



BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

“Using a Critical Pedagogy-based mentoring for a transformative and inclusive teaching practice of EFL pre-service teachers”

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of**

MAESTRA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

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Abstract

In recent decades, mentoring has gained importance in teaching education. Encinas and Sánchez (2015) argue that mentoring entails a reciprocal interaction that depends on the mentor's role and competence to guide new teachers. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the usefulness of a mentoring strategy grounded in Critical Pedagogy to promote the development of a transformative and inclusive teaching practice among EFL pre-service teachers who participated in a social program *Inglés Incluyente*, in Puebla, México.

This qualitative case study adopted thematic analysis to examine 14 written reflections provided by two pre-service teachers, to trace the reshaping of their teaching practices. In addition, to complement the analysis and assess the effectiveness of the mentoring process, the study incorporated the four teaching domains proposed in *Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* (Gooden et al., 2024). The results indicate that the chosen approach to mentoring enabled both pre-service teachers to become more aware of their teaching contexts, recognizing their power to create inclusive and safe learning environments. Furthermore, the experience fostered a strong sense of commitment to ongoing professional development.

Key words: Critical Pedagogy, sociocultural theory, mentoring, transformative, inclusion.

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Dedicatory

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the main aspects involved in this research, with the intention of providing the background which sustains this study. Thus, some key literature points will be presented, the reasons for carrying out this investigation, the aim, the research questions, the research context, the philosophical orientation of the study, its significance, and finally, the organization of its chapters.

1.2 Integrative aspects of this research

Pre-service teaching mentoring has received considerable attention in the last decades. Orland-Barak and Wang (2021) report that pre-service teacher education programs internationally and progressively pursue to provide a field-based experience, enabling pre-service teachers to practice in a real-life classroom with the help of a mentor.

In this vein, some initiatives have taken place to emphasize the relevance of this topic: the Blue-Ribbon Panel in the United States, the National Curriculum Standards for Teacher Education in China, and the Scottish Teachers for a New Era Program, among others.

Latin America has also taken part in supporting English teachers' professional development. The Chilean Ministry of Education has a program called "*Programa Inglés Abre Puertas*" that was created in 2004 and promotes meetings between English teachers that belong to learning communities (*Redes de Docentes de Inglés*) to work in pairs and discuss classroom issues to find strategies that empower their teaching practice.

In the national context, the Regional English Language Office in the US Embassy in Mexico sponsored a Mexican group of teacher educators and assigned Dr Amy Gooden from Lesley University as the specialist to orient them. Lesley University (2022) states that the

American government chose Dr. Amy Gooden for collaborating in a four-month project in Mexico, concentrating on developing a supervision and mentoring guide for supporting professional development for classroom teachers. The guide, *Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* (Gooden et al., 2024), was written in collaboration with Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla and Benemérito Instituto Normal del Estado. It incorporates an inclusive and transformative approach to teaching practice to be adjusted to the setting conditions of Mexican teachers that also include pre-service teachers in a relationship with a more experienced teacher, the mentor.

Being a mentor then demands to be aware of the contextual situation in which they and their pre-service teachers are involved. Lane (2004) states that a mentor should tailor their skills in relation to who the pre-service teacher is and the stage they have reached in their relationship; different situations may demand different competences from the mentors. In this line, Boren et al. (2000) state that flexibility, open-mindedness, and willingness to engage in active communication are the most important attributes of a competent mentor. In other words, the mentors' competence goes beyond possessing teaching knowledge for practical usage, but to adapt mentors' resources to match pre-service teachers' needs and interests to ensure an active role of these last in the relationship as well.

Additionally, the interaction between mentors and pre-service teachers should follow a predictable unfolding of stages. Zachary and Fain (2022) emphasize that mentoring should be seen as a collaborative and critical process which is composed of four phases: preparing, negotiating, enabling growth, and closure. The first concerns the setting up of the mentoring relationship; the second involves the corresponding agreements; the third implies both parties receiving advice on sustaining good personal development in mentoring. Finally, the last one allows them to evaluate their learning and retire.

Therefore, mentoring is an intentional, nurturing relationship between mentors and pre-service teachers. In this respect, mentoring is a learning process that can be fostered by

conversations that provide knowledge and skills that can be incorporated into the thinking and practice of pre-service teachers (Wong & Premkumar, 2007). Hence, this interaction can be seen as setting up a scaffolding that promotes an insightful process of reflection in the beneficiary to reshape their practice.

Mentoring then involves a systematic and conscious procedure that goes beyond sharing experience and expertise with pre-service teachers. Becher and Orland-Barak (2016) state that mentors need to develop informed and reasoned mentoring practices by being aware of their capacities and limitations in their own practice. Thus, it is essential to know some teacher mentoring approaches that can guide mentors throughout their role: traditional mentoring, peer mentoring, and group mentoring.

In the case of a critical transformative approach to mentoring, this triggers pre-service teachers to develop a critical stance. Orland-Barak and Wang (2021) suggest that a critical stance is reached by means of a collaborative reconstruction of teaching knowledge and practices between mentors and pre-service teachers. This interaction remarks on the essence of the Zone of Critical Development by Vygotsky that basically refers to the difference it makes doing things in isolation against what a novice can reach with the scaffolding received by a more experienced subject.

In this line, mentoring presents itself as a tool that may provide an opportunity for social construction of knowledge. From social constructivism's view, knowledge is the result of a fluent interaction based on giving and taking within a community. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory remarks how socially mediated communicative acts and interactions conduct to building meaning making and development of thinking, considering the cultural and historical aspects of learning in that context (Crosslin et al. 2013). It is not about imposing or transferring truths to pre-service teachers but providing them with tools to shape their procedure to fit their needs.

In this perspective, Sharif (2019) states that Critical Pedagogy improves the critical thinking capability to generate positive behavioral changes in students' lives. The author also

mentions dialogue and problem-posing are means to create knowledge in Critical Pedagogy. These devices give students a voice about what is surrounding them to develop a position and their own opinion.

1.3 Study justification

This study stems from the teacher training initiative *Inglés Incluyente*, a program that seeks to cultivate research on the impact of mentoring using an inclusive and transformative approach. During its first phase, the program implemented two simultaneous mentoring studies informed by different theoretical frameworks, both aimed at providing pedagogical guidance to pre-service EFL teachers. One of these studies is the present research, which is grounded in Sociocultural Theory and Critical Pedagogy, while the other draws on Strauss and Barkhuizen perspectives on professional identity.

In its second phase, *Inglés Incluyente* expanded to include another public university in central Mexico, with the purpose of assessing the impact of the inclusive and transformative approach on both mentors and pre-service teachers' trajectories. To achieve this goal, as the first phase, the program adopted the framework proposed in *Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* (Gooden et al., 2024).

The decision to adopt Critical Pedagogy attributes as the guiding framework for this study was motivated by the need to employ an informed theoretical approach that aligned with the program's inclusive and transformative orientation. In this regard, Nkealah and Simango (2023) discuss the challenges faced by pre-service teachers who are trained in Critical Pedagogy when they attempt to apply its principles in their classrooms. Even if the authors remark on the fact that Critical Pedagogy leads to teaching for social transformation and empowers pre-service teachers to reflect on their own practice to improve it, their context in South Africa constrains

them. Thereupon, this study raises the question of how useful Critical Pedagogy is to scaffold mentoring of pre-service teachers in Puebla, Mexico.

In a relationship between mentors and pre-service teachers, Critical Pedagogy may be of help since it focuses on a dialogical interaction for transformative learning: enacting social justice thanks to the reshaping of beliefs that affect behavior. This could take English as a Foreign Language pre-service teachers to give room to social responsibility, and inclusion in their classroom, in line with the development of a teaching practice that encompasses the contextual conditions of their students. Nevertheless, for this to happen, it is necessary for the mentors to also tailor their scaffolding to match the situational context needs and objectives of the pre-service teachers. This is a concern that affects the unfolding of the teaching practice of the pre-service teachers.

1.4 Aims

In this respect, this study aims to determine how effective a Critical Pedagogy-based mentoring strategy is to promote the development of a transformative and inclusive teaching practice among EFL pre-service teachers who participate in a social program that provides free English classes to low-income students from public middle schools in Puebla, Mexico.

1.5 Research questions

Consequently, the research questions to be addressed are the following:

- 1) How useful is it for a mentor to use a Critical Pedagogy view to scaffold EFL pre-service teachers to transform their teaching practice?
- 2) How does a mentor's Critical Pedagogy-based support make students aware of the situational context of their teaching practice to respond to it?

1.6 The context of the research

This research was conducted at the *Facultad de Lenguas* of the public university *Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla* (BUAP), located in central Mexico. The participants were two senior pre-service EFL teachers who took part in the study as mentees. Both were responsible for teaching groups of middle school students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Through the study, the mentor observed the pre-service teachers practicing their teaching on a weekly basis. Each observation lasted 45 minutes and was carried out from a non-participatory role during 45 minutes. The mentor, who also served as the researcher of this study, is an experienced EFL teacher and provided immediate oral feedback to the pre-service teachers following each observed lesson.

However, a more detailed description of the institutional, pedagogical, and sociocultural context is provided at the end of Chapter two in order to offer a deeper understanding of the relevance and situated nature of the research.

1.7 Philosophical orientation of the study

Considering the above, it is necessary to determine the paradigm, ontological, epistemological, and methodological dimensions that embody the procedure of this research. In this fashion, Oliver (2004) states that a paradigm informs how to approach research since it provides a worldview. Then, this study will be grounded in a constructivist and critical paradigm. Consequently, its ontological, epistemological and methodological dimensions are described as follows:

Ontological dimension: the relationship between mentors – pre-service teachers (identities) is understood through a description of their interaction which emerges from the EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions analysis.

Epistemological dimension: the local reality of pre-service teachers' teaching practice knowledge is interpreted based on the influence of Critical Pedagogy to shape mentors' scaffolding to fit the situational context with middle school students, who belong to a low-income sector.

Methodological dimension: it requires a qualitative approach that entails a collection of data to be registered in an instrument denominated *Reflection Matrix* that involved three moments for every mentoring cycle: pre-observation (lesson plan review), observation (classroom performance), and post-observation (feedback). In this way, both pre-service teachers could write a critical reflection of their practice in the last section of the instrument, which enabled them to track their teaching practice transformation. Therefore, thematic analysis was used to identify Critical Pedagogy attributes in their reflections.

In addition, thematic analysis was also employed to identify attributes of Critical Pedagogy and their correspondence with the four domains of an inclusive and transformative approach (Gooden et al., 2024) in the responses to the second instrument, referred as *Retrospection Protocol*. The goal of this instrument was to determine how assertive the Critical Pedagogy-based scaffolding of the mentor was to fit the development of EFL pre-service teachers' practice transformation. Finally, since one of the researchers of this study is implicated in mentoring activity throughout the whole process, this research possesses ethnographical strategies.

1.8 Study Significance

In terms of relevance, this study contributes to the field of English Teacher Education in Puebla by grounding the mentoring of pre-service teachers in a combined theoretical framework of Sociocultural Theory and Critical Pedagogy. Furthermore, *the incorporation of Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* (Gooden et al., 2024), along with its resources to guide the mentoring process, allows

for an assessment of the guide's potential to support inclusive and transformative teaching practices. Depending on the results, the piloting of this approach could be replicated in other national teacher education contexts.

1.9 Thesis overview

Consequently, chapter 2 presents a literature review that helps to understand the essentials for this study, followed by chapter 3 where the methodology is explained and justified. Next, in chapter 4, the analysis of the corresponding findings is displayed to finally arrive at chapter 5, where the main conclusions are offered.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide the theoretical framework needed to understand the present study. It is integrated by relevant sections such as Sociocultural Theory, Critical Pedagogy, Critical Pedagogy's attributes, Teacher Education Models, and Mentoring and Supervision Approaches in Teaching Education, which together lead to present mentoring pre-service ELT teachers with a Critical Pedagogy-based scaffolding.

2.2 Sociocultural Theory

This section addresses the fundamentals of understanding Sociocultural Theory. First, it presents the evolution of different learning theories that contributed to its development, by contrasting Behaviorism, Cognitivism, and Cognitive Constructivism theories. Next, some essential concepts of Sociocultural Theory such as interaction, Zone of Proximal Development, mediation, and scaffolding are explained with an emphasis on their mutual correspondence.

2.2.1 Sociocultural Theory background

According to Vygotsky, experience boosts creativity in thinking because it allows the resolution of current problems. He explained that "in education it is far more important to teach the child how to think than to communicate various bits of knowledge to him" (Vygotsky, 1997, p.175), that is, learners are not perceived as passive collectors who cannot contribute to their learning building.

To have a better comprehension of how Vygotsky's sociocultural view contributed to understanding how learning is developed, it is relevant to review different theories that supplied the shaping of Vygotsky's perspective.

Firstly, behaviorism (developed in the early twentieth century, and influenced by positivism), conceived learning as a product of an outside stimulus fostered by memorization, repetition of patterns, and imitation. Motivation for learning is associated with a desire for reward. Similarly, Ahmad et al. (2020) describe that learning gives rise to a change of observable behavior, which is supported by reinforcement, and learners are passive people who respond to the stimuli; that is, teachers are the transmitters of information, and learners simply acquire it to be applied in different situations. This dynamic opposes Vygotsky's conception of learning, which required the discussion of ideas: dialectical discovery and neglected the influence of lived experiences on what people construct in their minds.

Second, Cognitivism (1930s) broadened the discussion to consider previous knowledge to understand new ones. In other words, learning is the result of individual mental processing to make sense of the world. Under this approach, teachers promote active learning and students' cognitive engagement with their learning. Motivation is not derived from an outside stimulus; it is intrinsic. Additionally, pieces of information are incorporated into existing patterns but understood as a related body. This frame aligns with Vygotsky's conception of learners being actively involved in their own learning construction, however, from an individual activity.

Later, Cognitive Constructivism (1950s), which emerged from Piaget's research, emphasized that humans do not immediately understand and use knowledge; rather, they construct their own knowledge through conceptual structures to store information. In this vein, Powell and Cody (2009) specify that in Cognitive Constructivism, ideas are constructed through an individual process of assimilation and accommodation during the cognitive developmental phases, which are facilitated by resolving conflicts. In contrast, Social Constructivism posits that ideas are built through interaction with others.

In the cognitivist perspective, the environment was not an essential part of what was learned. On the contrary, in Cognitive Constructivism, a connection of behavior and mental processes with the environment was recognized: individuals were constructing within their

minds, but not necessarily in relation to others. Learners are individual constructors of knowledge by means of experimentation, research, and hypothesis testing, while their teachers guide and support the learner to come to their own conclusions. Again, this highlights the active role of learners from Vygotsky's view but lacks deep interaction within a community.

2.2.2 The value of interaction in Sociocultural Theory

From a social constructivist perspective, knowledge emerges through interaction among the members of a community, which in turn fosters personal critical thinking processes. Hoai (2003) states that Vygotsky viewed cognitive development as the internalization of socially shared activities. In other words, learners share their expertise in constructing and negotiating meanings, using language that portrays historical and sociocultural relationships.

From a sociocultural perspective, context plays an integral role in co-constructing knowledge that learners can apply in their lives. In this framework, learners use interaction with others as a platform to connect new information to prior knowledge, while the teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding collaborative learning around specific content.

To fulfill their role, teachers guide learning by mediating interactions, using cultural tools, and providing support as the more knowledgeable other. This illustrates the key distinction between Social Constructivism, which emphasizes that knowledge is co-constructed through social interaction, and Sociocultural Theory, which explains how learning occurs through these interactions. Therefore, concepts such as the Zone of Proximal Development, mediation, and scaffolding are particularly relevant.

2.2.3 The Zone of Proximal Development

Shabani et al. (2010) state that Vygotsky described the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as the difference between the current development level of a learner, indicated by their problem-solving ability, and the possible development level when receiving support from a more competent peer. Consequently, mediation is a concept that emerges in this association, as it is

understood as the use of tools to intercede in the interaction between people and their world, and then ZPD represents an opportunity to help learners pass to the next level.

Podolskiy (2012) explains that Vygotsky coined the term Zone of Proximal Development with the purpose of assessing children's intellectual abilities correctly and evaluating the efficacy of instructional practices. The author specifies that Vygotsky was particularly interested in analyzing ongoing abilities before they were fully mature. He did not simply concentrate on what the children could do independently. In fact, Vygotsky (1978) considered that ZPD helps educators understand the internal development of learning. Hence, ZPD emphasizes the importance of social interaction and collaborative learning for cognitive development since it argues that learners can progress against tasks that are beyond their current level of ability if they receive suitable support.

Therefore, tasks within the ZPD are challenging but achievable with the intervention of the teacher or mentor, who scaffolds learning by offering support, feedback, and guidance. Nevertheless, understanding ZPD may be difficult because of individual variations among learners.

Learners may have different prior experiences and knowledge that shape what they can already do independently and what they can do with assistance. In this line, some learners may need to be provided with highly articulated scaffolding, while others only require some interventions, which demands teachers or mentors to adjust the type of support they provide.

Similarly, pre-service teachers' ZPD may be affected by external contextual factors that limit mentors' support. In this sense, the classroom can be understood as a micro context that reproduces larger systems of power (Singh & Richards, 2005). Accordingly, pre-service teachers may resist the assistance offered by their mentors to reach new levels of mastery, as their autonomy and decision-making are influenced by contextual factors rooted in social, economic, political, or educational policies (Shabani et al., 2010). Consequently, the boundaries of the Zone of Proximal Development may not be uniform for everyone.

2.2.4 Mediation

Sociocultural Theory emphasizes the relevance of cultural contexts in providing resources to intercede cognitive processes to reach higher levels of thinking and ability. This is mediation and refers to the use of cultural tools (language, symbols, and artifacts) that facilitate cognitive processes to become higher since they transform and moderate our experiences and learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Kozulin (1998) mentioned that Vygotsky identified three kinds of mediators: material tools, psychological tools, and other human beings. Thus, mediation is closely related to the Zone of Proximal Development, as more knowledgeable individuals use cultural tools to guide learners through their ZPD.

While Kozulin (1998) reported three different types of mediators, Guerrero (2007) analyzed and classified studies applying Vygotskian principles in ELT practice, dividing mediation as both a symbolic tool and a material tool. The first category implied human mediation embodied in teachers and peers, while the second implied technology, which required teachers' creativity and organization to be integrated. Therefore, the teacher's role is essential in mediating technology: "it is the teacher who gives proper guidelines as to how to make the best use of technology for acquiring language skills" (Ahmad, 2012, p. 928). In other words, teachers shape their practices with the aid of tools rather than being shaped by the tools themselves.

In this fashion, it is convenient to describe Vygotsky's classification of mediators. Material tools refer to everything humans have invented to master nature. Regarding psychological tools, these mediate psychological processes that have contributed to understanding the abstract, known also as symbolic tools, like language. Mediation through another subject considers the use of tools to fulfill the role of mediator, giving space to language in that goal. Consequently, mediation underscores the interactive nature of learning and highlights the importance of social and cultural contexts in shaping how individuals think and develop their cognitive skills.

On the other hand, mediation is also difficult to be applied because of the variation in available tools and interactions in different cultural contexts. First, what mediates learning in one

culture may not be applicable to another culture. Secondly, mediation is not static; the teacher or mentor requires the use of different tools depending on the learning context, specific task, and the learner's needs. Sometimes, guidance promotes peer collaboration or stepping back to leave the learner experience independently. However, there might be power issues derived from the complexity of social mediations (human interactions), in contrast to material mediations. Finally, effective mediation should align with learners' developmental stages and needs, as not all learners learn at the same pace.

However, mediation can be basically said to operate for the benefit of the ZPD activation. Hoai (2003) comments that the mediation executed by materials, symbols, or another human contributes to refining knowledge, and concerns the transformation of socio-cultural activities into mental functioning to cause a cognitive change: higher mental processes, which include strategic orientation to problem-solving. In this line, Rico et al. (2023) highlight that mediation involves influencing how to manage conflict to allow pre-service teachers to understand the social context which they will be working in. For this reason, a conflict requiring a solution can be a meaningful opportunity for personal and professional development.

To sum up, the use of different kinds of tools supports learners reaching a new level of complexity but based on what they were capable of doing on their own first. This recalls the concept of scaffolding, which consists of the assisted and graduated learning process that boosts the ZPD to complete a task.

2.2.5 Scaffolding

Scaffolding posits that it helps learners become conscious of external knowledge to take control of it for accomplishing learning tasks. In this connection, Gonulal and Loewen (2018) summarize scaffolding as "the temporary and dynamic support within the ZPD" (p.3) and explain that Vygotsky suggests two developmental levels: the actual and the potential, with the ZPD representing the distance between them. Thus, the ZPD highlights the contrast between

learners' current independent problem-solving abilities and how these change because of guidance or collaboration with more capable peers. For this reason, scaffolding provides the platform to support the ZPD, and the tools to endorse it assign a great responsibility to the mediator.

Consequently, mediators must carefully weigh the pros and cons of selected tools to ensure learners are pushed to higher levels of knowledge and performance. This entails close monitoring of learners' development to provide precise support at the right time and place to fit learners' learning needs. Indeed, Taber (2018) emphasizes that scaffolding is not a simple synonym of support; it requires being informed on how to tune it to achieve learning outcomes. Therefore, scaffolding can be seen as a fluid and reasoned process that demands a deep understanding of learners' development, and not every mediator may be willing to engage in adapting their procedures.

2.3 Critical Pedagogy

This section is dedicated to the description of Critical Pedagogy foundations. First, a brief narration of Critical Pedagogy roots is presented, followed by a general description of its elements and purpose based on its creator's philosophy: Paulo Freire. Later, other authors' contributions to this theory are shared to finally give ground to a discussion of the main attributes and goals of Critical Pedagogy.

2.3.1 Origins of Critical Pedagogy

The origins of Critical Pedagogy can be traced back to the first half of the twentieth century with the emergence of Critical Theory in the 1930s, which was a response to the socio-economic situation of Germany after their participation in the World War I. In this line, I will describe the foundation of the Frankfurt School and its relation to the Critical Theory formulation that preceded Critical Pedagogy. Finally, the principles that integrate Critical Pedagogy are exposed through the eyes of its creator: Paulo Freire.

2.3.2 The Frankfurt School and Critical Theory

Society's pitfalls find a relation with macro conditions since the first ones influence the desire to reshape the living conditions of people. In this perspective, Germany was expected to move from capitalism to communism because of the financial hardship and social tension caused by their participation in the World War I. However, it did not happen, but it meant a call to reconsider how to analyze society. Therefore, the Frankfurt School was born on June 22, 1924, to carry out that task.

Nevertheless, not until Max Horkheimer assumed its direction in 1930 did the institution change their tackling to studying perspectives. Ogbobuike (2019) states that the goal of the institute was to focus more on the interdisciplinary integration of the social sciences in contrast to the economic viewpoint of the former director, Carl Grünberg. Consequently, they shifted from economics and embraced the social sciences to study people, society, and culture, but still using the theoretical economic approach of Marxism in that formula.

Due to this reorientation, Horkheimer realized capitalism had successfully integrated the working class into its structure instead of inspiring insurrection, as the stable participants of that group would protect it. This was the basis for the development of Critical Theory. Thomson (2017) explains that for Horkheimer, Critical Theory pursues an explanation and normative evaluation of the reasons behind the problematic object of research. Therefore, Critical Theory draws on different fields such as economics, political science, psychology and others, to explain how capitalism encourages conformity. In other words, their mission was to support the understanding and deconstruction of oppressive and dominating social order. It is precisely the acceptance of oppressive practices what Critical Pedagogy fights.

2.3.3 Paulo Freire “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”

Pedagogy may be summarized as the art of teaching. Friesen and Su (2023) argue that pedagogy is an ethical practice that posits for the sake of young learners or children, involving

personal postures of responding, reflecting and acting to present the world to the learners. Thus, pedagogy reflects the choices that sustain our teaching practice in hand with what we consider appropriate for our students.

Among the different types of pedagogies available for leading teachers, there is a highlighted controversy between traditionalist ones and Critical Pedagogy. In his masterpiece *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1988) coined the term *Banking Model of Education* to refer to a teaching-centered pedagogy that conceives students as empty containers to be filled with unquestionable knowledge by teachers, who in turn prefer a narrative monological addressing to learners. Thereupon, students are not educated to question the dynamics in their reality or to use creativity to transform it. Because this last requires the development of critical thinking, to avoid adaptation to the established patterns in which injustices are overlooked. Thus, education is used to free people from society's templates.

Paulo Freire's concept of education as a liberating praxis becomes clearer within the framework of Critical Pedagogy. Under this approach, teaching aims to raise learners' awareness of the interconnectedness of individuals within society. From this awareness, students are encouraged to take action to improve the living conditions of their communities in a way that prevents the repetition of acquired patterns of selfishness that perpetuate injustice. Therefore, Critical Pedagogy is worthy of developing empathetic and active citizens.

Furthermore, Critical Pedagogy highlights education as a political practice. De Oliveira et al. (2021) reported that there is a difference between politicizing education: setting ideologies and politics in education, which refers to learning about the relations of power. In this regard, the authors denote that learners' worldviews and their understanding of themselves are shaped by the educational system, and as these will act as the driving force of their society, they will act and make decisions based on those acquired beliefs. For this reason, Critical Pedagogy holds that education is never neutral. This means that pedagogical choices support the validation or

refusal of different versions of reality and shape how we convey the meaning of them and ourselves. Then, through pedagogical choices, the status quo can be legitimated or questioned.

Freire (1988) argues that Critical Pedagogy is the counterpart and antidote to the Banking Model¹ since it spurs learners to be critical of the power structures, inconsistencies and pitfalls these bring to society. Essentially, he sustains that education can be performed as a liberating praxis that pursues the development of critical thinking to enact social justice. In this respect, teachers must recognize and integrate learners as active assemblers of their own learning process by giving them a voice; students also have worthy experiences and knowledge to share. As a result, dialogue and discussion are elements that distinguish this liberating praxis.

In this context, Critical Pedagogy cultivates students' understanding and judgment of reality based on the development of their consciousness. Sharif (2019) states that Critical Pedagogy improves the critical thinking capability to generate positive behavioral changes in learners' lives. The author also mentions that dialogue and problem-posing are means to create knowledge in Critical Pedagogy. One more time, those tools give students a voice about what is surrounding them to develop a position and their own opinion.

Since Critical Pedagogy considers social justice and democracy as the main goals of education, it seeks to promote a transformative learning process. Mezirow (2008) explains it as the recognition and reevaluation of the structure of beliefs and expectations that affect our thinking, feeling, and acting. The author also states that those structures of meaning form a "meaning perspective" or "frame of reference." In a few words, meaning perspective constitutes our lens of reality appreciation, and this enables us to hold preferences or refusals towards what integrates certain social practices, including teaching. As meaning perspectives go through a transformative process to be restructured, this process can be triggered by education.

¹ Banking Model of Education refers to a traditional approach where teachers deposit knowledge into passive students who are intended to memorize it.

However, applying Critical Pedagogy in specific educational contexts and to mentor English pre-service teachers like the ones who participate in this study, could face some complexities. To start, they come from an educational model that endorses the counterpart of Critical Pedagogy, The Banking Model. Traditional education systems are typically characterized by top-down teaching methods and a focus on teachers as authoritative figures. This scenario conflicts with the values of Critical Pedagogy that promotes democracy, and a social and conscious approach to teach and learn. For this reason, transforming their teaching practice may take a considerable amount of time. It is not easy to eliminate traditionalist views of education that they have not only experienced as student teachers but also mirrored in their early teaching practice.

2.3.4 Other scholars' contributions to Critical Pedagogy

The role of education in creating a meaningful perspective begins with institutional decisions about what topics can be discussed in class, what content should be included in the curriculum, and how much exposure learners have to relevant issues in their realities. It is in this context that Peter McLaren, Michael Apple, and Henry Giroux emphasize the role of education in shaping the ideologies that guide individuals' lives.

Peter McLaren is a pioneer of Critical Pedagogy in North America. He conceives that Critical Pedagogy can be used to address social injustices in educational settings. He argues that education must support learners in critically assessing and resisting oppressive structures and systems rather than maintaining a neutral position. In his book "*Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture*," McLaren discusses the role of public institutions, the state, and social agents as dominant systems of power. Nevertheless, he assigned a crucial role to teachers in deconstructing ritualized practices. McLaren states (2002) that "we transform teaching practices in our schools into acts of dissonance and interventions into the ritual inscription of our students

into the codes of the dominant culture” (p.21). Therefore, he emphasized the relevance of discussing issues such as sexism, racism, and classism within educational institutions.

Similarly, Michael Apple, an American scholar, argued that there is a connection between education and ideology. Apple emphasizes the use of Critical Pedagogy to encourage learners to think critically about the curriculum that preserves societal hierarchies (Lamsal, 2024). In his book “*Education and Power*,” Apple (2012) states that “the knowledge that was taught, and our methods and actions, was ideally suited to help legitimate the structural bases of inequality” (p.11). In other words, schools mirror power structures rather than functioning as neutral places because educational settings and their members participate in reproducing inequalities. For this reason, Critical Pedagogy can be used to contest ideologies that support social injustices within the curriculum and teaching practice by discussing issues of race, class, gender, and other forms of oppression.

In this vein, Henry Giroux underlines the relationship between democracy and education. From his perspective, learners must apply what they learn in the classroom to real-world problems. Therefore, Critical Pedagogy supports teachers in helping learners become agents of social action. Consequently, learners should participate in discussions on social issues. In fact, De Oliveira et al. (2021) report that in an interview with Henry Giroux, he stated that “you can’t have a democracy without informed citizens, and the issue was not if you had to know to interpret the world or to change it, the point is to do both” (p. 8). In this way, Critical Pedagogy promotes democratic actions, since they emerge from the development of critical consciousness to oppose dominant ideologies that favor inequalities. In essence, democracy is understood as a manifestation of social responsibility that can start in the classroom with a teacher acting as a facilitator of discussion.

2.4 Critical Pedagogy's attributes

In this section, I will describe the attributes of Critical Pedagogy: the teacher as a facilitator, giving voice, dialogue and discussion, problem-posing method, critical consciousness, transformative learning and social justice, equity and democracy as the underpinning principles of this theory. The description aims at emphasizing the nature of Critical Pedagogy as a meaningful resource for co-deconstruction in the teaching and learning process.

2.4.1 The teacher as a facilitator

Teachers who follow Critical Pedagogy do not conceive education as a transfer of information (deposit-making) over cognizable objects -- anything material or abstract that can be mentally grasped. Memorizing these objects is not the aim; contrariwise, the teacher acts as a facilitator in the learning process, guiding critical reflection and dialogue between students and teachers. The cognizable object functions as a mediator in their relationship, eliminating a prescriptive dynamic. From a Critical Pedagogy perspective, teachers guide the development of critical thinking, reflection, and dialogue, which foster the exchange of ideas from both sides. This dynamic enables teachers to learn from their students, thus forming student-teachers and teacher-students.

Critical Pedagogy assumes that teachers are not the only ones who teach. As Freire (2005) states, "the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach" (p.80). For this reason, authority must work in favor of the liberating practice, not against it since learning occurs collaboratively. To facilitate this, teachers and students engage with cognizable objects—whether material or abstract—as shared mediators, which are no longer the sole domain of the teacher but are co-constructed in the learning process.

Teachers reshape their reflections, considering the reflections of students. These become critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. Therefore, once the teacher

presents the content to the students, there is space for reconsideration of the first one because of the students' opinions. As there is an emphasis on the co-construction of knowledge, students experience empowerment and ownership because of this collaborative approach.

On the other hand, it is important to note the responsibility of teachers in creating safe environments for their learners to express their views. Lamsal (2024) argues that teachers as facilitators foment secure spaces for learning where students can express their ideas, have difficult conversations, and resist prevailing narratives. Learners are motivated by the teacher to think critically, ask questions, and consider alternative points of view. To sum up, teachers create a space to be listened to and listen to others to value their knowledge and experiences by giving a voice.

2.4.2 Giving voice

Umbarila (2010) highlights the importance of giving a voice to learners to promote the development of an understanding of others through reflection on historical events, intending to denounce or reject injustice. The author also mentions that through critical pedagogical practices, learners can ask questions about the roles of the dominant culture and find answers to feelings of isolation and powerlessness. In other words, students and teachers together can analyze why power relationships sustaining the status quo constrain opportunities for social progress.

By giving voice, learners are encouraged to develop a more critical awareness of their own and others' realities. Consequently, they begin to question the power of the status quo that perpetuates relationships that coerce individuals into assuming societal roles. In this sense, language becomes the vehicle for giving voice, as it serves as a tool to engage with the world through a sociocultural lens- one that integrates speech and thought as interdependent processes for constructing and discussing meaning. Indeed, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

aligns with Critical Pedagogy in emphasizing the central role of language in human interaction and the development of consciousness.

Speech and thought collaboratively work to make sense of reality. According to Wink and Putney (2010), Vygotsky theorizing thinking and speech were important elements of verbal thought that enable us to make sense with others and ourselves through experiences, giving language a cognitive and cultural tool value. This supports the idea that everything we are or do is enrolled in a socio-cultural reference and that impacts our learning and development. Nevertheless, the political aspect should be emphasized as well in that formula according to the authors, but Critical Pedagogy surely considers that missing part.

Powell and Cody (2009) point out that Vygotsky argues that language enhances learning and is correlated to consciousness, and that discussion is promoted in Social Constructivism. For Vygotsky, learning and development occur simultaneously thanks to interactions among learners by means of language. It is in this interaction that learners bring their experiences from their own sociocultural context, and by sharing them, they create common knowledge. In other words, there is a social verbalization of thoughts that promotes individual understanding.

2.4.3 Dialogue and discussion

According to Umbarila (2010), teachers are obligated to promote reflection and dialogue regarding inequities to raise students' awareness towards social injustices. In this context, Bayu et al. (2019) emphasize the relevance of dialogue to support learners in finding a critical position by using critical thinking to transform their surroundings. This means that this kind of thinking perceives reality as a process and change, so it does not separate the self from action, to mobilize to solve problems. Hence, dialogue is an essential tool to promote participation, discussion, and analysis between teachers and learners that prevents teachers' domination of talking in class. This, in turn, permits students to develop critical social awareness.

Freire (2005) stated that every human being can critically examine the world through dialogical encounters with others, despite their "ignorance" or "submersion in the culture of silence." However, individuals need appropriate tools to progressively perceive both personal and social realities, including their contradictions, to address them effectively. As a result, the paternalistic teacher-student relationship is eliminated, with both parties engaging in mutual education through the mediation of the world.

Dialogue encourages the exchange of information and knowledge between representatives of different groups. Bayu et al. (2019) argue that it should be done in a horizontal relationship where the participants share their experience through equal two-way communication.

2.4.4 Problem-posing method

Freire (2005) stated that problem-posing empowers women and men to critically realize how they exist in the world and understand that reality is in a constant state of transformation. Then, dialogue fulfills the role of enabling teachers and students to engage in a critical reflection of the world around them. This approach stands in contrast to the Banking Model of Education, which, in turn, conceives students as passive learners who are not triggered to question, analyze, and engage with the world critically. In this manner, problem-posing fosters the development of critical consciousness through critical thinking since it requires exposure to problems that affect human relationships within the world. Thus, problem-posing concerns being conscious of objects in our surroundings, but also about the self: consciousness of consciousness.

In this regard, problem-posing posits the display of reality analysis to contribute to the nourishment of consciousness and critical intervention. Freire (2005) argues that students will end up feeling challenged and obligated to respond to problems in their context, which leads to new understandings and more challenges that promote their commitment to transformative action.

2.4.5 Critical consciousness

In Critical Pedagogy, it is impossible to deny the connection between people. There is no isolation of mankind from their reality. Freire (2005) states that world and consciousness are simultaneous; through constant reflection on themselves and the world, women and men expand the boundaries of their perception. As a result, they start noticing oppressive political, economic, and social forces shaping society. This leads to taking objects for consideration in terms of cognition and action purposes, in other words, to conceive reality not as a static condition but one that can be transformed.

In line with this, Critical Pedagogy seeks to foster solidarity and humanization, requiring a deep understanding of the roots of social inequalities to assertively act upon them. However, the educational context, in which teachers may try to awaken critical consciousness, might not be aligned with their intentions towards social justice in the classroom.

2.4.6 Transformative learning

Transformative learning involves re-evaluating personal understandings of experiences, without limiting them to fit established perceptions. It aims for autonomous thinking. There is a change in the frame of reference for the world. Mezirow (1997) claims that “frames of reference are the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences” (p.5). The author also mentions that they define expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings which shape the line of action. As a result, people would tend to reject any behavior that is not identified within those frames, but thanks to transformative learning, they can move to diversify their views, becoming more inclusive and self-reflective.

A frame of reference involves cognitive, conative, and emotional components and is composed of two dimensions: habits of mind and a point of view (Mezirow, 2008). The first ones entail habitual ways of thinking and feeling constrained by codes: cultural, social, educational, economic, political, or psychological. These habits of mind are endorsed in points of view when it

is required to carry out interpretations of the world by the application of beliefs, values, judgment, or attitudes. Therefore, habits of mind are more perdurable than points of view.

The transformation of habits of mind that affect points of view is not an easy task. It certainly requires us to confront ourselves with our beliefs and weigh to what extent they have been inherited or voluntarily chosen. This condition can be witnessed in the way teachers conduct their practice, what sustains their teaching philosophy, and their efforts in restructuring it for the benefit of education that boosts the transformation of their own students.

2.4.7 Social Justice, Equity and Democracy

Critical Pedagogy encourages learners to participate with agency in the transformation of their realities through critical analysis and questioning of social inequalities. In this way, learners are expected to transform oppressive social structures and systems through the process of learning and teaching. This means that learners become critical thinkers to challenge power structures. By engaging in these actions, they contribute to the creation of a more equitable and just society. Social justice, equity, and democracy are, in fact, the main goals of this pedagogy.

Social Justice is considered relevant in Critical Pedagogy since it refers to the claim against the support of oppressive structures and systems that generate inequity, discrimination, and injustice. Osborn (2006) defines social justice as a fair distribution of power and advantages in a society. For this reason, learners must be empowered to critically analyze systems that influence their lives at a socio-political and cultural level. This exercise also includes recognizing their privileges adhered to their social positions.

As learners are intended to become agents of change in their societies, they require developing critical consciousness addressing real problems, with the help of teachers. Because critical consciousness refers to the understanding of social, political, and cultural issues, it demands educating students on social injustices embedded in those sectors.

In this line, Lamsal (2024) argues that schools must be democratic spaces where learners are educated on social issues to act; it is necessary to incorporate current events into the curriculum to encourage empathy and involve learners in volunteer work in the community. In other words, social justice is performed through concrete actions towards the building of a more equitable and democratic society.

Nevertheless, teacher education plays a critical role in advancing these goals in the classroom, as teachers' perspectives on education may be shaped by their own experiences and the way they were educated to fulfill their roles. In this context, Critical Pedagogy's attributes can work as a set of tools to mediate the instruction and guidance of pre-service teachers that can make it possible to start generating a change in the current conception of education that still embodies principles of traditionalist approaches.

As was discussed, a prescriptive, rigid, and authoritative perspective of education does not give space to confront reality to change it, but to unconsciously accept it. Here, Critical Pedagogy offers the possibility to expose learners to their living circumstances and participate actively in the discussion of issues that not only concern themselves but also the rest of their community. For this reason, Critical Pedagogy is not only for co-constructing knowledge and transforming reality but also for nourishing humanity and sensibility.

2.5 Teacher Education Approaches

Teachers can take courses that provide both general and specific foundational knowledge related to education, including psychology, subject-specific content, and pedagogical methods. However, their preparation varies depending on the goals and objectives of their training programs, which in turn shape the curriculum content and the activities designed to prepare them. Regarding the particularities of program choices, it is also worth mentioning teacher education approaches as a factor that frames procedures for educating future teachers.

Robinson and Mogliacci (2019) state that there are six main categories of teacher education: a social justice approach, a master-apprentice approach, an applied science approach, a teacher identity approach, a competence approach, and a reflective approach. They are described in the following paragraphs according to the authors.

2.5.1 Social Justice Approach

In a Social Justice approach, teaching is deeply connected to the sociopolitical context of both schooling and society. The goal is for pre-service teachers to understand the relationship between education and the global and local patterns of hierarchy and power. Therefore, teachers are expected to serve as transformative agents of change, challenging social inequalities and striving for a more just society. In this context, teachers emphasize ethics, the advancement of democracy, and the improvement of educational conditions for marginalized groups in society.

In this approach, teachers reflect on their role and consider how factors such as culture, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disabilities, and language influence educational opportunities. By doing so, they develop the necessary skills to foster a respectful classroom in communities where open conversations about these topics can take place—discussions that address the factors of shaping opportunities.

In the interest of connecting with communities' social issues, service learning can be integrated into this Social Justice approach to teacher education. Meyers (2009) explains that service learning “fosters the development of citizenship by integrating theory and practice so that students can begin lifelong involvement in social issues and public life” (p.373). This means pre-service teachers can cultivate a sense of care for communities through engagement in practical activities.

Then, future teachers who are educated in this approach are likely to use their pedagogical knowledge and teaching skills to promote social justice in their classroom.

Institutional guidelines may hinder or encourage their intentions. However, this approach clearly emphasizes the relevance of connecting with reality from the early stage of teaching formation.

2.5.2 Master-Apprentice Approach

It is based on the supposition that a pre-service teacher learns how to teach by observing another established practitioner, named a tutor/ mentor/ expert. Thus, teaching is conceived as a situated activity in the classroom that embodies practical and experiential knowledge. The popularity of this approach derives from critiques toward novice teachers who are not prepared for coping with classroom realities and a gap between theory and practice. The aim, then, is that pre-service teachers match their performance to the ideal model they are presented with.

As a result, programs that follow this approach possess a school-based orientation, placing their students in schools where they can observe expert teachers and replicate what they witness. There is no space for reflection on teaching practice, only an emphasis on practical professional knowledge because practice and theory are seen as separate elements. Unlike the Social Justice approach, teachers are not expected to act as agents of change who question established patterns.

2.5.3 Applied Science Approach

For this approach, theory comes before practice, in contrast to the master-apprentice approach. Thus, academic knowledge is required to later be implemented in a practical school setting. The basis of this approach is that there is a lot of professional knowledge to be learned before a pre-service teacher can test their applicability in a practical environment. This conception generates teachers to be technicians or implementers of learned theories since they will base their professional decisions on the acquired knowledge.

On the other hand, this approach coincides with the master-apprentice approach in the fact that it gives more emphasis to only one of the components of the theory-practice formula in

education. This approach takes for granted that there is a correspondence between knowledge and direct applicability in the setting, minimizing the diversity of situations in social contexts.

2.5.4 Teacher Identity Approach

This approach assigns relevance to the connection between teachers' beliefs and practices with their personal lived experiences. Then, the development of teachers' identity requires an understanding of themselves and how they are influenced by their relationship with others in a concrete space, for example, classrooms. Here, identity is dynamic and malleable because of the exposure to personal and professional experiences, which gives an active role to teachers in the marking of their professional identity.

In the process of self-discovery, values and commitments are crucial for developing a moral identity since it grows from responsibilities with individuals and institutions. In this way, there is an emphasis on internal meaning-making aspects, such as stories and emotions, and external aspects such as context and relationships that together affect identity formation.

In this approach, there is space for reflection, communities of trust, recollection of past experiences, and introspection. Pre-service teachers have access to tools such as journals, autobiographies, and collaborative research projects. They are also alerted that their identity is influenced by different discourses they may refute or reject if it is necessary. This feature brings to light the relevance of teachers' voices in their formation.

2.5.5 Competence Approach

For a teacher to be considered efficient and accountable, it is necessary to count on professional competencies attached to skills and knowledge. As competencies are demonstrable, they can be measurable in the teaching performance that includes knowledge, skills, and attitude. Nevertheless, the competencies might demand different amounts of any of those three elements. Therefore, in this approach, it is not emphasized how pre-service teachers become teachers but what they learn to accomplish it: theoretical and practical professional

knowledge. Hence, competence-based teacher education pays attention to the observable performances of teachers. However, Biesta (2015) states that relying only on competencies for teacher education does not prepare them for an unknown future. Teachers must adapt those competencies to students' context and real-life situations, giving them space to make sense of current content, purpose, and relationships to face the future.

In this view, Nessipbayeva (2012) argues that competency goes beyond knowledge and skills; it implies the mobilization of psychosocial resources (skills and attitudes) to meet the demands in a particular context. As teachers have a crucial role in the educational process, Nessipbayeva (2012) listed a set of 21st century teaching competencies: 1) leadership, 2) establishment of a respectful environment for a diverse population of students, 3) knowledge of teachable content, 4) facilitators of learning, and 5) reflective practitioners. All these attributes permit the development of "life skills" for current students who are thought to be creative, innovative, and strategically communicative with impact in the future.

2.5.6 Reflective Approach

The reflective approach underscores the value of theory and practice; then, teachers need to weigh their motivations and personal theories of teaching. In the reflective approach, theory is implicit in actions. Thus, it questions the traditional approaches of knowledge-building in which there is a disjuncture between theory and practice (Cáceres, 2017). As a result, the concept of the reflective practitioner forms part of this approach as it provides teachers with an active role that enables the recognition and reframing of concerns in teaching.

It also gives relevance to context as this frames the purposes, means, and ends of teachers' work. In this line, Schön (1983) makes a distinction between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action; the first one takes place right in the moment of the action, and the latter before or after the action. But analyzing actions is not the only attribute adhered to teachers in this approach. Zeichner and Liston (2013) describe a reflective teacher as someone willing to

listen, responsible, and sincere. On that account, pre-service teachers can break the tradition of how they were taught and improve their practice through this analysis of self and actions. This introspection, influenced by contextual characteristics that frame teaching practice of pre-service teachers, can be accompanied by people who can guide them throughout an assistance process denominated as supervision or mentoring.

It is relevant to mention that the mentoring project in which this study was conducted is primarily shaped by two educational models: social justice and reflective approaches. These two models closely align with the *Inglés Incluyente program's* objectives and methods. The program resembles social responsibility and cares for the local community, aiming to enhance education opportunities for low-income middle school students by means of the practical application of teaching knowledge of EFL pre-service teachers. In addition, these are expected to reflect on their teaching practice, because theory is portrayed in their decisions before, during, and after class. However, it is important to describe the differences between mentoring and supervision in teaching education to better understand the nature of this study.

2.6 Mentoring and Supervision in Teaching Education

Mentoring as a reciprocal relationship differs from supervision in its purpose, while the former addresses improving teaching practice without an evaluative aim; the latter focuses on effective teaching performance to accomplish institutional goals.

In this section, the differences between mentoring and supervision are explained, followed by approaches that guide them, with the intention of understanding how they can be carried out depending on the purposes of the interaction.

2.6.1 Mentoring vs Supervision in Teacher Education

Mentoring is a conceptualization that has been present in human relationships for a long time. Boreen et al. (2000) explain that it possibly comes from the eighteenth-century B.C., when Hammurabi's laws required artisans to teach their craft to younger students; this apprenticeship

model continued until it was modified at the beginning of the twentieth century due to its adoption by the business and industry. On the other hand, mentoring is a concept also found in *The Odyssey*; the word portrays the relationship between Mentor and the son of King Ulysses. The mentor was a teacher who shared his knowledge, skills, and experiences to improve the life of Telemachus. Nowadays, mentoring can be present in formal and informal settings; therefore, it is not strictly related to work or professional development. Nevertheless, it still possesses the purpose of helping others to thrive and flourish in their responsibilities.

On the other hand, Baptiste and The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (2018) highlight that supervision focuses on the accomplishment of roles and tasks which require monitoring, gatekeeping, and directing. Thus, it is based on employees striving to meet standards of performance. Nevertheless, supervision is mostly found in business for productivity purposes, but it can also have a space for professional development programs.

Gallacher (1997) states that “mentoring and supervision have been described in the literature as strategies for building or refining specific early intervention skills, providing support, and encouraging continued professional development” (p.192). The author also emphasizes that both support personal development; however, supervision is focused on administrative functions with a possibility of including performance evaluation, whereas mentoring is narrower in scope, likely to be informal, and does not include an evaluative function. Additionally, a supervisor is not an individual’s mentor. Therefore, Gallacher (1997) refers to supervision as a guiding process for people to accomplish the organizational goals of their workplace since the aim is to deliver an efficient and effective service to the consumer. In this vein, mentoring and supervision can be present in education, a field that is concerned with the quality of educational service.

Thakral (2015) states that supervision in education involves administrative and academic tasks. The former one can imply adherence to organizational procedures, such as checking the safety and security of the facilities and maintaining adequate loads of work. In contrast, the second may involve monitoring of instruction and teachers’ guidance for improving assessment.

Conversely, mentoring in education refers to a process where the main participants are an experienced teacher (teacher-mentor) and a beginner teacher (novice teacher) who mutually share knowledge, skills, and experience to help the second become successful in their profession (Petrovska et al., 2018). The authors also state that mentoring smooths the transition from studies to practice, enabling the transformation of potential failures into success. Hence, supervision and mentoring look for improvement for different purposes.

2.6.2 Approaches to Supervision in Teacher Education

Supervision refers to the guidance given to stimulate the activities of others with the aim of improving. Educational supervision is defined as “a process of monitoring and evaluating activities to ensure that all educational activities within an educational institution are carried out in accordance with the plan” (Munjiatun, 2019, p.94). Thus, educational supervision is part of educational management functions that concern quality in education, considering teachers’ performance.

It is precisely about guiding and supporting educators in their professional development that educational supervisors can choose an approach to address teachers' performance improvement. Nevertheless, educational supervisors should choose an approach for their supervision in terms of the problems faced and the objectives to be achieved in the institution. For this reason, Munjiatun (2019) explains the difference between direct, collaborative, and indirect approaches as follows:

1. Direct approach: Supervisors give direct suggestions to the problems, as it is based on a behavioral principle where teachers with weaknesses are required to be stimulated to react better either through a reward or punishment. Hence, it is the supervisor who determines what abilities need to be improved, limiting as well as creativity.

2. *Collaborative approach*: It is based on cognitive psychology, enabling supervisors and teachers to agree on the criteria and process structure to tackle the problem. Therefore, there is a negotiation to determine the improvement and development of abilities and creativity.

3. *Indirect approach*: It is based on humanistic psychology; the supervisor does not directly indicate the problem. Thus, teachers are listened to with high respect as much as possible, but they must be able to solve their own problems since the supervisor's role consists of provoking teachers' awareness of their experiences. It is the teacher who determines their abilities, development, and creativity.

2.6.3 Approaches of Mentoring in Teaching Education

On the other hand, mentoring has a traditional model of pairing a senior mentor with a single junior pre-service teacher. Although this is the most widespread model, other alternatives can be used alone or in combination, depending on the mentoring needs. Hence, Bland et al. (2009) describe three different models:

1. *Traditional mentoring*: this approach is the most familiar and involves the hierarchical relationship between a senior mentor faculty and a pre-service teacher to facilitate the career development of the second. However, it has disadvantages such as a lack of trained senior mentors with availability and willingness to support pre-service teachers. Another drawback is the possibility of facing conflicts of interest if the pre-service teacher has a constant interaction with the mentor through academic work, collaborations, or other activities: this could lead to exploitation of the pre-service teacher. Another issue is the perpetuation of the "status quo," which concerns educating pre-service teachers to continue doing things as they are. This strategy hinders matching decisions and teaching procedures to the times and conditions that are always in a dynamic evolution.

2. *Peer mentoring*: In this approach, there is no hierarchical relationship since both parties, at a similar career stage, join to contribute to their mutual career development. Therefore,

communication and collaboration are expected due to a principle of mutuality, having the chance to exchange experience and knowledge in alignment with equity and empathy. It is meaningful to remark that this frame of interaction is frequently absent in traditional mentoring. The authors also report that for pre-service teachers; it is easier to communicate with peers than with senior faculty mentors because peers may be coping with the same problems.

3. *Group mentoring*: this approach requires the presence of a member or members, usually senior mentors, holding the leadership of a group of pre-service teachers who, in turn, can have peer relationships. In this way, it offers benefits from traditional and peer mentoring, such as access to multiple perspectives and networks of other seniors, and support from peers at the same stage of career.

Now, Table 2.1 is presented with the intention of providing an outline of the exposed approaches to supervision and mentoring. Its content offers a summary of the key elements that enable us to highlight differences and similarities between them.

Table 2.1

Differences between Supervision and Mentoring Approaches in Teaching Education

Aspects	Approaches to Supervision in Teaching Education	Approaches to Mentoring in Teaching Education
Definition	A process of guiding, monitoring, and evaluating activities to ensure they align with educational plans.	A relationship where experienced individuals (mentors) guide less experienced individuals (pre-service teachers).
Primary Focus	Improving teachers' performance and ensuring quality in education through supervision.	Supporting career and personal development of pre-service teachers through guidance and mentorship.
Role of Leader (Supervisor/Mentor)	Supervisors guide and direct teachers' performance and development.	Mentors guide and support pre-service teachers, with various models for interaction.
Main Goal	To improve the quality of education by enhancing teachers'	To enhance the career development, teaching

	performance.	practices, and personal growth of pre-service teachers.
Types of Approaches	1. Direct: Supervisor gives direct suggestions (behavioral principle).	1. Traditional Mentoring: Hierarchical, senior mentor guides junior pre-service teachers.
	2. Collaborative: Supervisors and teachers work together to determine areas for improvement.	2. Peer Mentoring: Both parties are at a similar career stage and mutually support each other.
	3. Indirect: Supervisors facilitate self-awareness in teachers to solve their own issues.	3. Group Mentoring: Senior mentor leads a group of pre-service teachers, offering peer and senior support.
Psychological implications	1. Direct: Behavioral psychology, focusing on reward and punishment.	1. Traditional: Hierarchical relationships can lead to potential power imbalances and exploitation.
	2. Collaborative: Cognitive psychology, based on mutual agreement and negotiation.	2. Peer: Equal communication and mutual support at similar career stages.
	3. Indirect: Humanistic psychology, encouraging self-reflection, and personal responsibility.	3. Group: Combining perspectives from both peers and mentors.
Approach to Teacher's/ Pre-service Teacher's Development	Supervisors actively direct and evaluate teachers' growth, limiting creativity in some cases.	Pre-service teachers actively engage in self-growth with guidance from mentors.
Potential challenges	Supervisors may limit creativity and autonomy in direct approaches.	Traditional mentoring may lead to exploitation and perpetuation of outdated practices.
Mutuality and Interaction	Supervisors are generally in a position of authority and control.	Mentoring approaches vary in their level of mutuality, from hierarchical to equal partnership (peer mentoring).

Note. Comparative table created by the author.

As the *Inglés Incluyente* program did not intend to evaluate pre-service teachers' progress against strict and normative teaching performance standards, it was not suitable to

adopt a supervision orientation. On the contrary, the socioeconomic conditions of the instructed middle school students set a specific contextual teaching scenario that required both pre-service teachers to develop a critical stance for the reasons behind their pedagogical choices. Thus, mentoring would allow to accompany them in their teaching growth by motivating self-reflection and not a sense of accomplishment or failure in relation to an educational plan.

In this line, mentoring in teaching education takes different shapes with advantages and limitations for the pre-service teachers. Nevertheless, this relationship must be based on a reasoned procedure that orientates both parts: mentors and pre-service teachers in terms of what their roles are, and the phases they are expected to go through, with the hope of transforming not only their teaching practice but also themselves.

2.7 Mentoring

Carrying out activities of mentoring ideally involves an informed procedure from both parties: mentors and pre-service teachers. For this reason, the essence of the roles in this reciprocal relationship is presented in this section. Next, the phases that integrate the evolution of the process and the mentor's competence are mentioned. Finally, it is explained what transformative mentoring is and the possibility of combining it with Critical Pedagogy attributes to support Sociocultural Theory that emphasizes the value of interaction to learn and construct together with the help of cultural tools.

2.7.1 Mentoring pre-service English Teachers

The role of mentors and pre-service teachers implies a series of responsibilities that should be defined and clear for both parties. Otherwise, there may be misunderstandings with consequences for the health of the relationship: lack of commitment, heavy loads of work, and frustration. These repercussions would not only undermine the improvement of the teaching practice of pre-service teachers but also the reliability and trust in each other.

Conversely, when roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, the mentor- pre-service teacher relationship fosters autonomy and confidence, as both parties understand their areas of control and the expectations they have of each other. In this context, the following paragraphs will explore some key conceptions about roles, functions, and responsibilities.

Fullerton and Malderez (1998) (cited in Malderez and Bodóczy, 1999) state that a mentor can have different roles and functions: 1) model, to stimulate and to demonstrate; 2) acculturator, to show the pre-service teachers how to carry out teaching and help them in the acquisition of professional culture; 3) sponsor, to provide career opportunities by enabling access to networks; 4) support: let the pre-service teacher vent feelings and listen to their ideas before cathartic reasons, and 5) educator, to create purposeful learning opportunities for the pre-service teacher to achieve professional objectives.

On the other hand, Zachary (2005) suggests a list of responsibilities for mentors: initiate contact with the pre-service teacher, build rapport, keep in contact with the pre-service teacher, create new learning opportunities, provide guidance and support, help resolve difficulties, and give advice on professional careers. Regarding the pre-service teacher's responsibilities, the author suggests participation as an active learner, keeping in contact with the mentor, taking risks, asking for help if it is necessary, taking responsibility for completing the teaching program, trying new ideas, and following assignments.

It can be said that the authors agree about the importance of collaboration, fostering insightful and constant communication, displaying and taking learning opportunities as foundations for carrying out a fruitful mentoring relationship. Nevertheless, to hold a purposeful and organized alliance, mentors and pre-service teachers also need to be aware of the developmental phases in mentoring.

2.7.2 Phases of Mentoring

Phases of mentoring entail a predictable cycle in the relationship between mentors and pre-service teachers. Zachary (2005) states that there are four stages: preparing, negotiating, enabling, and coming to closure. The preparation phase includes self-preparation and relationship preparation. Negotiating consists of defining learning goals, criteria and measurement, specification of responsibilities, mutual agreements, and a workplan. The third phase, enabling, is usually the longest and tends to face problems that debilitate the relationship; however, it is productive in terms of accomplishing learning objectives and development. Finally, in the last phase, it is possible to learn to draw conclusions of mentoring for both parties.

2.7.3 Mentor's Competence

Competence can be understood as the possession of sufficient knowledge and skills to perform an activity successfully and efficiently. Therefore, content knowledge in the field of English Language Teaching is not enough to guarantee being a competent mentor for a pre-service teacher. Boreen et al. (2000) state that the most important attributes of an effective mentor teacher are flexibility, open-mindedness, and willingness to engage in active communication. A flexible and open-minded mentor encourages pre-service teachers to experiment, take risks, and make mistakes.

Regarding communication, the authors mention that mentors try to find time for meaningful conversations to help reluctant pre-service teachers analyze their classroom performance thanks to their ability to initiate difficult discussions. Accordingly, a competent mentor fosters self-confidence, promotes verbalization of thought, and encourages critical thinking, all with the objective of developing teaching practice.

2.7.4 Inclusive and transformative mentoring

As education must transform to respond to the evolving conditions in the world, teacher preparation programs should also adapt to better support pre-service teachers. In this line, Turiano and Otañe (2024) argue that it is possible to provide effective education to future teachers by empowering them to become agents of change. They advocate for transformative education, which basically makes students feel valued, acknowledged, safe, and included as active members in the learning community. The authors explain that transforming teaching involves relating curriculum, pedagogy, learning materials, and learning environment with natural, political, economic, and cultural contexts. In short, transformation in teaching demands grounding teaching practice choices on sociopolitical and cultural needs.

Then, pre-service teachers should be educated to project their practice beyond the walls of their classrooms. They can be agents of change by emphasizing the connection they have with their students and with the community they belong to at a local, national, and international level. Therefore, they must raise their voice and mobilize actions to fight against bullying, gender-based violence, and discrimination. Hence, transformative teaching education serves as inclusion.

Inclusion implies respect and integration of diversity. This principle of transformative education should also be applied in addressing pre-service teachers. Kimmel et al. (2021) encourages carrying out supportive and inclusive leadership to contribute to teacher retention, having to pay attention to differences in culture and personal background. Then, Cornwall (2020) provides advice for working with novice teachers from different backgrounds: a) build a network of mentors to provide the expertise one cannot, b) listen pre-service teachers on their needs, c) create opportunities for open conversations, d) provide practical and emotional support, and e) foster a space of empathy and connection by first analyzing if as mentor there is a status of majority in comparison to the pre-service teacher who may be part of a minority.

Since mentors collaborate with pre-service teachers to expand and improve their expertise, it is useful to count with directions that emphasize attributes that enable a transformative and inclusive teaching practice. For this reason, Gooden et al. (2024) present their book entitled *Supervision and Mentoring Practices for EFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* that provides checklists concerning attributes to be considered in four teaching domains: *Planning and Preparation, Teaching the Lesson, Classroom Management, and Rapport and Communication with Learners*. In this way, this guide can be used to support observation and dialogue with pre-service teachers.

The authors also suggest specific moments that compose a sequence for interacting with pre-service English Language Teachers, integrated by three steps: pre-observation, during observation, and post-observation. Pre-observation involves negotiating the aspects to be emphasized during observation and recommending pre-conferences to arrange this. The second part, observation, requires mentors to observe and take notes about the pre-service teachers' performance during classes, based on the pre-conference's interests and other things that also matter. Now, the intention of the third step is to hold a post-observation conference to comment on the pre-service teachers' strengths and areas in need of further development regarding classroom teaching. It can happen orally in a face-to-face mentoring conversation or by written exchanges. This last step ideally happens as soon as possible after the observation.

As the guide does not propose an intrusive and imposing approach, there is a promotion of dialogue in a safe and relaxed setting. In this manner, the mentor can elicit deeper understandings, listen to alternative perspectives on the lesson, and assist pre-service teachers in reflecting on the same. Thus, it is recommended to first ask the pre-service teachers to give their opinions on their own classes. In a few words, it is better to give them a voice before commenting on their teaching.

This transformative and inclusive approach brings into light the relevance of dialogue, collaboration, and giving voice to Critical Pedagogy, in the company of the co-construction of

knowledge with the help of cultural tools that Sociocultural Theory highlights. As a result, there is a suggestion that both perspectives can be used to guide the mentoring of EFL pre-service teachers.

2.7.5 Sociocultural Theory and Critical Pedagogy alliance for mentoring

Encinas and Sánchez (2015) argue that mentoring entails a dyadic and reciprocal interaction that relies on the mentors' role and competence to guide new teachers, having these last ones to receive theories and feedback through dialogue that contributes to understanding their own experience and transforming their practice. Similar to Vygotsky, the authors give relevance to sociocultural context in shaping learning. They highlight that mentoring must be adapted to fit pre-service teachers' situated teaching practice, since this is influenced by personal characteristics and contextual factors. As a result, it can be said that mentoring provides opportunities for social interactions to construct knowledge while cooperating for professional purposes and in response to contextual factors.

Considering the teaching context of the two pre-service teachers participating in this study – who worked with learners from low-income backgrounds- it was appropriate to guide the mentoring process using both Sociocultural Theory and Critical Pedagogy. While Sociocultural Theory provided structure to the mentoring interaction, Critical Pedagogy oriented the process toward transformation and inclusion within teaching practice.

Within this framework, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) addresses the pre-service teachers' initial problem-solving abilities as they navigate the challenges of their teaching practice. The mentor's scaffolding was organized through a structured mentoring procedure consisting of pre-observation, during-observation, and post-observation stages. These stages were supported by selected mediational tool that fostered skills development. Such tools included the supervision and mentoring guide, lesson planning feedback, observation notes, and reflective dialogue, among others.

A pre-service teacher's ZPD is not static; as new levels of competence are reached, further areas for growth and improving emerge. For this reason, Gooden et al. (2024) argue that inclusive and transformative mentoring should focus on lesson planning and preparation, classroom teaching, classroom management, and rapport and communication with learners. These areas promote critical reflection and sustained dialogue throughout the mentoring process.

From this perspective, mentoring serves as a platform that integrates key elements of Sociocultural Theory, such as the ZPD, scaffolding, and mediation. Consequently, the interaction between mentors and pre-service teachers is purposeful and development oriented. The selected cultural tools help pre-service teachers become aware of aspects of their teaching practice they may not be easily perceived independently, thereby promoting professional growth and reflective practice. As noted by Wink and Putney (2010), from a Vygostkian standpoint, mentoring emphasizes the reciprocal and dynamic relationship between thought, language, and experience.

Critical Pedagogy, derived from Critical Theory, conceptualizes knowledge as a form of power that can be used for personal and social transformation. It positions education to promote democratic participation and social awareness. Like Sociocultural Theory, Critical Pedagogy acknowledges that teachers and students learn from one another and that learning is shaped by social, cultural, and historical events (Wink & Putney, 2010). However, Critical Pedagogy places a stronger emphasis on the political dimension of education. It argues that recognizing contextual influences is insufficient unless educators also act toward social justice, which assigns purpose to the transformation of teaching practice.

Dialogue plays a central role in this transformative process. Vygotsky identified language as both a cultural and a cognitive tool that enhances learning. And dialogue enables pre-service teachers to explore new conceptions of teaching or to transform existing practices (Encinas & Sánchez, 2015). In mentoring, dialogue functions as a mediational tool through which pre-

service teachers relate their mental representations of teaching to their actual classroom performance. When guided by a Critical Pedagogy perspective, dialogue involves questioning the realities of teaching practice and creatively seeking ways to transform them. But this transformation requires the development of critical thinking to avoid adaptation to the established patterns in which injustices are overlooked, starting from those in their teaching practice.

In classrooms informed by Critical Pedagogy, dialogue serves as the foundation for problem-posing activities that address real-life situations. Such practices promote the development of critical awareness among learners. Luke (2012) explains that in dialogical settings, traditional teacher-learner relationships are transformed: learners become teachers of their lived experiences, and teachers become learners of those experiences. This dynamic reflects the social constructivist principle of reciprocal relationships within a community engaged in collective knowledge construction.

As a result, dialogue may be highly valued as a mediational tool for co-constructing knowledge and fostering meaningful reflection within mentoring activities for pre-service English teachers. From a Critical Pedagogy perspective, this study conceptualizes dialogue and discussion as attributes that empower reciprocal mentoring interactions. Accordingly, the attributes expected to present before, during and after classroom observations included the teacher as a facilitator, giving voice, dialogue and discussion, problem-posing method, critical consciousness, transformative learning, and social justice, equity, and democracy.

Moreover, this mentoring project possesses a nature of social justice and reflective approach to complement the pre-service teachers' professional preparation. This orientation aligns with Critical Pedagogy's emphasis on social justice and equity, which requires the development of a critical stance toward educational practice. As such, the alliance between Sociocultural Theory and Critical Pedagogy provided a framework to support the development of a transformative and inclusive teaching practice.

Finally, the incorporation of core Critical Pedagogy attributes into the mediational tools used to scaffold pre-service teachers' teaching practices allowed this study to examine the effectiveness of a Critical Pedagogy-based mentoring strategy. Transformative teaching, as conceived in this project, prioritizes inclusion and social equity. In this context, the mentoring experience was situated within an initiative that provided free access to English instruction for learners from low-income backgrounds, reinforcing the social justice orientation of the teaching practice promoted through mentoring.

2.8 Research Context: National Higher Education Policy and Evaluation frameworks

The General Framework of Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education (*Marco General del Sistema de Evaluación y Acreditación de la Educación Superior*, 2023) establishes the desirable attributes of higher education institutions. These characteristics are determined by national policies and laws concerning higher education in Mexico.

Thus, in December 2021, the National Policy for Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education (*Política Nacional de Evaluación y Acreditación de la Educación Superior*) was enacted to delineate the structural organization aimed at transforming higher education through a renewed evaluation framework.

Within this context, the General Law of Higher Education (*Ley General de Educación Superior*) promotes an integrative evaluation of programs and institutional management to improve tertiary education. This evaluation encompasses teaching activities, research, processes and results of learning outcomes, and students' trajectories matched to their national, regional, and local contexts. Therefore, institutions should also trigger reflective processes in their daily academic activities to articulate their participation within their community. In other words, what higher institutions are doing to respond to their society's needs.

Higher education institutions are then expected to commit to the transformation of social inequities within a pluricultural society such as Mexico. For this purpose, institutions are intended

to strengthen dialogue, critical thinking, equity, respect, and consensus in their evaluation approaches and methodologies. At this point, a clear convergence emerges with Critical Pedagogy, which likewise seeks social justice and equity through the development of critical consciousness, the promotion of dialogue, and the active involvement of students by giving them a voice in their learning processes. From this perspective, knowledge and its application have a humanistic purpose to transform the living conditions of their society for both: Critical Pedagogy and pertinence of higher education evaluation.

In this vein, higher education institutions should first align their internal operations with principles of inclusion and equality to model these values for their future professionals. Accordingly, the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP) has implemented a labor equality and non-discrimination policy (Cedillo, 2022) that fosters opportunities for both women and men to develop their professional capacities. Under this policy, any form of mistreatment, violence, or segregation based on cultural, social, economic or physical characteristics is strictly prohibited.

Nevertheless, more concrete actions regarding higher education intervention can be observed in projects affiliated with the Secretary of Science, Humanities, Technology, and Innovation (*Secretaría de Ciencias, Humanidades, Tecnología e Innovación*). This governmental organization promotes collaboration among higher education institutions and scientific, technological, and productive academies to foster social well-being (SECIHTI, 2025). Its areas of action include the environment, agriculture, cultural and diversified heritage, productive development, Mexican humanism, health, and inequity and social inclusion.

At this juncture, a connection can be identified between SECIHTI's objectives and BUAP's institutional commitment to equality and not discrimination. As a result, socially impactful projects are implemented across different university venues, including the Language Department, specifically within the B.A. in English language teaching program. At this location, a project entitled *Inglés Incluyente* was formally inaugurated in 2024.

It is worth noting that *Inglés Incluyente* reflects the seven operational guidelines established by the National Policy for Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education. Each guideline is described below, along with an explanation of how *Inglés Incluyente* embodies its principles.

1. Social responsibility: This guideline refers to the manner in which institutions assume social leadership to tackle problems within their communities to build a more just, free, inclusive and peaceful society. To this end, institutions implement strategies and concrete actions through teaching and research. Thus, the assessment of this guideline is based on the alignment between societal expectations and institutional practices.

The initial objective of *Inglés Incluyente* was to make English language learning accessible to elementary school students in Puebla City, particularly those from marginalized areas and low socioeconomic backgrounds. This objective aimed to reduce the educational gap between English instruction and basic education.

2. Social equity and genre: This guideline emphasizes the equitable distribution of educational opportunities for women and men, free from stereotypical, cultural, political or sexual orientation-based limitations.

The program recruited mentors and pre-service teachers based on the relevance of their professional profiles. Mentors were selected for their experiences and willingness to share and co-construct knowledge with pre-service teachers, while pre-service teachers demonstrated a commitment to collaborating in the transformation of their teaching practice.

3. Inclusion: This principle addresses the rejection of exclusion based on income, genre, race, beliefs, age, and any other trait. In this form, it is essential to consider the social and cultural characteristics of higher education contexts, as well as students' rights and individual features, to guarantee the same opportunities and possibilities for professional development.

Both mentors collaborated to agree on procedural steps for fulfilling their roles, including the implementation of core mentoring tools such as *Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL*

Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach (Gooden et al., 2024). This approach enabled the provision of comparable guidance to the four pre-service teachers, while allowing for nuanced differences based on the theoretical framework guiding each mentoring process.

4. Excellence: This guideline promotes a student-centered educational approach that encourages continuous improvement, the development of maximum learning potential, critical thinking, and strong bonds with both the institution and the community. In this respect, the General Law of Higher Education highlights the need to form professionals with solid disciplinary knowledge. Additionally, there must be a practical application of the learned theories in a socially pertinent manner, which promotes inclusion. In a few words, excellence posits the integral human development and tangible results obtained during professional formation.

The four pre-service teachers had the opportunity to apply the knowledge acquired during their B.A. program in a real classroom setting with middle school students from two nearby public institutions. As a result, they were challenged to mobilize their knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to respond to authentic teaching situations.

5. Vanguard: This guideline focuses on the renewal of institutional practices and knowledge approaches to achieve more effective social contributions. It entails the future of higher education institutions around their contexts, how they use their potential to transform pedagogical and social scenarios.

Inglés Incluyente supports and complements the training of EFL pre-service teachers through a mentoring program aimed at improving teaching practices. Simultaneously, the program contributes to broader goals related to education, equity, and social justice. By teaching public middle school students from low-income backgrounds, pre-service teachers are required to articulate their theoretical knowledge into socially relevant practice. This contribution aligns with BUAP's social mission to address inequality and discrimination.

6. Social innovation: This guideline refers to the participation of higher education institutions in collaborative projects with external organizations. Such initiatives are grounded in principles of co-responsibility, equity, solidarity, and justice.

During its initial phase, *Inglés Incluyente* operated within BUAP facilities, particularly at the Faculty of Languages. Over time, the project expanded to other university venues and currently receives support from an additional university in central Mexico.

7. Interculturality: This guideline aims to transform higher education institutions into spaces that foster dialogue, critical thinking, equity, solidarity, and respect. Linguistic and cultural diversity is celebrated, which leads to eliminating practices that reproduce exclusion and marginalization.

The supervision and mentoring guide was used to support mentors in helping pre-service teachers improve their teaching practices and develop critical and reflective stances. Due to the structure of the observation cycles (pre-observation, observation, and post-observation), there were sustained opportunities for respectful dialogue to address the pre-service teachers' concerns and interests. Throughout the process, the pre-service teachers were not treated differently based on cultural or individual characteristics.

In light of these guidelines, *Inglés Incluyente* responds to the expectations placed on higher education institutions to educate professionals under academic conditions that promote social justice and inclusion. The program contributes not only to the improvement of ESL teaching practices but also to BUAP's institutional commitment to the transformation of Mexican society.

Table 2.2, on the following page, provides a short summary of the mentors' and pre-service teachers' profiles. More detailed descriptions of the mentor and the two pre-service teachers who participated in this study are provided in Chapter 3.

Table 2.2*Professional Profiles of Mentors and Pre-service Teachers in Inglés Incluyente*

Mentors' profiles	
Mentor 1 F 33 years old	Teaching experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 years in basic education. - 4 years in upper secondary - 3 years in tertiary education Academic background: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BA in ELT - Education internship (Teach for Mexico) - MA in ELT (1 year)
Mentor 2 I 33 years old	Teaching experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 years in basic education - 3 years in upper secondary - 2 years in tertiary education Academic background: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BA in ELT - MA in ELT (1 year)
Pre-service teachers' profiles	
Pre-service teacher 1 P 21 years old	Teaching experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 year in basic education Academic background: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BA in ELT (Senior year) - Mandatory Community Service
Pre-service teacher 2 R 21 years old	Teaching experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 months in basic education Academic background: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BA in ELT (Senior year) - Mandatory Community Service
Pre-service teacher 3 A 21 years old	Teaching experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 months in basic education - 6 months in upper secondary Academic background: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BA in ELT (Senior year) - Mandatory Community Service
Pre-service teacher 4 M 25 years old	Teaching experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No experience Academic background: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BA in ELT (Senior year) - Mandatory Community Service

Note. Informative table created by the author.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in this study to collect and analyze data derived from the participation of pre-service teachers in *Inglés Incluyente* to give free English classes to low-income middle school students in Puebla, Mexico. The research aims to assess the effectiveness of a Critical Pedagogy-based mentoring strategy in fostering transformative and inclusive teaching practices among those EFL pre-service teachers.

3.2 Ontological and epistemological dimensions

Before explaining how the data collection was organized in practical terms, it is suitable to highlight the theoretical foundations that support their choice. Guarino et al. (2009) state that ontology focuses on the nature and structure of things, regardless of their physical existence, since categories can be used to describe their essence and how they relate to others. Then, Critical Pedagogy, which is an intangible education philosophy, can be found through the identification of its attributes that constitute categories. These are in relation to the transformation of teaching practice to assess the utility of Critical Pedagogy. For sure, the results are based on the pre-service teachers' perspectives.

Critical Pedagogy essentially pursues empowering learners to question, reflect, and transform their reality through actions. For this reason, Critical Pedagogy conceives a necessary duality of mind and body, closely related to learners' context to transform it. Kress and Lake (2018) state that Paulo Freire's educational trajectory emphasized the relevance of material context for transformative learning, and that Critical Pedagogy is an onto-epistemological praxis that explains being as a process of becoming, derived from the relationship between a person and their land. In other words, transformation is seen through what people believe and how they

act. For this reason, it was appropriate to accompany the pre-service teachers' practice in their classrooms and collaborate through mentoring to be immersed in their professional development.

In this fashion, an advocacy/participatory worldview promotes cooperation with participants of research. Creswell (2009) explains that this position goes beyond Constructivism, since it promotes helping marginalized people, and, with that, research needs to be related to politics and a political agenda. The author also states that the research should contain an agenda for reform that may transform the lives of the participants, their institutions, or even the researcher's life, while ensuring participants' voices are heard. In this vein, the pre-service teachers' voices were heard from the start, and the use of a Critical Pedagogy view, created by an emancipatory writer, Paulo Freire, supported the interaction with them and their guidance throughout mentoring.

On the other hand, Oliver (2004) explains that epistemology refers to the beliefs regarding the nature of the knowledge used to resolve the research question. Thus, this study follows an interpretative epistemology by having Sociocultural Theory and Critical Pedagogy as the knowledge grounds. The first one reinforces that knowledge is created in community through social and cultural interaction, while the second advocates for using it to transform the living conditions of society to reach equity and social justice. In this connection, the study is based on the pre-service teachers' views of mentoring and their teaching practice transformation.

3.3 Scope and purpose of the study

It was only at the end of the mentoring relationship that the scope of Critical Pedagogy's contribution to the development of a transformative and inclusive teaching practice of EFL student- teachers was established. In this regard, the exploratory method was adopted. As Singh (2021) explains, the purpose of the exploratory method is to learn as much as possible

between two variables; however, this relationship can only be understood once the investigation has concluded.

This correspondence was particularized in a setting where a similar study had not been carried out before. In this line, Swaraj (2019) states that exploratory research is necessary to obtain insights into problems for a more precise investigation. For this reason, this study is thought to establish a grounded picture of the elements at play- transformation of teaching practice supported by a Critical Pedagogy based mentoring- which sets the basis for broader future research. Therefore, the exploratory method was considered the most suitable to adopt.

In addition, from an interpretative perspective, this study emphasizes that the social facts to be collected and analyzed were not predetermined, since the pre-service teachers were immersed in a setting of fluid interactions with their middle-school students. Only by identifying the main attributes of Critical Pedagogy in their reflections was it achievable to assess its scope for promoting the transformation of their practice. In other words, a Critical Pedagogy perspective allowed me to interpret the results to understand to what extent this strategy was efficient. In this regard, there was no prescriptive purview or purpose. In consequence, the use of an exploratory and descriptive method was possible.

On this subject, Atmowardoyo (2018) states that a descriptive method is used to portray a phenomenon as precisely as possible. That is, it is limited to the factual registration of the shaping of the student- teachers' practice under the available conditions of the research. This scheme enables the study to answer the question “what” happens in that specific scenario when Critical Pedagogy is used to promote a transformative and inclusive teaching practice.

A descriptive method was then chosen with the intention of providing a detailed picture of the mentoring experience of the pre-service teachers in the established context (low-income middle school students). Consequently, the interactions of the pre-service teachers would be better appreciated and understood by the readers.

3.4 Methodological approach

This study was conducted following a qualitative research approach, as this implies understanding a phenomenon through the participants' perspective. Therefore, the results of this research are based on the mentored pre-service teachers' contributions, tied to their experiences and interactions within their teaching context with low-income students. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as follows:

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials –case study, personal experience, introspective, life, story experience, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. (p. 2)

With respect to these conditions, there is an appropriate relationship between the ontological and epistemological dimensions with the selection of the methodological approach, which in turn matches with the next sections: research method, techniques and instruments used for this study.

3.5 Research method

This study is framed as a case study since it generates an in-depth understanding of a real-life phenomenon. In this sense, Coombs (2022) states that a case study is usually used in humanities and social sciences, and it may provide insights into specific phenomena or situations. Additionally, Duff (2020) states that a case study is a type of qualitative and interpretivist research that examines a small number of entities - such as a person, group, or program- in their natural context, focusing on their unique and bounded characteristics. In this way, the author comments that data generation in case studies can come from a combination of

different resources, for example: observed performance, retrospective or introspective accounts contained in logs or journals. Moreover, the author highlights that implementing multiple cases may lead to remarkable variation between the participants.

Case study is longitudinal in this scope, in terms of the aim to assess the utility of Critical Pedagogy to motivate a transformation in the teaching practice during a defined period from August 2024 to November 2024. This implies an examination of their evolution of abilities, perceptions, and performance over time, based on the pre-service teachers' long view. This feature supports why case studies are suitable for analyzing a phenomenon with variables that are not static.

It is precisely the possibility of analyzing a specific event while being immersed in a community that highlights the development of a case study with ethnographic strategies. Thus, to accompany both pre-service teachers, my role in the research changed depending on the stage of the mentoring cycle. Firstly, in the pre-observation stage, I was a commenter, while in the observation stage, I was a non-participant observer. Finally, in the post-observation stage, I was again a commenter and listener.

Suryani (2008) explains that in case studies, researchers should maintain a neutral stance when reporting facts to avoid biased views, and they should use triangulation to support their claims. Similarly, the use of ethnographic strategies enabled us to triangulate data. Suryani (2008) also highlights that continuous descriptions during the period of a study can contribute to the credibility of a case study. In line with this point, the three-stage cycle of mentoring, supported by resources such as the mentoring guide, field notes, spreadsheets, and recordings, followed the same pattern for every observed class. This procedure allowed for the collection of targeted data regarding the participant's teaching practices over a determined and consistent period: August to November 2024.

As the pre-service teachers and the mentor shared Faculty facilities for the project, it was appropriate to have a convenience sampling. Golzar et al. (2022) explain that convenience

sampling is a technique to select participants from the population target based on their easy reachability. In this study, one of the mentors (who is also the researcher) steadily visited two pre-service teachers' English classes throughout the whole semester. In this respect, Nikolopoulou (2023) states that convenience sampling is used in educational research when pre-existing groups, such as students, are readily available or when participants are willing to participate. He also explains that convenience sampling is suitable for collecting data on individuals' perceptions. In this manner, convenience sampling made it possible to assess the transformation of the participants' teaching practices resulting from Critical Pedagogy influence. As a result, the selection of participants aligned with the study's purpose and research questions. A description of them, including the mentor, is provided later. But this information indicates their status before the observations of both pre-service teachers officially started.

3.6 Context

The study was carried out at the BUAP Faculty of Languages, located in Puebla, Mexico. The leaders of the *Inglés Incluyente* program arranged to borrow two classrooms, which are normally used for English classes offered to external students who pay an instruction fee to the university. The mentor coordinated with both pre-service teachers to be observed on a specific date. Accordingly, the mentor visited both classrooms where the pre-service teachers were teaching low-income students from two nearby schools. These students were between 14 and 15 years old, with an average attendance of 9 to 12 students per session.

Inglés Incluyente was designed to be developed in three phases: English Language Teaching, Supervision and Mentoring, and Evaluation. For the first one, it would count on the participation of 4 pre-service teachers (B.A. in ELT) to perform as instructors of two groups integrated with 10-15 students. The classes would be given at the Faculty of Languages facilities, twice a week in the afternoon, to cover A1 content for a period of 16 weeks.

Now, for the second part, the project would count on the support of *Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* (Gooden et al. 2024). The guide was intended to serve as a tool for future mentors, two students of M.A. in ELT, to help the four pre-service teachers in their aim to improve their practice, in hand with the development of a critical and reflective teaching stance. In this manner, the use of the available resources in the guide would also facilitate the accomplishment of an observational cycle (before the observation, during the observation, and after the observation) between mentors and pre-service teachers.

Finally, the evaluation of the scope of the project would be found in the third step. A time for evaluation and reflection on how every element impacted each other: pre-service teachers, mentors, objectives and the use of resources.

Nevertheless, the project had a modification and considered middle school students instead of elementary ones. For the rest, on the 24th of August 2024, the first generation of *Inglés Incluyente* was officially operating. It was integrated by two female M.A. mentors, and four B.A. pre-service teachers: three women and one man. They worked together until the first half of December 2024.

3.7 Participants

The participants of this study were 2 pre-service teachers and one mentor (myself). The next paragraphs describe the former conditions of both pre-service teachers and the mentor before formally starting their participation in *Inglés Incluyente*.

Pre-service Teacher R:

He is a 21-year-old TEFL senior pre-service teacher with 6-month teaching experience in basic education, elementary school. He decided to study a TEFL major because it seemed easy for him and thought he would be good at it to professionally practice it. Moreover, he felt the inner motivation to share the language with others who would need it.

Regarding his enrollment in the program, it was initially motivated by the simplicity of the registration process, along with the possibility of a close experience with ELT, within a semi-controlled and supportive environment. In this fashion, he could be provided with productive and professional growth as an English teacher.

Concerning his learning expectations of the program, he is interested in acquiring and developing several teaching skills that boost his professional development. For example: being in contact with an authentic group of learners that mirror the real behavior of students from a public school. This could lead him to test his capacities for managing, facilitating, and organizing language learning environments that he could experience in other circumstances.

The participant considers that his strength was being open to communicate and interact with learners, while he acknowledged that his area of improvement targeted being capable of detecting which situational factors could influence the way learning and teaching are carried out.

Pre-service Teacher P:

She is a 21-year-old TEFL senior pre-service teacher with 1-year teaching experience in basic education, elementary school. At first, she thought that TEFL B.A. was only about language, but once she had pedagogical content classes, she realized that she enjoyed teaching and decided to start giving classes on her own at a basic education level. In addition, she was fond of creating materials and decided to continue studying for the B.A.

Student-participant P decided to be part of the program because of the opportunity to increase and improve her teaching skills in the same place where she is studying for her B.A. Then, the goal and venue of the program were crucial.

The improvement of her teaching performance is her main learning expectation, since she will receive support from a more experienced teacher. From her point of view, if the mentor observes them, pre-service teachers need to react to problems that are not taught in their B.A. program.

She considers her main strengths to be lesson plans and test creation, managing a class sustained in behaviorist theory, and providing instructions in an organized manner. On the other hand, her areas of improvement are better time management, less anxiety, and more body movement control. Additionally, she wishes to make better use of her tone and speech speed.

The mentor:

Firstly, I would like to emphasize again that my role during the study suited the three-stages to carry out the mentoring of both students; therefore, I was a participative researcher with different nuances of intervention. I am a 33-year-old TEFL teacher, currently in my second year of M.A. in TEFL. I study at the same Faculty as both pre-service teachers. I have a teaching experience of 3 years in basic education, 4 years in upper secondary and 3 years in tertiary education.

Similarly, to Pre-service Teacher P, I believed the B.A. was not oriented towards teaching. However, once I had the opportunity to teach as part of my TEFL formation, I got interested in the field.

I decided to be part of *Inglés Incluyente* because of my professional development background. In my early years as a novice teacher, I was part of a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) named Teach for Mexico, a branch of Teach for America. Then, I realized that delivering quality education to low-income students was meaningful as it may contribute to pursue a more equitable society from classrooms. Years later, I felt particularly attracted to Critical Pedagogy and its social justice aim that favors inclusion and equity. For this reason, I willingly agreed to share my experience and learn along with the pre-service teachers to be mentored.

To prepare for mentoring, I read "*Supervision and Mentoring Practices: for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach*" (Gooden et al., 2024). I noticed that the guide presents a framework incorporating tools from Critical Pedagogy, such as giving voice to pre-service teachers throughout the mentoring process, recognizing the value of their active

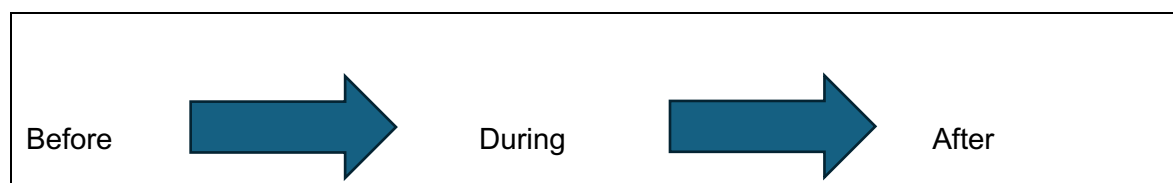
participation in building better teaching practices, and favoring dialogue and reflection instead of imposing or merely reproducing my own teaching approach. For this reason, I decided to make my experience with them even more meaningful by choosing it as the focus of my M.A. study.

3.8 Instruments

To prevent any confusion, in this study, the means through which the data were collected will be denominated as mentoring process artifacts. These involve three different stages: lesson plans in pre-observation, field notes during observation, and voice recordings (dialogue) during post-observation. The data generated through these three moments aimed to guide and elicit a written reflection. For this reason, every observed class included a Reflection Matrix (Appendix 1) designed to visually represent the 3-stage cycle and capture evidence of transformation in teaching practice, which was found primarily in the reflection section. In this manner, the Reflection Matrix incidentally became an instrument itself. Therefore, the written reflections derived from every 3-stage cycle will be the data, which is the focus of the analysis, since they concern the evidence of the transformation in pre-service teachers' thoughts and actions in their teaching practice.

In this circumstance, the data for this research were gathered using two main instruments; a Reflection Matrix, designed to guide the development of written reflections by each pre-service teacher, and a final Retrospection Protocol that summarized the perceived impact of mentoring on their teaching practices from both pre-service teachers' perspectives. Both instruments are described below.

Due to the size of the Reflection Matrix, its sections are presented separately to facilitate the understanding of its use during the mentoring process. As mentioned above, this process was supported by a three-stage observation cycle model suggested by Gooden et al. (2024): before the observation, during the observation and after the observation, as illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1*Observation Cycle*

Note. Adapted from *Supervision and Mentoring Practices: for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* by Gooden et al., 2024.

The three stages were crucial in structuring the appearance of the Reflection Matrix. However, the original terminology was adapted to “pre-observation”, “observation”, and “post-observation” to facilitate communication with the pre-service teachers. In this connection, Checklists 2, 3, 4, and 5 – found in Chapter 3 of *Supervision and Mentoring Practices: for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* (Gooden et al., 2024) - were used to inform the pre-service teachers about specific attributes considered for grounding the observation cycle.

It is worth noting that those attributes are organized into four domains according to the aforementioned book: Planning and Preparation, Teaching the Lesson, Classroom Management, and Rapport and Communication with learners. Additionally, pre-service teachers were referred to as “mentees” throughout the Reflection Matrix to guide the instructions for completing each section. In this context, Figure 3.2 illustrates the first stage on the following page.

Figure 3.2*Pre-Observation Section of the Reflection Matrix*

Stage 1: Pre-observation <i>Domain: Planning and preparation</i>	
Mentor's comments These comments were made as feedback to the lesson plan which was previously shared with the mentor using checklist 2 (p. 40 and 41).	Mentee's decisions Once the pre-service teachers had read the feedback, they needed to explain their changes or decisions.
4 domain priorities (traffic lights): In this space, pre-service teachers indicated which specific attributes they wished to be observed, starting from the moment they uploaded their lesson plans. A traffic light system was used to reflect their prioritized concerns: green for high relevance, yellow for medium relevance, and red for low relevance.	

Note. Descriptive figure created by the author.

For the pre-observation stage, pre-service teachers were required to upload their lesson plans to a shared folder with the mentor. This allowed the mentor to add comments that encouraged reflection on elements such as objectives, materials, and didactic sequences, among others. Then, Checklist 2 provided a common language for both parties: mentors and pre-service teachers to identify which specific attributes, as listed in the checklist, were addressed in the comments. By doing so, pre-service teachers could express their stance in the section "mentees-decisions" to take action based on that initial feedback. Now, the second stage of the mentoring process is summarized in Figure 3.3 as follows.

Figure 3.3.*Observation Section of the Reflection Matrix*

Stage 2: Observation	
<i>Domain: Teaching the lesson</i>	
Mentor's field notes These notes were written during the observation and categorized using checklist 3 (pp. 41-42).	
<i>Domain: Classroom management</i>	
Mentor's field notes	

These notes were written during the observation and were categorized using the Checklist 4 (p. 43)
--

<i>Domain: Rapport and communication with learners</i>
--

Mentor's field notes

These notes were written during the observation and were categorized using the Checklist 5 (p.44)

Note. Descriptive figure created by the author.

Stage 2 involved carrying out classroom observations, which lasted a maximum of 45 minutes, supported by field notes that considered the prioritized points in the system of traffic lights, as well as relevant aspects noticed by the mentor. Once again, the use of a shared language (Checklists 3, 4, and 5) enabled the classification of the field notes under their corresponding domain. Within this frame of reference, the third part is summarized in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4

Post Observation Section of the Reflection Matrix

Stage 3: Post observation Feedback	
Mentor's comments Pre-service teachers listened to the voice recordings they did during their oral feedback session with the mentor to identify the most significant points remarked by the mentor according to their own perspective.	Mentee's decisions Pre-service teachers responded to those comments to express their agreement or disagreement, as well as to provide explanations or describe any possible changes affecting their future practices.

Note. Descriptive figure created by the author.

Stage 3 consisted of a post-class meeting with both pre-service teachers held simultaneously to discuss the observation made during the lesson. This meeting allowed the pre-service teachers to share their thoughts on the points raised by the mentor, which were based on the field notes. The conversation was recorded and later revisited by the pre-service teachers, who were encouraged to identify and reflect on the mentor's comments they found

most meaningful from their own perspective. As it was mentioned, the integration of the three-stage process was intended to elicit a written reflection; this final part is presented in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5

Reflection Part of The Reflection Matrix

Reflection
The repetition of the 3-stage cycle for every session enabled us to build reflections on how the process had affected the pre-service teacher's teaching practice in the four domains.

Note. Descriptive figure created by the author.

The three-stage observation cycle culminated in a final reflection focused on the reshaping of the pre-service teachers' practice. To encourage this reflection, a set of prompts was provided to guide their writing, which was expected to be between 100 and 150 words. However, to complement the collected data and provide insights about the pre-service teachers' experience in mentoring, another instrument was created. This is summarized in Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6

Retrospection Protocol Summary

Retrospection Protocol
Pre-service teachers answered a 9-prompt reflection instrument (Retrospection Protocol) by the first weeks of February 2025, with the intention of collecting their final thoughts about their participation in the program <i>Inglés incluyente</i> and with that, their experience with mentoring.

Note. Descriptive figure created by the author.

The Retrospection Protocol (Appendix 2), the second main instrument of this study, included nine prompts designed to assess the impact of mentoring on the teaching practice of both pre-service teachers. To achieve this purpose, the first prompt asked the pre-service teachers to describe their teaching style before they participated in *Inglés Incluyente*.

Prompts 2, 3, 4, and 5 focused on the effects of mentoring: impact of lesson plans and conversations, self-perception of teaching practice, the shaping of their role as educators, including their social role as language teachers.

The final four prompts addressed the perceived utility and quality of the mentoring process: elements of mentoring to be applied in their future teaching practice, frequency with which they felt able to express their opinions, the efficiency of the mentoring program to help them become better language teachers, and their suggestions for improving the delivery of the mentoring process.

3.9 Data collection process

Initial phase

Both mentors were active collaborators from the early logistical preparations for the formal implementation of the program. In July 2024, they participated in the selection of middle-school students who met the main criteria for receiving free English classes: coming from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds yet demonstrating strong conviction and commitment to being part of the project.

Weeks later, on August 19, 2024, the first face-to-face meeting was held between the two mentors and the four pre-service teachers. During this reunion, the mentors outlined the system that would regulate the collaboration between both parties for conducting classroom observations and providing feedback. The pre-service teachers were advised on reading *Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* (Gooden et al., 2024) to encourage a better understanding of the key elements reflected in the checklists for the four domains: Planning and Preparation, Teaching the Lesson, Classroom management, and Rapport and Communication with Learners.

Implementation phase

It is important to reiterate that this study originated from the opportunity to participate in the mentoring program. As such, the initial data collection was not originally intended to serve research purposes. However, in the first half of September 2024, both mentors agreed on the organization and types of data to be collected through the Reflection Matrix to foster self-reflection focused on the teaching practice of the pre-service teachers.

The first version of the Reflection Matrix was presented to the research team leading the *Inglés Incluyente* project to track the pre-service teachers' weekly reflections and progress. Based on the team's feedback, the artifact was revised and subsequently approved for its implementation by September 19, 2024. To ensure effective monitoring, the mentors explained to the pre-service teachers how to complete each section of the Reflection Matrix – both to document previous classroom observations and to support future ones. On this basis, the artifact functioned as a spreadsheet designed to visually facilitate reflection throughout each three-stage observation cycle.

The classroom observation period for the pre-service teachers spanned from August 27 to November 28, 2024. A total of 13 classes were observed for Pre-service Teacher P and 14 for Pre-service Teacher R. The difference resulted from personal circumstances that prevented Pre-service teacher P from delivering one scheduled lesson.

During the pre-observation stage, pre-service teachers uploaded their lesson plans to a shared folder and received comments in the form of questions or suggestions aimed at prompting reflection on their pedagogical choices. In the observation stage, each pre-service teacher was observed once a week for a 45-minute segment of their 2.5-hour class. The observations were one after the other without interfering with their performance. These non-participant observations were accompanied by field notes, which addressed both the pre-service teachers' prioritized concerns (as indicated by the traffic lights system) and additional traits

noted by the mentor. This strategy proved to be valuable in tracking useful aspects of their teaching practice without overlooking key indicators of success.

During the post-observation stage, the feedback was provided to both pre-service teachers after their English classes. Oral feedback sessions were recorded by the pre-service teachers and uploaded later to the shared folder with mentors, to support reflections. To complete the post-observation section in the Reflection Matrix, the pre-service teachers listened to the recordings, retrieved the most meaningful mentor comments, and wrote their thoughts based on them. The final component of every cycle involved writing a brief reflection (100-150 words) guided by prompts to support a broader analysis of their evolving teaching practice. It is worth mentioning one more time that final written reflections were part of the actual data for this study.

Throughout this process, the mentor adopted a Critical Pedagogy perspective, striving to involve the pre-service teachers as active participants in the mentoring process without impositions, fostering dialogue and discussion, as well as cultivating social awareness tied to their role as educators in their classrooms with low-income students.

Final phase

Some months later, not only to deepen the experience of mentoring but also to close the formal mentoring relationship, both pre-service teachers received a nine-prompt Retrospection Protocol (Appendix 2). This second instrument would enable us to complement the first one (Reflection Matrix) to assess the scopes of mentoring, and with that, also evaluate the effectiveness of Critical Pedagogy to foster a transformative and inclusive teaching practice.

On the other hand, to ensure the validity and quality of the instrument, the Retrospection Protocol was initially designed by the two mentors and subsequently reviewed, revised, and authorized by the research team behind *Inglés Incluyente*, a group of experienced academic researchers.

All four pre-service teachers completed the same nine-prompt retrospective questionnaire. While the instrument was shared across the participants, each mentor retained the opportunity to analyze the resulting data in alignment with their individual research focus. The Retrospection Protocol instrument was distributed and completed during the second week of February 2025.

Given what has been said and to support the reader in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the data collection procedures described in this section, the following Figure 3.7 summarizes the initial, implementation, and final stages of the process.

Figure 3.7

Research Procedures

Phases	Steps	Description of the practice	Mentoring tools and instruments	Participants	Time
Initial Phase	Students' selection	Selection considered aspects such as being a child of a single parent and living in specific neighborhoods.	Excel survey reports	2 Mentors	July 2024
	First meeting with the student-teachers	Expectations and knowledge Agreements on the way of working. -Days of Mentoring - Use of The Mentoring Guide: Chapter 3 checklist 2, 3, and 5.	Slides presentation The Mentoring Guide	2 Mentors and 4 student-teachers	August 2024
Implementation phase	Carrying out the Mentoring Model	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) <i>Reflection Matrix</i>	Mentors and student-teachers	From August 2024- 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) <i>Reflection Matrix</i>	Mentors Student-teachers Students	From August 2024- Nov 2024
		Post/after-observation Meeting between mentors and their student-teachers to provide oral feedback and listen to their opinions (Dialogue) Student-teachers would ponder the three-moment cycle of mentoring to generate a reflection.	Recordings of oral feedback <i>Reflection Matrix</i>	Mentors Student-teachers	From August 2024- Nov 2024
Final phase	Closure and final thoughts	Student-teachers explained how participating in mentoring shaped their teaching practice.	<i>Retrospection Protocol</i>	Student-teachers	February 2025

Note. Informative figure created by the author.

3.10 Data analysis

This study aims to determine how effective a Critical Pedagogy-based mentoring strategy is to promote the development of a transformative and inclusive teaching practice among EFL pre-service teachers, who participate in a social program that provides free English classes to low-income students from public middle schools in Puebla, Mexico. Then, the research questions to be addressed are the following:

1) How useful is it for a mentor to use a Critical Pedagogy view to scaffold EFL pre-service teachers to transform their teaching practice?

2) How does a mentor's Critical Pedagogy-based support make students aware of the situational context of their teaching practice to respond to it?

As Critical Pedagogy plays a central role in this study, data interpretation was guided by predetermined themes corresponding to the attributes of Critical Pedagogy discussed in Chapter 2. The base codes associated with each theme allowed for the interpretation of reflections from the Reflection Matrix and the responses from the Retrospection Protocol provided by both pre-service teachers.

Therefore, because these attributes provide specific features for coding and theme formation, a deductive thematic analysis approach was adopted to interpret the data from both instruments. The themes (**in bold**) and their corresponding coding bases (*in italics*) are presented below:

A. Role of the teacher:

- **Teacher as a facilitator:** *evidence of pre-service teachers guiding rather than dictating learning and encouraging their students' agency.*

B. Students' empowerment:

- **Giving voice:** *instances where pre-service teachers encourage their students to express opinions, experiences, or cultural perspectives.*

- **Dialogue and discussion:** *instances where pre-service teachers promote conversations, questioning, and debate with their students.*

C. Critical consciousness and awareness

- **Problem-posing method:** *evidence of pre-service teachers challenging assumptions, analyzing real-world issues, and developing solutions.*
- **Critical consciousness:** *instances where pre-service teachers exhibit awareness of social, political, and educational structures that influence learning, because humanity is seen as unity.*

D. Social and transformative impact:

- **Transformative learning:** *evidence of changes in pre-service teachers' perspectives, engagement, or teaching practices.*
- **Social justice, equity and democracy:** *evidence of pre-service teachers' inclusion of diverse voices to make choices, fairness in classroom dynamics, and actions towards equitable education.*

It is evident then that this framework of themes grounded in Critical Pedagogy Philosophy served as the foundation for selecting thematic analysis as the method for analyzing the collected data.

Braun and Clarke (2012) define thematic analysis as a “method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset” (p.2). Through this process, researchers can make sense of shared experiences by identifying relevant commonalities in how a particular topic is discussed. Sarawasti (2020) explains that this method is used in qualitative research and implies the identification of themes through careful reading and re-reading of the data. Moreover, thematic analysis is recognized for providing insightful and trustworthy findings when applied rigorously.

Then, the data analysis consisted of recovering both student teachers' integrated reflections (drawn from the Reflection Matrix) and their answers to the Retrospection Protocol. In this way, there was a total of 13 reflections from Pre-service Teacher P and 14 from Pre-service Teacher R. The combination of both instruments led to an understanding of the relationship between the two main variables of this study: Critical Pedagogy attributes and teaching practice transformation.

In this regard, the data coding and analysis primarily followed a top-down, deductive approach. This means that specific attributes of Critical Pedagogy were used as a guiding framework to code and to interpret data. Accordingly, the main themes (**in bold**) with their descriptive-based codes (*in italics*) enabled the systematization of the data to make sense of the shared experience of both pre-service teachers.

On the other hand, there was also space for an inductive approach, enabling the data to generate themes that were not expected to appear but were related to pre-service teachers' teaching practice transformation. However, this type of accidental data was only considered to appear as "additional notes" if necessary, since Critical Pedagogy is the main and defined framework for analyzing the data. In this manner, as I analyzed the reflections, I highlighted the patterns that did not fit into my predefined themes, such as unexpected insights about their experiences or struggles.

With respect to thematic analysis, the steps that facilitated the implementation of a deductive approach were adapted from the procedural sequence outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006):

1. Familiarization with the data: reading through the reflections multiple times to become fully acquainted with the content.
2. Coding to identify themes: specific colors were used to highlight excerpts corresponding to the attributes of Critical Pedagogy in each reflection. In identifying them, the coding

bases were consulted, and additional descriptive and semantic codes emerged to enhance understanding of the excerpts.

3. Reviewing themes: the excerpts linked to the codes, which in turn were evidenced by the themes, were examined to ensure accurate correspondence.
4. Checking suitability of themes: the analysis was reviewed to verify its alignment with the research aim and questions.
5. Producing the report: the relationships between excerpts and themes were concretized in the development of the trajectories of both pre-service teachers.

Finally, to analyze the Retrospection Protocol, predetermined themes of Critical Pedagogy and the four teaching domains outlined in the transformative approach by Gooden et al. (2024) were used to correlate meaningful excerpts from the responses of both pre-service teachers. This approach aimed to validate the findings from the analysis of the first instrument, the Reflection Matrix, as it is worth noting that the main objective of the Retrospection Protocol was to assess the perceived utility of mentoring from the pre-service teachers' perspective.

For a better understanding of the four domains, a brief definition of each is one is provided below, according to what is explained in *Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* (Gooden et al., 2024):

1. Planning and preparation: It orients the teacher during the class as decisions are made about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.
2. Teaching the lesson: It refers to carrying out the lesson plan by considering different components interplaying in this process.
3. Classroom Management: It is the proper organization and smooth development of the class that contributes to positive learning outcomes.
4. Rapport and communication with learners: It is the established relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding, and respect.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the main findings from the analysis of the collected data, which aims to explain the effectiveness of a Critical Pedagogy-based mentoring strategy in fostering the development of a transformative and inclusive teaching practice among EFL pre-service teachers who participated in *Inglés Incluyente* program.

To guide the analysis, the attributes of Critical Pedagogy that were described in the previous chapter, were employed as the theoretical framework to analyze the written reflections and retrospective protocols of both pre-service teachers. These include *teacher as a facilitator, dialogue and discussion, critical consciousness, giving voice, problem-posing method, transformative learning, and social justice, equity, and democracy.*

The inquiry begins with a general visual representation of each pre-service teacher's trajectory of transformation from late August to November 2024. This is followed by a more detailed month-by-month analysis, encompassing 14 cycles of mentoring for Pre-service Teacher R, and 13 for Pre-service Teacher P. At the same time, the cycles provide meaningful excerpts that illustrate the pre-service teachers' evolving perspectives and practices over time.

4.2 Pre-service Teacher R's trajectory

Pre-service Teacher R went through a gradual engagement with the attributes of Critical Pedagogy throughout the 14 mentoring cycles. From late August to November 2024, Pre-service Teacher R consistently demonstrated *transformative learning*, as indicated by their constant presence across all cycles. This may suggest a steady incorporation of reflective teaching practices and commitment to growth. Nevertheless, he did not write his reflection in parallel to his practices; he wrote all of them by the end of November 2024 and the first half of December

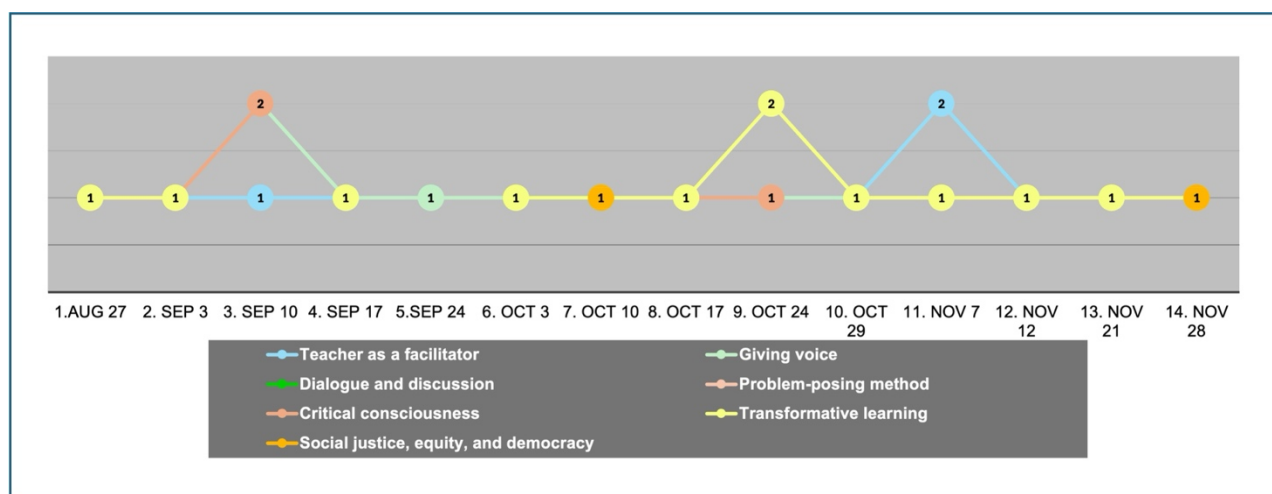
2024, which evidences that transformative learning is present after internalizing the weight of the experience as a complete retrospective. Therefore, this specific scenario may have influenced why the other attributes are not cited as much as transformative learning.

Notably, *critical consciousness* appears strongly in cycle 3, with two instances coded, marking an early moment of awareness regarding sociopolitical dimensions of teaching. This peak may reflect a pivotal point at which the pre-service teacher explicitly pointed out systemic inequalities within his classroom context.

Additionally, in cycle 3, *giving voice* possesses 2 instances that support the identification of the learning style that most of his students own, which should frame their learning experiences through teaching materials that match their interests.

Of particular concern is the recurrence of *the teacher as a facilitator* in cycle 11, where it peaks with two instances. This may demonstrate a significant shift in teaching stance, where the pre-service teacher positions himself as a guide who regulates and favors interaction in his classroom rather than a passive transmitter of knowledge.

Attributes like *dialogue and discussion*, *problem-posing method*, and *social justice*, *equity*, and *democracy* appear with lower frequency, suggesting they may have been present but perhaps less explicitly articulated in written reflections. A visual representation of his trajectory is provided in Figure 4.1 on the following page.

Figure 4.1*Pre-service Teacher R's trajectory*

Note. Illustrative figure created by the author.

August 2024. Cycle 1.

In terms of *transformative learning*, cycle 1 shows the pre-service teacher expressing regret for the lack of a classroom culture (agreement of rules to delineate interaction among students and the teacher).

"I have been feeling quite disappointed by not having established rules and norms that could have facilitated how things could have worked during the course".

Even though it was a late realization, it is still an acknowledgement of gaps in his teaching practice that turns into learning from experience. This aligns with Schön (1983) concept of reflection-on-action, which emphasizes reflection can occur before or after the activity.

Teacher as a facilitator highlights the relevance of the teacher's role as a leader to foster student engagement through assertive guided participation and selection of teaching material that match the learning style of students.

"they could have been even more engaged in the course by being guided by the teacher and emphasizing the importance of following the instructions"

"I needed, as they were a group of kinesthetic students, all of them, practically, lots of material not only digital but physical"

Regarding *critical consciousness*, the pre-service teacher evidenced being under professional development pressure derived from social expectations for English teachers and the authority exercised by the mentor.

"I was overwhelmed by the amount of responsibility that I had to show and perform according to the demands of the mentor and the professional expectations that usually surround the teaching of English as a foreign language"

This suggests that the pre-service teacher felt supervised rather than mentored, which reflects Gallacher's (1997) view that guidance in professional practice often serves institutional goals, ensuring the delivery of an efficient and effective service to the consumer.

September 2024. Cycles 2, 3, 4, and 5.

In cycle 2, the pre-service teacher reflected on the relevance of a conducive learning environment due to classroom culture. This reflection connects primarily *teacher as a facilitator with critical consciousness*. The former attribute appears in the acknowledgement of requiring structured routines that ease learners' active participation.

"having adopted an already established culture that could let me generate learning environments from which learners could make the most"

While the second reinforces that being the teacher, represents holding power that can be used positively to integrate students in a collaborative learning environment.

"an array of dynamics that could have let the students collaborate and be integrated in an environment of collaboration and constructive learning"

These understandings also resonate with Mezirow's (2008) concept of *transformative learning*, understood as the reevaluation of one's lens of reality. Here, the pre-service teacher's awareness of structured interactions and collaborative dynamics demonstrates a shift in perspective, recognizing how a clearly defined classroom culture can foster a learning community. The next excerpt, on the following page, emphasizes it explicitly:

"I failed to make them be disciplined, productive, and collaborative, but despite that, I got the important lesson of always emphasizing the disciplinary climate to be adopted to make them aware of what kinds of behaviors will be praised and recognized in the class."

Regarding *critical consciousness*, cycle 3 shows the pre-service teacher sharing how money constrains his teaching practice and may even impact his image as an empathetic professional, not only with students but also with parents who mainly belong to the working class. This highlights how external socio-economic factors shape teaching practice, illustrating that a classroom can function as a micro-context that reproduces larger systems of power (Singh & Richards, 2005).

"I was worried that if I did not use the coursebook, I would be getting comments of the like " then, why did we but it?" on behalf of one or some of the students, which is something valid as it was something that was bought and required an economic investment on behalf of their parents or parental guardians"

Additionally, he associated the restriction of learning experiences beyond his students' proficiency to economic limitations for supplying materials on his own or through the support of the program.

(experiences beyond students' proficiency) *"Something that could be done if I could have the materials on time, which is sadly something that requires a lot of investment on behalf of the teacher and that supervisor not often can provide"*

In this point, it is possible to notice the pre-service teacher connected the limitation of resources with the available learning experiences for his kinesthetic students, and with that *giving voice* is affected, from the pre-service teacher's view, as there is not an implicit consideration of students' needs and interests because teaching material does not project the learning style of his students.

"kinesthetic students require a great amount of attention, review, and practice to make them enjoy the process of learning and learn things and not having the former will just make things complicat"

The attribute *teacher as a facilitator* also appears in cycle 3. In this instance, the pre-service teacher highlights the connection between his role as a teacher and the textbook.

“If I did not strictly follow the syllabus of the coursebook maybe I could have tested things outside of it that could have helped me in producing rich environments and experiences of learning that could have made the students like the process itself”

He noticed textbooks can guide and constrain pedagogical freedom at the same time, which hindered delivering student-centered approach classes. This represents a gap in the coverage of the pre-service teacher’s responsibilities according to Zachary (2005), who suggests taking risks and asking for help, if necessary, to enhance their practice.

Nevertheless, in cycle 4, the pre-service teacher points to the relevance of the teacher’s role as a leader (*teacher as a facilitator*) to enable engaging and diversified activities within a structured learning environment (classroom culture).

“if I had let them know the importance of being disciplined and respectful of the class procedures that they needed to follow, I could have experimented with a variety of activities and tasks that could have made them enjoy more the process of learning”

In this line, there is a connection with *giving voice* as students were unable to share personal information in a noisy and disrespectful classroom.

(utility of established norms and rules in the classroom to enjoy learning) *“when it came to a class that could have fostered a meaningful exchange of information related to their personal lives and especially related to their families”*

Without conditions that allow students to be heard, establishing a foundation for dialogue is difficult. Bayu et al. (2019) emphasize the importance of an equal two-way communication, meaning that students should have the opportunity both to speak and listen to others.

In cycle 4, the pre-service teacher reconsiders the teacher’s role, emphasizing leadership over the attractiveness of materials supported by technology.

“technology can catch the attention of learners by using attractive visuals that can retrieve important information being learned during particular sessions (such as the use of color coding and pictures), however, if a teacher cannot assure good classroom management, then the information will not be easily assimilated and retrieved for further classes and even less appreciated if it is not used in a significant manner.”

This points to *transformative learning*, since he realized how teachers exercising leadership influence the scope of teaching material to promote meaningful learning. He reduces weight to teaching resources as a clear definer of class success, which, in terms of Sociocultural Theory, refers to the use of material tools. And, according to Ahmad (2012), it is the teacher who makes the best use of technology to acquire language skills, not the materials themselves.

The attribute of *giving voice* appears in cycle 5 through the pre-service teacher's expressed intention to promote genuine and interactive communication in the foreign language. Rather than focusing solely on accuracy or content delivery, the pre-service teacher begins to view language as a means for students to express their own ideas and identities.

"Pushing them into using a foreign language for genuine and interactive communication was an attempt to make them see that learning a language is not solely for learning grammatical structures and lexical units or syntactic structures but for dynamic exchanges of information usually done in their mother tongue"

This indicates the pre-service teacher expected his students to use language to favor their agency and active participation. This perspective agrees with Powell and Cody (2009), who report on Vygotsky's conception of the utility of language to enhance learning and promote consciousness, which implies sharing experiences and creating common knowledge.

One more time, the pre-service teacher highlights the importance of portraying a figure of leadership (*teacher as a facilitator*) to promote a structured learning environment, which enables students' agency in their own learning.

"through the establishment of habits, routines, and rules, one can explore and even experiment tasks that can be productive for learners themselves and see how much they can make from the session itself"

October 2024. Cycles 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

In cycle 6, *giving voice* is understood by the pre-service teacher as the lack of confrontation with disruptive students, but it turned out to be a failed strategy of not imposing authority to let students express themselves.

“my constant idea that if I did not intervene could not make them confront me or feel a sense of rigidity on my behalf: was counterproductive as it allowed them to continue with their disruptive behavior”

Critical consciousness is related to this stance as the pre-service teacher exhibited a desire for approval by parents, who are figures of authority with an opinion of his work. This episode matches with a Critical Pedagogy perspective of education as a political practice. Oliveira et al. (2021) explain that politics in education involves learning about the relations of power and that people act based on acquired beliefs within the educational system. In this context, the pre-service teacher’s reflection suggests that he had previously learned about the influence of parents in school settings.

“not to say that I wanted to avoid any kind of issues with their relatives”

However, the pre-service teacher also emphasized the relevance of clear boundaries and expectations for effective teaching, an indicator of *transformative learning*.

“I learned that I would need to be more firm and assertive when it comes to establishing rules and limits to make sure that I would have a balanced classroom management and less disruptive behaviour on behalf of my learners”

In cycle 7, *dialogue and discussion* are identified in the form of considering, not applying yet, conversation as a tool for behavior reflection and mutual understanding.

“prioritize a well-managed rapport and communication with my students to avoid the kinds of disruptive behavior...”

Next, the pre-service teacher conceives communication to build a community of learning in which everyone can benefit. This instance is related to the attribute of *social justice, equity, and democracy*, since it regards the pre-service teacher becoming aware of the relevance of using structured interaction and communication to provide the same opportunities for all the members in the class, including himself, to be heard and seen. This resonates with Freire’s (2005) emphasis on teachers learning from their students through dialogue and learning at teaching, if authority is exercised to support these interactions.

(disruptive behavior) *“that can interrupt and interfere with generating a productive learning environment that can be of benefit to everyone”*

Although *transformative learning* appears when the pre-service teacher considers reframing classroom challenges (lack of attention) into dynamic opportunities for learning, this intention is overshadowed by prioritizing giving voice to disruptive students' opinions, which hinders using activities that may better match kinesthetic students.

“Concerning their attention, it would be a good idea to use ludic activities to make each class or stage of the class novel”

“It is quite difficult to implement them as it can be considered childish for them, especially for those students who are seriously disruptive or feel “mature” for those kinds of interventions.”

This tension illustrates a conflict in maintaining social justice, understood as a fair distribution of power and advantages in a society (Osborn, 2006).

In cycle 8, regarding *teacher as a facilitator*, the pre-service teacher clearly identified the student who promoted disruptive behavior and noticed disruptive students can be a counterforce of teacher's leadership.

“The class somewhat was influenced by his absence as it was less influenced by his behaviour itself and without having someone who just fostered an environment that was prompted to distraction and disruptive behaviour.”

Despite the new learning conditions, the pre-service teacher reflected on how to respond to behavioral problems, an instance of *problem-posing method*, to avoid dropouts because of a straightforward parent-confrontation approach that does not consider dialoguing with the disruptive student.

“if I tried to talk to him personally about his own behaviour without the necessity of calling his mother to the class and thus possibly leading to a better option of still having him integrated into the class without the necessity of him to retire”

This issue highlights the teacher's role in fostering reflection and dialogue to raise students' awareness towards social injustices (Umbarila, 2010). In this case, injustices around the hardship to maintain an inclusive learning community.

In this connection, he emphasized the utility of a classroom culture to foster the co-constructive unfolding of classes between the teacher and the students. This insight is adhered

to *transformative learning* and reinforces a change not only of thought but attitude toward power through rules. The pre-service teacher realized this can be used to build a functional language learning community.

“This taught me to put limits and rules from the start so that through the process of classroom discipline and the establishment of habits and routines, one as a teacher could comfortably work along with learners and make the most of the classes they could have by respecting the rules that the teacher puts. In addition, it would have been better if the teacher make students understand that by following the rules that are established, they can have the chance to genuinely learn in productive ways with the teacher.”

Cycle 9 reflects the pre-service teacher’s inner conflict with holding power in his class, a matter of *critical consciousness*. He did not want to be authoritative to his students; however, the same reluctance to keep a learning environment based on a clear classroom culture constrained his leadership development, and with that his *role as facilitator* was also affected.

“However I still had issues when putting rules in the class by my constant reservation of not being confrontative with them as I still did not want to adopt an authoritative teaching figure that could affect the way students interact and get along with the teacher.”

This hesitation to be seen as the one in charge coincide with Mezirow’s (1997) explanation of frames of references, which are the assumptions through which people interpret their experiences, raising the possibility that the pre-service teacher had not yet fully perceived the distinction between being a facilitator and imposing authority.

There are also two instances for *transformative learning*. The first one involves the pre-service teacher’s observation about presenting contents strategically to support students’ practice. The second highlights how commitment to classroom culture begins with teacher’s example, which enables assertive teaching practices.

“The way the contents are presented so that learners have the chance to understand and assimilate easily what is being taught and thus have the opportunity to put into practice the elements that are learning during the session.”

“I still learned that sometimes is necessary to be firm with one’s rules so that one can have the chance to help students into their learning and leading them to be more in line to what is being practice in class.”

In cycle 10, the pre-service teacher reflected on the possibilities of hosting a Halloween thematic class. As a *transformative learning* instance, he realized classrooms can be spaces for valuable memories of joyful collaborative learning, linked to awareness of cultural diversity.

“made students assimilate even deeper and joyfully the lesson through an appreciation of the different ways Halloween is celebrated around the world while having a space for fun for ourselves as a group”

On the other hand, students collaborated with him to organize the party, which served to *giving voice* to them at co-constructing their learning environment.

“I needed to organize the party with them so that we could arrange how we could have the party itself”

November 2025. Cycles 11, 12, 13, and 14.

In cycle 11, the pre-service teacher realized how valuable was for him to have exchanged groups with his colleague (female pre-service teacher), as it meant the opportunity to apply the classroom culture he had not established with his own group from the start.

“One of the greatest opportunities I had by changing groups with my colleague, was the one of having a new chance to start again and implement what I did not implement with my other group of students”

This is linked to *transformative learning* in the form of recognizing gaps and learning from experience. Furthermore, this development of consciousness aligns with Freire (2005), who remarks that when learners feel obligated to respond to problems in their context, they gain new understandings that favor their commitment to transformative action.

Teacher as a facilitator is also remarked in cycle 11 with two instances. Then, the first excerpt concerns the intention of adopting a guardian figure of classroom culture that fosters students' participation in meaningful learning activities.

“establishment of rules and portraying a teaching role that was more grounded on assertiveness and discipline, as way to make the other group of students be focused on not losing track of the instructional process and make them see the importance of the contents being taught through a constant emphasis on participation, respect, and attention to the class”

As for the first instance, the second excerpt also emphasizes the relevance of teacher support, since it evidences a growth in classroom leadership by shifting from a permissive facilitator to one that blends guidance with structure.

“implementing a more firm teaching role that can help me in making students be more focused on their learning and not be so disruptive by adopting a more passive and permissive teaching role”.

Giving voice is also identified in this cycle, as an attribute benefited by the implementation of classroom culture, because the last one favors creating conditions to let students participate actively.

“this establishment of routines and habits, learners were able to be mainly attentive and participative during the session, easing the flow of the class and making sure that each learner had the chance to contribute something to the lesson.”

In cycle 12, *critical consciousness* is identified when the pre-service teacher perceives power can be used assertively for the benefit of keeping organization and fostering progress in a language learning community.

“how important is to establish rules and habits that can make students focused on the things they have to do during a course, as they will be constantly reminded about their progress of learning and emphasis on what the instructor or teacher indicates to do in each class”

The pre-service teacher also noticed that lesson planning must consider both curricular content and clear communication of covered and missing learning outcomes with students.

“the clearer the teacher is with his or her dynamics or activities will foreground what will be accomplished next and what has been accomplished in the present class and before it. So, summing up, I would need to take by heart, the development of my planning and curricular skills to base the everyday tasks I would like to implement in my classes of English as a way to analyse and observe which path my learners will follow and how.”

This suggests that his conception of student involvement should extend to informing learners about their achievement and goals, which supposes a clear example of *transformative learning*. This resonates with Henry Giroux’s ideas about democracy and education, as students need to be informed to interpret their surroundings and enact change (De Oliveira et al, 2021).

In cycle 13, *the teacher as a facilitator* is evident in the pre-service teacher's scaffolding of a traditional game, such as hot potato, which he redesigned through strategic choices of materials like flashcards. In other words, the use of cultural tools to mediate experience enables to increase in the complexity of cognitive processes (Vygotsky, 1978). These resources not only allowed him to monitor students' speaking productions but also demonstrated his ability to anticipate possible issues and provide timely support.

"My students were feeling more compelled by using the flashcards to feel more committed to trying to produce a bit of the language by the guide I was providing them and contributing constantly by reinforcing the verbal responses that were elicited during the class."

In connection with the former reflection, the pre-service teacher demonstrated a willingness to take risks trying new methods that could possibly increase students' engagement. This shift reflects a growing flexibility in his teaching practice, as he recognized and responded to the specific characteristics of his learners. The following excerpt illustrates his emerging agency in adapting instructional strategies to foster a more participatory and inclusive learning environment, an indicator of *transformative learning*. Additionally, this change may reflect the effects of Critical Pedagogy in mentoring, as this theory fosters the development of critical thinking capabilities to generate positive behavioral change (Sharif, 2019).

"taking them out of the class felt quite as a decision to be made to finally experiment a kind of activity that could possibly make them feel more engaged with the content by making them be more active and participative with it"

For the final cycle, 14, the pre-service teacher recognizes the value of individual speaking assessment to evaluate the commitment of each student in a group, an instance of *transformative learning*. Although not many students received high marks, the pre-service teacher realized his work was still worth it. The excerpt can be found on the following page.

"just having seen that at least 3 to 5 students were able to formulate sentences related to the prompts provided was enough to make me satisfied about the things they could learn from the course"

The pre-service teacher also demonstrated openness to improving his assessment practices, an aspect that benefits *social justice, equity, and democracy* in formal evaluation.

“if I expect students to reach levels of commitment that can let them be more competent in the use of foreign language and perform well in a test, I have to prepare them with anticipation so that they can reflect that learning they got in the specific assessment tasks they will be receiving and performing”

This highlights a broader vision of how teaching practices grounded in responsibility to accompany students' needs can provide fair opportunities to students. In other words, washback is perceived as a mechanism to establish fair and equitable conditions for assessment. This agrees with Podolskiy (2012), who explained that Vygotsky's concept of ZPD can serve to evaluate the efficacy of instructional practices.

4.3 Pre-service Teacher P's Trajectory

Pre-service Teacher P presented a more fluctuating pattern of engagement with the attributes of Critical Pedagogy across 13 cycles, compared to Pre-service Teacher R, with notable peaks in *transformative learning* and *teacher as a facilitator*. *Giving voice* appears in the first cycle, which indicates an early inclination toward fostering learner participation and agency. This is complemented by consistent instances of *transformative learning* and *teacher as a facilitator*, suggesting an ongoing reflective process aimed at rethinking classroom practice. In line with this, *social justice, equity, and democracy* frequently arise in parallel with *transformative learning*, reflecting a sustained concern with building inclusive and equitable classroom practices.

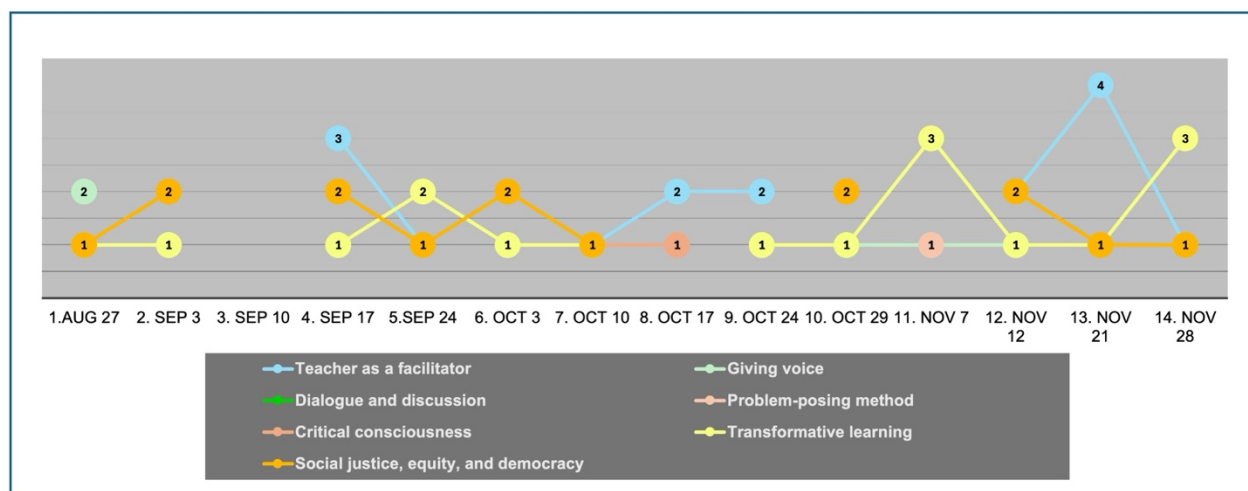
Regarding *teacher as a facilitator*, there are significant peaks in cycles 4 and 13, pointing to key moments when the pre-service teacher took an increasingly active role in guiding and shaping the learning environment beyond mere content delivery. Although *critical consciousness* and *problem-posing method* appear less frequently, their presence in cycles 8 and 11 conveys

an emerging awareness of the sociopolitical dimensions of teaching and a willingness to encourage students to question and explore more complex issues.

Only a few instances were associated with *dialogue and discussion*, which suggests it may be a growing attribute in comparison to the others. Nevertheless, *giving voice* counted with a total of eight instances, implying the pre-service teacher was first shaping a safe space for students to express their ideas and progressively develop their own stance on classroom and broader topics through *dialogue and discussion*. A visual representation of her trajectory is provided in the next Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2

Pre-service Teacher P's Trajectory



Note. Illustrative figure created by the author.

August 2024. Cycle 1.

In cycle 1, the pre-service teacher demonstrated an early concern with acknowledging her students' effort as a way to value their presence and *voices*. Similarly, she also expresses a clear intention to promote participatory learning and foster a sense of community with them as active figures.

"I consider I must pay more attention in the rewarding words because I don't want them feel that I don't care about their progress"

"I would like my students to participate more and notice that this is not a typical English class"

These comments reveal an emerging commitment to moving beyond traditional, teacher-centered instruction toward a more inclusive and participatory classroom environment. In this perspective, this cycle offers evidence of the pre-service teacher reflecting on teaching methods and self-improvement to benefit the understanding of the content, an instance associated to *teacher as a facilitator* and a sign of moving away from traditional teaching. In this manner, her awareness of instructional communication gaps and willingness to address them can be linked to taking risks and trying new ideas, two responsibilities of pre-service teachers mentioned by Zachary (2005).

"I will implement more monolingual strategies to avoid translation; as a result, I have to work on my body language because I feel that I'm not as expressive as necessary to clarify what they have to do."

In addition, there is early evidence of *social justice, equity, and democracy* closely connected to the appropriate use of student voice. The pre-service teacher showed interest in ensuring that disruptive students respect others' opportunities to take the floor, emphasizing fairness and equity in the sharing of ideas. This approach fosters democratic interaction within the classroom and avoids excluding disruptive students by instead prompting them to participate as part of the group within the classroom culture.

"Sometimes they speak at the same time and they are not respecting the other's opinions, so I must stop paying attention to the students that interrupt and clarify that in order to be heard, they have to 1. Respect the others and 2. Raise their hands."

Her efforts to establish norms that balanced freedom of expression with mutual respect shaped her chosen pedagogy, which, according to Friesen and Su (2023), concerns how to respond, reflect, and act to present the world to the learners, in this case, as an inclusive and equal learning community that fosters safety for everyone.

September 2024. Cycles 2, 4, and 5.

In cycles 2,4, and 5, the pre-service teacher exhibited an interrelation among *transformative learning, teacher as a facilitator, and social justice, equity and democracy*. The last attribute seemed to be the platform that triggered the first two. Across the three cycles, the pre-service teacher emphasized her intention of building a respectful and integrated learning community through different strategies that regulated interaction among her students.

Hence, in cycle 2, the pre-service teacher placed special importance on classroom culture, aiming to establish a systematized environment that supported *giving voice* and equitable participation in a democratic classroom. In this vein, the pre-service teacher not only demonstrated her concern with inclusion by enforcing rules to promote communication accessibility, but also by making students interact with different peers. Then, her interest in classroom culture can be associated with Crosslin et al. (2013), explaining that in Sociocultural Theory, communicative acts and interactions are mediated to build meaning-making.

By following rules and directions, students would develop a sense of commitment, respect, and integration within their learning community. Therefore, the next excerpts are clear examples of *social justice, equity, and democracy* guiding her early teaching practice.

"I must be more strict in the classroom culture because in the first class, I show them the rules; however, they are not respecting when someone is speaking"

"I will continue with the strategies that I am using such as mixing students to work with other people"

There is also evidence of *transformative learning* in this cycle that hints a recognition of a behavioral pattern and desire for change, which indicates a moment of transformation in thinking.

"I must stop translating when I began to feel pressure and I should relax in those moments"

It is significant to mention that *her role as facilitator* is reconsidered to match her intentions of making her speech accessible to everyone by weighing the possibilities of incorporating body language.

"I need use body language to model the activities so I can avoid the use of L1 in the TL classroom"

It is important to mention that the cycle 3 was not carried out because of the personal and sensitive limitations of the pre-service teacher.

In cycle 4, she pointed out her intention to build an integrated learning community by applying motivational strategies with teaching material that supported this objective.

"I will continue with the stamps and pencils because I feel that this increase their motivation of learning and involves all the students to work with different people"

Her strategies were designed not only to promote collaboration among peers but also to enhance inclusion and student engagement. In addition, the pre-service teacher desired to provide a safe yet controlled space which reflected equity by diversifying interactions among the students.

"I want my students to learn in a safe but controlled environment"

This approach contrasts with the traditional narrative and teacher-centered methods associated with the Banking Model of Education (Freire, 1988), highlighting her commitment to participatory and democratic teaching practices. The excerpts provided illustrate reflections aligned with *social justice, equity, and democracy*.

From this cycle, there are three valuable instances of *teacher as a facilitator* that regard the need for a self-conception as a leader, who responds to the teaching context situation to motivate language understanding and production, based on effective communication.

"They need to produce it as well", "remind them I am a teacher and not a friend", and "I will stop giving them the homework instructions at the end of the class because they feel pressured of going out the classroom and they do not pay enough attention"

Transformative learning is also illustrated through an instance that reflects her awareness of implicit teaching, particularly in recognizing hidden values and norms embedded in her actions. This deconstruction connects to the attribute of *teacher as facilitator*, as it reinforces her shift from teacher-centered practice to a student-centered one. By integrating classroom culture and values into her daily actions, she strengthens her role as a leader.

“I must pay attention in the things that I am implicitly doing such as teaching values or classroom culture to keep doing this and establish a constant behavior”

This realization of how values shape behavior is related to the concept of habits of mind. Mezirow (2008) states that habits of thinking are constrained by macro codes such as culture, society, education, economy, and politics. Thus, the pre-service teacher realized her actions communicated beyond direct instruction.

In cycle 5, *social justice, equity, and democracy* are present when the pre-service teacher states her interest in students fulfilling an active learner role respectfully and equitably, remarking that the sense of belonging to a community implies the acquisition of responsibilities.

“I want them to increase their responsibilities and be aware of what are their obligations as students such as paying attention, doing homework, etc”

In addition, the pre-service teacher reflected on the side effects of scaffolding when it is not accompanied by the promotion of student self-agency. This concern emerged from using the whiteboard to clarify her explanations or outline steps to follow.

“I consider that this can lead to disadvantages in behaviors because if they get used to this, they will wait all the time for me to provide all the things and I want them to be autonomous and responsible”

Such reflection illustrates a *transformative learning* event, as it highlights her development into an intentional and reflective practitioner. The pre-service teacher realized supporting their students' acquisition of the language was not simple; scaffolding requires being informed on how to tune it (Taber, 2018), to balance guidance with autonomy.

October 2024. Cycles 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

In cycle 6, the pre-service teacher identifies a need for clear rules to promote an organized and respectful classroom; a concern aligned with *social justice, equity, and democracy*.

“Another thing that I must improve is establishing rules before, during, and after the games or activities because I forget to tell them so they began to do a mess and I am aware that this is my fault”

This interest is reinforced by another instance within the same attribute, highlighting the role of structured communication, through explicit rules and the use of body language, in fostering a positive learning atmosphere.

“I need to pay more attention to are the rules and body language to create a good environment”

In fact, in this cycle, body language gains relevance as a key pedagogical tool, linking two Critical Pedagogy attributes: *teacher as a facilitator* and *giving voice*. Considering the first, the pre-service teacher recognized the need to employ alternative strategies to support students’ understanding apart from translation, highlighting her awareness of how nonverbal cues can scaffold learning.

“Something that is still giving me problems is the body language and modeling because I am not implementing at all this strategy to avoid using Spanish”

Regarding the second, body language was seen to foster language competence, thereby encouraging student participation.

“I want them to have good competence in the TL, I must implement my body language even though it is really difficult for me”

Both situations underscore the importance of being a cultural tool to guide her students through their ZPD, since Kozulin (1998) mentions Vygotsky considered human beings as mediators of learning.

There is also evidence of *transformative learning*, as the pre-service teacher reconceptualizes the scope of games to serve a formative purpose in assessing students' progress, as well as the relevance of explanation and connection between lessons for better understanding.

"The things that I will continue are implementing games to assess their understanding and have a clearer explanation or connecting the previous and new knowledge"

In cycle 7, there is evidence of *transformative learning* regarding both practice and mindset, as the pre-service teacher expresses openness to creativity and reduced dependency on the textbook. She demonstrates greater flexibility derived from increased self-confidence as a teacher.

"I am implementing more creative activities focusing on the grammatical points but not too much on the book and I feel more relaxed when giving classes and more confident"

An instance of *critical consciousness* appears when the pre-service teacher recognizes that success in learning is the result of collaborative efforts among students, teachers, and parents.

"The communication triangle was new for me but I will take into consideration because I don't want any student to lose the purpose of the class and courses"

This situation resonates with Fullerton and Malderez (1998, cited in Malderez & Bodóczy, 1999), who state that mentors act as acculturators, supporting pre-service teachers in acquiring professional culture. This is to understand the relational dynamics of educational practice.

The pre-service teacher also had the intention to create a non-threatening competitive environment that reflects fairness and equity in acknowledging progress, which aligns with the *social justice, democracy, and equity* attributes.

"I will implement the trackers because I consider that it is a safe competence between them and that they can have visual objects where they are at and make more efforts to be at the top"

One more time, the pre-service teacher expressed her interest in searching for strategies that benefit language understanding to follow and perform procedures, mentioning body language for it. This concern is connected to the attribute of *teacher as a facilitator*.

“ I need to implement more examples to clarify the topics because they can understand but at the time of producing or giving instructions, they can feel confused and they need a model which i am working on like the body language”

In cycle 8, her *role as facilitator* highlights a search for balance between authority and building rapport with her students.

“I consider that I must continue building trust because they feel good in my class even though I am strict”

In agreement with this attribute, another instance signals that she is developing teaching strategies that can guide students' self-management of time and vocabulary acquisition. By doing so, she is contributing to supporting her students' agency.

“I am making them copy the vocabulary and the songs to measure the time. I want to do it because I consider that it is extremely helpful because they notice how the word is written and the translation of it”

Giving voice is identified in the pre-service teacher's reflections on assessment. She conceived the moment to check on students' language competence while enabling them to communicate their opinions effectively. This instance reinforces the role of language as both a cognitive and cultural tool, allowing learners to make sense of reality through thought and speech (Wink & Putney, 2010).

“I feel proud of my work and them because they have good marks on the oral and written exam so they could convey their opinions and ideas with evidence”

In terms of *critical consciousness*, she testifies that success in learning cannot be separated from family support. Collaborative work among students, teachers, and parents is necessary.

“I am having too much problems with one student due to the fact that he is not paying attention, doing the activities, and getting bad marks. As a result, I am having a meeting on the next session with his tutor to talk about the situation and let the parents know about it”.

In cycle 9, teaching materials are relevant. To start, the *problem-posing method* is associated with them. The pre-service teacher identifies a gap in the incorporation of real-life scenarios through suitable teaching materials. And her *role as facilitator* now includes the appropriate selection and use of teaching materials to scaffold students' language comprehension and oral production, considering closer experiences to reality.

"I need to implement more authentic materials and more visual aids using Spanish, and push them to first understand instead of pushing them directly to produce"

"I need to stop with the disorder of the whiteboard because instead of helping them, they get confused, as a result, I need to be more organized and divided my whiteboard so they can be more aware of the input"

Her need to modify the implications of materials' mediation aligns with Gonulal and Loewen's (2018) description of scaffolding as a temporal and dynamic process.

The pre-service teacher also provides an instance of *transformative learning*, as she acknowledges her progress while developing an awareness of teaching priority issues to be fixed, such as teaching materials.

"I think that my teaching practice is getting better and that all those aspects are more complex but there are important to correct as soon as possible"

In cycle 10, there is a connection between *giving voice* and *dialogue and discussion*. The first is evidenced when the pre-service teacher notes that her students demonstrate trust and emotional openness, which in turn shows that their voices are being valued.

"I consider that they have trust on me because they are expressing their feelings"

"and asking for advices of what they could do"

Consequently, by sharing personal issues, the students create opportunities for critical conversations with their teacher in search of advice. This characteristic resonates with Lamsal (2024), who explains that teachers as facilitators should foster safe spaces for their students to

have difficult conversations and being motivated to think critically, while considering alternative points of view.

Social justice, equity, and democracy are also present in this cycle. The pre-service teacher observed that renewing teaching activities can foster an inclusive practice by engaging previously uninterested students.

“I will implement more relaxed activities such as drawings because they feel comfortable with this and they pay more attention; in addition, some students that are always talking, felt interested in this activity and promote more in-depth lexis”

Within the same attribute, she perceives misbehavior as a threat for the established learning community among students and weighs exclusion as the result of missed opportunities to participate responsibly. The excerpt can be found on the following page.

“I will send another mail to his mother telling her that I am not seeing a difference on his behavior so if he keeps with this situations, he couldn’t be able to come anymore because this situation is bothering the other students and it is not fair”

This conflict aligns with Freire (1988), who asserted that Critical Pedagogy encourages learners to become critical of power structures, and the inconsistencies and problems they produce. It means, the pre-service teacher conceived exclusion as a fair consequence that confirmed the equal adherence to rules of that learning community.

Regarding *transformative learning* the pre-service teacher confirms her increasing shift toward a student-centered approach because she takes their preferences into account before planning the lessons.

“I am noticing the activities that they like and the other ones that are not attractive for them so I can modify my lesson plans”

November 2024

In cycle 11, the pre-service teacher evidenced *transformative learning* through adaptive thinking derived from the exchange with her male peer pre-service teacher. There is also a shift

from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation, and the search for a reflective practice aimed at adopting more dynamic methods that align with her teaching context.

"I consider that it was extremely useful to change groups because I got a more opened idea of what I can implement whiting my group"

"I am too behaviorist so I want to change that to make them feel motivated and interested without winning a price (significant learning)"

"I need to give faster explanations because they are used to slow dinamics and maybe they are getting bored of this, so I will change the speed of my classes implementing more outside activities, visual aids, less behaviorism, and remembering the classroom culture"

Her reflections illustrate a growing rejection of a purely behaviorist approach, which makes students passive learners who respond to stimuli (Ahmad et al., 2020). Instead, she continued moving toward a student-centered practice that prioritizes learner autonomy and engagement.

As can be seen, the pre-service teacher considers her students' needs as a guide to adapt her practice. This trait is associated with an instance of *giving voice*.

"I will stop implementing too many writings because they don't like them a lot"

The *problem-posing method* is also identified in this cycle when the pre-service teacher acknowledges a gap in her practice: she realizes that using authentic materials allows her to purposefully connect students with their reality.

"I need to implement more realia to implement an authentic learning so they can notice the significance of what and why are we learning those topics"

In cycle 12, the pre-service teacher seems to possess a grounded knowledge of her students, suggesting a shift from rigid teaching to dynamic, context-sensitive, and responsive teaching, an aspect associated with *transformative learning*.

"After this session I consider that I am improving a lot in my teaching skills. I feel proud of myself because now I know how to improvise activities with the material that I already have or even to create new ones if there is an unexpected situation"

Regarding *social justice, equity, and democracy*, the pre-service teacher demonstrates a strong interest in creating inclusive learning spaces for her students and perceives affective teaching as a key element in sustaining such an environment.

"I will continue implementing inclusive activities because I want them to feel in a safe environment and improve their skills"

"I want to implement more activities to let them know that i care of them such as trying to make them have a voice inside our classroom to promote a more inclusive environment for social functions"

This situation resonates with Nessipbayeva (2012), who states teaching competency is not only about knowledge, but it also includes skills and attitudes to satisfy the demands of the context. In that regard, the pre-service teacher based the development of her competency on the construction of a safe and affective learning space with her students.

Teaching material again emerges as central to being associated with the teacher as a *facilitator*. She continues emphasizing the relevance of material to scaffold learning. Her concern on how to use materials to impact her students' language acquisition resonates with Hoai (2003), who supports that the mediation executed by materials contributes to refining knowledge, stimulating higher mental processes, and guiding problem-solving.

"I should continue improving in the whiteboard organization because I want to have more things for them to use it as visual aids but in the correct order to make them understand and use the material as an advantage"

"I want to have a more printed material to pin in order to facilitate their learning and help them remembering lexis or structures"

In cycle 13, the pre-service teacher once again associates her *role as a facilitator* with the strategic use of the whiteboard to scaffold students' understanding. She also reinforces her interest in keeping her role as a leader, especially in dynamic activities such as games.

"i am implementing more sections on the whiteboard to help them remember the rules, lexicum, etc in a an esaier way so they can understand better"

"I need to monitor more the games and not become part of them all the times because sometimes I lose control and i couldn't achieve the objective by the purpose of the game"

This last finds a connection with Freire's (1988) Critical Pedagogy, which contributes to becoming critical of power structures, as the pre-service teacher perceived games still require maintaining leadership and clear boundaries so that activities serve their educational purposes.

In terms of *transformative learning*, the pre-service teacher states a shift from rigid teaching to dynamic and context-sensitive and responsive teaching.

"i am improving a lot in my teaching experienmce because I know how to get their attention, have a dynamic class, implement games, manage the classroom, and the most important thing, I know the type of students that I have"

Regarding *social justice, equity and democracy*, this attribute presents a connection with *dialogue and discussion*. Her students feel in a safe learning environment, which makes them hold deeper conversations around personal issues with the pre-service teacher.

"and they feel in a secure environment" "to tell me their personal problems so I can help"

In the final cycle, the pre-service teacher summarizes her *transformative learning* in three main areas: 1) developing an overall awareness of her teaching practice and its continuous reshaping, 2), recognizing that learning can be both engaging and effective, and 3) perceiving teaching as dynamic, adaptable, and open to ongoing professional growth.

Her reflections demonstrate a critical stance, highlighting both her improvements and remaining gaps.

"After this session, I can say that I feel excellent with my teaching practice because now I have more habilities than at the beginning. This because I feel more confident at the front of the class I know how to manage the time, whiteboard, activities, games, etc"

" Somethig that made me feel proud was the students' reactions because they were learning and having fun at the same time, so I can say that I must continue with this method for them to make lerners become interested in the language"

" I felt vey well with my teaching performance and I could observe lots of improvements during this time, I must continue working to have more experiences and implement more methods, activities and become a better teacher"

This aligns with Orland-Barak and Wang (2021), who argue that in a critical transformative approach to mentoring, a critical stance is achieved by means of a collaborative reconstruction of teaching knowledge and practice between mentors and pre-service teachers.

Concerning *giving voice*, the pre-service teacher states her interest in co-constructing the class with students by using materials to evidence their opinions and knowledge mattered. Her interest in the use of cultural tools, teaching materials and language, resonates with Wink and Putney (2010), who state that cultural tools help make sense of others and ourselves through experiences. The excerpt can be found on the following page.

“Talking about the whiteboard, for me it is extremely important to take into account all the comments tha they gave for the class and this is a way to remember all the things so we can build the knowledge together and not only follow the teachers’ instructions.”

Additionally, under the attribute of *teacher as a facilitator*, the pre-service teacher was able to find a balance between authority and approachability. She acknowledges the importance of monitoring students’ performance while maintaining a friendly, yet leading presence.

“I can think faster about another activities if they finish earlier or if the activity is not working and in a relaxed manner to show authority in a friendly way”

To support a better understanding of both pre-service teachers’ trajectories, Table 4.1, on the following page, presents the most important aspects of their teaching practice, divided into three phases corresponding to the period from late August to November 2024. Furthermore, a written summary is provided for each pre-service teacher to ensure a deeper understanding of their transformation.

Table 4.1*Pre-service Teacher R and Pre-service Teacher P's Trajectories*

	Pre-service Teacher R	Pre-service Teacher P
Phase 1 August- September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gap of an established classroom culture. • Need to perform as a leader to promote participation, collaboration, agency, and integration. • Teaching materials require leadership to be successful. • Search of validation of professional image: qualified and empathetic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early concern with creating a safe, integrated, and equitable learning environment for all students. • Disruptive students are to participate within classroom culture rules. • Giving voice is essential for equity. • Teaching material can diversify interactions. • Holding leadership requires effective communication and steady patterns. • Scaffolding should promote agency.
Phase 2 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gap of an established classroom culture. • Leadership was in the hands of a disruptive student. • Shift from resistance to confrontation to an attempt to speak with a tutor. • Recognition of using power to benefit classroom culture and communication to set up a learning community with students. • Scaffolding should be strategic to favor practice. • Classrooms may be a space for developing cultural awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured communication within rules, games and body language to foster language understanding and assessment. • Creativity that avoids dependency on the textbook and fosters students' agency to manage time. • Learning success involves parents, teachers and students' participation • Consideration of visual trackers to promote safe competence • Balance between rapport and authority • Choosing and using material to scaffold language comprehension and

		<p>production, considering real-life situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson planning based on students' preferences • Affective care as the base of analytic conversations. • Exclusion is a fair consequence to protect fairness in the learning community.
<p>Phase 3 November</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A guardian figure of classroom culture favors active participation. • Shift from permissive to structured teacher. • Co-constructing classes requires communicating progress. • Power can enhance progress in a language learning community. • Informed planning is necessary to guide students in their learning. • Redesigning and risk-taking with appropriate scaffolding. • Assessment contributes to improving teaching practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of behaviorism to foster intrinsic motivation. • Reflective practice that responds to students' preferences and possibilities of the teaching context to host adaptive and dynamic activities, whether improvised or planned. • Need of authentic materials. • Strong interest in hosting inclusive spaces in class. • Teaching materials to co-construct classes with students. • The leader figure should not be lost. • Recognition of the class as a safe space for students. • Dialogue's base is affective rapport. • Teaching practice is dynamic, flexible, and improvement oriented.

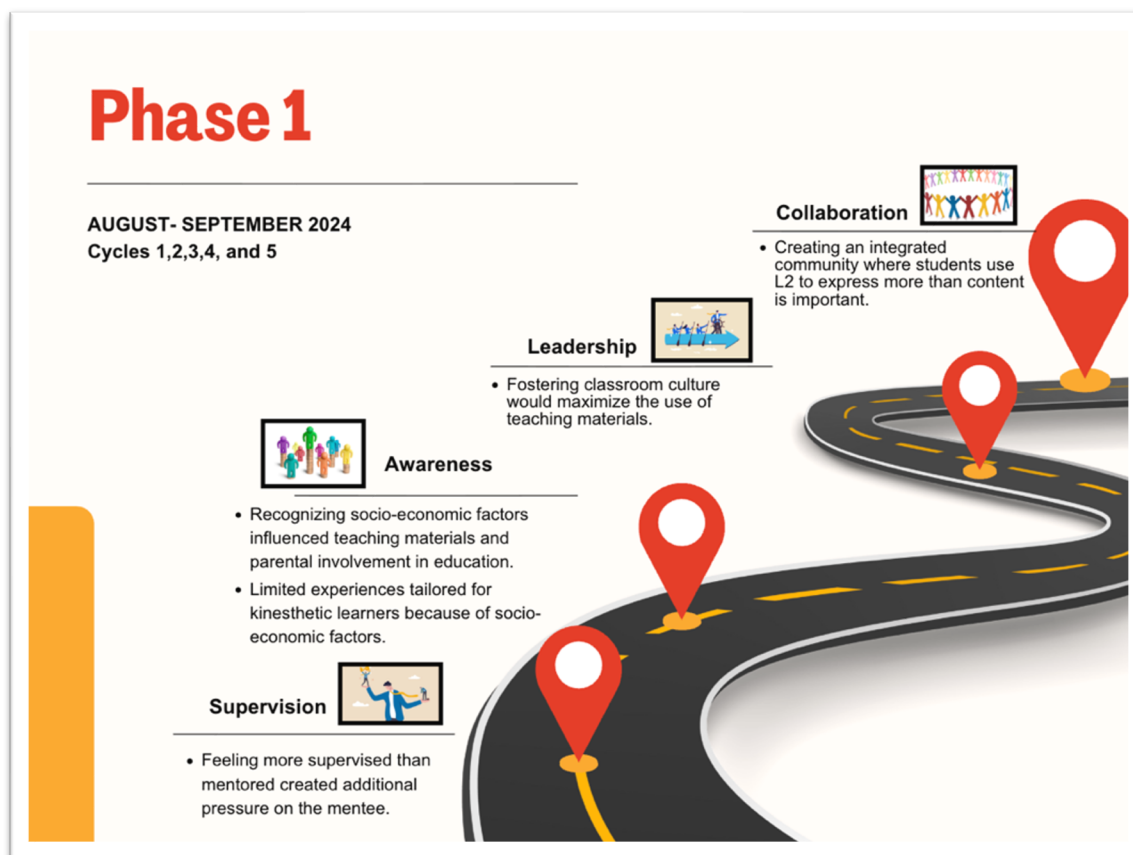
Note. Comparative table of pre-service teachers' trajectories.

4.4 Summary of Pre-service Teacher R's trajectory

In August-September, the pre-service teacher was concerned with meeting the professional expectations for an EFL teacher, including his mentor's demands, which made him feel supervised rather than mentored. During this period, he demonstrated awareness of socio-economic factors shaping his practice, such as parents' investment in the assigned book and the support of the *Inglés Incluyente* program in supplying teaching materials. He regarded these aspects as guiding parameters for the learning experiences he could offer to his kinesthetic students. This resonates with Freire's (2005), who states that world and consciousness are simultaneous; through constant reflection on themselves and the world, women and men expand boundaries of perception. Nevertheless, he realized that it was ultimately his role as a leader, supported by classroom culture, what defines the scope of teaching material and enables the possibility of building a collaborative and integrated learning community where students can use L2 to express their own ideas. A visual representation of this first stage is provided on the following page, as Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3

Visual Representation of Pre-service Teacher R's Phase 1



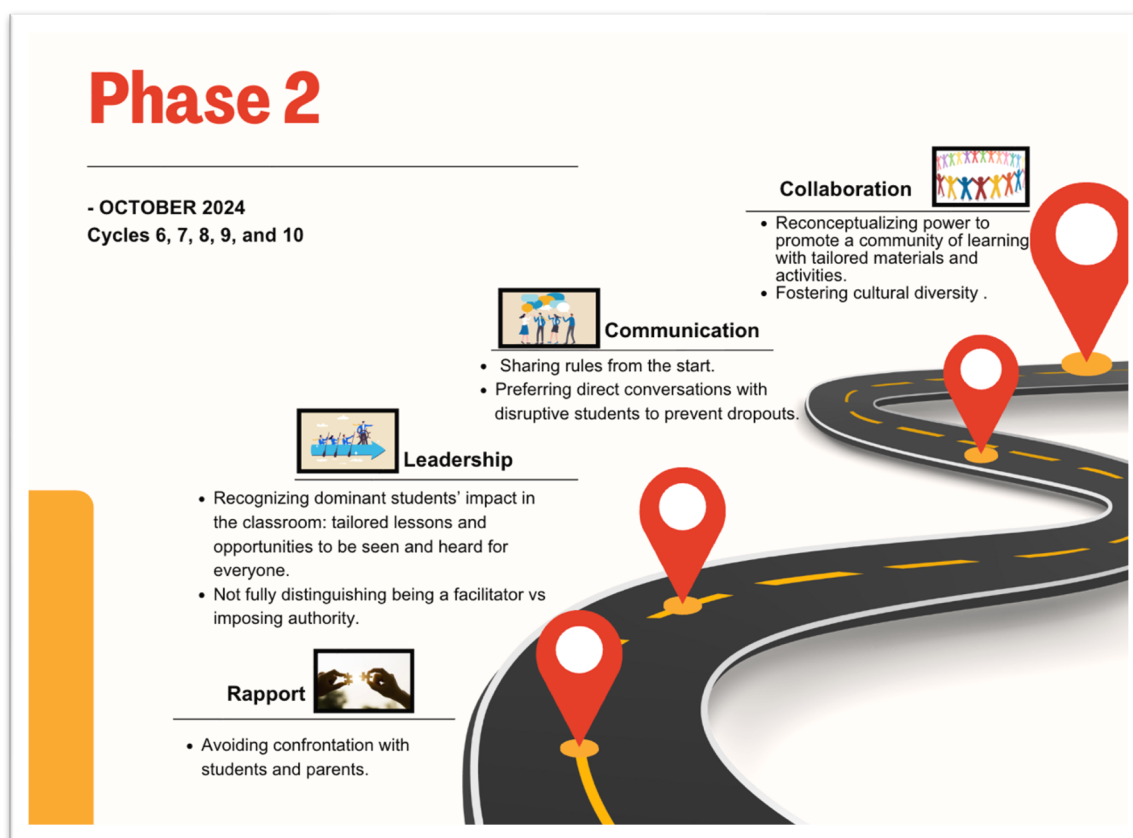
Note. Illustrative figure created by the author.

Later, in October, he remained focused on preserving a safe rapport with his students and parents by avoiding confrontation. Although he was aware of disruptive students, he did not immediately address the issues with them. Consequently, he refrained from implementing more dynamic activities that could have better suited the class, as a disruptive student held a dominant position in the classroom. This imbalance hindered *giving voice* correctly to benefit *social justice*, which Osborn (2006) defines as a fair distribution of power and advantages in a society. Nonetheless, he realized that establishing rules from the outset and communicating directly with disruptive students may prevent desertion and a lack of suitable activities for kinesthetic students. In other words, he experienced a reconceptualization of the meaning of

power: it can be used to build a community of learning where everyone, including him, can be heard. In this manner, it may be possible to make efficient use of tailored materials and activities to support both language practice and the development of students' cultural awareness. The following Figure 4.4 presents the main aspects of this phase.

Figure 4.4

Visual Representation of Pre-service Teacher R's Phase 2



Note. Illustrative figure created by the author.

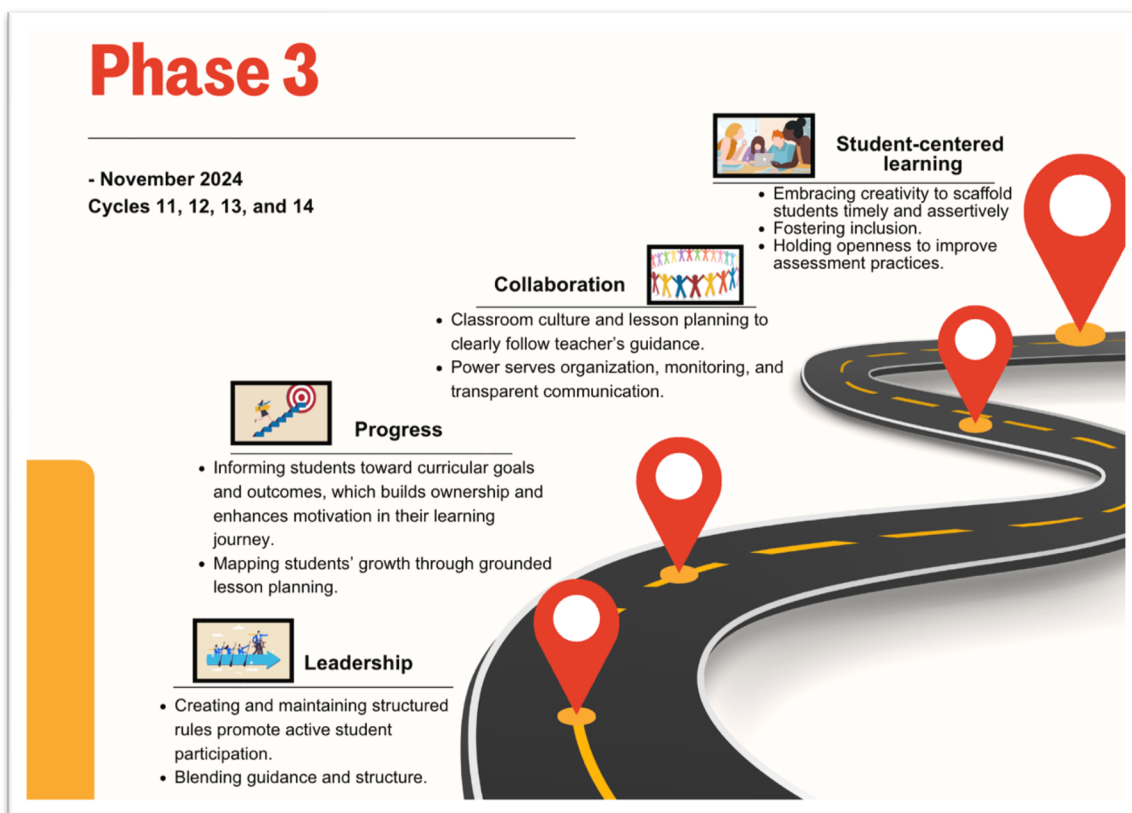
In November, the pre-service teacher had the opportunity to switch groups with his peer (Pre-service Teacher P), which allowed him to establish and maintain classroom culture with her colleague's students. This experience made him realize that rules empowered his role, helping him become a structured teacher capable of creating conditions that promote students' active participation. In this vein, he also noticed that student involvement in class goes beyond participation, as it must include being informed about their progress in relation to curricular goals

and covered or missing outcomes. Thus, he acknowledged the value of classroom culture and lesson planning as complementary tools to foster progress in a class where power can be used assertively to maintain organization, monitoring, and transparent communication. In this way, the pre-service teacher observed that students' progress can be mapped through grounded planning (a connection between contents), which supports guidance and awareness of progress for both teachers and students.

In addition, the pre-service teacher used his creativity to anticipate the scaffolding his students would require when adapting a traditional game and took the risk of implementing an outdoor activity, demonstrating a shift towards student-centered learning. This aligns with Zachary (2005), who explains that taking risks is part of a pre-service teacher's responsibilities. Thereupon, he was able to appreciate his work through students' speaking outcomes while remaining open to improving his assessment practices, thereby providing fair opportunities for all students and ensuring effective washback. Figure 4.5 summarizes the key points of this phase. The figure is located on the following page.

Figure 4.5

Visual Representation of Pre-service Teacher R's Phase 3



Note. Illustrative figure created by the author.

To sum up, the pre-service teacher's teaching practice initially focused on avoiding conflicts with parents and students, which influenced his role as a leader and revealed a lack of adherence to an established classroom culture. However, once he decided to adapt his practice to his actual teaching conditions rather than idealized expectations or pre-conceptions of his role as a teacher, he demonstrated transformative learning. This resonates with Mezirow's (1997) concept of frames of reference, which are the assumptions through which individuals interpret their experiences. Then, by leveraging his creativity and authority, he was able to design activities that engaged his kinesthetic students effectively. Ultimately, the pre-service teacher

was able to value his efforts while remaining open to ongoing improvement in his teaching practice in the future.

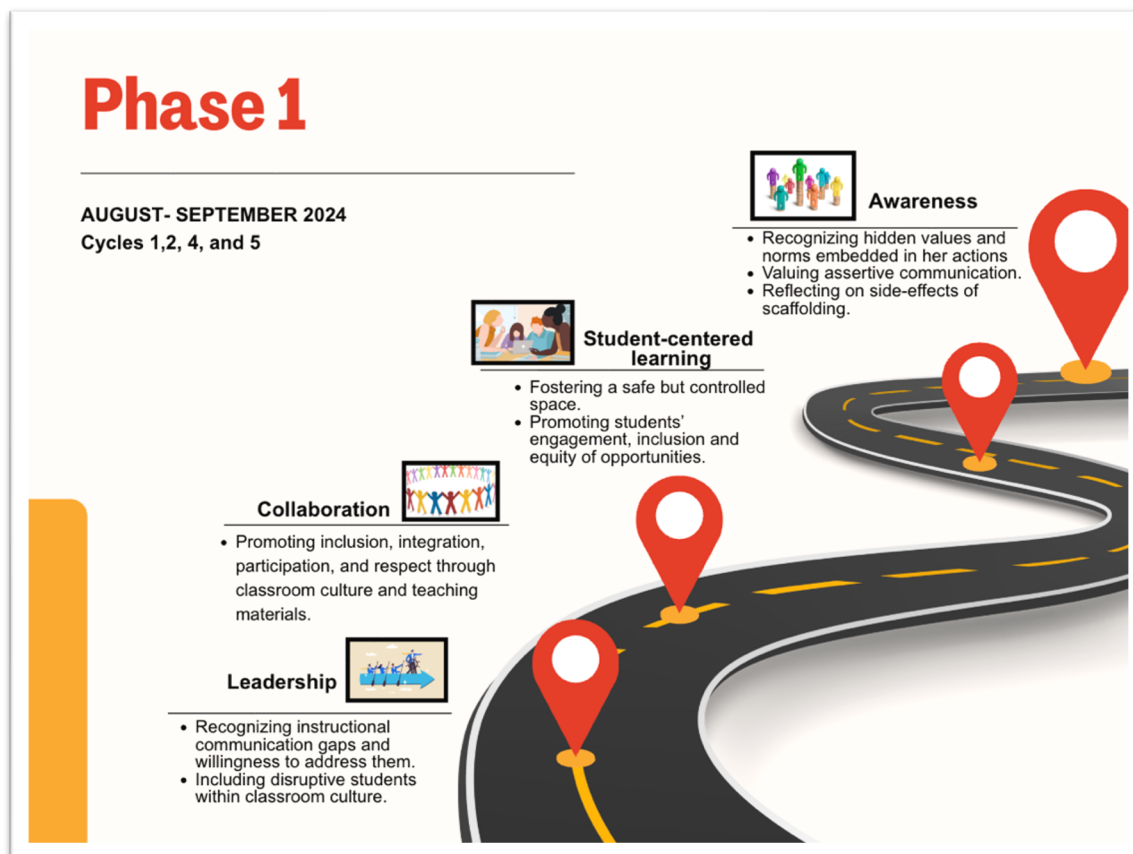
4.5 Summary of Pre-service Teacher P's trajectory

From the first phase, August- September, the pre-service teacher demonstrated a willingness to shape her teaching practice towards a student-centered approach. She considered improving her body language to avoid translation and perceived classroom culture not as a tool for exclusion, but to build an equitable learning environment where even disruptive students are encouraged to participate according to established rules. This resonates with the concept of social justice, which, according to Osborn (2006), is understood as a fair distribution of power and advantages in a society. For the pre-service teacher, everyone's right to speak and be heard is essential. Accordingly, she relied on classroom culture and teaching strategies to promote collaboration and integration, such as using teaching material that supports diversified interactions.

In this regard, she showed awareness of the teaching context and recognized her role as a leader who must exercise assertive communication and sustain a steady classroom culture and values to provide a productive and inclusive environment. Additionally, she considered the potential side effects of scaffolding, which may create dependency instead of fostering agency. A summary of this first phase can be found in the next Figure 4.6, on the following page.

Figure 4.6

Visual Representation of Pre-service Teacher P's Phase 1



Note. Illustrative figure created by the author.

In October, the pre-service teacher emphasized the impact of structured communication, particularly through body language, to avoid translation and the use of clear rules for games. She was interested in helping her students both understand the language and follow instructions, enabling games to foster a good learning environment where they may also serve as assessment tools.

There is also evidence of increased self-confidence when the pre-service teacher highlighted holding a balance between authority and positive rapport with her students; her creativity in practice, which reflects independence from the textbook; and her use of songs to

promote students' agency in managing their time. Another feature that suggests a deconstruction of mindset is the consideration of parents, teachers, and students working together for learning success. This aligns with Mezirow's (2008) concept of transformative learning, which implies a reevaluation of the comprehension of reality. In connection with her concern for students' success, she also emphasized using body language alongside fostering safe competence through visual trackers.

She also found validation of her student-centered work through her students' positive assessment results, which indicated that they could share their ideas in English. At the same time, teaching materials became a priority for her, as she realized that her own materials lacked a connection to real-life situations and should therefore be chosen and used to scaffold comprehension first, and then make language production possible.

The pre-service teacher demonstrated care for the learning community she had built with her students, highlighting their trust in her to discuss personal issues and her willingness to adjust lesson planning to include her students' preferences, embracing even distracted students, thereby fostering inclusion. However, she also perceived exclusion as a fair consequence for a student who was not aligning with the classroom culture. Figure 4.7 presents the most relevant points of this second phase, on the following page.

Figure 4.7

Visual Representation of Pre-service Teacher P's Phase 2



Note. Illustrative figure created by the author.

In November, the pre-service teacher continued to place her students at the center of her practice. This time, she considered alternatives to offer methods that make classes dynamic and attractive without neglecting classroom culture. With the intention of responding to her teaching context, she aimed to foster intrinsic motivation for meaningful learning. This resonates with Ahmad et al. (2020), who argue that behaviorism tends to make learners passive respondents to stimuli. In other words, the pre-service teacher was conscious of the gaps in her practice, including reliance on behaviorist rewards and the lack of authentic materials. Nevertheless, she was also aware of her ability to improvise or reshape activities to suit the conditions of her teaching context.

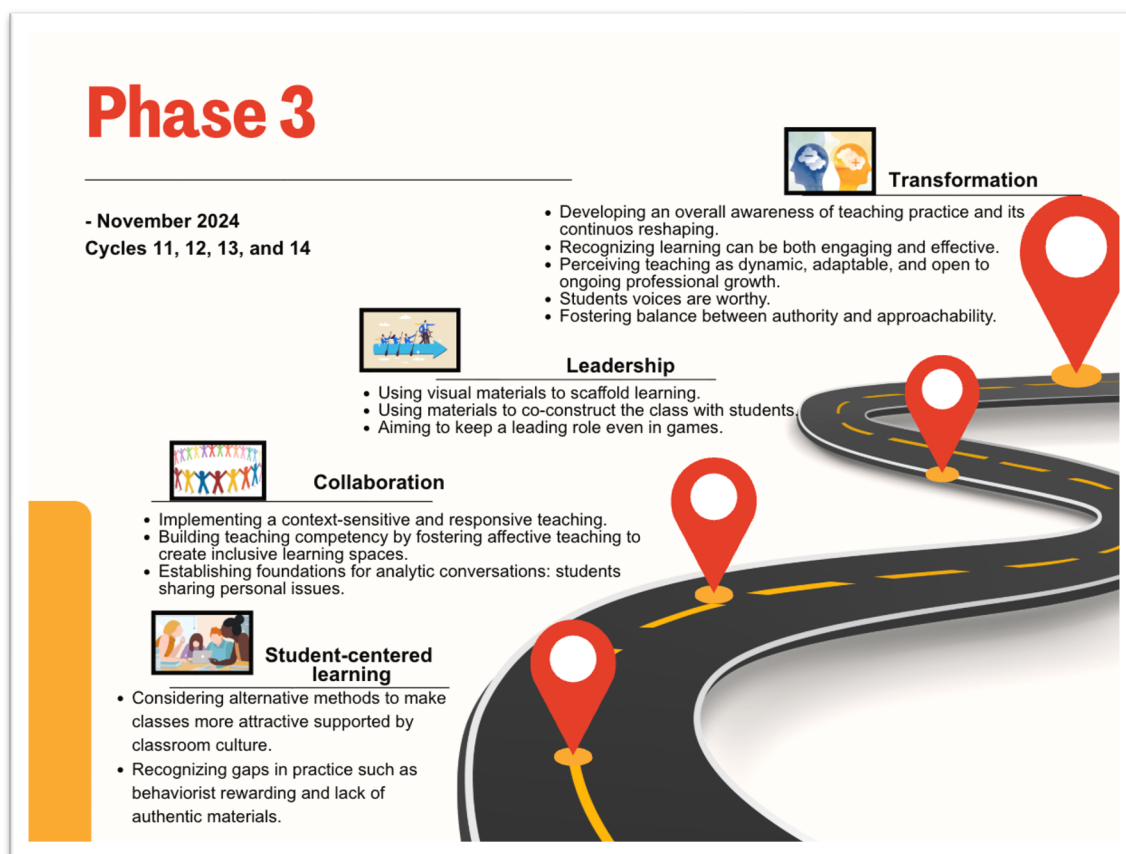
Alongside her care for the learning community she guided, she was interested in providing inclusive spaces where all students had a voice. Her efforts appeared to be met with her students' openness to share personal issues, which could make it possible to build analytic conversations and dialogue in the future. Therefore, her students were primarily developing the vision of dialogue as a tool to develop critical thinking. This resonates with Bayu et al. (2019), who emphasize that dialogue supports learners to find a critical position to transform their surroundings. And this condition of trust confirms her statement about her students' feelings in a safe learning environment.

Moreover, she continued to emphasize the use of teaching materials to scaffold learning, especially visual aids. In this regard, the whiteboard was of particular interest to her as a medium to co-construct the class with her students by collecting their collective knowledge on it. In this way, she acknowledged their voices while also maintaining her role as a leader during games and effectively monitoring students' performance.

Cycle 14 is of particular interest, as the pre-service teacher provides a summary of her transformation. 1) She developed an overall awareness of the reshaping of her teaching practice; 2) she realized that learning can be both emotionally engaging and effective; and 3) she perceived teaching as dynamic, adaptable, and improvement-oriented when it responds to the needs of her teaching context. Furthermore, she considered students' voices worthy and found a balance between authority and approachability. Figure 4.8, on the following page, contains the most important aspects of this third phase.

Figure 4.8

Visual Representation of Pre-service Teacher P's Phase 3



Note. Illustrative figure created by the author.

To sum up, Pre-service Teacher P's teaching practice evolved from her commitment to her teaching context. From the start, she focused on building a community with her students that fostered inclusion, integration, and active participation. To achieve this goal, the pre-service teacher drew on classroom culture to support her role as a leader, and used materials and games to promote diversified interactions, give voice, and scaffold learning. In turn, her students responded with affection and trust, sharing their personal views on issues, which may lay the foundations for developing a critical stance through dialogue.

In addition, Pre-service Teacher P was open to recognizing gaps in her teaching practice while working to reinforce her student-centered approach. This highlights the value of using a

reflective approach in teacher education. In this context, Cáceres (2017) emphasizes its utility as theory is embedded in actions, enabling teachers to reframe their teaching concerns while building practical knowledge.

Finally, the trajectory of both pre-service teachers, R and P, demonstrates that possessing theoretical knowledge alone does not define teaching competency. In this regard, Nessipbayeba (2012) outlines 21st century teaching competencies: 1) leadership, 2) establishment of respectful environments for a diverse student population, 3) knowledge of teachable content, 4) facilitator of learning, and 5) reflective practitioners.

Although Pre-service Teachers R and P possessed different skills at the beginning of the program, those 21st century teaching competencies appeared at different stages along their developmental roadmaps. These findings evidenced the utility of implementing Critical Pedagogy-based scaffolding to mentor pre-service teachers.

In addition, Pre-service Teachers R and P learned the importance of wielding power wisely through a classroom culture that benefited interactions among learners and with the teacher. This aligns with a social justice approach in teaching education, which, according to Robinson and Mogliacci (2019), aims to help pre-service teachers understand the relationship between education and the global and local patterns of hierarchy and power. Both embraced their roles as leaders, demonstrating that power can create favorable learning conditions when applied within a student-centered approach that promotes inclusion, active participation, and integration. This also supports transformative education, as it fosters an environment in which students feel valued, acknowledged, safe, and included as active members of the learning community (Turiano & Otañe, 2024).

Now, the findings of the second instrument, named *Retrospection Protocol*, are presented below. Critical Pedagogy attributes and “*Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach*” were used to interpret the results, since this last cultural tool contributed to structuring the mentoring of Pre-service Teachers R and P. It

is important to highlight that the aim of this second instrument was to determine how assertive the Critical-Pedagogy-based scaffolding of the mentor was to fit the development of EFL pre-service teacher's practice transformation. Due to the dimensions of Tables 4.2 (Pre-service Teacher R) and 4.3 (Pre-service Teacher P), the nine items that integrate the instrument entitled "Retrospection Protocol" are explained separately but are still part of the same tables.

4.6 Analysis of Retrospection Protocol, Pre-service Teacher R

In this section, Table 4.2 presents the analysis of the answers to "Retrospection Protocol" of Pre-service Teacher R. Its nine prompts concern his initial teaching abilities, the impact of mentoring in his teaching practice, influence of the mentor's feedback, self-perception about his role as an educator and social role as a language teacher, utility of mentoring for future teaching, opportunities to express his thoughts, and his suggestions to improve the program *Inglés Incluyente*.

Table 4.2

9-Prompt Retrospection Protocol Analysis, Pre-service Teacher R

His teaching style was initially constrained to covering the coursebook syllabus, using it as a strategy to cope with the challenges affecting his classroom management such as lack of commitment and discipline. Then, his role as facilitator gave little space for learners' voices because his planning and preparation fostered few inclusive practices, which in turn limited the development of rapport and communication with his group with disruptive students. The first prompt and its answer are found on the following page.

1. Describe your teaching style, before the mentoring process.				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Teacher as a facilitator: evidence of guiding learning and encouraging agency.	<i>“routinary, mechanistic, based-on-drills”</i>	<i>“made me make pragmatical decisions related to how I needed to teach”</i>	<i>“To have a practical classroom management since I faced several challenges such as lack of commitment and discipline”</i>	
Giving voice: encouraging the expression of opinions, experiences, or cultural perspectives.	<i>“I tried my best to cover most of the content seen during the program”</i>			<i>“difficult to adopt a communicative and less restrained instructional approach as I was doing my best to cover the program overall”</i>

Over the months, mentoring feedback impacted his teaching practice by providing suitable strategies and interventions for his instructions that supported classroom management and assessment. In addition, it helped him to work towards the integration of his students by considering their interests and needs. Therefore, he reconsidered the suitability of methods, materials, and communication moves, which made him redirect his teaching to be student-centered, flexible, and dynamic. Consequently, the given feedback prompted him to tailor his role as facilitator to his teaching context and consider a closer relationship between his role as a

facilitator and giving voice to his students, particularly in planning and preparation, and rapport and communication with his learners.

2. How did the feedback about the lesson plans and conversations influence your teaching practice during the mentoring process?				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Teacher as a facilitator: evidence of guiding learning and encouraging agency.	<i>“giving me some kind of guidance of how students could be better assessed on their performance in their foreign language”</i>	<i>“it gave me general clear ideas about which could be the most suitable strategies and interventions that I could adopt within my instruction”</i> <i>“improve my teaching performance by analyzing which methods, materials, and communicational moves I had to take in balance with the class I had in charge”</i>	<i>“the adoption of the most adequate classroom management techniques”</i>	
Giving voice: encouraging the expression of opinions, experiences, or cultural perspectives.	<i>“provided me with different pathways of how I needed to make my teaching flexible and dynamic enough to reach my students’ needs and interests”</i>			<i>“to a more communicative, open, and interactive way of learning by relying on materials that seeked to produce instead of just making</i>

	<i>“make them (students) be as integrated as possible during the course”</i>			<i>students receive the content”</i>
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Once he finished his participation in the program, he realized it offered a real-life classroom experience that implied a classroom management challenge for his role as facilitator: the lack of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of his students. However, this situation made him pursue a committed professional development for future situations, which reinforces evidence of transformative learning impacting planning and preparation, as well as teaching the lesson when he recognized that teaching demands a balance of different aspects.

3. What is your current self-perception of your teaching practice after being part of this mentoring project?				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Teacher as a facilitator: evidence of guiding learning and encouraging agency.			<i>“I had several learners who were not motivated or pushed enough to be immersed into the foreign language practice”</i>	
Transformative learning: evidence of change in	<i>“This teaching practice made me more motivated to keep pushing forward into the development and improvement of my teaching</i>	<i>“To teach a foreign language, it is necessary to have in balance many different aspects that shape the way</i>		

perspectives, engagement or teaching practices.	<i>skills, and be more prepared for other learning experiences that I could face in the future”</i>	<i>a class and a course overall is carried out”</i>		
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Concerning his role as an educator, it was also impacted by a commitment to professional development, a stance that includes referring to what he learned during mentoring. This shows evidence of transformative learning in connection with planning and preparation. Furthermore, transformative learning is also regarded as a reshaping of his views over what teaching the lesson requires. Pre-service Teacher R highlighted the need to adapt to work around a context-based approach, which involves the type of available learners, materials, and situational factors.

4. How has mentoring and your experiences with your students shaped your views on your role as an educator?				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Transformative learning: evidence of change in perspectives, engagement or teaching practices.	<i>“Continuing with the improvement of my teaching skills and be more committed to my role as an educator by recurring to the ideas, views, and piece of advice that the feedback sessions provided”</i>	<i>“Teaching has to be conducted based on the type of learners, contexts, materials, and situational factors”</i> <i>“I need to adapt to the variety of</i>		

		<i>teaching settings I might encounter during my professional teaching career”</i>		
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Mentoring also shaped his social role, since it led him to perceive English beyond a subject matter purpose. English was then aligned with supporting his students’ professional, economic and academic needs, but also with institutional interests. This perception sets out a relationship between critical consciousness and planning and preparation. In this line, he also marked a connection between transformative learning and teaching the lesson by emphasizing that English involves a language of economic transaction for students.

5. How has your social role as a language teacher been shaped after the mentoring process?				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Critical consciousness: awareness of social, political, and educational structures influencing learning.	<i>“It made me see the importance that English has for many learners that need to learn it for the economic, academic, and professional growth, making my skills and knowledge</i>			

	<i>worth for the interests and for the needs of that different institutions and students likewise may have”</i>			
Transformative learning: evidence of change in perspective, engagement, or teaching practices.		<i>“The mentoring process made me see that teaching English goes beyond instructing students into its sole acquisition and use to go beyond into its appreciation as a language for global communication and as an economic transaction for the globalized time learners belong”</i>		

By the time the pre-service teacher shared his answers for this second instrument, he was already applying the context-based suggestions provided during the mentoring feedback sessions, with another group. Then, a strong match between transformative learning and planning and preparation was identified when he mentioned he took into consideration his learners’ styles, cognitive development, and their needs and interests. In this regard, there is another connection among transformative learning, classroom management, and rapport and communication, because he decided to portray a firmer but more communicative teacher role to improve his classroom management. The part of the table associated to this item number 6 can be found on the following page.

6. What elements from this mentoring process will you apply in your future teaching practice?				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Transformative learning: evidence of change in perspectives, engagement or teaching practices.	<p><i>"I'm currently implementing the practical suggestions that the feedback sessions provided such as having activities that can correspond to my learners' styles of learning, cognitive capacities, needs, and interests"</i></p> <p><i>"tasks that can push learners into the production of the foreign language"</i></p>		<i>"having a more assertive and firmer teaching role to improve my classroom management skills"</i>	<i>"breaking the communicational barriers that I might have with my class and be in balance with them"</i>

Now, regarding the pre-service teacher's voice, it targeted the four domains. Planning and preparation, when he pointed out the lack of physical materials. Teaching the lesson by mentioning the inconvenience of the adopted schedule. Classroom management at sharing his concerns over disruptive students, and finally, rapport and communication when he had the opportunity to express his insights with the mentor multiple times. In essence, the pre-service teacher was given the opportunity to hold communication with the mentor. See next page.

7. How often were you able to express your ideas and opinions during the mentoring project? Provide some examples				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Giving voice: encouraging the expression of opinions, experiences, or cultural perspectives.	<i>“the lack of physical materials that could have immersed learners into their acquisition of the foreign language”</i>	<i>“the misbalance of the schedule adopted in the program that interrupted the flow of learning itself”</i>	<i>“such as dealing with disruptive students that interrupted the flow of the sessions or that were not paying attention”</i>	<i>“Most of the time I had the chance to provide insights of the experiences I had during the program”</i>

The pre-service teacher emphasized that mentoring helped him build context-sensitive teaching. Thus, there is a connection between his role as facilitator, planning, and preparation, and teaching the lesson. He now searches for his students' progress based on performance, learning capacities, and materials that provided proper scaffolding to his learners. These actions contribute to highlighting his decision to be more adaptable, flexible, and dynamic, which involves a connection between transformative learning and teaching the lesson. The analysis of this prompt can be found on the following page.

8. If you are currently teaching, do you think the mentoring program has helped you become a better language teacher? If so, please explain.				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Teacher as a facilitator: evidence of guiding learning and encouraging agency.	<i>“based on their level of performance, learning capacities, and their capacity to work with the most affordable and suitable materials that can scaffold their language learning experience”</i>	<i>“It taught me the different solutions and strategies that can be adopted for improving the learning processes and progresses of learners”</i>		
Transformative learning: evidence of guiding learning and encouraging agency.		<i>“ I have become more adaptable to the different teaching circumstances I can find myself in and therefore, be more flexible and dynamic”</i>		

On the other hand, the pre-service teacher suggested mentoring program should provide, if possible, different materials apart from available ICTs, assigning resource diversity to the relationship between the teacher as facilitator and planning and preparation. Moreover, Pre-service Teacher R used his voice to give a general observation of the utility of the mentoring

program, specifically teaching the lesson. Emphasizing it contributed well enough to improve the performance of the practitioners who participated in it.

9. Which suggestions do you have to improve the mentoring process?				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Teacher as a facilitator: evidence of guiding learning and encouraging agency.	<i>“provide mentees with some materials they might need in special circumstances, as they would not only rely on the digital and electronic technologies that they have at their disposal”</i>			
Giving voice: encouraging the expression of opinions, experiences, or cultural perspectives.		<i>“was sufficiently good for improving the performance of the practitioners who participated in it”</i>		

Note. Analytical table created by the author.

4.6.1 Summary of Pre-service Teacher R’s Retrospection Protocol

In a few words, from the Pre-service Teacher R’s view, mentoring program prompted him to build a teaching leader role that demands the implementation of tailored practices where

students are considered from the moment of designing a lesson, choosing materials, and being aware of challenges in the class, such as disruptive students and lack of interest. It can be said, mentoring contributed to make him develop a sense of correspondence between pedagogical decisions and actual learning situations. Nevertheless, the pre-service teacher also suggested to diversify the availability of material resources to support future pre-service teachers in the program, which suggests he possesses commitment to offer diversified and attractive practices.

4.7 Analysis of Retrospection Protocol, Pre-service Teacher P

In this section, Table 4.3 presents the analysis of the answers to “Retrospection Protocol” of Pre-service Teacher P. Its nine prompts concern her initial teaching abilities, the impact of mentoring in her teaching practice, influence of the mentor’s feedback, self-perception about her role as an educator and social role as a language teacher, utility of mentoring for future teaching, opportunities to express her thoughts, and her suggestions to improve the program *Inglés Incluyente*.

Table 4.3

9-Prompt Retrospection Protocol Analysis, Pre-service Teacher P

Her initial teaching style was characterized by a mismatch between her role as a facilitator and scaffolding procedures in planning and preparation, such as the type of material to ease her students’ understanding; scaffolding in teaching the lesson at using the whiteboard appropriately, and unfamiliarity with students’ learning styles impacting her rapport and communication with them. In addition, there was a lack of connection to daily life, an aspect of critical consciousness. The section corresponding to this question can be located on the following page.

1. Describe your teaching style, before the mentoring process.				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Teacher as a facilitator: evidence of guiding learning and encouraging agency.	<i>“the topics did not have a follow-up”</i> (problems) <i>“with the students’ understanding of the topics due to the insufficient use of authentic or traditional materials “</i>	<i>“I used to teach a class without an organization”</i> <i>“I had problems with the whiteboard organization”</i>		<i>“I did not know the learning styles of my students”</i>
Critical consciousness: awareness of social, political, and educational structures influencing learning.	(lack of organization) <i>“or any connection with daily life”</i>			

In this line, the mentor’s feedback on lesson plans helped her strengthen the relationship between critical consciousness and planning and preparation, since it made her pursue more authentic situations to have an impact on students’ learning. Conversations feedback enriched the connection between teacher as a facilitator, giving voice and rapport, and communication because of the mentor’s approach that triggered reflection instead of providing direct observations. See this section of the table on the following page.

2. How did the feedback about the lesson plans and conversations influence your teaching practice during the mentoring process?				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Teacher as a facilitator: evidence of guiding learning and encouraging agency.	(feedback on lesson plans) <i>"that made me notice and think more with and open mind"</i>	<i>"The mentor observed the factors that limited my class"</i>		(mentor's method) <i>"we had more views of what was happening and the implementations that we could add"</i>
Giving voice: encouraging the expression of opinions, experiences, or cultural perspectives.		(mentor's observations) <i>"and the input and outputs of the students' target language"</i>		(mentor's method) <i>"she was always asking why we did the things instead of just giving the observation"</i>
Critical consciousness: awareness of social, political, and educational structures influencing learning.	<i>"I related the topics with more authentic situations to make an impact on the students' learning"</i>			

By the time she finished her participation in the program, she had increased her confidence in her role as facilitator, which evidenced dynamic, purposeful, motivating planning and preparation. Within this same Critical Pedagogy attribute, her performance became sensitive to the evolving context conditions and pointed to a closer monitoring in classroom management. Not only was her role as facilitator benefited by the increase of rapport with her students, but also her critical consciousness broadened in integrating parents' interaction as well. The section corresponding to this part of the table can be located on the following page.

3. What is your current self-perception of your teaching practice after being part of this mentoring project?				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Teacher as a facilitator: evidence of guiding learning and encouraging agency.	<p><i>"how to engage and increase their motivation to learn the language"</i></p> <p><i>"I was implementing more dynamic activities with a purpose"</i></p> <p>(learned how to) <i>"plan"</i> <i>"evaluate projects or homework"</i></p>	<p><i>"I was not nervous anymore, I learned how to find solutions quickly or change the activities if they were not working"</i></p> <p>(learned how to) <i>"perform"</i></p>	<i>"I learned how to monitor them, observe facial gestures"</i>	<i>"I also learned how to interact with the students"</i>
Critical consciousness: awareness of social, political, and educational structures influencing learning.				<i>(interaction)</i> <i>"and with the parents"</i>

Furthermore, mentoring and her own experience in the program contributed to the development of critical consciousness in her teaching by empathizing with her students' limitations. Recognizing the challenge was not enough; she decided to find a solution, which aligns with the problem-posing method. Her idea was to humanize her role as educator by doing research, and building a safe space for her students, which would be based on communication and positive rapport with both students and parents.

4. How has mentoring and your experiences with your students shaped your views on your role as an educator?				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Critical consciousness: awareness of social, political, and educational structures influencing learning.		<i>"I noticed the students' limitations which increased the empathy on me as a person and educator"</i>		
Problem-posing method: challenging assumptions, analyzing real-world issues, and developing solutions.		<i>"Thanks to the comments and observations done by the mentor and my personal experiences, I open my mind in all the situations that learners currently live in, so I want to help them more, investigate and make them feel"</i>		<i>"giving advices when needed or telling the parents special situations"</i>

		<i>as comfortable as possible in my class with two main purposes: learning and feeling heard</i>		
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Regarding her social role, it is aligned with the problem-posing method, as it occurred with her role as an educator. It seemed as if the pre-service teacher was committed to helping her students face a reality that requires possessing grammatical and cultural knowledge of English, which demands she plans and prepares activities to reach that objective. Thus, her social role addressed improving the life conditions of her students from the classroom, giving rapport and communication a special place to stay aware of her social role and empathize with them.

5. How has your social role as a language teacher been shaped after the mentoring process?				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Problem-posing method: challenging assumptions, analyzing real-world issues, and developing solutions.	<i>“Activities for my future students so they can notice that a foreign language is extremely useful”</i> <i>“teaching grammar but also the cultural and traditions”</i>	<i>“I not only want to teach, but also help students as much as I can and as I am allowed”</i>		<i>“I was asked to give advice which increased my social role and the value of empathy”</i>

In terms of her future teaching practice, there is evidence of transformative learning for the four domains. In teaching the lesson and classroom management, the pre-service teacher highlighted the building of an integrated learning community. Classes should be co-constructed with students by giving a space for their thoughts on the whiteboard and promoting integrated interactions among all of them. While planning and preparation require the use of authentic materials, rapport and communication take into consideration the emotional state of her future students.

6. What elements from this mentoring process will you apply in your future teaching practice?				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Transformative learning: evidence of change in perspectives, engagement or teaching practices.	<i>"Implementation of more catching activities and relation with authentic materials"</i>	<i>"I will apply the organization of the whiteboard: explanation, lexis and contributions"</i>	<i>"assigning special sitting with constant moving so they can participate, work, and know all the classmates"</i>	<i>"Monitoring the activities, gestures, and feelings too"</i>

The pre-service teacher also stated that she had a voice to share her thoughts behind the decisions made to support her teaching, classroom management, and rapport and communication with her learners. The mentor never interrupted her and prompted reflective answers by asking the reasons for her actions. In addition, she could write them in the Reflection Matrix, which gave her the chance to have a voice after post-observations.

7. How often were you able to express your ideas and opinions during the mentoring project? Provide some examples				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Giving voice: encouraging the expression of opinions, experiences, or cultural perspectives.	<i>"The implementation of trackers was really useful due to the fact that I could add some thoughts that I could not mention at that time"</i>	(Examples) <i>"The mentor asked why I kept the contributions section on the whiteboard where I mentioned that it was for the learners to know that everything that they say or think matters"</i>	(Examples) <i>"The mentor asked me why I didn't stop the noises of some students where I mentioned that they have already finished and they were in their free time"</i>	<i>"The mentor didn't interrupt me at any time so I consider that I gave complete thoughts"</i> (Examples) <i>"The mentor asked about how we felt and about our progress where I mentioned that I felt great and proud of myself"</i>

According to the pre-service teacher's perspective, mentoring helped her to become a better language teacher. At that moment, she was already working in a school and applying what she learned in mentoring to carry out her activities. The comments of the mentor had helped her maintain order, classroom management, consideration of authentic activities, better

explanations, body language use, good pacing, and volume of her voice. Furthermore, the comments reinforced her serenity to speak with parents and other teachers. Consequently, mentoring strengthened a correspondence between her role as a facilitator and the four domains of the transformative approach to work smoothly within an institutional frame.

8. If you are currently teaching, do you think the mentoring program has helped you become a better language teacher? If so, please explain.				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Teacher as a facilitator: evidence of guiding learning and encouraging agency.	<i>"implementation of authentic activities"</i>	<i>"better topic explanations, more distribution of my body language, good speed and volume of my voice"</i>	<i>"the comments have helped me to maintain order, classroom management"</i>	<i>"and less anxiety to speak with parents or other teachers"</i>

None withstanding, from the pre-service teacher's perception, some adjustments should be made to improve the guidance of mentors. In this form, mentors are seen as the main facilitators of the experience in the program. To start, in planning and preparation, mentors should implement more formal instruments for observations. Next, in teaching the lesson, mentors should observe an entire class. Third, in classroom management, mentors should personalize feedback. Finally, in rapport and communication, mentors should make an equal investment of time for the pre-service teachers when giving feedback. See next page.

9. Which suggestions do you have to improve the mentoring process?				
Inclusive and Transformative Approach	Planning and preparation: decisions about the how and when of meaningful activities and resources to reach learning objectives.	Teaching the lesson: carrying out the lesson plan considering different components interplaying in this process.	Classroom management: proper organization and smooth development of the class that contribute to positive learning outcomes.	Rapport and communication: relationship between the teacher and his/her students that is built on trust, understanding and respect.
Critical Pedagogy Attributes				
Teacher as a facilitator: evidence of guiding learning and encouraging agency.	<i>"Future mentors need to implement more formal instruments like observation charts, checklists, etc"</i>	<i>"mentors can observe a whole class and not just a half because they need to notice how we introduce, develop, and conclude a class"</i>	<i>"feedback can be individual and complete "</i> <i>"I would implement the whole comments for one person and then for the other since I found difficult to follow the suggestions"</i>	<i>" keep an eye on the time and feedbacks on each person since sometimes there were not equal (more feedback for one person than the other)-"</i>

Note. Analytical table created by the author.

4.7.1 Summary of Pre-service Teacher P's Retrospection Protocol

It is held that mentoring helped Pre-service Teacher P to commit to a humanistic and holistic perception of an EFL teacher's role in students' development. For her, being a teacher goes beyond a classroom; it requires her to empathize with her students to perform feasible actions that contribute to the co-construction of a safe and respectful learning community. A space to prepare her students to face reality. Despite mentoring program benefited her teaching practice, *Pre-service Teacher P* made valuable suggestions to improve the collaboration between future pre-services teachers and mentors, by highlighting the relevance of personalizing and monitoring pre-service teachers more clearly and precisely.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

This research aimed to determine how effective a Critical Pedagogy-based mentoring strategy was in promoting the development of a transformative and inclusive teaching practice among EFL pre-service teachers participating in a social program that provides free English classes to low-income students from public middle schools in Puebla, Mexico.

Accordingly, this chapter presents the main findings that help determine the effectiveness of the implemented strategy. It also addresses the study's limitations, offers suggestions for further research, and closes with a final personal reflection.

5.2 Presentation of main findings considering theory

Gonulal and Loewen (2018) define scaffolding as “the temporary and dynamic support within the ZPD” (p.3). From this perspective, mentoring functioned as a supportive space for both pre-service teachers to reshape aspects of their teaching practice.

To better understand the role of mentoring, it is useful to recall Pre-service Teachers R and P's descriptions, containing initial self-perceptions of their practice – in Vygotskian terms, their zone of actual development. Pre-service Teacher R identified his strength as openness to communication and interaction with learners, while noting that he needed to improve in recognizing situational factors that shape learning and teaching. In contrast, Pre-service Teacher P mentioned that her strengths were lesson-planning, test creation, and behaviorist-based classroom management, but she also highlighted areas for growth, which included managing time, reducing anxiety, controlling body language, and adjusting the tone and speed of her speech.

These initial self-perceptions were later complemented by insights from the second instrument, the “Protocol of Retrospection”. Pre-service teacher R reported that, at the

beginning, he was focused on covering the content indicated in the coursebook, which limited the development of rapport and communication with his group, especially with disruptive students. On the other hand, Pre-service Teacher P's initial teaching style lacked a connection between lessons and daily life, had a disorganized use of the whiteboard, and reflected ineffective use of materials to scaffold students' understanding of topics, along with unfamiliarity with her students' learning styles.

In this vein, mentoring involved the use of cultural tools, which, according to Vygotsky (1978), encompass language, symbols, and artifacts that promote higher cognitive processes by transforming and regulating learning experiences. Among these tools, the framework presented in "Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach" (Gooden et. al, 2024) provided a structure for the observation cycles (pre-, during-, and post-observation) around four domains: Planning and Preparation, Teaching the Lesson, Classroom Management, and Rapport and Communication with Learners. Therefore, it is appropriate to present the results organized according to these domains, in alignment with Critical Pedagogy attributes that supported Pre-service Teacher R and P's development.

Pre-service Teacher R

Planning and Preparation

Initially, the pre-service teacher focused on covering the course's textbook content, prioritizing teaching-centered goals over his role as a facilitator to foster engagement. This approach led to a detachment from *giving voice* to the interests and needs of his kinesthetic students. His *critical consciousness* was highly influenced by socio-economic factors, including parents' perceptions of his work considering the investment in the book, and the structural limitations of the *Inglés Incluyente* program in supplying materials that better suited the learning style of his students.

Over time, he demonstrated transformative learning through his willingness to innovate and take risks with new methods, designing activities that matched his students' learning style using available and affordable material that even scaffolded language use, a foundation for *giving voice*. Additionally, he considered that lesson planning should follow an informed procedure, involving attention to missing goals and achievements alongside sharing them with students. Engaging students with their progress is an instance of transformative learning.

Teaching the Lesson

The pre-service teacher used to highlight the role of teaching materials to encourage students' participation and engagement, and the class was focused on content delivery as mentioned before. Nevertheless, he realized it was his *role as a facilitator* exercising leadership over teaching materials what determined the scope of meaningful learning. Furthermore, his views on language use changed to let his students express their own ideas and identities, which highlighted *giving voice*. These shifts evidence *transformative learning*.

Classroom Management

His *critical consciousness* was influenced by associating power with authoritarianism, which may cause the minimization of students' voices and parental disapproval. For this reason, the development of his *role as facilitator* was framed by avoiding confrontation with either students or parents. Then, his class lacked a classroom culture, which hindered students from hearing each other, and with that *dialogue and discussion* were difficult to be reached over time.

Later, the pre-service teacher realized the relevance of classroom culture to support his role as a *facilitator*, whose leadership is necessary for establishing a conducive learning environment. Thus, he went through a deconstruction of the concept of power. He perceived that rules could serve the co-construction of a class, promoting the integration and progress of students in a structured community of learning when *voice* is given assertively. This re-evaluation of perspective is also an insight into *transformative learning*.

Rapport and Communication with Learners

As the pre-service teacher was not exercising power to structure interaction among students, his restraint to endorse leadership was mining not only his development as *facilitator* but also fostering *dialogue and discussion*.

But later, he realized that communication with students framed by classroom culture was essential to foster opportunities for everyone, including himself, to be heard and share thoughts beyond academic content. Thus, he comprehended that classroom culture may represent the foundation for understanding with his students, even those who are disruptive. In this manner, he could prevent dropouts of those students, if they were considered part of a regulated community for the benefit of everyone, which aligns with *social justice, equity, and democracy*.

Pre-service Teacher P

Planning and Preparation

The pre-service teacher learned to project the development of outdoor activities. She grasped the relevance of communicating rules to foster organization and respectful interactions among learners, which align *with social justice, equity, and democracy*. *Transformative learning* was also evident when she recognized that games could serve assessment purposes, and when she began to rely less on the textbook, demonstrating greater creativity in her methods.

In terms of *problem-posing*, she highlighted the need to use authentic materials that support language production. This impacted her role as *facilitator*, since it required selecting resources that allowed closer connections to real-life experiences. Teaching materials became crucial for her practice, as they were used not only to scaffold learning but also to co-construct the class. For instance, she created a space on the whiteboard for their contributions, which is associated with *giving voice*.

She further realized that renewing activities could foster inclusion of students who did not normally feel identified with the existing designs, another instance of promoting *social justice, equity, and democracy*. Additionally, when acknowledging her students' preferences before

planning lessons, she confirmed a strong shift toward a student-centered approach, providing further evidence of *transformative learning*. Although traces of behaviorism remained, she was willing to encourage her students' intrinsic motivation by considering dynamic outdoor activities.

Teaching the Lesson

From the beginning, the pre-service teacher acknowledged the gaps in her instruction, such as body language and high speed in her speech due to nervousness. Her willingness to address these areas highlighted her intention to enact a *facilitator* role through a student-centered approach.

As she aimed to give students active roles in their own learning, she reflected on the boundaries of scaffolding and then implemented strategies to promote independent time management and vocabulary acquisition. She also reported developing improvisational skills to respond to the contextual challenges in her class. This adaptability illustrates *transformative learning* and underscores her capacity to adjust her practice in dynamic contexts.

Classroom Management

The pre-service teacher used classroom culture to promote structured and respectful interactions among students, reinforcing *giving voice* within an organized learning community. Rules regulated disruptive students' participation, and fostered *social justice, equity, and democracy* since all students were able to share their ideas, which made it possible to be heard and listen to others. In line with this last attribute of Critical Pedagogy, she promoted inclusion, engagement and integration of students by using teaching material that encouraged communicative tasks among learners.

Rapport and Communication with Learners

The pre-service teacher demonstrated an early concern with building a participatory learning community where students felt heard and valued, aligning with the attributes of *giving voice* and *social justice, equity and democracy*. She used classroom culture to build a safe yet controlled learning environment, investing her role as a *facilitator* with affective leadership. This,

in turn, encouraged her students to confide in personal issues, fostering critical conversations that laid the foundations for developing *dialogue and discussion*.

Regarding *critical consciousness*, the pre-service teacher recognized that success in learning required collaboration with both students and parents. However, she also perceived exclusion as a fair consequence of missed opportunities to participate in the learning community, a perspective linked to *social justice, equity, and democracy*.

The summary of both pre-service teachers' trajectories during the *Inglés Incluyente* program made it possible to trace and identify a common element that triggered and shaped the transformation of their teaching practices: the understanding of power in the hands of teachers. This finding demonstrates that the value of applying a Critical Pedagogy view to scaffold EFL pre-service teachers to transform their teaching practice lies in its capacity to reconceptualize notions of power. Recognizing that teacher power in the classroom – as the ability to using classroom culture to support the teacher's role as facilitator – can be exercised to foster inclusion and create a safe learning community is central to transforming pedagogical practice.

In this wise, Pre-service Teacher R changed his perspective on associating power with fulfilling acquired socio-economic expectations of an ELT teacher. This influenced his resistance to adopting the *role of a facilitator* using classroom culture to foster a guided, structured, and integrated participation of their students in his practice. Later, he realized that being a leader is not a synonym of authoritarianism and that rules can benefit the integration and progress of a learning community.

Pre-service Teacher P, in contrast, decided to use classroom culture to support her teaching practice. From the start, she was willing to shape her practice around making her students feel heard, valued, and safe in a learning community where rules were used to save respect, promote diverse interactions, and co-construct lessons. The establishment of a frame of steady interaction enabled her to build a positive rapport with her students, which in turn showed

her that being a teacher means finding a balance between classroom culture and approachability.

As can be noticed, the personal mindset of each pre-service teacher determined how fruitful their experience was. Pre-service Teacher R was building his teaching practice not to problematize with representative authorities and institutional goals (coverage of the program), while Pre-service Teacher P was aiming to work with her students in the development of a safe and inclusive space.

Nevertheless, another advantage of using Critical Pedagogy in mentoring is the development of a critical stance, which, according to Orland-Barack and Wang (2021), requires a collaborative reconstruction of teaching knowledge and practices between mentors and teachers.

Ultimately, both pre-service teachers became aware of the impact of leadership, organization, communication, and flexibility in fostering inclusion within their classrooms. They were able to recognize their achievements and progress while also identifying areas that require further development. Importantly, they demonstrated openness and commitment to ongoing professional growth. In essence, they realized teaching must remain dynamic and responsive, continually evolving in alignment with contextual features.

In fact, the feedback received through lesson plans and post-observation conversations enhanced the mentor's Critical Pedagogy-based support, helping the pre-service teachers become more aware of their situational context. Pre-service Teacher R said that he had the opportunity to share his thoughts and concerns most of the time with the mentor. Pre-service Teacher P stated that she always had the chance to express her ideas without interruptions and explain the reasons behind her decisions. Thus, the reflective and communicatively open mentor's approach enabled them to develop sensitivity toward their teaching context by identifying problems and broadening their views on possible solutions.

In this line, Pre-service Teacher R specified that feedback helped him identify constraints and limitations in methods, materials, and communication, which gave him a broader perspective on how to conduct teaching, based on the contextual conditions. On the other hand, Pre-service Teacher P stated that the mentor's feedback helped her develop professional and personal empathy for the living conditions of her students and a willingness to help them, an attitude associated with becoming an agent of change in her role as an educator.

All in all, the findings confirm that mentoring based on Critical Pedagogy and supported by a transformative approach influenced both pre-service teachers' pedagogical development. In this context, Sharif (2019) argues that Critical Pedagogy enhances critical thinking skills, leading to behavioral changes in learners' lives. As previously mentioned, the mentor adopted a reflective and communicative approach that encouraged both pre-service teachers to describe, identify, analyze, and find solutions to the challenges they encountered in their practice. This continuous process enabled them to restructure their teaching, become more aware of their students' needs, and develop into responsive and committed teachers engaged in ongoing professional development.

Critical Pedagogy highlighted important attributes to be considered during mentoring, but it alone was not enough to provide a framework for delineating mentoring procedures. In this regard, *Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* (Gooden et al., 2024) offered a structured framework to apply these attributes. Orland-Barak and Wang (2021) argue that, in a critical transformative approach to mentoring, a critical stance emerges through the collaborative reconstruction of teaching knowledge and practice between mentors and pre-service teachers. In other words, while integrating Critical Pedagogy attributes fostered the development of a critical stance, the transformative approach framework provided a structured mentoring model -focusing on four key domains and a three-phase observation cycle – that facilitated the collaborative reconstruction of pre-service teachers' perspectives on teaching.

5.3 Limitations

Although Pre-service Teachers R and P provided valuable information to trace their trajectories, Pre-Service Teacher R wrote his reflections after completing the program. Had he written them concurrently with each mentoring cycle, his accounts might have offered more precise descriptions of the challenges, problems, and achievements in his teaching practice. This contrasts with Pre-service Teacher P, who generally wrote her reflections in alignment with her ongoing participation in the program.

Additionally, this study involved only two pre-service teachers out of the four pre-service teachers who constituted the first generation of the *Inglés Incluyente* program. The other two were excluded from the present analysis because their mentoring process was guided by different theoretical approaches that complemented *Supervising and Mentoring Practices: for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach* (Gooden et al. 2024).

5.4 Suggestions for further research

This study employed ethnographic strategies, such as the researcher's dual role as mentor and the opportunity to interact with the pre-service teachers within their teaching contexts. However, observations were limited to 13-14 cycles spanning the institutional term, which ran from August to early December. The first weeks of August 2024 were devoted to covering logistical needs for the program, leading to an official start on August 28. December, with fewer than two sessions, was used to conclude the course with a small celebratory between pre-service teachers and their students.

By the end of this timeframe, attributes of Critical Pedagogy – such as the teacher as a *facilitator, giving voice, critical consciousness, transformative learning, and social justice, equity and democracy* - had become evident in the pre-service teachers' teaching practices, either as achievements or as areas for further development. Nevertheless, the attributes of *problem-posing and dialogue and discussion* did not emerge as tools for pre-service teachers to lead

social interventions alongside their students to improve living conditions. These elements may require a longer period of time to develop. Consequently, it is recommended that future research extends the duration of mentoring to accompany pre-service teachers over a longer time frame.

Considering the feedback given by pre-service teachers, future studies could include the observations of full class sessions for each pre-service teacher, combined with personalized feedback discussions. Over time, these discussions could evolve into pair or group feedback sessions. These suggestions resonate with Lane (2004), who states that mentors' skills should suit their mentored pre-service teachers and the stage they have reached in their relationship. Such adjustments may further strengthen the mentor- pre-service teacher relationship and enrich the overall mentoring process.

5.5 Personal reflection

I decided to study an M.A. in teaching English to strengthen my knowledge and skills in my profession. It was in a subject called professional development that I had the opportunity to read an article that emphasized the collaborative construction of classes between teachers and young students. I felt particularly interested in it, and by the time Critical Pedagogy appeared and made me wonder how I could incorporate it into my research project for my M.A. thesis.

At the beginning, it was difficult to connect a philosophical view in education such as Critical Pedagogy, with tangible processes. Then, my thesis director invited me to be part of *Inglés incluyente*. I was glad to share my experience with pre-service teachers and help them go through the program as peacefully as possible. Although I was eager to contribute, I did not know exactly how it would be outlined.

To help me find a structure, I read *Supervision and Mentoring Practices for TEFL Teacher Educators: An Inclusive and Transformative Approach*. I strongly felt identified with its emphasis on Critical Pedagogy attributes such as the teacher as a facilitator, giving voice and dialogue, and discussion. In this way, it inspired me to align my M.A. research with that

framework, as I was interested in supporting young pre-service teachers from an informed stance.

Critical Pedagogy taught me that everyone possesses valuable knowledge to share with others. While I was aware of my own repertoire of teaching experiences, I was challenged to support Pre-service Teacher R and Pre-service Teacher P in constructing a transformative and inclusive teaching practice. Then, they needed to develop a critical stance to become agents of change from their classrooms. This objective implied a deconstruction of myself, since I was used to being supervised rather than being invited to reflect collaboratively.

Consequently, I used Critical Pedagogy attributes into my discourse to guide my mentoring. This philosophical approach to education allowed me to engage in dialogue with pre-service teachers without judgement and to pursue teacher education grounded in respect for future professionals. I learned a lot from observing their classes. I am deeply grateful to them for allowing me to be part of their professional development process.

Fortunately, both pre-service teachers strengthened their critical stance toward teaching while also demonstrating a firm commitment to their professional development. I came to realize that mentoring can make a significant difference in helping pre-service teachers build self-confidence in their professional skills, while simultaneously advancing the humanization of education. From this perspective, mentoring can contribute to the construction of an integrated society by shaping classrooms into safe and inclusive spaces where learners are both seen and heard.

Appendix 2. Instrument 2. Retrospection Protocol.

Inglés Incluyente
Student-teacher final reflection
Fall 2024

Instructions: Based on your experience during the *Inglés Incluyente* mentoring program, answer the following questions as extensively as possible. Please set a moment aside from your daily activities to provide insightful responses to each question.

Name:

1. Please describe your teaching style, before the mentoring process.

2. How did the **feedback** about the **lesson plans** and **conversations** influence your teaching practice **during** the mentoring process?

3. What is your current self-perception of your teaching practice **after** being part of this mentoring project?

4. How has **mentoring** and **your experiences** with your students shaped your views on your role as an educator?

5. How has your **social role** as a language teacher been shaped **after the mentoring process**?

6. What elements from this **mentoring process** will you apply in your **future teaching practice**?

7. How often were you able to **express your ideas and opinions** during the **mentoring project**? Provide some examples

8. If you are currently teaching, do you think the mentoring program **has helped** you **become a better language teacher**? If so, please explain.

9. What suggestions do you have to improve the mentoring process?

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