



**UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE NUEVO LEÓN**  
**FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA Y LETRAS**  
**ÁREA DE ESTUDIOS DE POSGRADO**



**CO-TEACHING: A SUCCESSFUL FACTOR ON TEACHER TRAINING THROUGH  
COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES AND PROFESSIONAL ADVICE**

**PRODUCTO INTEGRADOR DE APRENDIZAJE  
QUE PARA OPTAR POR EL GRADO DE MAESTRÍA EN LINGÜÍSTICA  
APLICADA A LA ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS  
PRESENTA**

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**SEPTIEMBRE DE 2018**

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## DEDICATION

To my beloved parents, *Javier Cortez* and *Lucy Soto*, who helped me to become the woman I am now and for their great love for me.

To the love of my life, *Javier Guajardo*, who always encourages me to grow professionally and helps me to believe in myself.

To my sisters, *Lucy and Sara Cortez*, who made these years fun.

To my dear friend, *Leticia Morales*, who accompanied me through this journey.

And most especially to *God*, my beloved Savior.

Without whom none of my success would be possible.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the generous help and support of all the following people mentioned here.

Special thanks to Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (*UANL*) and to *MC. Ludivina Cantú Ortíz*, the principal of Philosophy and Arts School who supported me to start this Master's Degree.

Special appreciation to *MLA. Dan Isai Serrato*, my thesis director, who spent some of his valuable time checking this work and helped me to continue until the end.

Special appreciation to *Dra. María Eugenia Flores Treviño* who encouraged me to make a great research stay in Valencia, Spain.

Special thanks to Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (*CONACYT*) that supported me financially to make this Master 's Degree possible.

Finally, special thanks to all the great teachers who supported me with my research data.

Thank you!

## ABSTRACT

The emphasis of the present study was to design a didactic proposal to help pre-service teachers to develop their teaching skills through collaboration and guidance from expert teachers on the field of linguistics and education. This study is based on the co-teaching model that is defined as the joint work of two teachers with the same group of students sharing planning, organization, delivery as well as physical space (Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2010). Co-teaching promotes coaching and training for pre-service teachers to apply theory into practice during the different steps of teaching: co-planning, co-delivering, and co-evaluation (Conderman & Hedin, 2012).

This research looked for the perceptions that pre-service teachers had about the teaching practicum as well as the roles that cooperating teachers took regarding the supervision of pre-service teachers. According to the findings pre-service teachers realized they did not collaborate with cooperating teachers during planning, delivery and evaluation of the lessons. On the other hand, cooperating teachers were aware of the need of establishing collaborative teaching roles through a formal regulation that fosters commitment between participants.

The didactic proposal aims to establish a link of collaboration between pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers through a teaching practice protocol based on the co-teaching model. Pre-service teachers seek for benefits that derived from the exercise of teaching like development of teaching skills, improvement in language, development of social skills related to classrooms and acquisition of work experience. This emerging practice of co-teaching in teacher training holds great promise in transforming the process of teacher preparation and in meeting the needs of teachers from the XXI century (Suárez, 2016).

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Co-teaching is known for its contributions to various areas like development of communicative competence, increase of motivation, educational courses and interpersonal relationships where students could develop collaborative skills and increase their participation. Co-teaching has been an effective method for the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms too (Suarez, 2016). For example, with students who lead with any genetic, cognitive or physical disease and need to have special attention from the part of the teacher. So one psychologist or specialist in the area assist the teacher in the classroom to achieve learning for everyone.

Although co-teaching has been little studied in university level as a strategy for professional development, this is the area in which this project will be focus on. According to Bacharach and Heck (2010), co-teaching is defined as the joint work of two teachers with the same group of students; sharing the planning, organization, presentation, and evaluation, as well as physical space. These two teachers mentioned above are the pre-service teacher and the cooperating teacher. The pre-service teacher is a person who takes a job that requires training, especially in teaching. The cooperating teacher is a trained educator selected to coach and guide students who are training to teach in classroom settings (Virginia Wesleyan College, 2016).

As it is said above, in the co-teaching model there are two participants on teaching practices; the pre-service teacher and the cooperating teacher. However there is another teacher which is the university supervisor. It is the one who evaluates if the pre-service teacher achieves competency in entry level skills in the teaching profession and if the cooperating teacher is carrying out its job as the co-teaching method states (Virginia



Wesleyan College, 2016). These are the three different functions that the co-teaching method must have to accomplish its objective on developing professional competent teachers.

This research deals with the problem of professional practices that English Teaching and Bilingual Education students from a public university school in Nuevo León have at the end of their major. It has been observed that these students do not receive personalized advice and coaching from all those teachers that give them the opportunity to make their teaching practices in their classrooms.

According to the observations made during teaching practices in this university school, an interest arises to know in which extent students in the areas of English Teaching and Bilingual Education have individual advice and coaching from their expert teachers in their area, to know what the areas of opportunity are within teaching practice and then to propose a teaching practice protocol that establishes roles and collaboration between participants (cooperating teachers, pre-service teachers and supervisors).

First of all, this study looks for creating a teaching practice protocol based on collaboration to foster a deep interrelation in planning, delivery of classes and evaluation. Second, it seeks for benefits that derived from the exercise of teaching like development of teaching skills, improvement in language, development of social skills related to classrooms and acquisition of work experience. Finally, it pursues for a bridge between teaching theory and practice using English a foreign language as the medium of communication between teachers and students in the classroom.

This paper is organized as follows. In chapter 1 it is found the problem definition, the theoretical background that has been found in relation to the project, the professional significance of the study, the overall and specific objectives that are pursued, the research questions and a hypothesis that states expectancies.

In chapter 2 the theoretical background is presented. Important aspects are seen like the importance of field experience, language teacher education, the need of connection between theory and practice, teacher training and collaboration as well as the co-teaching model description, co-teaching strategies and the advantages and disadvantages from this model.

In chapter 3 it is shown the methodology that is used “action research”. It is described the methodological development to follow based on the application of questionnaires and interviews used for this project in order to gather information like the participants’ roles, experiences and opinions. The analysis of graphs and the interpretation of results are shown to reach the objectives developed for this investigation and to know the nature of the problem and what will be the way of improving collaboration in the teaching practice process.

In chapter 4 the didactic proposal is described taking into account the research results, the problem, the objectives and the needs of cooperating and pre-service teachers. Then, a protocol for collaborative teaching practices is developed establishing the roles in each stage of teaching. Finally, cooperating teachers and supervisors evaluated the protocol using a questionnaire that asked them for advantages, disadvantages and limitations of this proposal. Results are reported at the end of this chapter.

In chapter 5 some conclusions are presented and some recommendations are discussed for monitoring this protocol in order to make known the requirements involved in applying this model to collaborative teaching practices.

This introduction presents the problem of study, defines the concepts that are used in this project and provides a perspective of the protocol that is proposed to improve the teaching practices in future teachers on the areas of English Teaching and Bilingual Education. Each of the chapters mentioned above are defined and explained in more detail later throughout the paper.

## **1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

### **1.1 Literature review**

Many studies have been done related to the teacher training subject that highlight the importance of co-teaching in higher education nowadays. One of these research was made by Nancy Bacharach, Teresa Washut Heck and Kathryn Dahlberg (2008) in St. Cloud State University. The problem was to know what the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of the co-teaching method are and what the sample students think about it. The results of the survey highlighted that most students agreed with this model in which the average agreement was 3.4 / 4, noting that during the semester they had two different perspectives to listen for content development, time was always productive and comments from both teachers complemented each other. But students were confused about which teacher to approach regarding problems or questions.

Preservice teachers mentioned that the experience enlarged their perspective on the field of teaching problem solving in the classroom and it became more simple and practical. They concluded that if they had not planned and reflected together they would not have reached the results obtained and also they remarked that under teacher supervision they felt more confident when exposing the issues and implementing evaluation and activities (Bacharach et

al., 2008). This study reflects the importance of collaborative teaching as a new way to accomplish the teaching skills that the global professional world is asking for.

Another study was conducted in a Faculty of Education in Peru by Suarez (2016). The study question was: “What concordance exists between conceptions of co-teaching and teaching practice of teachers of a Faculty of Education at a private university in Lima, and what potential conditions and limitations are identified in their practices?” (Suarez, 2016, p.171). It was a case study with a qualitative perspective and was approached from a descriptive level. The participants were 10 teachers who developed at least one course in co-teaching during the first half of 2013 in undergraduate or graduate levels in classroom mode (15 sessions) or blended (with 4 sessions and the employment of a platform).

Most teachers considered interdisciplinarity as the main feature of co-teaching: *"To understand reality from complementary approaches"* (Participant 9), and *few to differentiated teacher training "course is enriched from the specialization of colleagues"* (Participant 2). Only four teachers presented alignment between their conceptions of instructional design, assessment of learning and their conceptual trends of co-education. As it can be seen, for most informants co-teaching does not require a special type of instructional design, but in defining it they mentioned qualities such as openness, creativity, dialogue and teamwork. Almost all teachers assume evaluation from an applicative-practical approach being the least cited attitudinal and conceptual content as well as self-evaluation and co-evaluation (Suarez, 2016).

In another university in Ghana a research study regarding teacher training was applied by Sekyi Acquah and Anti Partey (2014). They were aware of the importance of competent and well trained Economics teachers for their nation and want to know what the importance of field experience in teacher preparation is and what the perspectives of trainee economics

teachers in the university of Cape Coast are. The emphasis of this study was to find out how trainee-teachers of Economics perceived off-campus teaching practice in terms of the benefits they derived from the exercise.

The study employed a qualitative design with the use of interviews and focus group discussion as the main means for collecting data. A total number of 101 pre-service teachers, purposively selected, were involved in the focus group discussion and 20 pre-service teachers, out of the 101 were interviewed. The results were that preservice teachers see field experience as a very important part of their development of professional proficiencies like development of teaching skills, improvement in content knowledge, development of social skills and acquisition of work experience. Also during group discussion they agreed that off-campus field experience helped them to fully understand some of the teaching practices they were taught during lectures and also helped them to apply some of the key Economics concepts they had learned in class (Acquah & Partey, 2014).

The last study related to the importance of teacher training in higher education was the one of Padilla and Espinoza (2015), both with a PhD and currently working as professors and researchers in the University of Aguascalientes, Mexico. They researched about the teaching practice of English teachers with different level of linguistic competence in English in public secondary schools in Aguascalientes. The study was focused on teaching actions and elements of academic formation as a support of the doing and acting of the teacher inside the classroom (Padilla & Espinoza, 2015). The problems they perceived were that English teachers of secondary level do not have knowledge of teaching strategies, there exists different levels of English in most of them and unconsciousness of permanent teaching updating as well as professionalization.

The professional practice of four teachers was analyzed, each one in third grade from secondary level through the scholar period of 2011-2012. For this study, a semistructured interview and observations were used to know what teachers think about their professional practice. The results obtained showed that the teacher builds his practice according to their personal history, motivations, resources and particular meanings about their job (Padilla & Espinoza, 2015). The four teachers agreed on constant learning, personal and professional improvement but they realized that their teaching training during university was not enough. In general, they have learned from their teaching experience, that is the way they have improved in classes and have become better professionals.

The conclusion is that teachers need a teaching tool that covers the gap between theory and professional practice, a strategy that provides the preservice teachers with experiences to build up their learning on teaching skills in English Language or Bilingual Content. All these studies described above reflect the importance of teacher training supervised by experts on the area in order to improve the professional proficiencies needed to teach in real classroom situations. In the same vein, it was seen that students get in the field without the initial experience required to face educational problems in the classroom and it is something that needs to be studied soon and deeper.

## **1.2 Problem definition**

It has been observed that pre-service teachers on the areas of English Teaching and Bilingual Education from a public university school in Nuevo León do not receive personalized advice and coaching in their teaching practices from their cooperating teachers. They just open an space for pre-service teachers to deliver classes in their classrooms but without any commitment to guide them in their practices to make improvements in their teaching skills through the experience field.

There are letters sent to the cooperating teachers that state to receive the pre-service teachers in their classrooms, check their planning and write down some observations. The supervisor teacher evaluates each practice. Just in case of any situation that needs a recommendation, cooperating teachers talk to the supervisor teacher about it.

Pre-service teachers are sent to different classrooms in a language center from this school or in the school itself to deliver some classes there. The cooperating teachers receive them and even though they make some recommendations and feedback to the preservice teachers, there is no collaboration between them in planning, presentation of classes or evaluation. Some cooperating teachers allow only 20 minutes of teaching practice because this is the time that pre-service teachers can take to deliver their presentations without interrupting the cooperating teacher's calendar or missing classes. Pre-service teachers classes are seen just as "interventions".

So, cooperating teachers are not willing to re-organize their planning courses in which preservice teachers could fully be included, they just distribute topics to develop independently. There is not collaboration between teachers because the letters sent to the cooperating teachers to receive the preservice teachers in the classrooms do not state to work collaboratively with them or coach them.

Pre-service teachers do not have this practice as an enriching experience because they are not seen as co-workers without experience who need to be guided to achieve competency in their teaching skills. That is why co-teaching is a method that joint the work of these two teachers with the same group of students, sharing planning, organization and delivery of classes.

### **1.3 Professional significance of the study**

For pre-service teachers from the areas of Teaching English and Bilingual Education in this public school, it is relevant to have good guidance and coaching in their professional practices as part of their development as competent and prepared teachers. Effective teaching involves more than planning and content area expertise. Diversification of lessons to meet student needs, reteaching, classroom management, record keeping, organization, procedural efficiency, and communication with parents, are all important tasks intrinsic to the job and are “fleshed out” and explicitly understood during the intern experience (Spooner, Flowers, Lambert & Algozzine, 2008).

According to York-Barr, Bacharach, Salk, Frank and Benick (2004) “team teaching experiences could improve teacher education by offering preservice students the opportunity to learn from faculty with varied backgrounds and to experience a form of collaboration that strikes at the core of instructional practice” (p. 91). So, teaching schools need a model for teaching practices in which students can collaborate professionally with experienced teachers and help them to organize their calendars at the beginning of the semester and the consequent planning activities of the course, projects, delivery of classes and evaluation.

Pre-service teachers will acquire teaching skills through interaction with students, effective teaching methodologies according to different types of students and functional collaborative methods in the classroom as well as in labor relations that pre-service teachers may face as future teachers (Bacharach et al., 2008). This benefits will be achieved if students and teachers get involved in collaborative teaching and if they are actually committed with each other.



The development of this research provides to the educational community with a protocol by which they could know their roles to coach preservice teachers through feedback and reflection.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The general objective for this study is:

To design a co-teaching protocol establishing the roles of each participant to work collaboratively in teaching practices.

The specific objectives are:

- To identify the roles that cooperating teachers take toward the supervision of pre-service teachers.
- To categorize different conceptions of the professional practicum according to pre-service teachers.
- To evaluate the co-teaching protocol in order to know advantages, disadvantages and limitations when implementing it.

#### **1.5 Research questions**

- What are the roles that cooperating teachers take regarding the supervision of pre-service teachers?
- What are the conceptions that pre-service teachers have about the professional practicum?
- What are the advantages, disadvantages and limitations when implementing the co-teaching protocol?

## **1.6 Hypothesis**

The use of the co-teaching protocol will help pre-service teachers to have an enriching professional experience so that they can work collaboratively with an expert teacher on the areas of English Teaching and Bilingual Education.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Language teacher education**

This topic emphasizes the concept of “Language Teacher Education”, as well as, the importance of paying attention to the development of language teacher skills through collaborative practices. Richards and Farrell (2005) state that teacher education and development takes time. Pre-service teachers need a period of time that alternate theory and practice during their school years. Pre-service teachers as well as cooperating teachers require preparation in the process of training in order to achieve the competencies stated by the institution.

According to Altmisdort (2016) a language teacher should understand how the process of language development occurs, should care about the different kinds of learners and should create a very different classroom atmosphere. Language teachers get their first professional development in their teacher education schools as pre-service education. Language teachers should teach the aspects of language in context and seek for different methods of teaching that fit all students’ needs in order to accomplish the language objectives.

#### **2.1.1 The nature of language teacher education**

There exist two goals of teacher education; training and development. “Training refers to activities directly focused on a teacher’s present responsibilities and is typically aimed at

short-term and immediate goals” (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.3). It is seen as a preparation for induction into a first teaching position. Training is the process in which pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers and supervisors work together in order to prepare language teachers for the job of teaching and they should continue working in triad until the pre-service teachers complete their training process at school (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Teacher training also involves trying out new strategies in the classroom with supervision, monitoring and feedback from other’s on one’s practice (Richards & Farrel, 2005). Training is to put in practice the theory learned on real classroom situations following a monitoring of the practicum to provide feedback that helps them to improve the teaching skills.

The following are examples of goals from a training perspective (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.3):

- Learning how to use effective strategies to open a lesson
- Adapting the textbook to match the class
- Learning how to use group activities in a lesson
- Using effective questioning techniques
- Using classroom aids and resources (e.g., video)
- Techniques for giving learners feedback on performance

On the other hand, teacher development refers to general growth not focused on a specific job. It is established as a long-term goal and looks for facilitating the growth of teachers’ understanding of teaching and of themselves as teachers (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

The following are examples of goals from a teacher development perspective (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.4):

- Understanding how the process of second language development occurs
- Understanding how our roles change according to the kind of learners we are teaching
- Understanding the kinds of decision making that occur during lessons
- Reviewing our own theories and principles of language teaching
- Developing an understanding of different styles of teaching
- Determining learners' perceptions of classroom activities

Another important dimension of understanding what is meant by teacher development is the difference between novice teacher and expert teacher. Expert teachers show differences in the way they perceive and understand what they do (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Expert teachers are the cooperating teachers that accompany preservice teachers in their process of training. They help preservice teachers to take risk at classrooms and put in practice what they have been taught to do.

Some of those differences between novice teachers and expert teachers are the following (Richards & Farrell, 2005):

- A richer and more elaborate knowledge base
- Ability to integrate and use different kinds of knowledge
- Ability to make sound intuitive judgments based on past experience
- A desire to investigate and solve teaching problems
- A deeper understanding of students and student learning
- Better understanding and use of language learning strategies
- Greater awareness of the learning context
- Greater fluidity and automaticity in teaching

All these characteristics show that expert teachers on the area of language and linguistics are prepared to guide and monitor preservice teachers on their process of becoming professional language teachers in order to get the benefits of the practicum derived from the cooperating teachers' supervision and monitoring.

### **2.1.2 Supervision in language teacher education**

To coach pre-service teachers, carried out by expert professionals, appears as an essential element of the formation. According to Correa (2011), this highlights two things, one is to know how to recognize what can be done by a student at various points in his / her formation, and the second are the reference points that the program training gives the trainers to guide and evaluate each of the practices. Pre-service teachers' supervision should be reliable in the sense of reaching the objectives of the training program and the progress that students are doing since the last class they delivered.

The mere observation of the actions of a student during his practice is not sufficient to evaluate the development of his competences (Correa, 2011). Therefore, pre-service teachers cannot be evaluated only for the observations made during a class; they need continuity to enhance their weaknesses at the time of teaching.

The supervisor has a particular role because he has a double vision of the school environment. In general, by having a teaching experience, the trainer knows the reality of schools and, by representing the university institution; he knows its objectives and expectations. Thus, they occupy a privileged position in stimulating students to practice new pedagogical approaches (Correa, 2011), that is, to encourage them to use, practice and / or adapt the approaches seen in university courses during their practices.

Due to its characteristics, the supervisor has a crucial position in the students' training process. One of his roles is to accompany the student in the development of his professional

skills. This is reflecting both things, the accompaniment of the student's formative process and the evaluation of the result of that process. Regarding the evaluative aspect, examining a competence requires taking into account the nature of the resources that will be mobilized in the action. The selection of resources rests mainly on the actor's understanding of the situation, the anticipations about it and previous experiences. Thus, the supervisor must understand that students, compared to experienced teachers, are characterized by a less holistic view of the situation and by not clearly distinguish the different contexts (Kagan, 1992).

Supervisors need to encourage the linkage between theory and practice. What have been taught during classes must be shown during the practicum. This union should be the objective of all the participants in the process of teaching training; pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers and supervisors (Correa, 2011).

## **2.2 Teacher training for language teachers**

Teacher training is a period of practice in which pre-service teachers can develop teaching and social skills but also integrate theoretical and practical knowledge that help them shape their identity as teachers. The period of practice constitutes a potentially favorable space for the professional development of future teachers. Collaboration is another strategy that is useful for making links between the teaching university and the real classrooms (Correa, 2011).

### **2.2.1 Teacher training and collaboration**

Contact with the professional environment and with experienced professionals, promotes teacher professionalization (Correa, 2011). Collaborative relationships help preservice teachers to acquire experience from the expert teachers as well as to develop their social skills to work with others.

The undoubted importance of practices in initial teacher training and research results indicate that practices do not meet the expectations of competence development and highlights the need to take an interest in this dimension of vocational training and seek the means to improve training conditions on the field (Correa, 2011). Other research studies have shown that teacher training need to improve in order to achieve the objectives of the institutions but also the students and employers expectations about the profession.

Professionalization of teacher education requires not only a university education quality, but also the participation of professionals in the area “experienced teachers”, and the recognition of their contribution in the learning process of their future colleagues (Correa, 2011). Teacher training is not just the job of one supervisor; it is the job of all teachers that are committed with education. Experienced teachers are required to monitor and guide preservice teacher on the process of becoming in-service teachers.

Experienced teachers can no longer be considered as silent agents of the learning process, as service providers by facilitating access to their class. In the same vein, according to Perrenoud (1993, as cited in Correa 2011) contribution of experienced professionals in the training of their future colleagues is a characteristic of the profession. The teacher profession should be one that is committed with the future of education that means with new generations of teachers of any area.

The period of practice constitutes a potentially favorable space for the professional development of future teachers. “Professional practice allows preservice teachers not only to the construction and manifestation of skills but also to the integration of knowledge of diverse nature and appropriation of an identity model” (Correa, 2011, p.72). Teacher training allows preservice teachers to develop their identity as teachers, too. With the guidance of cooperating



teachers and the collaboration between them, pre-service teachers expand their identity to new teaching scenarios and get more benefits from it.

### **2.3 Theoretical and practical connection on teacher training**

The need of connection between theory and practice in the process of teacher training is worth studying. Becoming a teacher is a process that requires learning by the book and learning by the experience. The student teacher practice is relevant for the completion of a major and at the same time for the discovery of a new identity as teachers. The language teacher education needs to link the theoretical teacher training and the practical teacher training since the initial formation of language teachers is to provide them with the complete classroom experience as it is in the field.

#### **2.3.1 Theoretical teacher training**

Despite the acknowledgment of the contribution of teaching experiences on the field, it is necessary to highlight the recurrent difficulty of the theory - practice linkage, that is, the mobilization of the formal knowledge of the classroom to the real situations of the professional exercise and to make the student aware of this mobilization (Correa, 2011). Pre-service teachers as well as cooperating teachers and supervisors should be aware that the theory- practice linkage takes time.

A professional training cannot rely only on knowledge substantiated by practice; a teacher cannot reflect only from his or her experience, a teacher needs the concepts and theory to confront their experience (Correa, 2011). Theory is not being overlooked in this work, otherwise, it is being highlighted in order to check the practice and reflect on the experience from it.

It is necessary to modify the representations that cooperating teachers have about the role that they must assume in the formative process of future teachers. Rather than dictate the way

forward, the trainer guides the learners in the experimentation of formulas that allow them to develop their competences and build their own identity within the professional body to which they aspire (Correa, 2011).

Pre-service teachers should try out methods and techniques that they do not master at all, ways that get them to conflict in order to learn from the experience and improve on the practice. Cooperating teachers should lead the teacher training process in which pre-service teachers are put out of their comfort zone related to teaching.

### **2.3.2 Practical teacher training**

Teacher training is an important component of becoming teacher. Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009) assert that the term teaching practice represents the range of experiences to which student teachers are exposed when they work in classrooms and schools. Pre-service teachers should be exposed to different environments related to language teaching. Even though they realize that the student level is not what they are expecting to teach, teaching skills and ways of teaching are being developed through the training.

Teaching practice is a form of work-integrated learning that is described as a period of time when students are working in the relevant industry to receive specific in-service training in order to apply theory in practice (Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). So, professional practices on language teacher education are important for the development of well-prepared language teachers that aspire to get into language schools or private elementary schools.

According to Perry (2004), teaching practice can be conducted in a number of forms depending on the institution. Some of them send pre-service teachers to go for teaching practice once a week; others do this all weekdays over a semester; while others schedule teaching practice certain period of time. The public university that is being studied sends pre-

service teachers to do teaching training the last semester of the major, ten classes during the semester which is the time that the cooperating teacher allows.

Perry (2004) also points out that pre-service teachers should experience the excitement of being part of a real classroom setting, of getting to know learners and of planning and organizing the classroom tasks. Pre-service teachers need the complete experience of leading a classroom but with the guidance of an expert teacher on the area that make them aware of the connection between theory and practice, the alternation.

### **2.3.3 Need of connection between theory and practice**

Education is moving from a trend where the theoretical disciplinary knowledge constitutes the predominant axis in the training programs, to one where the practical knowledge and its performance is configured as the central axis (Sánchez, 2016). Programs are now focused on competences, what students can do with the knowledge acquired in classrooms and on the application of theory that make them professionals on their area.

Diker and Terigi (1997) said that what it is looked for is to achieve ways to organize properly the training path with a rationality that avoids falling into "the applicationist tendency (theoretical foundations) or in the exemplifying tendency (theory as a later explanation of practice)". Cooperative forms of teacher training look for the linkage between theory and practice but never leaving behind either one. Otherwise, they try to handle both at the same level.

It is necessary to recognize that "the teacher does not abandon the theory, quite contrary to this: first, it questions it in the light of the evidence that it possesses and, later, it questions it again according to the results of its intervention" (Sánchez, 2016, p.4). Theory is never left behind, it is always remembered to reflect on practice and improve teacher development.

Consequently, faced with the task of training teachers, practice processes are called to occupy a central space (Sánchez, 2016). Practice time is required to enhance all aspects of teaching and learning as a unique process. It is called “central” because the teacher training is longer than it looks.

The practice aims to "enable students to gradually approach professional work, and facilitate the process by which future teachers build pedagogical knowledge, develop in a personal way theory and practice of teaching and learning and, above all, learn to teach" (Avalos, 2002, p.113). Pre-service teachers learn to teach not just by the theory itself but by the practice of the theory in real situations.

Learning a complex job like teaching must encompass a theory associated with practice and practice resulting from this theory. Linking one and the other implies ... that each trainer, in his own context, elicits the approach of the theoretical aspects articulating them with the problems that students live (Sánchez, 2016). Theory needs to be seen as a part of the teaching that must be linked with the context, the students, the materials, etc., in order to be effective.

Teacher education points to the importance of accelerating the pace of alternation between training for conceptual analysis and training for intervention (Sánchez, 2016). The linkage between theory and practice is a difficult process that needs to be understood and apply to achieve the teacher education goals.

Thus, it is highly recommended to propose to the initial teaching formation: regulate purposively the rhythm of alternation between training for the conceptual analysis and for the action in real contexts; multiply the situations of formation by which the students have to learn to elaborate their own answers; and above all, value the consciousness of each student about their own representations of teaching.

## **2.4 Benefits of the student teaching practicum**

Within higher education, field experiences in placement schools are crucial in preparing future teachers (Sorensen, 2014). Thus, being immersed in the place where pre-service teachers will actually do their job prepares them to get in the field with the abilities required to teach with confidence.

There exist differences between teacher training programs with respect to field experiences (e.g., the timing of lesson, learners, delivery, etc.); the way they are developed is the same: the pre-service teacher works as a single trainee with an experienced teacher, the cooperating teacher (Sorensen, 2014). Within the field experience the cooperating teachers help the pre-service teachers to improve the areas of teaching that they do not yet fully master and helps them to improve their work.

Field experiences help to offer training to preservice teachers in the context in which they would be working after their training (Sorensen, 2014). The practicum provides pre-service teachers with real classroom problems that make them think on solutions and modify their teaching according to what is actually happened in the classroom. In that way, they can enlarge their perspective of teaching as well as techniques and methods.

In addition, field experiences provide pre-service teachers with the opportunity to put theory into practice in order to be prepared for future teaching jobs (Sorensen, 2014). Thus, field experience is seen as a preparation for becoming competent teachers on a specific area of knowledge because it provides pre-service teachers with real experiences in diverse context as well as monitoring and supervision from their cooperating teachers.

## **2.5 Co-teaching model for teacher training**

The co-teaching model in a teacher education classroom requires collaboration, commitment and creativity from all the participants. Co-teaching does not necessarily align

with traditional practices in higher education but it is an innovative practice to carry on teaching practice in collaboration. Co-teaching served as both a teaching strategy for pre-service teacher's development as language teachers and a strategy for faculty development in their roles as teacher educators (Bacharach et. al., 2008).

### **2.5.1 Co-teaching definition**

This model of teaching is seen as “two teachers, (a cooperating teacher and a teacher candidate) working together with groups of students; sharing their planning, organization, delivery and assessment of instruction, as well as the physical space” (Bacharach et al., 2008, p.9). The origin of this concept is explained as an abbreviation for the term cooperative teaching (Beamish, Bryer & Davies, 2006).

According to Cramer, Liston, Nevin and Thousand (2010), co-teaching is defined as two or more teachers that share the responsibility of teaching a group or a class, providing students with help and services in a collaborative way for the needs of the students with or without disabilities.

Another definition is the one stated by Cook (2004). He explains co-teaching as a collaborative teaching, team teaching or shared class. It is a formative process developed by two or more professionals that established a collaborative relation in order to give joint instruction to a diverse group of students in the same physical space and with specific content and objectives.

These authors establish that co-teaching is a model of teaching in which two teachers work together to achieve specific purposes or objectives and they collaborate during the stages of teaching: planning, organization, delivery and assessment. The purpose is to provide students with help and to achieve what the preservice teachers could not do alone, their initial

professional development as language teachers. This model has different components that make it work efficiently.

### **2.5.2 Co-teaching components**

To understand better the model of co-teaching in the teacher training process, it is necessary to identify the key components of a co-taught classroom describe by Bacharach et al. (2010). The components include the following:

Preparation. “When co-teaching all the members of the triad (cooperating teacher, teacher candidate, and university supervisor) are provided with information about the role of each member, expectations for the experience, co-teaching and co-planning approaches, and strategies for how to build a strong partnership” (Bacharach et al., 2010, p.5). Thus, the first step give a look on what will be practicum applying this model, the bases and foundations as well as the strategies that will be used.

Introduction. It is important to present the pre-service teacher to the students as another formal teacher in the class. This is a critical element in the success of any student-teaching experience; how students view the preservice teacher (Bacharach et al., 2010). “In co-teaching, cooperating teachers are instructed to introduce their candidates as teacher candidates or co-teachers rather than as student teachers so that the first word the students hear is teacher” (Bacharach et al., 2010, p.5). Pre-service teachers must be seen by students as teachers to gain confidence and be sure about the success of the practicum. That means that students should behave the same as in normal classes without altering the context.

Involvement. Generally, in a non-cotaught classroom, one teacher is passive while the other is active and leads instruction. In co-teaching, both teachers work together in the process of student learning (Bacharach et al., 2010). Co-teaching emphasizes the collaboration between the two teachers in the classroom to meet the needs of all students.

Relationship building. According to Bacharach et al., (2010), the participants in the co-teaching model should establish a relationship of professional trust and respect before teaching together. Both need to support and be committed to each other. At the beginning of the process pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers should create a collaborative relationship that enables them to work together without barriers.

Communication and collaboration. “Participants in co-teaching receive guidance on the importance of strong communication and collaboration skills” (Bacharach et al., 2010, p.5). Instruction in communication and collaboration during this process is given in order to reach the objectives of teacher training practice.

Planning. The cooperating teacher and preservice teacher are expected to have a specific time for planning the lessons where the focus includes the details of how, when and which co-teaching strategies use for future lessons. Pre-service teachers will spend more time on their own preparing presentations, material, activities, etc., for their part in each lesson (Bacharach et al., 2010). Both must select the co-teaching strategies that will be used in each class but the preservice teacher must spend more time preparing materials, presentations, activities that will be used for both teachers during the class.

Solo versus lead. Bacharach et al., (2010) state that in co-teaching the cooperating teacher provides the pre-service teacher time to develop and practice all aspects of teaching with mentoring and support. Both teachers are expected to plan for instruction and evaluation collaboratively. Ultimately, the pre-service teacher becomes fully responsible for the entire classroom but the cooperating teacher is leading all aspects of teaching. As the experience progresses, the pre-service teacher changes its role of solo teaching and start gaining experience as a lead teacher (Bacharach et al., 2010).



Modeling and coaching. “When co-teaching, the cooperating teacher provides ongoing modeling and coaching, making the invisible visible by explicitly sharing his or her rationale for instructional, curricular and management decisions” (Bacharach et al., 2010, p.6). The cooperating teacher should show to the pre-service teacher how to teach and lead with certain issues of classes before the preservice teacher takes his/her role in class.

Power differential. Cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers are taught to address issues of parity and gain experience in how to work as a team. Cooperative teachers should be opened to the pre-service teacher’s contributions and ideas as well as the pre-service teacher works on the cooperating teacher’s feedback and mentoring (Bacharach et al., 2010). The relationship constructed should be based on tolerance and openness to one’s other’s ideas. Both should take in and work with the ideas of the partner when they are well founded.

All these co-teaching components help to organize the pre-service teaching experience in an easy way to carry on this model. In addition, several strategies lead with the roles of cooperating and pre-service teachers in the classroom as well as the expectations of each one. Furthermore, the co-teaching strategies should be used according to the level of expertise that the pre-service teacher is acquiring.

### **2.5.3 Co-teaching strategies in student teaching**

During the student teaching experience the strategies mentioned here help to organize the roles of pre-service and cooperating teachers according to the lesson that will be presented. At the same time, they help to develop different skills and provide a larger view of the classroom and students as individuals.

The co-teaching strategies described below were developed by Cook (2004) and have been modified for use in the student teaching experience (Bacharach et al., 2010). Through the strategies pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers will establish their roles in each

collaborative lesson and furthermore use the one that seems to fit better the content of the lessons.

The strategies will be defined according to Bacharach et al. (2010), Suárez (2016) and Rodriguez (2014). These authors have investigated and worked with co-teaching strategies in different research.

### 1. One teach, one observe

The responsibility for instruction is given to one of the two teachers while the other gathers information about students or teacher. The observer should select and decide what behavior or technique is going to be analyzed because the observation should be focused on problems of interest for both teachers in order to discuss and propose an alternative solution. Pre-service teacher and cooperating teacher are able to take on either role.

### 2. One teach, one assist

One teacher has the instructional responsibility while the other assists students with their work, corrects assignments and provides feedback, leads with classroom management and encourages students to participate if they are hesitating to add comments or questions. This strategy fits for new teachers on the co-teaching method. However, it is noted that if one teacher takes the lead role very often, the other teacher is at risk of looking just like an assistant.

### 3. Station teaching

Pre-service teacher and cooperating teacher divide the instructional content into parts. Each teacher has a team. It can be stations (teams) where students have to work independently. The groups rotate according to the time designated at each station. Groups can be divided into three stations, two of which require instruction and one where students work independently.

#### 4. Parallel teaching

The class is divided in half the students. Each teacher is responsible for the instruction in the corresponding group. However, both teachers are using the same content and material as well as the same planning, delivery and evaluation. The benefit on this strategy is the reduction of students and the increasing of students' participation.

#### 5. Supplemental teaching

One teacher works with students at their expected grade level while the other teacher works with those students who need more time for doing activities or more time for explanation; some kind of extra help in the classes.

#### 6. Alternative (differentiated) teaching

This teaching strategy provides two approaches to teaching the same information. The learning outcome is the same for all the students; however, the avenue for getting there is different.

#### 7. Team teaching

Both teachers are involved in the instructional lesson actively. There is no division of authority. From the students' perspective, there is no clearly defined leader, both teachers share the instruction, are free to add information and questions, and assist students with doubts or answer questions. Teachers should alternate roles like direction, support, observation, evaluation, etc.

Each strategy is a different way of working collaboratively but teachers should determine objectives, content, assignments and the need of their classes to select the one that is more appropriate for the situation or some that fit with their planning, delivery and evaluation (Rodríguez, 2014). The description above shows the kind of relation between pre-service teacher and cooperating teacher and the distribution of roles among them. The co-teaching

implementation emphasizes the collaborative skills and through them, the teaching and supervision skills will be improved for all.

#### **2.5.4 Implementation in higher education**

The co-teaching model used in special education has provided a foundation for the adaptation of co-teaching as a model for student-teaching (Hartnett, Weet, McCoy, Theiss & Nickens, 2013). The co-teaching method started as a way of helping home teachers to teach children students with different needs and then it was adapted to be used as a model for the student teaching experience in higher education.

There are many benefits of co-teaching in higher education; students in co-taught classrooms have the opportunity to be exposed to vary content presentation, individualized instruction, and scaffold leaning experiences. Co-teaching in its most effective form can promote equitable learning opportunities for all students (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012).

Pre-service teachers participating in co-teaching display enhanced classroom management, improved collaboration skills, and increased confidence in their ability to meet the diverse needs of children (Hartnett et al., 2013). When pre-service teachers are learning in the field they notice the importance of social skills because now they are training teaching abilities that in the university environment will be difficult to put in practice.

Co-teaching does not necessarily align with traditional practices in higher education. Co-teaching requires more planning time than that of a solo-taught course (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012). Collaborative planning time is critical in co-teaching because it is needed for pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers to know what strategy is going to be implemented and what the role of each participant is.

Planning meetings prior to and during the course, as well as after each class are important to maintain the course continuity, monitor the content and instruction, and communicate with

one another (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012). After each class, pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers should talk about whether the objectives of the plan were reached and what was the experience when applying co-teaching strategies.

Co-teaching serves as both a teaching method in the classroom for cooperating teachers and a strategy for pre-service teachers' development in their role as teachers (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012). Both teachers have different experiences that make them grow as individuals and professionals in the language-teaching field.

The experiences that are gained from co-teaching provide to pre-service and cooperating teachers rich opportunities for reflection on their teaching practices, themselves as individuals and their student's learning (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012). The co-teaching model provides to cooperating teachers the opportunity to analyze the needs of their students and their leaning. Reflection plays an important role for this model because promotes correction and feedback.

Chanmugam and Gerlach (2013) say that students in a co-taught classroom observe the collaborative processes required for effective co-teaching such as cooperating teacher openness to dialogue and feedback. Students gain rich opportunities for the development of skills in areas of social work practice.

Furthermore, in the co-teaching relationship, the individual educator's reflection on teaching strengths and weaknesses becomes an opened, shared process rather than remaining private and introspective (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013). Reflection in the co-teaching model highlights the importance of being supervised and monitored in order to emphasize openness for feedback as well as sharing of information.

The co-teaching model applied to the student teaching experience promotes collaboration between teachers and students in the language teaching area and at the same time proposes

different strategies to apply. These strategies emphasize different roles for teachers and students in order to develop teaching and social skills as well as reflection on the teaching experience. Pre-service teachers as well as cooperating teachers must reflect in their collaborative practices to get opportunities for improving their development in teaching.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research design**

For pre-service teachers in the public university selected for this study, it is relevant to have good guidance and coaching in their professional practice as part of their development as competent and prepared teachers. Effective teaching involves more than planning and content area expertise. Diversification of lessons to meet student needs, teaching, classroom management, record keeping, organization, procedural efficiency, and communication with parents, are all important tasks intrinsic to the job and are explicitly understood during the intern experience (Spooner et al., 2008). Pre-service teachers need a cooperating teacher that provides accompaniment through all the teaching tasks and train them to face the actual classroom environment.

According to the characteristics of this study, the methodology selected was action-research. This project is specifically addressed to improve the collaboration and mentoring from cooperating teachers to pre-service teachers. According to Latorre (2015), the action-research methodology is conceptualized as a project of action formed by action strategies, linked to the needs of the teachers, researchers or research teams. It is a process characterized by its cyclical aspect between action and reflection.

The action-research methodology follows a continuous process, known as the research spiral that allows the articulation of reflexive action and transforming action. This dynamism means that it is necessary to articulate the planning phase, the action phase and the evaluation phase on a permanent basis (Gómez & Roquet, 2012). It is seen that a cycle of action research is not enough when it is required to achieve the full potential of the improvement on a practice.

Specifically, Lewin action-research model (Latorre, 2015) was followed. It describes action-research as reflexive action cycles. The cycle of action-research is the basis for improving the practice; it is integrated by these steps: planning, action and evaluation of the action.

During the planning phase two instruments were designed and developed to test the problem of study and verify whether it really exists or it does not and what its characteristics are. Cooperating teachers on the areas of English Teaching and Bilingual Education were interviewed in order to get data from their practice and analyze their roles as mentors. A questionnaire was applied to pre-service teachers in order to find data that comes from their experiences, feelings and perceptions that are related to their professional practicum as English or Bilingual teachers as well as to categorize their conceptions about their teaching practice.

The obtained data was analyzed to categorize aspects from the teaching training process like lesson preparation, being coached, reflection on teaching experience and mentor feedback taking into account the cooperating and pre-service teachers' conceptions and opinions. According to the results, a didactic proposal was designed to implement in the teaching practice process that is the next phase of Lewin's action- research model.



Then, during the action phase from Lewin's action-research model, a protocol for collaborative teaching practices was designed. It is based on a series of strategies from the co-teaching model in teacher education that encourages the collaboration between teachers and students in order to develop teaching and social skills needed for the teaching field (Bacharach et. al., 2010). The experiences that are gained from co-teaching provide to pre-service and cooperating teachers rich opportunities for reflection on their teaching practices, themselves as individuals and their student's learning (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012). This new protocol for collaborative teaching practices (co-teaching) established the cooperating and pre-service teachers' roles in each stage of the teaching practicum and looked for a commitment between participants through personal signs.

Finally, during the Lewin's evaluation phase, the didactic proposal implementation was evaluated through a questionnaire provided to cooperating teachers and supervisors. The purpose was to check whether the collaborative teaching roles proposed through the teaching practice protocol work or do not work according to their expertise as well as to know about advantages, disadvantages and limitations of this project.

### **3.2 Description of the context and sample**

The context for this research is a public university school in Nuevo Leon that is in charge of the development of future English and Bilingual teachers and the language center from the same university. Both institutions are public and pre-service teachers carry out their teaching practice there. This public university prepares English and Bilingual Teachers to face the teaching field once they have completed their corresponding curriculum. The language center is an institution that offers language courses to students from different majors as well as young and adult people who are not enroll in that university as students.

At the beginning of 10<sup>th</sup> semester, pre-service teachers are assigned to different cooperating teachers from that public university school and the language center. Sometimes pre-service teachers look for cooperating teachers that want to receive them in their classes to deliver their teaching practice. The classroom where the practice takes place is an area with capacity for 25 – 30 students. It has class tools such as: electronic board, white board and computer with internet access.

The participants in the selected sample were 28 graduated students from the areas of English teaching and Bilingual Education that took the teaching practice subject in their last semester of the major; generations 2010-2015 and 2011-2016. Currently they are working as English or Bilingual teachers. Each pre-service teacher (now, in-service teacher) or a pair of pre-service teachers delivered classes in charge of one cooperating teacher and a supervisor. 7 cooperating teachers were selected to be interviewed. They work as university teachers in this public school or as English teachers in the language center.

### **3.3 Instruments for data collection**

It was decided to work primarily with two instruments for data collection. An interview was used to analyze the cooperating teachers' roles as mentors on the areas of collaboration, supervision, selection, experience and feedback. A questionnaire was applied to pre-service teachers in order to contrast the perspectives from cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers in relation to the student teaching experience. It has an option scale that emphasizes the level of agreement according to different teaching categories like lesson preparation, being coached, reflection on teaching experience and mentor feedback.

#### **3.3.1 The interview**

There were personal interviews with cooperating teacher. They were informal interviews since as Balcázar (2005) states the interviewer should create a climate where the

interviewee feels comfortable and free to express his perspective on the topic. The author also describes that the questions should neither be very direct nor very specific because they can alter the natural form of the response. The questionnaire used in the interviews was taken from Hamilton (2010) and adapted to this study (See appendix 2).

According to Balcázar (2005) these are some of the characteristics that help to have a better quality for obtaining data in a personal interview:

- Allow the interviewee to speak.
- Do not make judgments.
- Pay attention.
- Remind the researcher that the data obtained will be for research only, it is confidential and that at any time the interviewee can access to them.
- Measure times in such a way that the interviewee is not rushed or falls into the tedious.
- Thank the interviewee for his / her contribution to the project.

Through the use of the interview as an instrument for data collection, it is expected to obtain relevant information on the different phenomena that affect the collaboration between pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers and on the teaching practice process implemented in the institution studied. With the data, it will be possible to visualize the cooperating teachers' points of view, so their work as mentors in the classroom can be studied for this research. The cooperating teachers' interviews only cover a part of the object of study. It is necessary to apply a questionnaire to pre-service teachers to collect data from their perspective about the cooperating teachers mentoring.

### **3.3.2 The questionnaire**

There was a questionnaire to apply to pre-service teachers. This questionnaire provided appropriate data related to conceptions and opinions about the teaching practice process. It was taken from Ngoepe (2014) and adapted to this research (See appendix 1). The questionnaire consists of a set of questions on a topic or research problem that must be answered in writing (Latorre, 2015). According to Latorre (2015) the questionnaire is a technique for collecting information about opinions, attitudes, and skills, applicable to large samples of defined populations.

As Latorre (2015) states there are some advantages in the use of questionnaires:

- It is easy and simple to complete.
- Provide direct answers.
- The information is quantifiable.
- It can quickly take responses to a large number of people.

For this research, the questionnaire has close questions. The questionnaire related to the problem was applied to obtain a greater reference of the pre-service teachers' conceptions. Graphs were then made for the analysis of the data obtained in closed questions and then information was categorized in tables to summarize the results and make them easy to comprehend.

Through the application of these instruments, it was expected to obtain a broad vision of the problem being investigated as well as provided the researcher with relevant data for the distribution of categories and the appropriate analysis of them. The purpose was to give answers to the research questions that were formulated at the beginning of this study. During the data analysis process, the information obtained was broken down in such a way that data

could be interpreted, explained, compared and summarized to better understanding of the research phenomenon.

### **3.4 Data analysis and results**

A structured questionnaire was used to elicit student teachers' perceptions of their cooperating teachers' assistance or lack of assistance among pre-service teachers in a public university. The instrument was taken from Ngoepe (2014) and consisted of closed questions; some of them were modified for this research (see annex 1). The questions were related to pre-service teachers' experiences with lesson preparation, being coached, reflections on teaching experience and mentor feedback. Data was collected by means of a Likert-type scale questionnaire (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree) with 18 different statements.

The questionnaire was structured to capture some participants' biographical information, which included age, gender and the major specialization on English teaching or Bilingual Education. 28 in-service teachers participated as the sample of study of this research from which 67.86% were women. Almost half of the participants (42.86%) delivered their teaching practicum as English teachers. It also sought information on opinion statements about their experiences during teaching practice and the cooperation and roles that cooperating teachers play during the teaching practice process. This instrument reported only on pre-service teachers' opinion statements.

Descriptive analysis was applied to analyze the perceptions on mentoring during teaching practice. Four categories about the perceptions of pre-service teachers were created for analysis. These categories were: support with lesson preparation, being coached, reflections on teaching experience and mentor feedback. The scales strongly agree (SA) to agree (A), and strongly disagree (SD) to disagree (D) were incorporated as one opinion in the discussion for

ease of interpretation. The neutral (N) option remained as the middle point between the two opinions (agree and disagree) mentioned before.

Numbers of statements in each table are not in order because they were getting together by the different categories. Each table shows a teaching category evaluating cooperation and teaching practice (see table I).

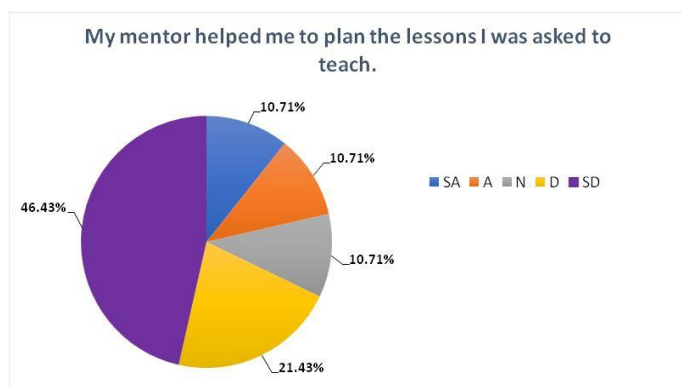
**Table I Views about support with lesson preparation**

Questions	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. My mentor helped me to plan for the lessons I was asked to teach.	10.71	10.71	28.57	17.86	42.86
2. My mentor helped me to write the learning outcomes for the lessons I taught.	3.57	7.14	28.57	17.86	42.86
3. My mentor helped me to decide on the media that I could use to develop concepts in lessons that I taught.	7.14	17.86	10.71	28.57	35.71
4. The mentor identified some teaching skills for me to implement in a lesson before/during planning.	3.57	32.14	21.43	14.29	28.57
17. The mentor teacher helped to identify some teaching materials.	10.71	42.86	10.71	17.86	17.86

Based on the data in Table I “Views about support in lesson preparation”, the majority of the respondents (67.86%) disagreed that their cooperating teachers helped them to plan for the

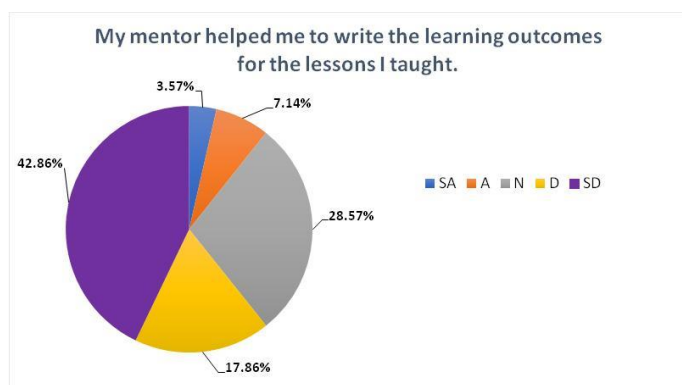
lessons they were asked to teach, 21.42% stated that cooperating teachers helped them to plan for their lessons and 10.71% remained neutral (see graphic 2).

**Graphic 2**



Furthermore, 60.72% confirmed that the cooperating teacher did not help them to write the learning outcomes for the lessons taught, 10.71% said that their cooperating teachers help them to write the learning outcomes for the lessons and 28.57% remained neutral (see graphic 3).

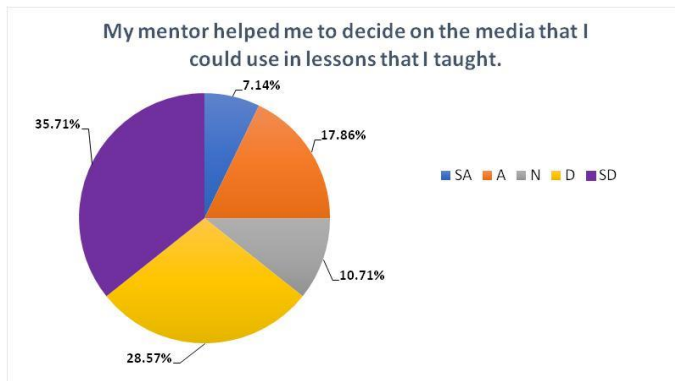
**Graphic 3**



A significant proportion of the respondents (64.28%), were in disagreement with the statement "my mentor helped me to decide on the media to develop concepts in the lessons that I taught" (see graphic 4). Only 25% were of the opinion that their mentors helped them to decide on the media they could use to develop concepts. According to Bacharach et. al.

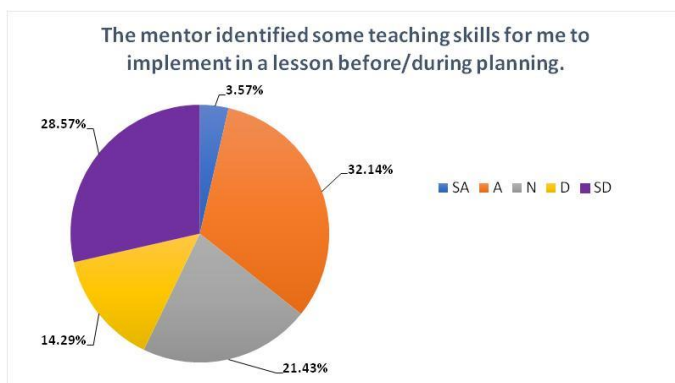
(2010) the cooperating teacher and pre-service teacher are expected to have a specific time for planning the lessons where the focus includes the details of how, when and which co-teaching strategies will be used for future lessons. Pre-service teachers will spend more time on their own preparing presentations, material, activities, etc., for their part in each practice lesson.

**Graphic 4**



Furthermore, 42.86% said that the cooperating teacher did not identify teaching skills for them to implement before and during the planning stage of the lesson and 35.71% said the opposite (see graphic 5).

**Graphic 5**

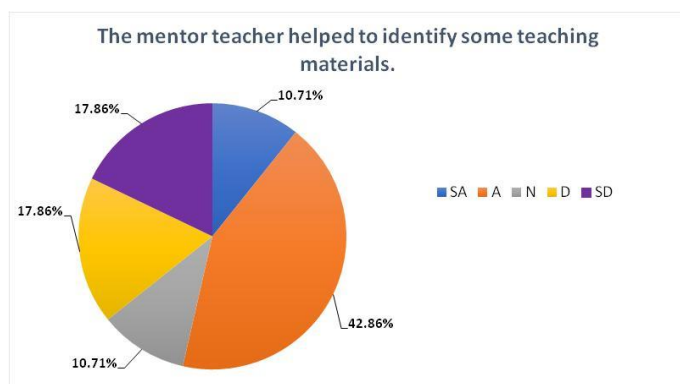


Moreover, 53.57% of the respondents agreed that their mentors helped them to identify some teaching materials but 35.72% disagreed with that statement (see graphic 17). According to Graziano and Navarrete (2012) planning meetings prior to and during the



course, as well as after each class are important to maintain the course continuity, monitor the content and instruction, and communicate with one another. After each class, pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers should talk about whether the objectives of the plan were reached and what was their experience during the practice.

**Graphic 17**



In summary, regarding support with lesson preparation, the majority of the pre-service teachers indicated that their cooperating teachers did not help them to plan lessons, write specific lesson outcomes, decide on the type of media used or support them in identifying some teaching skills but most of those cooperating teachers supported them in identifying specific applicable teaching material to use in classes.

**Table II Views on being coached**

Questions	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. The mentor teacher let me sit and observe his/her lessons during the early days of my teaching practice in order to get used to the class climate.	28.57	28.57	0	21.43	21.43
9. The mentor teacher demonstrated some	17.86	25.00	17.86	14.29	25.00

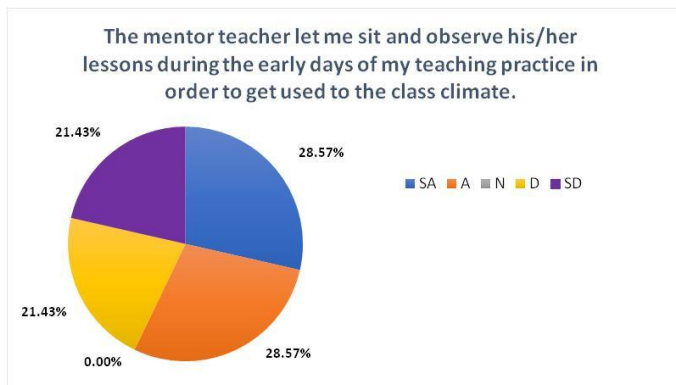
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teaching skills before asking me to teach a lesson.					
13. The mentor teacher coached me how to teach English or any content in English.	7.14	28.57	21.43	21.43	21.43
14. My mentor teacher regularly sat in on lessons and observed what I taught.	42.86	21.43	10.71	10.71	14.29
6 My mentor encouraged me to use group work during the lessons that I taught.	28.57	28.57	14.29	17.86	10.71
10. My mentor teacher discouraged me from using group work in lessons that I taught.	0	3.57	10.71	32.14	53.57
12. My mentor teacher allowed me to use any teaching method that I thought was useful to develop concepts in lessons I taught.	64.29	28.57	3.57	0	3.57

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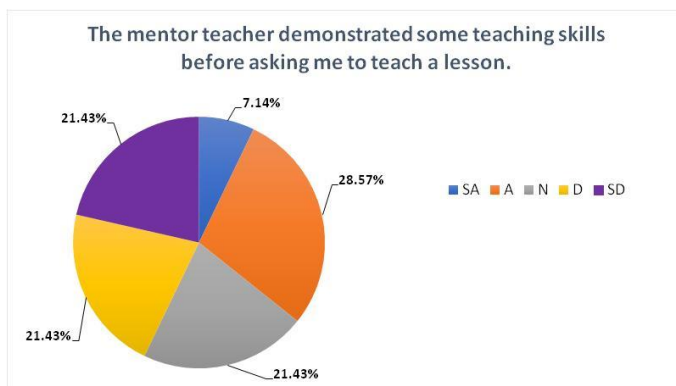
On the category “Views on being coached” (see Table II), it was clear that the middle of respondents (57.14%) supported the view that the cooperating teachers let them observe on lessons they taught during the initial days of teaching practice to enable them to get used to the class but the rest of the respondents (42.86%) said the opposite and there is no neutral pre-service teachers’ opinions (see graphic 1).

### Graphic 1



Furthermore, 42.86% agreed that the cooperating teachers demonstrated some teaching skills before asking them to teach a lesson but 39.29% stated that cooperating teachers did not demonstrated teaching skills they just let them teach but they did not learn from their expertise as English or Bilingual teachers (see graphic 9).

### Graphic 9



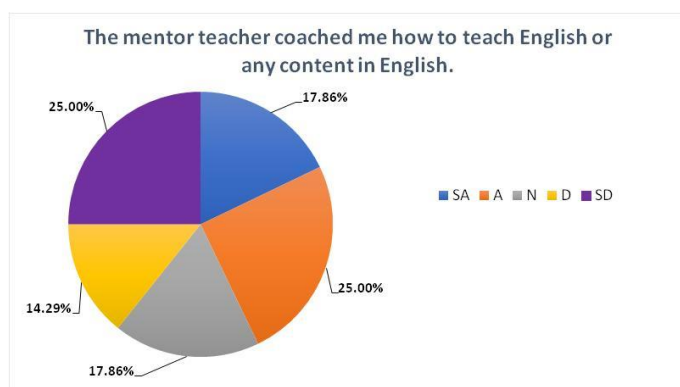
It is important to highlight that there is a considerable percentage of pre-service teachers that were not in agreement with the way cooperating teachers let them observe before teaching and that they did not model teaching skills in order for them to understand how to use different teaching strategies.

Bacharach et al. (2010) state that the cooperating teacher should provide ongoing modeling and coaching, making the invisible visible by explicitly sharing his or her rationale

for instructional, curricular and management decisions. The cooperating teacher should show to the pre-service teacher how to use different teaching strategies and how to lead with certain issues of classes before the pre-service teacher takes his/her role in classes.

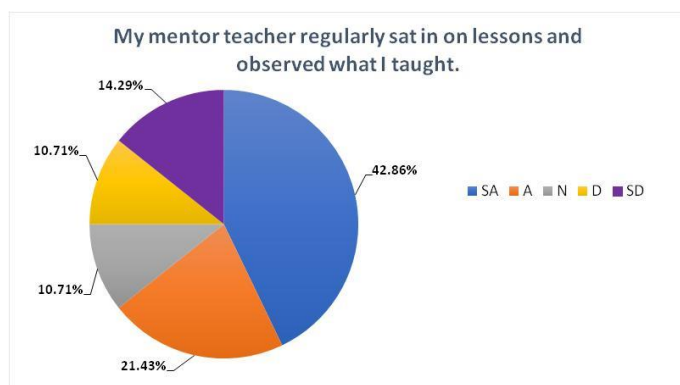
About half (42.86%) of the respondents disagreed that the mentors coached them how to teach and 21.43% were neutral concerning this statement (see graphic 13).

**Graphic 13**



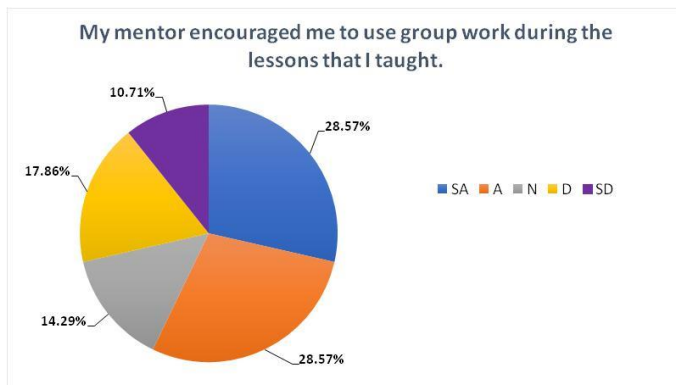
A significant proportion of pre-service teachers (64.29%) consented that their cooperating teachers regularly sat in on lessons that they taught and let them deliver the class, they just observe what it is being taught (see graphic 14).

**Graphic 14**



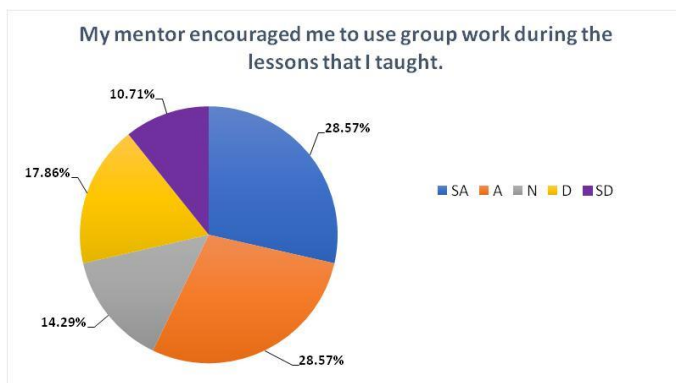
Some (57.14%) agreed that the cooperating teachers encouraged them to use group work during the lessons that they taught (see graphic 6)

**Graphic 6**



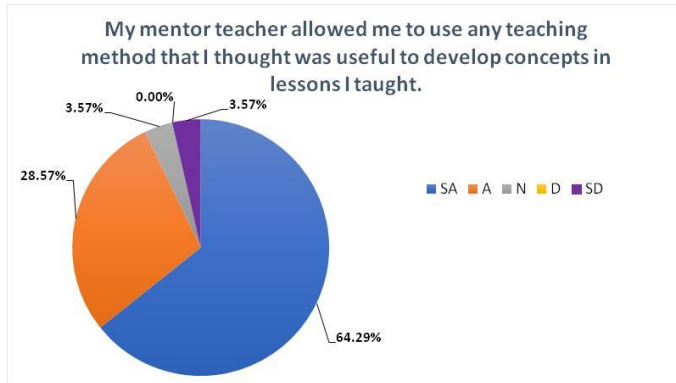
On top of that, 85.71% disagreed that the mentors discouraged them from using group work in lessons that they taught (see graphic 10).

**Graphic 10**



A substantial percentage, 92.86% agreed that their mentors allowed them to use any teaching method that they thought useful to develop concepts in the lessons they taught (see graphic 12).

**Graphic 12**



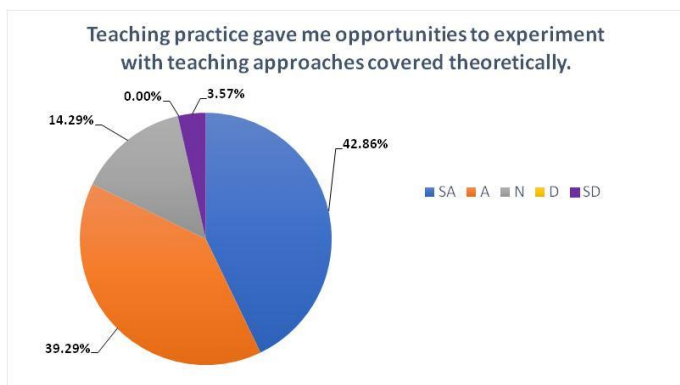
According to Correa (2011), teacher training is not just the job of one supervisor; it is the job of all teachers that are committed with education. Experienced teachers are required to monitor and guide pre-service teachers on the process of becoming in-service teachers. They have an active role in observing and monitoring pre-service teachers to make them realize about their weaknesses and make them work on these ones to improve them.

**Table III Reflections on the teaching experience**

Questions	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. Teaching practice gave me opportunities to experiment with teaching approaches covered theoretically.	42.86	39.29	14.29	0	3.57
11. I gained a lot of knowledge on how to teach during teaching practice.	25	32.14	25	14.29	3.57
16. I got a lot of insights on how students learn English during teaching practice.	25	42.86	14.29	3.57	14.29
17. All my practice teaching lessons in English are enjoyable.	35.71	35.71	21.43	3.57	3.57

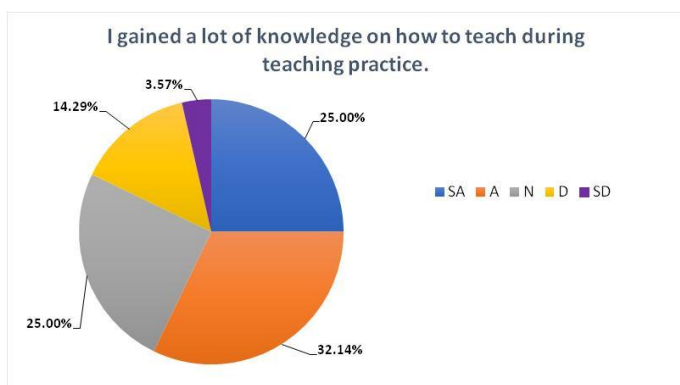
On the category “Reflections on the teaching experience” (see table III), it was clear that the majority of the respondents (82.15%) agreed that teaching practice gave them opportunities to experiment with teaching approaches covered theoretically (see graphic 8).

**Graphic 8**



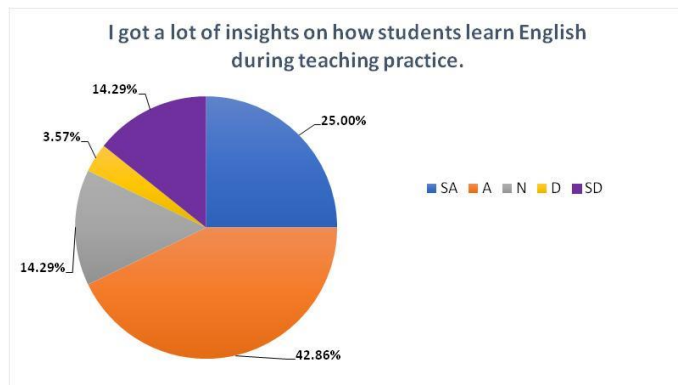
57.14% of pre-service teachers confirmed that they gained a lot of knowledge on how to teach during teaching practice but 25% of them were neutral about this statement (see graphic 11).

**Graphic 11**



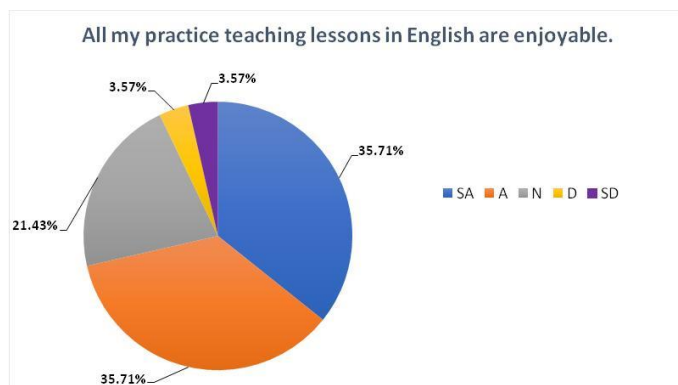
According to 67.86% of the respondents, they gained many insights on how learners learn English or any content in English during teaching practice and just 17.86% of pre-service teachers disagreed with this statement (see graphic 16).

**Graphic 16**



Moreover, 71.42% assented that all their practice teaching lessons in English or any content in English were enjoyable and 21.43% were not sure about it (see graphic 18).

**Graphic 18**



The experiences that are gained from the practicum provide to pre-service and cooperating teachers rich opportunities for reflection on their teaching practices, themselves as individuals and their student's learning (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012). According to the results pre-service teachers confirmed that they have gained a lot of knowledge on how to teach English or any content in English through their teaching practice process and that they had enjoyable classes or lessons during their period as pre-service teachers.

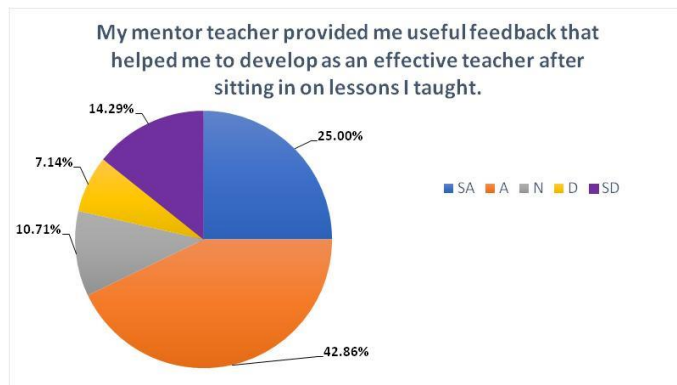


**Table IV Views on cooperating teacher feedback**

Questions	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. My mentor teacher provided me useful feedback that helped me to develop as an effective teacher after sitting in on lessons I taught.	25	42.86	10.71	7.14	14.29
15. My mentor teacher gave me useful feedback on my questioning techniques.	32.14	28.57	10.71	14.29	14.29

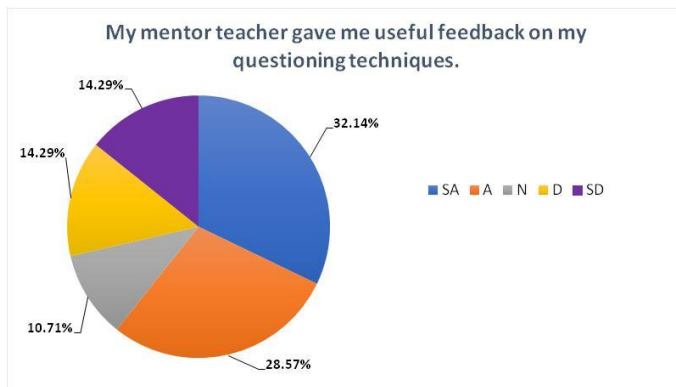
On the category “Views on cooperating teacher feedback” (see Table IV), it seemed that the majority of respondents (67.86%) were of the opinion that the mentors provided them with useful feedback that helped them to develop as effective teachers after sitting in on lessons that they had taught (see graphic 7).

**Graphic 7**



Furthermore, 60.71% agreed that their mentors gave them useful feedback on their questioning techniques, 21.43% of pre-service teachers disagreed and 10.71% remained neutral (see graphic 15).

**Graphic 15**



In summary, pre-service teachers from the institution studied said that they had good feedback and mentoring from their cooperating teachers so they could grow professionally as teachers. As Bacharach et al. (2010) said cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers must gain experience in how to work as a team. Cooperating teachers should be opened to the pre-service teachers' contributions and ideas as well as the pre-service teachers work on the cooperating teachers' feedback and mentoring. The relationship constructed should be based on tolerance and openness to one's other's ideas. Both should take in and work with the ideas of the partner when they are well founded.

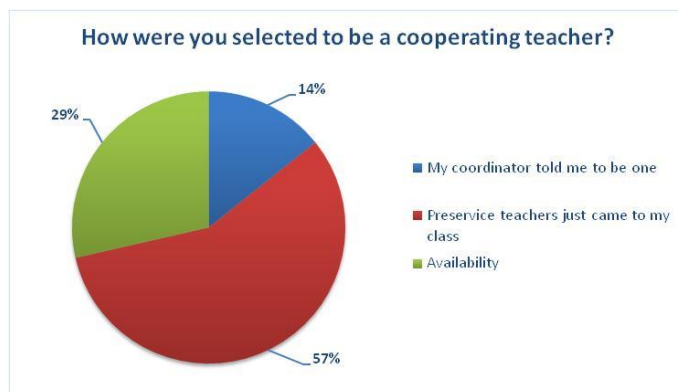
In addition, a semi-structured interview was applied to 7 cooperating teachers to know the roles that they take as mentors during the teaching practice process and how the organization of this process is carried out inside this university school. The instrument was taken from Hamilton (2010) and consisted of 12 open questions that were developed to answer with certain relevant information for this investigation (see appendix 2). Data was categorized in each question according to the interviewees' answers and graphics were created for ease of interpretation.

First question shows that more than half of cooperating teachers (57%) said that they did not know how they were selected to be cooperating teachers; pre-service teachers just came to

their classrooms and asked them if they could deliver their practice sessions there. Some comments were *“I don’t know about the selection, student teachers just come to me and tell me they’re going to be in my class”, “Well, all of the students come to me and they tell me that they are going to be in my class, some of them ask for permission, some of them don’t ask for permission they just say I am going to be in your class. Some years ago the teachers used to have a letter to send along with the students now nothing happens the students just arrive. So how am I selected? For the teachers or sometimes for the students”*.

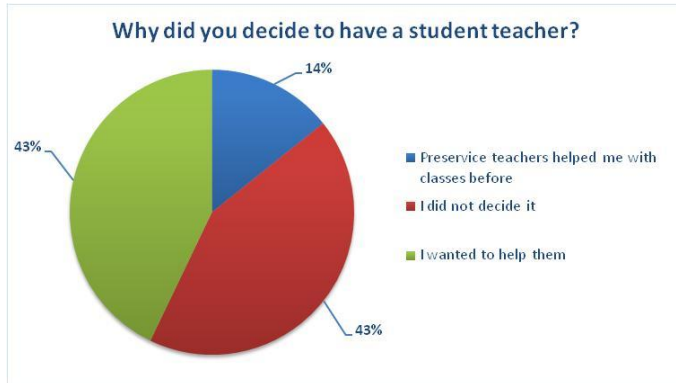
29% said that they were selected because of the availability they show to the supervisor in charge of the practice while just 14% mentioned that their coordinator told them to accept pre-service teachers in their classrooms.

**Graphic 1**



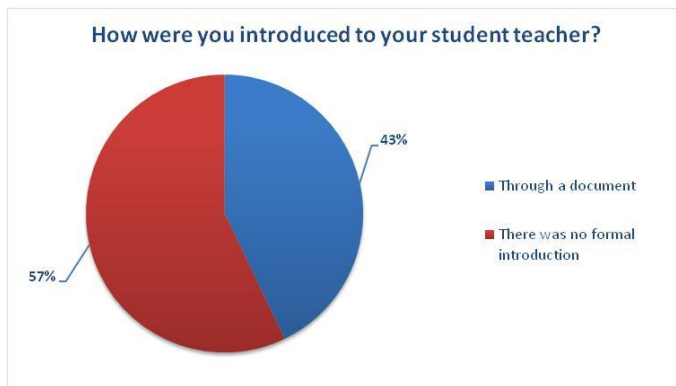
On question 2, some cooperating teachers (43%) mentioned that they decided to have a pre-service teacher in their classroom because they wanted to help them to grow professionally. A cooperating teacher said: *“Because I was like them, because we need to push the new generations, in order to be a support to them”*. The same significant percentage (43%) said that they did not decide, pre-service teacher just came to their classrooms with a letter of presentation for practicing. A cooperating teacher mentioned: *“I’ve never decided, they just come to me”*.

**Graphic 2**



On the next question, most of the cooperating teachers (57%) said that there was no formal introduction with pre-service teachers the first time they met but a significant percentage (43%) mentioned that there was a formal introduction through a document or letter that pre-service teachers shown to them at the beginning of their practice sessions.

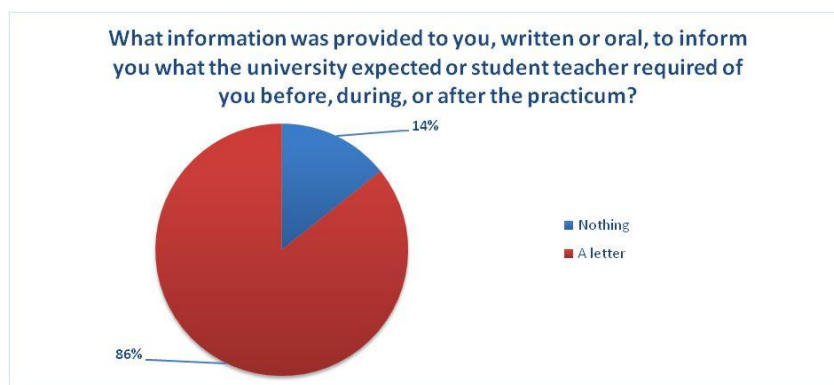
**Graphic 3**



Moreover, almost all cooperating teachers (87%) mentioned on question 4 that there is a presentation letter provided to them to inform about the pre-service teachers' practices but it does not state what pre-service teachers required of them as mentors before, during, or after the practicum. There was a comment that said *"Well, I have had some students from different supervisors and some of them from one of those teachers bring a paper where it is written some of the aspects or the things that the student must follow, a kind of code of ethic, how*

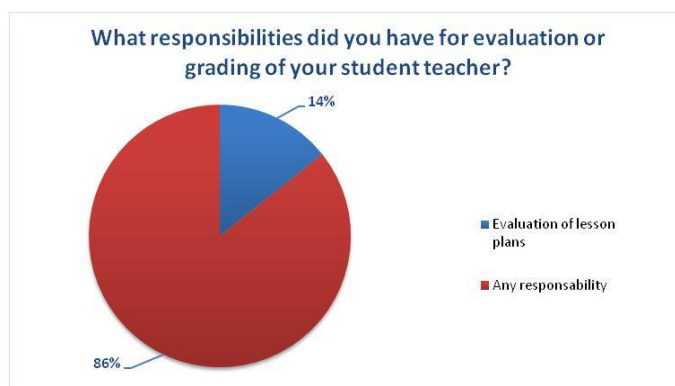
*they have to behave during the practicum but they are some other students that they just come and I don't know really what they are supposed to do, is like we have talked every class and I've told them what is the next topic but I don't know many things so I have to ask them sometimes and it is not very regulate it that aspect of giving instructions of how they have to work with me".* Just a teacher said (14%) that he did not receive any letter for presentation nor for stating his roles.

**Graphic 4**



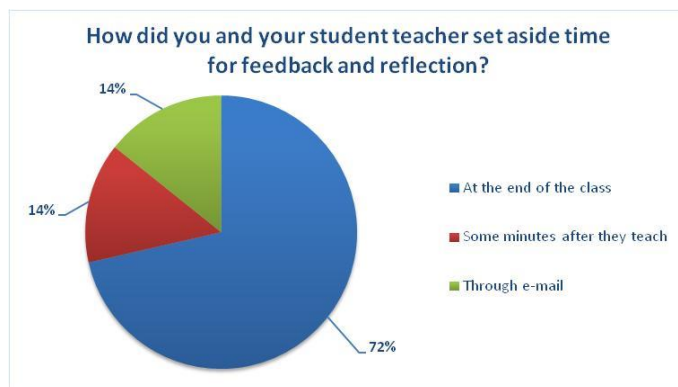
On graphic 5, it is shown that 86% of cooperating teachers did not have any responsibility for evaluating or grading of pre-service teachers, they are not asked to do that. Contrary, 14% mentioned that they had the responsibility on the evaluation of lesson plans each class pre-service teachers taught.

**Graphic 5**



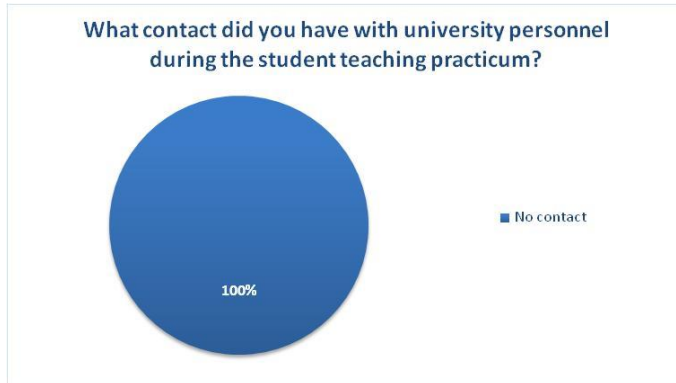
Furthermore, a significant percentage of cooperating teachers (72%) said that they set aside time for feedback and reflection at the end of the class, while the other 28% mentioned that they gave feedback to pre-service teachers some minutes after they taught or through e-mail. There were comments like: *“Well, we usually don’t set any time, what I do is that when they finish their practice sessions and if it is still some time remaining for the class I finish the class and when I finish the class I take like two or three minutes to give them feedback maybe five minutes to talk with them to tell them mistakes that they probably have done or the good things they have done in the class”, “I guess I give them feedback because I think I have to. Sometimes some minutes after they teach the lesson”.*

**Graphic 6**



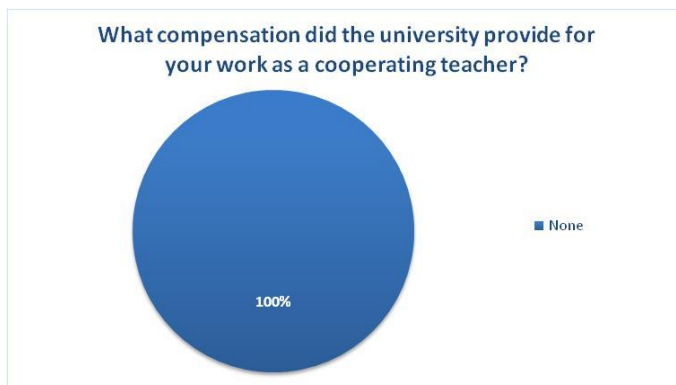
On question 7, all cooperating teachers affirmed that there was no contact with the university personnel in charge of the teaching practicum in the school. They just had contact with pre-service teachers. A cooperating teacher mentioned: *“Well, to be honest I’ve never had any contact with people who are in charge of them the only contact that I have is through the document they bring at the beginning of the sessions because it is sent by somebody but after that I have never had any contact with any other one”.*

**Graphic 7**



Also, all cooperating teachers stated that they did not receive any compensation or reward for their work and time they spent with pre-service teachers. Some of them mentioned professional satisfaction for pre-service teachers' development and their thankfulness. *“Well, the satisfaction. No, I do not have any reward any kind of reward. It is just that I feel part of helping them or giving them the space to practice and giving them the chance to have the experience in my classroom. It is not like earning any extra payment just helping them”.*

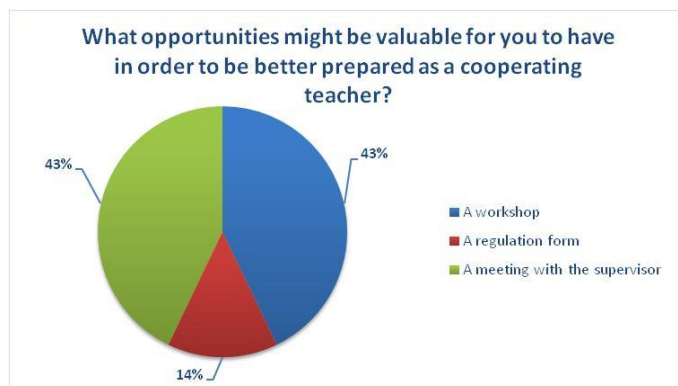
**Graphic 8**



Regarding preparation as mentors, cooperating teachers (43%) said that it will be valuable for them to have a workshop or a meeting with the supervisor before the semester starts as an opportunity to be more prepared as mentors. Their answers highlighted that they need instructions to follow during the teaching practicum to know what their roles are because they

are in charge of pre-service teachers during their practice sessions. Some comments were: *“I would like to have a regulated or regulation form to regulate what a cooperating teacher has to do in the class. In there, I would like to see the responsibilities that this cooperation has when having a student that is doing his or her practices. Regulation like the time how is the feedback, how long, when, how often, what is the format for the lesson plans, what if the student is doing wrong during the classes if I interrupt their classes or just let them finish”*. *“To have guidance from the teacher that is in charge of the subject. What she expects from me as a mentor and I mean to know the role that I have, if I have to evaluate or not, what I have to check, I mean sometimes I don’t know what to do and I just do what I think I must do”*.

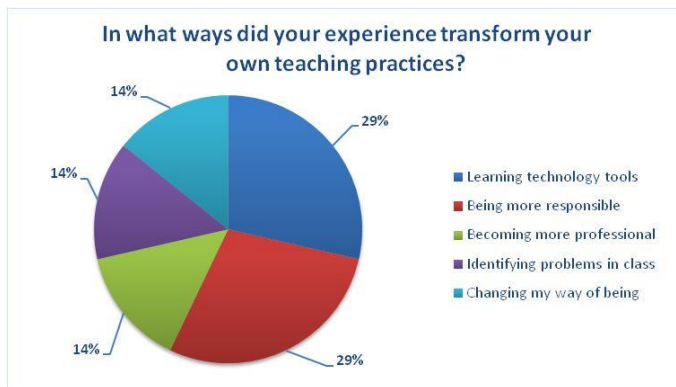
**Graphic 9**



There were too varied answers regarding the experience as cooperating teachers. 29% mentioned that learning technology tools and being more responsible are teaching aspect that have improved through their experience as cooperating teachers. The others said that becoming more professional, identifying problems in class and changing their way of being are aspects that have improved through their experience as cooperating teachers.

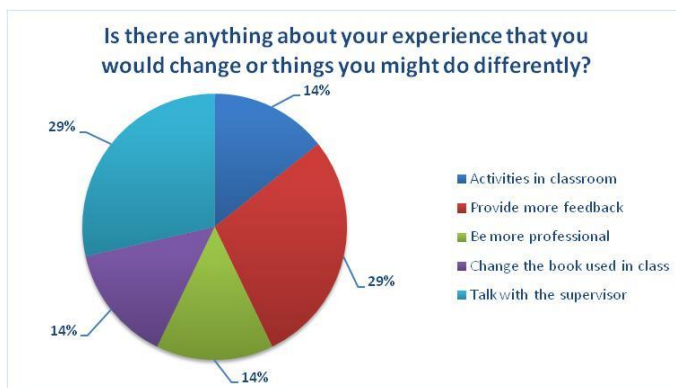


**Graphic 10**



Furthermore, cooperating teachers emphasized some aspects of the teaching practice process that they would change or do differently. 29% mentioned that provide more feedback and activities in the classroom that they must improve. The other cooperating teachers said they would be more professional, they would change the book used in their classes and they would talk to the pre-service teachers' supervisor before classes start.

**Graphic 11**

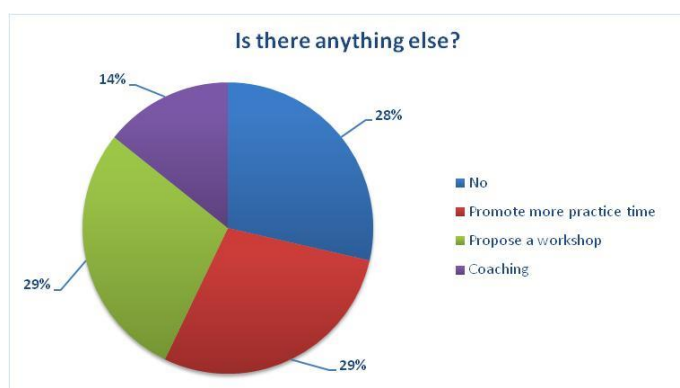


Finally, cooperating teachers add some comments they considered important regarding the teaching practicum for English and Bilingual teachers in this school. Some of them (29%) said that pre-service teachers must have more practice time in the curriculum. Since 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> semester students could start their first practices as teachers. *“Something else is that I think that is really urgent for the students to go to do their practice, their teaching delivery at*

*earlier semesters because if they go right at the end then they won't have enough time to grow in that self-esteem, to improve their teaching delivery so I truly believe that teaching practice must start like in 6<sup>th</sup> semester so they can go 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> probably or more semesters”.*

Other 29% emphasized the importance of having workshops or meetings with supervisors to agree in the ways cooperating teachers have to help pre-service teachers through this process. A cooperating teacher (14%) mentioned that they must know well how to coach pre-service teachers to really help them to improve. *“I think that would be good idea for us teachers to receive kind of a, maybe not a course but any training of how to work with these training teachers because we normally never receive a set of directions”*. The 28% left want to add nothing else.

**Graphic 12**



According to the results and the problems identified through them, a didactic proposal was developed in order to improve on these aspects mentioned before by Conderman and Hedin (2012) and to promote collaborative practices and professional coaching through a series of strategies from the co-teaching method during the teaching practice process.

According to Bacharach and Heck (2010) co-teaching is defined as the joint work of two teachers with the same group of students; sharing the planning, organization, presentation, and evaluation, as well as physical space. The didactic proposal looks for the implementation

of collaborative practices regulated through a document which will state the cooperating teachers' roles to improve on coaching and guidance with preservice teachers on the teaching areas of planning, delivery and evaluation.

## **4. DIDACTIC PROPOSAL**

### **4.1 Protocol for collaborative teaching practices**

This didactic proposal looks for the creation of an official protocol that establishes the pre-service and cooperating teachers' roles to enhance collaboration between participants into the teaching practice process as well as improvement on coaching and guidance for English and Bilingual pre-service teachers on the teaching areas of planning, delivery and evaluation in the context of a public university in Nuevo León.

According to the results got through this research, it was shown that it is missing a formal regulation in which the roles of cooperating teachers, pre-service teachers and supervisors must be stated. Cooperating teachers mentioned they want to help pre-service teachers but they need to follow a formal regulation that states the particular roles to play during practice. On the other hand, pre-service teachers said that even though cooperating teachers supported them in identifying specific applicable teaching materials to use in classes and provided them good feedback, they did not support them with lesson preparation during teaching practices and they did not coach them on how to teach.

According to the results and the problems identified through them, this didactic proposal is developed to improve on coaching and training for pre-service teachers as well as on

collaboration in the different steps of teaching like co-planning, co-delivering, and co-evaluation (Conderman & Hedin, 2012).

Some objectives are written down below to show what the purpose of this didactic proposal is and how to reach them in order to know the outcomes that will help to redesign and test the teaching practice protocol. The general and specific objectives are the following.

The general objective:

- Cooperating teachers involved on the teacher training area will evaluate a protocol for collaborative teaching practices that establishes the participants' roles for improving the teacher training process through collaboration.

Specific objectives:

- To define the teachers' roles during the teaching stages of co-planning, co-delivery and co-evaluation in order to promote collaborative teaching practices.
- Evaluate a teaching practice protocol to regulate collaborative practices through co-teaching strategies and professional advice.

Within the context of promoting collaborative interaction in this public university that focuses on the development of teachers in the area of English teaching and Bilingual Education, this protocol looks for promoting collaborative teaching practices to encourage the professional development of future teachers.

It is carried out by means of collaboration between pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers and university supervisors as follows.

Before practice:

- Supervisors start their teaching practice class explaining to their students (preservice teachers) the complete course and their responsibilities.

- Supervisors assign a cooperating teacher to a preservice teacher.
- Supervisors introduce preservice teachers to cooperating teachers and explain them how to carry out the protocol and their specific roles.
- Cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers start their work as co-teachers, cooperating teachers decide topics to teach and share them with pre-service teachers.
- Cooperating and pre-service teachers choose a co-teaching strategy to follow and then plan together the lesson selected.

In practice:

- Cooperating teacher introduces the pre-service teacher as a co-teacher.
- Both teachers start delivering the class according to the co-teaching strategy selected and the pre-service teacher takes the role of instructional leader.
- Pre-service teachers evaluate students through the activities applied and report them to the cooperating teachers.
- Cooperating teachers check preservice teachers' delivery and their strengths and weaknesses.

After the practice:

- Cooperating and pre-service teachers have some time for reflection.
- Cooperating teachers provide feedback through a rubric and coach pre-service teachers on how to improve their weaknesses.
- Cooperating and pre-service teachers plan for next class.
- Cooperating teachers monitor pre-service teachers on the next class to see their improvement.
- Supervisors check preservice teachers' improvement through some inspections.

- Pre-service teachers report reflections and feedback to the university supervisor.
- Supervisors grade pre-service teachers taking into account the cooperating teachers' rubrics and their own inspections.

### **Co-teaching strategies**

During the student teaching experience, the strategies mentioned here help to organize the role of pre-service and cooperating teachers according to the lesson that will be presented. The co-teaching strategies described below were developed by Cook (2004) and have been modified for use in the student teaching experience (Bacharach et al., 2010). Through these strategies, pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers will establish their roles in each collaborative lesson and furthermore use the one that seems to fit better the content of the lessons.

The strategies are defined according to Bacharach et al., (2010), Suárez (2016) and Rodriguez (2014). These authors have investigated and worked with co-teaching strategies in different research.

#### **1. One teach, one observe**

The responsibility for instruction is given to one of the two teachers while the other gathers information about students or teacher. The observer should select and decide what behavior or technique is going to be analyzed because the observation should be focused on problems of interest for both teachers in order to discuss and propose an alternative solution. Pre-service teacher and cooperating teacher are able to take on either role.

#### **2. One teach, one assist**

One teacher has the instructional responsibility while the other assists students with their work, corrects assignments and provides feedback, leads with classroom management and

encourages students to participate if they are hesitating to add comments or questions. This strategy fits for new teachers on the co-teaching method. However, it is noted that if one teacher takes the lead role very often, the other teacher is at risk of looking just like an assistant.

### 3. Station teaching

Pre-service teacher and cooperating teacher divide the instructional content into parts. Each teacher has a team. It can be stations (teams) where students have to work independently. The groups rotate according to the time designated at each station. Groups can be divided into three stations, two of which require instruction and one where students work independently.

### 4. Parallel teaching

The class is divided in half the students. Each teacher is responsible for the instruction in the corresponding group. However, both teachers are using the same content and material as well as the same planning, delivery and evaluation. The benefit on this strategy is the reduction of students and the increasing of students' participation.

### 5. Supplemental teaching

One teacher works with students at their expected grade level while the other teacher works with those students who need more time for doing activities or more time for explanation; some kind of extra help in the classes.

### 6. Alternative (differentiated) teaching

This teaching strategy provides two approaches to teaching the same information. The learning outcome is the same for all the students; however, the avenue for getting there is different.



## 7. Team teaching

Both teachers are involved in the instructional lesson actively. There is no division of authority. From the students' perspective, there is no clearly defined leader, both teachers share the instruction, are free to add information and questions, and assist students with doubts or answer questions. Teachers should alternate roles like direction, support, observation, evaluation, etc.

The description below shows the kind of relation between pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers and supervisors as well as the distribution of roles among them. The co-teaching implementation emphasizes the collaborative skills and through them the teaching and supervision skills will be improved for all.

Throughout this document according to Conderman and Hedin (2012) the three steps of teaching (co-planning, co-delivering and co-evaluation) are established. Furthermore the participants' roles in each of them are defined in order to promote collaborative teaching practices and professional advice for preservice teachers' development.

This protocol contributes to achieve the teaching development of future graduates through principles of collaboration and advice in the teaching practice area. The following describes the participating teachers and their roles along each teaching stage involved in the teaching practice process (Bacharach et al., 2010).

### **Cooperating teachers**

A cooperating teacher is a trained educator selected to coach and guide students who are training to teach in his classroom settings (Virginia Wesleyan College, 2016).

Cooperating teachers		
Co-planning	Co-delivering	Co-evaluation
Introduce pre-service teachers as co-teachers rather than students.	Provide the pre-service teacher time to develop and practice all aspects of instructional lead in the co-teaching with mentoring and support.	Share or slowly take back the primary responsibility of teaching relationship.
Enhance a context of professional trust and respect.	Remain actively involved in class with students and pre-service teachers.	Provide feedback to the pre-service teachers and to the university supervisor.
Determine content to be taught.	Provide ongoing modeling and coaching regarding content and strategies to be addressed.	Share responsibility for evaluating students' learning through activities.
Determine a specific planning time where the focus includes the details of how, when, and which co-teaching strategies to use for upcoming lessons.	Support pre-service teachers in their adoption of the role of instructional leader.	Model evaluation of students' learning.

## Pre-service teachers

A pre-service teacher is a student who requires training, especially in teaching for delivering classes under cooperating teacher's supervision (Virginia Wesleyan College, 2016).

Pre-service teachers		
Co-planning	Co-delivering	Co-evaluation
Take responsibility as a formal teacher.	Engage students in learning by trying out co-teaching strategies with cooperating teachers.	Share or slowly give up the lead instructional role in the co-teaching relationship.
Enhance a context of professional trust and respect.	Adopt the lead instructional role in the co-teaching relationship.	Take responsibility for evaluating activities implemented during the co-taught classes.
Spend additional time planning on their own to prepare for their part in each lesson.	Be responsible in their preparation for delivery co-teaching classes.	Reflect on their learning and professional growth.
Communicate with the cooperating teacher to determine which co-teaching strategies will be used in the classroom.	Improve on feedback given by cooperating teachers.	Report reflections and feedback to the university supervisor.

## Supervisors

A supervisor is the one who evaluates if the pre-service teacher achieves competency in entry level skills in the teaching profession and if cooperating teachers are carrying out their job as it is stated (Virginia Wesleyan College, 2016).

Supervisors		
Co-planning	Co-delivering	Co-evaluation
Explain the co-teaching model for practices to pre-service and cooperating teachers.	Provide cooperating teachers with a rubric to evaluate pre-service teachers' performance and improvement.	Collect rubrics from cooperating teachers to evaluate pre-service teachers collaboratively.
Hand in presentation letters to cooperating and pre-service teachers and take them back signed.	Check collaborative lessons personally every three weeks to grade preservice teachers' improvement and collaboration.	Check pre-service teachers' reflections regarding their improvement on teaching practice and the collaboration between participants.
Introduce pre-service teacher to the corresponding cooperating teacher to foster a context of professional trust and respect.	Keep in touch with participants during the teaching practice process.	Grade pre-service teachers taking into account the cooperating teachers' evaluation through rubrics and the supervisors' evaluation through class' observations.

After defining the cooperating teachers', pre-service teachers' and supervisors' roles, two presentation letters were written down (one for each co-teacher) to establish the collaborative teaching protocol where the steps, roles and commitments are described for each stage during the practice time. Presentation letters require the sign of both participants and include the supervisor's personal information. These presentation letters were the documents presented to cooperating teachers for evaluation (see appendix 3 and 4).

#### **4.2 Protocol's evaluation**

The next step after designing the protocol for collaborative teaching practices is to let this protocol be evaluated by cooperating teachers who are involved in the teaching practice process. According to the action-research methodology, this step is called "evaluation" (Latorre, 2015). It is the last stage of Lewin's action-research model before starting the cycle one more time to improve on.

A questionnaire was created in which 5 open questions were written down to check for information like advantages, disadvantages, limitations, coaching to preservice teachers and specific roles for participants. 5 cooperating teachers evaluated the didactic proposal according to their experience in the teacher training area and also they enriched this research with their particular point of view as teacher trainers (see appendix 5).

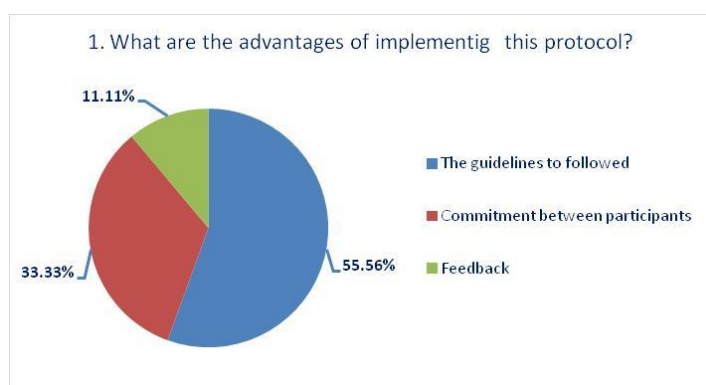
The application of this evaluation was optional for those cooperating teachers and supervisors who were willing to participate in this didactic proposal and who kindly took time to answer it. The results from the evaluation of the protocol were the following.

Half of the teachers said that the guidelines to follow are an advantage for collaborative practices. One cooperating teacher mentioned *"It helps both sides to commit to the practice required and to the guidelines to be followed"*. 33% of the teachers mentioned another

advantage that is the commitment between participants and 11% said that feedback is also one when implementing the protocol (see graphic 1).

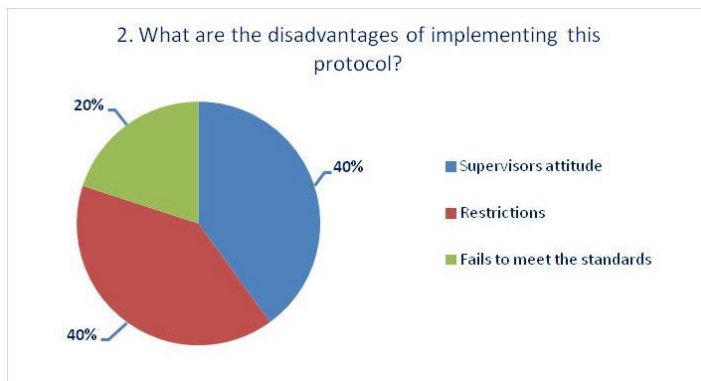
Another important comment was *“I believe that the main advantage would be that both the student and the teacher would know their responsibilities. It is also like an implicit contact between both parts”*. According to Correa (2011) collaborative relationships help pre-service teachers to acquire experience from the expert teachers as well as to develop their social skills to work with others.

**Graphic 1**



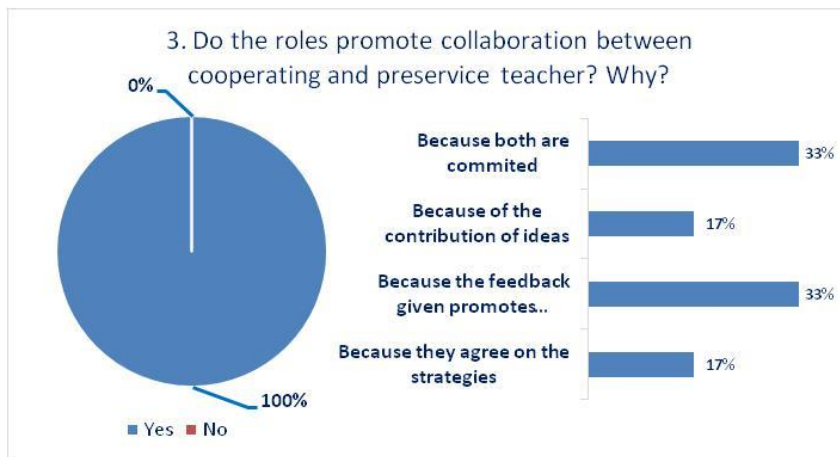
Some disadvantages that teachers mentioned were: the supervisor's attitude (40%), the protocol restricts the way they teach (40%) and rejection (20%) if one of the sides fails to meet the standards (see graphic 2). One cooperating teacher said *“If one of the sides doesn't commit or fails to meet the standards it will create a situation that can be uncomfortable and leading not to improvement but for rejection mainly on the side of the teacher”*. That is why it is very important that both sides work together collaboratively because the purpose of education as Correa (2011) mentioned is to be committed with the future of education that means with new generations of teachers of any area.

## Graphic 2



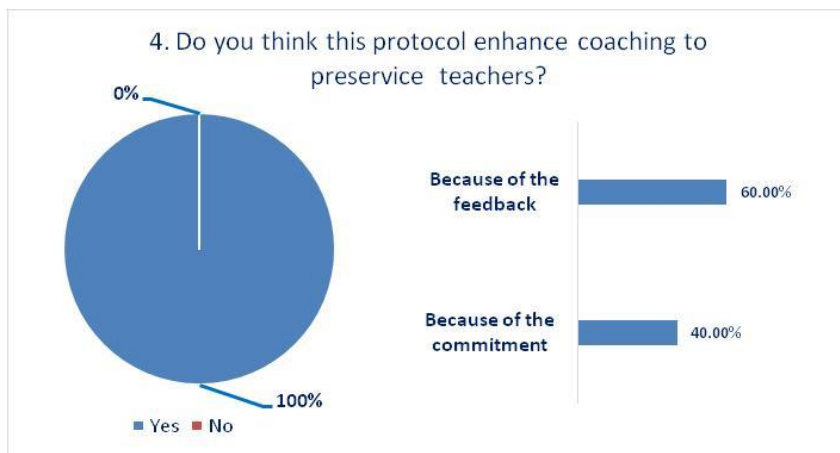
All teachers (100%) said that the roles promote collaboration between cooperating teacher and pre-service teacher. 33% of the participants added that it is because both sides would be committed with training and the same percentage said that it is because the feedback given promotes interaction. The other ones said that it is because of the contribution of ideas and the agreement on strategies used (see graphic 3). A cooperating teacher mentioned “... *I think communication and feedback are the key for preservice teachers to improve*”. Teacher training involves trying out new strategies in the classroom with supervision, monitoring and feedback from other’s on one’s practice (Richards & Farrel, 2005). Communication and feedback are part of supervision and monitoring. These aspects enhance the collaboration during the teacher training process.

**Graphic 3**



The full sample thinks that the protocol enhances coaching to pre-service teachers. 40% of cooperating teachers said that this is because of the commitment established between cooperating teacher, supervisor and pre-service teacher. 60% of the sample mentioned that this is because of the feedback (see graphic 4). There was an interesting comment by one of the cooperating teachers that said *“I think that if this protocol is taken seriously it will enhance the coaching”*.

**Graphic 4**

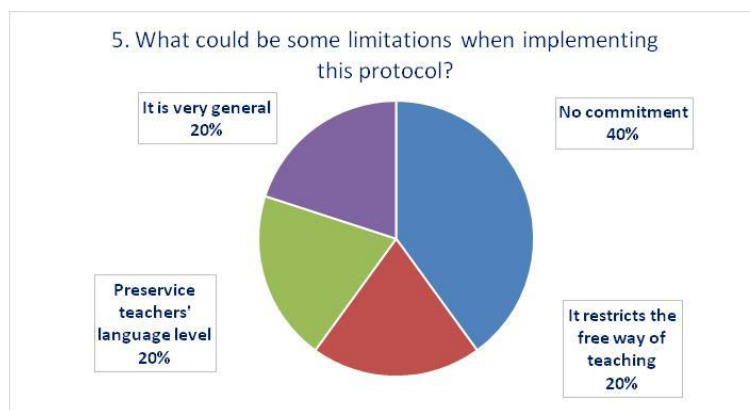


Some limitations when applying this protocol could be the following: there is no commitment between participants (40%), there are restrictions on the way of teaching in their



classrooms (20%), the pre-service teachers' language level of English is sometimes low (20%), and that a certain point the protocol is very general (20%); some teachers may just look at it as a simple procedure of the practice class and do not help the pre-service teachers as much as it is required (see graphic 5). A cooperating teacher mentioned *"There are situations in the classroom in which you have to use your teacher criteria not the protocol"*. Another comment was *"The lack of commitment from the teacher who is supervising the preservice teacher in his/her classroom because that is vital for the feedback and improvement of the pre-service teachers"*.

**Graphic 5**



Some cooperating teachers said that there are important aspects taken into account in the protocol that have not been considered before or at least they do not know about it like evaluation of the student's learning and coaching through feedback and reflection for improving as language or bilingual teachers. There were many comments that point to take very seriously the teacher training aspect on pre-service teachers and do not see it as a simple procedure to follow.

All the results showed that the collaborative teaching protocol is a good document that has many advantages and provide coaching and guidance for pre-service teachers to improve on their teaching practice. On the other hand, there are some disadvantages too that must be

taken care of when redesigning this didactic proposal. Collaboration in teacher training is a very important aspect because communication and feedback are the keys for preservice teachers to improve. Correa (2011) said that contact with the professional environment and with experienced professionals, promotes teacher professionalization.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The general objective for this study was to design a co-teaching protocol establishing the roles of each participant to work collaboratively in teaching practices. According to the results, it was necessary to establish the roles that cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers play within the teaching practice before implementing strategies of collaboration in the classroom. A protocol was created where the guidelines to follow were established in order to carry out the practice with coaching and collaboration.

The first specific objective of this study looked for categorizing the conceptions or opinions that pre-service teachers have about the teaching practice in their institution. Therefore, according to the questionnaire results, even though cooperating teachers supported pre-service teachers in identifying specific applicable teaching materials to use in classes and provided good feedback to pre-service teachers, they did not support them with lesson preparation during teaching practices and they did not coach them on how to teach. Pre-service teachers mentioned that coaching and support in lesson preparation is missing but that teaching practice in their institution is an enriching experience.

The second specific objective looked for identifying the roles that cooperating teachers take during the teaching practice sessions. Through the interview results, it was shown that it is missing a formal regulation in which the roles of cooperating teachers must be stated. Most

of the times there is no formal introduction with pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers do not decide to have pre-service teachers in their classrooms. Cooperating teachers want to help pre-service teachers but they need to follow a set of instructions or a regulation in this process and to have a particular role in it.

Cooperating teachers were in agreement that they gain experience being immerse in the process of teaching practice and as Correa (2011) mentioned the teaching practices process is not just the job of a supervisor, it is the job of all teachers committed with the future of education. Some cooperating teachers add as a suggestion to get students in teaching training since 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> semester and to add more hours of practice in the curriculum. The period of practice constitutes a potentially favorable space for the professional development of future teachers. According to Correa (2011) it is important to allow pre-service teachers to practice because training helps them to build and use different teaching skills as well as to integrate knowledge of diverse nature.

The co-teaching method promotes coaching and training for pre-service teachers to apply theory into practice as well as collaboration in the different steps of teaching like co-planning, co-delivering, and co-evaluation (Conderman & Hedin, 2012). According to pre-service teachers, the co-teaching steps mentioned here are not followed because as it is seen there is no collaboration in planning, co-delivering is not mentioned by pre-service teachers, just observation during their classes, and finally, co-evaluation is not taken into consideration as part of the teaching experience in this institution. Pre-service teachers cannot evaluate students even though this is a very important step during the whole process of teaching as well as in the teaching practicum.

Cooperating teachers mentioned that they provide feedback to pre-service teachers at the end of the classes and most of the times it is about planning and delivery or about the PPT

presentation. They said they observe the class and check planning but they are not asked to do that, the only thing is to sign the lesson plan. According to the interview results, there is no co-planning, co-delivery or co-evaluation during the sessions. Pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers do not collaborate in the teaching practice process because there is no regulation for doing that. They follow what preservice teachers tell them they have to do or what the letter sent to them says to do but preservice teachers are not under cooperating teachers responsibility.

The third specific objective was to evaluate the co-teaching protocol in order to know advantages, disadvantages and limitations when implementing it. It was needed to establish roles between participants through a protocol and after that to have feedback from cooperating teachers and supervisors through an evaluation. The outcomes of the implementation and evaluation of the protocol were the following.

The general objective of the protocol was reached because it was evaluated by expert teachers involved on the teacher training area and they checked the pre-service and cooperating teachers' roles saying that they enhance collaboration in the teacher training process as well as coaching but they also emphasize some limitations when applying the protocol saying that it restricts cooperating teachers to deliver their class as they normally do.

According to Correa (2011) experienced teachers can no longer be considered as silent agents of the learning process or as service providers by facilitating access to their class. Cooperating teachers must contribute to pre-service teachers' grow providing them with mentoring and support during this step in teaching.

The specific objectives of the protocol were also reached. The first one was to define the teachers' roles during the teaching stages of co-planning, co-delivery and co-evaluation in order to promote collaborative teaching practices. The cooperating teachers', pre-service

teachers' and supervisors' roles were determined and written down on the body of the protocol as well as in the presentation letters created as formal documents that establish guidelines to follow in the practicum.

The second one was to evaluate a teaching practice protocol to regulate collaborative practices through co-teaching strategies and professional advice. As it was mentioned before in the general objective, this protocol was evaluated to know advantages, disadvantages and limitations when putting in practice according to cooperating teachers. The results showed that there are more advantages than disadvantages but there are limitations as lack of commitment, little freedom when teaching and that sometimes the pre-service teachers' language level is low.

The important thing here is trying to implement the protocol as it is and check if the limitations mentioned by cooperating teachers can be overcome or if it exists a way of avoiding them. According to Bacharach et al., (2010) all the participants on the teacher practice process need support and be committed with each other and mainly with education. They must have a collaborative relationship that enables them to work together without barriers.

For further research, it will be necessary to take into account the evaluation of the protocol as an activity that each cooperating teacher and supervisor must do to have a broader view of it. It is also important that supervisors test the protocol as a pilot to verify its advantages and disadvantages as well as its limitations and effectiveness.

In addition, the university school might look for a new way of organization where cooperating teachers and supervisors agree on how to evaluate the pre-service teachers taking into account the coaching that the cooperating teacher does. They must establish a clear evaluation rubric where both take part on the evaluation of the pre-service teachers'

performance as beginning teachers. Supervisors have a greater responsibility to ensure the effective implementation of the collaborative teaching protocol.

The supervisor has a particular role because he has a double vision of the school environment. In general, by having a teaching experience, the trainer knows the reality of schools and, by representing the university institution; he knows its objectives and expectations. Thus, they occupy a privileged position in stimulating students to practice new pedagogical approaches (Correa, 2011), that is, to encourage them to use, practice and / or adapt the approaches seen in university courses during their practices.

An observation protocol will be another option to implement. This option was proposed by a cooperating teacher during the co-teaching protocol evaluation. Cooperating teachers might also receive comments on areas to improve that allow them to provide better feedback to pre-service teachers. Thus, cooperating teachers must take more seriously the teaching practice protocol and must be aware at all times about their commitment and responsibilities.

The results showed that the current teaching practice is valuable but contrary to this, there are some needs that must be met to improve the process of teaching practice and to benefit as many pre-service teachers as possible. Co-teaching might be a possible solution for the problems identified through this research if collaboration is seen by the participants as the key that promotes commitment to education.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Genre: \_\_\_\_\_ Branch: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark with a check your opinion about the next statements that underline the teaching practice as the main topic; take into account the abbreviations: SA (Strongly agree), A (Agree), N (Neutral), D (Disagree), SD (Strongly disagree).

Questions	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. The mentor teacher let me sit in on lessons he/she was teaching during the early days of teaching practice to enable me get used to the class.					
2. My mentor helped me to plan for the lessons I was asked to teach.					
3. My mentor helped me to write the learning outcomes for the lessons I taught.					
4. My mentor helped me to decide on the media that I could use to develop concepts in lessons that I taught.					
5. The mentor identified some teaching skills for me to implement in a lesson before/during planning.					
6. My mentor encouraged me to use group work during the lessons that I taught.					
7. My mentor teacher provided me with useful feedback that helped me to develop as an effective teacher after sitting in on lessons that I taught.					
8. Teaching practice gave me opportunities to experiment with teaching approaches covered theoretically.					

9. The mentor teacher demonstrated some teaching skills before asking me to teach a lesson.					
10. My mentor teacher discouraged me from using group work in lessons that I taught.					
11. I gained a lot of knowledge on how to teach during teaching practice.					
12. My mentor teacher allowed me to use any teaching method that I thought was useful to develop concepts in lessons I taught.					
13. The mentor teacher coached me how to teach.					
14. My mentor teacher regularly sat in on lessons that I taught.					
15. My mentor teacher gave me useful feedback on my questioning techniques.					
16. I got a lot of insights on how students learn English during teaching practice.					
17. The mentor teacher helped to identify some teaching materials.					
18. All my practice teaching lessons in English are enjoyable.					

(Ngoepe, 2014)

## **Appendix 2. Interview**

Study Title: Co-teaching: a successful factor on teacher training through collaborative practices and professional advice.

### **Description of the Study**

(Review each of the following topics with the interviewee.)

- a.) Study Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the training and preparation of cooperating teachers for their roles as mentor, supervisor, facilitator, reflective listener, and their perceived needs regarding that training.
- b.) Data Collection: During this interview, I will ask you questions about your preparation and training for your role as a cooperating teacher. Please answer as specifically and fully as you can.

### **Questions:**

Please tell me about your experiences as a cooperating teacher:

1. How were you selected to be a cooperating teacher?
2. Why did you decide to have a student teacher?
3. How were you introduced to your student teacher?
4. What information was provided to you, written or oral, to inform you what the university expected or student teacher required of you before, during, or after the practicum?
5. What responsibilities did you have for evaluation or grading of your student teacher?
6. How did you and your student teacher set aside time for feedback and reflection?
7. What contact did you have with university personnel during the student teaching practicum?
8. What compensation did the university provide for your work as a cooperating teacher?

9. What opportunities might be valuable for you to have in order to be better prepared as a cooperating teacher?
10. In what ways did your experience transform your own teaching practices?
11. Is there anything about your experience that you would change or things you might do differently?
12. Is there anything else?

(Hamilton, 2010)

### **Appendix 3. Presentation Letter 1 (Cooperating teacher)**

March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León  
San Nicolás de los Garza

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to request placement for (Pre-service teacher's name) in your regular classroom for student teaching practicum during the January-May 2018 semester. S/He is looking forward to student teaching as the final step before becoming a professional teacher. S/He is going to deliver at least \_\_\_\_\_ practice classes in collaboration with you as a coach. Please make sure you follow the corresponding roles as established in the following list.

Before class:

- Introduce pre-service teacher as co-teacher rather than student.
- Enhance a context of professional trust and respect.
- Explain content to be taught.
- Determine a specific planning time where the focus includes the details of how, when, and which co-teaching strategies to use for upcoming lessons.

In class:

- Provide time to pre-service teacher to develop and practice all aspects of teaching with mentoring and support.
- Remain actively involved in class with pre-service teacher.
- Provide ongoing modeling and coaching regarding content and strategies to be addressed.
- Support pre-service teacher in their adoption of the role of instructional leader.



After class:

- Model evaluation of students' learning.
- Share responsibility for evaluating students' learning through activities.
- Share or slowly take back the primary responsibility of instructional lead in the co-teaching relationship.
- Provide feedback to pre-service teacher through a rubric.

If you agree to receive (Preservice teacher's name) in your regular classroom and follow the corresponding roles to work collaboratively with him/her, please sign this letter.

---

(Cooperating teacher's name)

Thank you for your time,

(Supervisors' name)

(Phone)

(E-mail)

#### **Appendix 4. Presentation Letter 2 (Preservice teacher)**

March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León  
San Nicolás de los Garza

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to inform you (Pre-service teacher's name) about your student teaching practicum during the January-May 2018 semester. Your cooperating teacher will be the professor (Cooperating teacher's name). S/He is looking forward to collaborate with you as a coach and to guide you in the student teaching experience that is the final step before becoming a professional teacher.

You are going to deliver at least \_\_\_\_\_ practice classes in collaboration with him/her. Please be very responsible and follow your corresponding roles as established in the following list.

Before class:

- Take responsibility as a formal teacher.
- Enhance a context of professional trust and respect.
- Spend additional time planning on your own to prepare for your part in each lesson.
- Communicate with your cooperating teacher to determine which co-teaching strategies will be used in the classroom.

In class:

- Engage students in learning by using co-teaching strategies.
- Adopt the lead instructional role in the co-teaching relationship.
- Be responsible in your preparation delivering co-teaching classes.
- Improve on feedback given by cooperating teacher.

After class:

- Take responsibility for evaluating activities implemented during the co-taught classes.
- Share or slowly give up the lead instructional role in the co-teaching relationship.
- Reflect on your learning and professional growth.
- Report reflections and feedback to the university supervisor.

If you agree to be under supervision and coaching by the cooperating teacher as well as take responsibility for your corresponding roles to work collaboratively, please sign this letter.

---

(Pre-service teacher's name)

Thank you for your time,

(Supervisors' name)

(Phone)

(E-mail)

## **Appendix 5. Evaluation of the protocol for collaborative teaching practices**

1. What are the advantages of implementing this protocol?
2. What are the disadvantages of implementing this protocol?
3. Do the roles promote collaboration between cooperating teacher and pre-service teacher? Why?
4. Do you think this protocol enhance coaching to pre-service teachers? Why?
5. What could be some limitations when implementing this protocol?

Thank you!

