



The development of soft skills in research formative process in a bachelor program

Jessica Andrea Olivares Ramos

CAU Villavicencio

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Directora: Johanna Patricia López Urbina

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	4
Resumen.....	4
Contextualization	6
Research statement	8
Research question	9
Research objectives.....	9
Theoretical Framework.....	10
Narratives.....	10
English Language Learning	13
Soft Skills.....	14
Distance Education	20
Research design.....	22
Participants.....	23
Instruments.....	24
Trustworthiness.....	27
Data analysis.....	28
Analysis results.....	30
1. Factors influencing PTs' soft skills development.....	34
2. Evidenced consequences in the development of soft skills.	51

Conclusions.....	56
References.....	60
Annexes	68

List of tables

Table 1.....	24
Table 2.....	33

List of figures

Figure 1	29
Figure 2	31
Figure 3	32

List of graphs

Graph 1	37
Graph 2	39
Graph 3	42
Graph 4	44
Graph 5	46

Abstract

The education of society is related to the formation that teachers receive during their bachelor's degrees, thus it is necessary for it to be of quality for personal and social enrichment. Soft skills have an important role in the personal and professional growth of pre-service teachers; therefore, this work evidences how in 19 studies presented during the years 2017 and 2021 by students belonging to the Bachelor's degree in foreign language English, these skills were represented and developed. Through the qualitative approach, an axial coding was carried out using a matrix, a Google form and the NVivo program; the information was classified to make different categories and this was accompanied with the opinions provided by the authors in a survey. The analysis done, shows how soft skills such as motivation are associated to teachers and that they affect students both positively and negatively in the emotions and their teaching. In addition, self-learning and problem solving are part of the regulation of the processes as learners; and responsibility is strengthened in pedagogical and research practices.

Keywords: Narrative research, pre-service teachers, soft skills, EFL

Resumen

La educación de la sociedad se relaciona con la formación que reciben los maestros durante la realización de sus licenciaturas, así que es necesario que esta sea de calidad para el enriquecimiento personal y colectivo. Las habilidades blandas juegan un papel importante en el crecimiento personal y profesional de los maestros en formación; por ende, este trabajo da a conocer como en 19 estudios presentados durante los años 2017 y 2021 por estudiantes pertenecientes a la

Licenciatura en Lengua Extranjera Inglés, representaron y desarrollaron estas habilidades. A través del enfoque cualitativo, se llevó a cabo una codificación axial haciendo uso de una matriz, un formulario en Google y el programa NVivo; se clasificó la información para realizar diferentes categorías y se acompañó esta con las opiniones brindadas por los autores en una encuesta. El análisis hecho, resalta como habilidades blandas como la motivación van relacionadas con los maestros y que estos afectan a los estudiantes tanto de manera positiva como negativa en las emociones y su enseñanza. Además de que el autoaprendizaje y la resolución de problemas hacen parte de la regulación de los procesos como aprendices; y la responsabilidad se fortalece en las prácticas pedagógicas e investigativas.

Palabras Clave: Habilidades blandas, maestros en formación, investigación narrativa, EFL

Contextualization

The present research proposal aims to analyze the development of soft skills through narratives, pointing out the importance and influence they have during teacher training and also, their participation in improving the quality of personal, collective, and educational preparation of the bachelor's degree program in a foreign language: English at Universidad Santo Tomás. The use of these narratives is promoted through the analysis of 19 research studies between the years 2017 and 2021, belonging to students who were studying this major, did their pedagogical practices, and, in some cases, were already working as research assistants.

Although this project is strictly academic because it is carried out within the bachelor's degree program in a foreign language: English and its involved, relying on the experiences acquired through pedagogical practices and experiences reflected in narratives; the reasons for doing so are valid for the different educational community, mainly those of the career mentioned above. According to the article *Habilidades blandas: Necesarias para la formación integral del estudiante universitario*, written by Marrero et al. (2018) "al docente se le demandan mayores habilidades socioemocionales que coadyuven al desarrollo de iguales habilidades en sus estudiantes" (p, 9), therefore, it is necessary for pre-service teachers to be educated in an integral way, making use not only of their knowledge and hard skills such as training, technical ability, planning; but it is also essential to work on the soft skills in order to strengthen their social, emotional and communicative aspects since they are necessary when working with human beings in their development. Through the analysis of the different narratives in which the soft skills are involved, the results are intended to be shared with the students, so that they can acquire the necessary information to carry out the

educational process with little less difficulty by identifying, understanding, avoiding and facing different problems or situations that they will encounter and that other students (graduates in this case) have already experienced; as well as with the teachers who can also reflect on their teaching and their participation in the program because from their role they can contribute to improving the formation of future teachers.

Finally, this project is related to the structure of Research at the LLEI, presented in the final research report made by Bonilla et al., (2017), indicating that this project is part of the research field number 2 "The study of the Language and its contexts" due to its participation in the bachelor's degree program in a foreign language: English in the different spaces and roles in which the students of this program developed (in schools as practitioners and teachers or in the university as research assistants). It is also part of macroproject number 2 "Understanding and characterizing EFL in the LLEI: experiences and phenomena in the pre-service teachers' educational contexts", because it applies a narrative and qualitative design that focuses especially on this, on the experiences and the results that these brought to the pre-service teachers and will provide to other students and teachers; and thus ending in the subproject number 3 "The voices of the LLEI realities: life stories and experiences", using these as the object of study for the demonstration of the benefits that this design offers.

Research statement

Within the field of research, especially related to the Bachelor's Degree in English as a Foreign Language at Universidad Santo Tomás, the narrative design is rarely heard or treated in the preparation provided by the teachers who oversee the theoretical-research subjects, as well as by the students who begin and carry out their research studies. According to the article *Investigación narrativa y sus formas de análisis: una visión desde la educación física y el deporte* by Andrew C. Sparkes and José Devís Devís (n.d) this design provides the opportunity to analyze and investigate not only in a personal way but also to deal with identities, cultures, and structures, in a social context, encountering certain problems or situations.

However, this design is not known in detail, having little information to use as a reference or as an option applicable to research, thus ignoring that narratives reveal phenomena and offer contributions or teachings from the stories that reflect their own and others' experiences. An example of this, which is visualized in this study is the emergence of soft skills development in the pre-service teachers' experiences; this topic is fundamental in this project because it played an important role in the academic formation and labor field of the authors. The analysis of soft skills demonstrates the relevance of considering people's words, feelings, and thoughts and their impact on different areas of their lives.

The interest in studying this type of problem arose within the research field in this career appears due the lack of knowledge about narratives and the learning that can be acquired through the experiences of other students who studied the same bachelor's degree in English as a foreign language and made their research studies (in this case, presented between the years 2017 and 2021 are used) about what they lived during their journey as teachers in formation, offering

contributions that although not known to others are quite useful and essential to take into account but also, demonstrate that from the study and proper use of narratives, a great amount of information can be acquired to facilitate, in this case, the educational process of the current and future students of the degree program. Considering the lack of knowledge and practice, the interest is to learn the importance of narrative design, promote its use and show how it allows analyzing soft skills in the research and pedagogical processes.

Research question

How is the development of soft skills depicted in the narrative research papers of pre-service teachers of a bachelor's degree program in English as a foreign language during the years 2017 - 2021?

Research objectives

General objective

To analyze how pre-service teachers develop soft skills through the search, finding, and analysis of phenomena immersed in the learning of English as a foreign language and the educational and research process in a bachelor's degree in English as a foreign language.

Specific objectives

- To identify through the narrative opinions and information extracted from the analyses the level of participation of soft skills in the formation process of pre-service teachers.
- To classify the information through an analysis matrix on soft skills, development, and involvement in soft skills, in the research formation of pre-service teachers.

- To establish the way in which soft skills are developed in the research process within the bachelor's degree program in foreign languages English.

Theoretical Framework

Narratives

The information collected and necessary for the respective analysis is not only extracted from numerical data, statistics, and specific dates on events that have occurred; but also, within the research process, the importance can be given to the life stories of both a person or a group that allows knowing, deduce and interpret useful experiences for the formulation of conclusions that can even be closer to the people who develop research based on these and to whom they are shared. The tool that encompasses the above is the so-called narrative, which Laura Bieger and Nicole Maruo-Schröder (2016) in their article titled "*Space, Place, and Narrative*": *A Short Introduction* commented that "creates imaginary maps and itineraries of and for the social relations that constitute space and place" (p, 5), explaining in a general way that description that is made about an event in detail and that is of great support for the understanding of significant experiences for us or others, allows us to create and establish relationships between people who have lived similar situations or in relation to the topic in which we want to use the narrative. The stories told or written can give meaning and support to facts, thoughts, and data, among others.

Within this research process, narratives are used as a means to create a connection to the present and future students of the bachelor's degree named above, providing the opportunity to learn about their career in depth and likewise, to use the findings and conclusions proposed for personal and collective benefit; taking into account that, as expressed by Marie-Laure Ryan

(2017) in chapter 33 of the book *A Companion to Critical and Cultural Theory*, "The ubiquity and multiple manifestations of stories in human societies mean that the relevance of the theoretical concept of narrative extends to all the disciplines concerned with human experience, including cultural studies"(p. 518), explaining that the experiences found are adequately analyzed for their understanding and are useful to relate them not only in the promotion of the use of this within the research field but also for the improvement of the educational quality of the academic program and the participants related to it.

A study entitled *Narrative inquiry study: Experiences and pedagogical reflections upon the pedagogical practices of an English pre-service teacher*, was carried out by the graduate teacher Magda Yohana Munar Villamil in 2018, in the city of Chiquinquirá and belonging to the bachelor's degree of English as a foreign language at Santo Tomás University. In this study it is proposed to reflect on the narratives of the experiences that emerged during the realization of pedagogical practices between the eighth and ninth semester of the degree, having a total of 3 practices, presenting in this way how was her role as an English teacher during her academic preparation. The author manifests within the analysis the emotional support that her tutors gave to her teaching process, benefiting not only her students but also herself; she also highlighted the importance of writing down her experiences to benefit from the acquired reflections and to evaluate herself to improve as a person and as a teacher. Magda emphasizes in her conclusions that it was significant to consider her own experiences for her academic formation since she knows her weaknesses and strengths and at the same time reinforces the acquired knowledge related to methodologies, theories, tools, etc.

Narrative at LLEI

According to the article titled *Macroprojects as a new didactic proposal for teaching EFL research in distance education* which was conducted by Bonilla et al., (2017), The Licenciatura en Lengua Extranjera Inglés (LLEI), has implemented a theoretical proposal based on research macroprojects (defining these as the general research topics linked to the objectives), thus facilitating the accompaniment and development of this research process in the students of the program. These macroprojects are related to the area of knowledge that leads each project, making part of a field which are: Research field 1, *The teaching and learning of English as a foreign language*; and Research field 2, *The study of the English language and its context*. The narrative is part of the latter due to the macroproject it directs and which is entitled *Understanding and characterizing EFL in the LLEI: experiences and phenomena in the pre-service teachers' educational contexts, focusing on the life stories and the spaces in which the teaching and learning process takes place and specifically to subproject number 3 The voices of the LLEI realities: life stories and experiences*, explaining to this term as a bridge that allows the connection between the student's individual research studies and the macroproject, following a protocol created by the teachers in charge of guiding the subprojects to carry out these studies properly and to group the topics found in the contexts presented by the students themselves to copy the results and to increase the information in the report of these and the proposal on the macroprojects.

Considering the above, narratives are an essential part of this subproject because they are the main source for its realization allowing participants to analyze and characterize their own and others' voices in stories of teaching and learning by playing roles as pre-service teachers,

assistants, and students, giving importance and highlighting aspects immersed in their daily lives that are useful as information for the improvement of their personal and professional academic quality. In the research studies presented between 2017 and 2021, the narratives were found to follow a trend focused on autobiographies, with the researchers being the protagonists of their own stories.

English Language Learning

The learning of a second or foreign language allows an expansion of the socioeconomic opportunities of people and favors them at a personal and metacognitive level. English is a universal language that has taken power in aspects of everyday life, playing an important role in society. Juárez Díaz and Perales Escudero (2019) stated through paraphrases, in their research studied *Experiencias en el aprendizaje del inglés en la educación superior* that “El aprendizaje del inglés es una necesidad puesto que se ha convertido en una lengua franca en contextos académicos, económicos y laborales” (Cited by Crystal, 2012, p, 112), taking this language as a tool that allows to perform with greater ease in environments in which human beings must necessarily live for their adequate development throughout their lives. Therefore, it is important to promote the learning and teaching of English for the individual and common benefit for the betterment of the population and their quality of life.

The learning of English, in the case of this research work, has great importance because the students who carried out the research studies between 2017 and 2021, and myself, were and are being trained not only to be able to teach this language, deepening pedagogy and didactics, but we also have to dedicate our time to learn this language with responsibility and in a constant way to be able to appropriate English correctly as our first language, being aware that the

preparation and acquisition of this would benefit us not only on a personal level, but also to future students who will learn it from us.

The research study *Experiencias en el aprendizaje del inglés en la educación superior*, named above which was conducted by Catalina Juárez Díaz and Moisés Damián Perales Escudero in 2019, in Chetumal, Mexico, developed an analysis of 21 studies between 2004 and 2018, in order to identify and find the perspectives, phenomena and methodological and theoretical approaches on which the experiences of people during their learning of English as a foreign language have been based. Using databases, articles were collected that presented the stories of the learners of this language; with these, Juárez and Perales (2019) stated that the positive experiences were due to the characteristics and treatment of the teacher, especially towards the students during explanations and solution of doubts. The negative ones, on the other hand, are related to the autonomous way of learning and the lack of teacher assistance related to the emotional aspect of the students and the appropriation of the language. They concluded that the experiences of the authors of the studies focused on the change they had during their process, in technology, teaching methodologies, the lack of attention, and the self-regulation of their knowledge and their ways of working. Finally, they commented on the need to use students' narratives for a better understanding of how students develop during the learning of English and to improve the effectiveness of its teaching.

Soft Skills

The development of people not only involves the educational and social sphere, but also those competencies or individual and group skills related to working with others and emotional intelligence. This combination of skills that are also social and communicative is called soft

skills, which according to Rodriguez et al., (2021) in the research article entitled *Habilidades blandas y el desempeño docente en el nivel superior de la educación*, estas "son cruciales para el desarrollo académico-profesional y personal del docente universitario, pues es preciso que estos formen a estudiantes para la vida a partir de capacidades como saber escuchar y comunicar, por ende, retroalimentar de forma positiva"(p.7), Thus being able to treat not only ourselves as educators of people but also to guide and strengthen these important skills is necessary in the personal, social, academic, labor and professional field, to other people from a young age avoiding difficulties in the future.

Chapter 8 titled *Soft Skills for Effective Communication* of the book *Computers and Communication Technology* by The National Council of Educational Research and Training (n. d) comments that these soft skills "help us excel in the workplace and their importance cannot be denied in the emerging information or knowledge society." (p. 186) since they focus more on personal values and skills needed to deal with other people, I feel part of the academic, social and professional success. Also, in the document mentioned above, it is explained that in this type of skills "some are inborn such as confidence, friendliness and whether or not someone has a sociable nature, while others are skills that can be taught or improved upon, such as developing effective communication, organization, and social graces." (p. 86), this can be carried out from an early age to academic and professional stages in which the human being requires interacting with others, as in the case of this research, pedagogical practices, and teaching processes. The report *What Works in Soft Skills Development for Youth Employment? A Donors' Perspective* prepared by Clare Ignatowski (2017), defines soft skills as "the mix of skills, attitudes, behaviors, personal qualities and mindsets that individuals use to be successful across different situations in work and life" (p. 5), thus suggesting their influence and importance in personal and

collective development because when these skills are enhanced at a personal level, the benefits are not only for the individual who is working on them but also take advantage of the environments in which this person performs; thus highlighting that these skills are mostly needed by young people in order to be able to "effectively navigate their environment, work with others, perform well and achieve their goals" (p. 6), thus allowing them high opportunities in labor demand and their economic growth because they are ultimately required skills that are acquired through exposure to practices, situations, and reflections on them.

A study entitled *Evaluación de las habilidades blandas en la educación superior* conducted by Fuentes et al., (2021), belonging to the faculties of Business Sciences and Human and Social Sciences at the Uniminuto University, Bogotá South and Zipaquirá, focused on identifying which soft skills prevail in the students at this same university in the psychology and occupational health administration programs. During the realization of this study the level of soft skills that they had was known through characterization and analysis of role play in order to evaluate them and an interview conducted with each of the participants; with these, the 50 students, most of whom are employees, showed that they present behaviors in which the ability to listen and influence is highly present but lack the ability to ask questions and presentation. They also highlight the behaviors related to leadership and psychology students are found with weaknesses in the inquiry to others, recognition of contributions, and motivation to others (Fuentes, Moreno-Murcia, Rincón-Tellez & Silva-Garcia, 2021). Both programs demonstrate sufficient confidence and commitment in carrying out activities, but teamwork is below average. This shows that these two programs, which require a high social level in the development of their work, can perform easily in front of others but need even more dedication in the relationship among themselves.

Also supporting this research study is the *Experiences of Participants in Teacher Professional Education on Obtaining Soft Skills: A Case Study in Indonesia*, conducted by Nurul Huda et al. (2021), belonging to different universities in Indonesia, and was conducted in the year 2020. This study which was conducted for six months, focuses on 15 participants' acquired awareness of soft skills in the Professional Education Program, and showed as results that they learned about soft skills using an integrated or hidden curriculum, through their own experiences in school practices, projects, and micro-teaching. The soft skills that stood out in this study were self-confidence, collaboration, patience, responsibility, critical thinking, cooperation, tolerance and respect; and it is important for my research because it provides information of the ways in which these types of skills can be carried out with pre-service teachers in their formation.

Through these, it was obtained as conclusions that the students did not relate directly with the soft skills during their studies and that they rarely mentioned them; but they understood what they were about, and it was through the experiences that they were strengthening them (Nurul Huda, et al., 2021). Through the internships, they evaluated their soft skills by writing down aspects about them, but during their classes, they were extracted through the material provided by the teachers or observation. They were acquired in an integrated way and not because they were taught directly but because they analyzed their practices in different schools or in their lives, in the actions and words they expressed even among their own social group. These skills were not integrated into a curriculum, but it was through the application of these skills that they could be frequently experienced. However, as mentioned by the authors Tito Maya & Serrano Orellana in their article *Desarrollo de soft skills una alternativa la escasez de talento humano* (2016), it is necessary to implement and enhance these in the content taught in different

educational institutions or organizations and academic levels to focus more on human development and the expansion of opportunities to improve the quality of life of people.

Another study focused on the analysis of soft skills is *Productive Method as the Basis for Soft Skills Development in Engineering Foreign Language Education*, conducted by Medvedeva & Rubtsova, published in 2021. These students of the Department of Foreign Languages and Translation and Interpreting conducted questionnaires to find out the opinion of 192 students of Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, belonging to the first and third-year engineering program, in order to find out their opinions regarding the necessity of developing soft skills, especially during the study of foreign language and they applied a case study problem-based learning and written essays as a productive method useful for the design of technology that allowed the use of these skills and their progress. Finally, the information was analyzed, and the findings were presented. This category of university students was chosen because the disciplines of mathematics, physics, and natural science modules are not aimed at developing soft skills or the use of interactive pedagogical technologies that allow this; in addition to the fact that the professional-oriented a foreign language can use these through the internationalization of society and the implementation of academic mobility. Through the execution of these activities and methods, the authors highlighted the importance of soft skills because they contribute to the successful interaction of people in society and in their professional activities, emphasizing the skills presented such as communication skills (teamwork, negotiation, oral and written communication, oratory skills, etc.), management skills (management and organizational skills, critical thinking skills, time allocation, leadership skills, adaptability, responsibility, creativity, etc.) and professional skills (modern technologies, numeracy skills, hard work, etc.); and commented on the lack of development of soft skills in high school together

with the interest and awareness that university students have about them (Medvedeva & Rubtsova, 2021).

A last study that focuses on the promotion of soft skills and their development is *Competencias Blandas para la mejora de la Educación y el Desarrollo Social Sostenible*, which was conducted by Algarra López et al., (2021). They conducted a literature review of other international studies conducted by authors who were teachers in basic secondary and higher education, with the purpose of analyzing and proposing the soft skills that should be developed at the different educational levels mentioned above. This was decided because these are currently required more frequently by employer supervisors and are related to the academic environment, personal, and social well-being. The authors conducted a search of documents in databases such as Scopus and WOS, relating them to soft skills and educational formation levels, and then categorized them considering the needs at those stages. Through this, it was established as conclusions that the majority of students carry out studies in the different hard skills and there is neglect in the integral formation because they find problems in fitting into society and there is frustration in front of the personal and organizational objectives; the need for all members of the educational community to participate in the expansion and enhancement of students in soft skills from an early age is emphasized; and that skills such as motivation, creativity, curiosity, and tolerance are related in grades in both secondary and undergraduate education, and confidence and resilience are associated with university students because they are mostly required in today's professionals. Finally, in postgraduate education, it is important that professors contribute through their experiences of innovative mechanisms that promote these skills, focusing on the important ones to develop such as communication skills to be able to give lectures or teamwork for better social experiences. The authors also emphasize that internships help to develop the

social aspect in the interaction of people, but in subsequent studies, there is no continuity or improvement, therefore, the accompaniment and guidance of teachers are necessary (Algarra López, et al., 2021).

Distance Education

It is essential to highlight the work of education in relation to the advances that society has developed, including those of technological aspects, and consider the newly emerging needs of present and future generations. The ways of teaching and learning have been changing and one methodology that has adapted to this is distance education. Abdullah Saykili (2018) shares in his article *Distance Education: Definitions, Generations, Key Concepts, and Future Directions* that according to Keegan's definition of distance education, a strength of this way of teaching is "the inclusion of technical media to bridge the distance between the learner and the teacher." (p, 4), thus allowing not to lose the "essence" of learning from another with adequate accompaniment and providing guidance and greater confidence. Currently, there are tools such as electronic devices and platforms that facilitate the interaction of the process. This term contributes to my research study because it is through this that the students and I are carrying out our educational process making use of main autonomy, and self-regulating what we have learned in the career, with the support of teachers and directors. However, as the same author explains, "the weakness here is the question of whether one would need the influence of an educational organization to experience a planned learning scheme" (p, 4), because not having a place and a fixed schedule, they are the ones who must adjust the classes and activities according to the needs and norms presented.

EFL Students' Views on Distance English Language Learning in a Public University in Turkey is a study done by Dilek Altunay in 2019 in the cities of Antakya and Hatay, Turkey. This research had as an object of study the opinions of Turkish first-year EFL students about distance English language education. Data were collected through an online questionnaire with a Likert scale and semi-structured interviews with 62 students from various majors taking compulsory distance English courses at a public university. Through these, it was revealed that most of the students found the vocabulary and grammar provided on the platforms useful, as well as improved listening skills; however, a large percentage of students did not know about the activities. The author concluded through the analysis that face-to-face interaction allows the improvement of English learning and communication, emphasizing that distance education is adjustable because of its flexibility of time and place, but the traditional one is more effective. Also, he shared that the course time is not enough and that it is not studied regularly by them.

Research design

The present study adopts the qualitative research approach, which as stated by Haradhan Kumar Mohajan (2018) in *Qualitative Research Methodology in Social Sciences and Related Subjects* "it is described as an effective model that occurs in a natural setting and enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from high involvement in the actual experiences" (Cited by Creswell, 2009, p. 1); therefore, data collection is based on the latter, on stories, facts and emerging results that provide important information to analyze in order to give a reason for a situation or problem. According to Tamarinde L. Haven (2019) in her article *Preregistering qualitative research*, in this type of research, "Every result in a qualitative design is one that is an interpretation, subjective; it is influenced by the lens through which the researcher has interpreted the data"(p, 234), due to the flexibility it has, giving the researcher the ability to not only analyze what has been collected but also to reflect, understand and provide different perspectives or findings of a given context.

Within qualitative research, the case study is the one that best suits the type of research to be done. According to Zeitley Karmilla Kamana and Zaleha Othman in their article *Validity, Reliability, and Triangulation in Case Study Method: An Experience* (2016), "case studies become particularly useful where one needs to understand some particular problem or situation in great depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information" (p. 2); the latter, in my research project, will be collected from a survey designed to collect opinions of some students of the bachelor's degree in a foreign language: English on the soft skills and of the narratives of the graduates found in the 19 theses and analyzed individually and in groups through the documentary analysis matrix in order to find trends, specific situations, and important aspects useful for knowledge about soft skills within teacher education, especially in the bachelor's

degree in a foreign language: English. The narratives mentioned above, as stated by Gary Barkhuizen et al. (2014) in *Narrative Inquiry in language teaching and learning research*, “offer alternative perspectives to official or academic accounts of historical events and often uncover issues that had not previously been visible” (p, 5), considering this then, they allow access to more information in an inferential way. Therefore, in my case the graduates of the bachelor's degree in English as a foreign language share information that not only can create a relationship with other people but also reflect through behaviors, actions, attitudes, or feelings that can be characterized, classified, or used to understand how the person is in a certain condition or situation.

In this case, this research study is based on the narratives and experiences that graduates of this career have had as students, as pre-service teachers, and as research assistants, for the analysis and interpretation of their stories, in order to unveil phenomena that only narratives allow us to know, and their results will serve as support to strengthen the knowledge of this methodological design.

Participants

The process of analysis and interpretation of the research studies (one presented in 2017, seven in 2018, one in 2019, seven in 2020 and three in 2021) was conducted from the research process carried out by students belonging to the bachelor's degree in a foreign language: English, including those who were in the Research Mentorship Program in this field, and who participated by answering the survey. These students were protagonists of their own pedagogical practices or processes throughout their careers or they also played a passive role during the research as observers of other people's experiences. Although students of the program completed a total of

26 research projects or theses inside the narrative inquiry research, 7 of them could not be accessed because the students did not upload the information to CRAI [Centro de Recursos para el Aprendizaje y la Investigación] and there were no records in the program for those final papers.

Table 1

Total of research projects included in the study.

Year of study	Amount
2017	1
2018	7
2019	1
2020	7
2021	3
Total	19

Source: Researcher's design

Instruments

The total number of research projects considered in this study was 26, but unfortunately 7 of them could not be accessed because the students did not upload the information to CRAI and there were no records in the program for those theses: therefore, 19 research projects were finally used as the first instrument. They were written between 2017 and 2021 by graduates with bachelor's degrees in a foreign language: English, from the Santo Tomás University. The authors of these are between 20 and over 30 years old, and most of the graduates are teachers with years

of experience in teaching English in public and private institutes, transversalizing this foreign language with the contexts found in their communities, problematic situations presented, and other subjects of learning. For the analysis of the theses, the first five were reviewed and with them, a matrix was established that served as a basis throughout the study and was applied to the remaining 14 theses. With these research studies, I want to make an analysis that allows to know how soft skills are evidenced during the formation of teachers in their professional education and their influence and participation in their professional and personal life, taking into account that as expressed by Marrero et al. in its article *Habilidades blandas: Necesarias para la formación integral del estudiante universitario* (2018) "Las habilidades blandas tienen relación con la inteligencia emocional; la relación y comunicación efectiva se ve afectada principalmente por la capacidad de conocer y manejar las emociones, tanto en nosotros mismos como en los demás". (p, 15).

Subsequently, as mentioned above, a documentary analysis matrix was created with the information that emerged from the five initial ones, this being the second instrument to be used. Jennifer Bates Averill (2002), in her article entitled *Matrix Analysis as a Complementary Analytic Strategy in Qualitative inquiry*, comments that "descriptive matrices allow the researcher to display categorized data in individual cells, just to observe what appears"(p.856), thus facilitating the codification and analysis of the data for the researcher. This is used in my research with the purpose of organizing and classifying the data of the 19 theses in trends, identifying which soft skills are commonly found in the students during their institutional and professional-pedagogical practices, the people involved in their development and their negative and positive effect according to the opinions of the graduates. The matrix has nineteen questions, six of which are based on basic information about the research project, five are focused in a

general way on the soft skill found in each one, and finally, eight are centered on the negative and positive details that affect or drive these skills and the impact that their results have on the researchers. For the analysis of this, a questionnaire created in Google was used to classify the information and discover the type of information that tends to be repeated.

This project not only interprets the data and experiences provided by the researchers in a textual and interlinear manner but also wants to know the views and opinions of the researchers themselves during and even after they have finished their research studies and degree, hearing from their own voices how this process affected them or not in their academic and professional development. This information is gathered through a survey, the third instrument conducted to know the perspectives of the graduates themselves regarding their knowledge of the soft skills experienced in the development of their own degree projects and the level of each of these; thus allowing the researcher to know if they were aware of the soft skills in their practices and training, the importance they gave them and suggestions regarding a better deepening in the students of the program and formative research processes. According to Ponto (2015) in her article *Understanding and Evaluating Survey Research*, "It can range from asking a few targeted questions of individuals on a street corner to obtain information related to behaviors and preferences, to a more rigorous study using multiple valid and reliable instruments" (p. 1). In this case, the survey has two sections, the first referring to general information on the degree project and graduation and the second on the analysis of the development of soft skills during the conduct of their research, with the latter having selection questions and open answers to obtain specific opinions.

Trustworthiness

This research project is mainly supported by research studies with a focus on narratives that were extracted from the CRAI, of the Universidad Santo Tomás. With this information, different processes are carried out to analyze data mainly based on the deepening and study of experiences of graduate students belonging to the Faculty of Education and specifically the bachelor's degree in English as a foreign language.

For the triangulation of this work, the use of at least three instruments such as the final paper of research projects, a survey, and a content matrix of analysis, allowed the decoding of information, the identification of essential categories to highlight and trends that are repeated frequently among researchers who used the narrative design during the years 2017 and 2021. In addition, the survey was conducted with the authors, with the purpose of reaching the Primary Source on which my research project is based. Finally, this research is supported by constructs that appear in the theoretical framework and arise from the main aspects that this project emphasizes and relates to the topics of the other studies.

Data analysis

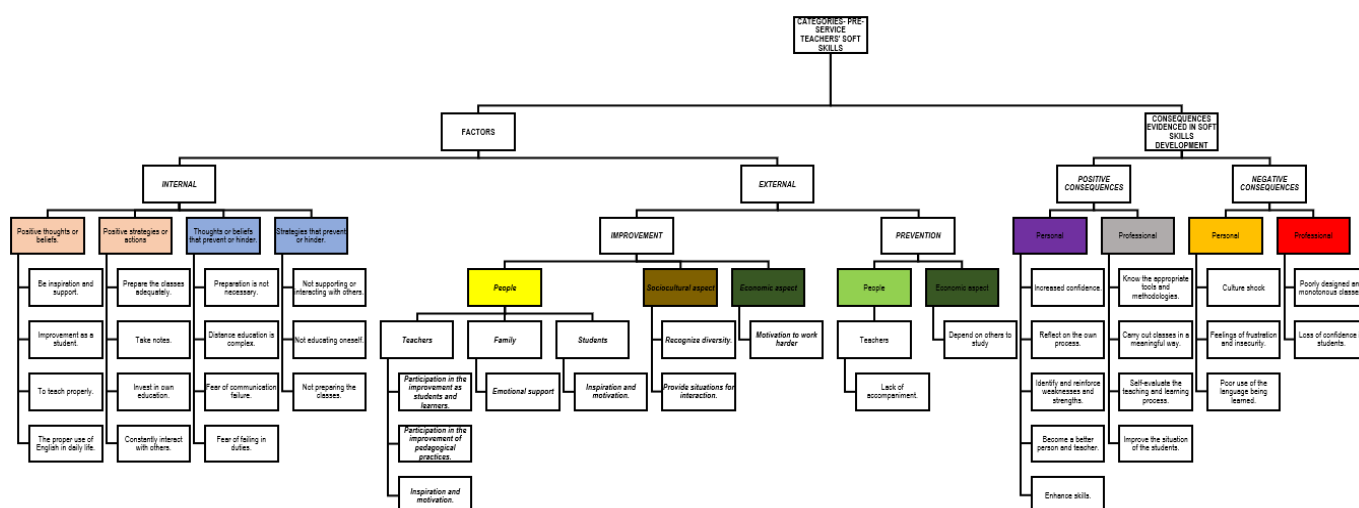
After the data collection, in which the instruments mentioned above were considered, the analysis process began. According to what John W. Creswell (2014) wrote in *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, "the investigator may collect qualitative documents. These may be public documents (e.g., newspapers, minutes of meetings, official reports) or private documents (e.g., personal journals and diaries, letters, e-mails)." (p, 263); in this case, the documentary review that was performed was of the research studies that emerged from the narratives presented during the years 2017 to 2021 of graduates belonging to a bachelor's degree in a foreign language: English; of these, only 19 studies could be consulted due to their free access to information and the remaining 7 could not be read since they had no record in the institutional repository. To obtain information on the latter, the authors of these research studies were contacted, but no response was obtained from them.

As a result of the analysis of the research studies, a survey was designed in order to deepen the information presented by the students in each of their projects. This was done with the purpose of deepening the aspects that frame the development of soft skills within the bachelor's degree program in the research processes, thus knowing the opinion of the students themselves regarding these. In the first instance, the survey was sent to the writers of these research studies, but due to the lack of participation, the study population was extended to students who at the time of writing this article were in the development or finalization of their research project, especially focused on narratives, or who were also part of the Research Mentorship Program.

Next, an open data analysis was made, defined by Corbin & Strauss (1990) in their article entitled *Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria*, as "the interpretive process by which data are broken down analytically" (p. 423); in this, the themes were limited through the recognition of similarities in the students' arguments, thus facilitating the grouping of the information and its understanding. Next, an axial data analysis was made, a type of coding that presents the relationship between categories and subcategories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 13); through the matrix made, looking for connections between the themes that allowed the establishment of the categories and subcategories for this research study. The latter emerged from the deepening of the data provided and classified, coming from the narratives; they were not pre-established. According to Corbin & Strauss (1990) in the same article, these categories "are generated through the same analytic process of making comparisons to highlight similarities and differences that is used to produce lower-level concepts" (p. 7), being in this project the following:

Figure 1

Categories



Source: Researcher's design.

Analysis results

Within the analysis of the research studies, the development of soft skills is evidenced through the narratives of the authors of these studies, from these categories were extracted the internal and external factors that promote or impede the development of soft skills and both positive and negative consequences that teachers acquired during the training process and that are useful or impede their academic, professional, and personal growth.

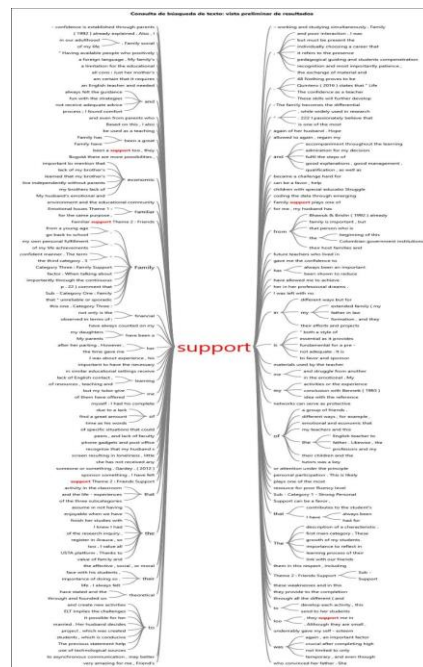
To ratify the categories that will be shown below and that were defined for this project, an analysis was made through the NVivo program, which according to Davidson's publication (2018) in The SAGE Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Measurement and Evaluation, this is useful because "Source attributes provide researchers with the ability to connect and track important characteristics of documents" (p. 2). Using the frequency of words and the coding that it allows, excerpts and trends in the students' works were identified and used as references. In addition, NVivo shows that there is a direct relationship between the learning process of pre-service teachers and the development of soft skills.

Initially, with the NVivo program, a general coding of the 19 research studies was made; through this, a graph was created showing the words that were most repeated in these works, mostly coinciding with agents that are directly involved with the pre-service teachers, such as family, learners and children, tutors and community; soft skills such as motivation and support; and highlighting for its high frequency, the experiences of graduates, both personal and those acquired within the academic environment and in the pedagogical practices, which are essential in their formative process and in the construction of the narratives.

This program indicated that this term was referenced in 16 of the 19 studies analyzed for a total of 107 times and through the extraction of excerpts that mentioned the support, it was possible to verify that the relationships were mostly based on the agents mentioned above, with students and peers as a minority.

Figure 3

Support scheme



Source: Scheme generated by NVivo

Similarly, a total of 8 key terms were included in the program: autonomy, personal, value, empathy, feelings, support, creativity, and emotions. With these, the same procedure was

carried out and the results were of great help in planning the categories and what aspects are important to consider. NVivo confirmed that these categories are aimed at the development of soft skills.

The categories that emerged from the analysis of the axial coding and the one done with NVivo are:

Table 2

Defined categories

1. Factors influencing PTs' soft skills development.	2. Evidenced consequences in the development of soft skills.
•1.1 Internal Factors •1.1.1. Thoughts that promote the development of soft skills •1.1.2. Thoughts that prevent the development of soft skills. •1.1.3 Strategies or actions that promote and prevent the development of soft skills. •1.2 External Factors •1.2.1 Aspects and actors that promote and prevent the development and improvement of soft skills. •1.2.1.1 People •1.2.1.2 Economic aspect. •1.2.1.3 Socio-cultural aspect.	•2.1 Positive and negative consequences in the personal aspect evidenced in the development of soft skills. •2.2 Positive and negative consequences in the professional aspect are evidenced in the development of soft skills.

Source: Researcher's design.

The categories named above are accompanied by subcategories that emerged from them and allow us to know the influence and impact of aspects, thoughts, conditions, situations, and actors that play an essential role in relation to soft skills and pre-service teachers during their

academic and research process; also, they show the benefits or otherwise, the effect of little use or poor development of these skills.

The following results were obtained with these categories:

1. Factors influencing PTs' soft skills development.

In these factors, we have internal and external factors that promote and prevent the development of soft skills.

1.1 Internal Factors

Within the internal factors, we found that there is a coincidence in the type of thinking and actions or strategies that people can develop and apply, thus establishing a tendency among them. Thoughts, strategies, and actions are divided into two essential aspects which are those that promote the development of soft skills and those that prevent these skills.

1.1.1. Thoughts that promote the development of soft skills.

In this subcategory, according to the findings, it was evident that the students had developed positive thoughts that allowed them to enhance and adequately develop their soft skills.

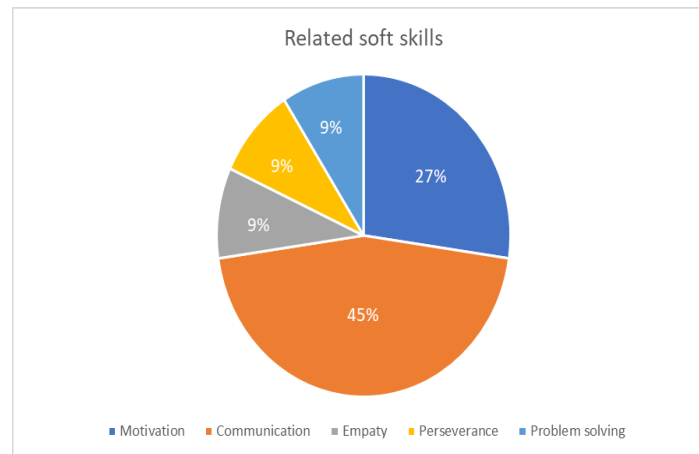
Achievement motivation is a soft skill that is related to different positive thoughts that the pre-service teachers had during the realization of their research project. It was reflected in their need to be a source of inspiration for their students and their journey in learning English, as well as to improve as teachers in their work and pedagogical practices. The pre-service teachers expressed in the research studies that they want to be a support in the educational community and

a tool for the academic and personal growth of the students; they refuse to be a teacher who only shares knowledge. They wanted to do their job properly favoring students in their quality of life and to achieve this, they had to prepare themselves arduously during and after their academic training constantly; making adequate use of different strategies and instruments to promote meaningful learning in the classroom. An example of this is cited in study two, which expressed that "Since I wanted to be a good teacher, I started learning the grammar rule that corresponded to each lesson so that I could be ready just in case any of them would ask a question related to that But I feel proud of myself because most of my strategies were self-taught and self-discovered and they taught me how to be creative and fun for my students, who are the ones that truly matter in this process." (Study, 2) and twelve, which cited that "I have always wanted to be a teacher in English, first for my professional improvement, in addition to helping my family, my colleagues and my students where I live". (Study, 12), demonstrating that this motivation allowed for establishing professional and personal goals, is also related to skills such as critical thinking for decision making, adequate planning, and implementation of strategies; and metacognition because they made an analysis and reflections of their practices, producing as a positive consequence, feelings of satisfaction and confidence due to the beneficial results brought by these. The previous soft skills allowed teachers not only to know how to teach in an interesting and engaging way but also to benefit the actors involved in their work and their personal lives through growth and preparation.

Motivation, which as stated by Obilor (2019) in his article *Soft Skills and Students' academic achievement*, "refers to inner drive or intention that makes a person to do something or to behave in a certain way" (p. 28) is also reflected in the pre-service teachers' thinking about themselves as English language learners and its relevance in their daily lives, both for themselves

and for their students. The pre-service teachers through their narratives expressed the importance that English has in their lives not only within their professional careers but also in its impact and influence on their personal development and growth. The belief they have is closely related to the adaptability, the latter being defined by Collie, R.J. and Martin, A.J. (2016) in their article *Adaptability: An Important Capacity for Effective Teachers* as the “ability to effectively react and respond in constructive ways to these situations” (p. 3), to new contexts in which the language is required both to facilitate communication with other people who have this language as their native language and its influence in improving the quality of life due to its breadth of job opportunities and mobility to other places or countries. They relate the interaction they have with this language as an incentive to reinforce their learning and make better use of it inside and outside the teaching process. Study three stated that "The amount of the Latin American population was seldom. For this reason, during that school year, I was the only "Latino" student in the classroom. This forced me to put my average English-speaking skills to work to survive" (Study, 3) thus demonstrating the need to be able to coexist with others and therefore, the motivation he had to achieve personal goals that also helped in academic and work aspects.

With respect to the research processes, the soft skill of motivation is involved in the suggestions made by the authors of the studies analyzed and who participated in the survey, in the section on how the program and the formative research processes can improve the development of soft skills in the students. The 27% of the answers, expressed that different academic spaces such as the Research Mentorship Programs can be used to participate in processes such as degree projects, obtaining more information about them and receiving more support and accompaniment from the teachers; thus, avoiding losing negative perspectives such as the complexity of these and feelings such as fear, frustration or anxiety to carry them out.

Graph 1*Related soft skills*

Source: Survey conducted to graduates.

1.1.2. Thoughts that prevent the development of soft skills.

Just as there are thoughts that motivate, promote, and allow the strengthening of soft skills, there are also negative thoughts or beliefs that coincide with the narratives and hinder the adequate development of these skills in pre-service teachers.

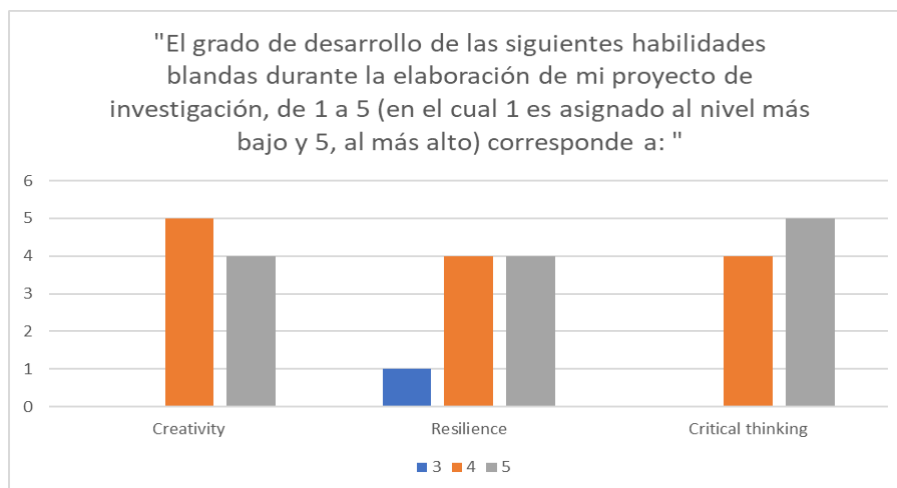
The first reiterated thought found in the narratives is that some pre-service teachers believe that it is not necessary to prepare themselves or try to plan their classes to adequately carry out their pedagogical practices and teaching processes. This negative belief is supported by the fact that to teach the language it is only necessary to know it from what they have learned about it inside and outside the country, without any pedagogical or professional training. The success of student learning depends on the preparation that teachers have in their teaching process; study number two expressed that "I can see a clear evolution from a non-educated teacher to a pre-service teacher, to a professional teacher of English. While the first actions were

based on trial and error, intuition or random acts of reflection, my current choices are always thought through and founded on theoretical support" (Study, 2) emphasizing the difference between a superficial education to a meaningful one and the professional growth that allowed the teacher to achieve more effectively the goals set by making use of a soft skill such as critical thinking, which was presented by Bakir (2014) in *Critical thinking dispositions of pre-service teachers* as a "reasonable reflective thinking focuses on deciding what to believe or do" (Cited by Alvarado, 2008, p. 226), to analyze the situation, the processes and the effect they have on the students.

In relation to this and according to the survey, the then students evidenced an evolution in soft skills such as resilience, defined by Noriega, Angulo and Angulo (2015) in their article *La resiliencia en la educación, la escuela y la vida* as a "resorte moral, y se constituye en una cualidad de una persona que no se desanima, que no se deja abatir, que se supera a pesar de la adversidad" (p. 42), critical thinking, and creativity, with the latter soft skill being referred to by Gisbert (2014) in *Creativity and English Language Learning in Primary Education* as "the process to form ideas or hypothesis, verify them and communicate the results, supposing that the product is something new" (Cited by Thurstone, 1952, p. 7); being the degree of development of the last two high and in the first one, according to the opinion of a graduate, a slightly lower score. The above reflected that this thinking, although negative, was part of their growth to realize the need to adequately perform their role in their pedagogical practices and work.

Graph 2

Level of development of soft skills: Creativity, resilience and critical thinking



Source: Survey conducted to graduates

A soft skill that is also affected by the negative thoughts of some graduates during their academic-research training process and their personal growth was adaptability and resilience due to the pre-established and generated idea that distance education is complex. The students commented on their perspective on this educational modality, relating it to feelings of loneliness, frustration, and loss of interest due to the lack of contact with their peers and teachers, the inadequate use of class time, and the lack of practice to enhance their English skills. These types of thoughts also hinder achievement motivation and autonomy, the latter being defined by Usma and Frodden (2003) in their article *Promoting teacher autonomy through educational innovation* as “as the human capacity to be in charge of one’s own life, including the academic and political fields where we belong” (p. 102); since the feelings that emerge do not allow them to carry out their pedagogical and research practices with greater pleasure, and they do not know how to carry out their own learning and teaching process adequately. An example of this is the comment

of the author of study number nineteen, who stated that “I felt that my English classes were not very relevant for students, and I felt some barrier between students and me. I always questioned myself because I did know that something was not right” (Study, 19), showing that because of this type of thoughts, it was difficult to relate adequately with their students, lose self-confidence, and create ideas that did not help to advance.

The development of the degree project was also affected by distance education and the authors expressed feelings of frustration and loss of interest. In the survey, two graduates expressed their opinion in this regard, the first one commented that it was necessary to make proper use of soft skills because “la carga y el estrés que manejas es muy alto” (Survey, question seven, answer four); and the second one, that this same modality allowed the pre-service teacher to prepare to become “una persona autónoma, responsable y con unos objetivos claros” (Survey, question seven, answer nine).

And in relation to the appearance of emotional negativity, the thought of failing to communicate using input language was found in the students' narratives. They expressed those foreign languages became a barrier in social interaction both in relation to students and people outside the educational sector; thus, generating the fear of being misunderstood by other people or of making mistakes as in the different capabilities of English and that their students repeat those mistakes that affect their learning. An example of this was expressed in study nine, in which it was said that “Con la madre anfitriona se han presentado ciertos malentendidos en los cuales es bastante difícil poder expresarse en alemán, lo cual se tuvo que recurrir naturalmente al inglés” (Study, 9); thus, showing how the student had to resort to the language in which she was more confident in order to express herself correctly and relate better.

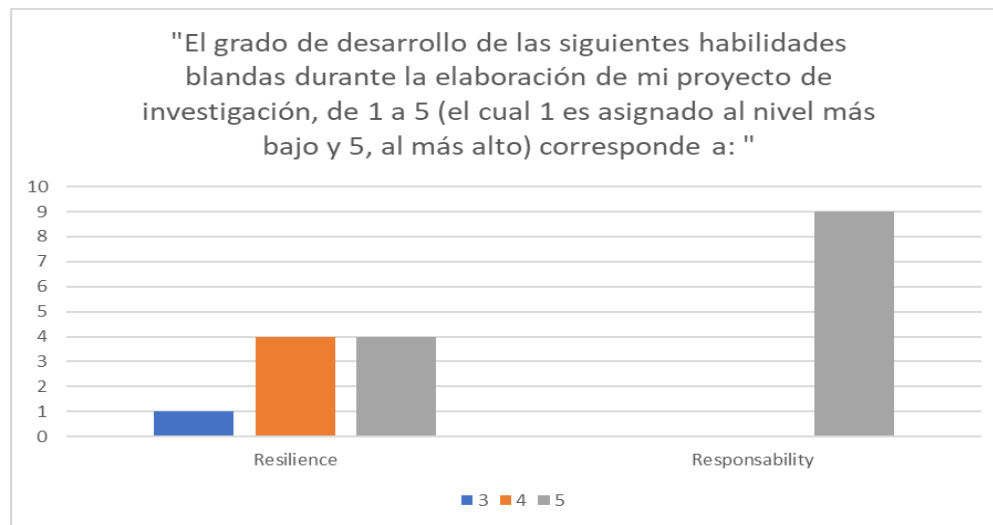
This negative idea that allowed the appearance of feelings of distrust towards themselves at the moment of expressing themselves and teaching the foreign language is related to the soft skill not only of communication, being this skill presented by Ghosh (2022) in his article *Role of communication in education* as “as the process by which information is shared between persons through a common system of symbols, signals, or behavior, despite the existence of several sophisticated theories and concepts” (p. 326); but also that of adaptability to the language and to situations in which it is required to be able to establish relationships or to advance in the teaching-learning process. In study number thirteen the participant commented that the pre-service teacher “is afraid of mispronouncing a word and that the students will repeat the mistake” (Study, 13), showing how this insecurity, not feeling sufficiently qualified and the fear of making mistakes in communication could have negative consequences for her students. In the surveys, however, the graduates' responses did not relate to language learning and difficulties in teaching it.

Finally, another thought and fear of the graduates were that of failing in their duties as educators. They mentioned the fear that due to their lack of preparation; they might teach English wrongly; thus, allowing the loss of interest in the language, the frequency of making mistakes, and the negative predisposition on the part of the students during classes. Recognizing the essential role they play in the education of learners, they doubted whether they were doing their job properly, questioning themselves about their actions according to students' reactions to the teaching provided. This affects soft skills such as the motivation of the pre-service teachers, losing interest, causing frustration at the time of teaching, and the confidence to perform their work. As a sample of this, study number nineteen expressed that “I used the memory to learn, I repeated a text sometimes to learn it, however, it required more time, and it was more difficult

for me." (Study, 19), making wrong use of strategies that did not lead to exercise the learning and teaching properly. In the survey answered, however, the authors demonstrated that through soft skills such as resilience and responsibility, the latter being understood by Perazzo (2012) in his thesis entitled *La responsabilidad y la amistad virtudes que ayudan a encaminar a los jóvenes de tercero de secundaria hacia la felicidad y realización persona* as “una virtud moral, ejercida y guiada por nuestra libertad, que tiene consecuencias directas en nuestros actos, que nos traen méritos o no” (p. 46); which were evidenced during the development of their studio and in which according to their degree of development, the latter had the highest score and the former with a lower score due to the minimal difference of opinions, it is possible to face and diminish the fear of failure that persists in teachers in training, obtaining better results in their teaching process.

Graph 1

Level of development of soft skills: Resilience and responsibility



Source: Survey conducted to graduates

1.1.3 Strategies or actions that promote and prevent the development of soft skills.

The graduates during their research process and academic training carried out different actions or strategies that allowed or diffculted for them to develop soft skills, bringing with them consequences either positive or negative that were part of their formation and growth as persons and teachers.

One of the negative actions that led the then pre-service teachers to generate a change that would allow them to grow as teachers, even though it made it difficult for them to develop soft skills during their research and educational process, was the inadequate teaching in English classes due to the lack of preparation, ignoring the capabilities that the students already possessed or not adapting methodologies that could make the classes more meaningful. They decided instead to make use of traditional methodologies and not innovate. A piece of evidence of this strategy was the comment made in study number two in which the author said that " I started replicating what my teachers did when I went to school; once again, without understanding why or if those choices were correct." (Study, 2), thus repeating a methodology without questioning the results according to the age and context of his students.

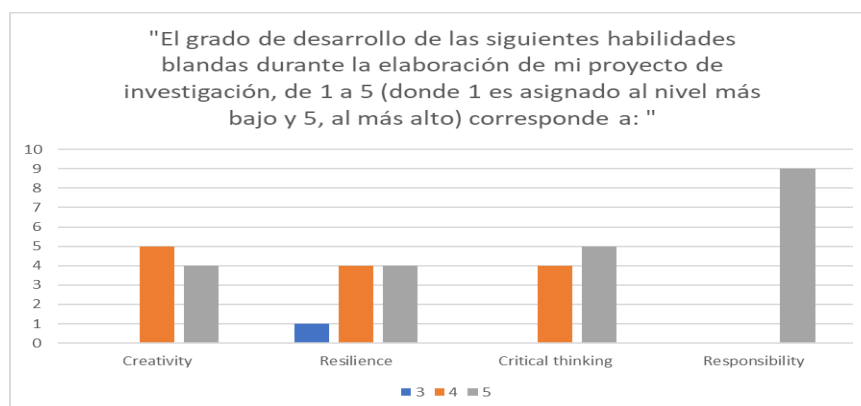
The education of students is a challenge that should be taken responsibility for by teachers; therefore, one of the positive strategies applied by the graduates was to carry out the classes in a dedicated manner from the moment of their planning. For this, it was important to take into account the contexts in which the teachers found themselves, thus knowing the reality of the students, taking notes of their own experiences to reflect on it, using the resources they have at hand and those provided by the Nacional Ministry of Education, and applying methodologies that focus on cooperative and collaborative work or that served them in their

learning of English. An example of this was expressed by the author of study number eleven regarding the implementation of the EFL syllabus in the ninth grade, which was “hemos mejorado la calidad de las clases en el salón, en cuanto a que, vuelvo y te digo yo estaba más enfocada en la gramática y ahora puedo incluir todas las 4 habilidades a través de las distintas actividades” (Study, 11), thus showing, in the author's opinion, how the application of a strategy relevant to the needs and abilities of the students can result in an improvement of the classes.

The soft skills related to these strategies both positive and negative were creativity, resilience, responsibility, and critical thinking because the teacher was able to analyze the work he or she was doing and execute it according to the different aspects that are an important part of his or her planning and teaching process. In the survey conducted, these soft skills are the ones that had an enhancement among the graduates, being an essential part of their training for the improvement of their pedagogical practices, thus breaking a routine and making the classes more striking.

Graph 2

Level of development of soft skills: Creativity, resilience, critical thinking and responsibility



Source: Survey conducted to graduates

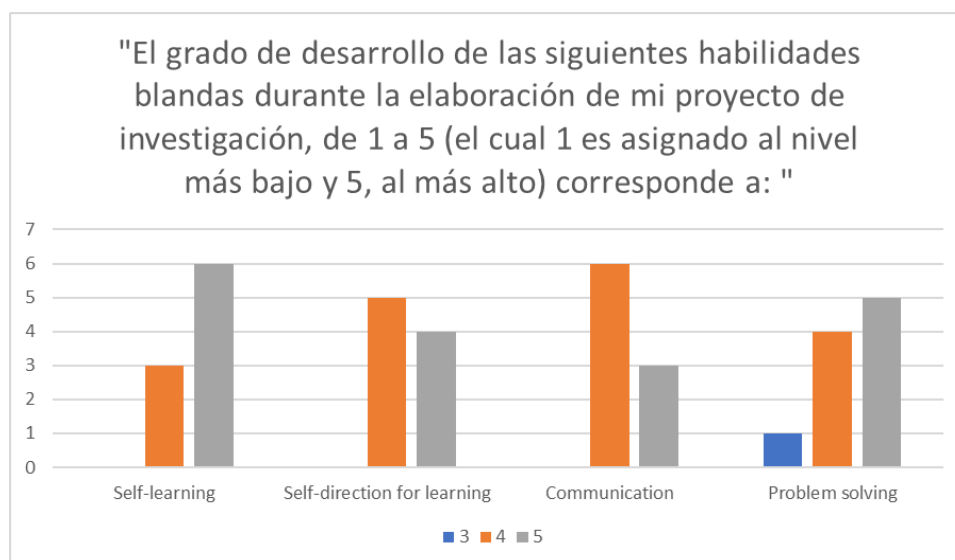
In this preparation that the pre-service teachers mentioned, they included as a negative action not self-educating about their English language learning. The development of their own language skills was affected when they decided not to take courses to strengthen their language, depended on others to advance, and did not organize their own duties to get more time for themselves. Study number fourteen expressed in the narrative that "En cuanto a inglés no he realizado ningún curso, se desarrollan los contenidos con ayuda del internet y se trabaja solo vocabulario sencillo" (Study, 14) making known how the language was taught without academic training by the teacher, thus the learning provided is superficial. To counteract these actions, the pre-service teachers decided to invest in their own formation by participating in programs such as Au Pair programs in an exchange of languages and cultures, confronting situations, and interacting in communities where the language is used. This is done to not only speak English proficiently but also to improve their professional training. An example of this is mentioned in study eighteen in which the author commented that "I had to be recursive, creative and disciplined with my time and my different tasks, many times I had that dedicate long hours to study" (Study, 18), thus demonstrating how it was possible to have spaces to practice having adequate control over the daily activities.

In addition to the soft skills mentioned above, these also include self-learning, being this defined by Tejada (2019) in her research work entitled *Self-Learning Techniques to Contribute to the Learning of the English language of the Students* as "the way to acquire new knowledge through self-effort, with the individual assessment of information and processes that each person considers appropriate for their learning" (p.11); self-direction for learning, communication, and problem-solving, the latter being presented by Obilor (2019) in his article *Soft Skills and Students' Academic Achievement* as the "skill of a person to be able to solve problems from some

unexpected perspective”(p. 28); due to the effort and autonomous work made by the graduates to regulate their own process as learners and adapt to the new contexts. Considering the survey and in relation to the completion of the project, these skills that participate in the improvement as learners have a high degree of progress, being self-learning and self-direction for learning, the highest scores, followed by communication and finally problem-solving with lower scores. The above highlights how the student's good management of their own knowledge in relation to the language and its practice was more evident, although, to a lesser extent, the solution to situations to adequately evolve in these environments is a little difficult.

Graph 5

Level of development of soft skills: Self-learning, self-direction for learning, communication and problem solving



Source: Survey conducted to graduates

1.2 External Factors

When external actors and factors are mentioned, reference is made to people, situations, and conditions presented during the academic and professional development of pre-service teachers that influence the improvement or limitation and inadequate use of soft skills.

1.2.1 Aspects and actors that promote and prevent the development of soft skills.

1.2.1.1 People

First, an actor that plays an essential role in both the improvement and prevention of soft skills are the teachers of both the faculty of the bachelor's degree program, as well as those who were part of their primary and high school. The students, in their narratives, expressed a contrast in the participation of teachers during their academic training. They commented that in the faculty, although some teachers were involved in their pedagogical practices in an emotional way providing support, encouraging them to overcome difficulties, recognizing their work and at the academic level, offering them feedback on their work in the classroom; but other teachers lacked more accompaniment in their teaching process in classes, they witnessed inadequate attitudes on the part of educators and there was not a good use of time given to learn methodologies and tools necessary and adequate for their application. Even so, in most studies, teachers were involved in the development of students' soft skills through their opinions, suggestions, feedback, and words of support and enthusiasm.

Finally, the learners expressed that they met teachers during their school years in their schools who were an inspiration and motivation to decide to dedicate themselves to education due to their work in the different communities in which they were located. Empathy, being this understood by Bialystok and Kukar (2018) in their article *Authenticity and empathy in education*

as “the ability to hear and care about another person’s experience” (p. 24), and communication were soft skills that the pre-service teachers identified as aspects that tutors need to improve because they also interfere in the development of pedagogical practices. On the other hand, the pre-service teachers expressed that responsibility was a soft skill that was fully evidenced, and instances of that were some of the classes experienced. An example that evidences the prevention of these soft skills were commented by the author of study number nineteen, who expressed that “When I arrived at the university in Medellin, it was supposed the tutor must explain contents on more than three subjects and he did not. These situations generated anxiety, demotivation, stress, sadness, and depression because I really needed the explanation” (Study, 19); showing the negative feelings that were generated in the student in relation to his teachers and his teaching process. Otherwise, in study number five, the author commented that “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” (Study, 5); demonstrating the impact of the teachers' comments to improve the training as future teachers.

Another important participant involved in the soft skills was the family, who provided emotional support to the students through words of encouragement, thus giving them confidence in their experiences during their personal growth and even in important decisions in their lives. In addition, the family also gave the pre-service teachers their time and help by reducing their daily tasks or duties outside the university so that they could dedicate more time to their academic process and be able to carry it out adequately. The soft skills identified were also empathy to understand the situations and efforts of the students and to be able to provide support and problem-solving to facilitate their education. The author of study twelve referred to the role

his family played in her development as a teacher in training, telling how they were a pillar to move forward and achieve her degree. In the narrative, she commented: "I had different occupations including being a rural student at a distance. Seeing the difficulties and limitations as obstacles could not help me in my learning process. I always had the support of my family to follow with my academic process." (Study, 12).

Finally, a group of people who played an important role in the development of soft skills was the students of the pre-service teachers, who despite their age, were also an inspiration and who provided the pre-service teachers the encouragement and confidence to apply relevant strategies, to do their work better with greater responsibility and effort, teaching significantly to improve their education and therefore, their quality of life. The soft skills related to the above are achievement motivation as an impulse to reach their educational goals; and responsibility and perseverance in the process, because of this. An example of this was the words of the author of study eight, who said that "How can I create inspiring goals, both for students to achieve academic success, and for the interest to continue learning this kind of teaching that contributes to their lives" (Study, 8); thus, showing the teacher's interest in promoting values by transversalizing the teaching of English, to create learning with a positive impact on the daily lives of her students.

1.2.1.2. Economic aspect

A factor that played an important role in the personal growth and academic formation of the pre-service teachers was the economic conditions in which they found themselves at different stages of their lives. In the narratives, it was expressed that one aspect that had a negative impact was the fact of depending on other people's money to be able to carry out their activities and

responsibilities such as finishing their degree on time; leaving in the hands of others, duties that without that help, could not be carried out. An example of this was what was said in study number three, "as I assumed that after living with my parents, I would simply switch parents, and my brother would continue supporting me financially. How wrong was I..." (Study, 3), in which the author expressed her dependence on her brother and how, when her brother was absent, she realized the reality in which she found herself and in which she had to act quickly.

However, when they could not count on this economic support, the students found in these situations the soft skill of achievement motivation to encourage them to work harder and go ahead by themselves, seeking stability by their own means; and with the ability of responsibility and problem-solving, to respond adequately to the challenges they faced and reach their desired goals. Evidencing the above, the author of the same research study expressed that "This difficulty allowed me to become more conscious and thus, more motivated to find things that were of my personal interest and through this, add to the shaping of my identity" (Study, 3), demonstrating the positive impact generated from a problematic situation in which the soft skills mentioned above were appropriately applied.

1.2.1.3. Socio-cultural aspect.

A final factor that was an essential part of the development of the soft skills of the pre-service teachers and that was expressed in the research studies was the socio-cultural aspect. The students expressed that they experienced different moments and interacted with people outside their academic formation in exchange programs and in their process of integration into new environments with native speakers or experts in English or other foreign languages. From these experiences, the pre-service teachers not only recognized the diversity in the different

communities but also, although they faced feelings of frustration and cultural shock, they gained the confidence to express themselves and confront situations in which they had to use the input language, strengthening their listening, and speaking skills in a more meaningful and natural way. This shows how they made use of the soft skills of adaptability, communication, resilience, and problem-solving to better relate to the new population in which they found themselves and to continue in their daily lives.

In study nine, in the narrative the following comment was found "intento mucho siempre que llego a un lugar como buscar una iglesia, involucrarme con gente que sea totalmente americana, si? que ... que hable inglés [...] entonces yo intentaba como mezclarme con grupos de americanos, que trate de hacerlo como... varias veces'" (Study, 9); thus evidencing how the student tried to interact with other native speakers in order to improve her communicative skills and improve in her learning of English through everyday actions such as these.

2. Evidenced consequences in the development of soft skills.

The graduates, through the pedagogical practices and the development of their research projects, acquired both positive and negative consequences according to their actions in the education process, which are related to the soft skills they worked on during it; these were useful for their growth as people and professionals.

2.1 Positive and negative consequences in the personal aspect evidenced in the development of soft skills.

Some pre-service teachers, during the process of adapting to new environments and their development as teachers, felt frustrated and unsure of themselves. They reflected this negativity

due to the lack of preparation and their shyness affecting the way they felt during the process they were going through. However, other students commented that during these practices they felt confident, capable, and autonomous, improving their responsibility and valuing the effort they had made; even giving them positive changes in their personalities. In relation to these consequences, students were involved in soft skills such as self-knowledge, being defined by Chernicoff and Rodriguez (2018) in *Autoconocimiento: una mirada hacia nuestro universo interno* as “la capacidad para dirigir la atención hacia uno mismo y tomar conciencia de diferentes aspectos de la identidad, así como de nuestras emociones, pensamientos y conductas” (p. 29); focusing on their own progress, and perseverance, understood by Okubanjo (2014) in his article *Academic perseverance, class attendance and students’ academic engagement: a correlational study* as “the ability of an individual to endure in the presence of deterrents” (p. 134), to improve as individuals. An example of the above is the comment made by a tutor regarding the aspects she observed of the pre-service teacher and was part of research study number seven; she expressed that “I think you felt frustrated and wanted to give up. Fortunately, you overcame this difficulty by asking for guidance and being aware of all the great effort and dedication you had to put into this subject to take it forward” (Study, 7). This is a piece of evidence that these feelings, both negative and positive, were present and noticed by others during and after the work and demonstrated the students' progress.

Another positive consequence that stands out on a personal level is that the students were able to reflect on their own process, identifying weaknesses and strengths and allowing themselves to reinforce them to improve not only as teachers but also as people, seeking stability in both aspects and carrying out their work with a better attitude. This gave them great satisfaction because they grew in an appropriate personal way and were motivated to continue

being dedicated to improving their own conditions and those of others in relation to their quality of life. The above reflected the soft skills of responsibility for strengthening the weaknesses found in self-evaluation and motivation to achieve by wanting to improve their own and other people's situations through their actions. The author of research study four commented that "I had to study a lot, I had to maybe sacrifice some other spaces of my personal life, to start improving my English, because I knew at that time, that I didn't have the high level I thought I had." (Study, 4); thus, expressing how through the reflections made on her learning and experiences with the language, decided to improve her language skills by being more demanding with herself, making greater use of her time and with more devotion.

On the other hand, another negative consequence expressed by the pre-service teachers was the shock of not knowing some contexts they had to face due to the differences encountered and the deficient use of the language they were learning, limiting them in expressing themselves to avoid misunderstandings and not being able to fit in properly in the new communities. The soft skills affected in this aspect were communication, which could not be adequately executed, and problem-solving to interact with the environment. Evidence of the above was what was said by the author of study number nine, who commented that "I especially had to struggle a lot when needing to understand idioms and slang used by people of a particular context or age, also mostly when interacting with the kid I used to take care of" (Study, 9); showing the difficulties she had

in relating with others and the precautions she had to take to avoid situations that could cause her problems.

2.2 Positive and negative consequences in the professional aspect are evidenced in the development of soft skills.

Pedagogical practices and the development of research projects also allowed the pre-service teachers to experience and identify consequences because of these practices that affected their development as professionals. Some of them commented that they had an inadequate teaching process in English classes due to the lack of preparation on their part in relation to lesson plans and didactic material, thus creating boring and monotonous classes. This also caused the learners with whom they interacted to present negative effects such as a lack of confidence and frustration when interacting with the English language. The author of study number five expressed that " 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" (Study, 5); this is an example of how inexperience and lack of preparation affected the adequate teaching of the class.

In contrast, other pre-service teachers commented that, through self-evaluation of their teaching and learning process and reflection of their practices, they recognized not only their capabilities and potential as teachers but also learned to use the right tools and methodologies, carrying out the classes in a meaningful and engaging way; they were able to learn in the process of identifying and implementing strategies according to the conditions and needs of the students. The future teacher sought to improve through teaching their situations. An example of the above was expressed by the author of study seven in which she commented that "during each lesson I

could learn a lot of things which help me in my role as a preservice teacher such as the correct use of methodologies, pedagogical strategies and activities taking into account the needs of my students"(Study, 7), reflecting the progress in the teaching process that the pre-service teacher had in the course of her practice, not only for her improvement but also in the education of her students.

The soft skills addressed in these consequences were those of responsibility to perform their work in the best way, critical thinking to make the right decisions regarding the classes, as well as creativity in creating them and achievement motivation that interferes with the adequate learning and teaching of the language.

Conclusions

Considering the research question of the present study, and the analysis done within this, I could relate the categories stated with the findings and arguments of the different authors of external studies to those worked on. Juarez and Perales (2019) and the present study have in common the role played by the teacher in the formative process of the students, because they are the ones on whom learners rely for their personal and academic growth. The teachers were affected in a positive way promoting the development of soft skills through words of encouragement, accompaniment, and guidance; motivating them to perform the pedagogical practices and their work with dedication. However, some tutors also intervened in the process with negative attitudes and a lack of commitment, hindering the development of students' soft skills because feelings of insecurity and concern arise in them due to the lack of preparation, thus affecting the adequate performance in their pedagogical practices.

In addition, this study could verify what was stated by *The National Council of Educational Research and Training* (n.d.) in the book *Computers and Communication Technology* about soft skills. According to the latter, soft skills allow us to stand out in work environments and have a great impact on society; and my study shows that the pre-service teachers through the experiences acquired in tutoring and pedagogical practices, were able to develop these skills indirectly to be better people and useful teachers to different communities.

Regarding the methodology used for this study, qualitative research was the most appropriate for analyzing and evidencing that a person is developing soft skills during his or her academic and research process. This method allowed me to make an in-depth interpretation of the graduates' narratives through the analysis of documents, in this case, their final research

reports; and to relate the classified information with their opinions about the soft skills worked on while carrying out their projects which were collected with a survey. However, the latter had a limitation during the application of instruments. It is worth highlighting that, according to Juárez and Perales (2019), narratives are useful to understand the evolution of English learning and help to improve the applied teaching processes; important aspects appointed by the graduates, and the present study could take advantage of this type of research to actually extract pieces of evidence of the pre-service teachers' final research reports to depict how soft skills are developed.

As mentioned above, a limitation encountered during the implementation of this research study was in the survey. Participation in this instrument was low since it was not possible to communicate with some of the graduates because their contact information was not updated, or they did not answer phone calls and emails. Once they have graduated, communication with the university community is difficult; therefore, one option to improve this situation is to carry out follow-up and interventions with the authors before they graduate and periodically update their database after that. Finally, another limitation found was that of the 26 studies that were available for the research, only the CRAI allowed access to 19 of these, thus reducing the sources of information to be analyzed.

With the reading of this document, through the students' narratives, teachers can realize the need to improve teaching regarding the accompaniment and academic and emotional support given to them during classes, pedagogical practices, internships, and research processes. They are factors that promote the adequate performance of these and influence the personal growth of the learners. In addition, with this study I share the representation of soft skills development

through the analysis of narratives since it focuses on the experiences of students and promotes reflection processes, understanding the importance soft skills have in educational formation and their great relevance in the improvement of their personal and professional profiles. With these, directors, teachers, and students of the same program or other can analyze the shortcomings identified in the study and create or establish strategies to include and strengthen the development of these types of skills.

Remembering the question of this study, to talk about the impact of the use of narrative methodology and soft skills, it is necessary to know and analyze not only the students' point of view but also the opinions and narratives of the teachers who actively participate in these processes and are an important agent in their formation. As further research, it could be possible to carry out studies that focus on teachers and how their work could be used to develop soft skills in formative research. Also, the present study suggests that both students and teachers can review projects based on these skills to have them as references and support to enhance their competencies. Finally, I can conclude that educators should continuously monitor these processes so that they can obtain more information about the performance of their learners, improve them by strengthening the weaknesses found and, at the same time, promote the interest to do research. However, this process should not depend entirely on the teacher, but should also be supported from within the institution through the areas of UDIES (Unidad de Desarrollo Integral Estudiantil) and welfare because they can promote the development of soft skills

throughout the university careers considering its main purpose is to help students and accompanying them during the process of getting their degree.

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Annexes

Analysis matrix

docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1FODM2K47dUXiN1AJPiAGa2a5FY1xEpATc1o0U7FaGY/edit#gid=1896966169

Instrumento de Análisis (respuestas)

Archivo Editar Ver Insertar Formato Datos Herramientas Extensiones Ayuda

65% € % 0.00 123 Predet... 10 B I A

B1 Dirección de correo electrónico

	P	D	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
1	The reasons why these people had an important role to play in these soft skills were... (Negative)	The negative thoughts or beliefs that interfered with the proper development of the soft skills were...	Actions that stopped or triggered failure in the use of soft skills were...	The lack of development of these soft skills caused the pre-service teacher to...	The misuse of these skills or their poor progress was evidenced when...	The thoughts or beliefs that encouraged the proper development of soft skills were...	The strategies or activities that were applied to strengthen these skills were...	The application of these strategies and activities allowed the pre-service teacher to...	Some experiences in which the pertinent use or improvement of these skills were evidenced are... (Citation)
3	No information.	It is not necessary to prepare if the previous knowledge is already acquired. Knowing that she doesn't need education to teach	Don't prepare and think hard their classes. Based her teaching on her own education and beliefs.	Inadequate teaching of English classes. Perceiving arrogance and egotism about oneself and one's work.	"But teaching young minds differs significantly from teaching adults. So, in this opportunity when I went to class once again, without understanding why or if those choices were correct." (p. 38)	It's necessary to educate and prepare oneself to do better a job.	Register beliefs to make sense of actions. Preparing oneself and one's classes through education.	Obtain meaningful insight about the professional and pedagogical role. Acknowledging that some beliefs were wrong. Be aware of the important aspects of learning and teaching a language.	"Since I wanted to be a good teacher, I started learning the grammar rule that corresponded to each lesson so that I could be ready just in case any of them would ask a question related to that. But I feel proud of myself because most of my strategies were self-taught and self-discovered and they taught me how to be creative and fun for my students, who are the ones that truly matter in this process." (p. 38)
4	No information.	Distance education is quiet and lonely. Fear of neglecting the family.	Dependence on others. Don't understand new situations.	Cultural shock. Frustration because of differences. Loss of motivation due to lack of contact.	"My first wakeup call was the moment my brother asked for my half of the rent. I was very confused, as I assumed that after living with my parents, I would simply switch parents, and my brother would continue supporting me financially. How wrong was I..." (p. 43)	She believes she is capable of adapting to cultures. Respected and tolerate different cultures. If the beliefs of others are different from one's own, it does not mean that they are wrong.	Learn a new language. Accept facts instead of trying to change them. Write to do list.	Be able to relate with others. Be tolerable with others. Better scheduling of time.	"The amount of Latin American population was seldom. For this reason, and during that school year, I was the only "Latino" student in the classroom. This forced me to put my average English-speaking skills to work to survive" (p. 38).
5	Forcing to learn English. Use wrong technologies to teach English.	Learn a language is learn only vocabulary.	Spending time thinking that she is not capable of teaching correctly.	No information.	"una vez se fue la profe de preescolar y fue como... Dabes dicitr inglés en preescolar" y eso fue traumático para mí. Cúre como un mes y dije no más, porque bueno... yo sentía que no estaba preparada, que no tenía ni suficiente conocimiento pedagógico para darle a ellos" (p. 28).	Need to improve English level (speaking). Avoid being like the English teachers at school, but rather like the teachers at the informal education institute.	To increase investment in EFL learning. Increase the efforts on acquiring the necessary skills and competences in the L2.	Taking a liking to language. Finish the college degree.	"When I was studying my 4th Semester of Administration I decided to finish with that, because my father was asking me, well, "You have to change from University, you need to study in a good University", so having that in mind... when I had the opportunity to work in another place, I was like... So, at that time I chose a studying here at the university... I started there my Bachelor on EFL, and I finished it" (p. 23).
6	Lack of support.	Believing that she is capable of teaching. English just because she learned it in school.	Not receiving adequate advice and support from the responsible directors. Develop poor teaching plans and incorrect	Be a shy and insecure person. Develop poorly prepared lesson plans and incorrect	"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. On other occasions, my classmates and I were not able to..."	To want to adequately face the teaching process. Go beyond just sharing knowledge.	To carry out the pedagogical practices. Self-evaluate the process as a teacher after each class. Do not let one's emotions rule the behavior.	Improve important aspects such as teaching methodology and attitudes. To change that negative impression of the teaching process.	"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 this profession you can not be totally different..."

+ Respuestas de formulario 1 Explorar

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Instrumento de Análisis (respuestas)

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B1 Dirección de correo electrónico

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1	The title of the research study is...	The general objective is...	It takes place in...	The time frame in which this research study was executed was...	The pre-service teacher's role is... (type of narrative)	Students' age...	The soft skills to be focused on are...	This/these soft skills are... (definition based on the narratives)	It is important to develop this soft skill because... (personal field)	It is important to develop this soft skill because... (professional field)	The people who influenced the improvement of these skills were...	The people who influenced the worsening of these skills were...	The reasons why these people had an important role to play in these soft skills were... (Positive)
3	My Life as an English Teacher: An autobiographical narrative	To interpret autobiographical narrations in order to portray the English teaching and learning experiences of a pre-service English teacher	Urban zone	2017	Autobiography	+30	Critical Thinking	Analyze something and make sense of it in order to keep repeating or moving away from certain movements.	Provide meaningful input on one's beliefs and choices in professional development. Reflect on oneself and one's actions...	Realize what are the appropriate teaching and learning strategies. Carry out classes in a more meaningful way. Reflect on own activities and teaching.	Family. Teachers.	No one.	Hard to analyze information and contribute to improve pedagogical practices.
4	Modeling a pre-service teacher's identity	To analyze the experiences and circumstances while living, studying, working, and learning English in different milieus.	Urban zone	2020	Autobiography	+30	Adaptability	Learn or do something in order to be able to function or adapt to the new environment.	Learn new habits, activities, language, culture, etc. Lifestyle changes. Make conscious or unconscious efforts to relate.	To make free decisions about the teaching. Self-evaluate the process. Help create an identity as a quality teacher.	Family. Society.	Family.	Unpleasant and economical support. To be open-minded about people and diversity.
5	Life-experiences that portray English learning and teaching in the context of Distance Education at Universidad Santo Tomás-Bogotá	To describe how a teacher's life and her particular experiences portray English learning and teaching in the context of Distance Education at Universidad Santo Tomás-Bogotá	Urban zone	2018	Life history	+30	Autonomy	On one's own initiative, monitor herself and what is desired to obtain or know.	Reflect to past decisions and experiences. Follow one's dreams.	Create expectations to be a better teacher. Improve research skills to innovate in knowledge.	Family. Teachers.	No one.	No information.
6	Experiences of a student and pre-service teacher during the process of becoming an English teacher in a classroom	Describe different types of experiences that a pre-service English teacher goes through and the way down from her beliefs.	Urban zone	2020	Autobiography	+20	Confidence.	The necessary security to be and to do something.	Identify qualities or strengths. Reflect on oneself on how one could improve in one's studies.	To carry out the job adequately. To be a better teacher.	Teachers. Students.	Teachers. Students. Directors.	How feedback to improve the teaching practices. To help to strengthen and overcome negative aspects. Provide safety through...

+ Respuestas de formulario 1 Explorar

Survey

Análisis de Desarrollo de Habilidades Blandas

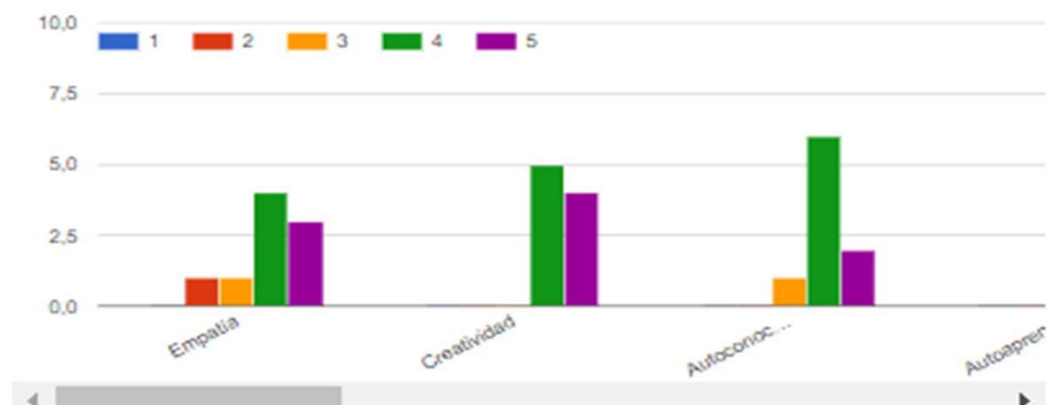
Por favor, indique su grado de acuerdo o desacuerdo respecto a las siguientes afirmaciones en relación a: "Durante la realización de mi proyecto de grado pude evidenciar el desarrollo de las siguientes habilidades blandas:"

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Por favor, siendo 1 el grado más bajo de desarrollo de la habilidad y 5 el desarrollo más alto de la habilidad, analice el grado de desarrollo de habilidades blandas respecto a las siguientes afirmaciones en relación a: "El grado de desarrollo de las siguientes habilidades blandas durante el desarrollo de mi proyecto de investigación, de 1 a 5 corresponde a: "

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Por favor, justifique su respuesta anterior.

9 respuestas

Estudiar a distancia me preparo para ser una persona autónoma, responsable y con unos objetivos claros.

Fue un proceso de investigación, desarrollado paso a paso, analizando diferente información recolectada, lo que implicó mi compromiso total para obtener los resultados.

fue apropiado ya que he contribuido en mi aprendizaje, y he tratado de perfeccionarme académicamente y laboralmente.

Al desarrollar tu proyecto debes combinar tus habilidades blandas puesto que la carga y el estrés que manejas es muy alto.

Todo lo que he aprendido o avanzado desde el comienzo de mi proyecto ha sido muy notable. Me cuesta aún no lo del manejo de la ansiedad que me genera el proyecto, pero ahí vamos

Me pude relacionar con otros y conmigo misma, en la comprensión y manejo de

¿Cómo considera usted que podría el programa y los procesos de investigación formativa mejorar el desarrollo de habilidades blandas en los estudiantes?

9 respuestas

Sería maravilloso tener un curso donde se centren en el desarrollo de habilidades blandas y así el estudiante estará más consciente y en contacto con estas habilidades.

Desde mi punto de vista siento que los estudiantes le tienen miedo a los procesos de investigación, es por ellos que la mayoría opta por otras opciones de grado; creo que es importante motivar a los estudiantes a participar en los diferentes espacios académicos que involucren la investigación, por ejemplo en mi caso, yo hice parte del semillero de investigación y fue la mejor decisión que pude haber tomado, desarrolle muchas habilidades que después me fueron útiles en mi propio proceso.

Creo que el programa que tiene la universidad es muy bueno ya que manejan una comunicación, flexibilidad en el programa, liderazgo, motivación, paciencia. De pronto un poco que nos hablen sobre el proceso de flexibilidad o sea los créditos que maneja la universidad de cuanto tiempo debemos estudiar por parte de cada uno.

Nvivo

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ALEJANDR OLIVARES

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Sheet1

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support [Modo de compatibilidad] - Word

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Archivos\2018davidbelalcázar> - \$ 3 referencias codificadas [Cobertura 0,05%]

Referencia 1 - Cobertura 0,02%

I knew I had the support of the professors and my

Referencia 2 - Cobertura 0,02%

always felt the guidance and support of my teachers and this

Referencia 3 - Cobertura 0,02%

use of technological sources to support my activities or the experience

Archivos\2018Torresdiana1> - \$ 2 referencias codificadas [Cobertura 0,01%]

Referencia 1 - Cobertura 0,01%

observed in terms of: Financial support – working and studying simultaneously. Family

Referencia 2 - Cobertura 0,01%

of the research inquiry, the support of tutors was a key

Archivos\2018yolandabustamante> - \$ 4 referencias codificadas [Cobertura 0,02%]

Página 1 de 13 1840 palabras Español (Colombia) Accesibilidad: No disponible

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