Challenges in the transition from virtual to face to face instruction in pre-service teachers of bachelor's degree in Modern Languages English - French, Universidad del Cauca, Sede Norte

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APPROVAL

UNIVERSIDAD DEL CAUCA

The Undersigned Committee of Human and Social Sciences School approves the project developed by Daniela Lasso Chocó, Geraldine Jiménez González, and Juan Sebastian Serna Ortiz:

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Dedicated to:

Geraldine for her perseverance in this project and for keeping our group together,

Our parents for their unconditional support and

Our teachers for their guidance.

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Abstract

In this research, the aim was to describe the challenges experienced by three pre-service teachers in teaching English as a foreign language during and after the COVID-19 pandemic in the transition from virtual to face-to-face instruction. To carry out this description, the difficulties and preferences of the pre-service teachers were analyzed, internal and external factors in both modalities were identified and finally, the experiences were reflected upon through a qualitative methodology with narrative inquiry, using lesson plans and journals as instruments. As a result, both difficulties and positive aspects were evidenced in both modalities, for example, the lack of materials during in-person classes, the use of different strategies for time and group management, the negative and positive presence of parents in virtual classes, the large number of students in the same classroom, and academic inequality during virtual classes.

Resumen

En esta investigación se buscó describir los retos vividos de tres docentes practicantes en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera durante y después de la contingencia sanitaria (COVID-19) en la transición del aula virtual a la presencial. Para realizar esta descripción, se analizaron las dificultades y preferencias de los practicantes, se identificaron los factores internos y externos de ambas modalidades y finalmente se reflexionó sobre las experiencias vividas gracias a una metodología cualitativa con una investigación narrativa, utilizando como instrumentos los planeadores de clase y diarios de campo. Como resultado, se evidenciaron tanto dificultades como aspectos positivos en ambas modalidades, por ejemplo, la falta de materiales durante las clases presenciales, uso de diferentes estrategias para el manejo del tiempo y de los grupos, la presencia negativa y positiva de los padres en las clases virtuales, la gran cantidad de estudiantes en un mismo salón de clase y la desigualdad académica durante las clases virtuales.

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Introduction

In this project, we described the challenges that we, as pre-service teachers, faced in the transition from virtual to face-to-face instruction and mostly the strategies we utilized to carry out all the sessions to succeed in the teaching practice. We considered that it was important to reflect about this teaching experience because it was necessary to know several factors that can influence teaching practice, we were also able to differentiate the advantages and disadvantages of both modalities.

The teaching practice in virtual modality was a challenge due to pre-service teachers were not trained for this and all of us had to find a way to adapt our classes and our activities in order to succeed in classes. We decided to explore and analyze different aspects that we found through this transition. In this project, we were able to analyze three different points of view since each researcher in the first semester of teaching practice had the opportunity to work with different groups and in different public schools, such as the Institución Educativa Rafael Tello, the Institución Educativa Francisco José de Caldas and the Institución Educativa Instituto Técnico, sede Jose Edmundo Sandoval.

A qualitative methodology and a narrative inquiry method were chosen for the development of this project since we wanted to share our experiences during the transition from virtual teaching practice to face-to-face instruction practice. Besides, thanks to this methodology and this method we were able to analyze, describe and reflect on the different teaching aspects we found throughout our teaching practice.

Problem statement

Bachelor's degree program in Modern Languages at Universidad del Cauca demands two semesters of practice, where students must fulfill the role of pre-service teachers in face-to-face instruction in public schools. But in 2020 the pandemic caused by Coronavirus affected the whole world and generated a worldwide lockdown, therefore, schools and universities closed their doors to prevent COVID-19 from spreading. Schools and universities in Colombia had to find a way to continue with their classes, most of them resorted to virtual modality using several tools to carry on with the education. Meanwhile, some institutions could just adapt their classes to learning guides due to the few economic and technological resources available.

The first experience as pre-service teachers, for the researchers, was interesting and challenging at the same time, since for pandemic reasons they had to adjust their face-to-face activities proposed on the lesson plans to a virtual modality. Although neither the students nor them were prepared for this kind of education, thanks to their inventiveness and dedication they could handle it and be successful with the classes.

However, they had to experience the transition from virtual to face-to-face instruction when schools and universities returned to their normal activities. This experience was even more demanding because they, as pre-service teachers, were already used to work with virtual apps and activities. The environment and some aspects such as attendance, participation, motivation, resources and others were different as well. For instance, in virtual classes, they just needed some online apps to create activities, whereas in face-to-face instruction they had to create and adapt the teaching material in order to let the students interact with it.

The researchers wanted to do a deep reflection on their teaching practice Orientación del Proceso educativo (OPE). Their desire was to narrate and analyze what happened when pre-

service teachers experienced the transition from virtual to face to face instruction in the

teaching practice of bachelor's degree in Modern Languages English - French of the

Universidad del Cauca, Sede Norte.

Rationale

Since the pre-service teachers started this bachelor's degree in Modern Languages they visualized through the years how their teaching practice would be at the end of their career. Until 6th semester they were prepared for a face-to-face instruction teaching practice, they learned several ways to teach with different types of methodologies, and they made diverse materials to use in classrooms and to fulfill the students' necessities in their English language learning process.

Once they started the semesters of practice with many expectations about this experience, the year 2020 arrived. This was a year full of surprises and disasters, from several floods to murders in different countries, but one disaster that caught more attention was COVID-19. This changed everyone's lives in different aspects, people had to stay at home for months without being able to see their families and friends, some restaurants, schools, and public places had to close their doors, also jobs and classes had to go from face-to-face instruction to virtual.

Although, for students and teachers it was difficult at first to get used to virtual modality due to diverse issues, for example, some students did not know how to use technological resources or tools, and many others did not even have an electronic device such as computers, cellphones, tablets to develop their homework or to attend their classes. According to the journal OECD (2020), this new modality excluded many people because of their lack of economic resources and therefore, from having access to education.

Despite everything, many people adapted their work and study to this new way of living. Regarding teachers, they found and worked on new teaching methods, some of them set up a room to create pleasant classes from their homes. Besides, they used many educational web pages to encourage their students to keep learning despite adversities.

Considering the publication made by Ministerio de Salud:

"Todas las personas pueden desarrollar la capacidad de superar los eventos adversos y continuar con una vida con sentido, sin embargo, los niños, las niñas y los adolescentes por su condición de desarrollo y su capacidad de aprendizaje, son más sensibles a desarrollar resiliencia" (Minsalud, June 3 de 2020).

Then, it was time to face the pre-service teaching process virtually way, nothing was as the pre-service teachers expected it to be, they longed to put into practice their knowledge in a different way, they wanted to have a closer interaction with their students, they imagined decorating the place where the kids would attend their classes, not only to make the students feel the immersion in the other language and culture but also to share all those physical materials with them that they created during the career. They wanted to experience the school experience this time as teachers and to look at all those students playing around while their break time passed. However, they had to adapt the remote classes to bring the students the best classes in a classroom simulation while being at home. Due to the first teaching practices were virtual and then they had to continue with the learners in face-to-face instruction, their purpose was to share and narrate the challenges that they had to face through this transition.

Objectives

General objective

- To describe the English teaching experiences in the transition from virtual to face-to-face instruction.

Specific objectives

- To analyze the difficulties and preferences of the group of pre-service teachers in virtual and face-to-face instruction.
- To identify the internal and external factors in pre-service teacher's teaching process in both modalities.
- To reflect on the experiences of the transition from virtual to face-to-face instruction.

Previous studies

According to BTS Academy: ''Previous studies are identified as all the previous research which have tackled the topic in which the researcher is digging through discussion and studying.'' These five chosen studies were important in our research project because they helped us not only to study in more detail concepts for this research but also to know how the pre-service teachers from other higher education institutions carry out their teaching practices. Besides, some of them showed changes that existed in the transition from one modality to another one (virtuality to in-person learning or vice versa).

First, Munar (2018), in the article "Experiences and Pedagogical Reflections upon the Pedagogical Practices of an English Pre-service Teacher" used a narrative inquiry study where the research appealed to narrative frames, semi-structured interviews, and reflective journals. The objective of this study was to describe and publish the experience through the three pedagogical practices in Universidad Santo Tomas, as well as to reflect about the pre-service teacher's teaching process. Besides, the researcher had the opportunity to give face-to-face and online English classes to children, adults and university students, enriching even more her knowledge and experience.

Second, Marshall et al. (2020), in the article "How Teachers Experienced the COVID-19 Transition to Remote Instruction" had the objective to find the difficulties that 328 teachers who participated in this study had to face in the transition from face-to-face instruction to emergency remote teaching (ERT). It was evident in this study that these teachers had many technological and pedagogical difficulties, they mentioned that all of their pedagogical training assumed that teaching would take place in a face-to-face environment. So, they were not trained to teach virtually, they were not prepared to give classes through a computer because they did not know what tools they could use in those classes. Also, the difficulties increased for those teachers who had children at home because they had to work hard for

their children's educational and technological needs. Finally, several teachers, particularly those in rural areas, shared that they did not have reliable internet access at home, which made it all even more difficult.

Third, Mahyoob (2020), in the article ''Challenges of e-Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic Experienced by EFL Learners'' used a quantitative methodology where the main objective was to identify the challenges and obstacles that online learning had by means of a questionnaire where English language learners in science and art college of Taibah University (Saudi Arabia) answered the negative or positive aspects that they lived in the pandemic when they were learning a new language with this new methodology of the study. At the beginning, with the new modality they used a platform called "Blackboard" where they did all the tasks that the professors gave in the virtual classroom, but shortcomings were identified with the platform, so they analyzed which other platforms such as WhatsApp, Google Meet, Zoom or Teams had more acceptance and functionality for the students. It was also identified that the participation inside the virtual classroom had a very low percentage.

Fourth, Aguilar (2020), in the article "Del aprendizaje en escenarios presenciales al aprendizaje virtual en tiempos de pandemia" did a descriptive research where the objective was to reflect on the consequences of moving from face-to-face learning to virtual learning. Besides, this article used a bibliographic-documentary search and direct observation-experience of the social context to collect information. Here, the writer addressed different points such as the importance of face-to-face learning saying that through socialization, social diversity, and communicative skills students can develop moral and social values, but it also talked about the advantages and disadvantages of virtual learning.

On one hand, this allowed students to develop some skills like information management, the use of new concepts, language expansion related to connectivity and communication. But,

on the other hand, virtual learning limited several families due to the few resources they had. This is also considered a factor of social inequality, another point that she also discussed.

Fifth, Machuca et al. (2021), in the article ''El Docente Universitario y su Transición Forzada de la Enseñanza Presencial a la Enseñanza Virtual'' used a mixture approach where the main objective was to make a diagnosis of the weaknesses and strengths that 77 teachers of Universidad Regional Autónoma de los Andes, sede Santo Domingo experienced in the forced transition from face-to-face instructions to virtuality where the teachers should make an extra effort to motivate their students since during the remote lessons the learners had to implement strategies to improve their autonomous learning. Besides, they needed to be guided by the teachers to apply the acquired knowledge.

Conceptual framework

To Miles et al.,(2014, quoted by Reason & Riggan) "A conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied–the key factors, variables, or constructs–and the presumed relationships among them. Frameworks can be simple or elaborate, commonsensical or theory driven, descriptive or causal."

According to this definition, the following eight concepts were defined as the main resources for the research. Some of them were paired due to the relationship that exists between them and at the same time, the contrast that was made when describing the English teaching experiences in the transition from virtual to face-to-face instruction.

Face to face instruction and virtual modality

These two modalities of teaching and learning helped the essential education process of teachers and students as well. On one hand, face-to-face instruction was the most common modality to learn, acquire knowledge, and share experiences with classmates having physical meetings. Those were usually set in a specific time and a specific place, which could be schools and institutions or any other physical area, either public or private. Here, this social interaction was an important component of teaching since thanks to it the classrooms could become active places where students could have more productive, engaging and meaningful learning. (Bali & Liu, 2018)

On the other hand, in virtual modality people must connect to the class at the agreed time but each one could choose the place depending on their convenience. Besides, it can be said that "are traditionally defined as those in which 100% of the delivery takes place in the online environment through asynchronous activities, synchronous meetings" (Kansas State University) and according to Manfuso(2020), it was promoted online learning as a valuable teaching method and learning using computers, phones, tablets, etc.

This method could have potential advantages and disadvantages. For example, students could be more independent regarding their education and the ones who were shy and introverted could feel more comfortable assisting classes through a computer. Besides, there was more flexibility, and it could be cheaper since students did not need to travel and spend money outside, the time that some of them used moving to the school could be used for something else.

However, these advantages could be selective due to the fact that there were a lot of students who could not have access either to a computer or the internet. Some of them could also feel disappointed as they preferred social interaction and being only in front of an electronic device could make them easily distracted. Besides, not only students but also teachers could develop sight problems and back pain from sitting for so long in front of a screen.

Synchronous and asynchronous study

In order to promote active learning virtually, those methods were the most important during the interactions because they offered the possibility to get more responsibility with the students and they helped them to be more confident with the information that they were going to get to improve their knowledge.

> ''Asynchronous e-learning is on the basis of constructivist theory, a learner-centred approach that emphasizes on the importance of peer-to-peer interactions. This approach combines self-study with asynchronous interactions to promote learning, and it can be used to facilitate learning in traditional on-campus or regular education, distance education, and continuing education''(Shahabadi & Uplane, 2014)

In this way, at the beginning of the pandemic, most of the students did not recognize the importance of getting extra information by themselves because they always had been adapted with a different traditional method where the guide or teacher explained all the topics during

the class and they did not feel the need to learn more about a specific topic. However, as time passed, they began to adapt to the new autonomous methodology because they had to improve their knowledge to share it inside the virtual rooms.

This new method helped all the students to be more independent with their academic responsibilities and this situation increased the self –service, students learned how to research in the browser, how to get correct information, how to read multiple opinions, and the most important thing, they learned how to explain and express their ideas with the others giving a valid argument and defending their position.

On the other hand, the synchronous method presented some difficulties because at the beginning some teachers did not know how to maintain a long-term class through a computer, they analyzed that all the students after some hours got distracted because they felt tired, bored, or sleepy, for this reason, the synchronous session took less than 2 hours for children because their focus time was not the longest inside the classes.

> ''The main strengths of synchronous online learning are the real-time interpersonal communication, the use of natural language, and immediate feedback (Blau et al., 2017). These attributes can diminish the difference between online and face-to-face learning in this manner and provide a sense of personalization'' (Shahabadi & Uplane, 2014, p.133)

However, this method had its advantages for the active learning of the student, a fundamental reason why synchronous classes should have been done is that the teacher had the opportunity to provide an explanation of a new topic for them and could clarify doubts within the class which made effective participation of the entire virtual classroom.

In addition to this, the formative online evaluations made the teacher evaluate the process that each student was carrying out at home in their asynchronous activities, for example, the teacher started his class with debates between students which helped to strengthen

argumentation and research.

Pre-service teacher and practice

A Pre-service teacher is the student who assumes the role of the teacher in a school to put into practice what they learned through the career of bachelor's degree. Each pre-service teacher has to fulfill some hours of teaching, share their knowledge through activities, and be part of the educational process of students. According to the guidelines of the Universidad del Cauca, each pre-service teacher has to do 2 semesters of practical experience. Moreover, Trujillo and Hernandez(2017) say,

> "The teaching practicum allows pre-service teachers to become exposed to the real world of teaching English to students of other languages and to gain knowledge about the complexity of current classroom practices, which contribute to enhancing preservice teachers' motivations, attitudes, and engagement towards the teaching profession" (Munar, M., 2019, p.4)

In addition, it is one of the requirements for some careers to obtain a diploma. Regarding bachelor's degree in Modern Languages, students had to teach in public schools with a previous agreement with the Universidad del Cauca for two semesters.

In these months, thanks to the practice, pre-service teachers are able to better understand how students behave depending on their age and grade. They also learn as classes went by how to recognize both the needs and preferences of students and therefore, how to adapt and improve the activities for them.

Lesson plan

Based on Singapore Management University (SMU) "A lesson plan is the instructor's road map of what students need to learn and how it will be done effectively during the class time. Having a carefully constructed lesson allows you to enter the classroom with more confidence." Therefore, as its name suggests, a lesson plan is a guide document created or

filled out by teachers with a clear outline to be followed when developing their classes considering the general and specific goals to achieve.

Besides, having a lesson plan helped teachers and students to become better teachers and better learners since this allowed them to get constant feedback and evaluation of the process carried out; also, all the time spent in class with the students becomes meaningful, since their experience of learning is guided by what is really important to be developed at each point.

This institutional lesson-plan format for the OPE (Orientación al Proceso Educativo) that the Universidad del Cauca provides, could be filled out in many different ways, but it was necessary to always have clear and identified what were the learning objectives for the lessons, this might include, but not limited to a varied of activities, the length of the class and the materials to be used during the lesson (explained in detail, for example, what it is for and how it works according to the subject), realistic timeline for the activities and a closure for the lesson including the evaluation of learning methods. In conclusion, it could be said that a lesson plan is not only important but also an effective resource for instructors/teachers to develop their classes taking into account the general and specific goals to achieve during the class.

Time and group management

Group management is an important part of the class because each teacher or pre-service teacher has to have the ability to catch the attention of their students through the actions, plays, or sounds that the students identified as a methodology to keep them focused. Also, the pre-service teacher must have a way to keep order in the classroom, while he/she gives instructions about the workshop, and subjects, among others.

However, sometimes group management could be challenging when the activities are planned in an improvised way because if there is not a clear objective the students could spend time doing no matter what inside the class causing a delay in the development of the

topic that was exposed in the lesson plan and the student's curriculum. Regarding time management, according to Martinic & Vergara(2007),

> "Esta perspectiva cuestiona la simple suma de horas para mejorar la calidad de los aprendizajes. Plantea, por el contrario, la necesidad de reorganizar el uso del tiempo; las relaciones e interacciones de profesores y alumnos y ampliar la flexibilidad de los profesores y alumnos para la gestión y uso del tiempo en la sala de clases."

For this reason, each pre-service teacher has to create a lesson plan to organize the time when each activity is going to be exposed to their students. Time inside the classroom could change depending on the educational process that students have, also it depends on how the teacher wants to bring the information and how the motivation of the students make them want to participate.

Motivation and participation

Aypay and Eryilmaz (2011, as quoted by Tasgin, A. and Tunc, Y. 2018, p.1) described motivation as the energy that each person has and participation as the link between the individual and the activity.

Regarding motivation, it could be said that it is the inner energy that stimulates us to do our daily activities or to start doing new tasks. In an academic environment, motivation lets students keep focused, attend classes, do their homework, and continue with determination in order to achieve their goals.

As for participation, this concept was linked to motivation since without it the students will not have enough encouragement to participate in classes. This also could be defined as the intervention that existed in a classroom and how involved the students were with the subjects.

> Therefore, effective teachers help students develop goals, beliefs, and attitudes that will sustain long-term involvement and contribute to quality involvement in learning.

If we measure motivation strictly as achievement, we can easily lose sight of these other educational goals and values. Motivation is important because it contributes to achievement, but it is also important as an outcome. (Ray, 1992, p.4)

As the synchronous classes are short, the tutor is in charge of making the class enjoyable and concrete, since taking and presenting a lot of information in the slides to develop the class meant losing the students' focus in the shortest possible time. These two categories complemented each other because without motivation there would not have been good participation of the learners.

Punctuality and attendance

In both face-to-face instruction and virtual modality, punctuality in students is important because each minute of the class counts. Teachers plan their classes with an order, for that reason students need to attend classes to follow the rhythm of the topic that the teacher brings.

It is very important that the students attend classes in the school to be able to get the information and to receive immediate feedback from the teachers, it helps the students to focus on the subject that they are going to study and improve their knowledge, in addition, the guide can support the students and resolve their questions inside the classroom.

Contextual framework

Colombia is a multicultural country located in the northern tip of South America lapped by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, crossed by the Andes Mountains, and adjacent to Brazil, Venezuela, Panama, Peru and Ecuador. Moreover, Colombia is composed of 32 departments in which there are many public institutions of university education.

The department of Cauca is located in the southwest of Colombia between the Andean and Pacific regions, where the Cauca and Magdalena rivers are born, therefore this department is considered as a region with the most water sources in Colombia. Here, there is a large number of indigenous inhabitants and the capital is the city of Popayán. In this city is located the head office of Universidad del Cauca. This university is the biggest in the city, it was founded on November 11, 1827 and has 43 undergraduate programs and 48 postgraduate degree programs. Besides, Universidad del Cauca has 2 seats situated in Miranda and Santander de Quilichao, in the last one this study will take place.

Santander de Quilichao is a town located north of the department of Cauca 97 km north of Popayán and 45 km south of Santiago de Cali with approximately 99.354 residents. There are many universities around like Fundacion Universitaria de Popayán, Comfacauca, Sena, and Universidad del Cauca. This seat of Universidad del Cauca receives a lot of students from different towns like Pescador, Mondomo, Corinto, Miranda, Villa Rica, and Jamundí, among others. and has five undergraduate programs including engineering, law, and a bachelor's degree in Modern Languages where the researcher students currently are enrolled.

Bachelor's degree program in Modern Languages in Sede Norte is a career where each student must pass 10 semesters to become a teacher. The first courses are focused on the grammar of the foreign languages and other specific subjects such as Psychology, Psychoanalysis, and Pedagogy, among others are taught to be able to understand how kids learn and the different methodologies that teachers can carry out. In the 8th and 9th courses,

the undergraduates must make their practices as pre-service teachers in a public school where the University of Cauca has an agreement. In addition, to finish their career and obtain the diploma students have to present a final project where they promote or study a research problem to expose to the audience and get a bachelor's degree in Modern Languages.

Furthermore, we as student researchers of this final project want to expose this analytical perspective of the practices called OPE (Orientación al Proceso Educativo). We were the authors and the principal characters in this research. We told in a narrative inquiry the experience we had during the classes taught in virtual and face-to-face instruction.

Methodology

This study had a qualitative methodology since it sought to know how the researchers interpreted and experienced new events (Hignett & Mcdermott, 2015). Throughout the development of this study, the researchers pretended to narrate and share their own experiences during the pre-service teacher process, because it started with a virtual modality and then changed to face-to-face instruction.

> "The purpose of a qualitative research study is to examine phenomena that impact on the lived reality of individuals or groups in a particular cultural and social context, studies firmly anchored in a methodological school of thought are finely textured and nuanced - producing a much higher quality outcome. It is the question asked by the researcher that determines the methodology used and it is this choice of methodology that guides the researcher, already ensconced in their discipline, to consider dimensions of topic and substance, voice and text" (Mills & Birks, 2014)

On the other hand, the experiences and challenges found in the classes that researchers impart were collected in the journals which were written since the first day of the practice. Also, we administered an interview at the end of each semester of the teaching practice (OPE I-II) and we analyzed the lesson plans that we used in some of the classes. These tools were used to obtain relevant information about pre-service teachers' attitudes and experiences in classrooms.

Method

Regarding the method, the one that was selected is narrative inquiry because the main objective was to analyze and reflect on the aforementioned experiences. Huber and Clandinin (2010) state that "Narrative inquiry is the study of experience understood narratively". This method consists of narrating the most important experiences that we as pre-service teachers had in our practice considering our lesson plans, journals and interviews.

Stages

The action stage of this research study consisted of the implementation of three steps in which to explore teaching experiences. According to Colorado State University, the general steps that we must follow in narrative inquiry are:

 Step 1: Identify a problem or phenomenon to explore: We identified an issue with which we could tell our experiences as pre-service teachers. In this case, the transition from virtual modality to face-to-face instruction because the pandemic changed our lives in some aspects and one of the most important was education and how the teachers taught in virtual classrooms. Then, we as pre-service teachers wanted to know what physical classrooms were like, what group management was like, and what kind of strategies we could implement to catch the attention of our students.

Step 2: After we identified and got the main topic of our investigation, we proceeded to review the lesson plan (See lesson plan model on annex B) after each class to check how many activities could be carried out as planned or if something got in the way and not all activities were completed. Then, we started to write all the experiences that we had after the class finished in the journals (See journal model on annex A). We intended to express all our thoughts, feelings, impressions, and expectations about the classes, the strategies that we used, and what we expected to improve. Besides, to have more information about all our three experiences, each one of us wrote a report where we narrated in detail how we lived and faced both teaching practices.

Step 3: Thanks to the reading of all the lesson plans, journals, and reports, it was possible to find the categories that we wanted to develop since we realized we had mostly these in common. We all struggled, learned, and enjoyed dealing with group and time management, lack of motivation and participation, the different tools that we already knew, the ones that we learned to use, and the difficult attendance during virtuality that we noticed in our

students. Then, we related these categories and divided them into three chapters to tell in detail about our experience and the challenges that we faced.

Instruments

These materials allowed us to have a database for our final report because each of them helped us to collect important information about our face-to-face instruction practices as pre-service teachers. For example: To do reports about our classes such as students' motivation, discipline, participation, bullying, interaction (between students- students, students-pre service teacher and vice versa) or time and group management. These reports were taken at the beginning, the middle and the end of each class.

- Journals: These journals included the most important events that could happen in a specific situation, and they could be written in a book or on a computer. For this, we created a model based on those that teachers in OPE (Orientación al Proceso Educativo) gave us to describe our experiences after each class in the teaching practice. The model encompassed information about the grade and the school we were teaching at. Besides, it had questions such as "Do you consider that your class was developed according to the lesson plan?", "What aspects do you consider as challenges in this class?" among others, which helped to collect information and achieve the main objective which was to describe the possible challenges that the pre-service teachers faced in the transition from virtual to face-to-face instruction.

  In this case, we wrote after some classes what happened, what we thought could be useful to describe the challenges and what could enrich our research. (See the journal model on annex A)

- Lesson plan: Singapore Management University (SMU) says:

  ''A lesson plan provides you with a general outline of your teaching goals, learning objectives, and means to accomplish them, and is by no means exhaustive. A

productive lesson is not one in which everything goes exactly as planned, but one in which both students and instructor learn from each other''

The University of Cauca gave us a glider where we had to materialize each activity that we performed in the classes. This format helped us to focus or to have an idea about how we managed our time and activities during the session. (See the lesson plan model on annex B)

1. **The power of reflection: Turning time and group management experiences into learning opportunities.**

While the music was playing, the students, their parents, and the pre-service teacher knew that the class was about to begin. So, students had the chance to go to the bathroom, drink water, and get ready for the class. During the first sessions, we did not have control of the meeting, which meant we could not turn off the microphones when the students started to cry, to speak aloud, and even when their parents started to scold them. Most of the time, the leader was not present at those moments, so the class was interrupted until the teacher showed up. In the meantime, we had to call their names several times until the kids realized they had the microphone on. But then, after some classes, pre-service teachers were allowed to have control of the virtual meeting and it was easier to keep the order since we just turned off their microphones or blocked the chat that sometimes students used to get distracted.

Certainly, the virtual practice was easier than face-to-face instruction since most of the students attended classes with a responsible grown-up, so they usually made sure that the children did not misbehave, besides the time was enough for each activity because their relatives helped to resolve the tasks or the evaluations and they also were aware of the time. So, sometimes it was common to hear expressions like "Hágale que la profe lo está esperando" or "No se desconcentre porque tiene que hacer el taller". Because of this, there were classes when students took less time than we expected and we ran out of activities, thus we had to improvise with another task or look for a video about the topic taught to practice.

In addition to this, during virtuality, the students seemed to be more focused on the activities, most of them just turned on the microphones when they finished them or if they had doubts. However, to avoid confusion and chaos, we realized that it was better to explain and at the same time carry out the activity together with the students. For example, Geraldine used to explain the upper body parts and do a short activity about it before continuing with

the lower body parts, in this way, all students finished at the same time, and they could not get distracted waiting for the others. So, the discipline in online classes was quite better. It can be said that there was better control of it.

On the other hand, in face-to-face classes, when the school bell rang meaning that it was time to enter the classroom, we had to be ready for their classes and we had to know that the time was an essential part of the process. For each class, the pre-service teacher entered the classroom to move the desks and organize the classroom to give a comfortable and different session, this means that we did a circle with the chairs, and we hung some posters about the topic, so the students felt that English class was fun and that learning new things in another language was interesting.

One of the goals that we had as pre-service teachers was to teach in the best way for the students to have an interesting experience so that they would always be motivated to learn English. Thus, each one of us had to create a lesson plan which described step by step each activity with the respective time to do it in the class. Here, we had to include not only the activities to explain the topic but also an ice breaker, a warm-up, or short activities to do in the middle of the class if students were distracted or made a lot of noise. This lesson plan also fulfilled the function of guiding us during the session and made us finish with the topics already planned.

However, when some students did not understand the topic or the activities, we had to take more time to repeat and explain as many times as was needed until all of them got the main objective of what was being carried out. This made the group and time management difficult because some students were not really focused on the class, most of them just wanted to play and talk with their classmates and sometimes it was difficult to keep them quiet and, in their seats, while we explained the tasks to the others. So, it was very usual to see several students walking around, being very noisy and distracting the others, then, when we had to continue

with the class, it took at least 10 minutes to get the attention of all the students and make them sit down again.

Besides, considering the ages of the students, mostly 5 to 9 years old, some of them thought that every activity was a game and did not follow the activity rules, but they started a mess inside the classroom. This meant that we lost more time scolding them and in the end, there was not enough time to finish all the activities and the students could not get feedback, so we had to add the missing activities to the lesson plan for the next class.

There were times when some students wanted to talk to the teacher at the same time about personal topics like their pets, friends, experiences at home, or their parents while the rest of the class was playing around or even arguing sometimes. A memorable situation was when one of Daniela's students was always out of his chair messing with his school supplies such as his notebook, pencils, or anything else and throwing them out of the classroom downstairs when nobody was looking at him, so he could ask for permission to go out, pick them up and miss the class.

Therefore, time and group management are important concepts inside the classroom and during the learning process because when the class gets done with an unfinished activity, students' interests are not going to be the same in the next session. In addition, when we were preparing the lesson plan, it was essential to keep in mind time management since as it can be noticed we could have extra time to do more activities, feedback sessions or it could happen the opposite, we could not be able to finish our lesson.

This lesson plan also needed to have more specific activities to do when the main subject was explained so the students could practice what they already see during the day and take advantage of the time, besides, it was necessary to prepare backup activities in case the main ones were developed faster than expected. Sometimes, during virtual classes, these activities

were not developed by themselves but by their relatives and that is why they finished faster than during in-person lessons.

Besides, it was important to keep in mind that when students started school, they did not know what teachers expected or how they were supposed to behave, so it was necessary to establish some rules, explain to them the importance of using our time in the classroom wisely and also what is right and wrong in terms of their behavior inside the classroom, this meant talking to them about not talking to their classmates during classes or not playing around.

In addition, we considered that the group and time management was slightly easier in virtuality since we could have more control of the class keeping the students' microphones off during the class and motivating the students to participate by raising their hands in the meeting app, therefore, the activities were a little more organized. However, being inside the classroom permitted us to create a closer environment with the students where it was possible to strengthen the confidence in the teacher-student relationship. Besides, in the classrooms, we were able to give them immediate feedback and explanations during the class. For example, it was common to hear some students struggling with activities, so it was easier to let the others work independently while we addressed doubts of those who needed clarifications on the exercise, without causing distractions, whereas during virtuality, all students had to hear the explanation repeatedly if someone did not understand.

2. Exploring the classroom technological tools and attendance in both modalities

The difficulties with attending online classes during the pandemic were quite complicated. Many students had problems because they could not connect to the internet, making it hard for them to take part in classes smoothly. Additionally, a worrisome number of students did not have the necessary electronic devices, which made it even harder for them to join online classes. Some students also struggled because they were not familiar with how to use these devices, and they did not have someone to help them figure things out while accessing online learning materials. All these challenges together showed that there was a big gap between people who have good access to technology and those who do not. Therefore, we need to work on fixing these differences so that everyone could have a fair and inclusive education.

The three of us had several situations where we could evidence the lack of internet and good devices that students had, so either the students could not attend class or could not do the activities on the pages we were using. Some examples are:

1. There was a student in fourth grade who always had to borrow a cell phone to attend the English class, but his participation was marked by a pattern of behavior, he joined the meeting for a while and then when he was out of sight he quietly disconnected from the call, so he could play video games while the class continued. His mother once caught him doing that and he said the class was over when it was not true.

2. Another attendant used to join the class out of his house, specifically in his mother's workplace, however, his engagement was frequently disrupted by the constant foot traffic and the noise in the background. Also, sometimes he had to leave the meeting temporarily because his mother needed to close the establishment, consequently, all that distraction could have meant that crucial information or important concepts were missed, which could have been beneficial for his overall understanding of the topics.

3. A learner had to enter the class connected from the neighbor's internet because she

did not have access to her own internet connection, therefore she had to be near the street to catch some signal and she even had to sit outside until the class was over or until her phone's battery ran out. This way, she tried her best to stay connected and not miss the English class or other courses during the quarantine, risking herself in order to obtain education during that tough time.

4. A kindergarten student usually attended the class in the company of only her grandmother at home. When Sebastian Serna assigned an online activity, this student faced a challenge as she lacked familiarity with the virtual tool and her grandmother did not know either how to navigate very much on the internet or how to find specific educational websites, for that reason, many times she was unable to actively participate in the activities like her classmates, leading to instances where the teacher had to modify the activity so all the students could participate.

5. Some students never had the opportunity to attend the virtual class because of the lack of internet or electronic devices. These students had access to printed learning guides containing all the activities and topics covered in the remote classes. This allowed them to read, understand, and complete the activities, keeping up with their peers in the same course and if they had any questions, they could always contact us through our school emails.

6. Somedays, a few students joined the online meeting considerably late due to oversleeping or getting caught up in their morning routine, which included spending an extended amount of time having breakfast and getting ready. This habit began to impact their overall punctuality for the English class, making it a challenge for both them and the teacher to maintain a consistent and productive learning environment.

Those were some factors that affected the teaching process because we needed to repeat the same topics multiple times which ended up delaying the achievement of all the criteria outlined in the ''Mallas de Aprendizaje''.

On the other hand, in in-person teaching two important cases were found during the practice as pre-service teachers. First, some students could not go to school because they had some medical appointments, issues with the public transport or difficulties with the weather that made mobility impossible to the school from some rural areas. Those kinds of situations affected their learning process. After all, they did not have any idea what they saw in the last session with the teacher and they started to lose the rhythm of the classes because each class had something in common to connect this immersion.

Second, when learners wanted to avoid the class, they usually asked the pre-service teachers for permission to go to the bathroom and suddenly all of them wanted to go at the same time. These cases were not a real problem for the development of the class, but it was a constant interruption for the activities and the attention of the rest of the classmates.

Talking about the tools we used for diverse ways of learning, we noticed a significant difference. In virtual learning, we mostly used slides, websites, YouTube videos, online games, and similar things. When we started doing classes online, it was tough in the beginning because all three of us had to learn how to use platforms like Zoom and Meet. Those were new to us at that moment, for example, sometimes we wanted to share a video on Google Meet, but we did not know how to display both the image and sound at the same time, and it was frustrating. Some of the pre-service teachers tried to make their space at home or on the screen look like a regular primary school classroom, but because the internet was not always good, students could not see it well. This made learning online even more tricky since the web pages did not always load as fast as we needed them or did not load at all.

Whereas, in face-to-face instruction, we could work with paper, posters, flashcards, and photocopies since the school we were in did not have a projector or a TV that we could use to show slides, videos, or even online educational games. However, we all agreed that although virtual tools could align with the preferences of the new generations and their learning styles, they often did not function properly during classes because public schools in Colombia lack the necessary technological resources. Moreover, we considered that we felt better while developing activities with the students all together in the classroom since we were there physically being able to help them one by one without interrupting the others.

Thus, the virtual modality had issues in order to receive suitable classes with the necessary conditions for all the students to get the information and not only to enter the English class but also to attend the other courses that were related to the vocabulary or topic in another language. Besides, it was frustrating for the pre-service teachers to repeat over and over again the same instructions when students joined the meeting late. On the contrary, during face-to-face instruction, attendance and punctuality were easier for both the students and pre-service teachers because they were in the same establishment which was the school with equal conditions.

In addition, these virtual classes showed us the reality of many children, the lack of resources to meet the classes and the few help that the government gave them. In Escuela Nacional Sindical (ENS) they say "según estudios del año 2019, el 38% de las personas no usa internet y el 50% de los hogares, ni siquiera lo tiene. Y no son estudios realizados por nosotros como organizaciones sindicales para hacerlos ver mal, ni mucho menos, son datos publicados por el mismo Ministerio de las Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación." (Secretario de Cultura, Recreación y Deportes del Sindicato Único de Trabajadores de la Educación del Valle, SUTEV).

The virtual teaching practice made us even more aware that millions of students really

want to study but all of them had limitations that complicated their learning process. For example, it was a report about a kid in Colombia in Noticias Caracol. El clamor de tres niños en Boyacá que estudian a punta de vela porque no tienen electricidad (October 7, 2020). He lived in the mountains, so he had to walk several kilometers with his mother's cellphone for the data signal to work and thus, join his virtual class. That was moving because it told us how forgotten the children of the countryside were and how important it is to invest in education, the facilities, devices, and tools students can use.

The previous report reminded us of many similar cases that we had during the pandemic. People consider those an act of courage that children have to do to succeed in their education. But there's another way to think about it. Some people do not want to accept that we should just think it's normal for kids to struggle so much to do well. This other way of thinking shows that some kids have not gotten the help they need from the government. Their problems are not being taken care of properly. This should make us want to do something about it and make sure all kids get the support they need for their education.

3. The dynamics of motivation and participation before and after face-to-face instruction

Motivation and participation are two key pillars that shape the landscape of education, influencing students' attitudes, behaviors, and ultimately, their academic achievements. As Albert Einstein remarked once, 'It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.' This feeling captures the essence of the intrinsic motivation that drives individuals to engage passionately in the learning process. Also, the philosopher John Dewey (2015) emphasized that education goes beyond simply preparing for life; it's an integral part of life itself. This underlines the significance of being actively engaged in learning, as it contributes to personal growth and enriches life experiences.

Students were unaware of the importance that a subject like English would hold for their future careers and job prospects. They had yet to recognize the significant role it would play in shaping their paths toward professionalism and successful employment. Most of them believed they would engage in activities such as playing games for enjoyment, listening to music, and occasionally spending time on tasks like crafting flashcards to aid vocabulary retention. They also anticipated practicing speaking skills through conversations and improving the skill of listening actively by listening to different audio materials. For that reason, maintaining motivation became a critical element in the classroom, as it was vital for capturing their attention and facilitating their knowledge enhancement.

During our remote classes, students found motivation to join the English sessions on Google Meet. They were intrigued by the introduction of a new instructor who offered diverse activities and encouraged them to explore a different language compared to what they were used to with their previous teachers, like not participating actively or not being the main role during sessions, as many of them expressed. We were dedicated to preventing monotony by integrating a variety of technological tools, including web-based games and activities. Our

enthusiasm and drive to incorporate these innovative methods, along with everything we had learned during our career, helped students move away from the usual way of learning.

At the beginning of the first classes, something interesting happened to the students. Most of them were excited to take part in all the activities, and you could see this because they all turned on their microphones during the online meetings. Even though they had good intentions, this made the online meetings a bit chaotic when they did that at the same time.

What was intriguing was that their excitement to participate was connected to them feeling safe and comfortable. Most of them felt safe because their parents or family members were often with them while they were online. Also, being behind their computer screens made them feel safe, in control, and less stressed if things got uncomfortable, since they could leave the online meetings whenever they wanted by clicking a button.

The students' enthusiasm to participate by turning on their microphones showed how much they wanted to be involved in the class, even the ones who were shy. They participated because their parents told them the answers or helped them with the activities. But it was important to have some rules and order in online classes, that's when some of us decided to call out their names to participate one by one according to the grade list and not just let them talk whenever they felt like it. Additionally, the easy way to leave the meeting showed how online tools could provide both a sense of safety and challenges at the same time.

For example, there was a student in fourth grade, with the pre-service teacher Daniela, who always wanted to talk and provide answers to everyone, even when it wasn't her turn to use her microphone. She showed a genuine interest and attentiveness in all the classes but indirectly resisted listening to her classmates. One day, a student's mother interrupted the meeting and used harsh words to express her frustration with this girl's constant compulsive talking. The director of the class immediately responded, acknowledging the mother's comment, but also pointing out that it wasn't appropriate to speak like that to a student. The

director assured the mother that they would address the issue and talk to the kid about it at the end of the class. The child did agree to listen and consider the feedback. However, following this incident, she chose not to actively participate in discussions that required speaking up and providing answers.

Looking back, the learners enjoyed spending more time doing virtual activities. One big reason for this was that many of these activities were online games that matched what they liked or did in their everyday lives. When the pandemic began, kids started spending a lot more time in front of screens, mostly because they had to do school and have fun at home. So, online games became even more appealing to them since these games were exactly what they wanted and made them feel like they were part of familiar situations.

On the flip side, when students were in in-person classes with their teacher and classmates, things were quite different. In contrast to online classes where parents were often available for assistance, the physical classroom noticeably lacked this familiar presence. This meant students didn't have someone nearby to help them translate or quietly give them answers. Without their parents' assistance, students had to figure things out on their own, which was now a new challenge for them.

Additionally, the classroom was different from learning online because students did not have easy access to the internet. During virtual sessions, the older students that were in fourth or fifth grade could look up information quickly online, but that was not the case in the classroom, since they did not have the internet right there to use. Unlike in virtual classes, where they could find answers online, in the classroom, they had to rely on their own notes, or what the teacher explained.

It was also difficult to make them participate because some of them were shy, others did not like to talk in front of everybody or they did not pay attention. Sometimes it was frustrating for us because we did not know how to work on that and it felt like we were

begging them even though we knew we were an unknown person and there was no confidence between the students and us, so it was common to hear a lot of expressions like "Come on guys, who wants to do it?" or "Vamos chicos, ¿Quién quiere intentarlo?" many times. It was clear that the interest in playing games in person seemed to decrease during this time. A reason could be how easily kids can get distracted. Physical games need them to pay attention for a while, and kids are known for getting bored or losing focus quickly. So, it might have been easier for them to get uninterested or distracted while playing games in person.

Some of the youngest students especially used to cry when they felt afraid or stressed about participating in an activity, however, it only happened at the beginning of an exercise because when someone took the initiative to participate the rest of them just followed and got motivated to do it as well. As in all three schools, there were many students per classroom, we always tried to plan and develop short activities, this would help us to keep their attention and we could make sure each student could join in at least one of these activities.

Maintaining the motivation and participation of students inside the classroom became a big challenge since we had to deal with distractions during the sessions, these could be because of external factors or internal difficulties, e.g. noises coming from other groups, students walking around and even crying when they felt upset, but we consider that this is the reality of several public schools, where there is a large number of students per classroom and the teacher has to find the best strategies to work on keeping them focused and participating, so the class could be carried out.

Conclusions

For the development of this project, we structured our ideas taking into account mainly a conceptual framework, with concepts such as pre-service teacher, practice, face-to-face instruction, and virtual modality, to achieve the general objective that was to describe the English teaching experiences in the transition from virtual to face-to-face instruction based on retelling our own stories during the process, using the journals from each class and all the lesson plans that each one of us made. Also, we used a qualitative methodology and narrative inquiry method since this approach allowed for a detailed understanding of the subject under study as it focuses on people's experiences and opinions.

Throughout our process of learning to teach, it was possible to identify some external and internal factors in both modalities, as in virtual instruction as well as in in-person instruction, through the reading and reflection of our narratives that were written in personal journals.

Considering as an internal factor the influence of a person or situation that frequently disrupted the class, leading to constant distraction within the room or during the meeting. On the contrary, the external would be any kind of scenario that is beyond our control when developing our lessons. Thus, we could say that these aspects influenced the English classes in positive and negative ways depending on the modality of the course, for example:

In virtual instruction, many students, especially from the lower grades, used to struggle with navigation on the internet by themselves, making impossible their participation in those activities, besides, the order, attention, and students' participation were different when they were at home, since most of the time they were with a relative who whispers the answers to them or scold them if they were distracted. However, some students lived in very noisy places generating distractions like eating breakfast during classes, and some of them could not attend class due to a lack of devices to enter the meeting. These situations had an impact on the group of students, either positive or negative since they could develop a lazy and

uninterested attitude during the class or in contrast, a motivated and participative one.

In-person instruction, the primary teacher of the group allowed the students or their parents to organize events like celebrating birthdays during the English class without preventing the apprentice teacher or their opinion. This kind of event cut off the rest of the class and we were not able to continue with it as planned. Also, some students wanted to go to the bathroom multiple times, and this delayed the progress of the main topic of the session they were working on.

These factors already mentioned provided us some valuable opportunities for our personal and professional growth in the field of education, since we were able to encounter some great and enriching moments, as well as some other intriguing challenges from which to continue learning because we not only learned how to well manage different situations related to children, a crucial skill for teachers, but also in other work areas, for example, how to manage our time and how to keep a group focused, things that can help us to get ahead.

Analyzing our experiences, preferences, and difficulties we found that one of the biggest challenges while being pre-service teachers during and after the pandemic was group management and the time that we used to carry out the class, since the activities in the lesson plan took more or less time than programmed, besides in all the groups we had there was a big quantity of students for one pre-service teacher, making even harder to have everyone working at the same pace or listening attentively all the time.

Recommendations

Due to the sanitary emergency that the world experienced (COVID-19), we all realized how important it is to be an adaptable and flexible person or professional in any field. Thus, it would be interesting that Universidad del Cauca implements a virtual training program (e.g., TIC's course) for teachers of all faculties in order to maintain a high-quality education which is what this institution is known for, regardless of the adverse situations that may arise where there is no possibility of meeting in person as we previously experienced.

Also, we would recommend to the Human and Social Science School, specifically the Bachelor's Degree in Modern Languages English-French to add more strategies or subjects in their curriculums for virtual modality, in order to prepare their students for both teaching processes, for example: to create some spaces where all the pre-service teachers can simulate some online classes with some issues during the lesson in order to think about provisional solutions at that moment to improve their knowledge in the asynchronous mood. In this way the pre-service teachers will be able to handle different situations, improving their teaching skills even more when using technical tools or physical materials.

A recommendation we would make to the students currently taking the OPE subject (Orientacion al Proceso Educativo), as they are now pre-service teachers, is to always be researching and learning about different teaching strategies inside the classroom because all the students have different learning needs, and the only way to determine if the teaching process is being successful or not is putting into practice in the classroom those methods, also, we strongly encourage you to have multiple plans or ideas for the classes, to keep yourselves curious and updated in the field of education, since we as future teachers, we all need to be advancing at the pace of the new generations.

It is important to highlight that there are spaces where the OPE students can express their feelings by having meetings with their advisors and classmates before and right after the

English classes in the schools, since we consider these exercises help to the improvement of the pre-service teaching practices, for example, during the sessions each student could share how the class worked for them and the strategies that they implemented, in order to make a better lesson plan or strengthen it.

We suggest the schools where we worked as pre-service teachers create different financial programs or activities where the students can participate and learn at the same time how to collect money and generate monetary resources to be able to acquire some technological devices for their benefit according to the school's needs. Besides, we believe this kind of material could be useful to facilitate teaching or learning experiences nowadays, helping them to expand and upgrade their knowledge in specific areas such as science, history, and languages, among others.

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Annexes

Annex A:

Universidad
del Cauca

DIARIO DE CAMPO	
Fecha	
Nombre del practicante	
Institución	
Grado	
Asesora	
¿Consideras que tu clase se desarrolló como lo estipulaste en el lesson plan?	
¿Algo quedó faltando? (actividades/tareas) si, no ¿Por qué?	
¿Cómo te sentiste emocionalmente en el aula de clase?	
¿Qué aspectos consideras que fueron retos en tu clase?	
¿Qué podrías mejorar de la práctica que realizaste hoy?	

Annex B:

Universidad del Cauca
Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales
Departamento de Lenguas Extranjeras
Programa de Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas Inglés-Francés
Comité de Práctica Profesional

posibles soluciones	
3.6. Previsión de conflictos de aula y posibles soluciones	
3.7. Transversalidad	
3.8. Vocabulario a aprender	
3.9. Estructuras gramaticales	
3.10. Aspectos funcionales	
3.11. Enfoque	3.12. Método

3.13. Procedimiento programado						
Hora	Tiempo	Nombre actividad	Patrón de interacción	Objetivo de la Actividad	Descripción actividad	Recursos y Materiales
7:00-7:15	15'					
10:00-10:20						

3.14. Evaluación del objetivo de aprendizaje 3.1	
3.15. Tareas asignadas a los estudiantes y su propósito	
3.16. Referencias	
3.17. Relación con los	

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estántares de competencias en lenguas	

IV. Reflexión de la preparación de esta clase

Observaciones del asesor

V. Reflexión a ser escrita después de la clase

VI. *Best Practice:* ¿Considera Usted(s) esta sesión como una "buena práctica? Explique su respuesta

VII. Reporte situaciones para estudio de caso una vez concluida la clase o la jornada de observación