PRÁCTICAS PROFESIONALES: UNA OPORTUNIDAD PARA FAMILIARIZARSE CON SU FUTURO CONTEXTO PROFESIONAL

PRE-PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: AN OPPORTUNITY TO FAMILIARIZE WITH THEIR FUTURE PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

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Prácticas Profesionales: Una Oportunidad para Familiarizarse con su Futuro Contexto Profesional

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RESUMEN

Las prácticas preprofesionales son un medio de introducción para los docentes en formación hacia el ambiente laboral de los profesores de inglés, ofreciendo una oportunidad para familiarizarse con el entorno real de la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera. Esta investigación pretende comprender cómo influyen las prácticas preprofesionales en la familiarización de los estudiantes con la profesión futura. Se basa en la observación de las prácticas preprofesionales, centrándose en describir el contexto en el que se desenvuelven los profesores de inglés, involucrando al observador en el ámbito educativo, en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje, mediante el desarrollo de las prácticas preprofesionales. El instrumento utilizado para esta investigación fue las notas de campo que permitieron describir detalladamente el trabajo del profesor durante la clase, acciones, actividades e información obtenida durante el desarrollo de las prácticas. Se identificaron 5 indicadores (didactic materials, classroom management, language switching, dynamics, feedback) que permitieron resaltar aspectos importantes de los métodos de enseñanza y dinámicas del aula. Finalmente, involucrar a los educadores en formación al ambiente real de enseñanza es muy importante ya que permite familiarizarse con el entorno y empezar a formar y enriquecer su estilo de enseñanza.

Palabras clave: prácticas pre profesionales, contexto profesional, proceso enseñanza-aprendizaje

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Pre-Professional Practices: An Opportunity to Familiarize with their Future Professional Context

ABSTRACT

Preprofessional internships are a means of introduction for pre-service teachers to the work environment of English language teachers, providing an opportunity to familiarize with the real environment of teaching English as a foreign language. This research aims to understand how pre-professional internships influence students' familiarization with the future profession. It is based on the observation of pre-professional practices, focusing on describing the context in which English teachers develop, involving the observer in the educational environment, in the teaching and learning process, through the development of pre-professional practices. The instrument used for this research was the field notes that allowed a detailed description of the teacher's work during the class, actions, activities and information obtained during the development of the internship. Five indicators (didactic materials, classroom management, language switching, dynamics, feedback) were identified to highlight important aspects of teaching methods and classroom dynamics. Finally, involving the trainee educators in the real teaching environment is very important as it allows them to become familiar with the environment and to begin to form and enrich their teaching style.

Keywords: pre-professional practices, professsional context, teaching-learning process

INTRODUCCIÓN

The teaching profession, particularly within the context of English language education, plays a fundamental role in shaping the educational landscape. As highlighted by Utheim R. (2023), the freedom to learn is essential for individuals to develop their full potential and participate meaningfully in society. Aligning English language instruction with the local environment presents unique challenges. The pre-professional internship is a program designed to bridge the gap and correlate theoretical knowledge with practical application.

These internships provide an invaluable opportunity for future educators to immerse themselves in the teaching profession, observing and engaging with the real- world classroom environment. Through exploratory research conducted in various educational institutions, the program aims to familiarize students with the occupational field of English teachers, the ideal teacher profile, and the standards and responsibilities they must meet. Oolbekkink-Marchand et al. (2020) state the importance of integrating research practices into teacher training to enhance the professional development of future educators; the integration from various teacher-educator perspectives can lead to improved teaching practices and a deeper understanding of educational processes. Teachers face unique challenges in different educational contexts, particularly when aligning teaching practices with local needs (Hattie J. and Clarke, S 2018). This suggests that effective teaching and learning are enhanced when educators draw on their understanding of the local context and build relationships within that environment. This study addresses the research question: How do pre-professional internships help future educators familiarize themselves with English language education's unique challenges and teaching methods? By exploring this question, the research aims to identify how internships contribute to understanding and addressing these challenges, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of English language instruction.

The study aims to familiarize the observer with the professional context of an English as a Foreign Language teacher. Understanding how pre-professional internships influence future educators' familiarity with the teaching profession is crucial for developing effective educational policies and teacher training programs. This research, grounded in observations from pre-professional internships, offers priceless insights into the practical experiences that shape teaching methods and effectiveness.

The internships allow future educators to adapt their teaching methods to diverse educational contexts, ensuring that learning is engaging and relevant.

The data collected reveal several vital themes that underscore the importance of contextualized teaching. Teachers frequently use didactic materials tailored to students' levels, such as flashcards, specialized books like "Cambridge Super Minds," and digital platforms like Idukay. Sarjoni et al. (2020) discuss the significance of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) in teaching reading skills; she emphasizes integrating technology into pedagogy and content knowledge to enhance reading instruction. Effective classroom management strategies, including non-verbal cues and flexible seating arrangements, are essential for an engaging learning environment. Additionally, the switching between English and Spanish in instruction reflects the importance of language contextualization, ensuring that explanations are accessible and understandable to all students.

This study's findings can potentially inform educational stakeholders, teacher educators, and practitioners about best practices for fostering an inclusive and effective teaching environment. Fossland and Sandvoll (2021) state that educational leaders perceive academic developers as important change agents in driving educational change within higher education institutions. Basically, by exploring the perspectives of educational. leaders on the role of academic developers in facilitating and supporting transformative processes in teaching and learning practices, we can improve the quality and relevance of higher education.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was based on a qualitative design with a descriptive approach to familiarize the observer with the professional context of an English as a Foreign Language teacher. Busetto et al. (2020) explain the qualitative design as the study of phenomena that is usually written in words and aims to describe the quality and its characteristics, as well as the context in which the phenomena occur and the perspectives from which it is perceived. Also, Asmawi and Alam (2024) report that this design is used in a wide variety of disciplines, including education, and values the diverse aspects of human nature and culture behavior. Furthermore, Tomaszewski et al. (2020) emphasize that qualitative design values the people's experiences, being subjective and taking account of the perspectives of the participants and the

researcher, and assuring that it is conducted correctly; this type of research is consistent and helpful when answering questions about the participants.

First of all, the study focuses on describing the context in which the EFL teachers develop. This gets the observer involved in the educational field and its components, including the teaching and learning process, and also identifies the teaching professional requirements needed to work as an EFL Teacher. For that, the researchers designed an activity plan, which includes this project's details, approximating the context in which EFL teachers work via the research.

Additionally, the pre-professional internships observed covered a total of 80 hours that were divided into 3 important phases: theoretical phase, practical phase and research phase. The initial phase with a duration of 20 hours is based on the necessary knowledge required by teachers in training to understand and adequately perform the second phase, the practical phase with a duration of 40 hours that focuses solely on the development of pre-professional practices. Finally, the research phase, with a duration of 20 hours, focuses on exploratory research, coupling what was learned during the pre-professional internships and resolving concerns and gaps that may remain from them. The instrument used for this research was field notes, which allowed us to describe in detail the teacher's actions in class, including more information that, according to the researcher, was insightful for the research. The field notes are indispensable in qualitative research, providing a rich, detailed account of the researcher's observations and reflections, which are crucial for data analysis and interpretation (Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018). The participants observed during the research were the teachers assigned by the private school in the parallels in their charge together with the teachers in training in their development of the pre-professional internships. The assigned parallels were 2'd EGB, 3rd EGB, and 7h EGB. Conclusively, for conducting this research, the process followed was an exploration of the theoretical content, observation class, collection, and systematization of the data through the instrument "field notes", allowing the research to have a clear point of view of the perspective of the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research study aims to familiarize pre-service teachers with the importance of the professional context of an English as Foreign English language Teacher, providing valuable insights into teaching practice through a systematic analysis of field notes.

The results presented highlight important aspects of teaching methods and classroom dynamics, offering the following findings:

Gafric 1: Results of the Observation

Results of Observations

Always: 100%
Usually: 80%
Often: 60%
Sometimes: 50%
Rarely: 20%
Never: 0%
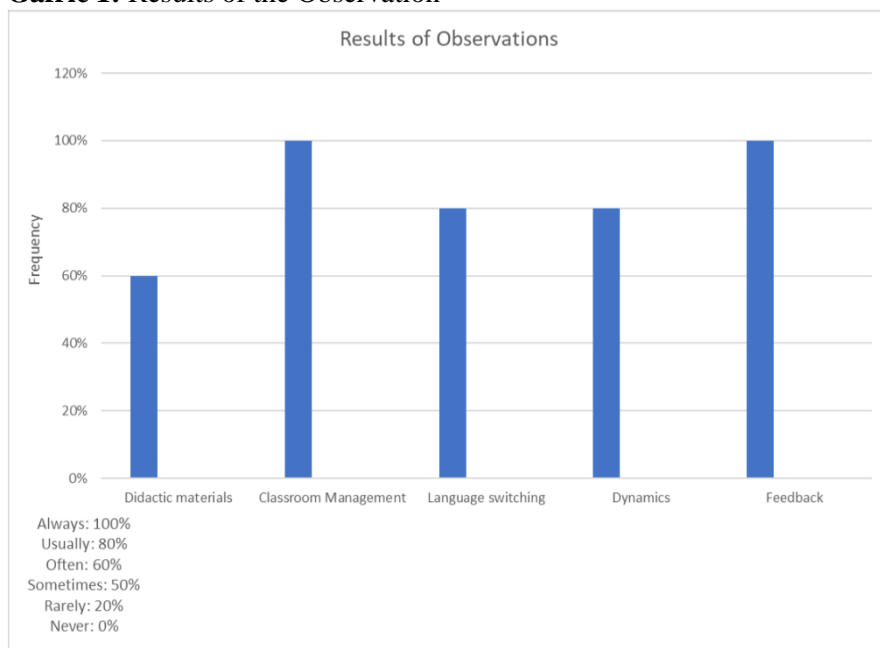
Author: Researchers

Through the qualitative research conducted, several key findings emerged from the analysis of the field notes. In the graph, the indicators used were 5. First, the teacher frequently used didactic materials such as flashcards, specialized textbooks like "Cambridge Super Minds," and the digital platform Idukay (60%). Yanes and Mostafa (2020) discuss the importance of catering to diverse learning styles in the context of a machine learning-based recommender system designed to improve student's learning experiences; they emphasize the need for various learning materials and formats to address different learning styles. This includes using videos, interactive simulations, and text-based resources, ensuring that all students can engage with content in a way that suits their preferences. Yasin and Mohamad (2024) argue that the correct implementation in the use of visual aids plays a vital role in conveying meaning and enhancing understanding of vocabulary. They help to illustrate concepts that may be abstract or difficult to grasp through text alone; it improves memory retention and cognitive processing. These materials assist in promoting contextual comprehension, allowing students to see how vocabulary fits into real-life situations. Regarding classroom management, the teacher always maintained complete control of the class (100%). This approach involved clearly outlining student responsibilities and

expected behaviors, ensuring a conducive learning environment where students could focus on their academic and moral development. According to Yasin et al (2022), it's essential to set clear rules and expectations from the beginning of the course. This clarity helps students understand what is required of them and fosters a sense of responsibility.

Now, language contextualization is used in instruction, with the teacher frequently switching between Spanish and English (80%). This strategic use of language aimed to accommodate students' language proficiency levels, ensuring that instructions and explanations about the topic and activities were accessible and understandable to all. Sotlikova (2023) points out that incorporating students' native languages can significantly aid comprehension. This approach allows students to process information more effectively, especially when they can collaborate with peers who speak the same language.

Additionally, the teacher consistently employed feedback mechanisms (100%), demonstrating a proactive approach to understanding students' learning needs and praising them for their participation, individually and in the classroom in general. Sallang and Ling (2019) noted the importance of immediate constructive feedback in enhancing students' instrumental motivation for speaking English. This allows for a clear connection between the input and the specific aspects of the student's speech, enabling them to make targeted improvements.

Therefore, dynamics were usually implemented (80%) to a broader range of learning needs and active teaching. It aimed at enhancing engagement and learning outcomes. This way, teachers can ensure that all students receive equitable educational opportunities tailored to their abilities and requirements. Adopting a communicative approach in teaching productive skills promotes authentic communication and interaction, allowing students to practice speaking and writing in real-life contexts. The implementation of task-based language teaching, where students engage in meaningful tasks that require the use of productive skills. Azis et al, (2023) mention that the implementation of task-based language teaching, where students engage in meaningful tasks that require the use of productive skills, can foster learner autonomy and promote the development of language proficiency.

CONCLUSIONS

The pre-professional internship as a means of introducing students to the professional reality is an effective tool as it gets students involved with the teaching environment, familiarizing them with the

skills, knowledge and professional behavior. Getting to know the teaching environment as well as how teachers of English as a foreign language manage their classes is extremely important and allows the teachers in training to broaden their panorama and learn how to develop themselves in these situations, as well as to be adaptable and flexible to the situations they are presented with and above all, this early contact in the training of teachers allows them to develop and enrich their own teaching style.

In terms of what was observed and analyzed during the development of the pre-professional practices by the students in formation, the correct implementation and effectiveness in fostering student engagement and learning outcomes in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context relies on the strategic use of diverse didactic materials, effective classroom management, and bilingual education; these elements are essential components that increase a thriving learning environment. It's incredible how this differentiation is crucial to support varied learning styles and enhance the educational experience.

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