Normal Schools in our country.

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Peer-tutors program: A creative aid to multilevel groups at the Escuela Normal Rural “Miguel Hidalgo”

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Keywords: English as a second language, multilevel group strategies, leveling up group strategies, large groups, peer tutors.

Abstract

This work presents a peer tutoring program implemented by the English teachers at the Escuela Normal Rural Miguel Hidalgo (ENRMH) in Atequiza, Jalisco, Mexico, during the academic years 2019 to 2022 as a strategy to overcome the challenges associated with instructing large, multilevel groups. The majority of students at ENRMH commence their undergraduate studies with an A0 - A1 level of English proficiency, as per the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Navarro Núñez et al., 2019). However, a minority of students demonstrate higher English proficiency. The national curricular programs for Escuelas Normales prescribe a linear progression of English courses (Dirección General de Acreditación, Incorporación y Revalidación, 2022), potentially overlooking the varied learning pace and English proficiency of students. This oversight could impact the academic continuation of students struggling to reach a passing grade in the English courses, a meaningful and intrinsic process of language acquisition, and the ongoing enhancement of language skills, including for advanced-level speakers. To address the diverse language proficiency levels among ENRMH students, a peer tutoring strategy was implemented on a weekly basis during extracurricular hours over each semester. This paper collates valuable data

on the scope, benefits, challenges, and limitations of peer tutoring gathered through surveys and teachers' empirical experience. The findings of this study offer significant insights for language educators and academic program coordinators striving to facilitate the continuous progression of English language skills in multilevel groups through a collaborative scaffolding approach, particularly in Escuelas Normales.

Introduction

In 2018, the Estrategia Nacional de Inglés was launched in the Escuelas Normales in Mexico, intensifying the focus on English learning in the national curriculum (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2017). Despite being a national program, a degree of academic flexibility in implementing the English Program was granted to the recently hired English teachers, known as Formadores de Inglés C (FICs), considering the diverse contexts within the country's Escuelas Normales. The previous led to a varied implementation, with some institutions being able to separate students by levels of English proficiency while others were not.

Since their recruitment, FICs have faced challenges working with large multilevel groups in the Escuela Normal Rural Miguel Hidalgo (ENRMH). The high student-to-teacher ratio (approximately 600 students for three teachers) and logistical constraints from the school administration made it impossible to rearrange students into groups based on English proficiency levels.

The student population at the ENRMH primarily comprises individuals from remote regional communities. Consequently, many students commence their studies with a limited English background and minimal exposure to the language in their daily lives. It is less likely to be present in their familiar context than in urban areas through standard context media (e.g., music, movies, texts). This lack of exposure, coupled with a perceived reluctance to learn the language, often attributed to the inability to see a direct benefit in their daily lives, complicates meaningful English language development.

A unique feature of Mexico's Rural Normal Schools in Mexico is their robust student committee, characterized by significant political engagement and activity. However, this often leads to class suspensions due to political activities, resulting in a significant loss of 40 to 50% of the scheduled classes per semester.

These challenges, combined with the restrictive Control Escolar rules that offer limited opportunities for students who fail the subject, create a snowball effect on those who fall behind. To address these issues, the FICs at ENRMH implemented an effective initiative launched in late 2019, a tutorship program designed to leverage the benefits of multi-level groups. Interestingly, the tutors were not teachers but students with advanced English proficiency levels, fostering a supportive learning environment of peers helping peers.

Literature Review

In the realm of education, teachers frequently grapple with numerous challenges and obstacles to suit students' learning needs. One particular and often found challenge is the task of instructing a multilevel class. This undertaking presents a series of complexities within the context of teaching English, as teachers must adeptly navigate a diverse group of students, each with varying levels of proficiency, motivation, unique interests, and prior experiences.

Jones (2007) posits that every class is inherently multileveled or mixed-ability. Even in instances where students have consistently studied together, inevitable disparities in language proficiency and knowledge retention arise. Students bring their unique personalities, strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles to the class, leading to varied abilities in reading, speaking, or listening. Bremner (2008) further elaborates on this concept, describing a mixed-ability class as one where students not only display a range of abilities but also exhibit different learning styles and preferences.

Ur (1996) identifies nineteen factors contributing to the differentiation of students' abilities, including language learning ability, language knowledge, cultural background, learning style, attitude to the language, mother tongue, intelligence,

world knowledge, learning experience, knowledge of other languages, age or maturity, gender, personality, confidence, motivation, interest, independence, self-discipline, and educational level. Nonetheless, while there is an inherent mixture of abilities in most classrooms, teaching can become exceedingly challenging when a class is pronouncedly heterogeneous. Hence, it becomes imperative to formulate innovative ideas and strategies to enhance the effectiveness of the teaching process (Ur, 1996).

On the other hand, several authors disclaim that teaching large classes at the tertiary level presents specific problems for staff and students alike, often leading to less effective teaching and learning (Mulryan-Kyne, 2010; Bahanshal, 2013; Lipinge, 2013). Large class sizes have become increasingly common at universities, particularly at the undergraduate level, given the high demand for higher education and the global trend of educational expansion (Mulryan-Kyne, 2010).

Peer Tutoring

The concept of peer tutoring, while not a novel idea, continues to hold relevance in contemporary educational discourse. Hott and Walker (2012, para. 2) define peer tutoring as “a flexible, peer-mediated strategy that involves students serving as academic tutors and tutees”. According to the authors, this typically involves pairing a higher-performing student with a lower-performing student to revise and construct critical academic learning.

Historically, the roots of peer tutoring can be traced back to the times of Aristotle. However, it was not until the late 18th century that the concept was theorized by Andrew Bell. Bell’s theory emerged from his observation of two Indian children teaching alphabets to each other by writing on sand (Srivastava & Rashid, 2018). Since this pivotal moment, the practice of peer tutoring has been extensively explored within classroom settings, underscoring its enduring relevance in the field of education.

Project Overview

The project described in this work focuses on the provision of tutorships as an extracurricular activity for students experiencing difficulties in language learning. The tutors are students who have demonstrated advanced language skills. As mentioned in the previous section, it has been observed that students commencing their Bachelor's degree at ENRMH who demonstrate an advanced level of English proficiency often lack opportunities to further enhance their English skills in class. This is due to the nature of the multilevel classes and the sequentiality established in the national curricula, where the first semester of English commences from A0, or basic communication basis.

Additionally, it has been detected that the majority of students starting their studies at the ENRMH are at levels A0-A1 according to the CEFR. By structuring this tutoring program, students at advanced levels of English can practice and enhance their language skills while simultaneously assisting students who are struggling with the subject to upgrade their English language skills.

Throughout the project's duration, a total of 10 advanced students have served as peer tutors, benefiting approximately 150 students who were experiencing difficulties in the subject and engaging three FICs in the coordination of the program. This project underscores the potential of peer tutoring as a strategy to enhance language learning in an academic setting.

Selection of Tutors

Tutors are identified using a multifaceted approach. The Oxford Placement Test, conducted at the commencement of each semester, serves as a primary tool for identification, supplemented by an evaluation of their classroom performance. It is not uncommon for students to already possess a language certification, either acquired prior to their school entrance or during their academic journey. Such certifications are naturally considered during the selection process.

However, while essential, English proficiency and language certification are not the sole determinants in the selection process. The students' willingness and motivation to participate in the program are deemed equally important. Furthermore, their attitude towards assisting others, their level of class participation, commitment, and extroversion are also taken into account. This comprehensive selection process ensures the identification of tutors who are not only proficient in the language but also committed to the ethos of the tutoring program.

The tutees

Tutees, or students who require tutorship, are identified at the onset of each semester. The identification process involves a comprehensive evaluation of their Oxford Placement Test results, academic grades, and performance in the preceding semester. Given the limited availability of slots in the program, it is crucial to effectively select students who stand to gain the most from the tutorship.

To facilitate this, open and consistent communication among teachers is deemed essential. The constant communication aids in distinguishing students who are grappling with learning difficulties from those facing issues related to attendance or lack of interest. Consequently, this ensures that the program's resources are optimally allocated to students who genuinely require and can significantly benefit from the tutorship.

The tutorship sessions

Upon the selection of tutors and tutees, the tutorship sessions are set in motion. Each tutor is responsible for a group of 10 to 15 students, segregated based on their academic grades or semesters. Typically, one or two groups are formed per semester to cater to the students, although there have been instances where up to three groups per semester have been established.

These tutorship sessions are conducted weekly, lasting for two hours, and are held outside of regular school hours on the school premises. Attendance is recorded, and while students are encouraged to participate, their attendance is not mandatory.

Teachers play a pivotal role in preparing the tutors through additional sessions and providing them with resources such as board games, readings, and worksheets for use during the tutorships. It is crucial to note that these tutoring sessions do not serve as substitutes for English classes or lectures. Instead, they provide a platform where tutors can offer advice to their peers based on their knowledge of specific questions and facilitate the practice of English skills through dynamic activities of English practice.

Incentives for Participation

Tutors are rewarded with social service hours, a requirement for every student at the ENRMH. These hours are negotiated with the relevant office, providing a significant incentive for participation. In addition to fulfilling their social service requirement, the program also offers tutors an opportunity to enhance their language skills.

For tutees, the program requires a conscious awareness of their difficulties in language learning and their own academic performance. In certain instances, under particular circumstances, a student passes the subject only with the commitment of attending tutorships the following semester. This arrangement underscores the program's role in promoting opportunities for academic success and language proficiency among students.

Results

The program has proven effective over five semesters. Advanced students chosen as tutors generally exhibit high motivation levels and report enhanced language and teaching skills. Concurrently, tutees demonstrate progress and express satisfaction with the program.

To assess the program's effectiveness, an online survey was conducted at the end of each semester throughout the five semesters for both tutors and tutees. The survey for tutees assessed their perceptions on three main aspects: the program's most helpful areas, the skills developed, and the reasons they believe the

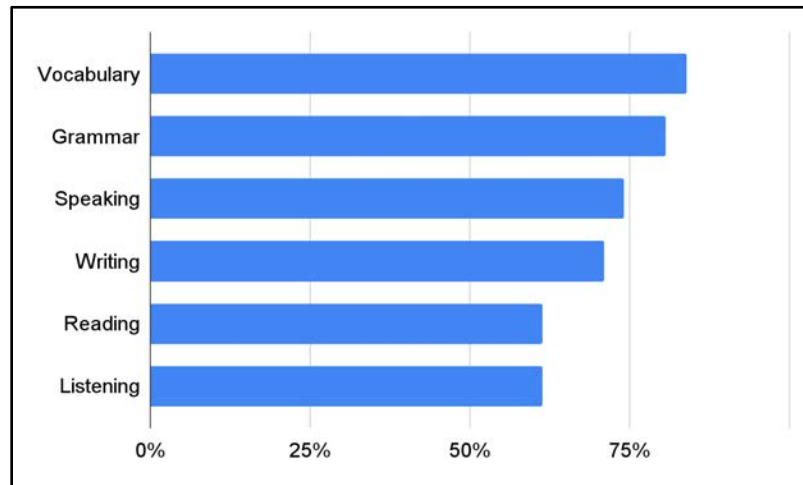
program helped them develop these skills. For tutors, the survey examined whether the program aided in developing their study, language, and teaching skills and the degree of support this program represented. The survey comprised a series of statements where students indicated their level of agreement on a scale from 1 (strong disagreement) to 5 (strong agreement).

The survey results explained below reflect the perceptions of 8 out of the 10 tutors and 60 out of approximately 150 selected tutees. It is worth mentioning that only the students who regularly attended the sessions were selected to answer the survey, and the participation of both tutors and tutees was voluntary; no students were excluded arbitrarily.

The survey responses indicate that tutors experienced skill enhancement in the three assessed areas. In the area of language skills, 87.5% of the students strongly agreed that the program enabled them to apply their previously acquired skills, and 100% agreed or strongly agreed that the program encouraged their individual pursuit of language skill improvement. Figure 1 presents the perceived level of development for each language skill in descending order. To assess this perception, students rated their development of each skill on a scale from 0 (no development) to 4 (most development). The displayed percentages were calculated by assigning 100% to the maximum possible value for each skill, i.e., if all surveyed students assigned a 4 (maximum possible value) to that skill. Tutors reported vocabulary increase as the top developed skill, but they also noted strengthening in all their English skills.

Figure 1

Language skills developed the most during the program, according to tutors

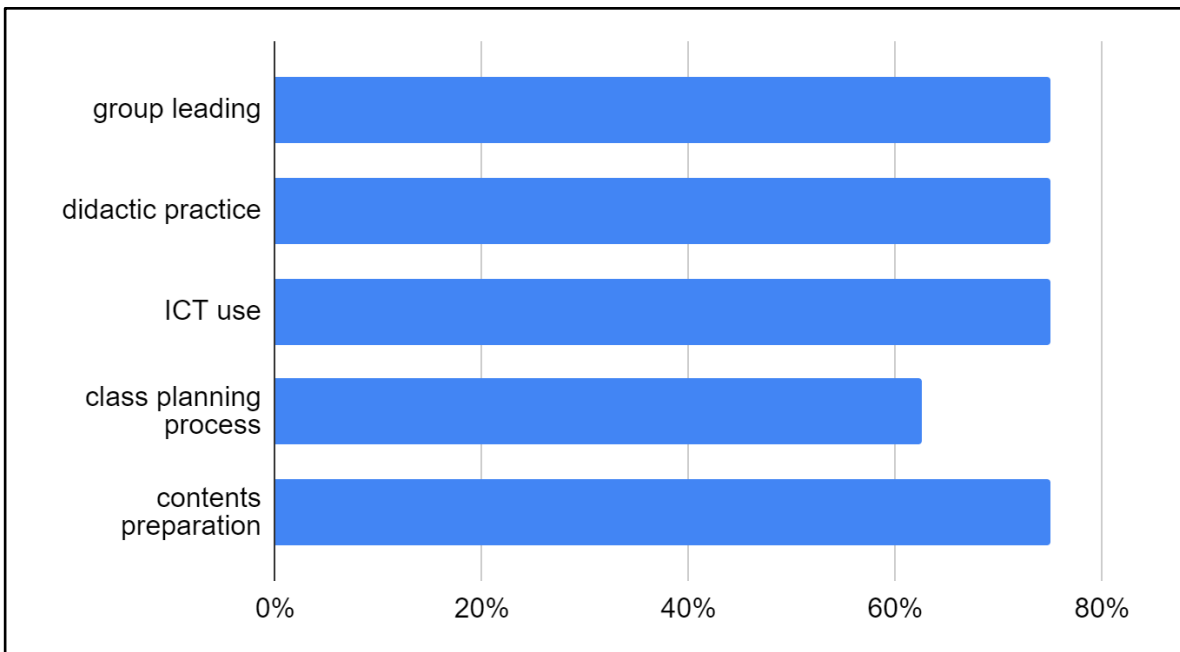


Note. The percentages were calculated from a scale of the level of development reported by the tutors. Students were asked to rate 0 to 4 the development of each skill, with zero meaning no development, and four the skill developed the most during the program.

Additionally, the tutors developed didactic and pedagogic skills, which are crucial for their professional experience as they are preparing to become primary and preschool teachers. Figure 2 explicitly illustrates the teaching areas where the tutors reported significant development from participating in the program. The areas assessed in the survey included group leading, didactic practices, ICT use, class planning process, and content preparation. The tutors rated the degree to which the program helped develop each area on a scale from 0 (no helpful) to 4 (significantly helpful). The percentages were calculated by assigning 100% to the maximum possible value for each area, ergo if all of the students surveyed were assigning it a 4 (maximum possible value).

Figure 2

Percentage of tutors reporting much help by the program in the areas displayed



Note. The percentages were calculated from a scale of level of agreement reported by the tutors answering the survey.

Conversely, regular program attendees also expressed satisfaction with their progress and the English teachers observed an improvement in class performance. According to observations, informal interviews, and a final survey, most of the program's success is attributed to working in small groups with classmates of the same level. Students have reported feeling more confident in expressing their questions to a peer student rather than to the teacher in front of the entire class. As a result, they have grown more confident in their learning abilities. Furthermore, they have become more responsible for their learning process and have taken a more active role in it. Table 1 provides a detailed explanation of this information.

Table 1*Percentage of tutored students agreeing with the statements*

	Level of agreement, being 5 strongly agreement and 1 strongly disagreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
Participating in the program helped me to understand better the topics in class	55%	35%	10%		
The extra contact time with English allowed me to become more familiarized with it	55%	30%	10%	5%	
After participating in the program, I feel more confident in expressing myself in English	20%	40%	35%	5%	
I felt more confident expressing my questions to a peer tutor than to a teacher	45%	35%	10%	10%	
I felt more confident since my classmates were at the same level as myself	65%	25%	10%		
Working in a small group allowed me to understand better the topics	85%	10%	5%		
Participating in the program increased my interest in developing my language skills on my own.	45%	45%	10%		

Conclusions

The Peer Tutorship Program at ENRMH has proven to be a valuable tool in addressing the challenges of multilevel classes. It has provided students with opportunities to improve their language skills, particularly those who face challenges due to large class sizes and the need for more individualized attention. The authors anticipate that this program could be successfully replicated in other higher education institutions facing similar challenges.

Key aspects contributing to the program's success have been identified throughout its course. The selection of tutors is crucial, with successful tutors displaying commitment, outgoingness, self-direction, excellent communication skills, and didactic and pedagogical skills. These attributes ensure steady progress and engagement of tutees through individualized scaffolding. Autonomy and proactivity

are required as tutoring sessions occur outside teachers' school hours, and technical or logistical unforeseen situations may arise.

Effective communication between the tutor and the teacher is vital for the program's smooth operation. To ensure this, teachers must closely monitor tutors. Regular checks on the attendance list and occasional visits to the sessions, especially at the beginning, provide insights into the program's progress and motivate tutors by recognizing their efforts. Tutors should feel supported and reassured that assistance is available should difficulties arise.

The selection of tutees is of equal importance. It has been observed that students' attendance at tutoring sessions tends to decrease as the semester progresses and the workload of other subjects increases. Some students even cease attending, as the sessions are free and attendance is not mandatory. This results in wasted effort and time by the teachers and tutors. Therefore, a thorough selection of committed students can help prevent unnecessary work.

In addition to the commitment to attend, students selected to attend the tutorship sessions need to demonstrate an acceptable degree of autonomy. Tutors are not teachers, and teachers must ensure tutees understand this and encourage them to attend sessions with specific questions or topics to facilitate effective work.

Despite these considerations, student attendance and commitment remain the main challenges for the Peer Tutorship Program at ENRMH. A potential opportunity for further research would be integrating drop-off tutees in the sample selection. This would provide valuable information to enhance the Peer Tutorship Program considering finding a solution to boost the tutee's engagement and commitment to make use of this valuable resource has not been found.

From an administrative perspective, the program has provided valuable tools to address challenges arising from school regulations, national curricula, and the academic calendar. It has contributed to a decrease in the rate of students failing the subject and has facilitated fair decisions about providing students with opportunities to improve their evaluation results.

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The use of ICT in the English teaching program for Normal Education university students in the frame of the pandemic 2020.

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Abstract

This work aims to show how English classes were developed for online classes during the 2020 pandemic with 250 2nd and 3rd-grade Benemérita Escuela Nacional de Maestros (BENM) students, confronting the necessity of learning and teaching through a computer in a completely different way of education.

Applying diverse learning techniques to strengthen the language's four abilities and developing exercises with a ludic knowledge strategy allows the students to reach the free production and use of the language in different contexts. The process of introducing a new language requires being aware of all the socio-cultural approaches that surround the language used to conceptualize it in different situations of real life, independently of whether the interlocutor is a native speaker or not.

The lessons were designed using two specific frameworks: Presentation—Practice and Production (PPP) and Pre-While-Post, and they used diverse educational tools applied to technology. The applied strategies help English teachers accomplish the syllabus. Still, they help students acquire English language skills through innovative and technological methods and discover other ways to learn English. They also help teachers be accurate monitors in the learning process, who help provide information to students for their comprehension.

Even when the pandemic 2020 was a real challenge for students and teachers in México and worldwide, this project helped students understand and apply grammatical structures, pronunciation, and free language production at the desired English level at the end of the course.

Key Words: Language abilities, technological tools, ludic teaching, and learning

Introduction

As known, human beings use language to achieve social interaction to communicate in specific contexts, which is why, as teachers, it is necessary to guide our students through learning processes where, in addition to knowing the ways and language functions, use them in a contextualized way plus negotiating meanings of it.

The Benemérita Escuela Nacional de Maestros (BENM) is part of the Normalist teaching public system, which focuses on primary education, which means that we guide our students to know how to teach at that basic level. The program that we follow does not consider English teaching as part of the general program for teachers to teach; it is considered the general knowledge that the students need in their professional egress profile, which means that, like teachers' trainers, we do not teach a methodology for teaching. Still, we must help the students reach the required B2- English level.

The project mentioned in this work was developed with the teachers, trainees, and students of the bachelor's degree in basic education of the Benemérita Escuela Nacional de Maestros, second and third grade, attending a total of 250 students during the 2019-2020 academic period, and developed online of the world pandemic.

Considering that English is a lingua franca used worldwide as a medium, it is necessary to understand various ways to communicate the correct ideas with respect and awareness of the interlocutor's culture. Excellent grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation are possible without getting the meaning across.

The 2012 curriculum course purpose is to obtain a B2 high level according to the European Common Framework, which implies a basic knowledge of the language that allows the students to communicate orally and write easily in a familiar

context close to their environment, speaking about their occupations, interests, and activities, likes, personal profile, costumes, and daily life (SEP, 2012a).

The curriculum points out three spheres to develop knowledge: learning the language, about the language, and through the language. These spheres refer to global knowledge that includes all the language aspects, the understanding of the linguistics structures, the development of the speaker, and its use in different contexts.

The present academic intervention considers the aspects described above. It focuses on developing the four English language abilities with the design of class activities set up during the first period of the pandemic in Mexico (March to July 2020), implementing ten sessions and 20 hrs. total of practical homeschooling work.

The designed activities were in an online context, meaning the students worked out the activities using technological tools while staying at home. One of the primary objectives of the intervention was to make the learning ludic and didactic, using ICT not only as a communication medium but also as a learning tool.

The sessions planned include various activities that contextualize the learning subject, provide semi-control, and allow free practice and production. The plans include using diverse ICT as learning tools that lead the students through a meaningful understanding of the topics. The activities conveyed the activation of their previous knowledge, understanding of the meanings of words and phrases, their use in different contexts, and their relation to other cultures and their own. The use of ICT for education during the pandemic was tough. Hence, the main objective of this project was to develop meaningful strategies with ludic technological tools and lead us to research and discover the best way to teach and learn, considering the specific characteristics of our students.

It is possible to observe the educational and ludic application of the intervention not only in the technological tools themselves but in the combination of activities and topics to reach an understanding and use of the language. This guides the student using diverse learning strategies such as images, audio, video recordings, pre-recorded video classes, and platforms such as Google Classroom,

Kahoot, and Lyrics training. These means led the students to use technology to make their productions, like audio and video recordings, playing games, singing songs, and applying the learned knowledge.

Theoretical Foundations

It is essential to know the theoretical foundations of second language acquisition to understand why it is relevant to introduce ludic techniques to the teaching-learning process. Knowing the learning theories associated with a method at a level of approach may emphasize the conditions that need to be met to activate the learning processes. Knowing the second language learning theories provides the basis for teaching philosophy. Based on Richards and Rogers (2006), we analyzed some of the approaches and methods in language teaching that we believe are relevant to this work, some of which are still in use.

The foundations of the teaching language methods can be found in the XVIII and XIX centuries with the Grammar-Translation Method, which is based on the assimilation of grammatical rules, vocabulary, and translation exercises by analyzing the components of the second language and looking for the similarities in the mother tongue and these methods take us through Chomsky saying that linguistic competence as an innate ability of the human being, and the communicative language teaching approach as a goal to cover the needs of communications. Also, Stephen D. Krashen, 1981, established the Monitor model of second language development and built the method of the Natural Approach.

These knowledge models show the need to move from behaviorism to constructivist teaching methodologies. This means that the teacher's role has had to change, becoming a negotiator and facilitator of meaning. The teacher must seek the students' autonomy and responsibility regarding their knowledge and be aware of the process, helping them notice their competencies, weaknesses, and strengths.

The curriculum and programs emphasize communicative competence rather than linguistic competencies. The approach to teaching English focuses on language

as a communication element (Communicative Language Teaching), which is focused on using language most appropriately in specific contexts, beyond grammar knowledge, emphasizing the continuous use of language for practical and communicative purposes.

Focusing on learning in real contexts is essential for students to understand its use and build their skills in known environments and situations. The students are sought to be autonomous, with elements that allow them to identify and strengthen their learning style, thereby breaking the fear of interacting in another language inside and outside the classroom.

The English teachers' and students' role

The teaching role becomes fundamental in the CLT since it must be a facilitator with the sufficient capacity to encourage students to construct meanings through original, interactive, and playful communicative interactions while at the same time granting their students freedom to monitor their performance, ensuring that the student's role is that of a communicator in himself, which implies cooperating, collaborating and being permanently active and attentive to his learning process (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

The author describes a Concrete Experience in the moment when the student uses his previous learning in the class, not only about the language but of the world around him and of the whole context that makes him an individual, which is necessary for the teacher to use for the student to reproduce with their classmates to begin the process of social construction.

According to the initial diagnosis, most BENM students arrive knowing the basic A1 level of English. The Centro de Lenguas Extranjeras (CELEX) is the department in charge of organizing the English classes and classifying the students by applying an initial exam to organize the groups according to their level of English knowledge.

The English master's program 2012, published by the SEP, is organized by units. This course starts in the second year of four and lasts the professional preparation to be a primary school teacher. The goal is to obtain the A1 level in the first six months and B2 at the end of the career, following the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) standards (SEP, 2012a).

According to the 2012 program, this curriculum space provides normalist students with the necessary tools to develop their communicative competence in the English area. It suggests English teaching through systems work (grammatical structures and functions, vocabulary, and phonetics) and skills of the language (reading and listening comprehension, writing, and oral expression).

The skills the plan (SEP, 2012b) and program mention guide the trainers' English teaching style in their classes. The skills affirmed to be developed by the students applying to this program are:

- Develop different learning strategies for a second language (cognitive, mnemonic, compensation, affective, social, and metacognitive).
- Use the technological resources and information sources available in English to stay updated concerning the various disciplinary areas and training fields involved in their teaching work.
- Critically analyze the cognitive and social impact of learning a foreign language in the school environment.

Competences of the final profile to which this course contributes:

- Apply communication skills in various contexts.
- Develop their communication skills to acquire new languages.
- Use a second language to communicate.
- Apply information and communication technologies.
- Participate in work communities and collaborative networks by technology.

On the one hand, as English teachers of a normal public school, we must manage an essential issue, which is the concept of learning a second language, specifically

the English language, which is considered invasive to the culture for those who do not know it. The perception of a second language as not indispensable for a career and that the students would not use it to teach it to their classmates limits the community's attitude towards the possibilities that the English language provides.

The program provided us as trainers with general guidelines for course development and suggested that we work with the fundamentals of Social Constructivism and Learning by Experience, considering that the course's purpose is to promote the student's development of communicative skills in English.

In Social Constructivism, we found Vygotsky (1978 in Randall & Thornton, 2001) who mentioned that learning is a process built through social interaction. On the cultural level, some social concepts and symbols become learning and development tools that the individual appropriates and assimilates, transforming them into ideas. The individual acquires all these tools through mediated experience that involves dialogue with people, acquiring experiences that the student requires. In this way, the individual progresses through various learning states. Mediated experience requires a scaffolding process from the cognitive, affective, and social perspectives. This mediation favors transit in the Zone of Next / Potential (DGESPE, 2012).

Social constructivism perceives the individual as a social entity participating in a learning community, so social practices carry a significant burden on the coursework. Working within the context and promoting interaction in pairs, groups, and cooperative work is vital for the students to develop. This kind of work implies that students and teachers assume various roles and become learning co-builders.

According to these two theoretical foundations, which generally guide the degree plan and study programs, it is recommended for English trainers to include in-class items such as:

- Students learn by discovery, which implies providing the student with opportunities to see the linguistic models in a specific context through a text generator. The student extracts the signifiers through context and is then invited to practice opportunities in context.

- Task-Based Learning TBL Task-Based Learning: When discussing a pedagogical application that adapts to the teaching criteria of English in basic education, it is also recommended to follow the project-based method.
- Using authentic materials during the course is essential for this pedagogical approach. It refers to authentic materials as spoken or written language produced during genuine communication, not necessarily written, with specific educational purposes. (Nunan, 1994)

The evaluation determined the students' progress according to their initial domain of the language. This development focused primarily on the student's communication effectiveness, not the correct structure, vocabulary, or number of correct answers.

Self-assessment and self-reflection are encouraged to help students recognize their mistakes and facilitate self-correction. Peer observations were also constructive in fostering a collaborative learning environment.

The class plan

The designed lesson plan was based on the current program 2012 for A2 and B1 levels of the bachelor's degree in basic education (SEP, 2012b). The project planning included ten sessions, 20 hrs. total, with second and third-grade students. The lessons were focused on grammar, speaking, listening, writing, reading, and vocabulary using the Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) framework for speaking and writing and the Pre/ While / Post framework for reading and listening skills, including grammar and vocabulary exercises.

The aims of the project were:

- To create the necessary conditions to generate distance learning environments according to student's needs in the global pandemic.
- To encourage students to learn, adapt, and implement ICT in their learning process using the Google Classroom platform as a digital medium to make up a portfolio.

- To develop productive and receptive skills in a distance way, using diverse digital material and practice with ludic and technological didactic resources.
- To interact with intercultural characteristics and talk about their context in the provided activities.
- To encourage students to talk about their context, experiences, feelings, and thoughts in a second language.

The designed lesson plans are based on the current program 2012 for A2 and B1 levels of the bachelor's degree in basic education (SEP 2012b). The designed lessons used two specific frameworks. The first one is Presentation- Practice and Production. This framework is often used when grammar and vocabulary are taught. It is helpful because it gives the teacher a guide for developing the students' activities. One of the particularities of this framework is that it allows a more extensive description of the lesson plan and leads the students through the general context of the topic to the lesson-free production practice. This framework focuses on grammar, speaking, listening, writing, reading, and vocabulary. One disadvantage of this framework is that the activities could be extended and sometimes boring for the students. That is the reason sometimes the framework steps were changed.

The second framework used is the Pre-While-Post for listening, reading, writing, and speaking activities. This framework encourages the students to use authentic material like audio or text as the context of the topic and use the content to make free productions.

With these materials and the frameworks, it was possible to introduce the intercultural approach to the topics, leading them to practice writing and speaking as free production.

Presentation, Practice, Production PPP

1. **Lead in:** To activate previous knowledge, set the context, and engage students. Activate Schemata -previous knowledge-

2. **Presentation meaning:** To give Ss a chance to focus on the meaning of the target language, and the teacher can check their understanding.
3. **Form:** To help Ss notice and focus on the grammatical form of the words
4. **Pronunciation:** To help Ss identify pronunciation features of the phrases and practice them in a controlled way.
5. **Practice and production:** To help the Ss to practice grammar and vocabulary.

Pre/ While / Post

1. **Lead in/ context setting:** To activate previous knowledge describing characteristics of people and drill vocabulary.
2. **Listening for gist:** To develop listening skills in the context of personal information.
3. **Listening for specific information:** Listen intensely for detailed information.
4. **Post listening:** Ss establish the comprehension level of the information.

The students developed listening, reading, writing, speaking skills, grammar, and vocabulary knowledge during the first three lessons. During the lessons, three readings were used as the focus of the activities. These writing and listening stories gave the students a specific intercultural context, which provided an understanding of the grammar structures and the verbal tense learned in the pre-recorded video classes. The developed control exercises focused on grammatical structures, the understanding of tense verb topics, and the development of communicative skills in free production. The recreational part and ICT use of the session was making audio records and videos related to their context, showing their strengths and weaknesses when using the language.

The unit's lessons four to eight were developed by the students exercising listening and writing skills, using various videos where stories and different played games are shown in a specific intercultural context and related to their own. The videos and ludic activities were related to free production writing, where students

could understand the topic, strengthen their communicative skills to express their ideas systematically and manage the learned topic in a real context. The writing sentences activities allowed free practice, where the students could understand and show their ability to describe things, actions, persons, or situations in daily life.

In the last two lessons, students developed two projects. The first focused on integrating the acquired knowledge in a text that described previously selected topics of their preference. In the text, the students described what they loved the most in life, integrating the intercultural component based on the student's ability to talk about their feelings and thoughts in specific situations and contexts where they live or have experienced; then, students made slides presentation where they set out their production in free speaking practice, explaining the chosen topic. The project led the students through language understanding and developing activities that allowed them to use the four abilities of the language to tell personal experiences.

The Lyrics Training Project used the platform of the same name, <https://es.lyricstraining.com/en>, as a digital tool for strengthening linguistic skills in the additional English language, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, reading, and listening. The students could strengthen their language skills using the Karaoke or practice resources that the platform provides. The planning led students to practice the four language skills through singing as a ludic activity.

After finishing the lessons, the students could write texts that exposed their ideas and feelings in order and coherently, relating to intercultural aspects, relating and describing their contexts with another, and speaking production, expressing more confidence and fluency when talking in public.

The ludic didactic approach is understood as the continuous action and production of the students during the learning process through various fun, interactive, and productive activities. It involves letting work and performance into the learner and permitting them to show the acquired language ability confidentially and autonomously of their knowledge. (Madrid y MacLaren, 1996) The students perform multiple activities that encourage them to produce the language, most of all

when this activity leads them to make personal creations that involve their preferences.

Students were evaluated using a rubric (Tobón, 2005), which described three levels of development and each indicator according to the expected performance acquired level.

This kind of evaluation instrument allowed us teachers to provide feedback during all the learning processes and conduce to students' reflections about their performance in each evaluating skill or required product.

It was notorious at the end of the implementation plan that the level of performance in the writing and speaking skills was higher than at the beginning; in the texts and audio records, the students made fewer mistakes than at the beginning, and there was an improvement in pronunciation. Also, the ludic activities permit them to engage with the subject of the lessons and involve personal topics to show their preferences and likes, besides interacting with their classmates differently when they sing or play games.

The use of ICT permits everyone to continue the learning process during the pandemic, learn different, personal, and autonomous ways of learning, and look for solutions to submit their activities.

In the pandemic frame, it was urgent to implement ICT as the medium for teaching and learning how to develop competencies, abilities, and skills through useful ludic technological tools and didactic methods; this was challenging for teachers and for the students we attended. However, it enriched the teaching practice of developing teaching-learning strategies, considering the specific needs and characteristics of the learners.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to reconsider how to implement the English lessons using technological resources, taking into account the students' abilities and possibilities in this regard.

A total of 250 students attended academically using the Classroom platform, through which they accessed the teaching resources and uploaded the activities scheduled through the same platform.

The professional teaching style is intended to look for fun, a different way of teaching in the classroom, with all the students' interaction and didactic sequences that involve board games, songs, and role-playing games, among other technological tools.

The objective was to cover the course program, get students to continue learning new topics, practice them, and identify their use in everyday intercultural relationships using language in various situations by using the following ludic technological resources, strategies, and virtual tools implicit in the lesson plans that were developed by the students.

1. Virtual classes in the Google Classroom platform.
2. Pre-recorded video classes.
3. Digital grammar and reading exercises.
4. Video recording of daily life practices.
5. Audio recording speaking and listening practices.
6. Playing practices with YouTube videos.
7. Video intercultural approach.
8. Kahoot playing practices.
9. Ludic singing practice with Lyrics Training Platform.

Also, as a complementary integration skills evaluation element, there were developed two final projects, where the students show the four abilities of the language:

Project 1. "What I love"

This project aims to practice verb tenses and elements of the language we are working on during the semester through the free written and oral production and presentation of a specific topic.

The students were free to choose the topic they liked most in life and were passionate about. For example, they could discuss when they like it, why they want it, its characteristics, how it is done (if so), who is involved, or with whom they do it.

Project 2. Lyrics Training

This project uses the same platform, <https://es.lyricstraining.com/en>, as a digital tool for strengthening and developing linguistic skills such as pronunciation, vocabulary, reading, and listening through teamwork. This final project using ICT focused on identifying and using vocabulary and common expression through a music platform. The sequence of activities guided the students to identify and use the previous tenses, vocabulary, and expressions in a song and practice listening, reading, writing, speaking, and pronunciation while singing.

The planned activities focus on developing different skills through ludic activities, where the students' production allows them to use the language in different contexts inside the classroom during control, semi-control, and free activities. Also, students developed the skills to reflect and relate, interpret a document or event from other parts of the world, explain and connect it to documents from their own, develop social and linguistic skills, and break the fear of talking in public.

The references to assess the learning of a second language at all educational levels are that students:

- Use the foreign language to express ideas and thoughts confidently and efficiently towards people from other cultures.
- Use the foreign language to organize thought and discourse; critically analyze and solve problems; and participate in various exchanges and cultural expressions of their own and other countries.
- Use the foreign language to interact creatively and ethically, with awareness and empathy with others' perspectives and feelings.
- Recognize the English language as a builder of knowledge, a sharper identity, and a tool for regulating behavior, experience, and values. Reflect on

language and culture to interpret and produce meaning in linguistic and cultural exchanges.

According to national and international standards, the educational model establishes the English proficiency and efficiency levels defined by the levels, descriptors, and scales in two referential frames:

- The national reference framework, developed by the SEP, offers descriptive scales of proficiency and competence in English and its equivalences with the Council of Europe's international rankings.
- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Learning, Teaching, Evaluation, developed by the Council of Europe and the Association of Language Evaluators in Europe, which presents a set of descriptive scales of proficiency and competence levels to unify guidelines for language learning and teaching.

According to the competency model, the rubric helps observe and follow language skills development. This type of evaluation instrument shows the expectations to be achieved and their different degrees of achievement. It allows us to analyze the tasks that comprise the competencies and shares the criteria to evaluate progress with continuous and formative evaluation from the beginning and throughout the learning process. (Masmitja Josep Alsina, 2013)

The course programs of the 2012 curriculum of the normalist bachelor's degree in basic education (SEP, 2012b) propose the communicative method of language teaching. The assessment of three types promoted:

1. Summative evaluation: Midterm and end-of-course exams
2. Formative evaluation: Through the portfolio of evidence and continuous evaluation within the class.
3. "Illuminative" evaluation or self-evaluation: Through self-reflection exercises such as checklists and self-assessment rubrics included in portfolios.

According to the competencies approach established in the current plans and programs, a rubric allows the dissection of complex tasks, such as the features and competencies of the graduation profile, into more straightforward tasks distributed gradually and operationally.

The designed evaluation tools allowed the student's assessment learning process during the semester, but, most of all, allowed them to be aware of their development, and included developing skills level and specific characteristics of each topic and skill.

The students knew these evaluation tools since the beginning of the semester, and I discussed with them to let them know what the required development was. When the pandemic began, the Google Classroom platform and technological tools were included in the rubric, taking them as knowledge to be developed.

This evaluation instrument graded each practice, permitting a closer numeric grade to the student's development. This grade helped to decide the students' acquired level of English language knowledge and their level at the next academic year.

A total of 250 students worked on the assigned task during six weeks of virtual classes. The development of the four skills that students were working on and practicing through the different topics, exercises, and practices grew over time, and it was notorious for strengthening the work skills.

It was challenging to organize the topics and virtual classes and keep them related to the ludic didactic objective, which was not standing at the beginning of this teaching project. However, we believed that the language productions the students developed were practical, and the ludic objective was accomplished.

Following the evaluation rubric, it was possible to establish if the objectives of the lessons were covered. Students' average is 75% - 85% of the accomplishment

of the tasks and 80% - 87% of the skills development according to the designed rubric in each implemented lesson plan.

The activities in the implemented plans allow the students to present and describe characteristics of their context and focus on grammar use and form of the verbs' tenses. During lessons 1 to 4, the students mistakenly used the tenses during the free practices. They were ashamed of their pronunciation, and it was difficult to elicit answers.

Plans 5 to 10 contained a variety of activities that focused on the four language skills to strengthen speaking and writing skills. The activities were delivered on time, and the students showed the right attitude when they wrote and recorded the videos and the audio using the language in their specific contexts.

The ludic use of the Kahoot and Lyrics Training technological platforms was an innovation in developing the class and learning facilitator tools. The students showed enthusiasm and effort in performing the activities in teamwork.

About implementing the Lyrics Training project, students learned how to use and manage the Letters platform by learning its features.

- Develop communicative competence through music and singing.
- Strengthen vocabulary using the Lyrics training platform in mode (writing and selection).
- Develop English language hearing skills in Karaoke mode using such a platform.

According to Byram's model (Byram, 1997), this implementation allows intercultural attitudes because it generates curiosity and openness about the place and the people in the given readings, and at the same time to learn about their own culture, sharing personal experiences, and the importance and meaning in Mexico about the topics. Nevertheless, the positive attitude and interest of students allowed this project to be successfully implemented beyond connectivity problems, and the

difficulty of the topics could have contrasted with the level and previous knowledge of the students.

As teachers, we faced uncertainty about implementing the lessons only using ICT, the number of students that could attend the virtual classrooms, and the technological issues students handled. Most of all, we wondered if the didactic strategies would help them reach the objective language level. At the end of the project, it was possible to realize how to manage class time using ICT and improve the classes with all these tools to achieve better teacher and student performance.

Conclusions

The different components of the curriculum applied, and the plan class for language teaching had to content the different components of the target culture and the kind of interactions that students and teachers had to develop intercultural competence. The class needed to be precise according to the students' and teachers' cultural characteristics to avoid the ethnocentrism, prejudices, and stereotypes that we commonly bring to the classroom.

Methodological approaches help implement diverse strategies in class and clarify the roles that teachers and students can play in understanding the target culture and fostering intercultural competence in the language classroom. The different roles of a teacher can be mixed to achieve the objectives depending on the students' characteristics and the purposes of the main topic of the class. This creates diverse knowledge environments that allow the students to recognize, explore, know, understand, and respect the similarities and differences between cultures.

As teachers, we need to examine diverse materials that allow the students to have the opportunity to reflect on their knowledge and the diverse ways to apply it by making them conscientious about their attitude, knowledge, and skills using the second language and confronting different situations. All this includes the evaluation tools as a dialectic instrument to strengthen the acquired knowledge. The ludic

activities seem like free productions that lead the students to be creative and to have confidence in the use of language by making relations with their contexts, cultures, beliefs, feelings, and thoughts. Joining the ICT use permits the students to enrich their knowledge with diversifying technological tools and, during the pandemic framework, allows us to continue teaching. English teaching practice must be strengthened. It needs to focus on intercultural competence as the main objective of the teaching, plus essential communication. Language must be seen as the key to opening the students' minds to a world of possibilities, even for their personal and professional lives.}

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The role of reflection in teacher education

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Introduction

Teacher education is a never-ending process, and while there are different stages of teacher education and different needs at each stage, there are some elements that play –or should always play– an important role in this process. One of those elements is *reflection*. Before jumping into the role of reflection in teacher education, it is important to establish what reflection is. The Cambridge Dictionary Online (n.d.) defines reflection as “careful thoughts.” Similarly, the Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries (n.d.) describe reflection as “careful thought about something, sometimes over a long period of time.” It can be noted then, that reflection requires thinking carefully about something, in this case, teaching.

But is it only *thinking* that reflection is about? According to Dewey (1933, as cited in Fennema, 2017), “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, constitute reflective thought” (para. 3). Thus, reflection requires thinking with the purpose of solving something, ordering one’s ideas, and connecting them to their predecessors. Additionally, reflection involves a consideration of the knowledge and beliefs that one has, as well as the arguments to back them up (Hatton & Smith, 1994). Therefore, it can be established that reflection is used with the purpose of solving a problem by linking one’s thoughts (solutions) to previous knowledge and beliefs. In the case of teachers, the problem to be solved would be something in their teaching practice.

In this paper, I will describe the role of reflection in teacher education. It is necessary to explain that for the purposes of this paper, teacher education refers not only to pre-service education, but to in-service teachers as well since they take part in continuous learning, as teachers should never stop educating themselves. First, I

will present a review of relevant literature in the topic, which will allow me to establish the value of reflection in the educational process of teachers, as well as some of the challenges which have been found in using reflection in teacher education. Following, I will provide a discussion on the topic. Finally, I will present my conclusions and state my own perspective about it.

Literature review

The value of reflection in teacher education

In the practice of teaching and of learning to teach, there are always things that go well and things which do not go according to plan. So, what happens when the latter occurs? Are teachers supposed to finish a lesson and carry on with the next one regardless of the outcomes, especially if they were not up to par? The answer to this question should be unequivocally “no”. Thus, it is important to find out why a lesson went a particular way: what worked, what did not work, and how to make changes for future improvement. It is for this purpose that reflection can come in handy for both pre-service teachers and in-service teachers.

Teachers and student teachers who practice reflection, who ask questions about their practice –either before, during, or after, have started a path towards learning which allows them to link knowledge to practice, and, consequently, to improve. Finlay (2008) explains that the use of reflection in teaching is “learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights of self and practice” (p. 1). She adds that what is sought after is “to recapture practice experiences and mull them over critically in order to gain new understandings and so improve future practice. This is understood as part of the process of life-long learning” (Finlay, 2008, p.1). Similarly, Tice (2004) states that reflective teaching leads to professional development and that this begins in the classroom.

According to Schmidt and Everett (2019), freedom of mind and action can only be fostered by critical thinking (or reflection) –which is (or must be) an educational aim. Furthermore, in explaining the value of reflective thinking as an educational aim, Dewey (1933) states that reflection “enables us to act in deliberate and intentional fashion to attain future objects or to come into command of what is

now distant and lacking... it converts action that is merely appetitive, blind, and impulsive into intelligent action” (p. 17). Hence, it is necessary that reflection be accompanied by action. Without action, reflection is no more than noticing what went right and what went wrong. In order for reflection to truly have an impact on teacher education –to turn into learning, teachers must do something with the information obtained from their reflection process.

So, what can be done with that information? According to Tice (2004), once enough information is obtained, teachers may think, talk, read, and ask about what they discovered. Doing this individually and with the help of others (colleagues, friends, superiors) might enhance the reflective process.

According to Wallace (1991), reflection can lead “to the conscious development of insights into knowing-in-action” (p. 13). Frequent reflection, consciously thinking about the teaching practice and how to improve it, and learning from and for the teaching practice, allows teachers to be able to reflect, not only after a lesson but during the lesson –which is essential in the teaching practice. Imagine not having the capability to switch up a planned activity gone awry, forcing your students (and yourself) to suffer through something that is clearly not working, only because you cannot think of something else, because you cannot evaluate the situation –preventing you from identifying what is not working and, based on your knowledge and beliefs, from making the necessary adjustments.

In this regard, Schön (1983) refers to *reflecting-in-action*, explaining that we think about what we are doing while doing it. He states that “when someone reflects in action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context” (p. 68). Thus, the teacher investigates what is not working and thinks of different scenarios, chooses a solution, and implements it. Afterwards, reflection can be resumed to analyze the results and find new solutions, should they be necessary.

Slade et al. (2019) point out that although the role of reflection has gained a lot of attention in the past decades, concepts such as *personal reflection*, *self-assessment*, and *reflective dialogue* have existed for centuries. As the role of

reflection has gained more value in teacher education, it has led to the reflective model or reflective teaching. Di Pardo Léon-Henri (n.d.) explains that:

Reflective teaching is a process whereby teachers reflect on their teaching practices in order to examine the overall effectiveness of their instructive approaches. Improvement or change in teaching methods may be required, depending on the outcome of this analytical process, which is based on critical reflection. (para. 2)

Di Pardo Léon-Henri (n.d.) adds that reflective teaching can be excellent for both novice and experienced teachers to improve their teaching practice. Additionally, Tice (2004) explains that reflective teaching leads to changes and improvements in our teaching and that it is a cyclical process. First, one must reflect and identify the areas of opportunity; next, one must implement the changes that were thought of. Then, the reflection process can start again to assess if such changes produced the desired improvement. This is what Schön (1983) referred to as *reflection-on-action*, going over what happened and critically analyzing the events and situations that occurred in order to learn from them and to look for solutions that can be implemented at a later time should something similar arise. It is relevant here to notice the difference between this (reflection-on-action) and reflection-in-action, which refers to thinking about/noticing something which is not quite working and doing something about it simultaneously. In Figure 1, you can see a representation of my understanding of how reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action coexist.

According to Dewey (1933), reflective thinking must be an educational aim because (1) it makes possible action with a conscious aim, (2) it makes possible systematic preparations and inventions, and (3) it enriches things with meanings. Slade et al. (2019) support these ideas with the following statement:

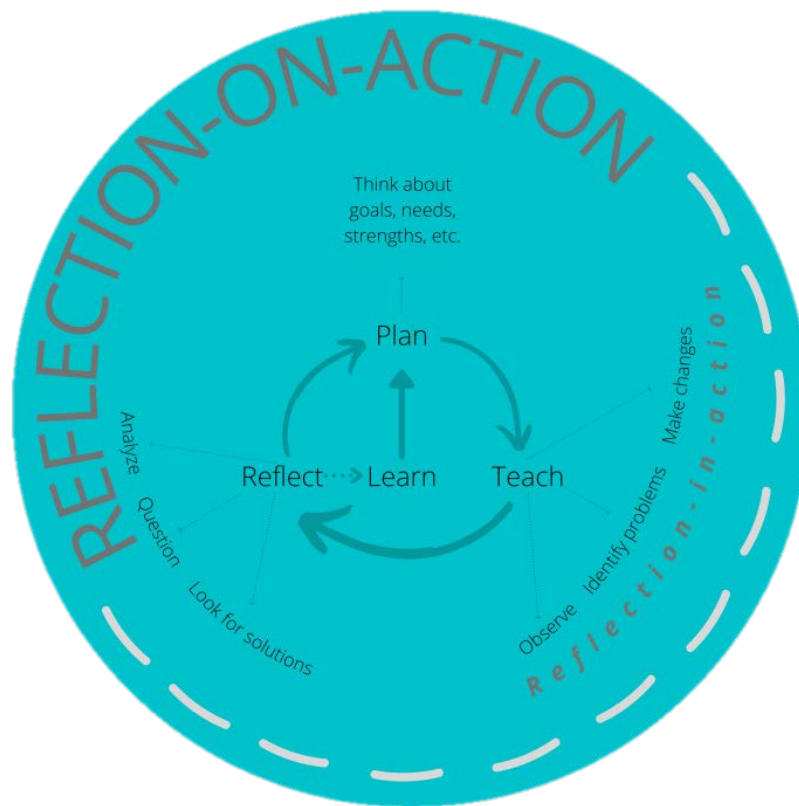
...reflective practice occurs when an individual or group engages in reflection before, during, and after applying what has been learned in a course to a field placement. When accompanied by a practicum experience, what is taught during coursework enables teacher candidates to apply new knowledge to the

world of practice through problem-solving, data-driven decision-making, and problem-resolution in educational practice. (p. 1)

Hence, it can be understood that the reflective practice is not separate from the teaching practice, but an integral part of it. What teachers find from their reflections should feed their everyday work and vice versa.

Figure 1

Reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action



Note. The image represents the interaction between reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action.

Challenges of reflection in teacher education

Despite the value of reflection for teacher education, it is not without its challenges. For instance, in the case of pre-service teachers, it can be difficult to know what to reflect about when their experience is scarce. Maybe they know

something went wrong, but they cannot identify it, or perhaps they can identify it, but they do not know what to do about it. As Jaeger (2014) points out, “many inexperienced teachers lack the skills that they need to engage in reflection” (p. 96). She adds that novice teachers may not have the practical competence they need to take a step back from what they are doing (teaching) because they are focused on delivering content and managing the class. Additionally, Hatton and Smith (1994), point out that “student teachers may see it as a rather esoteric and useless diversion from mastering the technical skills and content of teaching which they regard as essential, especially early in their training” (p. 36). Thus, reflection may be considered as pointless by some student teachers –especially if they are not ready for it and are not appropriately guided by teacher educators and/or mentors.

Another challenge of reflection in teacher education may be that it is a process which requires time. It is important to keep in mind that it is a cyclical process, as pointed out by Tice (2004); therefore, after reflecting, there should be enough time to have the opportunity to implement changes and to reflect on them once again in order for learning to take place. Hatton and Smith (1994) explain that for reflection to be effective, student teachers require time and opportunity for development so that “the required essential metateaching and metacognitive skills can be acquired” (p. 37). If reflection stops on the paper or on the discussion (if it is spoken), its benefits –although they may not completely disappear– might diminish.

The educational system itself may also be a challenge. As Jaeger (2014) mentions, paraphrasing Hatton & Smith (1995; in Jaeger, 2014), when novice teachers find employment, they are not likely to find the time or opportunity for reflection, let alone school structures that actively support it. The case may be similar for seasoned teachers, who may also learn from reflection, but find themselves buried in administrative work and bureaucracy when they are not teaching. After teachers conclude their studies and no longer have that structured experience, their motivation to continue reflecting on their practice may diminish due to the overwhelming demands of teaching (Jaeger, 2014).

Another challenge, which may be one of the most important, is personal limitations when practicing reflection. Some pre-service and in-service teachers may be simply too close-minded or proud to recognize flaws in their practice (Calderhead, 1989; in Jaeger, 2014). Thus, their reflections may turn out to be mere narrations of their practice, with no room for self-evaluation and an inability to be objective about the issues which may have arisen during the lesson. Others may be too self-critical, which may result in low self-esteem or a feeling of constant failure. According to Quinn (1988/2000; in Finlay 2008), reflection “can lead to feelings of self-disapproval and self-rejection”. Finlay (2008) adds that “if an individual understands the word ‘critical’ to mean ‘negative’, they can end up in an unduly negative frame of mind” (p. 11).

Finally, there is also an ethical concern in the use of reflection for teacher education, particularly when it is mandatory and not suggested, and when it is shared with others. On this matter, Finlay (2008), explains that:

The teaching and application of reflective practice have generated a range of ethical concerns. These relate to confidentiality, rights to privacy, informed consent, and professional relationships. Practitioners who are engaging reflective practice need to [*sic*] aware of the risks and also of the potential for conflicts of interest.

It needs to be remembered that reflection can have a profound emotional impact on the person reflecting and therefore has the potential to be harmful. (p. 11)

Thus, it is important to deal with these concerns with the appropriate sensitivity, as the purpose of reflection should not be to evaluate, to criticize, or to put someone on the spot, but to allow for personal and professional growth.

Reflection in the EFL classroom at *Escuelas Normales*

As in any field of education, reflection is highly important in the EFL classroom, for both teachers and students. In the case of the EFL classroom at *Escuelas Normales*, it may be regarded even more so because it is there where

future teachers are learning how to be teachers. Whether they are studying to become English teachers or not, they are indeed always observing their teachers, what they do and what they do not do. Thus, it is paramount that teachers lead by example and show their students the importance of reflection in their teaching practice and their professional development regardless of their experience levels.

According to Rahimi and Weisi (2018), EFL teachers who analyze their actions critically before, during, and after their class to find better ways to develop their teaching practice and improve their students' learning are also more engaged in research in ELT. This may result in teachers becoming more professional. As Salmani (2011) explains, reflection is an ongoing process in which “the reflective teacher assesses, revises, and implements approaches and activities as the teaching process goes on. This leads to professional development; hence, professionalism” (p.5).

Self-efficacy has been found to be intertwined with reflection in the case of EFL teachers as well. According to Baluchzada (2023), “reflective teaching enhances self-efficacy and pedagogical skills” (p. 7). Similarly, Rahimidi and Weisi (2018) found that reflective practice has a positive correlation with EFL teachers' self-efficacy.

Discussion

As it has been established and supported here, reflection in teacher education can lead pre-service and in-service teachers to question and evaluate their practice, to think about what they do in their lessons and if it works or not for their students' needs and for the class goals and objectives. Moreover, reflective practice allows teachers to go beyond thinking about their lessons and identifying what went right or wrong, it allows them to come up with alternatives and implement them. As a result, teachers learn from their practice by linking what happens in the classroom to theories, methods, and/or approaches that they are learning (in the case of pre-service teachers) or already know (in-service teachers).

Using reflection, teachers can give meaning to their actions. Instead of doing things monotonously and automatically, by reflecting, teachers know that what they are doing has a purpose and support. Reflection, thus, allows teachers to think about what they are doing as it is happening, stay on top of things, and identify problems or unexpected situations more easily, improving their practice.

Since reflection is cyclical and teachers can learn from their insights, it becomes a source for life-long learning. Learning and teaching go hand in hand. Therefore, reflective teachers open the doors to constant learning and keep an open mind to new ideas and alternatives to be better teachers.

It is important to remember that there are challenges to using reflection in teacher education, such as time constraints, educational system constraints, ethical issues (if reflection is done as part of a group), personality-related issues, among others. These problems need to be dealt with carefully so that they do not hinder the benefits that reflection can provide for teachers.

For instance, in the case of time constraints, teachers may be given a specific time during the week to reflect on their work. Maybe it will not be a lot of time, and perhaps teachers will not be able to reflect on every single lesson, but they can still benefit from this practice. Similarly, schools can not only allow the time for reflection but promote it amongst teachers, highlighting its benefits to their practice, which will, in turn, benefit students.

Teachers should be aware that there are always things that can be improved in their practice, even if it does not seem so. Therefore, they should strive to be objective in their reflections. Reflection is a personal endeavor, and they should be as honest as possible with themselves in order to learn. On the other hand, it is very important that teachers –especially novice teachers– are taught to reflect on their practice constructively. They should know that reflection is not meant to find negative aspects and tear apart their practice, but to find alternatives to improve it.

Conclusions

After considering the value and the challenges of reflection in teacher education presented in this paper, it is my belief that its benefits overpower the challenges it may pose. Nothing is or will ever be perfect in life, and especially in teaching –where so many variables come into play before, during, and after a single lesson: people’s beliefs (teachers’, students’, stakeholders’), knowledge (teachers’ and students’), setting, well-being, content, etc. Nevertheless, that does not mean that reflection loses value or that it should be rendered ineffective.

Reflection can offer a lot to teachers, both novice and experienced. Hence, it is important that they be aware of its benefits and challenges and know how to engage in reflective practice. Doing reflection for the sake of doing reflection can be counterproductive. It is important that reflection not be imposed but promoted; that it is used willingly and consciously. Teachers who use reflection for their professional practice and learning should want to do it and be keen to learn how to do it well.

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Implementation of the PPP (presentation, practice, production) methodology in primary schools located in rural areas

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Introduction

During the pandemic experienced in 2020 in our country, we realized that the technology and methodology used in some schools were not suitable to withstand the challenges posed by mandatory distancing. Using a webpage as the main tool for uploading and downloading activities, employing a Google-derived app for viewing and interacting with students, and utilizing other applications for explanations became the means to continue activities as normally as possible.

Later on, we were able to transfer this experience to the institution's students during practice sessions, seeking ways to ensure that their work as future educators would not be hindered as it had happened at the beginning of the pandemic. Several strategies were implemented, which fortunately proved successful in enhancing the teaching-learning process.

As a result, we redoubled our efforts with the methodology that significantly supported us during the pandemic. The PPP methodology, standing for Presentation, Practice, and Production, operates simply and can be molded and worked on from different perspectives or content areas. The Presentation, Practice, and Production methodology is based on three levels, where vocabulary, context, etc., are first presented, followed by exercises to practice what was introduced, and it concludes with production, where the student must create ideas using the presented material. It is as straightforward as the name suggests.

Methodology

The current work is an action research investigation aimed at understanding, analyzing, and establishing the relationship between English language teaching and the learning process in elementary school students under the guidance of sixth-semester students. This methodology focuses on examining a specific social problem that demands a solution and affects a particular group of individuals, communities, associations, schools, or companies. It is suitable for small-scale research, especially in the fields of education, health, social assistance, and administration. It presents itself as an ideal approach for implementing changes in organizations (Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight, 2000), often used by researchers who have identified a problem in their work environment and wish to study it to contribute to its improvement (Bell, 2005).

Additionally, it will be a descriptive/analytical study, distinguishing the elements in the use of the workbook and proceeding to review each of them in an organized, separate, and systematic manner. These elements were fragmented to describe and examine the preceding causes.

Moreover, it will have an explanatory focus as it seeks to verify the cause-and-effect relationship between the use of the workbook and the academic performance of the students. Finally, it will complement a propositional study of the teaching practice of the sixth-semester students by describing, explaining, confronting, and constructing their teaching tasks as potential English teachers in elementary education.

To achieve this, the following actions were followed:

1. To select students authorized by their practice elementary schools to teach English.
2. Guidance of the use of the PPP methodology.

3. To make a diagnostic test to be applied to elementary school students.
4. To apply the diagnostic test in elementary rural schools.
5. To analyze diagnostic test results.
6. To use the PPP methodology from February to July 2023.
7. To have guidance meetings for the training students with the investigation team.
8. To reapply the diagnostic test to measure the progress obtained.
9. Analysis of the obtained results of the second test.
10. Comparison and interpretation of the tests.
11. State conclusions.

Results

The PPP method is used to teach a language and is one of the most modern methods employed by professionals worldwide. This methodology is explained in the book "Teaching Knowledge Test" (TKT), modules 1, 2, and 3 by Mary Spratt, (2012). It originated in the 1960s and is associated with the situational approach, especially in the presentation stage, and the audiolingual method due to the behaviorism underlying the practice stage. The production phase is related to the communicative approach. While initially designed for adults, its success led to its implementation with children. In its first phase, this strategy introduces the subject, facilitating the learning process of a second language.

The presentation engages students in using language naturally and logically for optimal learning. A new structure or vocabulary is presented using dialogues, phrases, texts, diagrams, videos, or audio, always in context. The emphasis in this stage is on ensuring both the meaning and the use of the new phrases and expressions are clear. There are various ways to present the topic to students, with

an emphasis on using real and creative materials that are of interest to students throughout the course.

In the Practice stage, it is determined whether the student understands the topic through exercises based on previously developed themes. One characteristic of this method is its focus on developing oral language skills, one of the most challenging for students. A review of the presentation is also conducted to clarify any doubts and practice can be individual or in teams. Practical exercises must be clear and understandable so that the teacher can monitor students' performance in the course and assess their ability to achieve correct results.

The Production stage involves the student creating material learned, usually involving the student's creativity in developing the learned material. An important aspect of this stage is not telling students what to do or why; instead, students receive feedback on their topic practice. Effective activities in the production stage include debates, narrations, descriptions, tests, and games. Games, in particular, are effective because they are designed by students and allow for enjoyable, meaningful learning.

At the beginning of the research, a selection of students was made based on the practice schools assigned by CREN, specifically seeking schools in rural areas. Subsequently, students assigned to these rural schools were invited, and nine agreed to participate. They were then, provided with an instrument for a diagnostic test to assess the knowledge of English among elementary school students at that time. The test took into account suggestions from the books "How to Teach Grammar" and "How to Teach Vocabulary" by Thornbury (1999 and 2002). Based on the results, topics were selected for the upcoming weeks, and the same test was applied at the end to compare results and measure the effectiveness of the PPP methodology.

The information obtained from both, the initial and final instrument applications was recorded in a table designed to register corresponding data by

school, diagnostic, and final evaluation for each. This allowed for the analysis and interpretation of the information, as described below. The results obtained in this research show that the use of this methodology increases the chances of acquiring a second language, in this case, English. In all the schools where this research was conducted, there was an increase in the number of correct answers from the diagnostic test to the final, with an average of 4.6 in the first and 5.9 in the last. While there is only a 1.3 difference between the two, it should be noted that the same number of children did not participate in both tests (see Table 1).

On the other hand, we must remember that in the rural context, students have very poor knowledge of the English language, or in some cases, no previous exposure at all. Therefore, it should be taken into account before deciding whether to use this methodology or not. Additionally, the time provided for second language classes in rural elementary schools was limited—only six sessions of half an hour each over four weeks. Had it been different, we might have obtained even more favorable results.

Regarding the objectives set at the beginning of the research, our main purpose was to "Understand the effectiveness and relationship between the use of work strategies for English language teaching and learning under the PPP methodology in a rural context and the acquisition of this language by students belonging to this context." We observe that there is indeed an increase in the development of language skills, despite the mentioned limitations. Thus, upon reflection, we can say that we obtained a positive response.

Specific objectives achieved include:

1. Determining the linguistic level of students in rural elementary schools using a diagnostic exam developed by the researchers with a total of 10 items. This exam was applied in the first class taught by the students in the selected practice schools, revealing that the children did not even have a basic level according to the Common European Framework of Reference, which would be A1.

2. Selecting the contents to be taught during practice, based on the results obtained from diagnostics applied in participating rural elementary schools. The chosen topics were basic vocabulary: animals, numbers, and colors.

3. Interpreting the results obtained during the teaching practice periods using the same tool as at the beginning. This involved observing the children's responses and assessing their confidence in answering the test.

4. Comparing the mastery of the English language achieved by students in the elementary schools where the methodology was applied at the end of the teaching practice period. This comparison was made by compiling the results of both diagnostic and final exams in a comparative table, allowing a detailed observation of achievements in both cases by school.

5. Determining the effectiveness of the PPP methodology in improving English language learning in rural elementary schools. The obtained results suggest an increase in language knowledge among students in rural elementary schools.

Discussion

The PPP methodology has been used in various teaching fields, as seen in studies conducted at the Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia (UNAD) in Colombia, by Parra Ramírez, (2021), where it was employed to enhance listening skills through music in a virtual environment. Similarly, other studies demonstrated favorable outcomes, such as the improvement of reading comprehension in English through a virtual course using the PPP teaching methodology.

In our case, we chose to investigate the application of this methodology in the rural areas, where elementary schools lack equal teaching opportunities. The majority of these schools operate with one or two teachers handling all students in a multi-grade setting, prioritizing subjects such as Spanish and Mathematics. English language education is often neglected. By selecting this working area for our

research, we could more accurately measure the effectiveness of the methodology, given that the students had virtually no prior exposure to the language.

The results of our application indicate that using this method to teach a second language in rural schools is successful, even with limited weekly time commitment. It proves to be an easy and meaningful way for students to retain knowledge, specifically English vocabulary.

Increasing the number of sessions or the time dedicated to the study, teaching, and learning of the second language would likely directly impact students' language skills. As observed in some of the studies we found, the PPP methodology can be used to enhance specific language skills, such as speaking, listening, writing, or reading, or to improve overall language proficiency, as we did in our research.

The results obtained in this research contribute to the knowledge about the effectiveness of using the PPP methodology in teaching a second language, specifically English, in rural areas where students have little or no prior exposure to the language. Future researchers can benefit from the contributions our work makes to the theoretical framework of their projects.

In conclusion, we can affirm that despite having only six classes, lasting half an hour, using the PPP methodology was favorable. In the initial application of the instrument designed for both diagnostic and final assessments, an overall average of 4.6 was obtained. In the second application, after working under this methodology, the average increased to 5.9. While it might seem unsatisfactory or negative at first glance, this improvement signifies notable progress, considering factors such as the limited class hours and, above all, the low engagement some of our trainees faced from elementary school students.

Figure 2

Sample from Exercise 1 of the Assessment Instrument



It is worth noting that, despite the previously mentioned challenges, the average increased by almost one and a half points. This leads us to the conclusion that this methodology can enhance second language learning even in the face of adverse factors such as limited class time, disinterest, and absenteeism among some students. Therefore, we recommend the use of this strategy for teaching English to language teachers, and we also encourage elementary school teachers in rural contexts to consider implementing it.

According to the results obtained in our study, children in these schools typically start with a beginner level (A1). As a result, regular classroom teachers may not necessarily require a high proficiency level (B2, B1, C2, C1) in the language. Additionally, we suggest increasing the number of class hours dedicated to language instruction.

Figure 3

Compilation of Evaluation Information

	FRANCISCO I. MADERO			BENITO JUAREZ			EMILIANO ZAPATA			Escuadrón 201			Escuadrón 201			Plan de San Luis			JULIAN CARRELO			Juan Sarabia			JUVENTINO ROSAS		
Grade	Diagnostic test	Final test	Grade	Diagnostic test	Final test	Grade	Diagnostic test	Final test	Grade	Diagnostic test	Final test	Grade	Diagnostic test	Final test	Grade	Diagnostic test	Final test	Grade	Diagnostic test	Final test	Grade	Diagnostic test	Final test	Grade	Diagnostic test	Final test	
0			0	2		0	2		0			0			0			0			0	3		0			
1			1	3	1	1			1			1			1			1	1		1			1	2	2	
2			2	1	4	2		3	2			2	1		2	1		2	2		2	4	3	2	2	2	
3	1		3	2	2	3	1	3	3			3	2	1	3	1		3	2	1	3	8	4	3	3	1	
4			4	2	2	4		1	4	3		4	1		4	1		4			2	4	1	1	4	1	
5			5	4	2	5	2	3	5			5	4	1	5	1	2	5	1	5	5		1	5	2	1	
6	5		6	1		6	1		6	3	2	6	2	1	6	3	2	6			6	1	2	6	1		
7	3		7	1	2	7	2	1	7	4	3	7	1	3	7	4	2	7			2	7		1	7		
8	3		8			8			8	1	4	8		3	8	4	2	8			8		2	8		1	
9	3	2	9		3	9			9	4	4	9			9		2	9			9		2	9		4	
10		9	10			10	1		10		2	10			10	2	5	10			10		1	10			
n° of students	15	11		16	16		9	11		15	15		11	9		17	15		6	10		17	17		11	12	
Average	7	7.2		3.3	4.6		4.8	3.7		6.8	8.1		4.6	6.6		6.6	8.0		2.7	5.0		2.5	5.3		3.2	5.2	

Finally, there is only one last question remaining: to determine whether replicating the research conducted by the authors of this study would yield the same results or not, especially in an urban context with all the differences in context that it entails. This could serve as a basis for future research.

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Strategy of English in Normal Schools of Mexico...a comparative study between 2018 and 2022 syllabi

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Introduction

In 2017, an ambitious project for Normal Schools in Mexico was launched: The National Strategy of English, whose goal was that students ideally graduated with a bachelor's degree profile where they reached a B1 level in English, and would be capable of managing, as independent users, this lingua franca, spoken by 2,000 million people around the world. This would grant them more growth opportunities, at a personal and professional level.

In the design of public education, there is a strong resistance to value the role of English in the learning line since it is considered as:

- A loss of identity or an intrusion.
- A sign of contempt for Mexican values or components of indigenous origin (Mexicanos Primero, 2015).

The current trend of laxity, incoordination, and lack of support within the school system eventually destroys English programs which hinders the development of English proficiency. Thus, Mexican students are denied access to a treasure trove of scientific and technical ideas and processes, and to a heritage of humanistic and political culture for the defense of human rights (Mexicanos Primero, 2015, p.10).

Quality English teaching is no longer an elegant addition or option in the syllabus. The third paragraph of Article Three of the Mexican Constitution declares that students have the right to the widest possible range of learning and academic

grades. It is urgent to make visible and discuss the incredibly high costs in terms of equality that the lack of an effective national policy for the teaching and learning of the English language entails for Mexico. (Calvet & Calvet, 2010, cited in Mexicanos Primero, 2015 p.10).

Unfortunately, the status of English in Mexico has proved to be very low and with great limitations and voids. With information derived of previous surveys and studies from the Index of English Level (EPI), Mexico holds the 89th place on Education First's 2023 edition, which ranks citizens of 113 countries for their English skills. In Latin America, Mexico has the position of 19 out of 20 countries (Education First, 2023). As every year passes, Mexico's position decreases, due to the current government's policies disregarding the great importance of effective English teaching.

Despite Mexico's progress between 2009 and 2018 in structuring and consolidating its policy framework for learning and teaching English, the country and the education system have not made progress in their goals of having citizens who communicate in English at the expected levels. The low level of students at the end of their secondary, upper secondary, and higher education concerns many, especially employers, who do not necessarily find the human talent they need with the required English skills (Stanton & Celly, 2023).

Building a national policy for the teaching of English would offer millions of Mexican children and teenagers who attend the public school system a powerful tool to access better opportunities of development. English programs that do not teach English, only simulate, and waste scarce resources, exacerbating our great inequalities (Mexicanos primero, 2015, p.33).

Bilingual education has been proven as a secret weapon in supercharging children's learning and even changing the structure of the human brain. The main benefits of a bilingual education among many others are: increased cognitive development, improved memory, better academic achievement, increased

economic opportunities, cross-cultural appreciation, improvement in the executive function of the brain (Nord Anglia, 2022). It has been considered an additional subject, whereas it should be seen as a way to relate with one another. The Mexican education system has deprived many generations of its benefits. This must change. Nothing must impede future generations to receive these benefits (Mexicanos Primero, 2015).

If we do not understand the value of English as a lingua franca, and its strong link to the right of learning for a lifetime, we will not be able to change the root cause on how the English teaching has been offered to Mexican children and teenagers. In the new 2022 syllabus, in the Normal Schools curricula, there is a reduction from six to four weekly class hours, and from six semesters to only two for the English courses in some of the bachelor's degree syllabi, for example in the one of the special education major which is the one the authors work for.

Method

Data collection was carried out within the Escuela Normal Regional de Especialización (ENRE) where the authors were incorporated to the teaching staff of the institution, as English teachers emanated from the national summon launched by the Secretary of Public Education, announced in the same year of the National Strategy, to find qualified English teachers. In the state of Coahuila, from the 594 teachers who registered, only fourteen were found fit to fill the sixteen full time positions in its eight normal schools.

The aspects considered in the study were:

- Diagnosed level of English at the time of entering Normal School
- Level progression*
- Certification eligibility**
- Certification achievement

All of them collected from the: 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 classes.

*Only 2018, 2019 and 2020 classes (74 students plus 17 dropouts); 2021 are still taking English courses.

**Only students from advanced semesters (fourth and on) and levels (B1 and on).

Results

Normal Schools in the state of Coahuila, within the 2018 syllabus offered six semesters of mandatory English courses in all their different bachelor programs with six class-hours each course per week. As seen in Table 1 all these class hours make up a total of 108 each semester. After subtracting the class hours from all the weeks, the students are participating in their teacher training within basic education schools, the total class hours per semester is now reduced to 70 class hours only. Class hours are in fact 45 minutes long, therefore, the actual total of hours per semester of English instruction is only 52.

Within the 2018 syllabus, (SEP, 2017) the goal was to attain a B1 level for the initial stage of the national strategy and even a C1 for the upcoming years. According to the National Strategy of English published by SEP in 2017, teacher trainees for all normal schools throughout the country would get training in the use of English to make it possible for all public basic education to become fully bilingual after the first 20 years from the strategy implementation. Such strategy contemplated that pupils ended basic education holding a B1 level while high school graduates would hold a B2 level. A final goal of this strategy was that after 20 years, all English teachers working for basic education would certify in a C1 level and all teachers working in high school levels would get certified in C2 (SEP, 2017).

In contrast, the new 2022 syllabus does not establish a parameter for a goal level of English for graduate students, and the number of English courses or semesters, along the academic program is reduced from six to two, this is at least in the case of the special education syllabus; and even worse, students now take the

course in a pace of four class-hours weekly instead of six. With this new scheme, they would barely consolidate their entering level, with the very low total of 84 hours* for the two semesters they take English class along their whole career.

Table 1

Hours for English instruction

Syllabus	Actual class hours programmed per semester	Actual class hours per semester	Clock hours per semester	Clock hours along the career
2018 syllabus (6 weekly class hours) 6 semesters	108	70	52	312*
2022 syllabus (4 weekly class hours) 2 semesters	72	56	42	84*

*For both cases, unexpected upcoming class suspensions are not considered.

Table 2 shows the number of hours of guided instruction needed for level progression according the CEFRL (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) (Cambridge University Press and Assessment, n.d).

Table 2

Guided instruction number of hours for level progression

CEFRL level	Approximate guided instruction number of hours
C2	1000-1200
C1	700-800
B2	500-600
B1	350-400
A2	180-200
A1	90-100

From: Cambridge University Press. Tutored learning.

Table 3 depicts language level progression by the students regarding their entering one. This is considering the initial population from classes 2018, 2019, and 2020 which is equivalent to 91 students.

Table 3

Level progression

Entering level	% of students	Progression
A0-A1	55-60%	14.0% Dropouts 6.0% Remained A1 64.0% A2 16.0% B1
A2	19-30%	12.5% Dropouts 4.2% Temporary dropouts 8.3% Remained A2 75.0% B1
B1	12-16%	23.1% Dropouts 7.7% Remained B1 69.2% B2
B2	1-6%	25.0% Dropouts 75.0% C1

In the 2020 class is where the highest number of dropouts is allocated, it can be inferred that this is somehow connected to having started the career totally online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pretending to certify the highest possible number of students in a B1 level, students from fourth, fifth, and sixth semesters who were enrolled in the B1 and upper levels were diagnosed to check if they were eligible to get a certification. Eligibility and results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4*Eligibility and results*

School year	Eligible students	Students taking the certification	Results
2018-2019	25	4	2 A2 1 B1+ 1 B2
2019-2020	33	6	2 B1 4 B2
2020-2021		Postponed due to covid-19 pandemic	
2021-2022	33	6	4 C1 2 B2
2022-2023	10	4	1 A1 3 C1

After getting the results from the 2018-2019 school year, it was decided to make a stricter diagnosis process for certification candidates to prevent lower results than B1. The different certifications taken were: Oxford TCC, Cambridge Pet, 2 and 4 skills Cambridge Linguaskill, and Global Learning Consulting Canada. Most of the C1 results are derived from the last exam mentioned which is affiliated with CeNNI (National Language Level Certificate), and according to the diagnosed candidates, it is inferred that it does not necessarily mean better results from students, but it probably is not as accurate as other examinations. Moreover, the only A1 result was obtained from the same examination which happens to be online and can present technical failures.

Based on the experience gained and taking the data from tables 2, 3, and 4, it is observed that more than half of students enter the career holding an A1 level, and it is required at least 100 actual hours of guided instruction to progress to an A2 level, but to reach a B1 level, it is required from 250 to 300 additional hours.

The desired goal seems almost impossible to achieve. After taking English courses for six semesters within the 2018 syllabus, they progress at least one level above the one they hold at the beginning. 16% of learners got certified in B1 level in the 2018-2022 class, 27% in the 2019-2023 class, and only 14% in the 2020-2024 class.

In addition to the problem, the new rules of the registrar's office (control escolar), in the 2022 syllabus, establish that students can no longer fail English courses either by absences or duty failure, causing a lesser importance to them, despite that English courses are now part of a syllabus academic field called: Lenguas, Lenguajes y Tecnologías Digitales.

For instance, some of the students from the two classes of the 2018 syllabus already graduated, were reaching the desired level in certification, and were even reaching higher levels. With the sudden change specified in the 2022 syllabus, English courses lost a dramatic number of hours, then there it is little hope for the newcomers to develop the high level of English specified within such syllabus as it is described as follows:

English is becoming more important every time to successfully take part in professional and social activities, which is why it is essential that all students develop a good level of competence in the language. Its importance as lingua franca is growing to access information, make useful contacts, understand other cultures, and participate in cultural activities (SEP, 2022).

It is found that those who prepare plans and programs do not adhere to the empirical data because what they set as a goal is unfeasible with the little time devoted to guided instruction and the evident lack of training and supervision for English teachers. In addition, if the student wishes to continue with their vocational training by enrolling in a master's degree, they will face the challenge that most prestigious universities demand a B1 level of English for their graduate profile; this is also stated as a mandatory requirement of a 450 TOEFL score (SEP, 2022), which

is equivalent to an initial B1 for some of the master's degrees programs in some Normal Schools along the country.

Also, this represents that students will meet a serious obstacle because they will not hold the required previous training in the aspect of foreign language since that opportunity was taken away from them from the bachelor's degree programs. Basic and complimentary bibliographies as well as digital updated resources of postgraduate programs point out that texts in English must not be left out.

The aforementioned situation is already experienced within the postgraduate degree area of the institution where this study was conducted, in which nearly all students who just finished their courses, will have to sort out with their own means to get a certification in a B1 level to be able to graduate when most of them hold A1 and A2 levels. Besides, postgraduate programs of Normal Schools demand for candidates to have competencies in the use of information in both Spanish and English (SEP, 2022).

With the panorama, unfortunately, this project was not the exception of the ups and downs and the erratic decision-making of those holding the power, and nowadays the students from Normal Schools are affected in such transcendental aspect, causing the cherished bilingualism dream once again to fade.

Discussion

How possible is it to reach the goal of achieving a B1 level, considering the students' characteristics, context, and current conditions?

Receiving most of our students in the A0-A1 level, with six class hours (of 45 min) per week; at best, 17 weeks per semester for the students of the first two school years (76 clock hours), whereas in the students of second and third grade the number of weeks decrease to 14 or 13, due to their larger practice periods. This amounts to 63 and 58 clock hours respectively.

Having the above analysis in mind, with the results presented of the syllabus 2018, it is evident that not all A1 entering students were reaching the desired B1 level stated in its goals. In the new syllabus 2022 with only 4 class hours a week, considering only two semesters of English throughout the whole career, the forecast is:

76 planned class hours

68 class hours (subtracting time they're away practicing)

51 actual hours (considering that classes are 45 minutes long)

Even in the 2018 syllabus, with 51 clock hours per semester, it was needed that students had 8 semesters of English to comply with the 400 hours required to reach the B1 level (refer to Table 2).

Considering all the above conclusions, in the event of having true beginners, they will not even be able to progress to an A2 level. Likewise, any student in the above levels will merely reinforce the current level but will not move forward. Furthermore, since English courses are taken in the first two semesters, students are very likely to forget what they learned in this period by the time they graduate.

The method presented throughout this research could be replicated in other Normal Schools to compare and contrast within the whole state of Coahuila and eventually, nationwide.

It is for all the above that we conclude that it is imperative that in the current curriculum for normal education syllabus (2022) it is strived having the same study hours we used to have in the 2018 syllabus, or even increase them. English courses as well, are needed to have the same regulations in the registrar's office as any other course, so these courses are not overlooked or considered as non-important as it is evidenced. As English teachers, we also demand proper guidance and effective learning-oriented feedback which will result in continuous improvement and more

and better training to enrich the teaching and learning processes of this language within normal schools.

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Teacher talk: how do I talk in the classroom?

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Introduction

Communication in the classroom is one of the pillars of learning –especially of language learning. Additionally, the way language is used between students and teachers can benefit or hinder the classroom environment. Classroom talk in the language learning classroom is vital for learners and teachers. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that teachers be aware of how language is used in their classrooms.

It is undoubtedly more important for students to engage in conversation – meaningful conversation– than it is for teachers to dominate the conversation during the lesson. There might be times when more teacher talk may be required –perhaps to establish rapport or to further explain something that students are having trouble understanding; however, many teachers –especially if we have taken part in a language teacher education course or certification– have heard that it is important to minimize teacher-talking time (TTT). According to Walqui and Heritage (2018), “As a general pattern, we educators often talk too much, no doubt influenced by our ‘apprenticeship of observation’ that began when we were students ourselves. However, given the centrality of talk in learning, this pattern needs to change” (p. 20).

Minimizing TTT does not mean that what teachers say is not important. In contrast, it means that more attention should be paid to what is said and its purpose. What is it that teachers are doing with their language in the classroom? What effect is such language having on learners and learning?

In this paper, I will show an analysis of my classroom talk using a short two-minute transcript of one of my lessons. It is necessary to point out –as this might have been a factor in the way language was used by me in this lesson extract– that

the sample comes from a lesson I taught online due to COVID-19 restrictions, which is not my usual teaching modality. First, I will present a literature review on the topic. Then, I will describe how I carried out this brief research project followed by a discussion of the findings. Finally, I will present my conclusions on the topic.

Literature review

Teacher Talk

Teacher talk refers to everything teachers say in the classroom, from greeting students to giving instructions, explaining topics, and providing feedback. It can be very easy for teachers to dominate classroom talk for many reasons: passive students, a desire to “control” what happens in the classroom, wishing to provide students with as much input as possible, and so on. According to Clinton (n.d., in DeWitt, 2019), teachers in developed countries ask (on average) around 200 questions a day, while students only ask 2 questions each per week. Chaudron (1988; in Walsh, 2006), concluded that teacher talk represents about two-thirds of classroom talk, which does not seem as much compared to Clinton’s findings but is still extremely high-occurring. According to Walsh (2006):

In the L2 classroom, teachers control both the content and the procedure of the learning- process. According to Cazden (1986), some of the features of the L2 classroom context include: teachers control the topic of discussion; teachers control who may participate and when; students take their cues from teachers; role relationships between teachers and learners are unequal; teachers are responsible for managing the interaction which occurs; teachers talk more. (p. 6)

Despite the recommendation of minimizing teacher talk, on the day-to-day, most teachers find themselves talking more than they should or would like to, as it was pointed out previously, for various reasons.

Analyzing teacher talk

Teacher talk is part of classroom talk, and in order to learn about how we use language in the classroom, it is important that research be done. Researching

classroom talk can have many positive effects on the ELT classroom because it allows teachers to recognize how learners interact and thus, help them to identify communication strategies that they can use and their potential for miscommunication. Additionally, teachers can see discourse patterns in their classrooms and expose their learners to them by using different materials and interactions.

Moreover, researching classroom talk can help teachers notice *their own* language behavior –for example, how much they talk and how they do it. This can help teachers realize where they could improve; for instance, they can notice if they talk too much about themselves with no real purpose or if they do not allow learners sufficient time to think about and structure their responses. So, how can teachers analyze their language use in the classroom?

There are different methodologies teachers can use to analyze teacher talk. Before choosing one, consideration must be given to the purpose of the analysis and teachers need to define what it is they want to learn from such analysis. It may be possible to use more than one methodology to make sure the results are reliable. Once this has been decided, the data must be collected.

One way –probably the best way– to do this is by recording their lessons. Fortunately, today’s technology makes this easier and more accessible than ever before. Most of us have smartphones, laptop computers, or tablets which we can use to record our lessons on audio or video formats. Recording is only the first step.

The next step is to transcribe the lesson or the part of the lesson which will be analyzed. According to Graddol (1994), “transcripts provide a permanent and readily accessible record of spoken language, and allow close scrutiny of the data” (p. 180). However, transcription can be very time-consuming, and although there are specialized tools and software, such as foot-pedals and transcribing machines (Wray et al., 1998), most teachers might not have access to them since they tend to be quite expensive. There are also companies that offer transcription services, but again –unless there are funds available, these services are out of reach for most teachers. Thus, teachers must do their own transcriptions.

When transcribing, it is necessary to use transcription conventions. The conventions used will depend on the transcriber, but it is important that they be established and that a key for the transcription is available. Wray et al. (1998) explain that although it is possible for others to understand the conventions one uses, a key should still be provided because there may be some choices regarding how specific features are transcribed and it is better not to assume they will be clear to everyone.

Once the transcript is ready, it is time to analyze the data collected. There are different approaches to do this, and their use will depend on the purpose of the research as well as teachers' preferences. One of these approaches is the one proposed by Walsh (2006), the Self Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT), which will be explained next.

The SETT approach

The Self Evaluation of Teacher Talk framework was developed by Walsh (2006) "to help teachers both describe the classroom interaction of their lessons and foster an understanding of interactional processes" (p. 62). This framework considers four classroom modes: *managerial*, *materials*, *skills and systems*, and *classroom context*, each with its own pedagogic goals and interactional features (See Appendix A). However, Walsh himself states that not all classroom interactions can be easily classified into the aforementioned modes. He explains that "the modes do not claim to account for all features of classroom discourse, nor are they sufficiently comprehensive to specify each and every pedagogic goal" (p. 83).

It is important to keep this in mind while using the SETT instrument for the analysis of teacher talk, which does not diminish its value whatsoever as it can provide interesting information and point teachers in the direction they want to go in improving their practice. For instance, Zotzmann (2017) conducted a research project to find out the way classroom discourse analysis –using the SETT instrument– could impact teacher development. She worked with four participants who "... expressed that the awareness they gained had inspired them to change established routines and find new and more effective ways of communicating" (p. 11).

The study

This study consisted of the analysis of two minutes of classroom talk to answer the question “How do I talk in the classroom?”. For the purpose of this brief study, a recording of one of my lessons taught online was used. The decision to use this sample was made because, since the sample had been recorded before deciding to work on this topic, there was no danger of teacher language being modified or rehearsed in any way. It is real language.

The recording of the lesson from which the sample was taken, as well as all the other lessons which were recorded during the time classes were taught online, was consented. Students were always aware that lessons were recorded and agreed to it, as did school authorities such as the principal and vice principal. Since students are all over 18 years of age no parental permission was necessary.

The sample was transcribed (see Appendix B) using Walsh’s (2006) transcription system, which was adapted from van Lier (1988) and Johnson (1995). The transcription key is available in Appendix C. The transcript was analyzed using the SETT instrument (Walsh, 2006) by marking the number of times each feature of the teacher talk was found and providing examples from it (See Appendix D).

Discussion

According to the analysis carried out, it was found that two classroom modes were present: *materials* and *skills and systems*. The following examples of features of teacher talk were found in the lesson extract sample: scaffolding, direct repair, extended wait-time, referential questions, teacher echo, display questions, and form-focused feedback. There were no examples for content feedback, seeking clarification, extended learner turn, teacher interruptions, extended teacher turn, or turn completion (See Appendix D).

The most recurrent features were extended wait-time and display questions, with four occurrences each. The longest example of extended wait-time happened at the end of the sample. The wait-time was thirteen seconds. Examples of these features are:

Extended wait-time: *Number four?* (13)

Display questions: *So what would the answer be in number one?*

The second most recurrent features were teacher echo and form-focused feedback. Teacher echo was used to repeat part of learners' contributions (the answer, not the entire sentence). Form-focused feedback was used to provide feedback on the grammatical aspect of the answer, which is what was being checked in the exercise. Examples of the two features are:

Teacher echo: *...was painted...*

Form-focused feedback: *So, was painted. Thank you. Very good!*

The next feature was scaffolding. Interest in the use of scaffolding was high before starting this project. However, it was found that it was used only twice. In both cases, it was used for modeling. An example of scaffolding from the sample is the following:

Scaffolding: *...and the first time you said it was correct: directed. DirectED.*

Finally, for direct repair and referential questions, one example of each feature was found, which are presented next.

Direct repair: *in this case, it is silent, the "e", OK? designed.*

Referential questions: *Are you guys ready?*

Direct repair was used to correct the pronunciation of a regular past participle verb, while the referential question was used as a general question to know if it was possible to continue with the activity.

It is relevant to keep several things in mind. First, the extract is only two minutes long; thus, not a lot of examples are available because the teacher talk was minimal. Second, the extract belongs to a part of the lesson in which answers from a grammar exercise were being checked. Students were not providing personal answers but providing answers for a gap-filling exercise. Third, the waiting time for student responses was long for most questions. This could be attributed to the fact

that the lesson was delivered online and, unfortunately, many students did not participate willingly, and the flow of participation was very slow.

Conclusions

Conducting small research projects such as the one presented here can provide teachers with relevant information regarding what happens in their classes. Classroom discourse analysis can help teachers learn about their language use in order to improve their lessons, but also their language proficiency. By analyzing their language, teachers can notice if they have important language issues (such as language fossilization) or if they overuse certain words or features of teacher talk. They can notice if they always correct learners directly instead of using other strategies or if they do not use enough scaffolding, for example. Additionally, classroom discourse analysis can be used to learn about learners' language, too. Teachers can use it to find out how students use language to interact with each other, and the type of mistakes they make, and address these issues accordingly.

While it is time-consuming, it is also work that can become easier to do with practice. Teachers can decide to pay attention to only part of a lesson at a time and it does not have to be done for every lesson. It can also be done collaboratively. For instance, a colleague might be in charge of transcribing the lesson (or part of the lesson) and someone else be in charge of the analysis of the data.

From this analysis, it can be concluded that more scaffolding strategies can be used in my lessons. Additionally, it would be better for my students' learning if more referential questions instead of display questions were asked. Considering that this analysis corresponds to a lesson taught online, it would be interesting to carry out a second analysis, this time for face-to-face lessons in order to compare if the features used vary a lot or if they are similar.

Carrying out this project allowed me to learn a little more about my language use in the classroom. Additionally, it taught me about the importance of classroom discourse analysis for my teaching practice and of trying something different in order to achieve better results. It is important for teachers to learn not only theories,

approaches, and new methodologies for teaching, but also to learn from their own practice.

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Appendix A

Walsh's (2006) L2 Classroom modes

Table 4.1 L2 classroom modes

<i>Mode</i>	<i>Pedagogic goals</i>	<i>Interactional features</i>
Managerial	To transmit information	A single, extended teacher turn which uses explanations and/or instructions
	To organize the physical learning environment	The use of transitional markers
	To refer learners to materials	The use of confirmation checks
	To introduce or conclude an activity	An absence of learner contributions
	To change from one mode of learning to another	
Materials	To provide language practice around a piece of material	Predominance of IRF pattern
	To elicit responses in relation to the material	Extensive use of display questions
	To check and display answers	Form-focused feedback
	To clarify when necessary	Corrective repair
	To evaluate contributions	The use of scaffolding
Skills and systems	To enable learners to produce correct forms	The use of direct repair
	To enable learners to manipulate the target language	The use of scaffolding
	To provide corrective feedback	Extended teacher turns
	To provide learners with practice in sub-skills	Display questions
	To display correct answers	Teacher echo
Classroom context	To enable learners to express themselves clearly	Clarification requests
	To establish a context	Form-focused feedback
	To promote oral fluency	Extended learner turns.
		Short teacher turns
		Minimal repair
	Content feedback	
	Referential questions	
	Scaffolding	
	Clarification requests	

Walsh, S. (2006). *Investigating Classroom Discourse*. Routledge, p. 66.

Appendix B

Sample lesson extract transcription

- 1 T Are you guys ready? (5)
- 2 L Yes (2)
- 3 T Alrighty (2)
so what would be the answer IN number one (**Google Meet participation ding**) (3)
Ok so erm Fatima?
- 4 L1 Erm (3) er Mont (**mispronounced**) Sainte-Victoire was painted by French artist
Paul Cézanne
- 5 T OK... (**T writes answer on digital board**) so was painted Thank yoU very goOD er
number two ? (6)
- 6 L2 Me teacher
- 7 T Yes (**microphone echo**) yes
- 8 L2 The first Star Wars film was written and directed direct by George Lucas
- 9 T Ok so... (**T writes answer on digital board**) was written and the first time you said it
was correct directed (**T underlines "ed"**) directED that's correct (2)
Thank you Kate... number three (6)
- 10 L3 Me teacher
- 11 T Yes
- 12 L3 The (**mispronounced**) state of liberty was (**mispronounced**) designed by the French
Sculptor Frédéric (**mispronounced**) Auguste Barthol... Bartholdi
- 13 T Ok... (**T writes answer on digital board**) was desIGNED (**T corrects learners' pronunciation**) in this case it is silent the "e" OK ? desIGNED (3) Thank you Emily
number four ? (13)

Appendix C

Transcription Key

T	teacher
L	learner (not identified)
L1: L2: etc.,	identified learner
LL	several learners at once or the whole class
/ok/ok/ok/	overlapping or simultaneous utterances by more than one learner
[do you understand?] [I see]	} overlap between teacher and learner
=	turn continues, or one turn follows another without any pause
...	pause of one second or less marked by three periods
(4)	silence; length given in seconds
?	rising intonation – question or other
CORrect	emphatic speech: falling intonation
((4))	unintelligible 4 seconds: a stretch of unintelligible speech with the length given in seconds
Paul, Peter, Mary	capitals are only used for proper nouns
T organizes groups	editor's comments (in bold type)

Reference

Walsh, S. (2006). *Investigating Classroom Discourse*. Routledge, p. 165.

Appendix D

Analysis of teacher talk using the SETT Instrument

<i>Feature of teacher talk</i>	<i>Tally</i>	<i>Examples from your recording</i>
(a) Scaffolding		and the first time you said it was correct directed directed was designed
(b) Direct repair		in this case it is silent the "e" OK? designed
(c) Content feedback		
(d) Extended wait-time		Number four? (13)
(e) Referential questions		Are you guys ready?
(f) Seeking clarification		
(h) Extended learner turn		
(i) Teacher echo		was painted was written was designed
(j) Teacher interruptions		
(k) Extended teacher turn		
(l) Turn completion		
(m) Display questions		So what would the answer be in number one Number two?
(n) Form-focused feedback		So was painted Thank you very good That's correct

Appendix D (continued)

SETT key

<i>Interactional feature</i>	<i>Description</i>
(a) Scaffolding	(1) Reformulation (rephrasing a learner's contribution) (2) Extension (extending a learner's contribution) (3) Modelling (correcting a learner's contribution)
(b) Direct repair	Correcting an error quickly and directly
(c) Content feedback	Giving feedback to the message rather than the words used
(d) Extended wait-time	Allowing sufficient time (several seconds) for students to respond or formulate a response
(e) Referential questions	Genuine questions to which the teacher does not know the answer
(f) Seeking clarification	(1) Teacher asks a student to clarify something the student has said (2) Student asks teacher to clarify something the teacher has said
(g) Confirmation checks	Making sure that teacher has correctly understood learner's contribution
(h) Extended learner turn	Learner turn of more than one clause
(i) Teacher echo	(1) Teacher repeats a previous utterance (2) Teacher repeats a learner's contribution
(j) Teacher interruptions	Interrupting a learner's contribution
(k) Extended teacher turn	Teacher turn of more than one clause
(l) Turn completion	Completing a learner's contribution for the learner
(m) Display questions	Asking questions to which teacher knows the answer
(n) Form-focused feedback	Giving feedback on the words used, not the message

Reference

Walsh, S. (2006). *Investigating Classroom Discourse*. Routledge.

Teaching English through Mexican history

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Introduction

Learning English in Mexico relies its importance on the fact that it helps us communicate with others more efficiently, understand the world, and promote the use of the language in meaningful contexts. The premise of this text lies in the need to provide a proposal that promotes teaching English (and learning) through Mexican history. Therefore, the main question was how to achieve language learning outcomes using historical elements that encouraged meaningful communication.

This proposal comes as a result of active Action Research where different strategies were designed. Once the strategies were designed it was necessary to validate them in order to obtain answers to the main question: was it possible to promote English language learning through Mexican history?

It is necessary to understand that the main idea of this text is to share the insights of an Action Research process that aimed to promote the development of linguistic competencies to enable effective communication in English. It is crucial to highlight the responsibility of every English teacher to manage processes and actions that not only facilitate students to master the programmatic content but also to efficiently contribute to the achievement of expected learning outcomes, enabling effective language use in diverse situations and contexts.

English teachers then, play a pivotal role in guiding students not only towards a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum but also in fostering the practical application of language skills, ensuring that learners are adept at utilizing English in real-world scenarios. In order to achieve this, a multifaceted approach is required, the selection of appropriate instructional materials, the creation of engaging learning environments, and the implementation of strategies that stimulate higher-order

Thinking Skills. To do so, this proposal seeks not only to equip teachers with activities that help students with their language proficiency but also to empower them to navigate and communicate effectively in the complexities of various linguistic situations, thereby fostering a holistic and practical grasp of the English language.

This document addresses four main sections to explore the proposal and understand its design and application. The first one is theoretical background. In this section, it is possible to highlight the main references that support the idea of implementing a proposal based on teaching English using historical features as a main source. The next section refers to the methodology, as it has been stated above this is an Action Research based investigation. Therefore, the results recapitulate the main findings and state them compared with the theoretical background as a way to explain the results. Finally, the discussion part serves as a critical component that lets us understand how the proposal is aimed to satisfy students' and teachers' needs in terms of learning and teaching beyond the curricular changes that might happen over the years.

Theoretical Background of the proposal

Understanding the theoretical foundations in the current didactic proposal helps to envision the methodologies employed in the distinct ways of comprehending the design of the different strategies proposed to teach English through Mexican history and how to connect them with intracultural principles.

English teaching methods

Recognizing the inherent strengths within different approaches, the objective is to create an eclectic methodology that capitalizes on the strengths of each, forging a dynamic and comprehensive didactic proposal. This theoretical background explores different teaching methods, looking at their specific features and principles. From traditional grammar-based approaches to communicative language teaching

and immersion techniques used to design strategies that include Mexican history features as trigger points.

Based on the behaviorist theory, the Audiolingual method is often associated with the structural view of language. Students engage in extensive drilling of grammatical patterns and vocabulary through repetitive exercises, often in the form of dialogues. According to Richards (2009), “the role of grammar is perhaps one of the most controversial issues in language teaching”; however, it has regained its “rightful place in the language curriculum” (p.145). Therefore, the focus on repeated drills and mimicry can contribute to the development of accurate and natural-sounding spoken language.

The second method to be considered for this proposal is the grammar-based method, also known as a deductive or rule-driven approach, is a language teaching methodology that centers on explicit instruction of grammatical rules and structures. Swan (1998) suggests that the teaching of grammar should be determined by the needs of the students. In this way, the grammar-based method provides a structured framework for learning grammar.

As it is also important to consider other language skills, such as speaking and listening, another explored approach is Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP). Within this approach, the teacher introduces a situation that contextualizes the topic to be addressed and where language can be presented. Afterward, students practice the language using reproduction techniques (oral or written). It could be said that the PPP approach resembles the audiolingual approach; however, the fact that it is contextualized within a situation and provides students with opportunities to produce their own examples sets it apart (Ramirez, 2020)

Understanding the importance of providing students with different learning experiences that enable them to use language and their high-order skills leads to the introduction of other methods such as Task and Project work. It is vital to create language classrooms where it is not only language practice that happens there, but

also, and most importantly, a place where genuine and meaningful communication takes place.

Prabhu was among the first authors to popularize the idea of task-based learning, as he speculated that "students were more willing to learn if they were focused on a linguistic problem rather than on a specific language form" (Harmer, 2001, p. 86). In this way, the use of tasks helps to facilitate communication and interaction in meaningful and various ways. Regarding the Project work, it is aimed to create different opportunities for learning as through problem-solving and cooperative activities students focus on using the language to succeed and present their findings about how they solved the problem.

Finally, the last method to be addressed is Content-based instruction. So as to work with cultural elements, it is important to consider a method that focuses on real-world content. The primary focus of this method is on teaching both language skills and content simultaneously. Students learn the language in the context of meaningful content, making the learning experience more authentic and purposeful. Content-based instruction refers to content as the substance or subject that is learned or communicated through language. It seeks to prioritize meaning and the content of the real world to ensure the connection between reality and the student's own experience (Ramirez, 2020 p. 55).

Inter and intracultural principles

For Ramirez (2020) "interculturality goes beyond the idea of bringing together individuals from different backgrounds; it involves understanding culture and cultures from what is known and needs to be known". Culture is defined as the explicit and implicit patterns of behavior acquired and transmitted through symbols, constituting the distinctive realization of human groups, including their incorporation into artifacts; the essential core of culture is composed of traditional ideas and especially assigned values (William, 1980 cited in Holmes, 2020).

Therefore, interculturality perceives and accepts all cultures as a reflection of themselves, where none is considered superior or equal, but rather as a moment and space where they can converge in such a way that both can express themselves. Cultural diversity underscores the need to view the school as a space where various cultures converge and share daily life.

Intraculturality, on the other hand, aims to maintain the culture and the culture inside the culture. Therefore, it arises as a response to the need to include minorities that find themselves subordinated in daily contact with majority cultures. This implies that schools must place special emphasis on the preservation and extension of cultural pluralism, aiming to view education as a transformative process.

Methodology

In order to generate this proposal, an Action Research based investigation was necessary. The cyclical process of action research involves a systematic sequence of steps that researchers follow to address a specific problem or improve a situation. In this case, the question to be answered was how to promote English learning through strategies that included historical elements of Mexican history. Intending to answer this question, it was necessary to follow the cycle of the Action Research proposed by Elliot (1996).

In the first step of the process *Planning*, researchers develop a plan for addressing the identified problem. This stage is referred to by McKernan (1988) as the moment when a situation that requires improvement is identified. It is along this revision that the hypothesis or ideas to solve this problem emerge. After that, in this very same stage, a global action plan is designed. This plan includes the strategies and interventions intended to be implemented.

It was after observing students' attitudes towards learning English that a pattern could be identified, every time they encountered themselves with names of people, places, or objects they could not understand they always said English was

difficult. Many students approached the language with difficulty and limited motivation as they made establishments such as “*why doesn't it say Juanito instead of John?*”. It was when they were given materials that said “Doroteo Arango also known as Pancho Villa” that they started to make comments as “Lucía also known as Luchi”; therefore, the idea of this proposal emerged.

Talking about this specific proposal, the problem identified comes from the need to provide students with meaningful insights about learning English. This is a global proposal that aims to help students learn English using their previous knowledge and experiences as a starting point. This proposal sought to shed light on teachers' toolbox providing them (and students) with activities that helped them work with different language functions beyond any particular curriculum.

In this step, researchers are also allowed to draft the strategies, set goals, and establish criteria for success. In this phase, all the strategies were designed based on the Experiential Learning Approach developed by Kolb in 1983 (2014). As a didactic proposal, this research seeks to adapt strategies and activities to this model in order to create spaces for students to continuously improve their command of the language.

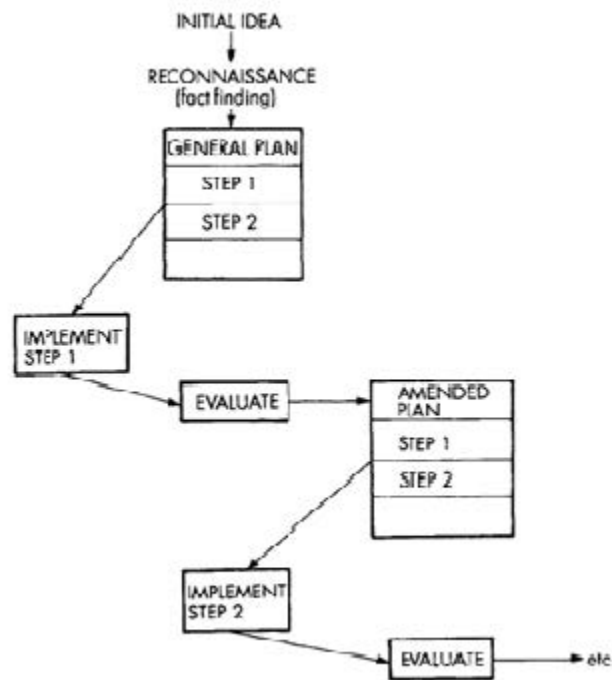
The next step is the implementation of the plan. For McKernan (2001), this step consists of implementing the planned interventions or changes in a real-world setting. Throughout this phase, regular communication, feedback sessions, and opportunities for participants to share their perspectives and insights contribute to a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the success of the interventions. It was during this time that students participated in different activities based on the Experiential Learning approach where historical elements were used to foster language learning.

The next and final step is *Evaluation*. In this step, researchers reflect on the outcomes and analyze the data collected, reflect on the outcomes, and consider the implications for future actions. Based on the reflection and data analysis,

researchers make informed decisions about whether to revise the interventions and strategies. In this stage it could be possible to identify how to interconnect Mexican history, Experiential learning approach, and language learning methodologies in order to design strategies that helped students to learn English and achieve language outcomes.

Figure 1

Action Research Model interpreted by Elliot



Source: *La investigacion - Accion en educacion*. Elliott, J. (1996).

The purpose of action research "is to solve the immediate and pressing daily problems of professionals in practice" (McKernan, 2001, p. 24). This allows teachers to have a greater sense of agency and responsibility in the process. Furthermore, it does not limit itself to observing or analyzing from an external perspective but promotes direct participation, decision-making, and the implementation of concrete actions. This approach considers that "research is a form of self-critical study... and

that human behavior is greatly influenced by the environment in which it occurs" (McKernan, 2001, pp. 24-27).

Results

It is considered that, for the design of didactic strategies, basic elements of planning must be taken into account, such as the subject, competencies to be developed, expected learning outcomes, didactic sequence, resources, time, and, of course, assessment. Additionally, great importance is given to various communication techniques, assuming that the purpose of teaching a foreign language is to participate effectively in language-related social practices, and therefore, communication.

In order to design the different strategies, as part of the planning state, it was necessary to choose a learning model with the intention to adapt it and include some features of the selected methods and approaches for learning and teaching English. In this case the selected approach was the Experiential Learning Approach which served as a basis for the proposal. This approach consists of the idea that individuals acquire knowledge, skills, and insights through active engagement with real-world experiences. Those experiences are tailored to the needs and interests of the learner and involve collaboration with others focused on the historical elements of Mexico.

In the first step of the cycle suggested by Kolb (1983) *Concrete experience* learning is grounded in concrete, real-world experiences. This involves encountering situations that provide a tangible context for understanding concepts, theories, or skills. In this step, we hook the idea of activating previous knowledge (sociocultural approach) by having students focus on the historical aspect that will be used to generate knowledge.

In this stage is where students encounter themselves with their previous knowledge about historical elements of Mexico, language functions that will be worked with that content, and as Kolb says, "find meaning from deep involvement in

experience” (2014, p. 145). For the purpose of this stage in the design of the strategies, students must connect with what they already know in order to give them purpose for their own learning management.

The next step is *Reflective observation*. After engaging in an experience, learners are encouraged to reflect on what they have learned, how it connects to existing knowledge, and how it can be applied in different contexts. Reflection helps in the internalization of learning. Here is where some features of audiolingual and grammar-based instruction take place as the teacher’s guide and scaffolding is crucial for students to reflect on the language. Here is where students will be presented the content, where they will gain ability and awareness of how the language works.

The third step in this cycle is *Abstract conceptualization*. This stage recognizes that individuals bring diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and prior knowledge to the learning process. It allows for personalized learning experiences tailored to the needs and interests of the learner. Task and project work place their contributions in this stage as students are part of the controlled practice and are presented with some specific micro-skills, strategies, and the process involved in the development of the task. This task uses as a primary focus the history of Mexico where students can participate in different situations such as visiting a Museum where the Prehispanic cultures are presented.

Finally, during the *Active experimentation* learners are encouraged to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills in different contexts, refining their understanding through trial and error. In this final step, students are focused on the task’s objective as well as in the social interaction which are essential part of the communicative competence. In this step, students are able to experiment with the language in contextualized situations such as the museum presentation as they gather information from what has been presented and are able to use the new knowledge as a starting point for the concrete experience, so the cycle begins one more time.

Figure 2

Adapted model for designing strategies for Teaching English Through Mexican History



Ramírez, C. (2018) *Enseñanza del inglés a través de la historia de México*
[PhD Thesis] Colegio de Estudios de Posgrado de la Ciudad de México

Learning strategies are considered by Monereo as those that help "the student to learn different curricular contents in a meaningful and autonomous way" (p. 11). Therefore, it is necessary to understand that a strategy involves how and what is learned, as, in the words of Schmeck, "strategies are always used consciously" (in Monereo, p. 19).

The results of this proposal report the importance of basing the design of strategies on the Experiential learning approach as well as using some features of different teaching methodologies such as Meaningful learning, Sociocultural approach, and Task-based learning in order to develop a positive and more complete higher level of thinking while learning English.

Discussion

To lessen the impact that these deep-rooted ideas have that grammar is not important, it is necessary to provide learners with elements that go from traditional grammar-focused methods to communicative language teaching and immersion techniques. Acknowledging the idea of concepts as “selective perception”, “selective attention” and selective retention”, it is necessary to change attitudes towards content to teach English and turn teachers’ attention to new ways and perspectives to include different historical elements when teaching. It is important to suppress the idea of teaching grammar because it is in some ways easy to do and to test, but rather seeing it as part of the process that leads to effective communication.

It must not be assumed that any of the steps in the design of the strategies and their implementation lack relevance as many facets of communication offer a substantial understanding of the communication process. Regarding specifically to the proposal, to determine the relevance, effectiveness, and coherence of the present research, it is necessary to start from the awareness suggested by its genesis, that is, to accurately answer the research question and consequently understand how the relationships between learning English and the processes for teaching a foreign language were triggered through the effective integration of inputs related to the use of historical elements in Mexico.

Using the history of Mexico provides opportunities to approach language functions in an interesting, real, factual, continuous, and precise manner for the achievement of national and international standards related to foreign language proficiency. Additionally, students become more engaged in the English session when the activities presented have a direct connection to their prior knowledge as intra- and interculturality promote metacognitive development for the attainment of English learning goals.

This engagement was measured using a Likert scale (Appendix 1) where students were questioned about whether they found the implementation experience

attractive and motivating. Results showed that the participants increase their likelihood of the English class as they were able to improve their understanding in a foreign language.

Answering the research question that prompted this proposal, helped to understand that the development of strategies and activities relies its effectiveness on the teacher's intervention to generate successful educational practices. Therefore, educators should identify the stages of the experiential learning approach in order to implement successfully the proposal.

It is crucial to understand cultural processes in which one is involved, as this promotes more meaningful learning for the student. To achieve this, it is also necessary to comprehend the syncretism that arises between the signifier and the signified in a foreign language, and the cultural elements of Mexico contribute to the attainment of international standards by fostering the development of levels corresponding to the Common European Framework of Reference for Foreign Language Learning.

Finally, it can be said that research as a way of perceiving things, as a path that allows us to delve into the root of the problems that afflict and deteriorate our systems, is a step towards more effectively seeking answers that enable us to provide an effective solution to what we are investigating. While it is true that the researcher's task is not one of superficially searching for questions that seem to answer themselves or that only require empirical evidence for their response, it is also true that the questions must originate from the reality of the individual, the problems they face in everyday life, and their essential substance: the individual and their relationship with their environment.

This work aimed to link what has so far been referred to as "teaching English through historical elements of Mexico" and the response (solution) pursued by the implementation of this didactic proposal, starting from and towards *complexity* understood by Morin (1994) as a quantitative phenomenon at first glance, but when

examined more closely, it also involves uncertainties, indeterminacies, and random phenomena as it is "always related to chance."

Therefore, teaching English through Mexican history seeks to become a model that understands cultural diversity, social phenomena, and the environment in which students operate, contributing to the formative approach in education, without neglecting the primary focus, the teaching and learning of English.

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Appendix 1

Escala Likert para la valoración de la implementación de la propuesta didáctica “La enseñanza del inglés a través de la historia de México”

Indique en qué medida está de acuerdo con cada afirmación, utilizando la siguiente escala de Likert.

1. Totalmente en desacuerdo
 2. En desacuerdo
 3. Neutral
 4. De acuerdo
 5. Totalmente de acuerdo
- a. Las actividades que integran elementos históricos de México en la clase de inglés me motivan para participar más activamente.
 - b. Siento que mi motivación aumenta cuando las actividades de la clase de inglés están relacionadas con mi entorno y experiencias personales.
 - c. Creo que las actividades que incorporan mis conocimientos previos, relacionados a la historia de México, en la clase de inglés me ayudan a comprender mejor los temas y mejorar mi desempeño académico.
 - d. La inclusión de elementos históricos de México en las lecciones de inglés me hace sentir más conectado/a con la materia.
 - e. Cuando las actividades de la clase de inglés se relacionan con mi entorno, me siento más entusiasmado/a por aprender y participar en las discusiones.

The Wisdom Treasure Hunt: Reading for ESL students

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Introduction

“Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge, it is thinking that makes what we read ours” John Locke.

Reading is a significant skill for learning and life. Most people read in everyday life for multiple purposes, either for a practical aim to a theoretical one. Knowledge is gained through reading; therefore, it is one of the main competencies to develop in students at Escuela Normal. It will allow them to keep learning throughout their lives and become, as UNESCO suggests, lifelong learners and future teachers who can share and spread their love for reading to their future students.

Reading in a foreign language, such as English, extends the readers’ field of learning and helps students become citizens of the world by learning about different cultures, customs, and ideas that open their minds. Nord Anglia Education (2017) mentions that reading is important because it helps you discover the world as it unlocks new interests and opens our eyes to different places, people, and ideas. Reading also stimulates creativity and imagination and improves focus as it centers the reader’s attention entirely on the task at hand, immersing them in information and improving their concentration and memory. On the language skills side, reading improves vocabulary and communication. “Other benefits to reading for pleasure include text comprehension and grammar, positive reading attitudes, pleasure in reading in later life, increased general knowledge” (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, as cited in Department of Education, 2012, p. 3).

Students might find reading comprehension a challenging process when they try to understand ideas, and deduce or infer, not only in their first language (L1) but

also in a second language. Reading effectively and efficiently is a vital skill for students to develop new vocabulary and work on cognitive strategies that will make them feel more confident in lifelong learning.

Students need to read a lot to become fluent readers. “Evidence suggests that reading for pleasure is an activity that has emotional and social consequences” (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, as cited in Department of Education, 2012, p. 4). However, as English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, it is understood that students must go beyond the act of reading. Comprehension of texts through different activities should engage them in an enjoyable learning process. Multiple techniques and strategies are required to make them active readers. Appropriate strategy use is essential. Different studies have found that effective readers are more aware of strategy use than less effective readers. This suggests that teaching, developing reading strategies, and reflecting on them at school is necessary to help students construct meaning and develop skills. “As we develop our skills in reading, the process often becomes more challenging. We are introduced to new vocabulary and more complex sentence structures” (“Skills you need”, 2024, para. 6).

Metacognition has an important role while reading. Vaezi (2006) explains that metacognition involves thinking about what you are doing while reading, and suggests that strategic readers do different things such as: identifying the purpose of the reading before doing it, identifying the form or type of the text, thinking about the general character, projecting the author's purpose for writing the text, choosing, scanning, or reading in detail and making continuous predictions about what will occur next, based on information obtained earlier, prior knowledge, and conclusions obtained within the previous stages. “Carrying out the previous steps requires the reader to be able to classify, sequence, establish whole-part relationships, compare and contrast, determine cause-effect, summarize, hypothesize and predict, infer, and conclude” (Vaezi, 2006, para. 10).

On that account, providing students with a challenging and engaging diversity of texts in English became a priority, so they could practice their second language reading skills as they also learned more vocabulary and grammar structures.

According to McNamara “the use of effective reading comprehension strategies is perhaps the most important means to helping readers improve comprehension and learning from text” (2007, p. xi). However, before working with reading strategies, appropriate reading materials were needed, as well as a more accurate understanding of the strategies students were using and what needed to be addressed in the classroom.

Mixed Method Approach

A mixed-method research design was implemented to expand the understanding of reading strategies used by students at CBENEQ and ways to improve them. As Creswell describes a mixed method, prioritizes "action-oriented research, such as in participatory action research and empowerment approaches" (2009, p. 74). A survey to gather information was used, as well as research on websites to develop reading in English, all these with a focus on action and solutions from the data collected.

This project was conducted with three groups from the bachelor’s degree programs in Preschool Education and Elementary Education at CBENEQ. Aspiring to become professional school teachers, these students undertake a curriculum that includes English language learning over six semesters. Like any other English as a Foreign Language course, students must develop the four language skills to communicate successfully in English. To achieve that goal, enough input is required. However, the school differs from other universities in several aspects, the main one is that they spend from three to four weeks per semester in different internship programs and, along with a great variety of events and holidays that take part in the institution, time is never enough to work on all the necessary activities to achieve all the expected goals.

Upon reflecting on the role of reading and its significance in a second-language classroom, we observed that students were not reading sufficiently.

Furthermore, when they did engage in reading, they lacked the use of strategies and techniques to help them understand what they were reading.

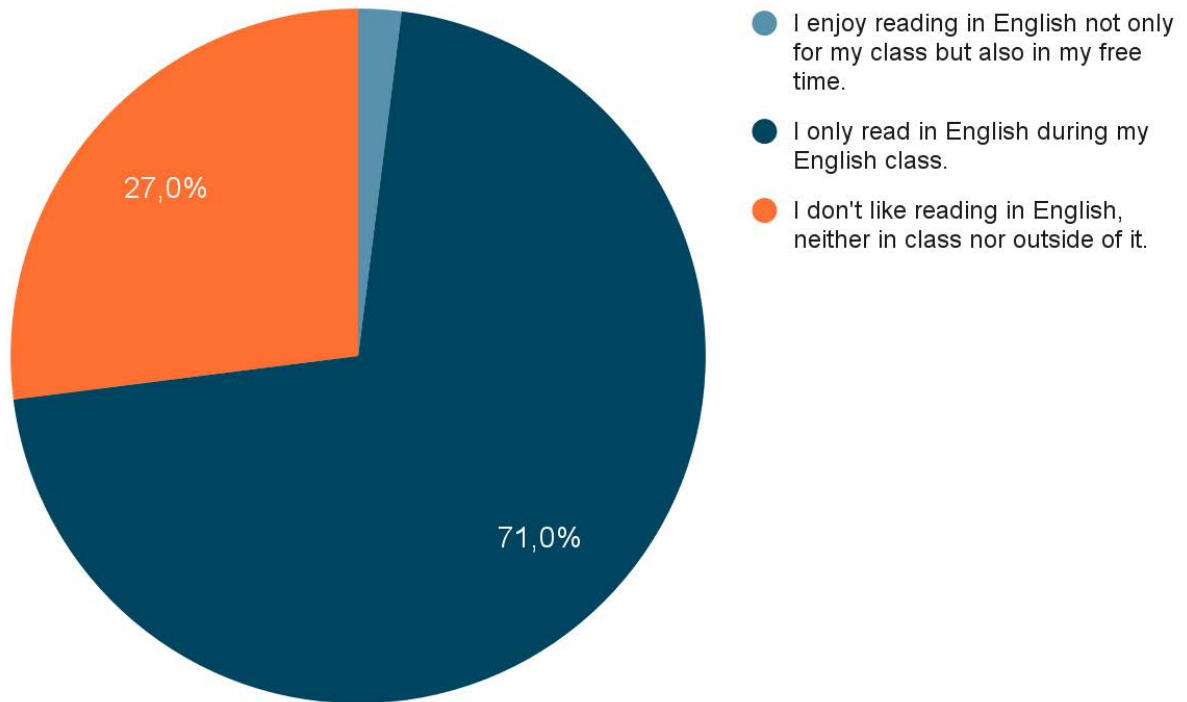
The project was developed from September 2021 until July 2022. The initial phase consisted of using a quantitative strategy. Creswell (2009) focuses on two strategies of inquiry: surveys and experiments. "Survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (Babbie, 1990 as cited in Creswell, p. 29). Surveys include questionnaires and structured interviews for data collection. In this research, a questionnaire was developed to gain insights into how students felt about reading in English. The aim was to understand the type of support they believed they needed when reading in class and at home, the strategies they acknowledged using during reading, their opinions on autonomous learning, and their experiences with online reading in English. This questionnaire was completed by 97 students in September 2021, including those in their fourth and sixth semesters of the bachelor's degree in Primary Education and the third semester of the bachelor's degree in Preschool Education.

Results

The reading strategies survey results revealed the strengths and also the opportunities to be improved in the students' reading habits. Some of the key findings are presented in the following figures:

Figure 1

English Reading Habits: Survey Results

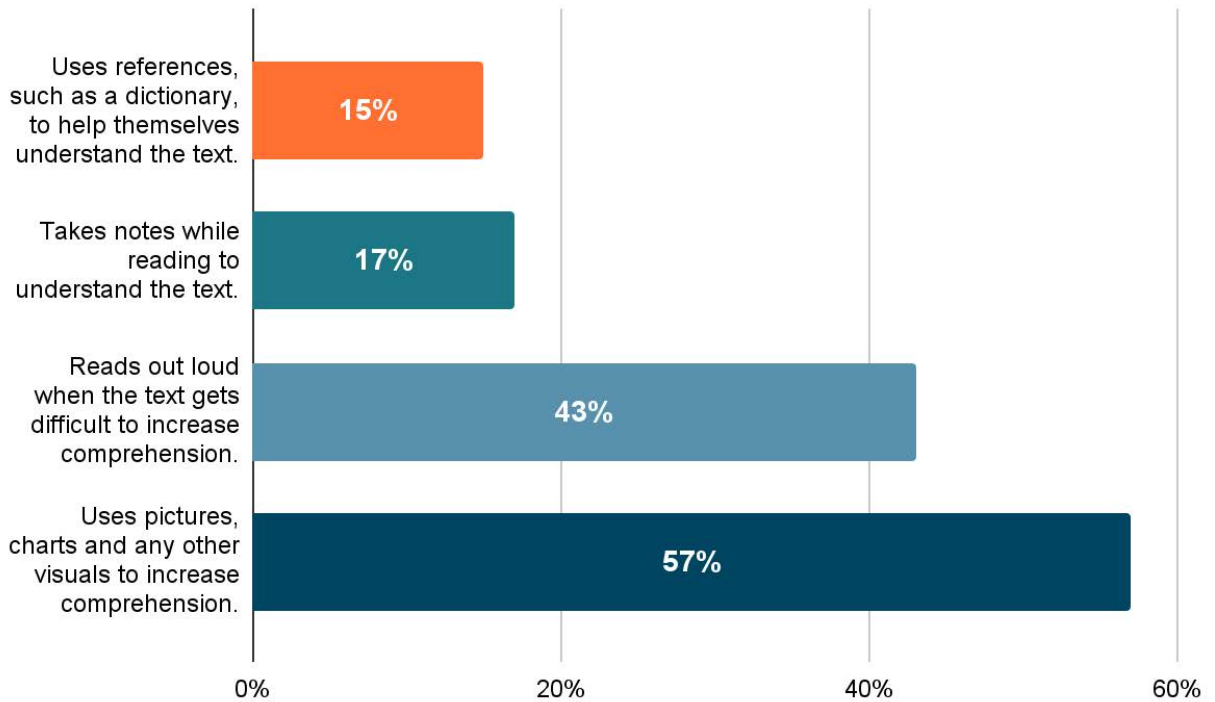


Note: The graph shows the results of the question 'Do you read in English?' answered by 97 students at CBENEQ.

Figure 1 provides insights into the reading habits of students in English, revealing that they typically do not engage in English reading unless it is a teacher-assigned task. A significant 71% of the students only read in English during their language class, which limits their opportunities for extra practice. Additionally, 27% of students openly express they do not enjoy reading in English, even when it is an academic task. Only a small 2% of the students mentioned they enjoy reading in English outside the classroom.

Figure 2

Reading Strategies: Survey Results

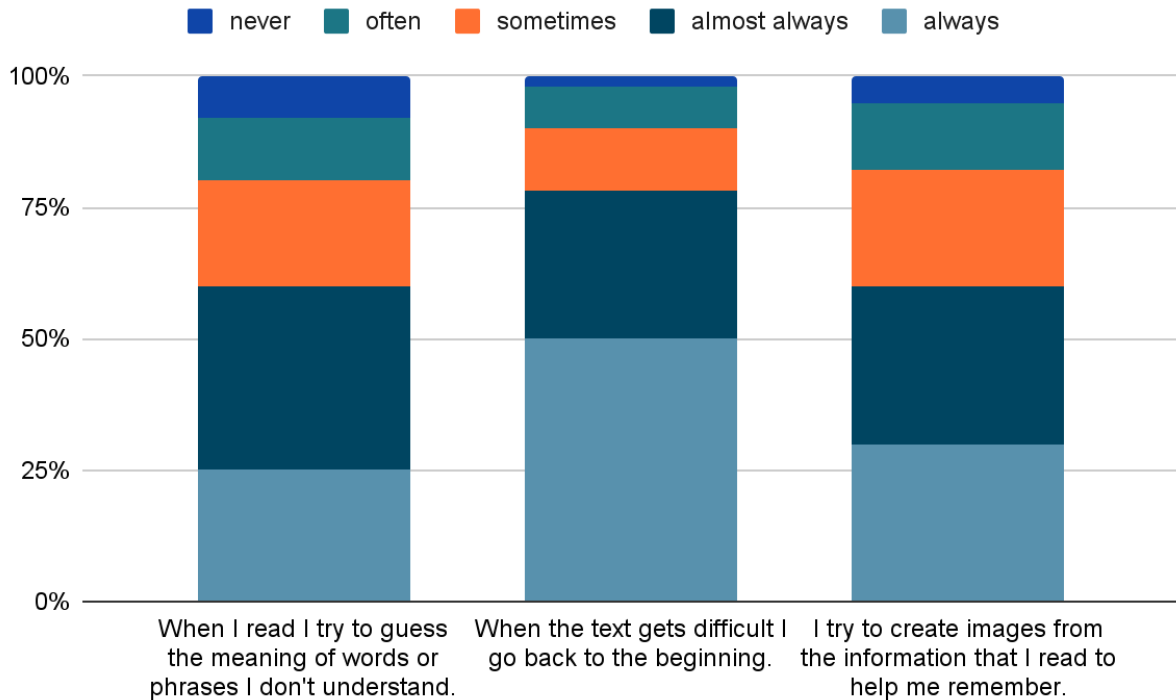


Note: The graph displays the percentage of students employing various techniques and strategies to understand English texts while reading.

As observed from the results in Figure 2, 57% of students use visuals to comprehend a text, and only 15% use references when reading. 43% of students need to read out loud as it helps them increase understanding. It is noticeable that other types of strategies need to be taught and developed in the classroom to allow students to understand texts that have no visuals and to make them skillful when reading complex texts by using references and taking notes.

Figure 3

Reading Strategy Usage Frequency: Survey Results



Note: This figure illustrates the frequency of reading strategies used by 97 students at CBENEQ, based on survey results.

Finally, Figure 3 reveals the reading strategies employed by the students. When reading a text in English, most of them try to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases, as well as create mental images from the information they read. A common strategy revealed in this survey is that they start reading the text again from the beginning when they don't understand it. These results confirmed the need to develop additional reading strategies that could be used according to their reading purposes at different times.

As educators, it was imperative to continue enhancing this major skill to ensure students have enough input in English. Due to the lack of books in English in the institution, a search for texts was initiated. Quality resources were needed in this

language for students to become avid readers. Another concern was that students could not afford to purchase books or any other resources online. Therefore, free, high-quality options in English were required. The journey became an intensive search for such reading materials.

This action contributed to the finding of several websites offering suitable resources for the English program at Escuela Normal, from A1 to C1 levels. Armed with these findings, the decision was made to integrate these materials into English lessons, combining them with various reading strategies to address the challenges students were facing. After one semester of utilizing these materials and implementing different reading techniques, the main findings are shared here.

The importance of reading, reading strategies, and quality free access material for ESL teachers is essential to use in all the courses to demonstrate that reading can be enjoyable and it is an opportunity to increase cultural knowledge in the students and their lifelong learning.

In the following paragraphs, the most significant findings are presented, as well as some ideas to develop reading strategies and reading skills in pre-service teachers at Escuela Normal. Using various free sites and resources, along with the appropriate lesson planning and effective reading strategies, we propose a framework to assist ESL teachers in fostering autonomous reading and reading comprehension. These user-friendly sites facilitate the development of reading skills, allowing students to engage with enjoyable content on their mobile devices, tablets, or computers.

Epic (<https://www.getepic.com/>) is a platform designed for children, making it particularly suitable for preschool and elementary education programs. It includes a variety of reading materials, complete books, novels, and comics. Some books also feature audio. To use Epic, students need to create an account and have internet access. Teachers can create a class and assign readings or books to their students. Both students and teachers can monitor and track their progress, making it ideal for gamification. One downside of the site is that students have a limited amount of time to read each day, and access to some books requires payment.

Given the abundance of free narrative texts on this site, students can work in teams and complete story maps by identifying the setting, the characters, the problem, important events, and outcomes, fun ways of having it done is by creating a sandwich or hamburger diagram adding one element from the ones mentioned before as each layer of the dish. It's crucial to find suitable texts for their reading level, and Epic provides a helpful indicator in the form of Lexile levels.

Another valuable resource on Epic is the biographies section, featuring a wide array of famous characters. This section proves beneficial when teaching the simple past tense. Students then can make a timeline with the main events from each character and present them in class.

ReadWorks (<https://www.readworks.org/>) is a versatile site that provides a wide variety of reading materials organized by subject, topic, level, type of questions, and genre. It includes E-books and voice audio, with many texts featuring items such as challenge and boost articles, as the site names them. ReadWorks offers various settings options to work with, allowing users to adjust the playback speed of the audio, expand text, enlarge text, use split-screen, and access guided reading tips. Materials can be printed to work in class with no internet access or work online.

To access the full range of features, both students and teachers are required to create accounts. Once teachers have created classes, it is easy to link them to Google Classroom. The site also offers free professional development webinars for registered teachers.

The variety of materials on ReadWorks enables teachers to use them in many ways, always considering the Lexile level to suit the texts according to the students' level. One effective approach is assigning daily or weekly reading tasks to students from the "Article-a-Day" sets, provided by the website. For students with internet access, human-voice audio is a great option to practice pronunciation while listening to the reading.

ReadWorks also offers a classification of the activity-type questions including open-ended questions, inference, text structure, and vocabulary, among others. Some articles feature an option called "step reads" as the text can vary in difficulty

level according to your students' needs. Utilizing a projector or internet access, teachers can project a book, students can listen to it and then use it as a model for storytelling in groups from preschool or elementary education. You can also assign them for homework and then bring the exercises to the class, using the flip classroom model.

USA Learns (<https://www.usalearns.org/LearnEnglish>) goes beyond being a mere reading site; it serves as a comprehensive English course, allowing teachers to create classes and even download diplomas for students upon completion. If you are specifically interested in reading, there is a dedicated section organized by topics. Many readings include both a basic and a full story to differentiate complexity. Additionally, the site features a vocabulary check section and comprehension activities.

Like the previous sites mentioned, users need to create an account to access the material. Teachers can monitor the time students spend on the site. However, they cannot view the specific activities completed, which may be a drawback for some educators. This site is recommended for teachers who can assign online activities for their students.

English for Everyone (<https://englishforeveryone.org/Topics/Reading>) is a website designed exclusively for printable material, offering a variety of resources covering reading, grammar, and writing. The Reading Comprehension section is clearly organized by level and type of text. It offers a wide array of texts that cover different reading strategies, so teachers can find a text according to the purpose of the class. Additionally, the site also includes answers and explanations for those answers.

Being a free site, it does have a significant number of advertisements and pop-up windows. However, users are not required to log in to print materials. For those who prefer an ad-free experience, workbooks are available for purchase.

English for Everyone is an excellent resource for collecting supplementary materials, offering tons of readings tailored to specific purposes and levels. If you want to set some specific time during the week for reading activities, you can have

different texts for students to read. You can ask each student to draw a grid in his or her notebook to mark the reading they have completed. Each week, they can choose different texts, answer exercises, and self-correct them using the provided answer key. As students complete the grids with various texts you can assign a grade for extra reading activities or give them a quiz, depending on your needs.

Commonlit (<https://www.commonlit.org/>) boasts a wide collection of texts organized by topic and level, and the site offers complete lesson plans. Teachers have the flexibility to create groups, assign materials, and seamlessly integrate with Google Classroom for efficient assignment distribution. The option to print material is available for in-class use with no internet access, and there is also an online mode. Both teachers and students can monitor progress, and students have the option to listen to the story and adjust the font size. However, one downside is that texts may be challenging for beginner readers. As a teacher with advanced-level groups, these readings are perfect to work in class or as autonomous work.

Conclusions

Reading in English is key to having enough input and fostering the development of cognitive strategies. However, the constraints of time within the courses often limit the range of activities implemented to achieve desired outcomes with students. Consequently, having a diverse array of options for sourcing materials, whether for homework, as a reading project or in-class activities becomes indispensable.

The showcased websites provided here are a good option for teachers at Escuelas Normales. Not only are they freely accessible, but they also offer high-quality content, enabling teachers to develop and implement a wide variety of strategies in class.

The varieties of texts available on these sites allow students exposure to various writing styles, fostering and understanding different contexts and tones. There is no doubt that reading in English will benefit students since it not only

enhances their language proficiency but also broadens their perspectives and contributes to an overall improvement in communication skills.

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