Online pre-service English teacher's practicum and the lived human relation

La práctica docente en línea del futuro profesor de inglés y la relación humana vivida

A prática docente online do futuro professor de inglês e a relação humana vivida

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Abstract

The practicum is a crucial stage in a future teacher's life. Pre-service English teachers did their practicum online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Online practicum is a challenge because of a lack of technological skills and little interaction between teacher-students. This paper describes a narrative inquiry that focused on the lived experience of being online pre-service English teachers to gain insights into how they experienced the lived human relation. It is a qualitative narrative study that analyzed two cases in-depth. The participants were recruited by maximum variation criteria including individuals related to the conceptual questions, diversity regarding the students' attendance (full-time student or blended-learning student), and the practicum's class grade taught. Data were gathered through autobiographical accounts and follow-up interviews. The results are presented narratively.

The participants' stories emphasized the importance of the lived human relation and how it impacted the pre-service English teacher practicum. Despite the distance practicum's lack of interaction reported in the literature, it is stressed that building up a pedagogical relation is possible and necessary. It is concluded that the lived human relation was an essential existential dimension that helped pre-service teachers improve their classes and become a teacher even in online settings.

Keywords: English pre-service teacher, narrative inquiry, online practicum.

Resumen

La práctica docente es una etapa crucial en la vida profesional de los futuros docentes. Derivado de la pandemia por la COVID-19, los docentes practicantes realizaron su práctica docente en línea. La práctica docente a distancia enfrenta a los docentes practicantes a una serie de retos como la falta de habilidades tecnológicas o la poca interacción entre maestros y alumnos. Este artículo describe la experiencia vivida de ser docente practicante en línea para comprender ¿cómo se experimentó la relación humana vivida? Se trata de una investigación cualitativa narrativa, se analizaron dos casos en profundidad seleccionados por criterios de máxima variación que incluyen ser docente practicante en línea, la modalidad en la que se formaron (estudiante de tiempo completo o estudiante de la modalidad semipresencial) y el grado en la que impartieron su práctica docente. Los datos se recabaron a través de entrevistas y relatos autobiográficos. Los resultados presentados de forma narrativa enfatizaron la importancia de la relación humana vivida y el impacto que tuvo en la práctica docente de los docentes practicantes de inglés. A pesar de la falta de interacción en ambientes virtuales reportada en la literatura, los resultados resaltan la necesidad y la posibilidad de construir una relación pedagógica aun cuando la práctica docente se realiza en línea. Se concluyó que la relación humana vivida es una dimensión existencial esencial, incluso en ambientes virtuales, que ayuda a los docentes practicantes a mejorar sus clases y a asumirse como docentes.

Palabras clave: docente practicante de inglés, investigación narrativa, práctica docente en línea.

Resumo

A prática docente é uma etapa crucial na vida profissional dos futuros professores. Decorrente da pandemia de COVID-19, os professores praticantes realizaram a sua prática docente online. A prática do ensino a distância enfrenta os professores atuantes com uma série de desafios, como a falta de habilidades tecnológicas ou a pouca interação entre professores e alunos. Este artigo descreve a experiência vivida de ser professor atuante online para compreender como foi vivenciada a relação humana vivida? Trata-se de uma pesquisa narrativa qualitativa, foram analisados em profundidade dois casos, selecionados por critérios de máxima variação que incluem ser professor em exercício online, a modalidade em que foram formados (estudante em tempo integral ou aluno da modalidade semipresencial) e a titulação em que deram a sua prática pedagógica. Os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevistas e relatos autobiográficos. Os resultados apresentados em forma de narrativa enfatizaram a importância da relação humana vivida e o impacto que ela teve na prática docente dos professores de inglês em exercício. Apesar da falta de interação em ambientes virtuais relatada na literatura, os resultados destacam a necessidade e a possibilidade de construção de uma relação pedagógica mesmo quando a prática docente é realizada online. Concluiu-se que a relação humana vivida é uma dimensão existencial essencial, mesmo em ambientes virtuais, que ajuda os professores em exercício a melhorarem as suas aulas e a assumirem-se como professores.

Palavras-chave: professor de inglês em exercício, pesquisa narrativa, prática de ensino online.

Introduction

The pedagogical practicum is a key element in pre-service English teacher training since it offers the future teacher to perform *in situ*. According to Zabalza (2016), the practicum can be viewed from three dimensions: as an element of the curriculum, as a learning experience, and as a personal experience. The curriculum dimension requires that the practicum be part of the curriculum and assures agreements with institutions, so students have a place to do the practicum. As a learning experience, the focus is on what students learn during their practicum. As a personal experience, the focus is on how students live their practicum.

Due to the SARS-COV-2 pandemic, the Universidad Tecnológica de Izúcar de Matamoros English pre-service teachers did their practicum online. For pre-service teachers, the practicum is a crucial step in their professional lives since it is their first teaching experience that impacts their attitudes and lived experience (Selva Olid, Vall-llovera Llovet and Méndez Creu, 2020). This manuscript is interested in how the online practicum impacted the pre-service English teachers as learning and personal experience with emphasis in the lived human relation. It focuses on the "how" that stresses the pre-service English teachers' lived experience rather than an evaluative or instrumentalist perspective. It addresses the question: how do online pre-service English teachers experience the lived human relation during the practicum?

Literature review

Pre-service English teachers face diverse challenges during their pedagogical practicum. They experience anxiety, mismatching between theory and practice, low language proficiency self-perception, contradictory feelings such as anger, fear, and enthusiasm (Lucero and Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019). Pre-service teachers feel overwhelmed by the students' misbehavior, but they also experience positive emotions due to the students' active performance (Méndez, 2020). They experience these issues along their practicum journey, which consists of three phases: anxiety, settling down, and relief (Nashruddin, 2015).

The beginning of the practicum is the most demanding moment that pre-service teachers face. At this phase, they experience anxiety due to the lack of teaching experience (Agustiana, 2014). They do not see themselves as teachers but still as college students (Macías and Sánchez, 2015). These self-perceived missing teaching skills is a common concern that makes them feel insecure (Ramírez, 2020). Novice teachers identify that theory is emphasized over practice during their college stage (Akcan, 2016). Besides, they see a mismatch between what they plan and what happens in the classroom. They do not know whether to stick to their lesson planning or to adapt themselves to the class development (AlRasheed, Al Dakhil and Bouzegza, 2020).

The teaching practicum is not only an opportunity to practice teaching but an opportunity to begin constructing a teacher identity. Pre-service English teachers' beliefs change during the practicum (Suárez Flórez and Basto Basto, 2017). In the beginning, they have some pre-conceptions about teaching that they confirm or discard. Finally, pre-service teachers provide emotional support and mutual motivation to each other (Comoglu and

Dikilitas, 2020). The issues briefly narrated above correspond to face-to-face classes. Do pre-service teachers who have their practicum online experience the same?

Teaching online differs from face-to-face teaching. The online teachers feel unable to know the students as a "real person." They feel that they should be always available to their students due to the learning environment 24/7 availability, the online class preparation is ongoing, and they deal with technical issues to manage the class effectively (Rose and Adams, 2014). English language teachers report that teaching English online is an opportunity to learn new things, but also a challenge because it is hard to make classes as interactive as face-to-face classes (Bhattarai, 2020).

Online teaching impacts the practicum, in pre-service EFL teachers' view, distance-teaching practicum lacks effectiveness, so they think practicum *in situ* cannot be replaced by distance practicum (Koşar, 2021). There is a minimum of teacher-student interaction (Jan, 2020). This lack of face-to-face interaction hinders the class management (Özkanal, Yüksel and Başaran-Uysal, 2020). Pre-service teachers find it difficult to implement online activities because they do not know the digital resources needed (Munar, 2018). In Sum, online teaching practicum has challenges such as lack of live communication between pre-service teachers and their students, lack of expertise in using technology, limitations to internet access, and little mentor's support (Kadir and Aziz, 2021).

The pre-service teachers' lifeworld

The Husserlian concept "lifeworld" helps us understand the future teachers' experience. The lifeworld concept refers to the world as it is lived. It "involves an existential context, which means that it is always shared with others, but at the same time, it is experienced individually through our personal experience" (Ekebergh and Lindberg, 2020, p. 553).

The lifeworld allows us to understand the teachers' lived experience, which is commonly forgotten or taken for granted. Understanding the teachers' lifeworld "involves stories of their experiences that focus on the pre-reflective moment that captures the relational significance for teachers with children" (Foran, 2021, p. 50). In other words, the lifeworld allows us to understand the teaching practicum from an existential viewpoint. It allows us to understand the pre-service teachers' experience from an existentialist dimension that reveals their live experience along with its meaning rather than from an instrumentalist perspective that focuses on outcomes or technological issues.

The lived body, lived time, lived space, and lived human relation known as lifeworld existentials, are insightful dimensions to explore and reflect the world as experienced. Lived body refers to how the body feels, reveals, or conceals in a situation. Lived time refers to time as experienced or sensed; happy moments are felt short-duration as opposed to painful ones. Lived space helps us understand how people experience space and vice versa. Lived human relation refers to the relations people maintain with others, it is how they feel when they encounter others through interactions or conversations (Rich, Graham, Taket and Shelley, 2013). The pre-service teacher's practicum is scrutinized through these lifeworld existentials, but especially through the lived human relation existential.

Methodology

It is a qualitative narrative inquiry. This methodology is suggested to gain insights into teaching practices since it gives us a deep understanding of the lived teaching experience in its context (Mendieta, 2013). The biographical narrative method allows exploring a person's lived experience in the representation of people's experiences. By analyzing a person's experience, it is possible to understand how that experience is collectively lived (Vega, 2018). By focusing on participants' life stories, this method humanizes research that allows the understanding of English language teaching in the broad context of participants' lives (Phillion and Ming Fang, 2007). In other words, it helps us see the way pre-service teachers experience the lived human relation in terms of personal and learning experiences.

The participants

It is a purposive sample defined by maximum variation. The informants were recruited by the following criteria, individuals related to the conceptual question, diversity regarding the student' attendance (full-time student or blended-learning student), and the practicum's class grade taught. Two pre-service teachers, who did their practicum during the 2021 summer course, were invited to participate through the consent form. The participants were pseudonymized as Monica and Graciela.

Monica is a 20-year-old full English major student. She did her practicum at an elementary school located downtown. Due to the pandemic, she taught online classes to fifth-grade students. She reported no teaching experience and no English proficiency before her university arrival.

Graciela is a 27-year-old blended-learning English major student. She did not expect to become an English teacher. She attended the major to gain English proficiency. For a moment, she became disappointed because she was not interested in becoming a teacher, but later, she got interested in teaching, and "here I am, about to begin my first online teaching experience with the first-grade elementary students," she says.

Data collection

The instruments include autobiographical accounts and follow-up interviews. Autobiographical accounts are helpful to gather professional experiences, epiphanies, or critical events (Barkhuizen, Benson and Chik, 2014). Due to the pandemic, the data were gathered through digital tools including *Google docs* and videoconferencing. The participants wrote stories about their teaching practicum's stages such as the beginning of the practicum, the relation with the mentor teacher, class preparation, the first online class, course adequacy, pre-service teacher and student's relation, online classes, and the course evaluation. The informants were given prompts such as, choose a relevant moment in your practicum that you have had with your mentor teacher! It must be a specific experience (when you first called him/her, when you felt supported, and so on)! Now, write it as it was lived, avoid any interpretation, belief or perception. After the participants wrote their narratives, follow-up interviews were conducted to ask "pocket questions," understood as questions that are not covered sufficiently in the participants' narration (Josselson and Hammack, 2021). The follow-up interviews allowed to check and further the information on the lived experience. The interviewer asked questions such as, you say this in your account! Would you please add some more details?

Data analysis

A narrative analysis as proposed by Josselson and Hammack (2021) was carried out. The authors say that narrative analysis consists of several sequential readings. The participant's biographical accounts were read separately. In the first reading, the initial thematic content and each participant's overall gestalt were identified. In the second reading, close attention was paid to implicit meaning to identify voices and discourses. For example, it was identified that Monica considers teaching as a genuine care for her students. The third reading focuses on patterns and unity, the question "how do all these voices and the thematic content they produce create coherent patterns within the narrative?" was addressed

(Josselson, and Hammack, 2021, p. 49). The relationship with others (with the university teacher, with the mentor teacher, with the students, and with the students' parents) produces patterns that connect the parts with each participant's whole story. The fourth reading engaged with theory. The themes were reread through the lived human relation lifeworld existential. It was concluded that the lived human relation is an essential existential dimension in the pre-service teacher's practicum. In the fifth reading, differences and similarities between the participants' stories were identified. It was found that the lived human relation is cross-case important.

Different tools were used throughout the data analysis process. Atlas.ti software was used from the first to the third reading, initial thematic content (subthemes) was identified and was clustered into larger themes (patterns of meaning known as categories or codes in other qualitative methods). A semantic map was built to show the themes and subthemes that structure the pre-service English teacher´s practicum experience. The themes were named as lack of confidence and gaining confidence in oneself. Next, it was identified that relationship with others was implicated in the identified themes. In the fourth reading, a two-column chart was used as suggested by Josselson and Hammack (2021). The left column contained the themes and subthemes, and the right column was used to read them through the lived human relation lifeworld's existential. It was found that the initial lack of confidence and later gain of confidence in oneself must do with the lived human relation with the mentor teacher, with the students, with the previous English teacher, with the university teacher, and with the parents. Finally, the two cases were compared. It was identified that the lived human relation with the students is presented in both cases, but the relation with parents and with the mentor teacher prevails in Graciela's lived experience more than in Monica´s one.

Results

Monica's story: "the practicum meant learning that built me little by little"

When Monica was asked to do her practicum, she was in the last semester of her Bachelor's. At that moment, she was an online student due to the world COVID outbreak. At first, the practicum was planned to be carried out in a face-to-face setting. Unfortunately, the pandemic spread more than expected, so the practicum had to be carried out online bringing some changes.

> We were supposed to do the practicum in pairs, but they (university staff) suddenly told us that we would do it individually. In the beginning, I felt upset and worried because we had several doubts and little information. It was unfair that they changed the rules when the practicum was about to begin.

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic impacted the practicum's curriculum dimension. The practicum in Monica's university was planned to be carried out in face-to-face settings and pairs. Since the practicum will be carried out online, students were asked to work individually due to the flexibility that technology offers. This rule's change impacted Monica's lifeworld.

> I thought a lot about the practicum that day that I felt anxious and insecure. No matter that I knew what to do, I wondered if I would be able to teach. I doubted if I had learned how to teach correctly.

Face-to-face future teachers experience anxiety and insecurity (Agustiana, 2014) when doing the practicum. Monica, an online pre-service teacher, felt the same. Pre-service teachers' lifeworld is affected no matter the practicum is carried out in a face-to-face setting or an online environment. Pre-service teachers experience anxiety and insecurity when they have self-doubt in their teaching skills and language proficiency.

> The mentor teacher told me that the students had an excellent English teacher last year. I immediately got worried: "what if I am not proficient enough?"

The lived human relation (the way people experience the relation with others) is an essential lifeworld's existential (Errasti-Ibarrondo, Jordán, Díez-Del-Corral and Arantzamendi, 2018). Her future students' previous English teacher impacted Monica's lifeworld who made her doubt her language proficiency.

> Monica's anxiety and insecurity diminished when she began to get to know her future students. She designed a diagnostic test and a personal information questionnaire "this questionnaire was helpful," she stresses. "I determined the students' interests and I discovered that most of the students liked English and they wanted to learn it."

> When I diagnosed the students and I planned the first class, I felt more secure and ready for the first class. I booked the class in Google Meet and I shared the permanent link with my students in the class's WhatsApp group.

Some minutes before the first class began, Monica experienced excitement and eagerness to meet her students. Again, the lived human relation impacted Monica's lifeworld.

> I was calm and excited because I wanted to meet my students, I wanted to talk to them. That was weird because I do not like to be with children. But I was eager to meet them.

> When I received the Google Meet reminder, I felt nervous and excited. I had never sweated a lot in a couple of minutes. While the time was coming shorter, I felt more nervous and excited.

Monica's experience reveals that teaching is essentially relational. The students trigger the teachers' feelings. The pre-service teacher's lifeworld depends on the kind of lived human relation established with them.

> When most of the students were online, I welcomed them, and we did an icebreaker activity. When I realized that the students were excited and they were not ashamed of participating, I felt more confident.

> I felt delighted to see my students' class engagement. Even though, I was still a little nervous. My students inspired me with confidence. I will never forget when they told me: "thank you teacher" for the first time.

It is the students who affect the pre-service teachers' lifeworld ambivalently. It is the students who make them feel anxious and insecure before meeting each other. It is also the students who make them feel confident. It is the students who recognize them as their teachers. To recognize implies to see again, it is the students who see in Monica a teacher; something that she had not seen before.

Recognizing the students' lifeworld

Monica made some changes during her teaching practicum. "Sometimes, a class does not come out as expected," she says.

> I felt frustrated because I doubted if the topics that I chose would be interesting and easy to understand for my students. I finally chose topics such as school supplies, family, my favorite subjects, my pets, etcetera.

Monica realized that taking her students' lifeworld into account is crucial. The topics she chose are not isolated topics, they are related to the students' everyday lives, they are related to the students' lifeworld.

> During the first classes, I remained silent while I waited for my students to connect. But later, I began asking them about the way they feel, about their weekday activities, about their homework. We talked around seven minutes before the class began. It made me feel like their friend, and I think they felt it in the same way, too.

Monica realized that the lived human relation is an important aspect of teaching. Learning is not isolated from the children's lifeworld. When Monica allowed her students to talk about their lifeworld, she noticed a change that impacted her classes.

> When I allowed them to express themselves, I realized that the children dared to say when they did not understand something, or they had forgotten it.

Taking the students' lifeworld into account improved the pedagogical relation. When the students felt listened to by her teacher, the online class environment became better. The students began to listen to her, too.

> The students used to talk simultaneously, they used to write nonsense phrases in the chat. When I allowed the students to express what they felt (even if it had nothing to do with the class) the students' behavior improved.

Dealing with online classes

Monica adapted what she learned at the college to teach online. "What I learned in the university has to do with face-to-face classes. I had to adapt it to an online setting," she remembers. The first source to adapt her teaching came from her experience as a student.

> Being an online English student allowed me to see how my teacher managed the class. I took and adopted some activities from him to teach my students.

She did not face big issues with online teaching and the use of digital tools.

> I think the use of digital tools was one of the easiest things in the practicum. I had been an online student for a year, and the students had been working online for the same time. So, the adaptation problems had already been lived.

As a personal experience, Monica stresses the lived human relation even in online settings. Relationality is a relevant aspect of Monica's practicum.

> Despite not meeting my students face-to-face because of the online practicum, I felt an affective and genuine connection to my students

Monica's lifeworld

Monica's teaching practicum's gestalt can be described as a process where she becomes a teacher. In Monica's words "the practicum meant learning that built me little by little." Monica recognizes that every lived experience contributed to her becoming a teacher. During the practicum, Monica learned how to deal with teaching obstacles. She learned to make decisions by choosing what was best for her students. She concludes that teaching is

not only a matter of lesson planning or teaching classes, but it means to care for the students by recognizing their lifeworld even if the practicum occurs online.

Graciela's story: "the practicum meant a space for teaching based on the lived human relation"

Graciela was a Blended Learning student when she was asked to look for a school to do her practicum. Graciela was interested in doing her practicum with kindergarten students, but she did not do it due to institutional issues.

> I asked a kindergarten principal to do my practicum, but she told me that it was impossible since they already had teaching assistants. I got sad and worried since the deadline was near. Two days later, a university teacher asked if I was interested in doing the practicum with the elementary first graders, I immediately accepted the invitation.

The first challenge that Graciela faced was looking for a school. Her lifeworld suddenly changed from being a university student to looking for a school as the first step to becoming a teacher. Hopefully, the university help her find a school. Graciela experienced institutional support coming from her university. She also felt supported by the mentor teacher.

> The mentor teacher was kind from the beginning. She gave me some hints to teach successfully.

The lived human relation (relationality) plays an important role in Graciela's lifeworld. The other (the university teacher and the mentor teacher were Graciela's important supports).

The lived human relation

The lived human relation understood as the relations experienced by the pre-service teachers is a helpful existential dimension to exploring Graciela's lifeworld. As previously discussed, the first important human relations in Graciela's practicum are with her teachers (her university teacher and her mentor teacher). Graciela experienced the relation with her mentor teacher as "being supported."

> I told the mentor teacher that I was very nervous because it was my first teaching experience. She offered her help and support, we agreed on the schedules, and we got everything ready to begin the English class.

But there are two more important relations that Graciela experienced in her practicum: the relation with her students and the relation with her students' parents. Graciela experienced the relation with her students as "being an example for them"

> The big day arrived. The day where I can finally experience what it is like to be a teacher. I was nervous and excited. I calmed down because I wanted my students to be calm.

Graciela recognized the influence that teachers have in the students' lives. A teacher has important pedagogical importance in children's lives, "adults cannot help being examples to children, either positive or negative examples. Children are experiencing adults as examples when they ask, how come you always tell me to do this, but you never do it" (van Manen, 2016, p. 132).

Finally, Graciela experienced the lived human relation with her students' parents as "being influenced and resistant to being influenced." The students' parents influenced the changes in the teaching topics. They wanted the first graders' pre-service teachers to teach the same topics.

> In the beginning, I chose what topics to teach according to the diagnostic test. But later on, my mentor teacher told me that the children's parents wanted all the first graders pre-service teachers to teach the same.

Her university teacher helped her fulfilled the petition.

> My university teacher helped us, so all first graders' pre-service teachers teach the same topics. I had to adapt the material to teach the new topics.

Later, Graciela experienced the lived human relation with the parents as "resistant to being influenced." Parents get involved in their child education, especially in the first years of schooling.

> When I showed the grades, I received several WhatsApp messages saying: "my son does not deserve that grade." I felt confused, I thought that they were unreasonable. I told them that it was unfair that I assigned an undeserved grade.

The mentor teacher and Graciela's university teacher were important existential supports to help her overcome this situation.

> I talked to the mentor teacher about this situation, and she agreed with me. My university teacher advised me to make the evaluation criteria clear so the parents understood clearly how their children would be evaluated. I did it and I invited them to submit all the activities.

Graciela's lifeworld

Graciela's lifeworld gestalt can be described as the practicum is essentiality a place for teaching based on the lived human relation. Graciela found important existential support in the mentor teacher and her university teacher. She also experienced the lived human relation with her students' parents where she assumed herself as a teacher by making decisions by herself. She considers the lived human relation with her students as the most important aspect in the practicum. When she was asked to talk about online teaching, she chose not to talk about technical issues, nor the implementation of digital tools but the lived human relation with the children.

> We did all the practicum online. Even though I never met my students in person, and I met only the students who activated their videocams, I appreciate them. They became very special persons in my life.

Discussion

The lifeworld focuses on the experience as lived. It captures the encounters that teachers have with children (Foran, 2021) that are commonly taken for granted. As part of the lifeworld, the lived human relation gives insights into how people feel during interactions or conversations (Rich, Graham, Taket and Shelley, 2013). The lifeworld showed that the lived human relation (relationality) is an essential lifeworld dimension in the pre-service English teachers' first teaching experience. The relationality backgrounds the practicum from beginning to end.

The findings match with the phases identified in the face-to-face practicum: anxiety, settling down, and relief (Nashruddin, 2015). The practicum has the same impact on the pre-service teachers' lived experience, no matter if it occurs online or in face-to-face modality. The online pre-service teacher experiences low language proficiency perception, and a lack of teaching skills just as face-to-face future teachers do (Lucero and Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019). These feelings do not come from the course setting (online or face-to-face), but from the lived human relation. These feelings are triggered when the pre-service teachers wonder if they will be as good as the previous teacher, or if they will be proficient enough to teach their students (there is a lived human relation implicated).

Going back to the pre-service English teachers' lifeworld revealed that they overcome low language proficiency, and the lack of teaching abilities auto perceived when they gain

confidence in themselves. They start feeling confident due to the students' will to participate and when students recognize them as their "teacher." The students impact the pre-service teacher lifeworld ambivalently, they make their teachers feel insecure and anxious, but it is also them who make them feel calm by their engagement and recognition as their teacher.

The pedagogical relation is an essential aspect that pre-service teachers build during the practicum. It is hard to think that teachers and students can build such relation in an online setting because of the difficulty to design interactive classes (Bhattarai, 2020), because of the minimum of teacher-student interaction (Jan, 2020), and because of the digital resources missing skills (Munar, 2018). Nevertheless, opposite to what has been reported in the literature, it was found that online setting does not avoid the pedagogical relation, in pre-service teacher's words "despite not meeting my students face-to-face because of the online practicum, I felt an affective and genuine connection to my students."

The pedagogical relation allows pre-service English teachers to develop a genuine concern for students. It is this concern that makes them make decisions on students' benefits. The practicum as a learning experience gives them the chance to view errors and challenges as a learning improvement chance. By prioritizing students' lifeworld, future teachers dare to make decisions by themselves. They learn that teaching is not only a matter of lesson planning or designing the material but building up a pedagogical relation by giving voice to the students and sharing an online mutual space where everybody can feel comfortable expressing themselves.

Conclusion

Being an online English pre-service teacher is experienced as a process of constant personal and professional growth based on the lived human relation. Initially, the experience is stressed by the concern and insecurity of not having the skills and abilities to teach and the required language proficiency, that is, the feeling of not being a teacher yet. These feelings are caused by the lived human relations that pre-service English teachers have during their practicum. Paradoxically, it is the lived human relation that makes them gain confidence in themselves.

The pre-service teachers' initial doubts and insecurity are diminished when they assume their role as teachers. It happens when they bring the students' lifeworld into class, they start making decisions to meet the students' needs, which impact positively the class development. By this means, the pre-service teachers move from a state of insecurity to

assuming themselves as a guide in the teaching-learning process. In other words, they recognize themselves as "real teachers."

The lived human relation with the students is an essential aspect that improves the teaching practicum. By bringing the students' lifeworld into class, the pedagogical relation and the students' behavior improve. As a result, the students feel confident in expressing their questions or doubts. As conclusion, the lived human relation is an essential dimension of becoming a teacher.

Educational implications and further research

The lived human relation is an important dimension in the teaching practicum. The support that the mentor teacher and the college teacher offer to the pre-service teachers is essential to help them on their journey of becoming a teacher. Even though pre-service teachers need help in different degrees, this paper is an invitation to be attentive to the pre-service teachers' lifeworld. It reminds us that future teachers face not only pedagogical challenges but existential ones as the lived human relation with students and parents. Further research to explore the other lifeworld existentials (lived body, lived space, lived things, and lived time) and their role in the pre-service practicum is recommended.

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