

Unveiling Pre-Service Teachers' Attitudes Toward Teaching: The Role of Pedagogical Practicums

Develando las actitudes de los profesores en formación hacia la enseñanza:
el papel de las prácticas pedagógicas

Yimer Andrés Morales Cortés*

Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, Tunja, Colombia

This article reports a research developed at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia with a group of pre-service teachers that was immersed in an English teaching practicum. The main purpose of this inquiry was to find out the role that practicum exerted on novice teachers' attitudes towards teaching. Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, verbal reports, and artifacts. The results evidenced the English practicum provided the teachers being trained opportunities to consider what teaching entails. Thus, the participants were able to reflect, develop awareness, positive attitudes, and satisfaction towards their teaching practice.

Key words: English language teaching, pedagogical practicum, pre-service teachers' attitudes.

Este artículo reporta una investigación desarrollada en la Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, con un grupo de profesores en formación, quienes estuvieron inmersos en una práctica pedagógica de inglés. El propósito principal fue averiguar el papel que esa práctica tuvo en la actitud de los profesores en formación hacia la enseñanza. Los datos fueron recogidos por medio de entrevistas, cuestionarios, reportes orales y manuscritos. Los resultados evidencian que la práctica de enseñanza de inglés ofreció a los profesores en formación oportunidades de considerar lo que conlleva enseñar. Así, los participantes pudieron reflexionar, desarrollar conciencia, buenas actitudes y satisfacción hacia la enseñanza.

Palabras clave: actitudes de los profesores en formación, enseñanza de la lengua inglesa, práctica pedagógica.

* E-mail: y.amc90@hotmail.com

How to cite this article (APA, 6th ed.): Morales Cortés, Y. A. (2016). Unveiling pre-service teachers' attitudes toward teaching: The role of pedagogical practicums. *PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 18(2), 47-61. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15446/profile.v18n2.49591>.

This article was received on March 12, 2015, and accepted on February 5, 2016.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Consultation is possible at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

Introduction

This article reports a study developed with a group of novice teachers that was immersed in a pedagogical practicum. The research describes the role this space of practice had on the students-teachers' attitudes towards teaching. As found along the inquiry, the teachers in formation had several opportunities to consider what teaching involves. Thus, the research question which led this inquiry was: What is the role of the English pedagogical practicum carried out at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC) on a group of ninth semester pre-service teachers' attitudes toward teaching?

The desire for developing this investigation was based on the need to have a better understanding of the process of teachers' development throughout the teaching practicum and of the different factors that were involved in this practice. One important feature to take into consideration in pre-service teachers' training is the fact of facing real teaching environments and all the implications this act brings to novice teachers' progress. When they are exposed to classroom environment they start to consider teaching as a difficult practice. The issue is that on some occasions student-teachers are not aware of the origin of those thoughts and they are affected by assumptions which emerge from lack of reflection.

Consequently, it is important that teachers in training evaluate their work in real teaching spaces in order to reflect on and understand what teaching implies. In this spirit, it is necessary to question the opportunities of practice that are provided to teachers in their tertiary studies. It is relevant in order to validate the meaningfulness of those practicums and their articulation to novice teachers' professional development.

Literature Review

Nowadays, teaching is perceived as a professional practice rather than a technical one. Some time ago teaching was conceived as "a craft profession, built on a conscience of craft, rather than a more conventional

ideal of professionalism" (Pratte & Rury, 1991, p. 62). Teaching has another focus today, as Britzman (2003) states: "Teaching is the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing and what one can become" (p. 31). Teaching is professed as an opportunity to grow intellectually as well as humanly. Moreover, Hattie (2015) claims "the art of teaching is to balance the need for surface knowledge with deep processing of this knowledge." (p. 25). It means, teaching goes beyond presenting data but, it relates to transforming content itself according to what is needed. Consequently, there are factors that take place in the formation of teachers, factors such as prior experiences, knowledge trajectory, and practical input.

In this spirit, the practicum experience is a very important component of teachers' preparation. Barton, Hartwig, and Cain (2015) state that the practicum is a key component of teacher education. Also, Darling-Hammond (2010) asserts that "learning to practice in practice, with expert guidance, is essential to becoming a great teacher of students with a wide range of needs" (p. 40). Therefore, pedagogical practicum within this study is referred to as those determining spaces provided to novice teachers in order for them to reflect, learn, and develop professionally. Richards (2002) states that the teaching practicum enables and enriches student teachers' knowledge, skills, and experiences and, more importantly, is an opportunity to continue academic and professional growth.

In relation to the term "pre-service teacher" there is a close conception of what it means according to Schön: "It is the stage where beginning teachers obtain substantial on-campus coursework that they expect to transfer directly to the in-school practical setting where they begin to act as a teacher" (as cited in Wallace, 1991, p. 13). Being a pre-service teacher has to do with the act of acquiring content and practical knowledge. Content knowledge has to do with the different theories about teaching and practical knowledge relates to teaching experiences teachers in training have. Another view is

posed by Borg (2006) who states that pre-service teachers are those who start a teaching education program at the undergraduate level. A pre-service teacher is the person who is studying to be a teacher and also someone who starts sharing knowledge with others.

Referring to attitudes, Brown (2001) points out that "they are characterized by a large proportion of emotional involvement such as feelings, self, relationships in community" (p. 61). Thus, establishing a connection between attitudes and teaching allows considering relevant issues such as identity, feelings, and classroom setting, among others. Pre-service teachers develop or reaffirm attitudes toward their future profession based on the situations they go through in pedagogical practicums.

Also, there are several authors who have discussed novice teachers' perceptions of teaching and their origin. In that sense, Taylor and Littleton (2006) claim: "As student-teachers are learning to teach, they continually reconstruct their perceptions and beliefs of the teaching profession as well as their understanding of the tasks of teaching" (p. 22). In that sense, the spaces in which student-teachers face real teaching events determine their approach to this profession.

Then, it is normal to find that after novice teachers are involved in pedagogical practicums, they construct a set of attitudes towards teaching based on what they experience. Related to this issue, Danielewicz (2001) declares that "becoming a teacher involves the construction of a person identity" (p. 9). It implies developing a self-image connected to teaching. This author evidences the relevance that identity, which is close to attitudes, has on student-teachers' professional growth.

Another important aspect has to do with what pedagogical practicums imply within the student-teachers' formation process and the results that the act of connecting theory and practice has. Then, Sharkey (2009) provides relevant information related to integrating theory and practice in second language teachers' education. This author asserts that "when teachers reflect on a lesson or their practice, they must

go beyond description of what happened or 'how did it go?' and consider questions such as 'From this lesson, what did I learn about myself as a teacher?'" (p. 129). This view of reflection upon practice is what allows teachers to become qualified professionals. Connecting the previous information to this research, pedagogical practicums were conceived as spaces that allowed student-teachers to reflect upon their main work (teaching).

Wallace (1991) offers another view about the results of joining theory and practice. This author proposes some models in relation to language teachers' training such as the *reflective model*. In order to build up this model, Wallace starts introducing some terms in relation to teachers training and the origin of their knowledge. He introduces the term "received knowledge" to refer to the information that is based on data, facts, and theories, among others. He also presents the term "experiential knowledge" that refers to the knowledge product of practice, that is, "the trainee will have developed knowledge-in-action by practice of the profession, and will have, moreover, the opportunity to reflect on that knowledge-in-action" (Wallace, 1991, p. 15). The fact of being involved in a practicum allows the pre-service teachers to reflect upon what they do and the results their work has. That practice brings chances to evaluate and take actions on the teaching act and thus generate new understandings of it.

Method

This study was carried out within the qualitative paradigm since, as stated by Merriam (2002), the accomplishment of qualitative research involves the understanding of some circumstances in a specific context. Furthermore, due to the nature and scope of this inquiry it was framed under the applied type of research (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). It is applied because it established the role that some pedagogical experiences had within a specific population's beliefs about teaching. Furthermore, it focused on understanding a phenomenon or a reality.

Setting

This research was carried out at UPTC, a public university located in Tunja, Colombia. The participants were finishing their undergraduate program of Modern Languages (Spanish-English). This program is focused on training Spanish-English language teachers for the high school level. The pedagogical component of the program is centered on the articulation of theory and practice. The methodology of the program centers on an English component constructed under the principles of the communicative approach.

Participants

This research was carried out with a group of 10 ninth semester pre-service teachers, four men and six women. The participants' age range was from 21 to 27 years old. The participants were involved in activities of observation, assistantship, and practice at high schools from the first semester of the program. Those experiences were considered while working on the role the English pedagogical practicum I (which is the practicum corresponding to the ninth semester of the program) had on student-teachers' attitudes toward teaching. The participants agreed voluntarily to be part and contribute to the investigation.

Data Collection Instruments

The techniques used for collecting data were *elicitation* and *think aloud*. In the case of elicitation, the instruments employed were interviews (group and individual) and questionnaires. According to Wallace (1998) "they both involve eliciting something from informants: usually information about themselves and their teaching situation, or attitudes/opinions on some issue" (p. 47). In relation to the "think aloud technique," the instrument used was verbal reports. As stated by Ericsson and Simon (1993) verbal report is the way in which people verbalize the thoughts that come up in their mind as they are completing a task or immediately after a task has been completed.

Two questionnaires were used; they were piloted, examined, and adapted for being applied to the population involved in this inquiry¹ (Appendixes A and B). They were centered on examining the attitudes pre-service teachers developed along the interaction with the teaching experiences. Then, the questionnaires helped to corroborate the information obtained through the interviews, oral reports, and the student-teachers' artifacts.

Additionally, two semi-structured interviews were applied² (Appendixes C and D). As stated by David and Sutton (2004) "semi-structured interviews are non-standardized and are frequently used in qualitative analysis" (p. 87). This kind of interview allows the researcher to examine views and opinions from the interviewee. The interviews used in this research were focused on a protocol designed beforehand. Also, they were opened to explore the data that emerged during their application. In this mode, the information obtained was contrasted to explore the perceptions the pre-service teachers had about teaching when they started the practicum and the ones they developed during it.

Another instrument used was *verbal report*.³ It was used two times, taking advantage of the discussions that the pre-service teachers had in the tutoring class with the teacher of the English practicum (I). Verbal reports were recorded and analyzed in order to gather data regarding the novice teacher's conceptions about their work at schools. The last instrument employed was students' artifacts.⁴ Goetz and LeCompte (1984) define artifacts as things that people make and do. Examples of artifacts that may help to illuminate research questions include letters, e-mails, and personal logs, among others. In this research the student-teachers' artifact was a

¹ The questionnaires were originally in Spanish, taking into account the participants' mother tongue.

² The interviews were conducted in Spanish taking into account the participants' native language.

³ The verbal reports were developed in English due to the fact they were done during English classes.

⁴ The students' artifacts were done in English as part of the English practicum process.

reflective essay that they delivered to the teacher who directed the English practicum (1) subject. Then, these texts were explored in detail so that the data found in them revealed and confirmed some of the data that the other three instruments showed.

Findings

After gathering all the information, the methodology employed for data analysis was grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Moreover, triangulation was done in order to find the general patterns among the different instruments employed within this research. Triangulation as stated by Janesick (1998) is related to “the processes of using different data collection methods, data sources, analysis, or theories to check the validity of the findings” (p. 13). In this research two types of triangulation techniques

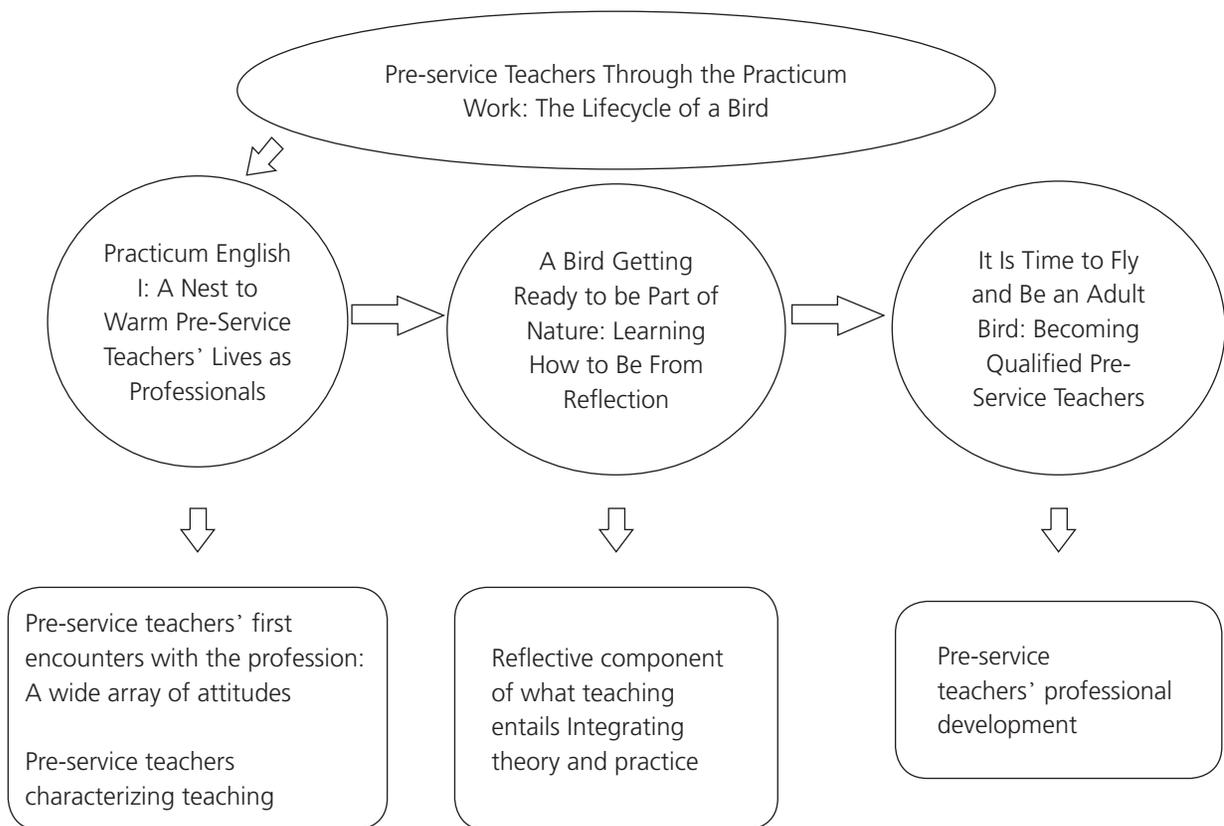
were used: first, triangulation by instruments and second, the researcher’s triangulation. Thus, this dynamic guaranteed a reliable and valid process of data analysis.

The data analysis produced a core category, three main categories, and five subcategories represented in Figure 1. Also, some abbreviations of the instruments for data collection were used in order to guide the reader.⁵

These abbreviations point out the source of each piece of evidence presented. The abbreviations are coded as follow: QS stands for questionnaires, IN stands for interviews, SA stands for students-teacher’s artifacts, and VR stands for verbal reports.

⁵ Part of the evidence was translated into English to make it comprehensible for non-Spanish speaking readers.

Figure 1. Core Category, Categories and Subcategories Created by the Researcher



Pre-Service Teachers Through the Practicum Work: The Lifecycle of a Bird

This core category makes an analogy of the way in which a bird is hatched, raised, and prepared for being an adult. As a bird is hatched, the pre-service teachers were born in a range of attitudes toward their profession. The novice teachers were settled in a nest (the English pedagogical practicum 1) that was the birthplace for good and bad feelings regarding the teaching profession. These attitudes were rooted in the varied circumstances they experienced. This aspect was considered by Zimbardo and Lieppe (1991) who argue that attitudes are formed by experience as well as by implicit learning. Participants experienced what might be called a dichotomy of feelings.

Practicum English I: A Nest to Warm Pre-Service Teachers' Lives as Professionals

The name of this category is a metaphor in which the English practicum 1 was considered as a nest. As happens in the life of birds, the nest is the space where they can live and start interacting with the outside world. The pre-service teachers as little birds could experience a range of feelings. These emotions and perceptions were a product of their involvement in this space of practice.

Recognized scholars in the area have mentioned that the fact of being involved in a pedagogical practice has implications in its participants' way of thinking. Taylor and Littleton (2006) assert that "as student-teachers are learning to teach, they continually reconstruct their perceptions and beliefs of the teaching profession as well as their understanding of the tasks of teaching" (p. 22). Thus, the spaces in which student-teachers face real teaching events define their approach to their profession. This situation is evidenced in the following excerpt from the pre-service teachers' considerations:

I think that this practicum offers a more realistic view, since what one always has in mind is an ideal classroom and when you face it in reality there is a shock between what you think and what it

really is. Then, this allows a change in the way we think making us consider teaching as a difficult but at the same time gratifying practice. (QS, Participant 1)

Due to the interaction with teaching, the pre-service teachers started to characterize teaching itself. There were times in which the novice teachers argued that teaching was hard work, but there were also moments in which they expressed teaching was a meaningful job for societal construction.

Pre-service teachers' first encounters with the profession: A wide array of attitudes. One of the aspects the pre-service teachers faced relates to high school students' response to learning the English language. Sometimes learners did not have the best behavior or commitment in classes. On the other hand, there were times in which high school students participated and were interested in learning. These issues rebounded in the novice teachers' feelings about their work and their attitudes toward teaching. The following evidence accounts for participants' response to a question which focused on knowing about those aspects that made the novice teachers feel bad during classes:

A circumstance that made me feel bad was students' low progress. In occasions they evidenced a lack of interest and motivation and they did not get involved in classes (QS, Participant 4)

Even though there were circumstances that made the pre-service teachers feel not so good while teaching a class, they showed understanding of those situations. The following evidence accounts for participants' verbal reports about their teaching experiences at schools and their comprehension of that labor:

I get demotivated when I spend time developing a lesson plan, looking for the best activities for students to learn and have fun; at the same time however, students do not value that and they do not work in class...anyway I understand that situation and the most important thing is to continue working in order to achieve students get interested to learn. (VR, Participant 7)

In this part, the awareness the pre-service teachers developed towards their teaching practice is clear. On the other hand, the novice teachers showed an attitude of satisfaction toward teaching when students revealed a commitment and interest in classes. This fact is manifested in the following excerpt:

I felt really happy when students were motivated and interested in class. I mean, when they asked me questions or when they gave opinions suggesting something related to the topics. (QS, Participant 2)

According to the previous information, the pre-service teachers started to consider teaching as a pleasant practice. This way of perceiving teaching was based on what they lived in their encounters with teaching itself.

Moreover, pre-service teachers faced circumstances regarding the relationship they had with in-service teachers at schools. The novice teachers manifested that on occasions they felt supported by in-service teachers. This aspect is revealed in the following excerpt from a pre-service teachers' verbal report:

The teacher helps me a lot with the activities I do. She supports me in the sense that she makes students work and respect me, for her it is important that learners respect me as teacher. (VR, Participant 2)

The other part of this interaction among student-teachers and in-service teachers is related to the negative interference in-service teachers had in classes, according to the pre-service teachers' points of view:

The teacher sometimes takes one hour of class, but not to make good suggestions to students but rather to say to them she is going to be tough. The teacher says to students she will send them to the coordinator...so it has been difficult for me to manage. (VR, Participant 6)

The previous aspects had an important impact on the way the pre-service teachers conceived learning. In the coming subcategory the pre-service teachers' visions of teaching as a product of these encounters with their profession are discussed.

Pre-service teachers characterizing teaching. This subcategory is focused on presenting the conceptions the participants showed about teaching due to their involvement in the pedagogical practicum. Simmons et al. (1990) claim that novice teachers translate the experiential world of their classroom into unique views of teaching. In that sense, the teachers in training developed conceptions of teaching due to their participation in teaching itself. As a product of this interaction, they expressed positive views about this job. This situation is proved in the following excerpt from the pre-service teachers' opinions:

Teaching is a way of interaction with others. I can interact with other people sharing my knowledge but at the same time I can acquire knowledge from others, in this case from students. (IN, Participant 5)

Teaching is a reciprocal act, always that I offer any knowledge to students they also offer me something I can learn. (IN, Participant 3)

In this respect, the novice teachers characterized teaching to be a process of knowledge co-construction. Also, teaching was considered as an opportunity to accomplish students' growth and a key component of culture and civilization.

Furthermore, the pre-service teachers characterized their work as a challenging and difficult practice. For them, teaching was a challenge due to aspects such as society evolution, amount of students, learners' behavior, and time, among other issues. This situation is revealed in the following excerpt that accounts for the participant's response to a question which focused on grasping the novice teachers' conceptions about teaching:

I think teaching is a labor that implies a lot responsibility and it requires from us to be primarily human beings. This is a profession in which it is needed to know about many knowledge fields and also it requires teachers to be ready to meet students' needs. (QS, Participant 2)

As seen above, in the same way the pre-service teachers encountered teaching they developed an attitude of awareness as to what that practice entailed

for them. In the following lines, the second category is described. Some pieces of information were included in order to explain, illustrate, and characterize in depth the issues presented in it.

**A Bird Getting Ready to be Part of Nature:
Learning How to Be From Reflection**

The name given to this category is a metaphor in which the pre-service teachers are viewed as birds that interact with their environment and learn the dynamics of their professional life. Thus, this category focused on describing the aspects that embodied the teaching practicum and the way they allowed the pre-service teachers to reflect upon their performance in teaching.

English practicum I has been the opportunity for me to realize the true reality in schools in a deep way. (SA, Participant 2)

Furthermore, within this category the novice teachers' perceptions about the fact of linking theory and practice inside the teaching process are presented. That circumstance is visible in the following excerpt from a participant's answer given on one of the questionnaires:

I could realize that theory is away from practice and the other way around, since theories are not always adapted to the context by teachers. (QS, Participant 3)

It is noteworthy how the student-teachers were continuously questioning the different issues that are behind teaching. Related to the previous data, we should remember Sharkey's (2009) recommendation regarding the way teachers must reflect so that they can achieve a proper sense of their identity as teachers. This view of reflection is an example of how the teachers in formation need to approach the understanding of what teaching means.

Reflective component of what teaching entails. This subcategory corresponds to the reflective part the English practicum I had on the pre-service teachers. The novice teachers manifested that it was necessary to try new ways of teaching English. This aspect was

revealed in some of the student-teachers' artifacts as presented in the following excerpt:

Taking into account this practicum, we need to have new ideas in English teaching. Some students reject this subject due to the lack of motivation that in most of times teachers do not take into consideration. (SA, Participant 7)

On the other hand, they showed the good results that taking into account students' likes brings:

Last class was very good because the students liked the activities; most of them told me that they liked the classes when I used songs at the beginning of the class. (VR, Participant 2)

Furthermore, the participants reflected on the classroom setting and its role in students' leaning process. Even when the student-teachers considered those bad situations that sometimes take place in classrooms, they understood that as teachers their work should be to search alternative options in order to improve those circumstances.

Integrating theory and practice. This subcategory is related to the considerations the pre-service teachers had in terms of joining theory and practice. The teachers in formation referred to aspects such as the usefulness of linking theory and practice. Also, they considered that sometimes it is difficult to integrate these two components because they do not always match due to the unique characteristics of contexts. That is why the pre-service teachers said one needed to transform or adapt theories according to the learning specific needs of a setting.

Sometimes theory given in the university does not form you as a teacher if you do not put all that knowledge into practice. (QS, Participant 5)

Every semester in the university it is given us a theorist conception of teaching... but it is in practice when you get involved with students and with all those social situations and issues that make you realize what teaching is about. (IN, Participant 3)

The pre-service teachers argued about the need of having opportunities in which all that they learned in their training years at the university could be put into practice within real teaching spaces. As introduced beforehand, integrating theory and practice allows pre-service teachers to improve their work. This can be said due to the opportunities of reflection that the novice teachers have while being involved in real teaching situations which include "received and experiential knowledge" (Wallace, 1991).

It Is Time to Fly and Be an Adult Bird: Becoming Qualified Pre-Service Teachers

The name of this category is an illustration of the final stage the pre-service teachers reached in the English pedagogical practicum I. This category relates to the time in which birds are ready to go out of the nest and become adults. This space of practice had a great impact on the student-teachers in terms of their professional development.

The pre-service teachers showed the contributions this pedagogical practicum brought them not just in terms of formal knowledge, but also in terms of values and humanistic aspects. They revealed that this experience allowed them to grow intellectually as well as humanly.

This experience helped me to improve different aspects that as teacher I must evaluate. In general, I can say that this was an experience that contributed to my life. (SA, Participant 6)

Pre-service teachers' professional development.

The student-teachers expressed that this practicum was an opportunity to grow as teachers as well as human beings. The novice teachers affirmed that this practicum contributed to their professional profile. They declared that after being immersed in this space of practice, they could learn about different features behind teaching that they did not know.

Along this experience, it was possible to reflect about my role and behavior, in order to improve my profile as teacher. (QS, Participant 5)

A contribution from this practicum has to do with my professional growth since thanks to the experiences lived I reflected about my characteristics as a teacher. I learned to know myself and now I am aware about what I need to improve. (QS, Participant 2)

The teachers in training recognized their strengths and weaknesses when teaching but, at the same time, showed their desire for working in order to improve. They took as reference their work and reflected upon the ways to make it more meaningful.

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

Through this study it was found that this practicum allowed teachers in training to consider what teaching entails and develop attitudes towards that job. Additionally, the novice teachers were involved in different circumstances at schools which permitted them to construct a professional identity. Based on the findings of this research, the participants took attitudes of awareness, reflection, work, and satisfaction towards their teaching.

Participants developed an attitude of awareness towards teaching due to the considerations they had about that practice. The novice teachers comprehended and expressed that teaching was meaningful work for society construction. They declared teaching takes place when teachers and students interact in order to build up new understandings of contents. On the other hand, the participants conceived teaching as a challenging practice. For them teaching was a demanding act due to aspects such as the evolution of our society, the number of students in classes, and students' behavior, among others.

Consequently, a reflective attitude toward teaching was evidenced. The teachers in training analyzed the possible reasons why their high school students did not like learning English. They reflected upon the causes of indiscipline, reasons of good and bad students' responses to the activities developed in class, and school

settings. Also, an attitude of work based on reflection emerged. After the teachers in training considered the relationship between theory and practice, they thought about the need for adapting and making theories feasible according to contexts.

Finally, an attitude of satisfaction toward teaching took place. One important feature which made the novice teachers feel pleased with their profession was the good results they could obtain with their pupils. The teachers in training were satisfied due to the contributions this pedagogical practicum brought them not only in terms of formal knowledge, but also in relation to values.

The development of this study gave origin to relevant pedagogical implications in the field of English as a foreign language teaching, and pre-service teacher's development. Those implications are meaningful to understand the reality of becoming a teacher. This research made evident the role and importance teaching practicums have when someone is studying for being a teacher. Along this research it was found that novice teachers need to be in contact with real teaching contexts in order for them to build up a realistic view of what this job entails. From that realistic view, pre-service teachers are allowed to understand, reflect, and work in order to improve their teaching practice.

Also, throughout this inquiry it was verified that teacher training programs are asked to provide teachers in training with spaces in which they can articulate their content and practical knowledge. That is why the opportunities students-teachers have to practice must be a core part of their development. Undergraduate teaching programs should include and strengthen pedagogical practicums in which the processes of reflection and action take place as fundamental components of teaching.

On the other hand, this study provided the possibility for teachers to think about the emotional component teaching implies for them. As showed along this paper, teaching rebounds on teachers' feelings and the way they see themselves, that is, the self-image they construct along these practical experiences. Teachers

go through different circumstances in their daily work and in the same way they are influenced by those situations. Consequently, this research work offered the possibility to delve further in the field of teachers' emotions, thoughts, and conceptions rooted in their work as educators.

Teaching education programs need to reinforce those spaces in which student-teachers can share their experiences lived at schools, their feelings in relation to their performance, and their concerns about classroom management, among others. In this way, teacher educators can provide novice teachers with advice and guidance when they have difficulties at schools for instance or when they are not sure about how to manage certain situations while teaching.

Furthermore, the results of this inquiry are valuable in terms of pre-service teachers' professional development. With the accomplishment of this investigation, how pedagogical practicums are directly connected to teachers' growth was perceived. This study allowed considering different aspects that are relevant in the achievement of positive changes in teachers' training and teaching. Those aspects are connected to the relevance of pedagogical practicums, reflection, and action processes when teaching, novice teachers' considerations about their work, among other issues.

Finally, it is relevant to recommend further studies based on the outcomes of this research. There are important issues that need to be understood such as the in-service teachers' role on pre-service teachers' development. Also, it might be significant to identify the relationship between student-teachers work and classroom settings. Moreover, the quality and nature of teaching practicums are issues worth researching.

References

- Barton, G. M., Hartwig, K. A., & Cain, M. (2015). International students' experience of practicum in teacher education: An exploration through internationalisation and professional socialisation. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*

- Education*, 40(8), 149-163. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2015v40n8.9>.
- Borg, S. (2006). *Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice*. London, UK: Continuum.
- Britzman, D. P. (2003). *Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Brown, H. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2nd ed.). Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Danielewicz, J. (2001). *Teaching selves: Identity, pedagogy, and teacher education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). Teacher education and the American future. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61(1-2), 35-47. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022487109348024>.
- David, M., & Sutton, C. (2004). *Social research: The basics*. London, UK: Sage.
- Ericsson, K. A., & Simon, H. A. (1993). *Protocol analysis: Verbal reports as data* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Goetz, J., & LeCompte, M. (1984). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Hattie, J. (2015). *What doesn't work in education: The politics of distraction*. London, UK: Pearson.
- Janesick, V. J. (1998). The dance of qualitative metaphor, methodolatry and meaning. In, N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (pp. 35-85). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Introduction to qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Pratte, R., & Rury, J. L. (1991). Teachers, professionalism, and craft. *Teachers College Record*, 93(1), 59-72.
- Richards, J. C. (2002). 30 years of TEFL/TESL: A personal reflection. *RELC Journal*, 33(2), 1-35. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/003368820203300201>.
- Seliger, H. W., & Shohamy, E. (1989). *Second language research methods*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Sharkey, J. (2009). Can we praxize second language teacher education? An invitation to join a collective, collaborative challenge. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 14(22), 125-150.
- Simmons, P. E., Emory, A., Carter, T., Coker, T., Finnegan, B., Crockett, D., . . . Labuda, K. (1990). Beginning teachers: Beliefs and classroom actions. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 36(8), 930-954. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1098-2736\(199910\)36:8<930::AID-TEA3>3.0.CO;2-N](http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1098-2736(199910)36:8<930::AID-TEA3>3.0.CO;2-N).
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Taylor, S., & Littleton, K. (2006). Biographies in talk: A narrative-discursive research approach. *Qualitative Sociology Review*, 2(1), 22-38. Retrieved from http://oro.open.ac.uk/4643/1/qsr_2_1_taylor_littleton.pdf.
- Wallace, M. J. (1991). *Training foreign language teachers: A reflective approach*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Wallace, M. J. (1998). *Action research for language teachers*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Zimbardo, P. G., & Leippe, M. R. (1991). *The psychology of attitude change and social influence*. New York, NY: McGraw Hall.

About the Author

Yimer Andrés Morales Cortés holds a bachelor degree in Modern Languages, Spanish - English from Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia. He has been involved in different pedagogical practicums carried out in educational institutions. He is currently working as an English teacher at Escuela Normal Superior Antonia Santos, a public school in Santander (Colombia).

Appendix A: First Questionnaire

Name: _____ Age: _____ Date: _____

This questionnaire aims at gathering information about student-teachers' attitudes toward teaching and their origin taking into account the beginning of the English practicum I.

Read the questions and provide clear and complete answers.

1. Why did you decide to study in the modern languages program?
2. Is teaching important in your life? Yes___ No___ Why? _____
3. Which place does teaching have in your life on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = inferior, 5 = superior)?
1___ 2___ 3___ 4___ 5___ Why? _____
4. In your pedagogical practicums, how do you feel emotionally when you teach students? Explain please.
5. What attitudes toward teaching does the fact of becoming a teacher generate in you? Explain please.
6. Taking into account this pedagogical practicum, which would be a reason why you like and a reason why you dislike teaching?
7. Do you consider that pedagogical practicums have contributed to the development of your professional skills?
Yes___ No___ How? _____
8. Have you changed your attitude in relation to your future profession along your undergraduate studies?
Yes___ No___ Explain in detail _____

Appendix B: Second Questionnaire

Name: _____ Age: _____ Date: _____

This questionnaire aims at gathering information about student-teachers' attitudes toward teaching using as a starting point the English practicum I.

1. One of the purposes of the subject English practicum I is to achieve for pre-service teachers to be aware of their personal, social, and professional commitment as future teachers. Do you believe this goal was achieved in your case or not? Why?
2. Explain the circumstances that made you feel good along the classes you took within this English practicum.
3. Explain the circumstances that made you feel bad along the classes you took within this English practicum.
4. What are those experiences you had in this English practicum that motivated you to continue in the teaching profession? Why?
5. Based on the English practicum I what are the circumstances you experienced along it which made you hesitate to continue in the teaching profession? Why?
6. What are the most meaningful contributions this practicum contributed to your development as future teacher? Explain in detail.
7. In which way do you consider this practicum relates to your conception about teaching? Explain in detail.

Appendix C: Group Interview

This interview aims at gathering information about a group of student-teachers' attitudes toward teaching.

What is teaching for you?

What are the social implications of the teaching profession?

Taking into account the English practicum I, what can you say in relation to teaching?

What feelings does teaching cause inside you?

Taking into account your experiences within this practicum, what are the contributions of teaching to your personal development?

Appendix D: Individual Interview

This interview aims at gathering information about a group of student-teachers' attitudes toward teaching after finishing an English practicum.

How do you feel about teaching after finishing the English practicum I?

In which way did your conception about teaching change based on you experiences within this practicum?

Consequently, what conception about teaching did you confirm with this practicum?

Taking into consideration that you will be an in-service teacher soon, what can you say in relation to teaching based on the English practicum I?

After being involved in this practicum which was an opportunity to be in a real teaching context, do you think this is the profession you will continue pursuing in the future? Why?