



BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

**Preservice student teachers' identity development
through mentoring: A Barkhuizen and Strauss'
Framework**

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Languages for the degree
of**

MAESTRA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

By

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PUEBLA, PUE.

Enero, 2026

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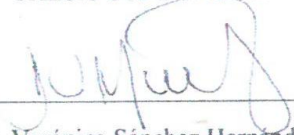
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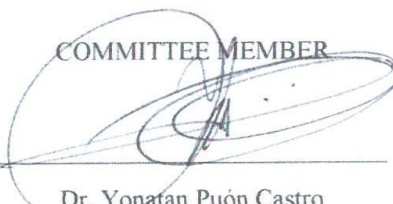
And it is considered worthy of approval in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
degree of

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Abstract

Preservice Student Teachers enter the profession with deeply rooted assumptions of teaching shaped by their experiences as students. As they transition from learners to educators, mentoring becomes essential in guiding them through the complex process of professional identity formation. Mentoring provides a reflective space not only for pedagogical competence, but also for social negotiation. This study, conducted at the Facultad de Lenguas of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, explores how mentoring influences the professional identity of two preservice student teachers with middle school learners from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Following Barkhuizen and Strauss' (2020) framework, this research investigates what facets of professional identity (reflecting, projecting, recognizing, and imagining identities) are present during different mentoring moments: before, during, and after class observation. Anchored in interpretivist and constructivist paradigms (Oliver, 2024), this study views mentoring as a socially mediated process where mentors and preservice student teachers (PSTs) co-construct professional meaning.

This research found that the most common facet found before observation was reflecting identity due to their apprenticeship of observation. Preservice student teachers have spent many years with a student identity, that moving to teacher's identity may take some time with several moments of frustration. Furthermore, during the observation moment the facets of reflecting, projecting, recognized appeared gradually. More imagining identity was present once PST noticed what they should improve to have a better teaching practice in the reflection moments. They highlighted the importance of constant professional development. Thus, the agency appeared as something

necessary to continue in their teaching practice. Finally, this research underscores that mentoring in EFL education should be a transformative practice that enables PSTs to navigate the complexities of identity construction.

Acknowledgements

In this section, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents and siblings, whose love, encouragement, and sacrifices have supported me throughout this journey. Their belief in my abilities has been a constant source of motivation and strength, and I am profoundly grateful for everything they have done to help me reach this point.

To the PhD professors who have guided me in this process of research, undoubtedly, without them I would not have achieved this research paper. For your patience and support in my professional development.

To my friends from work, master's degree, Friday meetings, and daily life. Thank you for standing by me during both the challenging moments and the moments of celebration. Your humor, understanding, and encouragement have not only made this process manageable but also meaningful. Without you, this could not have been possible. I am grateful for the countless conversations, study sessions, and reminders to take breaks and breathe.

To all who contributed to this thesis in ways big or small, thank you. Your support has shaped this work and enriched my experience more than words can fully express.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

The importance of mentoring in Language Teaching Education has been recognized globally, prompting policy initiatives aimed at intensifying and enriching field experiences for preservice teachers. Programs like the Blue Ribbon panel in the United States, China's National Curriculum Standards for Teacher Education, and Scotland's Teachers for a New Era emphasize the need for mentor-guided, student-centered teaching aligned with reformed curriculum standards to improve academic outcomes for students of all backgrounds (Barak and Wang, 2020). Through this structured mentorship, preservice teachers gain practical skills, knowledge, and continuing professional development necessary to become effective educators.

According to Ragins and Kram (2007), effective mentoring can help teachers build confidence, develop a sense of belonging within the profession, and integrate personal and professional identities in a way that is both authentic and aligned with the demands of the professional field. However, without adequate support, these identity-related issues may hinder teachers' development and affect their long-term success in the profession.

In the framework of Pre-service English as Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers, mentoring should not only be seen as a way to form their perceptions and behaviors but also to recognize its significant social impact on constructing their professional identity (Nunan, 2017). Research consistently shows that mentored individuals tend to be more satisfied and committed to their professions, achieve higher performance, and experience faster career progress compared to those who are not mentored where they may understand their place within the social structure of education as a lonely endeavor.

Furthermore, pre-service EFL teachers are not isolated from communities; instead, they create their realities with and within other social groups. Hence, their professional identity is not just constructed but also negotiated and acknowledged (Barkhuizen and Strauss, 2020). The practice in the classroom is a dynamic process that allows interaction with people of different backgrounds that might resonate with the teacher's behavior and identity. Preservice Student Teachers who begin to be immersed in the classroom start with a process of negotiation and adaptation due to the social practice of teaching.

Teachers' identities are continually evolving in response to their interactions with others. Thus, identity development occurs at the intersection of teachers' language teaching and learning experiences (Nganga et al, 2020). This dynamic process highlights the multifaceted nature of teacher identity formation in contemporary educational contexts. Defining teachers' identity emphasizes cognitive, social, ideological, emotional, and historical.

Importantly, the development of identity in preservice (EFL) teachers (PSTs) might create tension between their emerging professional identity and the existing social, cultural, and economic structures they encounter during their training (Norton & Toohey, 2011). As these PSTs navigate the complexities of teaching practice, they must negotiate their sense of self within diverse educational contexts, often marked by differing expectations, values, and norms.

Based on the previous, the question arises of how mentorship can guide PSTs in shaping their identities, where the educational background of the PSTs is rather traditional. Moreover, dialogue is not practiced understanding the PSTs' needs, leading to a prescriptive teaching practice. Through mentorship, the PSTs acquire pedagogical knowledge, teaching strategies, professional networks, and other knowledge and skills essential for success in the educational field. To guide the PSTs in their professional training, the mentor creates a scaffolding process

promoting constant communication among them. This dynamic process is called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by Vygotsky (1978)

As the PSTs progress, the mentor gradually reduces support, allowing for greater autonomy and competence. This dynamic process helps mentees expand their abilities, fostering both professional development and a stronger sense of identity within their field being aware of where they are situated in different economic, cultural, and social contexts.

Preservice EFL teachers learn to know how to navigate different social settings and achieve success according to their objectives. They also navigate the complex challenges of identity formation within their profession as Edge and Mann state (2013). The learning context makes mentorship a crucial element in the development of future educators. For this reason, this research will be carried out at the *Facultad de Lenguas at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla* with students who are in the last semester of their bachelor's degree in English Teaching (*Enseñanza del Inglés*). These PSTs are under a teaching English social service program to middle school students with socioeconomic constraints.

The PSTs work together with mentors of the MA. English Teaching from the same Faculty. The moments of observation are divided into three: before supervision, during supervision, and after supervision following the *Guide on Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Education: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* (Gooden et al., 2024).

For this reason, this research will follow the Interpretivism and Constructivism methodology due to the observation of how reality and knowledge are constructed through mentoring interactions. Constructivism and Interpretivism help frame mentoring as a dynamic, socially mediated process where knowledge, professional identity, and meaning are co-constructed by both mentors and mentees. These paradigms support research that seeks to uncover the complexities of professional identity development, emphasizing the role of personal experiences,

social interactions, and the interpretation of those experiences in shaping how individuals come to understand themselves within their professional roles (Oliver, 2004).

1.2 Purpose of the research

This research uses Barkhuizen and Strauss ' (2020) framework to explore how mentoring influences the formation of Pre-service student teachers' professional identity.

1.3 Research questions

This research is intended to address the following questions:

1. How does mentoring influence the development of Pre-service student teachers' professional identity (Barkhuizen & Strauss, 2020)?
2. Which Professional Identity Facets are evident during the mentoring moments (pre-, during, post), and how are these identity facets characterized?
3. What pedagogical implications can be suggested for a pre-service language program in this context?

Chapter 2: Research Context

This chapter describes the context in which this study was carried out. The pre-service program will be described along with the Community Service program in which the mentors and PSTs participated.

2.1 LEI: English Language Teaching Pre-Service Program- BUAP

The English program and the Language Faculty of the *Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla* (BUAP) is a language teacher education curriculum designed to shape proficient and engaged professionals. The subjects at the formative stage addressed courses such as language culture, course and syllabus evaluation, materials design, teaching methodology, and evaluation. This program culminates in two important moments that seek to bridge the gap between the classroom and professional and social world: Community Service and Professional Practice. The first one represents a commitment to community and social responsibility, where students apply their pedagogical and linguistic knowledge as a contribution to society. The second one, Professional Practice, immerses them directly into their future career field.

The preservice student teachers of this study volunteered to be part of a project that embraced both their community service contribution and their professional practice titled *Inclusive English*, which started in August of 2024 at the Language Faculty.

2.2 Community Service Program: *Inglés Incluyente* (Inclusive Teaching-IT)

The study described here took part in the community service program dynamics. Overall, the *Inclusive English* program aims at providing students public secondary schools students with situations of unequal socio and economic opportunities access to free English courses at the Faculty of Languages. It is worth mentioning that, according to some studies conducted in secondary schools, Díaz et al. (2019), a significant number of secondary students in situations of

unequal opportunities face emotional and psychological challenges due to the lack of life opportunities. For this reason, it was considered that by providing these students with the opportunity to learn or strengthen a foreign language within an institutional context, such as the university, they would be able to visualize themselves differently and define themselves with a sense of belonging, dynamically and relationally shaping their emotions and identity.

In this context, advanced-level students from the English Language Teaching pre-service program are trained under an inclusive and transformative perspective to become English teachers for these specific secondary students. In addition, they received close guidance and support from mentors who are postgraduate students from the Faculty of Languages, so that the student-teachers carried out a guided, supported, and reflective teaching practice. Therefore, Inclusive English has a dual purpose. On the one hand, it seeks to promote and develop, through free English courses, the linguistic skills, intrinsic motivation, and effective strategies for secondary students through an inclusive and transformative teaching perspective. On the other hand, it aims at promoting the professional development and sense of community service of the student-teachers by giving them the opportunity to serve as teachers for those students, under the supervision and mentoring of a group of master's degree students from the Faculty of Languages.

2.3 The Mentors and the Student Teachers in the Inclusive Teaching Program.

The mentors in this project were students enrolled in an English Teaching Master's degree at the same Faculty. Their role was to provide the student-teachers participating in this program with professional methodologies and pragmatic advice on navigating academic challenges. For the purpose of this study, only one mentor was selected (the researcher). She has had more than nine years of teaching experience in different levels of education. The preservice teachers were undergraduate students working towards their English Bachelor's degree. The two participants

were informed about how they were going to work using a resource guide titled: *Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Education: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* by Gooden et al., (2024). This guide is a publication aimed at providing a bridge between pre-service and in-service teacher education and meaningful, continuing professional development for classroom teachers. The guide integrates practical experiences from mentors/supervisors across *Normales* and universities, along with insights from academic literature, to supply valuable resources for effective mentoring and supervision within diverse educational settings, with practicing, pre-, and in-service teachers of English.

Chapter III. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the theoretical framework is unfolded to support this research considering different theories and concepts about identity construction from a Vygotskian perspective, professional development as a continuous practice to enhance several professional skills, professional identity in EFL considering different facets, supervision and mentoring.

3.1. Identity Construction from a Vygotskian Perspective

In today's interconnected world, identity has become a complex concept due to the dynamic interplay of cultural, social, and linguistic influences. This concept is particularly significant for language learners and teachers. On one hand, acquiring a new language involves more than mastering grammar and vocabulary. Students need to be conscious of specific language nuances that will allow them to communicate successfully with others. On the other hand, teaching goes beyond transferring knowledge to students. Teachers should be conscious of their students' social roles in a community. Thus, for teachers and students, it is about navigating and negotiating one's sense of self in new social contexts.

From a Vygotskian perspective, identity construction is deeply rooted in social interactions. Vygotsky (1978) believed that cognitive development is a socially mediated process, where individuals construct their identities through interactions with others within their social environment. Furthermore, Liu & Matthews (2005) state that these interactions, whether with peers or even cultural tools like language and symbols, play a crucial role in shaping one's sense of self. As a result, through these social engagements, individuals internalize various societal norms and values, which become integral parts of their identity. Studies have focused on these ideas. For instance, Norton (2000) explored how identity is shaped by social contexts and

interactions within language learning. Although the study was not explicitly from a Vygotskian perspective, it aligned with his principles by illustrating that social interactions and cultural tools like language significantly influence learners' identities and agency. Norton (2000) highlights a close connection between language learning and identity, emphasizing that learners continuously negotiate and redefine their sense of self through these social engagements.

Understanding identity construction from this view is essential for this research because it highlights the importance of the social, mediated, and developmental aspects that the learners adopt, adapt, and shape their identity. Thus, this might affect their engagement, motivation, and success. Acknowledging that identity is socially constructed, teachers should create supportive environments that facilitate positive identity formation in their students.

3.1.1 Interactions

Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) emphasizes the critical role of social interaction in learning. In this way, this interaction is essential because it provides the learners with the necessary support to carry out tasks that not only enhance their cognitive development but also foster a deeper understanding of the subject matter. In the classroom, leveraging the ZPD involves creating opportunities for students to engage in meaningful interactions with their peers and instructors. Teachers can facilitate this by designing activities that require collaboration, such as group projects, peer tutoring, and guided discussions. These interactions help students to articulate their thoughts, ask questions, and receive immediate feedback, which is crucial for their learning process. By working within their ZPD, students are more likely to experience success, build confidence in their abilities, and shape their identities. To provide one example, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) applied a Vygotskian sociocultural theory to second language acquisition, focusing on how social interactions and mediated action influence

language learners' identity formation. They explored how learners develop a sense of self in the target language through interactions with peers, teachers, and cultural artifacts. Thus, this study highlighted that identity in a second language context is formed and reshaped within the Zone of Proximal Development through mediated social interactions.

Another case explored the application of ZPD in English Language Teaching (ELT) training in Thailand. Khamkaew & Trussat (2024) examined the effects of using ZPD in fundamental English classes for EFL learners. The findings revealed that cooperative learning and corrective feedback within the ZPD framework significantly enhanced students' social skills, class participation, and attitudes toward learning. However, there are limitations to the application of ZPD in educational settings. According to Xi and Lantolf (2020), one major limitation is the generality assumption, which suggests that there is a ZPD for every type of learning task. Thus, this assumption can be problematic because it oversimplifies the complexity of learning processes and may not account for individual differences in learners.

3.1.2 The Zone of Proximal Development

When immersed in a learning environment where students are constantly encouraged to reach their current capabilities, supported by the guidance of their teachers, it is called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This concept in Vygotsky (1978) of cognitive development refers to the range of tasks that a learner can perform with the help and guidance of a more knowledgeable person but cannot be accomplished independently. Within this zone, learners engage in collaborative activities that challenge their current abilities and expand their potential. In particular, in the classroom setting, teachers use ZPD by providing scaffolding strategies tailored to the learner's current level of understanding. As students gain diverse competencies,

the support is gradually removed, allowing them to achieve mastery independently (Podolskij, 2012).

The scaffolding process can be several strategies that the teachers plan in their teaching performance. Nazerian et al., (2020) explored the effectiveness of individualized ZPD instructions on the writing accuracy of Iranian EFL learners. The study measured writing accuracy and ZPD levels before, during, and after the treatments. The results indicated that individualized ZPD-based instruction significantly improved the writing accuracy of low-scoring learners. These findings support the use of individualized ZPD-based approaches in TEFL writing to improve learners' writing accuracy and suggest the feasibility of measuring ZPD in both individualized and group-wide contexts.

Furthermore, Johnson (2009) applied the ZPD to second-language teacher education, emphasizing that teacher learning occurs most effectively when teachers are supported in specific teaching tasks. The scaffolding process, provided by mentors, peers, or teacher educators, helps teachers to bridge the gap between their current abilities and their potential for growth. In addition, it highlighted the importance of designing teacher education experiences that challenge teachers while offering sufficient guidance to ensure success. By situating learning within the ZPD, teacher educators can foster meaningful professional development of adaptive teaching strategies.

In this way, teachers could provide different ZPD moments that are essential in English Language Teaching (ELT). This underscores the importance of the social, mediated, and developmental aspects of learning. The ZPD contributes to a learner's ability to adapt and shape their identity within the learning of a new language. That is, to guide students through their ZPD

with cultural sensitivity, promoting growth not only in linguistic competence but also in self-confidence and cultural adaptability, which are crucial for real-world language use.

Notwithstanding these processes have functioned in some contexts, limitations are present. Xi and Lantolf, (2020) described one of these as the assistance assumption, which implies that learning is always dependent on support from an expert. This can lead to an overreliance on teacher guidance and may hinder the development of independent learning skills. Another one is the potential assumption that suggests teaching within the ZPD will always result in smooth and effortless learning, which is not always the case. Learning can be challenging and may require significant effort and persistence from students.

3.1.3 Mediation

Mediation, as described by Vygotsky, is the process through which individuals use cultural tools like language, symbols, and artifacts to internalize knowledge and skills. This process is crucial because it allows learners to engage and understand their environment in a meaningful way. For instance, in the classroom, mediation is often seen with instructional strategies that incorporate these cultural tools with the use of educational materials that reflect the students' cultural backgrounds. As a result, these strategies help students not only to acquire new information but also to connect it with their existing knowledge and experiences.

When students engage in mediated learning experiences, they begin to understand their roles and identities within their community and society using mediation tools. This understanding is essential for personal development and for fostering a sense of belonging for teachers and students.

Nevertheless, studies highlight several limitations in effectively implementing mediation in these contexts. For instance, Brownlie (2017) noted that mediation tools often fail to adequately represent diverse cultural contexts, resulting in superficial or stereotypical portrayals that hinder meaningful engagement with cultural aspects of the target language. In these underfunded settings, the lack of appropriate materials and resources often prevents educators from using mediation tools that align with students' cultural backgrounds, thereby complicating the internalization process.

Another challenge lies in the preparedness of teachers and the design of multimodal mediation tasks. Karpava, (2023) highlights that many EFL teachers do not present the training necessary to integrate cultural tools meaningfully into their teaching practices. This issue is further compounded by the complexity of using multimodal texts, which require careful balancing of linguistic and visual elements to support learning. Moreover, resistance to reflective practices, as Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) point out, can pose significant challenges in contexts where rote learning is the dominant educational approach. In this way, teachers' experiences could become moments of continuous reflection with further new ideas to promote a change in their teaching practice.

Addressing these limitations requires professional development for teachers, inclusive and contextually relevant curriculum design, and systemic changes to ensure access to adequate resources, thereby enabling more effective mediation in EFL classrooms.

3.1.4 Internalization

Vygotsky's (1978) concept of internalization is a cornerstone of his sociocultural theory of cognitive development. This refers to how individuals integrate external social interactions, cultural tools, and language into their own cognitive framework. Vygotsky argued that cognitive

development is fundamentally a social process, where learning occurs first on an interpersonal level (between people) and then on an intrapersonal level (within the individual). This transformation of external activities into internal cognitive processes allows individuals to develop higher mental functions, such as problem-solving and self-regulation.

Studies have shown that such interactive and collaborative learning environments can significantly enhance students' cognitive development and academic performance. For instance, a study by Newman and Latifi (2021) highlight the application of Vygotsky's ideas in teacher education, emphasizing the role of social interaction in learning. Students who engaged in collaborative learning activities demonstrated better problem-solving skills and higher academic achievement compared to those who learned individually. These findings underscore the value of incorporating Vygotsky's concept of internalization into teaching and mentoring practices, as it fosters a deeper understanding and mastery of subject matter through social engagement and interaction.

3.2 Teachers' Professional Development

In every organization, there is a need to continue improving skills that will allow one to achieve success in the performance of some tasks. In the case of EFL teachers, the educational field demands constant professional development. From a sociocultural perspective, professional development is a mediated and transformative process. Teachers learn through tools and interactions that scaffold their understanding of teaching and learning. According to Johnson and Golombek (2011), teachers' growth is facilitated by engaging with mediational artifacts such as lesson plans, reflective journals, and classroom videos, which enable them to critically analyze their practices.

Additionally, professional development emphasizes the transformation of practice rather than the adoption of limited teaching methods. Hence, teaching is situated in specific classrooms, cultural, and institutional contexts. In addition, being in contact with preservice teachers could also transform the teaching practices from both sides. Teachers engaged in dialogic interactions with peers and mentors explore alternative strategies and adapt them to their contexts. For instance, through collaborative inquiry, teachers co-construct solutions fostering both personal growth and a sense of community. As a result, professional development is not a static process but evolves as teachers test new approaches, refine them based on experience, and reflect on them.

Teachers develop and refine their expertise through active participation in authentic teaching environments, where their understanding is shaped by interactions with students, colleagues, and the cultural norms and expectations of their community. In conclusion, this context-dependent nature of teacher knowledge is unfolded through practice and engagement within specific sociocultural settings.

3.2.1 Teachers' professional development models

Mora et al. (2013) differentiate between three approaches in the practice of PD: the individual approach, the institutional approach, and the teacher-lead approach. The individual approach is driven by the inner motivation of those who are committed to the foreign language teaching profession. Nevertheless, this type of PD identifies the limitations of teachers as isolated identities who may ignore the macro structures of the community. This may lead to just being aware of some aspects of the microstructures of the language-teaching world. As a result, some faculty members could experience feelings of frustration and isolation.

Institutional Professional Development refers to policymakers and people with high authority in educational contexts who provide opportunities to participate in activities that enhance professional practice. One advantage of this is the observable changes in a short period. Thus, the institution can measure the impacts of their training and make adjustments when necessary. Even though this represents changes, there is the risk of following prescriptive educational authorities without considering contextual circumstances.

Teacher-Led Professional Development focuses on considering their needs linked to the institutional ones. The concepts of identity and agency become central and consider teachers' experiences. Identity is understood as a phenomenon reconstructed across contexts and discourse (Gee, 2000). Hence, the four important elements that influence the reconstruction are culture, society, agency, and subjectivity. Each one is interconnected in several dimensions, allowing the existence to respond to everyday actions, behaviors, and situations.

3.2.2 The Role of Identity in Professional Development

Another critical aspect of professional development is its role in shaping teachers' professional identities. Johnson and Golombek (2011) assert that teachers' identities evolve as they engage in reflective practices and collaborate with others in professional learning communities. This ongoing identity formation positions teachers as lifelong learners who continuously re-evaluate their beliefs, methods, and roles.

For instance, a teacher's participation in peer mentorship or action research projects not only enhances their pedagogical knowledge but also reshapes their understanding of themselves as educators within a broader professional network. This aligns with Wenger's (1998) concept of communities of practice, where professional identity is co-constructed through meaningful

participation in shared activities. Thus, professional development is as much about acquiring new skills as it is about fostering a deeper understanding of oneself as a teacher.

3.3 Teachers' Identity

A teacher's identity formation is a crucial part of their professional learning process, and it is related to the decisions they make in their work. The concept of teacher identity has been explained from different perspectives, for Darvin and Norton (2013), teachers' identity is multifaceted, a site of conflict, and constantly evolving across geography and time. On the one hand, language teachers' perceptions about themselves, their surroundings, and the various interconnected aspects of language instruction can all have an impact on the learning outcomes of their pupils (Cheung et al., 2015). On the other hand, teachers' sense of self can influence their level of motivation, commitment, and confidence on both a personal and professional level.

According to Richards and Farrell (2011), identity refers to the differentiating social and cultural roles that teachers adopt through their interactions with learners. These roles are not static, but they emerge through the social activities in the classroom. In other words, the identity reflects not only the roles teachers perform but also personal beliefs, values, and experiences.

An example of this controversial concept, Kaasila et al., (2023) stated that the identity formation process of teacher educators is not well understood, with limited efforts to clarify the terminology. While there has been some holistic research on their professional identities, specific discussions on their teachers' identities are rare. This study used a meta-ethnography to synthesize findings from 30 studies over the past decade, revealing that teacher identity is often a hidden term in this research. This research discussed the current understanding and terminology and suggested future research directions in this area.

For this reason, this research uses the concept provided by Barkhuizen (2020) where teachers' identity comprises different levels of understanding that will provide different meanings depending on the person's context. Thus, contextual practices guide teachers to consider teaching beyond a moment to transfer knowledge without reflecting on the several cultural, historical, and social backgrounds of learners. Additionally, teachers' performance and negotiation of their role or roles as language teachers, as well as their comprehension of institutional and curriculum expectations, can influence their pedagogy and classroom practices in English language instruction.

3.3.1 Professional Identity in Education

Professional identity has been explored through different studies focusing on teachers' knowledge, that is, how they perceive themselves as teachers. Most of their perceptions were related to their willingness to cope with the educational changes in innovations in their teaching practice (Beijaard et al., 2000). Moreover, Buendía et al. (2020) state that EFL teachers encounter numerous obstacles when creating their practicum. Thus, their identity is shaped by such an event, which also affects the processes of teaching and learning.

Additionally, Reissner and Armitage (2024) presented a review of existing research on professional identity formation (PIF), focusing on how individuals engage in identity work within professional settings. In this study, the authors examined various manifestations of professional identity, drawing from diverse theoretical and empirical studies across disciplines. The results highlighted that professional identity is not static; it is shaped and reshaped through reflective processes, social interactions, and institutional influences. In other words, identity work is influenced by organizational culture.

3.3.2 English Language Teaching Identity

Teacher Identity research has grown to understand teachers' professional lives. Rushton et al. (2023) reviewed four hundred twelve studies published between 2000 and 2021, categorizing seven thematic groups: Models and Frameworks of Professional Lives, Narratives of Professional Lives, Becoming a teacher, Contexts, Communities, Change, transitions, and conflict, and Subject specialisms. This study showed gaps in the literature regarding the core curriculum subjects. Consequently, there are fewer investigations about identity connected with policy and practice, calling for a more inclusive, diverse, and context-specific research emphasizing the importance of bridging the gap between academic research and practical applications in policy and teaching practices.

In this way, this research is supported by the definition of language teacher identities that considers several dimensions, from an individual perspective to the social aspects. Self-identity needs to be conceptualized considering others. Thus, language teacher identities consider the geographical context, culture, history, and institutional policies.

Language teacher identities (LTIs) are cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical; they are both inside the teacher and outside in the social, material, and technological world. LTIs are being and doing, feeling and imaging, and storying.

(Barkhuizen and Strauss, 2020 pg. 20)

As teacher identities are social, they are negotiated in geopolitical spaces. They also may be contested and resisted by the self and others. Hence, many circumstances will affect identity construction, influencing or challenging the ways teachers perceive themselves and their roles. This process is dynamic and shaped by interactions, power relations, and diversity of social contexts.

3.3.3 Professional Identity Facets: Barkhuizen and Strauss Framework

The professional identity is shaped by every educational choice present before the class, in the class, and after the class. Firstly, the teachers already have developed belief systems according to their pedagogical knowledge. Secondly, the personality features guide their ways of classroom management regarding the kind of students they have. Thirdly, how these significant episodes become a moment of reflection on what changes or improvements should be implemented according to the student's needs.

According to Barkhuizen and Strauss (2020), professional identity for language teachers is complex and continuously evolving. For this reason, he states four interconnected concepts to help teachers reflect on and navigate their roles: reflecting identities, projecting identities, recognizing identities, and imagining identities.

3.3.4 Reflecting Identity

This refers to the sense of who a person is. Regarding teachers' identities, this considers personal and professional experiences to understand how their backgrounds, values, and teaching philosophies are shaped. This self-reflection can lead teachers to insights into their motivations and strengths, enhancing their understanding of their own teaching identity and approaches. This reflective process allows teachers to examine not only their beliefs and practices but also how external factors, such as institutional policies and cultural expectations, influence their professional identity.

Through this lens, self-reflection becomes a powerful tool for teachers to gain deeper insights into their teaching experiences as valuable opportunities to make sense of their identities, engage in collaborative learning, and find ways to navigate complex teaching environments. This

reflective process ultimately helps teachers align their teaching philosophies with their practices, leading to more authentic and meaningful interactions with their students.

This considers:

- Who we think we are
- Learners view of the self
- Includes language learners' conceptions of their abilities
- Includes linguistic self-concept- conceptions of language knowledge, skills, and ability to use it in different contexts of interaction
- Represents the inner self, which is multiple and variable

3.3.5 Projecting Identity

This describes how a person projects her or his identity. In the case of teachers to know how they consciously or subconsciously present themselves in the classroom and to their colleagues. This projection uses semiotic resources such as the tone, behavior, and teaching style that teachers adopt, whether it is an identity of authority, approachability, leader, mentor, and so on. In addition, it emphasizes that language is an important tool to project identities. That is to say, the way teachers project their identities shapes classroom dynamics and affects how students perceive and interact with them, which can greatly influence students' engagement and learning.

This includes:

- How we want the other to see us
- Public representation of the outer self
- Learners' (un) consciously projected identity to others
- Values semiotic resources (e.g., appearance, gesture, dress)

Represents the outer self, which is multiple and variable

3.3.6 Recognizing Identity

This refers to how others see us in specific social contexts. This acknowledges the diverse backgrounds and personal experiences that are brought into the teaching and learning environment. By validating identities, teachers create a more inclusive, empathetic, and supportive classroom atmosphere that fosters mutual respect and understanding.

This refers to:

- How others see us
- It is the counterpart of projected identities
- Potentially imposed identities, which may not be compatible with reflexive or projected identities
- Has implications (both ascribed and imposed) for reflexive identities

3.3.7 Imagining Identity.

It encourages the idea of the perception of the self at specific times and spaces. Hence, this envisions possible paths for their professional growth. This might involve picturing oneself in new roles, such as becoming a curriculum developer or taking on a research-oriented position. Imagining identities is a forward-looking process that inspires teachers to adapt to new challenges and continue evolving professionally.

Together, these four aspects described before help teachers form a dynamic and meaningful professional identity, supporting both their fulfillment and their impact as educators through language. Therefore, this shows that social events do not separate professional identity development; on the contrary, they emerge through interaction with others. As Gee (2000) states, individuals enact identities through language by comparing or contrasting others' identities to those they wish to enact.

- How we imagine ourselves in other times and spaces
- Participate in imagined (target language) communities
- Includes possible future selves.

3.4 Mentoring in Teacher Education

Mentoring is an important process that fosters learning. It implies a person's development and growth through supportive relationships (Zachary, 2000). The concept of mentoring has been explained in psychological, sociological, business, and educational fields, intending to explain how individuals acquire new skills and knowledge through interactions with more experienced guides.

Mentors traditionally provide career support, acting as teachers and transferring their knowledge to the mentee. On the one hand, this approach aligns with the functionalist perspective, which views mentoring as a hierarchical relationship where the mentor transmits wisdom to the mentee (Nuis et al., 2023). In this model, the mentor is typically seen as the expert, guiding the mentee through professional and personal challenges. However, this perspective focuses more on the mentor's role as a guide and authority figure, where the mentee's primary function is to learn and develop under the mentor's direction.

On the other hand, a perspective on mentoring based on a humanist perspective challenges the traditional hierarchical model (Nuis et al., 2023). This perspective conceptualizes mentoring as a collaborative and horizontal relationship between co-equals. In this model, the mentor and mentee co-create new knowledge and learn together, forming an interdependent and reciprocal relationship (Darwin, 2000). The distinctions between "expert" and "learner" become less relevant, as both parties contribute to and benefit from the mentoring process. This perspective

emphasizes a more egalitarian approach, where both mentor and mentee engage in mutual learning and growth.

Understanding the distinction between these mentoring perspectives is essential for defining and conceptualizing mentoring. Furthermore, differentiating between mentoring, supervision, and coaching becomes important, as each term carries different implications and approaches. While mentoring typically involves a long-term relationship focused on personal and professional growth, supervision often entails a more structured, task-oriented oversight, and coaching focuses on developing specific skills through short-term, goal-directed interactions (Encinas & Sánchez, 2015).

When using mentoring, it is important to recognize what could be one of the challenges and limitations. Boreen and Niday (2003) list some mentors' problems that might affect a good mentoring process, such as a lack of confidence, inadequate planning, insufficient knowledge, and one of the most important, a lack of teaching skills. The last point is crucial in a language-teaching education context. If the mentor does not present experience and awareness of the changes at different education levels, the mentoring process would provide limited observations there would be a negative impact on the mentee's side.

3.4.1 Mentoring vs Supervision.

Mentoring models are built upon a relationship of guidance and support where a more experienced individual (the mentor) helps a less experienced one (the mentee) navigate personal or professional challenges. In education, mentoring often emphasizes a collegial relationship that fosters mutual learning and trust, with the mentor serving as a role model and source of inspiration. According to Achinstein and Athanases (2006), effective mentoring involves

understanding the mentee's needs, providing emotional support, and facilitating growth opportunities, making it a personalized and flexible approach.

Another key feature of mentoring is the development of mentee autonomy. Unlike supervision, mentoring tends to prioritize long-term professional development over immediate task completion or performance evaluation. Hobson et al. (2009) argue that mentors aim to empower mentees to become self-directed learners who can critically reflect on their own practices. This approach aligns with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which underscores the importance of learning through guided participation and interaction with a more knowledgeable other.

Mentoring also relies on a reciprocal relationship that benefits both parties. For the mentor, the process provides opportunities to refine their understanding, strengthen leadership skills, and engage in reflective practices (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). For the mentee, the relationship offers a safe space to discuss challenges, experiment with new strategies, and develop professional confidence. This mutual benefit makes mentoring a collaborative rather than a hierarchical process.

However, mentoring models can face challenges such as mismatched expectations, limited resources, or power dynamics that may hinder their effectiveness. Research by Ragins and Kram (2007) highlights that the success of mentoring largely depends on the compatibility between mentor and mentee and the quality of the relationship. Addressing these challenges requires thoughtful pairing, ongoing communication, and institutional support to foster sustainable and impactful mentoring programs.

3.4.2 Supervision Models

Supervision models are primarily concerned with oversight, evaluation, and accountability, often focusing on ensuring that organizational or institutional standards are met. In educational contexts, supervision typically involves a hierarchical relationship, where the supervisor observes, assesses, and provides feedback on the performance of the supervisee. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) describe supervision as a structured process aimed at improving teaching practices and achieving predetermined goals within a formal framework.

Unlike mentoring, supervision is often directive, with the supervisor holding a position of authority and responsibility for evaluating outcomes. According to Glickman et al. (2017), supervision emphasizes monitoring progress, providing constructive criticism, and ensuring compliance with policies and standards. This approach ensures accountability but may limit opportunities for open dialogue and shared decision-making.

Supervision models are also frequently used to address specific performance issues or skill gaps. Supervisors are expected to identify areas for improvement, design interventions, and track the supervisee's progress over time (Zepeda, 2016). While this focus on performance metrics can drive measurable improvements, it may also create a pressure-filled environment that prioritizes short-term results over holistic professional growth.

Despite its structured nature, supervision can incorporate elements of collaboration and support. Modern approaches to supervision, such as clinical supervision models, emphasize reflective dialogue and joint problem solving between supervisor and supervisee (Cogan, 1973). However, the inherent power imbalance in supervision relationships remains a critical factor,

potentially limiting the supervisee's sense of agency and ownership over their professional development.

3.4.3 Mentoring in Education

In the EFL context, pre-service teachers need to develop teaching practices that could provide them with several tools for diverse teaching contexts rather than limited situations (Barak & Wang, 2020). Additionally, they must be in constant professional development to succeed in their future. In this way, mentoring provides different possibilities for growth together with the mentor. Through negotiation between the mentor and mentee, it can be achieved a process of internalizing new ideas and in the future be able to know how to perform in a problem-solving situation (Wing and Putney, 2010).

According to Darwin and Palmer (2009), mentoring in higher education that follows a collaborative practice enhances commitment from both parties, mentors and mentees. In addition, pre-service teachers who establish a reflection in practice means to learn to notice, interpret, and evaluate their skills in their teaching performance. As a result, they will be able to develop subsequent skills to predict the demands of the future, Malderez & Bodóczy (1999).

Mentors should be self-analytical and reflective, considering that all individuals undergo personal and professional change. They need to regularly analyze and reflect upon their current theories of teaching and learning and their classroom approaches. This reflection should also extend to their sociocultural identities and those of their student teachers, as well as the assumptions, biases, and challenges that influence equitable learning experiences. As Alston and Hansman (2020) state, equitable mentors with these qualities ensure a supportive and comprehensive learning environment.

To achieve successful mentoring, it is important to follow an observation cycle.

According to Ariza et al., (2024), there are three moments before, during, and after observation. First, before observation implies defining the specific purposes for the coming observation, these could be the identification of specific pre-service teacher needs. Before observation centers on establishing a collaborative framework between the mentor and the preservice teacher. In this section, it is reviewed the lesson's context, objectives, and instructional materials. In addition, this part prepares the mentee to reflect on how the class will be carried out and identify what possible challenges will arise during the session.

Second, during observation, mentors pay attention to the previous needs, lesson presentation, and other general aspects. The third one is after observation; it is a moment of reflection through dialogue about situations that might have arisen in the class.

3.4.5 Challenges in Mentoring

Mentoring preservice teachers involves several challenges that go beyond guiding professional skill development. One example could be aligning the expectations and goals of both mentors and mentees. Mentors may focus on classroom management, while preservice teachers just want to have broader professional guidance in understanding specific teaching methodologies. As a result, this may cause dissatisfaction in mentoring relations.

Another challenge deals with both mentors' and mentees' social, cultural, and economic backgrounds that influence the mentoring process. From both sides, there must be sensitivity in how to address possible tensions, ensuring a constructive and inclusive relation.

Chapter IV: Methodology

This chapter delineates the methodology chosen for the research project, which employs a qualitative approach to investigate how preservice teachers develop their professional identity through mentoring. The rationale behind opting for a qualitative research methodology lies in its inherent capacity to unveil nuanced insights through interpretive and experiential perspectives (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research is characterized by its adaptability and the researcher's discretion, allowing for a rich exploration of the subject matter. Through this approach, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How does mentoring influence the development of Pre-service EFL teachers' professional identity (Barkhuizen & Strauss, 2020)?
2. Which Professional Identity Facets are evident during the mentoring moments (pre-, during, post), and how are these identity facets characterized?
3. What pedagogical implications can be suggested for a pre-service language program in this context?

4.1 Research Design

For this research, it is fundamental to describe the philosophical characteristics that support this research. According to Alhoussawi, (2023) the ontology is the study of being or reality that explores the assumptions concerning the social aspects. Hence, social reality is constructed through individual and collective human experiences. Professional identity ponders not just cognitive development but also the social features that together shape the teachers' identity. This means that pre-service teachers or mentees' identity is in a continuum process between their perceptions of themselves and others' recognition in interaction through mentoring views of

professional development. The ontological dimension reinforces the importance of understanding the subjective mentees' experiences within their social contexts in shaping their identity.

Furthermore, the epistemological assumption for this research paper refers to how reality is interpreted in order to understand the meaning of events and activities. Social Constructivism and Interpretivism make an emphasis on the analysis in the nature of reality (Creswell, 2013). This approach highlights that knowledge is constructed through interaction and then there is an interpretation following a specific theoretical framework. Mentoring and professional identity are deeply intertwined due to the experiences, perceptions, and contexts of mentors and mentees. Thus, an Interpretivist perspective allows the researcher to explore how these relationships influence the development of professional identity, framed following Barkhuizen and Strauss's model, which is immersed in social contexts.

4.1.1 Purpose of the study

Barkhuizen and Strauss's (2020) model of professional identity development helps teachers to reflect on and navigate the attitudes, roles, pedagogy, and decisions that will unfold their professional identity. On the one hand, professional identity is developed through interaction with others in several situations that help to unveil the four facets, such as reflecting identity, projecting identity, recognizing identity, and imaging identity. On the other hand, mentoring with an inclusive approach allows this research to explore how these facets are present in the mentoring practice. As a result, both models are interconnected, guiding preservice students to reflect not just on their identities but also to be aware of students' needs when learning a foreign language.

To examine the development of professional identity facets within the context of mentoring, the exploratory method was selected. According to Swaraj (2010), this method helps to research social behaviors where existing knowledge is limited. Furthermore, it is useful in the early stages of the research to explore new areas, ask open-ended questions, and gather preliminary data. By adopting this framework, it allows flexibility in the moment of data collection that were as interviews, case studies, enabling a deeper understanding of how the identities of preservice teachers evolve through mentoring relationships.

In addition, exploratory research helps to adapt the methods as new information emerges. However, this method does not intend to provide definitive answers or test hypotheses; rather, it fosters innovations and leads the researcher to uncover new directions for further investigation in understanding cultural trends or societal behaviors. The strength of exploratory research is the ability to provide a better understanding of new cultural trends or societal behaviors.

Nevertheless, exploratory research faces significant methodological constraints. Queirós et al., (2017) describe these studies with a lack of structured hypotheses, which can lead to ambiguous findings. Furthermore, the absence of standardized procedures increases the risk of researcher bias, where subjective interpretations influence outcomes. These factors collectively reduce the study's internal validity, making it challenging to draw definitive conclusions. In this respect, this study mitigates these challenges by using deliberate theoretical scaffolding. By adopting Mentoring and Barkhuizen and Strauss's framework of professional identity facets (*reflecting, projecting, recognizing, and imagining identity*), the research anchors its findings in a validated framework. As so forth, this structure reduces subjectivity risks by providing defined categories for data analysis.

4.1.2 Methodological Approach.

This research follows a qualitative approach that seeks to understand social phenomena by exploring the meanings and perspectives of individuals immersed in a social context. Silverman (2004) states that the interpretative nature of the approach helps to identify patterns, themes, and underlying meanings. Particularly, this research seeks to explore how individuals construct their identities and navigate social processes in mentoring by documenting the research process, triangulating the data resources reflecting the researcher's role to uncover the complexities of human experiences.

To follow the qualitative research tradition, a wide range of data is used to capture enough details about the natural contexts. Dörnyei (2007) considers that the use of recorded interviews, images, and various types of texts, such as field notes, journals, and diary entries, allows for in-depth exploration of the research context rather than quantitative methods. This means that the qualitative methodology allows themes to emerge naturally in the context of mentoring and professional identity. Additionally, this study gives voice to the participants about their professional development.

By using the qualitative methodology, this study may generate meaningful and contextual insights that contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical application in mentoring practices. Thus, the amount of data obtained may answer the four research questions about identity or recognize the emergence of other categories that quantitative methodology does not allow due to the categories framed before carrying out the research.

The common constraint of qualitative research is the subjective nature of data collection. As Mwita (2022) describes, the researcher's interpretations or personal perspectives and

interactions may unintentionally influence the data, affecting objectivity. The absence of standardized procedures may lead to inconsistencies in how data is coded and interpreted, raising concerns about reliability.

In order to avoid the lack of objectivity, this research provides naturalistic evidence of how professional identity facets manifest in real-world guidance. This longitudinal mentoring relationship is captured by the usage of several instruments. In addition, Professional Identity facets ensure systematic coding of data and reduce researcher bias. Together, these frameworks allow readers to adapt conclusions to specific environments. Thus, both models justify qualitative limitations by converting them into opportunities for theory-informed discovery.

4.1.3 Research Method

This study is framed as a Case Study as it involves conducting interviews with participants to gain insights into their perspectives and experiences. It aims to explore complex phenomena by analyzing multiple data sources (Creswell, 2009). Case studies prioritize contextual understandings, which are particularly valuable for how and why questions inform policy, practice, or further research. Furthermore, Burkar et al. (2024) state that a case study is a comprehensive study of a social unit explored in detail depending on the specific research purposes.

In addition, a case study can work with multiple interrelated factors of concrete instances of a phenomenon within a theoretical framework and research design. As mentioned in Duff (2024), a case study gives accessibility and great emphasis on sociocultural dimensions in distinct fields. Hence, a case study pays more attention to the participants' lives in their past, present, and future emergent experiences. However, it is crucial to highlight the limitations of a case study in

general ways. According to Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001), one of the most common limitations is the large amount of data for analysis that makes the researcher selective regarding the qualitative research variables to study. Additionally, the complexity of case study data poses challenges in representation; simplifying findings without losing depth requires careful methodological choices. In this research, tables were employed to organize and present the information clearly, ensuring accessibility for readers while maintaining analytical procedures.

Another limitation is the lack of generalizability due to the contextual nature of case studies (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2018). Since findings are tied to unique settings, replicating the same results in different contexts is unlikely. Thus, while this study offers rich insight into its particular context, extrapolating conclusions requires further comparative research.

To avoid specific limitations, this research paper provided detailed descriptions of the setting and participants in order to guide further research on how findings may be applied in different contexts. First, the use of a model of mentoring and professional identity could be used in diverse research contexts. Second, the data gathered from different resources and the theoretical triangulation. By doing this, this research enhanced an analytical exploration of a social phenomenon.

Furthermore, to support this research, some ethnographic strategies were employed. McLeod (2024) conceptualizes ethnography as a qualitative method that studies what people do and say in specific contexts. Here, the researcher spent considerable time observing and interacting with the group. In this way, the researcher (me) was immersed as a mentor of the project for six months. This extended duration allowed the researcher to move beyond superficial understandings, identifying patterns and meanings over time.

Researcher's role

Being a mentor in this project and a researcher at the same time contributed to gaining an insider perspective, fostering trust, and access to authentic behaviors and interactions between the pre-service student-teachers and their students in the mentoring program. While this level of involvement raises questions about objectivity, ethnography explicitly acknowledges the researcher's role as a participant observer, framing her subjectivity not as bias but as a critical lens for interpretation, Sharma and Sarkar, (2009). Reflexivity with different instruments during the mentoring program helped to lessen distortion, ensuring that findings remain credible and grounded in the data.

As a mentor, the researcher unfolded emic insights, which were balanced by systematic data collection techniques following specific checklists already designed by “*Supervision and Mentoring Practices: for TEFL Teachers Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach*” (Gooden et al., 2024). This guide incorporates an inclusive mentoring model, which helps to triangulate the findings with Barkhuizen and Strauss's framework of professional identity facets. Thus, while subjectivity is inherent, it was rigorously managed to produce findings deeply contextualized and supported by a selection of instruments.

4.1.4 Setting

The study was carried out at Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Facultad de Lenguas, located in Puebla, México. The two preservice student-teachers were in their last semester of their bachelor's degree in English Teaching. They volunteered for the program *Inglés Incluyente*, which provided English classes for low-income junior high school students from public schools between 14 and 16 years old. The teaching setting consisted of two traditional classrooms within the same faculty building. They were equipped with a projection screen, a whiteboard, and walls

decorated with English vocabulary flashcards. Furthermore, the seating arrangement was for over fifteen students with shared desks for two learners each. Finally, the classes were given on different weekly schedules, covering three hours per week.

4.1.5 Participants

The participants of this research were two preservice student-teachers (PSTs) who were in their last semester of their bachelor's program. Their bachelor's includes a variety of subjects focused on target language acquisition, pedagogy, material design, professional practices, and social service. These subjects aim to prepare students for careers in English language education, equipping them with theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

In the final semester of the program, these students voluntarily participated in a teaching initiative aimed at supporting specific students. Their biographies are summarized below:

Pre-service student teacher 1

The participant is a 21-year-old senior student in the Bachelor of English Teaching, with one year of experience at the elementary level. Initially, she thought that the major was easy, but her perspective shifted after exposure to pedagogical coursework, which revealed her passion for teaching and helping others. Her enthusiasm for material development and classroom instruction reinforced her commitment to improving her teaching practice.

Pre-service student teacher 2

Participant 2 is a 21-year-old senior student teacher in the Bachelor of English Teaching with six months of teaching experience at the elementary level. Her motivations for choosing the major were her aptitude for language teaching and an intrinsic desire to share English with learners in

need. She aims to develop practical teaching competencies through authentic classroom interactions.

4.2 Research Procedure

Due to the nature and innovation of the mentoring process in this study, Table 1 below illustrates the procedure followed using the organizing structure of the mentoring program. First, this contains the three traditional phases in mentoring: 1) Initial phase, 2) Implementation phase, and 3) Final phase. Each one considers the steps taken, dates, description of the practice, instruments, participants, and data collection procedure. In the following sections, this table is described in more detail.

Table 1

Chronogram of activities

RESEARCH PROCEDURES						
Phases	Steps	Time	Description of the practice	Instruments	Participants	Data Collection
Initial Phase	Students' selection	July 2024	Selection considered aspects such as being a child of a single parent and living in specific neighborhoods.	Excel survey reports	2 Mentors	
	First meeting with the student-teachers	August 2024	Expectations and knowledge Agreements on the way of working. -Days of Mentoring - Use of The Mentoring Guide: Chapter 3 checklists 2, 3, and 5.	Slides presentation The Mentoring Guide	2 mentors and 4 student-teachers	
Application phase	Carrying out the Mentoring Model	August - Nov 2024	Pre/before-observation Domain emphasized: <i>Planning & preparation</i> -Establishment of priorities to be observed -Comments around lesson plans	Lesson plans Checklist 2. (pp. 40 and 41) Tracking progress spreadsheet	Mentors and student-teachers	Planning skills Lesson structure
		August - Nov 2024	During observation Domains emphasized: <i>Teaching the lesson</i> <i>Class management</i> <i>Rapport & communication</i> - Note taking to guide feedback	Mentor's field notes Checklists 3, 4, and 5 (pp. 41-44)	Mentors Student teachers Students	-Teaching performance - Classroom management. -Ss-teacher rapport

		August - Nov 2024	Post/after-observation Meeting between mentors and their student-teachers to provide oral feedback and	Recordings of oral feedback Tracking progress spreadsheet	Mentors Student-teachers	-Self- assessment -Mentor feedback - Reflections.
			listen to their opinions (Dialog) Student-teachers would ponder the three-moment cycle of mentoring to generate a reflection.			
Final phase	Closure and final thoughts	February 2025	Student-teachers explained how participating in mentoring shaped their teaching practice.	Retrospective Protocol	Student-teachers	-Written reflections

(Own source)

4.2.1 Initial Phase

The Initial Phase started in July of 2024 with the selection of junior high school students based on specific criteria such as being children of single parents, coming from low-income families, and living in lower and lower-middle class neighborhoods. Once the selection was made, the first meeting between the mentors and the PSTs was held to establish the criteria of the working program, considering PSTs' expectations, the mentoring schedule, and the structure of their sessions to ensure clarity and consistency.

In August of 2024, a second meeting of PSTs and mentors was carried out to discuss around the expectations of the program, agreements of way of working, the use of the Mentoring Guide (Gooden et al, 20024) specifically chapter 3 where there is a description of the checklist, 2, 3, and 5.

4.2.2 Application Phase

This phase was about carrying out the mentoring model, divided into three sections: the first was *the Pre/Before-Observation*, from August to November of 2024. This section was focused on Planning and Preparation. During this stage, mentors and PSTs worked on topics related to lesson

plans, learning objectives, and specific instructional strategies. This phase was critical for identifying potential challenges and refining teaching approaches.

During Observation was from August to November of 2024. This moment considered the first domain of teaching the lesson (Gooden et al., 2024), moving from theory to practice. The second was the class management, and the third one the rapport and communication (Gooden et al, 2024). Furthermore, the notes taken from the mentors were elemental to guide the feedback at the end of the teaching session.

Post/after- observation, from August to November 2024, were the oral feedback sessions with the mentors and the PSTs. This was a dialogue created between both parties, emphasizing the three-moment cycle of mentoring to generate reflection.

4.2.3 Final Phase

This section was the closure and the final thoughts carried out in February of 2025. Here, the PSTs were elicited to use a retrospective protocol to identify how the mentoring program shaped their teaching practice.

4.3 Instruments

The data was collected using several sources described in this section. It is worth mentioning that to organize the collection of the data, the information from the Excel tracker was used. This tracker was not intended to be used for research purposes; it was designed for registering the PSTs' progress activities during the mentoring program.

The instruments along with detailed description of the PSTs' performance was illustrated during their practicum organized under the three moments of mentoring: before observation, during the observation, and after the observation from the guide of Gooden et al., (2024).

4.3.1 Initial Phase

This phase sets the steps to start the program of mentoring. For this moment, the instruments used were a PowerPoint presentation and an Excel file. The power point presentation considered the characteristics of mentoring.

4.3.1.1 Excel

The use of Microsoft Excel allowed the data to be systematically organized. This Excel contained the names of the candidates for English students in the program *Inglés Incluyente*. Furthermore, it describes demographic information such as the age, name of their parents, and the most important section; why they wanted to be students of the program.

4.3.2 Application Phase: Before Observation

For the Pre-observation, the instruments used were the lesson plans, the tracking progress, and the checklist 2 (Gooden et al., 2024).

4.3.2.1 Lesson Plans

The format of the lesson plan first covered the level, age, and number of students. It also included the date, the learning objectives, the language topic, grammar skills, and teaching methods. The second section illustrates the instructional process, such as the time, the stages of warm-up, main activities, wrap-up, procedure, material, and setup. The last part was observations, which were made by the mentors. It is important to mention that the format of the lesson plan was selected by the PSTs and later revised by the mentors due to the components necessary for giving a class.

Figure 1.

Lesson Plan

TRAINEE: Abigail Castro Limon	DATE: 07/10/2024	SS' AGE: 13-14 years old	LEVEL: <u>Beginners</u>	# Ss: 15
OBJECTIVE: Students will review previous knowledge such articles (a/an) and plurals through activities to reinforce the previous knowledge.	TOPIC/GRAMMAR POINT: Demonstratives	LANGUAGE SKILLS: Grammar and vocabulary	TEACHING METHOD: PPP	# Class: 11

TIME	STAGE	PROCEDURE	MATERIAL	SET-UP	ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES
10 min	WARM-UP	Teacher asks students to name objects they see in the classroom and write it on the board. Then different students write the plural from the words. The students who didn't participate write the article.	-Whiteboard -Markers	T-Students	
15 min 15 min 20 min	MAIN ACTIVITIES	Teacher introduces and explains the demonstratives (this, that, these, those). Teacher uses images on the TV with objects close and far to create examples. Teacher does a pointing activity placing object around the classroom (near and far). Using questions with the demonstratives. Students answer. Students will complete a worksheet where they identify and use demonstratives, articles, and plurals correctly.	-Canva presentation https://www.canva.com/design/DAGSQv1-JGs/daUSBJMaMpNsaHvoaS2hyw/edit?utm_content=DAGSQv1-JGs&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton -Images -Objects -Worksheet	T-Students S	
15 min	WRAP-UP	Teacher reviews the worksheet with students. Students play a game using all the topics.	-Game https://es.educaplay.com/recursos-educativos/20625620-salva-a-la-ranita.html	T-Whole class	

(PST format)

4.3.2.2 Checklist 2. Domain 1

The checklists used were taken from the Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teachers Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach (Godden et al., 2024). These were selected according to the development of the practicum. The purpose of using the checklist was to guide the Mentoring program. For this moment, Domain 1 refers to planning and preparation. Here, the purpose of this checklist is to ensure that the PSTs addressed the basic components to prepare and plan a lesson, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2*Checklist 2: Planning and Preparation*

	The lesson plan shows:	Clearly evident	Evident	Some evidence	Little or no evidence/needs work	And this is why...
1.	Lesson aims and objectives according to the teaching context					
2.	A connection to the content and course aims in relation to previous knowledge and future learning.					
3.	Adequate teaching material and resources according to the objective(s) of the lesson.					
4.	A variety of techniques/teaching strategies according to the learning context					
5.	A selection of activities/tasks according to the lesson and level.					
6.	Activities that promote inclusion and are sensitive to students' needs/level of knowledge and skill.					
7.	Formative and summative assessment practices.					

(Gooden et al., 2024, p 40 and 41)

4.3.3 During Observation

These observations were done during class. The format of the observations considered checklist number three, four, and five (Gooden et al., 2024).

4.2.3.1 Checklists 3, 4, and 5

The use of this checklist was to ensure the PSTs were following the necessary procedures for carrying out the class. This checklist guided the mentor to track how the PSTs were working and what specific points should be considered to achieve an inclusive teaching and learning process, illustrated below in table three.

Table 3

Domain 2: Teaching the Lesson

	In the lesson, the teacher:	Clearly evident	Evident	Some evidence	Little or no evidence/needs work	And this is why...
1.	Shows ability to encourage participation and involve students					
2.	Makes use of students' existing knowledge, and previous learning.					
3.	Gives students time to think					
4.	Encourages independent learning					
5.	Provides challenging opportunities for students					
6.	Uses error correction techniques adequately					

7.	Uses elicitation/ questioning techniques					
8.	Gives clear explanations					
9.	Uses body language to explain the topic when necessary					
10.	Caters for a variety of learning styles and abilities					
11.	Uses teaching aids, materials and technology appropriately					
12.	Uses a variety of teaching strategies and activities					
13.	Checks on learning and offers ongoing feedback					

(Gooden, et al., 2024 p.41, 42)

Checklist 4.

This checklist made an emphasis on the creation of a structured, supportive, and engaging learning environment. This considers consistent routines, well-defined rules to minimize disruptions and maximize instructional time, illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

Domain 3: Classroom Management.

	The lesson showed...	Clearly evident	Evident	Some evidence	Little or no evidence/ needs work	And this is why...
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1.	Flexibility and ability to adapt to learners' needs and interests					
2.	Lesson development and flow					
3.	Monitoring of learners' work and providing support when necessary					
4.	Involving different learners' in the activities					
5.	Encouraging learners to use English as much as possible					
6.	Using their voice appropriately					
7.	Starting of activity/ task/ pacing					
8.	Timing of the activities and the lesson					
9.	Physical organization					
10.	Control and handling					
11.	Giving clear instructions					

(Gooden et al., 2024, p. 43)

Checklist 5

This checklist made an emphasis on Rapport and Communication with learners, which includes good communication, motivation, and other aspects that helped in the interaction moments. See table five.

Table 5.

Domain 4: Rapport and Communication with learners.

	The student-teacher showed...	Observation notes
1.	What evidence was observed that showed the positive and engaging attitude during the class?	
2.	How was trust built during class?	
3.	What evidence of respectful and helpful attitude towards students was observed?	
4.	How was good communication with individual students and with the group promoted?	
5.	How was a good relationship with learners fostered during class?	
6.	What evidence of praising and encouraging learners was observed?	
7.	What evidence of students-teachers' motivation towards learners was observed?	
8.	How was confidence in learners' knowledge and abilities enhanced?	
9.	How was flexibility and tolerance toward learners' individuality promoted?	

(Gooden et al., 2024, p. 44)

4.2.4 Retrospective Moment Process

This narrative considered the beginning, during, and after the mentoring program. PSTs described their opinions and observations about the program *Inglés Incluyente* which considered their development through their teaching practice.

4.4 Data Collection

The data collection was done through the excel tracker divided into three stages as illustrated in figure two.

4.4.2 Stage 2: Observation

During the Observation of teaching the lesson, the mentors' field notes, the mentees' points of view, feelings, or decisions were considered. This rubric considered the teacher's ability to encourage active participation and effectively involve students in the learning process. Also, if the teacher provided adequate time for students to think and reflect. How the lesson fostered independent learning by offering challenging opportunities.

Additionally, error correction techniques are used appropriately, and elicitation and questioning strategies are employed to engage students and deepen understanding. Clear explanations were complemented by the use of body language when necessary to enhance comprehension. Furthermore, the teacher catered to a variety of learning styles and abilities, ensuring inclusivity.

4.4.3 Stage 3: After Observation

After the observation moment considered to dialogue about classroom management, rapport and communication with students. During the class, there should be evidence of a positive and engaging attitude, such as the teacher's tone, interactive activities, and consistent encouragement of student participation. In addition, it is important how trust was developed in the classroom, active listening, and teacher support for students' ideas and questions. A respectful attitude was observed in the way the teacher addressed students, providing constructive feedback.

4.4.4 Stage 4. Retrospective Moments

PSTs reflected on the three stages together with the mentors' comments, creating a dialogue format. This guided the conversation into expressing inner thoughts based on their experience.

Additionally, when collecting descriptive data, there is an emphasis on the voices and experiences of four preservice teachers. This method considers the whole context, not a huge

population. Additionally, this demands significant ethical considerations for the participants, where they are informed about the purpose and procedures of the data analysis (Alam & Asmawi, 2024). This means it was respected anytime they decided not to continue to be part of the research without any further issues.

3.9 Data analysis

The data analysis will follow an inductive approach to condense extensive and varied raw text data into an organized format, identifying patterns that are categorized descriptively. The inductive approach reflects frequently reported patterns used in qualitative data analysis. Most inductive studies report a model that has specific categories in the findings (Tomas, 2003). Deductive reasoning leads to specific predictions or expectations that can be tested to gain insights from observed patterns, which cannot be applied in this research paper.

The data analysis was divided into three parts; first, there was a categorization of variables, and this categorization was determined by the months of mentoring. Then, it was analyzed according to the evident moment in the professional identity facets (Barkhuizen & Strauss, 2020). The faces serve as the main code for the analysis. The characteristics of the facets are described as follows:

Reflexing identity. This considers who we think we are, learners' view of the self-including language learners' conceptions of their abilities. Self-concept- conceptions of language knowledge, skills, and ability to use it in different contexts of interaction. Represents the inner self, which is multiple and variable.

Projecting identity. This describes how a person projects her or his identity. In the case of teachers to know how they consciously or subconsciously present themselves in the classroom and to their colleagues. This projection uses semiotic resources such as the tone, behavior, and teaching style

that teachers adopt, whether it is an identity of authority, approachability, leader, mentor, and so on. In addition, it emphasizes that language is an important tool to project identities. That is to say, the way teachers project their identities shapes classroom dynamics and affects how students perceive and interact with them, which can greatly influence students' engagement and learning.

How we want the other to see us, public representation of the outer self, learners' consciously projected identity to others. Values semiotic resources (e.g., appearance, gesture, dress)

Represents the outer self, which is multiple and variable

Recognizing identity. This refers to how others see us in specific social contexts. This acknowledges the diverse backgrounds and personal experiences that are brought into the teaching and learning environment. By validating identities, teachers create a more inclusive, empathetic, and supportive classroom atmosphere that fosters mutual respect and understanding. It is the counterpart of projected identities, potentially imposed identities, which may not be compatible with reflexive or projected identities. It has implications (both ascribed and imposed) for reflexive identities

Imagining identities. Picturing oneself in new roles, such as becoming a curriculum developer or taking on a research-oriented position. Imagining identities is a forward-looking process that inspires teachers to adapt to new challenges and continue evolving professionally. Thus, this identity defines how somebody imagines herself in other times and spaces by comparing herself with others. Through language, by comparing or contrasting others' identities, it is possible to imagine ourselves evolving to those identities wished to enact.

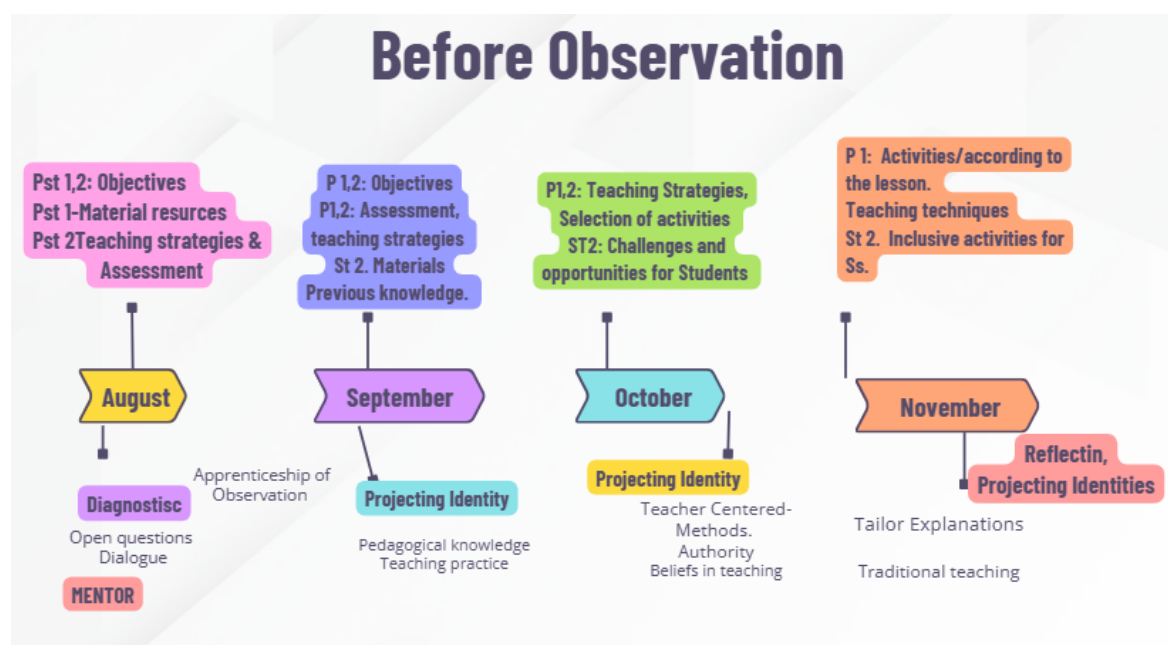
Chapter V: Discussions and Findings

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the study by analyzing how mentoring influences professional identity, and which facets of professional identity and features were observed within the mentoring process. The observations were described in three sections: before observation, during observation, and after observation (feedback) following the framework provided in the guide, *Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* by Gooden et al., 2024. Additionally, the mentor's reflections were described at the beginning and end of the mentoring program.

The following Figure three shows the first organizational structure of the Before Observation moment along the Domains and the evidence of identities, and the months of the observations.

Figure 3

Before Observation Process



(Own source)

5.1 Before Observation

This section describes the moments before teaching the classes, which were carried out with the lesson plans’ observations. The observations were done regarding the class's needs such as the objectives, activities, and other important elements. See Figure 4 below.

Figure 4.

Lesson Plan September 9, 2024

LESSON PLAN 3

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TRAINEE: Abigail Castro Limon	DATE: 02/09/2024	SS' AGE: 12-14 years old	LEVEL: Beginners	# Ss: 14
OBJECTIVE: Students will recognize the alphabet while they spell their name.	TOPIC/GRAMMAR POINT: Vocabulary and pronunciation	LANGUAGE SKILLS: Speaking	TEACHING METHOD: PPP	# Class: 3

TIME	STAGE	PROCEDURE	MATERIAL	SET-UP	ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES
10 min 20 min	WARM-UP	Teacher checks the homework (page 1-3). Teacher reviews the topics from the last classes with a game.	- Workbook - Quizzes link https://quizizz.com/admin/quiz/6640f4d0982b1058bec94e17/source=quiz_sharing	T- Whole group T- Whole group	
10 min 5 min 10 min 5 min 5 min	MAIN ACTIVITIES	Teacher writes the alphabet on the board with pronunciation and reinforces it with a video. Students repeat. Teacher works with the book page 8 activity 2. Teacher plays the audio and students listen carefully. Teacher explains the meaning of "spelling" and writes on the board how students can ask. Teacher asks in a random way the way to 5 students spell their names Teacher works with page 9 and plays the audio for activity A. Teacher plays the audio twice for activity B.	- Youtube video https://youtu.be/63WELUxi7gc?wme6DXU63aNs-rzm2 - Workbook - Board - Markers - Book - Audio	T- Whole group	
10 min	WRAP-UP	Students work with page 4, activity 2 from the workbook to review	- Workbook	S	

Irais Miriam Barr...
30 ago 2024

It is important to add how and what for.

Irais Miriam Barr...
30 ago 2024

What are the students intended to do while you're checking the hw?

Irais Miriam Barr...
30 ago 2024

Have considered other activities besides repeating? Ex. Use vocabulary of the classroom,

Irais Miriam Barr...
30 ago 2024

How do you promote Ss-ss interaction?

(PST 1)

5.1.1 August Practice

This section describes the initial practice carried out in August of 2024. The observations were applied in the lesson plans following the checklist 2: Planning and Preparation, unfolded in the guide by Gooden et al, (2024 pp. 40-41). This checklist details seven crucial elements regarding

the before observation in mentoring. Thus, the mentor structured the feedback following this framework to ensure an inclusive instruction in the teaching practice.

5.1.1.1 Objectives and Materials

In the first month, the observations of PST 1 and 2 were related to the objectives according to the context; sometimes they were too general or ambiguous. This means that the PSTS were focused on covering topics rather than mastering them. Highlighting this observation is necessary because clarity in objectives leads to other decisions, such as the selection of activities (Pollmeier et al., 2024). This aspect reflects how they are developing their pedagogical knowledge.

Another key observation was the selection of the material, considering the students' responses. In this case, PST 1 often stuck to their lesson plan rigidly, making them feel relieved and safe when giving a real class for the first time. This behavior aligns with the *survival stage* (Fuller, 1969). Nonetheless, recognizing and responding to students' feedback is an important part of developing teaching practice.

5.1.1.2 Teaching Strategies & Assessment

As for teaching strategies, only PST 2 showed limited variety in the use of teaching strategies, which might be attributed to a narrow understanding of how to adapt methods to different contexts. Such limitations are common in novice teachers who often revert to familiar teaching models. That is, they replicate the methods by which they were taught. This mimicry can lead to narrowed instructional practices that do not fully consider the learners' needs in the dynamic nature of the classroom environment.

Sometimes at the first practices, there might be a tendency to imitate the identities of past teachers. This process, known as *identity copying*, reflects an early stage in professional identity

formation where teachers adopt behaviors and styles they associate with effective teaching (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). While imitation can serve as a valuable starting point, it underscores the importance of strong role models during the teacher formation.

Another reason why the pre-service teachers root out some beliefs about teaching is by observing their own teachers. This phenomenon, known as the "*apprenticeship of observation*" (Lortie, 1975), describes how individuals form conceptions of teaching long before they receive pedagogical training. According to Borg (2004), preservice teachers' prior experiences exert a strong influence on their classroom behavior, potentially hindering the adoptions of newer, more effective ELT methodologies.

As for the assessment in the planning stage, it was a complex topic considering that this skill integrates pedagogical knowledge and a deep understanding of students' learning styles. DeLuca and Klinger (2010) describe that PSTs frequently enter their training with a significant gap, having experienced assessment primarily from a student's perspective. Thus, they have to continue their professional development not just in assessment but also in other aspects.

5.1.1.3 Mentor's reflection

This first approach as a mentor when carrying out a Before Observation procedure was with open-ended questions considering the learning objectives they wanted to achieve. Thus, the methodology was not prescriptive. Instead, the questions had the purpose to encourage reflection and self-discovery with empathy for creating a space of continual growth for both mentor and the preservice teacher.

This first observation marked a way to start knowing the PSTs about their conceptions of planning and thinking about how to carry out a class. Additionally, this was their first lesson

plan, and I had not given them previous samples or explanations about the design of a lesson plan. This was not necessary, considering they have had subjects in their teaching formation curricula.

Importantly, this was also my first formal experience as a mentor, when I noticed that my role as mentor was not clear because I had no previous experience. At the beginning, I struggled to understand the boundaries of guiding and I questioned myself about how much support should be provided without limiting the mentees' autonomy.

5.1.2 September Practice

This section delineates the predominant themes identified during four mentoring sessions in September. The thematic analysis revealed a subset of common themes evident in the practice of both participants, alongside several themes unique to each individual.

5.1.2.1 Objectives & Assessment

In the first two sessions of September, both pre-service student teachers received similar feedback regarding the formulation of their lesson objectives. The mentor began by engaging them in a reflective discussion, asking about their understanding of objectives and how realistic or achievable they were in their actual classroom setting.

Rather than providing direct instructions, the mentor encouraged them to think critically about their last three weeks of teaching experiences and use those as a foundation for developing more meaningful and attainable objectives. As Gooden et al. (2024) state, a reflective approach helps to foster a deeper understanding and allows them to take ownership of their planning process, promoting personal growth through guided self-discovery.

Another observation was about the conceptions of formative and summative assessment. The misconception of both concepts can lead to a reliance on one aspect ignoring the other. These challenges are connected to the development of their professional identity, as assessment is not only a technical skill but also a reflection of teachers' beliefs about teaching, learning, and student potential (Looney, 2011). PSTs are in the early stages of constructing their professional identities, often imitating assessment practices they have experienced as students, which may not align with contemporary, learner-centered approaches.

With a reflective practice through mentoring, their *evolving identity* begins to incorporate a more nuanced understanding of assessment roles, shaping how they perceive their responsibilities and agency as educators (Golombeck & Johnson, 2016). That is, agencies may be developed through mediated activity and collaborative dialogue.

5.1.2.2 Materials and connection with previous learning

PST 2 lesson planning revealed significant gaps in pedagogical knowledge, particularly in aligning materials with the lesson objectives and continuity in the connection of the topics. This disconnect demonstrated the absence of *reflecting, recognizing, and imagining identities*. The only partially present was *projecting identity* when the novice teacher introduced new topics to cover the curriculum rather than strategically building knowledge. According to Barkhuizen and Strauss (2020), the *projecting identity* can be shown just in specific moments. Thus, every PST has several opportunities in the classroom to demonstrate who he/she is.

This approach reflects a common novice tendency to prioritize syllabus completion over the learning process; teaching becomes a performative checklist exercise instead of a learner-centered process. This finding suggests PST 2 needed to make a student-centered differentiation

in the lesson plan and focus on teachers' competence, not merely the accumulation of skills, but co-constructed with others, making it more adaptive.

5.1.2.3 Mentor's reflection

The mentoring practice this month made me realize the relevance of mentors, particularly at the outset of the teaching practice. The primary relevance lies not only in guiding them with initial steps in the classroom but also in helping them to see further by providing a crucial long-term perspective, contextualizing isolated challenges with broader professional guidance. However, it is also relevant for mentors to be aware of these challenges and be able to scaffold the activities for them. Being inclusive with the PSTs demands knowing how to carry out a dialogue, how to structure and promote an appropriate discourse to make specific observations that may trigger a deep reflection in the teaching practice.

In addition, those observations worked as a mirror on my teaching beliefs and practices that definitely began to shape my identity as a mentor.

5.1.3 October Practice

During this month, there were some similar observations and new ones, which are described below.

5.1.3.1 Teaching strategies and activities

Both PSTs had an observation regarding this point. In the traditional education culture, quiet classrooms were not indicators of learning but for teacher power. Noisy groups may be considered chaos and an absence of authority. The novice teachers rely on their experiences to continue with this practice, showing a capability to manage big groups of students.

The idea of losing control of the groups leads to a practice focused on teacher-centered practices where chorus repetition or activities from the books to maintain order. In other words, this way of working controls the input, the pace, and the output. As a result, this minimizes unpredictable situations.

As Scarinno (2017) mentions, the choice of teacher-centered methods is a key tool for projecting an identity of “The authority” who has control. Conversely, attempting a dynamic activity without classroom management skills may definitely project the opposite.

5.1.3.2 Challenges and opportunities for students

PST 2 was observed to require this element. The central problem is that some educational environments prioritize coverage and measurable outcomes rather than deep, challenging learning. This may create a pedagogical comfort zone where students are tasked with reproducing information. Nevertheless, the challenge is not merely to give students more work but to design specific tasks that stimulate cognitive growth. These challenges need to be addressed with a scaffolding design to reach a higher level of understanding. As Wood et al. (1976) state that an expert supports a learner’s problem solving by simplifying the task, modeling strategies, and maintaining motivation.

5.1.3.3 Mentor’s reflection

This month was focused on a deep understanding of the importance of constant reflection in the teaching practice, no matter how much experience a professional may have. Students and teachers are always in constant interaction with others who shape their beings. Hence, every day practice is a new perspective on what should or should not be implemented in the classroom; what should still be discussed to improve professional practice. Teaching a language is not

separate from social, cognitive, or other sciences. On the contrary, it is a part of the teaching-learning dimension where not just teachers and students are present, but also society.

As in my own case, I realized that mentoring goes beyond a PST-Mentor interaction; it involves other sociological factors among every individual in everyday life.

5.1.4 November Practice

This section describes the last month of observations; both participants showed fewer observations in specific areas. However, there were still points that needed to be addressed during the feedback sessions. These aspects are developed as follows.

5.1.4.1 Activities/tasks according to the lesson

PST 1 struggled addressing aspects of this domain by showing more importance to the activity over the objective. This means there was no consideration of the process of learning; it was perceived as a linear sequence of teaching. Consequently, this suggested a primarily task-oriented rather than learner-centered. However, these moments are crucial to recognize others' abilities. In other words, the *recognizing identity* is not present nor the *imagining identity*. The PST neither considered whether her learning objective was reached nor considered different teaching strategies for diverse students. In addition, there was no consideration of the students' cognitive load and scaffolding moments. This reflected an early stage of professional development.

5.1.4.2 Teaching techniques/strategies for the learning context.

Observations revealed a limited range of teaching strategies, often adhering closely to the activities presented in the textbook. This reliance on the book may stem from her background and language learning experiences, which appear in her teaching methodology. Essentially, she may be replicating the style of instruction she herself encountered as a learner, resulting in a less

varied pedagogical approach. In other words, her apprenticeship of observation has constrained her ability to adapt and diversify her personal techniques to suit the immediate learning context.

5.1.4.3 Inclusive activities for students' needs.

This observation was for PST 2, who did not plan considering the diversity of her students. She was more focused on performance rather than on planning for inclusion. According to Rinke et al. (2013), this occurs due to the long time spent as students, more than twelve years observing teachers' activities, which may be replicated because of the joy novice teachers may have experienced. The only identity present is thinking about themselves and how others recognize them. This means the only concern is the survival stage (Fuller, 1975). The focus is on the performance, not yet on the nuanced impact on each student's learning. For this reason, mentoring model should help to reflect on this feature to avoid future repetitions of this practice

5.1.4.4 Mentor's reflection

As a final reflection of this before the observation stage, I can describe some relevant points from this amazing experience. First, during this exercise, I was able to tailor different explanations according to the mentees' needs. My approach had to be creative and not prescriptive; this helped me to see the importance of my constant professional development. Second, my perception of mentoring has been expanded; it is not a one-way process, but a mutual opportunity for reflection and professional growth, where my own professional identity was shaped through the act of guiding others. Finally, I started to reframe my understanding of mentoring as a dialogic process that cultivates collaborative leadership, essential for building an effective profession.

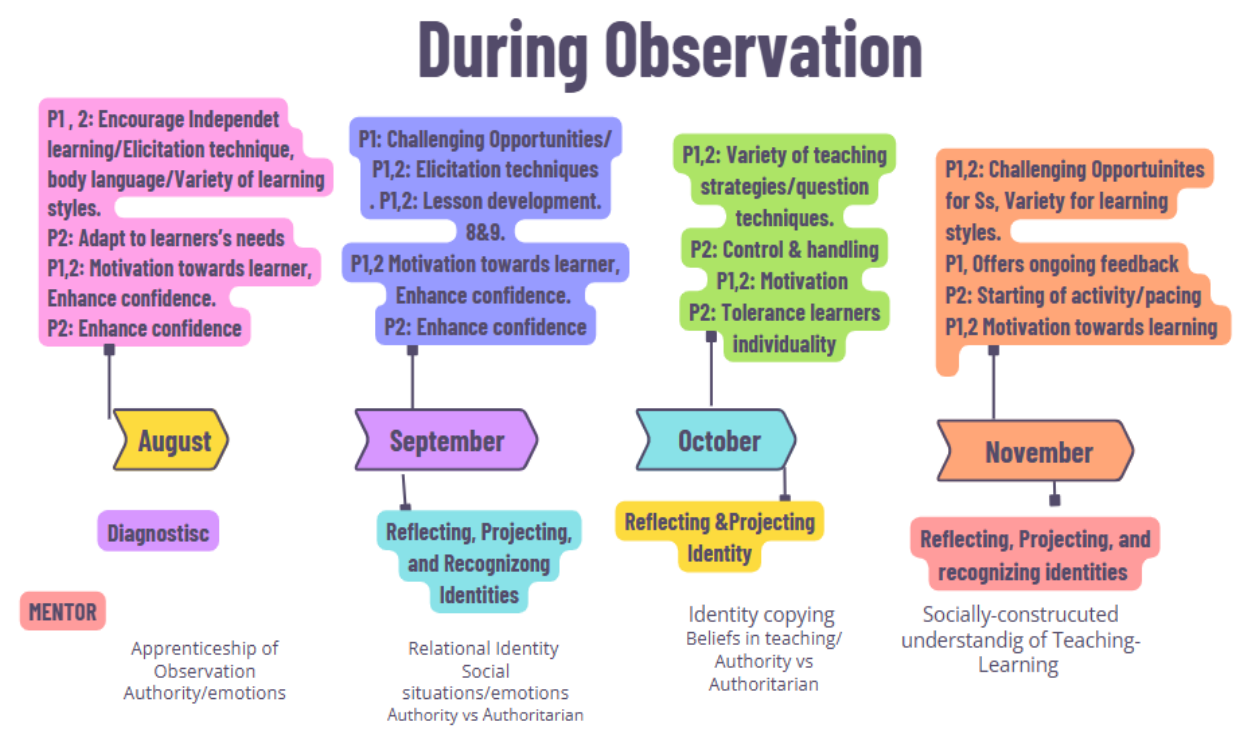
5.2 During Observation

This section describes the organizational structure based on the three domains: Teaching the lesson, Classroom Management, and Rapport and Communication with Learners. These three

observed moments were guided by the checklists of the *Supervision and Mentoring and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* by Gooden et al., (2024). Each month presents the observations and topics that emerged during observation as illustrated in the Figure five below.

Figure 5.

During Observation Process



(Own source)

5.2.1 August Practice

During this month, there was one session observed; and both PSTs had similar comments regarding the three moments of mentoring. The details and interpretations are outlined below with a description of mentoring domains.

5.2.1.1 Teaching the lesson

As for teaching the lesson, during the class, observations were addressed for both PSTs. In the section on encouraging independent learning, PSTs showed a necessity to complete the lesson quickly instead of letting students understand the lesson deeply. Furthermore, the idea of not knowing the students' strengths, needs, and learning styles pressures the PSTs to deliver all the material and content, having a teacher-centered focus. That is, it was observed that not knowing the students' strengths and weaknesses created a distance where students were perceived as passive recipients of information instead of active partners, limiting the development of a learner-focused relationship. At the same time, these difficulties generated uncertainty in their sense of professional confidence and agency.

PST 1 had some remarks regarding the section of elicitation/questioning techniques. It is known that mastering elicitation happens when the teacher moves from paying attention to their pupils' performance to understanding what is happening in their minds in the process of learning. On one hand, elicitation transfers the responsibility for producing knowledge to the students that may give the sense of losing the control of the class. On the other hand, in some teaching contexts the silence may be comfortable because it does not show moments of uncertainty. Johnson (2009) emphasizes the scaffolding strategies provided by mentors to help teachers break a hard task into steps where students can experience learning moments in each stage.

5.2.1.2 Classroom management

During the preservice program, PSTs ‘learned’ theories of differentiation, lesson planning, and voice modulation in university courses, but applying them simultaneously in a dynamic real classroom becomes a challenge. There is no evidence or recognition of the other learning styles having rigid classroom management. Furthermore, PST 1 focused on getting to the lesson plan as written, ignoring the tone of the voice and ways of calling the students’ attention.

Consequently, they may either plow ahead with ignoring cues or attempt to adapt in a way that disrupts the lessons’ flow when there are no alternative activities or explanations. According to Schön (1983), Reflective Practice Theory, effective teaching requires the ability to engage in a reflection-in-action where there is a response to classroom events. When this adaptability is limited, PST 1 may have felt as surviving the lesson rather than facilitating meaningful learning.

5.2.1.3 Rapport and Communication with learners

As the first session observed, PSTs struggled in fostering a genuine relationship with learners because they are navigating a complex and ambiguous role of identity, going between the role of authority figure and novice. This identity conflict may cause a barrier to connection and lead to either excessive distancing or inappropriate friendliness, both of which hinder the development of the natural professional rapport (Pillen et al., 2013).

5.2.1.4 Mentoring

This experience was focused on how they felt in the first class. Most of the comments were about feeling nervous and a change in expectations about the students’ level. Both PSTs wanted students to participate in the first class and have all aspects of the lesson plan covered. In this manner, I started mentoring with some questions to trigger a dialogue about what a teacher should do to make them feel comfortable and participate in the session. Furthermore, PSTs had

questions about attitudes towards certain situations that arose in class. Finally, they expressed how they felt with the mentor present; for this reason, I clarified that I was there as a guide, not a teacher who was going to grade or judge them.

5.2.2 September Practice

This section describes in detail the three moments of September.

5.2.2.1 Teaching the lesson

Regarding this section, PST 1 had more observations in the point of the need to show the ability to encourage and involve students during the class. This means she did not consider ways to integrate her students during the class. The other point was the importance of providing challenging opportunities for students. In addition, the observation in the physical and pedagogical organization of the classroom describes a PST 1 underlying educational philosophy. Hence, this PST 1 projected herself as a traditional teacher who just followed the lesson plan. According to Vygotsky (1998), a classroom is a social situation of development where every spatial arrangement facilitates or constrains learning. Thus, the PST choices in this aspect communicated how she reflected on herself and how she wanted to be interpreted.

5.2.2.2 Classroom management

With respect to this section, PSTs presented a challenge in particular points such as physical organization, monitoring learner's work, and managing timing. This happened because they are still developing the practical and situational awareness to coordinate multiple dimensions of the classroom. According to Richards and Farrell (2005), beginning teachers often struggle to balance pedagogical goals with the spontaneous demands in the classroom. The classroom space requires anticipating learners' needs, ensuring visibility, and facilitating interactions.

As for monitoring learners' work and timing activities are related to the way novice teachers tend to focus more on completing the lesson plans than on actively circulating and monitoring students' participation, resulting in a limited understanding of learners' progress.

5.2.2.3 Rapport and Communication with Learners

Both PSTs had observations on the need to promote flexibility toward learners' individuality. This observation is connected to the relational identity of teachers. PSTs have not yet perceived that teaching is not only cognitive but also emotional, interpersonal, and contextual (Varghese et al., 2009). Hence, they still need to recognize that building a positive relationship with students enhances engagement, and this shapes them to be perceived as more caring and responsive professionals.

5.2.2.4 Mentoring

The same approach was taken; I considered their feelings and monitored which were still aspects that needed to be changed. A notable finding emerged from PST 2, who frequently sought prescriptive directives from me for specific situations. I tried to adhere to a constructivist perspective, responded by describing a range of potential scenarios and strategic postures for problem solving without providing a dictated course of action. In some occasions, these interactions were perceived by the PST as somewhat frustrating without the scripted nature of teaching, which required the need to develop one's situated responses.

For example, I shared my experiences when giving my first classes, where I encountered similar challenges related to my emotions, and how being conscious of the ethical and professional responsibility has to guide the teaching path. That is, mentoring entails not only to recite information but a model of reflective thinking, empathy, and professional autonomy.

5.2.3 October Practice

This section unfolds the observations regarding the month of October.

5.2.3.1 Teaching the lesson

In respect to this section, PST 1 struggled to implement a variety of teaching strategies and effective elicitation techniques due to the immense cognitive load she was experiencing. The belief of projecting an identity as the Perfect teacher overwhelmed her leading them to fall back on a limited repertoire of safe activities (Borg, 2006). This focus on survival prevents flexibility in adapting their plan to students' responses. Furthermore, the idea of projecting the perfect class does not consider early signs of managerial issues or a lesson losing momentum, making the control rigid and easily disrupted.

5.2.3.2 Classroom management

Both PSTs were observed not having a good control and handling because they are still developing the ability to balance authority with approachability that requires more than enforcing discipline, it requires establishing clear expectations with a respectful atmosphere (Harmer, 2015). In respect to the point of the lesson flow, PSTs need to have reflective awareness in their practice that help them to anticipate transitions and adjust pacing.

5.2.3.3 Rapport and Communication with learners.

With regard to this section, PSTs struggled in motivating students and showing flexibility and tolerance toward learner's individuality. This happened due to the limited capacity for "imagining" the classroom from the students' perspective. Their focus is often inward, on their own performance and adherence to the lesson plan, which constrains their ability to "recognize" and respond to the individual needs, motivations, and unique personalities in the room (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). While they may project a desire to be a motivating and tolerant teacher, this

is often an abstract ideal. In practice, without a rich bank of experiences to draw upon, they may misinterpret student individuality as a challenge to their authority or a deviation from the lesson's script, leading them to enforce conformity rather than celebrate diversity.

5.2.3.4 Mentoring

These mentoring sessions were more reflective on what PSTs have achieved and what they needed to work more, they paid more attention to the guide *Supervision and Mentoring and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* by Gooden et al (2024). In addition, my focus was more on carrying out a dialogue in helping them to discover their strengths through the process of sharing their experiences. They articulated what challenged them and what specific actions they intended to take to improve their teaching practice. For instance, I used questions such as “What part of the lesson made you feel most confident?” or What would you change in your class and why?

5.2.4 November Practice

This section unfolds the last month of observation; every point is described in detail in the following paragraphs.

5.2.4.1 Teaching the lesson

This section focused on the points of providing challenging opportunities and catering to diverse learning styles, this revealed a gap between their *projecting identity* as a competent, inclusive educator and their current capacity for in-the-moment differentiation. While they tried to project a vision of a classroom where all students are appropriately challenged and supported, the reality of planning and executing is complex. Their *reflecting identity* is likely dominated by a focus on logistical execution ("Did we finish the activity?") rather than a critical evaluation of its cognitive demand or accessibility for different learners (Borg, 2006). They have not yet fully "recognized"

the distinct academic profiles and zones of proximal development within their student group, which is a prerequisite for tailoring instruction so precisely (Johnson & Golombek, 2016).

5.2.4.2 Classroom management

In this domain, the difficulty with checking for learning and managing pacing reveals tension in their *projecting identity*. They likely envisioned a smooth, well-paced lesson where feedback flows naturally, but their enacted practice shows an identity still rooted in "activity manager." The skill of checking for understanding and adjusting pacing accordingly requires a high level of "reflecting-in-action" (Schön, 1983), an ability to process student data in real-time and make adjustments. The PSTs' *recognizing identity* is not yet attuned to the subtle cues of confusion or boredom that signaled the need for a pacing change, causing them to stick rigidly to their planned timetable rather than respond to the learners' needs.

5.2.4.3 Rapport and Communication with Learners.

Finally, in the last sessions, there was a positive rapport and motivation that were noted with the student's attitude; this displayed significant indicators of a developing *professional identity*. This is not just a projecting identity, but also an *emerging and reflecting identity* that understands the foundational role of relationships in teaching. The teacher is successfully "*recognizing*" that a positive and engaging attitude is a core part of their professional role. This aspect of their practice often becomes a cornerstone of their identity, as it is through these positive interactions that they feel most like a "real teacher" (Barkhuizen and Strauss, 2020). This strength in rapport provides a crucial foundation upon which more sophisticated pedagogical skills, like differentiation and formative assessment, can be built.

5.2.4.4 Mentoring

The concluding month of the practicum evidenced a significant shift in the preservice teachers' discourse, reflecting movements towards a more complex and socially constructed understanding of teaching and learning. In my case, I could see how this program helped me to change my point of view about mentoring, how a constructivist and humanistic perspective creates an impact on the development of others who will be in front of a class, shaping other individuals. This also helped me to think about my agency in improving my skills to be able to help other professionals.

5.3 Retrospective Moment

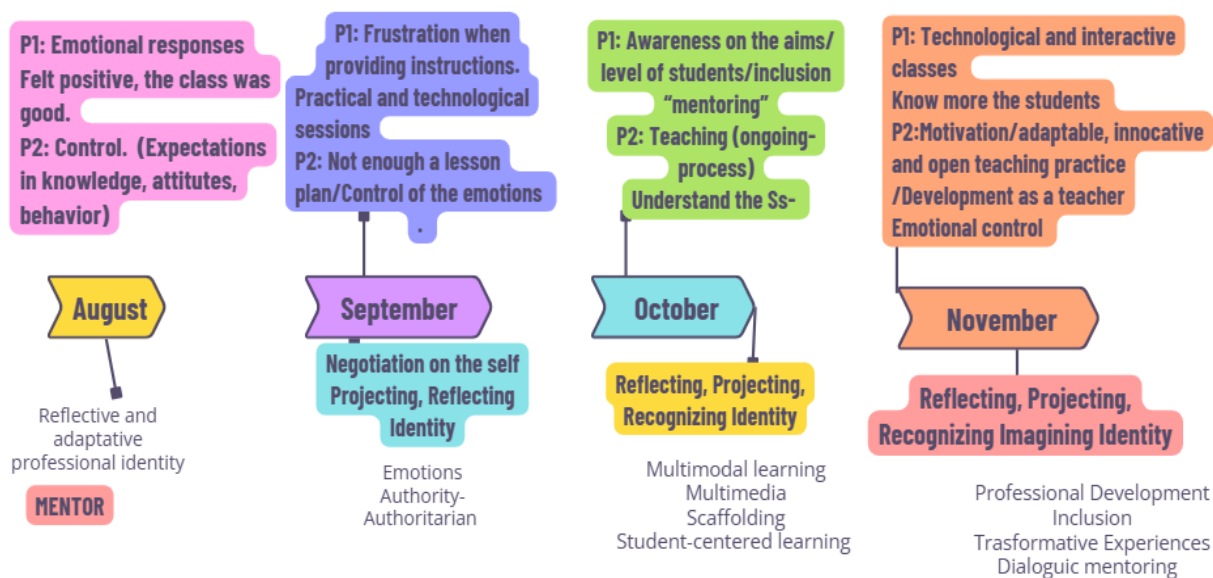
During the mentoring session, participants were instructed to record the feedback provided.

Subsequently, they were required to review the recording and engage in a reflective analysis of the mentoring practice. This section details four months of reflection that are briefly described in the following Figure 4.

Figure 6.

Retrospective Moment Process

Retrospective Moments



(own source)

5.3.1 August Reflection.

This month marked the beginning of the reflections; both participants explained what they perceived after the observations done by the mentor.

5.3.1.1 Participant 1

In this month, there was only one session of reflection per each participant. PST 1 highlighted a strong emotional connection between her teaching and her perception of the students' positive responses, which reinforced her motivation to continue teaching.

My teaching practice at the moment make me feel good with the students' response, they enjoy the class and it is a stimulus for me, to keep to working.

First, the preservice teacher engaged affectively with her teaching identity, there was an emotional satisfaction. This means that the participant one is recognizing herself through the interactions with others

during the first class. As Barkhuizen and Strauss (2020) state, the multiple dimensions of identity such as emotions play a significant role in shaping identity. That is, during and after the praxis, the PST 1 was conscious of herself in the role of a capable teacher. Emotions, in particular, influenced how the PST 1 perceived her capabilities when interacting with others. This emotional awareness was closely connected to the development of her sense of *self-efficacy*, defined by Bandura (1997) as the belief in one's ability to organize and execute actions required to achieve specific teaching goals. Thus, the reflection on her teaching practice through mentoring plays a crucial role in recognizing her emotional side.

Second, PST 1 reflected in her identity, evaluating her practice with emotional responses that evoke an ongoing development and reinforcement of her professional identity. However, it is important to acknowledge that not all emotional experiences are positive. Therefore, developing emotional resilience is essential to critically engage with challenges while maintaining a sense of self-proportion.

5.3.1.2 Participant 2

The second PST started her reflection around communication, classroom dynamics, and expectations.

I consider that I must work a lot with communication, I must create an environment of trust, eliminate my idea of the perfect class and the idea of basic knowledge of the language in my students.

This PST 2 in the first class recognized areas of growth by prioritizing the building of trust, which demonstrated an understanding that a safe and supportive classroom environment is essential for better teaching and learning engagement. Nevertheless, the idea of having a perfect class may be about control, the absence of problems, and be characterized by students who instantly understand every concept and produce flawless language. This shows the relevance of the first class; through the interactions, the students reveal who they are and how much English they know. In addition, the students' background was mentioned before this participant started

her classes; the students came from low-income, single-parent, and other socioeconomic limitations.

Based on the previous, it can be said that PST had to take a *reflective and adaptive professional identity* in order to understand the context where she was and how she responded to several situations in the classroom.

5.3.2 September

This month was about experiencing different emotions and how those moments triggered different behaviors towards teaching and learning.

5.3.2.1 Participant 1

In this month, participant one expressed frustration in a class due to her way of providing instructions.

My self, specially in this class, felt at the beggining frustated because students didn't understand the instructions until I guide them, so I need to work more in my instructions so they can follow the class better.

This reflection of the instruction moment was not a sign of failure but a sign of growth. The PST realized that teaching is not repeating without sense; on the contrary, it is about students being able to understand what to do. This showed a commitment to the learning process where the PST is considering others, moving from the inner self to the outer and recognized others in pedagogical moments. As Barkhuizen (2017) states, the negotiation of the self becomes dynamic due to the interaction between people recognizing them in several communicative situations.

The second reflection highlighted the technological resources and the monitoring moments when giving a class.

My teaching practice can be more practical and efficient if I implement the technological resources in my classes... also I need to monitor the students in order to observe what they are doing while the class is going.

The material interaction with the students and teachers in the process of teaching and learning marks a facet in *identity construction*. This unfolding situation recognized a necessity to consider future material. The *imagining identity* arose when acknowledging what should be used in the future. Furthermore, as Barkhuizen (2020) states, there are several ways of material interaction within spaces, places, and objects that mark the identity construction among ecological spaces. Thus, the language teacher identity considers not just personal features but also material ones.

5.3.2.2 PST 2

This reflection highlighted how active a class should be to avoid boredom.

In this class I realize that is not enough [to] have a lesson plan, I need to know when the activity can work and when not, in this case there were some situations which makes the class feel sleepy.

This PST has moved beyond the mechanical view of teaching as simply executing a lesson plan, this implies a context-awareness. First of all, this PST recognized others through a gap between the intention and the impact of the activities. She recognized how she was *projecting her identity* into a realistic and reflective one. Her identities were in constant interaction with each other (Barkhuizen, 2020). Through mentoring, she started having an understanding of the classroom rhythm and students' needs.

The second reflection was focused on control of the emotions which may help to motivate for achieving better teaching outcomes.

After this session I consider that I will have to continue learning to control my emotions, especially in situations that do not fully correspond to me, I will continue motivating my students to have good results, I need to have a good coexistence with them to have their attention; however, I am having a hard time to make that balance, between being the authority and a friend for them.

The PST experienced tensions between the personal self and the professional role. The desire to control emotions and the difficulty in finding balance expressed facets of negotiation. There is an intuitive understanding of synergistic integration where the classroom is a space of understanding emotional side, also discussed by Barhuizen (2020). This means a construction of resilience and nuanced identity of a teacher; thus, the PST expressed a dichotomy between authority and rapport and acknowledged how her internal state influenced her ability to motivate students and maintain a productive learning environment.

She started to recognize the limitations of her *initial identity* of control and predictability into a resourcefulness in her practice. This identity development is committed to student learning rather than planning completion. In conclusion, the awakening of ingenuity is one of the most important moments in a teacher's path; it marks the change of being a slave of the lesson plan into the architect of the learning process. As Pishghadam et al., (2022) state, the teacher identity is dynamic, evolving, and multiple where both teaching and learning take place as the base of the education.

5.3.3 October Reflection

This month showed a deep reflection on several aspects of the teaching process.

5.3.3.1 PST 1

The first participant described changes she should implement in the lesson aims.

After this session, I consider I must reflect more deeply on how I set my lesson aims and how they connect to students' behavior and engagement. The pre-observation process helped me realize that my objectives were sometimes too general or not clearly aligned with the students' level. During the observation, I saw that when my aims were specific, measurable, and adapted to A1/A2 levels, students participated more actively and with more confidence. Therefore, I should change my own perception of objectives not just as a formal requirement, but as a guiding tool for planning relevant and level-appropriate activities.

PST 1 reflection demonstrated a significant evolution in her *projected identity*, moving from a teacher who viewed aims as a "formal requirement" to one who recognizes them as a "guiding tool." This shift is crucial; it is connected to the development of what educational theorists call a "planning identity," the part of a teacher's professional self that is defined by their approach to design and preparation.

When critically analyzing the cause-and-effect relationship between the lesson's aims and student engagement, she engaged in deep reflective practice. Schön (1983) categorizes this as "reflection-on-action," where there is a reconstruction of the experience by analyzing the reasons for student behavior (participation and confidence), and drawing a meaningful conclusion for future practice. This process directly challenges and reshapes the underlying beliefs and cognitions, which are the foundation of the *personal teacher's identity*.

Furthermore, her commitment to designing "achievable" activities with "simpler instructions" and "scaffold tasks" showed a growing *recognizing identity*. It is a movement beyond seeing students as a monolithic group and is beginning to recognize and respond to their individual "real abilities and interests." This is a key characteristic of a student-centered educator. The goal for students to "feel successful" indicates that her motivating identity is becoming more defined and empathetic, prioritizing affective factors alongside linguistic outcomes. As Johnson

and Golombek (2016) suggest, this type of mindful analysis of the connection between the teaching decisions and student learning is the very mechanism through which teacher agency and expertise develop. The PST is not just learning new techniques; she is *re-imagining* her role in the classroom as a facilitator of accessible and empowering learning experiences.

The second reflection emphasized the importance of equality, confidence, and engagement to a more positive learning environment.

I will make sure the selection of participants is fair and rotated, so all students feel included. Their participation should reflect equality, confidence, and engagement in a positive learning environment. I should implement more visual aids, gestures, and guided practice to help them connect meaningfully with the content. I also need to continue mentoring students individually to track their understanding and provide feedback based on their progress.

The strategy to implement visual aids, gestures, and guided practice is a masterful application of Multimodal Learning, as theorized by the New London Group (1996). That is, the PST recognized that students process information through different channels (visual, auditory, kinesthetic), and by diversifying the input, she makes the content accessible to a wider range of learners. This "scaffolding" of instruction, a concept from Vygotsky, provides the necessary support for students to "connect meaningfully with the content." This leads directly into the final point on individual mentoring and progress-based feedback, which is the cornerstone of Formative Assessment.

5.3.3.2 PST 2

Participant two emphasized a change in her ideology in her teaching practice.

After this session I consider that I must eliminate that ideology that students must learn all the time from the teacher... implement in my teaching ideologies that can help me understand that students can learn and produce on their own, if we work with their tastes and their needs,

because they need to see English from another angle, my teaching practice is constantly changing and learning. This class is one of the most productive ones, just being a monitor of my students.

The commitment to "eliminate that ideology that students must learn all the time from the teacher" is a direct rejection of the "*banking model*" of education, a concept powerfully critiqued by Paulo Freire (1970). In this outdated model, the teacher is the sole depositor of knowledge into passive students. In this way, the realization signified a fundamental shift in her *teacher's identity*, moving away from the "fount of all knowledge" towards a more facilitative role. This aligns with constructivist theories, such as those of Piaget and Vygotsky, which posit that knowledge is not transmitted but actively constructed by the learner through experience and social interaction. By choosing to work with students' "tastes and needs," she acknowledged that learning is a personal and contextual process, and that motivation is crucial to the deep and meaningful production of language.

The description of the class being highly productive when she acted as a "monitor" powerfully illustrates the success of this new approach. This role is central to student-centered learning and is linked with the concept of the teacher as a "facilitator" or "guide on the side." As Weimer (2013) argues, learner-centered teaching requires a transfer of power and responsibility from the teacher to the student, which ultimately fosters greater autonomy and engagement. In addition, the point that students can "learn and produce on their own" when given the right conditions is a testament to the development of a learner agency. This shift is not just methodological but deeply philosophical; she was "constantly changing and learning" by re-evaluating the core purpose of her teaching, which Dewey (1938) would identify as the hallmark of a truly reflective practitioner. By helping students "see English from another angle," it is not

just teaching a language but empowering them to use it as a tool for their own expression and purposes.

Furthermore, the desire to "work together, listened to each other" while upholding "classroom rules, instructions and obligations" establishes what Brophy (2006) would describe as an *authoritative (as opposed to authoritarian) classroom management style*. This approach balances high expectations with empathy and clear communication, creating a predictable and safe space where students feel both "understood" and accountable for their own behavior, which is essential for collaborative learning.

5.3.4 November Reflection

This section describes the last month of reflection highlighting better teaching practices.

5.3.4.1 PST 1

The participant describes the importance to the use of technological resources in order to develop interactive learning experiences.

Because I want to make learning more engaging and accessible, I will use technology to present content, give examples, and create interactive speaking activities. My teaching practice will include the careful selection of a main topic that can smoothly connect to the next lesson, allowing for better continuity and deeper understanding.

As it can be seen, the use of technology became an important aspect to make learning more "engaging and accessible" through interactive activities aligning with the principles of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), a framework developed by Mishra and Koehler (2006). This model emphasizes that effective technology integration is not just about the tools themselves, but also about the intersection of technological knowledge, pedagogical

knowledge, and content knowledge. The mentoring moment helped to visualize this as something necessary for the class, and by strategically selecting technology to present content, giving examples, and facilitating speaking practice, PST moved beyond imagining the use of Technology as a transformative learning experience connecting this with *her imagining identity*. This approach fosters a more participatory and student-centered classroom, which can significantly increase motivation and cater to diverse learning preferences, thereby making the language more accessible.

Barkhuizen (2020) described this as an identity connected to materials. PST needed to use specific tools to carry out the class that helped her teaching process. This means there should be recognition of these tools in the teaching and learning process.

The second reflection focused on varying the future tasks to practice different skills.

Previous activities are useful to evaluate their level, but I should use that information to adapt and vary future tasks. I will implement more engaging speaking activities that are directly connected to meaningful topics, so students feel motivated to express themselves. My teaching practice needs to reflect the differences between groups not all students respond the same way to the same strategies, so flexibility is key. Through interactions, I get to know my students better (their strengths, struggles, and interests) which helps me personalize my teaching.

The evaluation data not just for assessment but to "adapt and vary future tasks" is the very essence of formative assessment and differentiated instruction. As emphasized by Black and William (1998), assessment becomes formative only when the information is used to adapt teaching to meet student needs. By closing the feedback loop, ensuring that the instruction is a responsive dialogue rather than a monologue. The goal of "flexibility" is, therefore, the operational core of creating an inclusive classroom where the curriculum is tailored to fit the learners, rather than forcing the learners to fit into a rigid curriculum.

This PST moved from *projecting identity* to *recognizing identity* and to *imagining identity*. This means, she started to consider a change in her future tasks due to the responses she has had. Her interactions with students promoted a reflection in her future. Consequently, this shift in her agency demanded her to continue working on her own professional development.

5.3.4.1 PST 2

The following reflection highlighted an adaptable, innovative teaching approach.

I feel motivated, sometimes it is difficult for me to think about the needs of my students, I need to continue implementing teaching activities, where everyone participates, and share with them learning from times, because not considering their ideologies can cause problems in my sessions, I cannot teach with my tastes, experiences and times only, my teaching practice must be adaptable, innovative and open.

Motivation amidst the difficulty of this work is a key indicator of what John Dewey, (1933) described as reflective thought, an active and persistent evaluation of beliefs and practices. The tension between an own framework and the students' needs is the core of professional growth. The PST was moving beyond a methodological change to an ethical stance. It can be perceived that the concept of "engaged pedagogy" from Hooks (1994) demands that educators are actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes the well-being of both students and teachers. It is not just learning new techniques but transforming a philosophy to a more inclusive, democratic, and humane classroom.

Her *projecting and imagining identity* took place when describing the desire to implement changes, her perception of teaching is evolving and she recognized the need to be innovative. As a result, this reflection showed a mature perception of education.

The following reflection highlighted a motivational description towards a better teaching practice.

I feel very satisfied with myself, the way the class developed makes me believe in everything I have learned, through experiences, tests and challenges, I want to continue acquiring experiences that help me in my development as a teacher, I also want to meet more students that help me control my emotions and become passionate about teaching, because I want each group that I can teach a class to take away a learning experience but, above all, a good impression and memory of my teaching methodology and my essence as a teacher, my students in this service have been a fundamental pillar of how much or how little I have grown in this service.

This perspective is core to a sociocultural theory of teacher learning, as explored by Johnson (2009), who states that teacher learning is socially constructed through participation in professional contexts. The students are not passive recipients of her teaching but active agents in her development. The goal to "meet more students who help me control my emotions and become passionate" revealed an understanding of teaching as a relational practice where emotional regulation and passion are sustained through interaction. This directly connects to the desire for students to have a "learning experience," positioning the PST not as a sole knowledge-holder, but as a facilitator of transformative experiences, a concept echoed in the work of Mezirow (1991) on transformative learning. The PST was building a legacy not just of lessons taught, but of positive impressions and memories, which is the hallmark of a truly impactful educator.

The *imagining and recognizing identity* arose when considering the others for her identity transformation, she described an evolving process and how the others helped her. This particular moment triggered the importance of how others shape us, and in this case, in the process of teaching and learning.

Chapter VI: Conclusions

Analyzing the data through specific theoretical lenses has led to this research section of conclusions. As highlighted in chapter one, the purpose of this paper is to know how mentoring influences the development of Pre-service EFL teachers' professional identity and which facets are present in the mentoring moments. This chapter will describe the relevant discussions and conclusions that answered the research questions. Furthermore, some limitations of this research and suggestions for further research will be stated.

6. 1 Pre-observation and Identities.

This section was related to the lesson plans' observations; each month was reviewed by the mentor, who followed a dialogic strategy. The lesson plans from August and September contained feedback primarily about objectives, activities, and material. However, in October and November, the focus shifted towards students' learning, showing a gradual movement from technical planning to pedagogical reflection.

The mentoring program began with a number of observations in the first months regarding several aspects of the lesson plans. Nonetheless, there were still some observations that were repeated at the end of the program. By discussing these points during the feedback moment, the PSTS were aware of making changes and even detecting their misunderstandings by themselves.

The findings revealed that through time the preservice teachers were able to perceive what should be analyzed and changed. This is related to what Vygostky, (1978) highlights, as a moment where the PSTs would need less of the presence of the mentor due to her practice of reflection on a lesson plan structure.

Additionally, the evolution in this moment illustrated an early stage of professional development where PSTs began to move from procedural teaching to reflective awareness. The only identities visible were Reflecting and Projecting Identity from Barkhuizen's (2017) and Barkhuizen and Strauss's (2020) framework, since the evidence suggests a self-construction of the identities.

6.2 During Observation and Identities.

The first month demonstrated how the PSTs started their first real class. When PSTs had difficulties in encouraging independent learning, using elicitation techniques, and other aspects related to teaching, it revealed special gaps in the undeveloped identity as an inclusive educator. According to Barkhuizen's (2020) framework, the teacher's practice remains rigid, and they just focus on surviving and not paying attention to the students.

Conversely, the identity facets that are present help explain this rigid approach. The preservice teacher is strongly enacting the identity of a "Curriculum Deliverer," heavily influenced by the contextual pressure to follow their lesson plan and the book's content as a measure of success. This is compounded by a personal identity rooted in survival and a perceived role as the primary "Knowledge Authority" in the room. This current identity constellation prioritizes safety and adherence to plan over adaptive and responsive teaching. Therefore, mentoring should move beyond technical feedback to engage in narrative inquiry, helping the preservice teacher envision and experiment with a more dynamic, responsive, and student-centered professional identity.

These observations revealed that the teachers were primarily operating within *reflecting* and *projecting identities* (Beijaard et al., 2004). The *reflecting identity* involves self-assessment focused on immediate classroom practice, while the *projecting identity* relates to envisioning

oneself as a competent future teacher who fulfills institutional expectations. However, both identities tend to emphasize performance and conformity rather than transformation, as the teachers' main goal is to meet program requirements rather than critically engage with their pedagogical decisions.

6.3 Reflections

Both participants moved from a narrow reflection on their teaching practice toward critical self-reflection and identity negotiation. This process was facilitated through dialogic reflection, in which interaction with the mentor served as a scaffold for their professional growth. From a Vygotskian perspective, this dialogic mentoring aligns with the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learning and development occur through social mediation and guided participation (Vygotsky, 1978), connecting both PSTs' previous and current teaching experiences.

Initially, the preservice teachers' reflections centered on technical aspects such as objectives, activities, and materials. Over time, however, their reflections became more *learner-oriented and self-critical*, signaling a shift from procedural teaching to professional agency and awareness of students' learning processes. This transition demonstrates an evolution *in professional development*, as teachers began to internalize reflective practices that lead to more autonomous decision-making (Farrell, 2015).

According to Barkhuizen and Strauss' (2020), this change also represents a movement from *reflecting* and *projecting identities* focused on meeting institutional expectations to a more *negotiated* and *evolving identity* shaped by social interaction and reflection. As Norton (2013) and Varghese et al. (2005) argue, teacher identity is not static but socially constructed through language, power relations, and participation in communities of practice. Similarly, Barkhuizen

(2017) emphasizes that identity construction in teachers emerges through narrative and dialogic reflection, where teachers make sense of their experiences and professional roles. Importantly, through dialogic mentoring and reflective engagement, both participants developed the capacity to reimagine their professional selves and teaching purposes within a sociocultural framework. Hence, the teachers' evolving reflections illustrate an ongoing process of identity negotiation shaped by institutional expectations, classroom realities, and social interaction.

In this respect, Barkhuizen (2017) also states that teachers construct their professional identities through narrative reflection by reinterpreting their lived experiences and finding coherence between their personal beliefs and professional practices. Thus, the use of scaffolding and dialogic mentoring became an essential mechanism for the participants to move from performing teaching roles to inhabiting them as reflective and self-aware professionals.

As conclusion, the programs of mentoring with a humanistic perspective should be implemented or considered in their teaching formation. This revealed that even though the PSTs have had subjects related to teaching, there is still a gap between the theory and the real teaching world. The acceptance of a guided program with other professionals not just shapes the mentees but also the mentors.

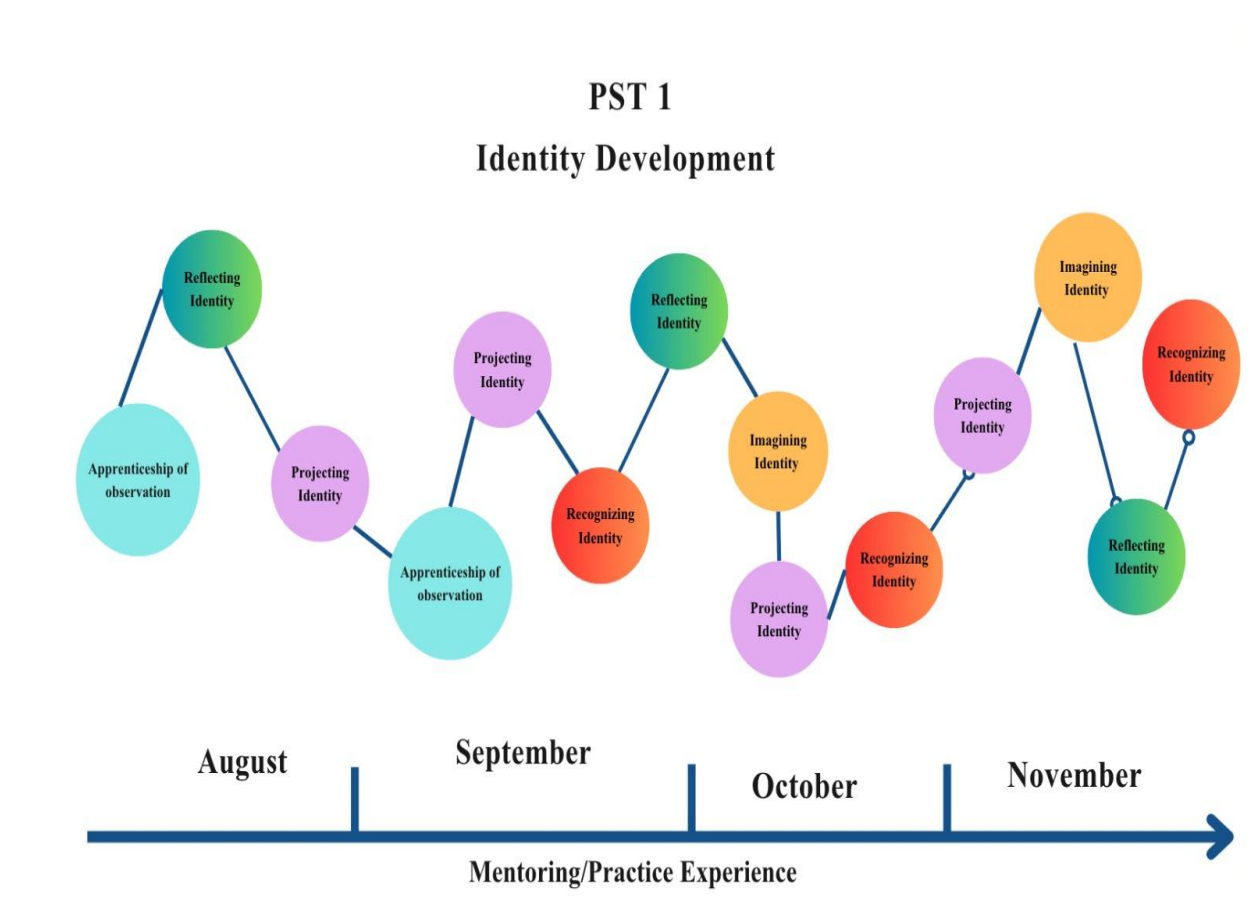
In my case as a mentor, I learned to reframe challenging situations not as failures to be rectified but as rich narratives where the PSTs could develop a deeper understanding of their role as EFL teachers. At the beginning of the mentoring program, I started with a situational mentoring approach. Over time, the dialogical mentoring was more perceived during the interactions with the PSTs. After reading the guide *Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach*, I realized the importance

of developing a repertoire of questions to explore the situations that could be considered problem solving but from another perspective were meaning making. Thus, my active listening was more visible when PSTs were provided with a confident space for reflection and at the same time their identity development.

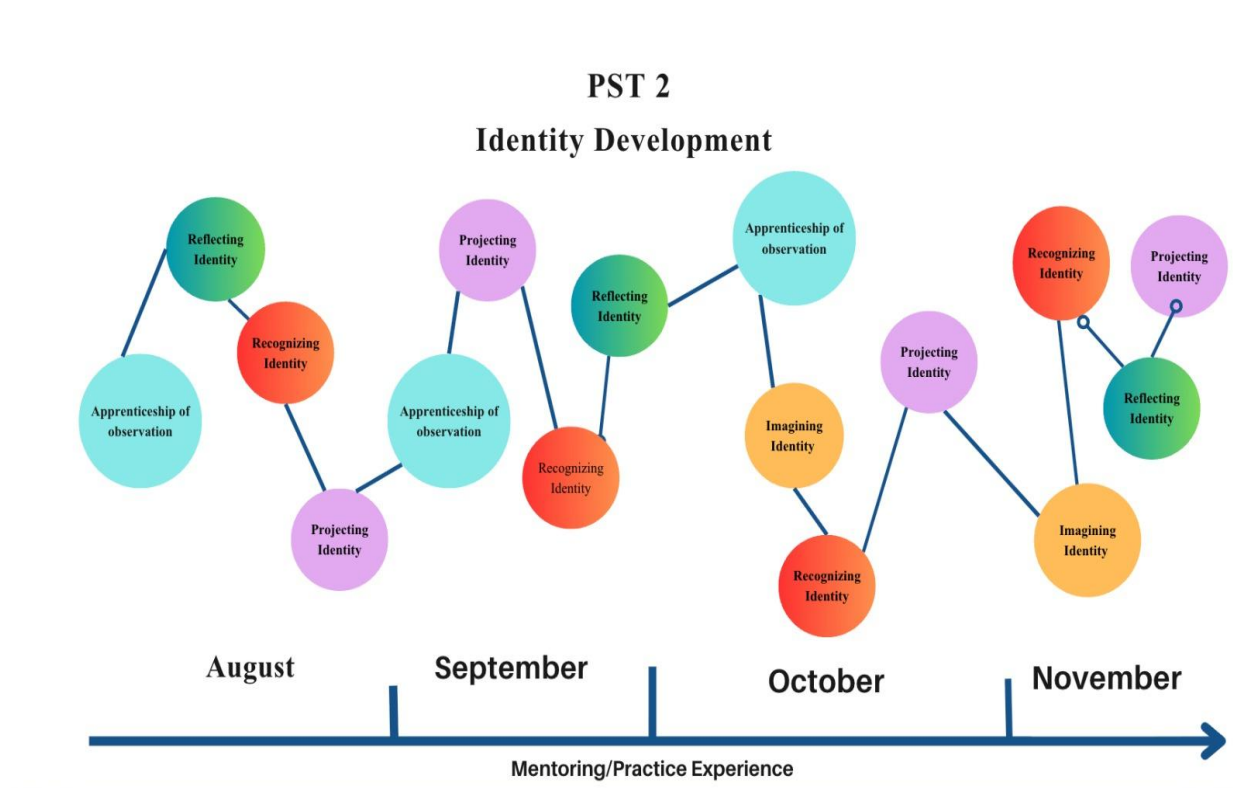
Another critical point for me as a mentor was being able to recognize PSTs' emotions, which were integral to the formation of identity. There were not just positive emotions but also negative ones; for instance, with one PST, there were many moments of frustration due to the classroom management experiences. She wanted to show an authoritative role at the beginning of her classes so that the class could flow "perfectly". However, the PST 2 realized that it was not a positive approach and had to make some changes in her attitude towards her students. As a mentor, I tried to create a safe space where they could learn to identify, understand, and integrate their emotional experiences. Definitely, this experience shaped my identity as a mentor because I realized that a mentor should play several roles, such as a 'motivational coach', a 'reliever', a 'professional peer', a 'researcher of unexpected themes', and so on.

Finally, the program of *Inglés Incluyente* fostered growth in my mentor's professional identity as an inclusive mentor teacher. It ensured that me alongside the PSTs continued to evolve in our capacity to a more inclusive, reflective, and empowered teaching profession.

In general, the figures below illustrate key moments in both PSTs identity shaping.

Figure 7.*Identity Development. PST 1*

(own source)

Figure 8.*Identity Development PST 2*

(own source)

As it can be perceived, in the first month, PST 1 was in the facet of *reflecting identity* and *projecting identity* through time, other facets such as *recognizing* and *imagining identity* were visible at the end of the program. On the other hand, PST 2 experienced more apprenticeship of observation for three months due to the projection of *authoritarian identity*. In addition, her *reflecting* and *recognizing identity* was present all the months; this means she maintained an ongoing awareness of others' actions.

6.4 Contributions

In the Field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, teacher identity has become a central construct for understanding how teachers develop their professional practices. EFL contexts are defined by teaching a language detached from local community communication, introducing distinct sociocultural, linguistic, and ideological changes. In these environments, where English is often linked to social mobility and global access, teachers must continually negotiate between language users and educators. Consequently, identity formation and negotiation in several cultural backgrounds consider not just the linguistic aspects but also the pedagogical ones.

Thus, by focusing on “teacher identity,” there is a shift from merely teaching methodologies to another dimension of the educational process: the teacher as a whole person who belongs to a community, viewed from a micro and macro perspective. This reframes from the crucial development of more humane, self-aware, critical, and affective educational professionals. In addition, this project on mentoring demonstrated that structured and reflective mentorships could foster the professional growth necessary to support preservice teachers and may be a source for policymakers, teacher trainers, and other institutions to develop further mentoring programs.

For preservice student teachers, this process marks a fundamental transition from being language learners to professional teachers. In this way, the study of professional identity holds a particular significance in Mexico due to its diverse sociocultural realities and the need to prepare teachers capable of responding to inequities in education.

6.5 Further Research

Mentoring plays an important role in shaping preservice teachers’ professional development by providing opportunities for guided reflection, scaffold practice, and identity negotiation. Within

this process, the examination of mentor's own identity development emerges as another dimension for future research. Understanding mentors not only as supervisors but also as practitioners can offer insight into how their beliefs, experiences, and pedagogical stances influence the mentoring relationship.

Another valuable point is the design and validation of analytic tools, such as observation protocols or checklists that capture indicators of identity development for mentors. Developing such instruments may allow researchers to document, compare, and identify patterns in identity over time.

6.6 Limitations of the study.

The first limitation of this study is related to the observing moments; both PSTs expressed feeling under pressure when the mentor was in their sessions. Thus, some of their classes might have changed their teaching practice.

Another limitation was that their English proficiency level was not considered in the project; sometimes, PSTs felt overwhelmed when their English level was not considered enough to give classes.

The last one, working with the topic of identity, belongs to subjective analysis which may hinder quantitative analysis. This means the results come from a theoretical perspective.

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