



LICENCIATURA LENGUA EXTRANJERA INGLÉS

EXPERIENCES OF A STUDENT AND PRE-SERVICE TEACHER  
DURING THE PROCESS OF BECOMING AN ENGLISH TEACHER IN A  
DISTANCE BACHELOR'S IN EDUCATION PROGRAM.

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this job to my mom Marleny Mendoza  
Who guides my steps from above and who taught me to be creative  
and the importance of being a better person.

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Thanks is an important part of being a person, is to recognize those who have contributed to our training, who with their contributions helped to realize idea. This is the space for each of them.

Thank you to the creator, to God, for my life, for giving me the blessing of a job and having studied one of the most beautiful and exciting careers, that of teaching.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this work is to record the experiences and changes that occurred during learning process as a student in the distance mode in the Bachelor program in english as a foreign language, since I was previously dedicated to teaching of said language without possessing all the knowledge, technique, methodology, and didactics related to this task. The intention is then to show, through the Narrative Research modality, the most significant changes that led to the improvement and professionalization of the teaching work and of my role as a distance student. The research problem I investigates was about the changes that a student and pre-service teacher undergoes through the process of becoming an English teacher in a distance bachelor's in education program at a private Colombian university. For this study was important to reconstruct my story and my lives as a student - teacher because this particular research paper emerges from my interest in making known and sharing a personal experience to others, not keeping information for myself but helping to construct knowledge and information that can be useful to others while taking their degree. The major findings in this project were changes to personal level, changings in the teaching practice and changes in the perception of myself that arose from my own story, interviews and pedagogical journals. Narrative Research is very important to analyze and reflect on personal experiences and changes and I could see it throughout this study process.

## **KEY WORDS:**

Autobiography, narrative, pre-service teacher, thematic analysis, distance student, distance learner

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## **CHAPTER 1: CONTEXTUALIZATION**

I decided to start the following research project based on my personal life as a student and pre-service English teacher by recreating my own autobiography. I was born and raised in Cucuta - Norte de Santander, but I became part of this program of Bachelor in Foreign Languages - English at Santo Tomas University while I was living abroad. Educational context is the set for this Narrative research in which one tells and shares his or her experiences and knowledge and the pathway they have come along through different learning points of view, so I will tell what I have acquired along the way as students and pre- service English teacher in a private distance education program.

The main purpose of this entire research paper is to share and bring forth those important aspects that I have been able to learn during the Bachelor in EFL Education at Santo Tomas University as well as the different learning features and characteristics that have enabled me to become the person who I am today.

The most important part of my project is to be able to share those experiences and different practices to help build this particular personal research about myself and to help in the benefit of others who will come along for their personal and professional development as English teachers.

According to Abrahao (2003) Autobiographical research uses various experimental sources such as life narratives, oral stories, and different types of documents. This project will not be the

exception as the main intention is to include different types of resources such as life story, interviews, journals, to be able to relate the best way possible and share the learning process. In the case of this project, they will be mostly personal sources such as journals, my story and interviews to relate and express the process of my learning and pre- service English teacher life story in a distance education.

This autobiographical research is connected to the field of Narrative research and the subproject “Voices of the LLEI realities: life stories and experiences”. This type of research will help contribute to my own learning process and provide a clear direction for my future career by analyzing those life episodes or most important moments of my life as a learner and currently as a pre-service English Teacher. This study will be the perfect opportunity to share those experiences and difficulties that an English distance learner could have and is most likely to face along the way but most important of all how to deal with them. In addition, this research could be suitable for those students who are interested in studying this type of bachelor with English as a major and provide valuable research information to the field of subproject research group for these voices to be heard and told.

In context, the main objective through this entire process is to understand the broader picture of why and the reason behind this. I decided to pursue this degree and share those experiences with others for example: what characteristics, experiences, stories, journals, experiences with while studying and learning that could help the bachelor's degree in English as a Foreign Language to have a better view of what and why students undergo these types of studies. Some of the aspects one can mention are ethnic, educational, professional, and ideological. (Bruner, 1990; McAdams, 1993; Polkinghorne, 1988).



## **CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH STATEMENT**

This particular research aroused from the interest as an English learner student at Santo Tomas University, I am interested in sharing the different types of experiences and situations that I went through and been able to share these with others to become relevant information and material for those who would like to access the distance university programs and for others to see the paths that I went through to achieve my degree.

It's important to highlight that many were the challenges and difficulties that I encounter along the way but these served as experience and knowledge to become the person and pre-service teacher who I am today. Barkhuizen and cols. stated: "Narrative inquiry brings storytelling as a tool for data analysis or presentation of findings. Another distinction concerns the relationship between researchers and participants in narrative research, for which use the term autobiographical research that analyze or tell own stories" (Barkhuizen, Benson & Chik, 2014, p. 3).

Narrative is a construction that the investigator can use to collect information and be a part of at the same time. This characterizes the process of research that consists in making memorials, life stories, autobiographies, and diaries, in other words writings about oneself, in histories that are rich in meaning and in which particularly subjective aspects appear. It is important to reconstruct the story and lives of students - teachers because this particular research paper emerges from the interest in making known and sharing a personal student - pre-service teachers experience to others,

not keeping information for myself but helping to construct knowledge and information that can be useful to others while taking their degree.

So, in this kind of study the researcher does not want to know what or how facts “really” happened, but how the narrator thought about it at the time and how he or she remembers it in the present (Abrahão, 2003). The main objective of this research is to show the reality that I consider is important and actually is the condition of many other students who are studying a bachelor or a major course from a distance with the Santo Tomas University, at Bogota or in any other region of Colombia or around the world.

It all started three years ago as a pre-service English teacher in the City of Bogota. The arriving was not easy and since then I have come a long way because beside the many challenges and difficulties that I underwent because of juggling in between working and studying at the same time in order to fulfill my responsibilities as a pre-service English teacher and meet my bills and responsibilities. Consequently, there are many other commitments simultaneously that demands time while making an effort to conclude one of my major aims in life, and is to achieve my degree in teaching English as a Foreign Language.

This entire research should be able to provide a better insight and feedback to those who are and will be interested in becoming English teachers and all those who are in distance learning. My experience shows that it can become difficult at times because of the many setbacks and challenges you can face, but at the same time help people to explore the educational context and will eventually equip them with the necessary tools to enlighten and provide them with the necessary information in the learning of the English language.

Having in mind the previous information, the research question that will guide this project is the following: ¿What are the changes that a student and pre-service teacher undergoes through the process of becoming an English teacher in a distance bachelor's in education program at a private Colombian university?

### **Research Objectives:**

The main objective of this research paper is to bring into the light the different circumstances and situations that I faced along the way and the most important aspects that I would like my readers to know about my experiences.

- To describe life episodes or landmark moments of my life as a learner and currently as a pre-service English Teacher.
- To describe different types of experiences that a pre-service English teacher goes through and the way these can be helpful for the future English teachers.
- To reflect on the different types of necessities and difficulties that an English distance learner can faced along the way and the way these can be overcome and be used as a tool to better understand the learning experience.

### **CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In the field of narrative in education, we can say that Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) create a revolutionary research that has come a long way. It involves three scopes of experience—sociality, temporality, and place—as articulated through the storied lives people lead. Narrative inquiry can enable teachers with its potential to transform teaching and learning by creating experiential resources (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007).

The main objective of this literature analysis is to take a closer look into my life and my experiences in a distance learning and pre service teaching in the process of achieving my degree in foreign language teaching. I born in Cúcuta, Norte de Santander, and over the course of the years I have managed to introduce myself into the world of teaching English at private schools and from I may have a story to tell and share along with many skills and knowledge to share.

On the other hand, literature review is all about the personal and cultural characteristics of teachers and their experiences in the teaching area. Teachers are able to serve to teaching and sharing knowledge to their students and those around them.

#### **3.1. Reflections and life stories**

In the narrative approach, we can say that sharing life stories and reflections become a very important part of the research paper. Life stories enables us to learn and have a wider and better

view of the experiences that others have along the way and to better understand each and every story and experience they are sharing with us.

Telling stories helps us make sense of the different events and situations in a specific context. Once, they are told, they help us to shape those experiences. “A person who reflects through his or her practice is not just looking back on past actions and events, but is taking a conscious look at emotions, experiences, actions, and responses, and using that information to add to his or her existing knowledge base and reach a higher level of understanding”. (Mathew, Mathew, Mr. Prince & Peechattu, 2017, p. 2).

### **3.2. Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative inquiry is popular in the educational field to share students and teacher's life stories and examine the relevant educational and professional experiences in a specific context. In addition, this kind of research is a guidance for academic's readers to understand and get information about the language learning process. According to Barkhuizen, Benson and Chik “Narrative inquiry brings storytelling as a tool for data analysis or presentation of findings. Another distinction concerns the relationship between researchers and participants in narrative research, for which use the term autobiographical research that analyze or tell own stories” (Barkhuizen, Benson and Chik, 2014, p. 3).

### **3.3. Narrative in Educational Research**

Narrative is a tool in the educational field that is used by those who have something to tell, to share and let others know. These are usually experiences, stories, videos, journals, pictures, among others, that they themselves consider important and that will be useful for those who would like to

follow their pathway. Barkhuizen (2014) specifies three main characteristics that narrative use in language learning and teaching. Firstly, its priority is to focus on personal experiences. Furthermore, they normally show experiences of language learning-teaching in a specific academic context. Finally, this kind of research implicated conditions of the narrator's identities.

Narrative in educational field is a method that one can find meaningful experiences in the teaching and learning process that may influence others view about language learning. As mentioned by Connelly & Clandinnin (1990) “The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world. This general notion translates into the view that education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories.” (Connelly F. & Clandinin D. 1990, p. 2). Also, Narrative in educational field help us understand the different aspects in educational context and how to make meaning and changes of educational situations. “In understanding ourselves and our students educationally, we need and understanding of people with a narrative of life experiences. Life’s narratives are the context for making meaning of school situations. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 3)

### **3.4. Autobiographical Narrative**

Autobiographies as a style of narrative have demonstrated that pre-service teachers, particularly, may also come to make sense of their pedagogical practices (Stenberg, 2011). Stenberg states that focusing on teachers’ own life experiences can help to access the inner beliefs, values, and understandings that fundamentally guide teaching practice. As underlined Kelchtermans (2009), autobiographies appear as a valuable instrument to look at teachers’ beliefs, conceptualizations, thoughts, and actions in the present. Besides, they are influenced by experiences from the past, expectations for the future and shape teacher’s practices.

Autobiographies are a valuable instrument to be able to look better into teacher's lives, beliefs, thoughts, actions and concepts, among other important aspects. These not only come with these different perspectives but they also help to better understand past experiences, what they have in mind for the future and help shape teachers into better professionals according to Kelchtermans (2009). Another important author Johnson (1999) mentions that autobiographies are the best way to capture the richness and prior experiences and get a critical analysis of those experiences and beliefs to better comprehend the difficulties and complexities teachers, teaching and learning.

With that said and done we can say that autobiography is a very important tool that allows me to analyze those experiences in my life since I became a distance learner at the Santo Tomas University and how has been that process as well as a pre-service teacher in a distance education.

### **3.5. Teachers in training**

To have better teachers it is important to study teachers teaching and teacher professional knowledge as Clandinin and Conelly (1990) mentioned "Conceptualizing a professional knowledge landscape provides a way to conceptualize teacher's personal practical knowledge" (Clandinin & Conelly, 1990, p. 24). Furthermore, it is important to study teachers teaching context to conceptualize what teachers have to go through their pedagogical practice, how they feel or think about the place they work and if the school supported them to improve their teaching.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN**

Narrative inquiry in autobiography is the design that sustain this particular research, telling my own story I was able to share and make myself known to others. The research paper is based on a qualitative research project where I as a pre-service English teacher and learner at the University of Santo Tomas wrote about my language learning stories and experiences in order to discover the different beliefs and facts that I experience as an English teacher. Through these narratives, I could be able to construct and share my autobiography rather than presenting my experiences, different events, happenings, and actions that I lived as a student and pre-service teacher in my learning process and that has a significant meaning on the methodologies of student-teacher strategies.

My own storytelling is the center of this narrative research paper, and one must remember that storytelling is very important because it helps put together the many phases and stages that one goes through as a learning student English teacher and turn them into meaningful experiences to be shared with others for their benefit and professional growth.

These particular types of research are done in order to help get more information and understanding about the main participant in this case which is myself, for my voice to be heard and to serve as a beacon of light and insight to others who are interested in becoming English teachers as well. Narrative research is all about life experiences, descriptions on individual's lives and their



narratives on how they were able to achieve these experiences and situations (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990).

I must have mentioned that during the different stages of the research many different tools were used in order to collect information from the participants. This was done and carried out in order to retrieve as much information as possible to feed the research paper and to be able to analyze as best possible the information that was retrieved from the different sources.

Data collection instruments are different tools that are used in order to collect information through research or any type of project someone is carrying out. Data collection allows us to collect information that we want to collect about our study objects. They can be divided into written, visual and oral. Written collection instruments are the ones that we used such as interviews, questionnaires, among others.

Instruments: Autobiography, Interview and journals from the pedagogical practice. For the compilation of the information as necessary for the realization of this research paper, I resorted to the use of three instruments of the Narrative inquiry: Interviews, Journals and my history. The relevance of the aforementioned above is that they are important sources of truthful and timely information collection in the construction of autobiographies, allowing the producer (the autobiographical writer) and the future researcher or consultant, to have the possibility of comparatively analyzing the vision of the actors present during a process, in this case formative. Some of the authors who support the use or integration of the narrative are Gary Barhuizen and F. Michael Connelly and D. Jean Clandinin. For these authors, the instruments named are determined as:

#### 4.1. Interviews

Interviews are the main way of collecting information, since, through them we can have access to the vision or opinion of a subject (the interviewee) in front of a topic, situation or, in the case of this work, person specific.

*Barkhuizen in Narrative Inquiry In Language Teaching and learning Research 2014 says that researchers should formulate questions that invite the interviewees to tell their stories in their own words, phrase questions in everyday language, and should not orient the interviewees towards the researchers (Barkhuizen, 2014)'' interest. Interviews are important because according to how the interview is conducted, it allows the interviewee to have or narrate more everyday things, without limitations and in a more formal way, etc. which helps to find rebel aspects and build a meaningful life stories.*

Considering the previous statement, interviews allow the interviewer to have a free and spontaneous response to the situation asked. However, he could object that the interviewer when creating this series of questions may manipulate the answers obtained in an interview. That is to say, it is possible to think that through the writing or the creation of the questions to be used during the interview, and the interviewer used to manipulate the interviewee to "say" the answers that the first one expects.

To the above, we can find that to pursue said inconvenience and recommends the creation of open questions, to invite the interviewee to feel comfortable and to invite spontaneously to count

aspects or events that occurred during an established situation also reference to the position or intervention that the interviewer should have: During the interview, reiterating the invitation [to tell a story] through questions that encourage fuller narration of the complexities of [the interviewee's] story is recommended; and, in addition, the interviewer should be sensitive to their use of minimal responses (e.g., yeah, uh-huh, etc.) during the interview, as these seemingly benign responses may indicate the interviewer's position is suggested. (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014, p. g. 21). The interviews in the narrative inquiry generates qualitative data consequently to move near its purpose it is important to the interviewee some questions that generate freedom to express themselves in a natural way and provide the interviewer some valuable information.

The process of conducting these interviews was carried out taking into account what was proposed by F. Michael Connelly and D. Jean Clandinin "The interviews are conducted between the researcher and the participant, transcripts are made, the meetings are available for Subsequent discussion and can be analyzed in part of the narrative record in progress". Connelly & Clandinin (1990) promote a favorable environment for both the interviewer and the interviewee, thus generating a pleasant and meaningful interaction in such a way that the remembrance of those important aspects that became memorable during our interaction in my learning process.

#### **4.2. My Story**

Language learning stories help to reflect, to identify and to recount the life experiences and changes during an individual's learning process. "Diary studies are typically introspective accounts of learning in process; language learning histories (LLHs) are retrospective accounts of past learning. They are the written stories of language learning experiences." (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014, p. 37). They can talk about a person's personal life if the writer so wishes or focus only

on the professional life. The most important thing is that they should show a transition, a complete story and a reflection on the entire life or life episodes. Therefore, LLHs should direct a person's awareness or knowledge about what he/she was, what he/she knows and what someone needs or should change in the future. The purpose of this project is to gather experiences from childhood to university education that give evidence to these changes during the English foreign language learning process.

#### **4.3. Journals**

This tool allowed me not only to take an anecdotal process of my classes and practices, but, at a certain moment in my life, it helped me to find the meaning of teaching. That is, the reason why I decided to study for a degree, in the article by Connelly & Clandinin, *Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry*, we can find a reference to what I present here, from the experience of a schoolteacher. "Journals made by participants in the practical setting are another source of data in narrative inquiry. Journal records can be made by both participants, researcher or practitioner" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. g. 5).

During this investigation, I was the main character, thus obtaining the possibility of telling my story, sharing my experiences and difficulties to address the different problems and circumstances that I went through during the time I worked as an English teacher prior to the service and at the same time analyzing and interpreting the information I will provide in order to validate and generate a final conclusion that will help solve the main question of this research project of my autobiography.

## CHAPTER 5: DATA COLLECTION

For data collection and subsequent analysis, I chose three instruments that help me identify the main issues during my Pre-Service Learning and Teaching process; Likewise, these instruments would make it easier for me to identify the categories that would respond to the recurring issues in said data collected, all aimed at solving the research problem question formulated in this project.

*¿What are the changes that a student and pre-service English teacher undergoes through (during) the process of becoming an English teacher in a distance education program at a private Colombian university?*

The tools or instruments that I decided to use, and the way in which I proceeded to the collection were:

### 5.1 The story of my life:

In this kind of autobiography, I began by writing in an orderly way a reflection on my personal and pedagogical life, and the connection I have had with the English language, covering periods such as my childhood, my adolescence and my adult stage. In this paper I reflected not only how the experiences with the language was in these stages, but also, I mentioned:

1. Changes that occurred in front of my training process as a pre-service teacher in the university stage,
2. Difficulties during the time of study of the Degree in the distance modality, and that little by little allowed me to find important aspects to highlight in my taste and desire to be an English teacher.

## 5.2 Interviews

In order to find support for the aspects that marked my life as a university student in the English Foreign Language degree, I decided to conduct three interviews with different people and with different roles or relationships in my life; one to my first teacher of pedagogical practices, another to a colleague from the university with whom I shared some academic spaces and finally to my coordinator of the English department at the institution where I currently work as a pre-service teacher.

## 5.3 Journals

This was the third instrument that I decided to use, the journals that I decided to use in this process correspond to the documents or duties that I had to create as a backup or blog during the pedagogical practice process, for the specific case, these Journals belonged to the first practice. As Connelly and Clandinin say “Journals made by participants in the practical setting are another source of Narrative Inquiry” (Connelly F and Clandinin D., p. 5).

<sup>1</sup>Personal reflection from the reading of the article Features of the identity of the secondary school teacher in his career and professional performance: ¿How, when and with whom does he acquire his status as a teacher? from Mariana Cecilia Ojeda “Knowing the teacher's identity implies approaching his reality through his own perspective, that is, from his voice, from what the individual expresses about himself. Therefore, the proper way to do this is to reconstruct the trajectories of teachers, through the narrative of their professional biographies. This implies working with the teacher's speech that explains a set of actions and own thoughts, which occurred in episodes of his past and present

personal and professional life. (Bertaux, 1980; Kornblit, 2004).” Recovered from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/28231500>: Traits of the identity of the secondary school teacher in his career and professional performance How and when he acquires his status as a teacher.

My Pedagogical practices were conducted during the months of April and March, 2018 and relevance of the use of this instrument is that it would help me identify specific aspects of my process in the teaching role, as well as the strategies, resources and dynamics; All this gave me clues in the aspects in which the personality of the individual may or may not mark or define the role of teacher, likewise, it allowed me to find categories that supported the topics for the analysis of the data.

## **CHAPTER 6: DATA ANALYSIS**

When it comes to any type of research one of the most important stages you can ever face is the data collection and analysis and during this particular research about my autobiography was not the exception. Through this entire process, we are able to determine and highlight important facts and information of the research and be able to establish codes and patterns that will allow us to enhance and comprehend the process of data collection.

During the process of research, the main character is myself, I was able to explore and analyze myself along the way and share the different practices that I do on a daily basis to see and recognize how these can help other students that are interested in the same type of learning and education and to share personal experiences and information that will create a sense of research and information among those who are interested in carrying out a research.

Some of the instruments that were used in order to collect data and information was: my experiences as a pre service teacher, pictures, images, all these are considered multimodal materials and they are very important during the process of collecting and analyzing information about any particular research.

Some of the instruments that were used during this process were the following:



- Life-history diary: the objective is to collect life landmark moments or episodes of my life as an English learner in a distance education and currently as an English teacher. Gary Barkhuizen (2014) said, "Learner diaries are autobiographical, introspective documents that record the experiences of language learning from the learner's perspective. Very much like personal diaries, they consist of a series of entries written over an extended period of time" (p. 35).
- Oral narrative: Short interactions with another distance learner to give trustworthiness to reflect upon my own experiences. Furthermore, in narrative inquiry, it is not uncommon to adopt multiple methods of data collection, and interviewing is viewed as one technique among others (e.g., teacher journals, learner diaries, classroom observation). (Barkhuizen, 2014, p. 14)

One of the most important aspects of the research analysis is the content; this can help us to generate certain categories that are related to the objective of the study or research. This helps the research paper take form and shape by adding thoughts, ideas, feelings and most of all beliefs and experiences from the student - teacher.

The other important aspect is the structure of the narration. And the ups and downs the research can take, this happens because it's an autobiography and information is being thrown into the research at high pace in order to come under one consensus of the most important and relevant information.

## 6.1 Data Analysis

For the analysis of the data, the review of the information recorded in the journals, in the interviews, and in the compilation of my history was used. In general terms, data analysis involves repeated reading of the data, coding and categorization of data extracts, and their reorganization under thematic headings. (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014, p. 75).

The way to carry out this analysis was to highlight through codification the different situations or aspects that were constantly repeated in the information recorded in the instruments or resources mentioned above, aspects that characterized me personally and professionally were highlighted, and subsequently grouped into Two fundamental aspects. “In qualitative research, the approach is called “thematic,” “content,” or “grounded theory” analysis...” (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014, p. 74).

The previous modality is known as thematic analysis, which implies repeated reading. The analysis and categorization of the data obtained through the different tools used for the collection of said data. “involves repeated reading of the data, coding and categorization of data extracts, and their reorganization under thematic headings.” (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014, p. 75).

For the development of the data analysis, the chosen instruments were read in detail and repeatedly, in order to begin the coding of relevant words that appeared in said instruments, when they were identified different colors were used to create large categorizations with each of them. All the words that had to do with changes on a personal level were highlighted with the color yellow and all the words that were related to the changes in the teaching practice were highlighted with

the color gray. Finally, this process of analysis of data the color blue was used to highlight those words related to changes in the perception of myself as a student in the distance mode.

Once the coding of relevant words was completed, a new reading was made to be able to organize the sub-themes of each of the topics found in the instruments and to give greater validity and support to said data analysis. As Polkinghorne (1995, p.15) states, thematic procedures have the “capacity to develop general knowledge about a collection of stories,” but the knowledge that is produced is “abstract and formal, and by necessity underplays the unique and particular aspects of each story.” (cited by Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014, p. 81).

The completion of this process required rigorous and critical reading in my interviews, in my journals of my teaching practice and in my story, in order to identify and analyze in detail those aspects that could really give or evidence each of the experiences and changes lived during my process as a distance student and in my teaching practice. In addition to a critical reading of my instruments, it was also necessary to read some authors that will help me understand and identify what those topics and subtopics could be for me data analysis.

### **Table 1:**

#### *Themes and Subthemes*

The following table shows the themes and subthemes that were finding from my instruments (my story, interview, journals) after reading each one and highlight the most important information that I considered meaningful for this study.

| Themes                                           | Subthemes                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CHANGE TO PERSONAL LEVEL                         | Increase of confidence                                                                                                |
|                                                  | Empower of myself as a determined person                                                                              |
|                                                  | Discovering of new creative skills.                                                                                   |
| CHANGES IN MY TEACHING PRACTICE                  | Development of a confident attitude to class<br>Awareness of the importance of self-training in my teaching practice. |
| CHANGES IN THE PERCEPTION OF MYSELF AS A STUDENT | Developing of a more receptive attitude                                                                               |
|                                                  | Creativity focused on teaching<br>Awareness of my responsibility in my learning process.                              |

Data obtained from the analysis of the information. Own elaboration

## **CHAPTER 7: RESULTS**

### **7.1. CHANGES TO PERSONAL LEVEL**

The changes on a personal level were one of the aspects that had the most impact on myself, as I mentioned earlier in My Personal story, the fact that I learned English in Bonaire made me feel qualified to teach anyone to speak English, however, During the process of teaching this language I realized some shortcomings in the pedagogical aspect and that, related to aspects of my personality.

#### **7.1.1. Increase of confidence.**

I remember that in my first intervention in an English class I had to interact with a student of 13-14 years old, at that time, I felt very insecure, because I did not have the appropriate teaching material and had no idea how to start and finish an English class. So, when students approached me with questions and concerns about the subject, I had no idea how to solve them at that time. This type of situation made me feel insecurity and shyness, likewise, the realization of the Plan lesson of the class was always difficult for that reason, because I did not know which activities were appropriate for my students. But after my first pedagogical practice my confidence in a classroom improved positively because I learned to control an English class shown in illustration 1, and the implementation of each feedback given from the teacher of the pedagogical practice to strengthen my learning and teaching process as this is shown in illustration 2.

*Illustration 1*

*Extracted from My story, in reference to the usefulness and implementation of the lesson plans.*

[...] I also feel that it helped me to be stronger and to overcome that shyness or disinterest in relating to other people, by expressing my opinion and feeling confident in my abilities.

*Illustration 2*

*Extracted from my Journal, in reference to Teacher-Students interaction in the classroom.*

**Teacher-Student's interaction:**

I think the interaction with the Ss went really good, as I said, I was very surprise because I thought it will be a mess, but not, students were very relaxing and willing to collaborate with the needs analysis. When I made a question they try their best to answer or ask for explanation and I think it is important because it shows that students really want to learn, and the importance that they understand everything. I felt very confident to work with adults, and talk in front of older people, so the interaction was good.

### 7.1.2 Empower of myself as a determined person.

As I mentioned in My story, during my first class intervention I never received a feedback from the bilingual coordination in the institution where I started my work as a “teacher”, because, in that school the English department was not well structured; I think that from this situation my shyness and insecurity did not contribute to the dynamics of English classes because I did not receive adequate advice and support from that person who is supposed to be the fundamental basis for giving feedback to teachers in order to improve English teaching and class material as this is shown in Illustration 3.

*Illustration 3*

*Extracted from my story, in reference to the feeling of insecurity in pedagogical practices in the first school where I start teaching English.*

I completed my internship at the university, and the knowledge I had of a class was only theoretical. In addition, the English department of that school was not well structured, there was no area head to help me or observe my classes, the books used by the students were a bit tedious, there were no televisions or tape recorders...

Furthermore, in my first pre-service teaching, as I mentioned in My story, group management was not the most appropriate, since I did not have the fundamental basis for being in a class; I mean, that my plan lessons were not well structured and the teaching material that the school provided to teachers was not helpful to teach a foreign language. In one way or another I had to look for material that would fit the students and that they could work with; In English class the didactic material that was used was only based on a text, I could not work skills like Listening and speaking because we did not have material to listen like a radio or a television, and to improve the ability of speaking was difficult to me because the number of students since I had to manage a group of 40 people. Thus, it was very hard for me to handle this skill in such a large group, therefore, the class management in English lesson was very complex because I did not have the right strategies to effectively conclude an English class.

After my first pedagogical practice I learned that it is important to have different strategies to carry out any activity in the classroom that support and fulfil the steps of the lesson plan, especially if something goes wrong with the material and electronic device. Also, the importance of making self-evaluation after each class in order to improve things that went wrong and think about ways to improve my attitude and my determination in class as this is shown in illustrations 4, 5 and 6.

*Illustration 4*

*Extracted from my Journal, the importance of analyze class activities and material to improve things that went wrong.*

I think I should use another song with more adjectives, this song was nice but too simple and I did not realize that. I also think it could be better if I had used reading instead of the flash cards, they could find the adjective by reading a specific celebration. I think it was a bad idea to let my Ss make groups by themselves, because of this, some students took extra time to finish their poster and others finished quickly, another thing to take into account is that students need more information to make their posters, the flashcards were not enough, so that is why I think reading could have been better for this lesson.

*Illustration 5*

*Extracted from an interview with a teacher coordinator to practice, referring to the constancy for the improvement of my teaching practices.*

## INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHER 1

Suddenly having the ability to self-assess I think that aspect is very important for you and that would get you of that image of insecurity that you often transmit because in the classroom you are totally different...

*Illustration 6*

*Extracted from my story, in reference to the complexity of teaching due to lack of resources that led to the lack of group management.*

... to help me or observe my classes, and the books students used were a bit tedious, there were no TV's or tape recorders, the only skills students could practice in class were Reading and Writing, and the population which I had to work with was difficult...

**7.1.3. Discovery of new creative skills.**

How I mentioned it in My Life Story creativity has always been part of my learning process and was also part of my pre-service teaching process. In different classes I incorporated didactic games, drawings, which will help me teach the subjects established for English classes, and thanks to creativity I was able to find new ideas that will help me improve my teaching-learning process in the classroom without having any experience in the teaching. As well, creativity was part of the different activities that I had to do during my learning process, especially when I had to work with



classmates and that coinciding with the time available was complex, but I had to find a solution to deliver our activities on time as this is shown in illustration 7.

*Illustration 7*

*Extracted from an interview with my university classmate, in reference to creativity as an aspect of my personality.*

3. Mention three skills that can highlight me during the program

CLASSMATE:

Persistence, commitment, dedication, that is the desire to do things; but I think that, above all, to highlight the existence of being there working all the time. I believe that this is one of the greatest skills I could notice in you, from there the others come off, that is, when you are insistent, you are attentive, pending then highlighted all that, especially your responsibility and creativity to do things.

## **7.2. CHANGES IN MY TEACHING PRACTICE.**

The experiences that I got during my pedagogical practice with the professors of the Santo Tomas University were so important to improve my following English classes and to change that negative impression of the teaching career because my first experiences in a classroom were not easy and I had to face different situations that I had to struggle alone.

### **7.2.1 Development of a confident attitude to class.**

When I started my pedagogical practices at the Santo Tomás University, I begin to identify different important aspects in the teaching-learning process in an English class; The fundamental basis of these pedagogical practices were the feedback I received from my university professor in charge of these practices, they also helped me to be constant and overcome negative aspects such as shyness in my personal life and turn it into a positive aspect to be able to fill myself with security with my pedagogical work. At the present time, I am still working as a pre-service teaching and I

can say that I feel confident in my classes, the way I interact with my students and the kind of material I use make me feel confident with my work as this is shown in illustration 8, I think I have got skills to solve any classroom problems and ensure productive learning of my students.

*Illustration 8*

*Extracted from an interview with the school coordinator, referring to my class observation of my teaching practices.*

School coordinator

Let's say: in comparison with other teachers, I have noticed that children always have their classes on time, that the notebooks are well organized, that they are beautiful, and that you being very responsible with the execution of the classes that you yourself have proposed.

Thanks to those interventions that the teachers did in my English classes, I was able to identify qualities or strengths in my features like: my responsibility with my own learning process and the teaching confidence that I have in class but I could not notice by my own, so aspects that I had not seen before and that, by promoting them, contributed to the improvement of my teaching role as this is shown in illustration 9.

*Illustration 9*

*Extracted from an interview with a teacher coordinator to practice, referring to the constancy for the improvement of my teaching practices.*

TEACHER 1 What I remember the work we did in this academic space on your part is that you were always a receptive person who asked questions that were all the time interested in correcting and improving the work developed during the practices, also in the feedback you received in the lesson plan, in the meetings that we developed in the school when we say you had any qualification or a particular comment in the lesson plan and you asked me specific questions in person then I considered that process you did was quite active curious about learning...

### 7.2.2. Awareness of the importance of self-training in my teaching practice.

Thanks to this feedback that I received from my teachers in pedagogical practices, as well as from the coordinators of the English area and suggestions from my university colleagues, they helped me to be increasingly demanding with my pedagogical practice and with the type of material I used in English classes. I improved considerably in the deliveries of my plan lessons, so that I could get feedback from my teachers and use them to change those things that did not help me in my pedagogical practice; I think that the essence of a student, especially at a distance learning, must be based on responsibility because it is the basis for achieving good self-training in the world of pedagogy. Now I believe that being a responsible person is something that people around us will never forget as this is shown in illustration 10.

#### *Illustration 10*

*Extracted from an interview with a teacher coordinator to practice, in reference to my requirement and responsibility.*

5. Mention three skills that can highlight me during the race.

Teacher 1

Well, during the process. Well, I think you were always very responsible for the timely delivery of the activities regarding the arrivals you fulfilled to the school in terms of the disposition of all the activities that required the work with the foundation. I highlight your responsibility to the opening to receive the comments and suggestions that were given to you in the process and suddenly to see what else is that it is very difficult to remember you after two long years, the truth. I do not remember anymore within the process.

### 7.3 CHANGES IN THE PERCEPTION OF MYSELF AS A STUDENT.

As a distance student I learned many things for my professional career that I didn't even know how to use them by myself until I started my pedagogical practice. Changing myself as a social

and receptive person let me improve my learning process, listen to other people's experiences made me reflect on my own and how I could do better in my studies and in my pre-service teaching.

### 7.3.1 Developing of a more receptive attitude.

As my teachers mentioned in the interviews and my study partner it has always characterized me for being a receptive person, for me it was always important and still important, to listen to the opinion of other people without thinking that mine is not meaningful, this is a strategy that I used to improve my pedagogical practice and my distance learning.

I think that in order to improve the learning and teaching part it is important to work as a team and always take into account those positive aspects that favored other people and ourselves; Personally, listening to the opinions of other people helps me improve my pedagogical practice as this is shown in the illustration 11, this kind of attitude definitely helps me to complete my academic spaces in the distance mode.

#### *Illustration 11*

*Extracted from an interview with a teacher coordinator to practice, referring to the receptivity in feedback in the exercise of my teaching practices.*

4. How would you define what my attitude was when facing the different academic challenges throughout degree? Do you remember any example or story?

TEACHER 1: The truth is that it has been quite a while and I find it a little difficult to remember in detail some situation in particular, what I remember is that when we were in the school of pedagogical practices you always approach me with the intention of clarifying some concerns you had with the lesson plan with the same tasks of the classroom that is what highlighted what I could notice; Normally I could also feel that you were in constant communication with your classmates to include the suggestions given, I found interesting at that time of the practices.

### 7.3.2 Creativity focused on teaching awareness of my personality in my learning process.

Through creativity, I was able to make my pedagogical practice more enjoyable for my students, since I tried to incorporate didactic activities such as songs, videos, stories, drawings, etc. All these kinds of activities helped me to teach the topics set for each class in a more fun way; using images on the board as drawings and flashcards, has made my pre-service teaching a more effective practice, helping students to focus and conceptualized the new topics in English class as this is show in Illustration 12.

*Illustration 12*

*Extracted from an interview with the coordinator of the school where I worked, in reference to my creativity in the exercise of my teaching practices.*

5. What are some of the success moments here pre-service teaching learn?

COORDINATOR OF THE ENGLISH AREA: Moments of success; I find it super nice and I have always told you about the activity of happy faces, that we must continue to urge children to speak, to let go and express themselves in English; That seems pretty nice to me and it would be in terms of children's learning.

## CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSIONS

This Narrative research focused on my experiences as a distance student and on my pre-service teaching which emerged from my biography, interviews and journals from my pedagogical practice. As it is said by Farrell, 1998; Freeman, 2002; Jay and Johnsson, 2002) the telling stories help us make sense and help us to reflect on those experiences and thus make meaning of them. Therefore, this research helped me to give consideration to the most important experiences during my distance learning and pre-service teaching that contributed to significant changes for my personal and professional life.

Another significant detail of this research is that I was able to corroborate those changes that arose during my learning process but above all in my perception from the beginning to the end of this project. Before start this project, I investigated different research methods but I was not sure what might be most appropriate for my degree project, at the end, I decided to carry out this narrative research after reading Barkhuizen, Benson and Chik theory (2014) about Narrative research where is stated that “Narrative inquiry brings storytelling as a tool for data analysis or presentation of findings, for which use the term autobiographical research that analyze or tell own stories”. So, this project helped me to find and reflect on those changes and personal achievements that I could not see before and after finish this academic project.

However, during the development of this project I could not find any meaningful sense or personal objective until I reached the data analysis, it was in this part of my project where I really

saw the importance of this research for my professional career and personal life, and so to give an account of this whole process during my distance learning and those experiences and changes that really contributed to my personal and professional life, a process that helped me to reflect on the fact that this whole process, long but significant, has been worthwhile. As a result, autobiographies are a valuable instrument to be able to look better into live, beliefs, thoughts, actions and concepts, among other important aspects, I could corroborate what Kelchtermans states about autobiographies that they are a valuable instrument to look at teachers' beliefs, conceptualizations, thoughts, and actions in the present. Also, they are influenced by experiences from the past, expectations for the future and shape teachers' practices.

Therefore, I would like to describe a little more, the changes that in my opinion were the most significant and that contributed to my professional and personal training.

1. Insecurity and shyness are aspects that in the professional and personal are presented by the lack of knowledge and preparation, the fact of making or facing new situations to which we are not yet prepared can produce negative emotions. Personally, I can say that after my first pedagogical practice I learned that everything is a process, in which many times for the eagerness to acquire new experiences or for the eagerness to fulfill a goal we believe that only with theoretical knowledge we are already suitable people to assume pedagogical positions in a classroom; but this is a big mistake, because the results can be negative and frustrating, it is not only about speaking a foreign language but knowing how to transmit it to a certain population and context, of receiving feedback from appropriate teachers or coordinators because they are the fundamental basis to increase the professional and personal safety of an individual in their teaching-learning processes. Therefore, this Narrative research helped me to analyse and see the changes I have made during

my learning process, as Gary Barkhuizen (2014) stated, “Narrative inquiry brings storytelling as a tool for data analysis or presentation of findings”.

However, although in the world of education we face continuous learning, today I can say that I am aware of my teaching role in a classroom after fulfilling my pedagogical practices at the university and from the feedback I received from my school coordinators, thanks to this study process, my personal and professional vision has changed in the pedagogical field, which is not only transmitting knowledge, there is also that human relationships between teachers and students, and to continue improving my teaching strategies is always necessary to receive feedback from other suitable people. On the other hand; Innovation and creativity will always be important in the classroom to strengthen emotions that help us feel secure in our knowledge and how to share it with other individuals.

2. After my pedagogical practices I learned to have better class control, to improve my teaching strategies and my own learning. I think that after this pedagogical learning experience I learned to easily manage large groups, to raise my curriculum according to the type of population and its needs. All this thanks to the classroom feedback received and its subsequent incorporation into my classroom activities.

The most important thing was to understand that teaching a foreign language goes beyond having knowledge of it, since it is very important to have that ability to impart and build knowledge, to focus on activities that really help and help me achieve the goal of a class.



Also, after really understanding and assimilating my teaching roll in an English classroom, all this learning process helped me to change that negative attitude that I was beginning to feel in my professional career, and helped me to continue my distance learning with better attitude as dedicated and persistent student, to be more critical and responsible with my self-learning. As Abrahão, (2003) mentioned, in this kind of study the researcher does not want to know what or how facts “really” happened, but how the narrator thought about it at the time and how he or she remembers it in the present.

3. I think that a creative person has more problem solving skills and in my case, during my distance learning process and during my pedagogical practices, creativity was always by my side as an instrument to innovate in my work. I could see it in my story, a tool I used to find meaning experiences and changes in my learning process and it proves what Barkhuizen, Benson and Chick (1990) said about this tool that language learning histories are retrospective accounts of past learning.

They are the written stories of language learning experiences. so, I could find that in the classroom, incorporating didactic games or drawings allowed me to observe my students, to know from another perspective their knowledge and what they and I needed to reinforce, likewise, I learned that I also have to take into account the type of population that I am working with to incorporate a didactic activity, especially in the selection of images, since they are very important for me in the workshops or works taking into account that, the choice and use of them should be focused on a specific group, to thus fulfill the objective of the class.

This type of skill helped me a lot as a distance student, since every time I had some difficulties in doing my work, I found the most assertive way to develop them, since, many times the instructions to develop some career jobs were limited and I think that being a distance modality every written work should have a role model from the teachers of the subjects, especially in the first academic semesters, perhaps this would prevent students from finding complex studying at a distance and dropping out in their studies.

4. The development of an appropriate attitude in class was based on my pedagogical practices because before these I did not have the slightest idea of how to start and finish a class, this process was very difficult for me because I did not feel confident what I was doing despite my desire to teach.

After my pedagogical process with the university I understood that it is very important the advice of suitable people to assertively understand our strengths and weaknesses in teaching-learning, for this reason the pedagogical practices are very important to be able to enter a classroom with the fundamental bases of teaching.

However, now I feel more confident about my teaching roll, I always try to do my best in teaching and be constant and responsible, I could see it in my journals where I wrote about my experiences of my pedagogical practices and prove that this tool is meaningful in the pedagogical field as Connelly and Clandinin (1990) say “Journals made by participants in the practical setting are another source of Narrative Inquiry” (Connelly F and Clandinin D., p. 5). This study process shows me that I am now a more social and decisive person, that I take into account the opinion

and knowledge of other people because they will allow me to keep improving many aspects of my personal and professional life.

5. In the self-learning in my teaching practice, I understood that it is also very important to improve all types of academic and coexistence processes. For me, each feedback from my coordinators were and continues to be a positive opportunity to improve my teaching-learning process, and I am still looking for and incorporating new teaching strategies into my classes that allow me to innovate and ensure the learning of a foreign language in a more enjoyable way.

6. During my learning process I always maintained a flexible attitude towards changes to develop new skills in the pedagogical part and in my self-learning. As Clandinin and Conelly (1990) mentioned “Conceptualizing a professional knowledge landscape provides a way to conceptualize teacher's personal practical knowledge” (Clandinin D. & Conelly F., p. 24). I think that a person can improve his or her teaching skills as long as he or she is open to listen to the opinion of other people in the same field of interest and is willing to understand the whole pedagogical context to make the necessary changes in the pedagogical practice.

7. Throughout this process I learned that creativity goes beyond drawing or painting, that being these the greatest sense of creative creation you can use your bases to be innovative and imagine new strategies that help me solve academic problems or improve processes Teaching-learning.

Although I had many problems in structuring my lesson plan, group management and time, I always used my imagination to find tools that would help me in a creative way with my academic processes.

This narrative research helped me to reflect on my entire academic process, and as those experiences changed my vision of my career, I personally felt that I had achieved nothing during these years of learning, that I had not obtained changes during my teaching process, but by analyzing each of the categories that emerged from the interviews, journals, and from my own history, I can assimilate the immense result that these experiences have brought to my personal and professional life.

Personally and professionally, now, I feel a more confident, consistent and responsible person. It is important to keep in mind that in order to achieve positive changes in our learning, each academic process must be respected, it is not necessary to expedite in executing a roll for which we are not yet prepared because we can fall into frustration. Also, it is important that in the educational field the collaborative part, responsibility and receptivity are always present to make changes that can improve academic processes and allow us to strengthen our knowledge.

In aspects such as limitations when performing a degree work under this investigation, I can only point out two, which, in my opinion, are aspects that have an impact and must be taken into account by future students who choose this type of degree work.

Although the modality in which I attended the degree is at a distance, this factor plays the role of carrying out the necessary activities for the collection of experiences, anecdotes and memories. For example, it was difficult at some times to arrange time for the interviewees (work, personal, distance, etc.).

The second aspect that relates to the previous one has to do with the ability to remember important events by the interviewees. For example, the people who gave their approval to be interviewed, had a concept formed about the interviewer, recognized me as a person with particular characteristics, attitudes, aptitudes, fears, etc. Concepts that outline a specific personality; but the difficulty was mainly in the remembrance of specific situations that could support the description of a characteristic.

My recommendation for people who in the future decide to opt for this type of research of degree work would be to do it taking into account that there can be a lot of time between professional practice, pedagogical practices and the conduct of research and compilation of the material for this work.

Finally, I would like to point out that narrative research is very important to analyze and reflect on personal experiences and changes and I could see it throughout this study process as Connelly and Clandinin (1990) expressed “The study of Narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world. The education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories”. (Connelly F. & Clandinin D., p. 2). I am very happy to have used Narrative Inquiry to do my degree work, since it helped me to understand how wonderful has been my learning process at the distance education and I can see along this study Narrative in Educational Research is important to understand and make personal and professional changes, as is expressed by (Connelly F. & Clandinin D., p. 3) in understanding ourselves and our students educationally, we need an understanding of people with a narrative of life experiences. Life’s narrative are the context for making meaning of school situations. I can say it was worth it. Furthermore, I am proud to have been part of the distance education of the Santo Tomas University, although distance education

requires a lot of sacrifice and consistency, but it gave me the opportunity to be a professional, to fulfill my dreams of becoming a committed student and educator, aware of the role as a teacher and the responsibility involved in planning and executing a class and of being in a constant autonomous learning aimed at my personal and professional growth.

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## **APPENDIX**

1. Link of my Story <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18t43Gc63dS-twxr0-RlrDtyBc9elxe6t?usp=sharing>
2. Link of my Journals <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1PbcgL2OEuG0DDRG3ZJZ8YbknaYF4qfx9?usp=sharing>
3. Link of the interviews <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1sIcrSsQmijGCRtKwSNxD4OQy3Y3C0ZgZ?usp=sharing>