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## Exploring Models of Team Teaching in Initial Foreign/Second Language Teacher Education: A Study in Situated Collaboration

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*Abstract: The demonstrable potential of team teaching as a productive mechanism for developing collaborative teacher learning is now broadly understood in the field of teacher education. However, there is less evidence of the use of such collaborative teaching as a means of strengthening initial foreign/second language teacher education. This paper reports on the findings of a multiple case study in Chile that explored team teaching in a foreign language teacher education program. The study is illuminated through the lens of cultural historical activity theory framework (CHAT) and draws on the analysis of semi-structured interviews, work shadowing observations and reflections. The outcomes suggest that team teaching provides a space for developmental forms of collaboration that can promote deeper learning among pre-service teachers. The findings support the argument that collaborative practices could be a path for developing and deepening the prospective reflexive practices of pre-service teachers.*

### Introduction

Collaboration has been long considered an important developmental practice among in service and pre-service teachers. However, it is only in recent times that collaboration in the form of co-teaching or team teaching have become a more frequently teaching practice (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2012). In this article I will use the term team teaching to refer to two or more teachers engaged in the process of teaching including preparation, planning, material design, actual teaching and assessment.

One collaborative co-teaching strategies adopted between English as a second language (ESL) teachers and 'mainstream' teachers in K-12 contexts (most notably in the USA and Australia), has demonstrated the clear potential to support more inclusive practices to accommodate the diverse needs of students in the classroom (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2012; Pappamihel, 2012). In English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, especially in Asian countries (such as Korea, Japan, Singapore), it is more common to observe a co-teaching model which has been characterised as a *Native Speaker-Non-Native Speaker scheme* (Park, 2014). This approach attempts to strengthen English language teaching (ELT) through the introduction of collaborative work among native English teachers and non-native English teachers, as a catalyst for English language improvement (Heo & Mann, 2015). In this type of instances, team teaching emerges as a powerful way to contribute to teachers' professional development (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2014). In this sense, team-teaching has demonstrated its potential to form a mutual

learning opportunity for teachers as they work together to face the challenges of teaching a foreign or a second language.

In initial EFL teacher education, an emerging body of research suggests that there is already evidence that team teaching can benefit the development of pre-service teachers' capabilities and shape language teacher identities (Dang, 2013). Another key benefit from team teaching in pre-service teacher learning context has been the emergence of peer support in the learning process. It has been suggested that peers can potentially become a primary source of emotional support, acting as a supportive partner to navigate through often difficult moments during their practicums (Nguyen & Hudson, 2012).

In the case of initial EFL teacher education in Latin America, individual teaching remains the dominant model of practicum. Collaboration among in-service and pre-service teachers, as a formal and supported practice, is still relatively infrequent (Castañeda-Londoño, 2017). However, team teaching has become more commonly employed in South American countries, for instance in Chile, as an alternative practicum model to enhance pre-service teachers' learning experiences (Barahona, 2015). This emerging tendency is founded on the core assumption that levels of professional and emotional support are heightened in collaborative teaching actions, meaning that enhanced levels of relational agency and professional skills are developed in these important situated contexts of learning (Baeten & Simons, 2014; Barahona, 2015; Dang, 2013). In addition, it has also been suggested that team teaching can moderate the workload of supporting teacher mentors and provide more effective pedagogical support for school students (Dee, 2012). Having said this, there remains an imperative to further explore the effectiveness of these emerging collaborative teaching models as an alternative model in initial EFL teacher education and if they contribute to improving prospective teaching practices.

It was with this broad ongoing dialogue that this study reported here was designed. The study specifically set out to examine the nature and effect of situated collaboration among pre-service EFL teachers in Chile. Specifically, the research used two case studies of the implementation of team teaching in an initial teacher education program, to understand pre-service teachers' perspectives, actions, interactions and motives in their situated forms of collaboration.

## **Literature Review**

### **Models of Team Teaching**

Team teaching can be understood as two or more teachers engaged in activities related to the teaching process, including planning, actual teaching, and assessment. According to a review conducted by Baeten & Simons (2014), a series of distinct models of team teaching can be identified, which they broadly classify as the observational model, the coaching model, the assistant teaching model, the equal status model and the teaming model. These models differ primarily in the levels of assumed collaboration among teachers, the specific collaborative approaches they advocate and their differing levels of engagement with hierarchies of power. The models with more limited levels of collaboration among teachers are approaches based on observational practice, on structured forms of coaching and where teachers occupy an assistant teaching role. In the case of the observational model, conventionally one teacher teaches and the other observes, with the observing teacher recording and analysing specific or general teaching approaches for subsequent joint dialogue. The coaching model follows a similar pattern as the observational model, however more responsibility rests on the observer (who tends to be a more

experience practitioner). This is a similar pattern followed in the assistant teaching model, in which one or more teachers assists the main teacher in activities that range from material preparation, marking or working with small groups in the lesson. More collaborative approaches to team teaching are the equal and teaming models. In these models, teachers share tasks and responsibilities and there is a tendency to view the teaching process as fundamentally a collective activity (Baeten & Simons, 2014).

### **Team Teaching in Initial Foreign/Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE)**

Research on the effects of team teaching in pre-service teachers' learning seems to be scarce (Ong'ondo & Jwan, 2009). Yet, collaborative initiatives in SLTE can be observed in two primary contexts: team teaching among mentors/tutors and pre-service teachers; and team teaching among peer pre-service teachers.

In the case of team teaching among mentors/tutors and pre-service teachers, differing specific approaches have been reported. For example, Yang's study (2014) reported the case of a teacher mentor and two student teachers working together as one team in their practicum (as part of a TESOL internship). This experience was a compulsory activity of a postgraduate TESOL program in an Australian university. This study reported on the benefits of team teaching for the prospective teachers' professional development, as well as for the teacher mentor. In this specific case, pre-service teachers observed the teacher mentor and their lesson, then as a team engaged in a collective dialogue about the relative strengths and weaknesses of the adopted pedagogies. Pre-service teachers were also engaged in authentic teaching activities, implementing such strategies as parallel and rotational teaching. The findings of this study confirmed that implementation of team teaching in initial teacher education has the potentiality of enhancing the learning experience of pre-service teachers, with more structured forms of feedback and support developing from mentors and peers as a result of the approach. This study also suggested that team teaching can potentially generate more collaborative activities in class activities as student teachers are encouraged to implement more group collaborative activities and increase student talking time (Yang, 2014).

Turning to team teaching among pre-service teachers, it has been observed that the benefits of this form of collaborative work during practicum has the potential to create richer learning environments than those available by merely engaging in individual practice, generating a more productive context for professional development (Ong'ondo & Jwan, 2009).

Recognising these potential benefits, some Asian countries such as Vietnam, have introduced peer-focused team teaching models in the practicum. An example of this initiative—cast as *peer group mentoring*—has been explored by Nguyen & Hudson (2012). In this case, peer mentoring emerged as a response to limited support and mentoring conventionally afforded to pre-service teachers during the practicum. In this study, pre-service teachers (n=27) in groups of 3 or 4 participated in an intervention program which consisted of observations of each other's lessons once a week, using common observation criteria. Then, in a weekly seminar students shared what they had learnt from each other's lessons and also provided peers with suggestions for possible improvement. This study investigated how peer group mentoring contributed to the development of pre-service teachers' capabilities, and in what forms it provided additional support to pre-service teachers in their professional development during their practicum. The findings of Nguyen & Hudson's work (2012) demonstrated that peer mentoring directly

contributed to changes in teaching methods and working practices. Participants reported that the group meetings were helpful in encouraging the adoption of new teaching strategies in their own classes based on their classmates' feedback and improvement suggestions. They also recognised the value of working collaboratively, as working in small groups made them feel part of a community in which the relevance of teaching work was understood as a shared experience. Another key finding of this study was the tangible value of emotional support shared between peers. In this sense, the group support became a 'safe space' for non-threatening dialogue, which encouraged the sharing of experiences, the development of resilience and an enthusiasm to explore new ideas. Thus, this type of intervention proved useful to providing more effective support and development to pre-service teachers than may have been afforded by more conventional individualised approaches.

Another seminal study which explored how EFL pre-service teachers learn to teach collaboratively was that offered by Dang (2012, 2013). This research explored how a group of pre-service teachers learnt to teach EFL in pair placements during their practicum at an undergraduate teacher education program in Vietnam. In this program, pre-service teachers worked in pairs for planning and teaching lessons, being paired randomly via ballot. All lessons were observed by the other pre-service teachers in the cohort, as well as by one of the university supervisors. Lessons were followed by feedback sessions involving the supervisor and pre-service teachers. The findings suggested that team teaching inevitably creates an environment laden with contradictions and tensions. For example, it was observed that pre-service teachers had conflicting perceptions of teaching, that there was an unequal power relationship between them and there were differing levels of appropriation of pedagogical tools. Yet, most of these contradictions were resolvable through forms of ongoing professional dialogue, with the team teaching model mediating both learning to collaborate with other teachers and learning to respond to students' needs (Dang, 2013). Thus, Dang's study confirms the conception that team teaching can be a powerful model for pre-service teacher learning during the practicum, not least of all because it can create a space in which pre-service teachers' conflicting identities—associated with different cognitive and affective perceptions of the experience—are debated, challenged and potentially reconciled. This can raise important contradictions that can encourage pre-service teachers to work to resolve these conflicting identities through planned and supervised collaboration, potentially leading to qualitative change in their teaching professional identities.

### **EFL Teacher Education in Chile**

Most EFL teacher education programs in Chile<sup>1</sup> are characterized by a four or five-year concurrent program, with a curricula that typically integrates discipline knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Barahona, 2015; Martin, 2016). School-based learning experiences are integrated in the curricula of the programs. There is a tendency to include at least three formal instances of practice-based learning experience, which consist of initial observation, some form of structured learning intervention and actual teaching experiences. In recent years,

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that teacher education in Chile is university based and that school placements for practicum purposes vary from program to program.

several university EFL teacher education programs have moved to introduce forms of team teaching into the practicum experience. However, individual teaching—following an observational and/or a coaching model—is still the primary form of practice-based learning experience. Therefore, although some programs have designed school-based learning experiences that include collaboration among pre-service teachers, mentors and peers, it is still the case that teaching is overwhelming conceptualised in the practicum as a solo practice. This is reflected more acutely in the forms of assessment adopted to measure the effectiveness pre-service teacher performance in the practicum. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that studies on team teaching as part of initial EFL teacher education in Chile remain unusual. The study reported here was an attempt to address this need for situated research on the effect of team teaching strategies in the practicum context.

### **Introducing the Research**

**Context:** This study was conducted in the context of an initial EFL teacher education program based in a large university in Chile. It was framed by two case studies of pre-service teachers and teacher educators from a university program engaged in team teaching initiatives. The cases were purposively selected as they represented two distinct instances in which pre-service teachers engaged in collaborative teaching activities as part of their development as future teachers of English. Participants of both cases were invited to participate in the study and were requested to provide their informed consent.

Although in both cases pre-service teachers engaged in team teaching activities, the implementation of team teaching was different in its form in the two researched cases, as well as in the approaches adopted toward collaborative practices experienced by participants. These differences were considered significant in the design of the research as they would afford a capacity to develop a comparative analysis of the differing forms of collaboration.

**Design:** A multiple case study design was designed to answer the research questions of this study. A case study approach enables the possibility of not only capturing action of individuals, but also understanding their motives and intersections with broader sociocultural demands (Merriam, 2009). This design assumed a bounded system or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context “(Creswell, 1998, p. 61). The study included two cases in which team teaching was being implemented in initial teacher education.

The explicit focus of the guiding research questions was on the reported outcomes of pre-service teachers in making sense of their experiences of team teaching, with the research seeking to respond to three primary research questions:

1. How does team teaching mediate EFL pre-service teacher learning?
2. In which ways are collaborative practices present in team teaching implementation in EFL pre-service teacher context?
3. Does team teaching represent a viable alternative for the enhancement of EFL pre-service teacher learning?

## Theoretical Framework

In order to most effectively explore the lived experiences of two groups of pre-service teachers and the tangible impacts of impact of team teaching, the study was framed by a cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) perspective (Cole, 1996; Ellis, Edwards, & Smagorinsky, 2010). This theory is grounded on the seminal work of Vygotsky (1978) and later developments of Leont'ev (1978) and Engeström (1987), which understands learning as a socially mediated activity. Thus, learning is undertaken collectively and mediated by different factors such as rules, community, and tools. In the case of SLTE, learning to teach EFL can be understood as “a complex social activity in which pre-service teachers learn to teach as they engage in meaningful activities (actual teaching) to become active members of a global English-teaching community” (Barahona, p.171).

From this perspective, the team teaching model emerges as a space for potential collective ZPD in which collaborative practices mediate pre-service teachers' learning (Sorensen, 2014). In this space, team members engage in dialogic and collaborative practices and benefit in different ways (Poehner, 2009; Johnson & Kuerten Dellagnello, 2013). Along these lines, the study of Sorensen (2014) which examined team teaching during practicum provides a useful set of indicators to understand how pre-service teachers learn to teach through the promotion of collaboration and dialogue. Sorensen defined the following indicators of collaborative/dialogic practices in the practicum context.

- **collective:** *pairs of student teachers decided on tasks (either separately or together), undertaking tasks (at least in part together) and evaluating tasks (together);*
- **reciprocal:** *student teachers listened to each other, shared ideas and considered alternative viewpoints;*
- **supportive:** *student teachers articulated their ideas freely, without fear of embarrassment over 'wrong' answers; and they helped each other to reach common understandings;*
- **cumulative:** *student teachers built on their own and each other's ideas and chain them into coherent lines of thinking and enquiry, drawing on the support of cooperating teachers;*
- **purposeful:** *student teachers planned school-based learning opportunities, drawing on the support of cooperating teachers, with specific learning goals in view.*

(Sorensen, 2014, p. 130)

These indicators were used in the analysis of the interactions among the team members and the levels of collaboration in the cases reported in this article. In the next section, each case is described and findings will be presented.

## Case Study One: Initial School Based Learning Experience

The first case study involved a group of four second year pre-service teachers undertaking their first school based learning experience supported by a school mentor and a university tutor. This practicum was a compulsory and graded activity for their studies. This

experience consisted of the placement of the pre-service teachers working as a team, assisting a teacher of English, primarily with one grade level for a semester (around 15 weeks). In this case, the pre-service teachers assisted the English teacher in a Year 9 class in a public secondary school. These classes were conducted twice a week, based on a 90 minute teaching sessions planned according to the national Chilean English curriculum. The goal of this experience for pre-service teachers was to gain familiarity with the school context, in order to better understand the work of an English teacher and learn first-hand how a group of teenagers learn English. As part of this school-based learning experience, meetings between the school teacher and the university-based supervisor and pre-service teachers were introduced. The data collected for this case study included shadowing of all four pre-service teachers at school, interviews with pre-service teachers and teachers, observation of the meetings of the triad and reflection seminars that the researcher conducted with the pre-service teachers. Data were collected in two stages. First, pre-service teachers and teachers were interviewed at the beginning of the practicum. Questions of the semi-structured interviews were in relation to their motives to be engaged in teaching, expectations and outcomes. During this first stage, the researcher also conducted a reflection seminar in which pre-service teachers were requested to reflect on their learning experiences during the first weeks of the practicum. The second stage considered shadowing of pre-service teachers in schools and participant observation of triad meetings. This was done during week 7 and week 14 of the semester. The last stage of the data collection procedure considered a final reflection seminar that allowed pre-service teachers to examine the practicum as a whole.

#### **Case Study One: Configuration of the Team**

The school teacher played a key role as she organised the lessons in term of planning and assessment. At the same time, she was responsible for supervising pre-service teachers' day-to-day work, assigning specific tasks during the lessons and before and after the lessons. Pre-service teachers assisted teachers' work and in that regard they followed suggestions and instructions of the supervising teacher. There were no regular meetings in which they convened as a team—that is, the pre-service teachers and teacher mentor—with the exception of three meetings that took place by mid-semester. However, between lessons, pre-service teachers regularly spent time together informally discussing what had been effective and ineffective in lessons and about their management of student behaviour. They also met with their university tutor during the semester to co-ordinate assessment tasks or in regard to related matters. This implementation of team teaching approach could be characterised as following an *assistant teaching* model.

#### **Case Study Two: English Workshops**

The participants in the second case study were eight pre-service teachers (divided into three teams) and a teacher educator. They were all engaged in a voluntary program—initiated by pre-service teachers themselves—as their own attempt to find new opportunities to teach in a safe environment, as well as to provide English instruction to local school students. The eight pre-service teachers were grouped into teams of two or three. Each team was in charge of teaching one group of school students (20-30). Each team undertook all the actions related to designing and teaching lesson for a group. A teacher educator provided broad coordination

support for these activities, supported them in their planning and provided them feedback about the effectiveness of their lesson planning and pedagogical practices. These classes, which were conducted at the university campus, ran for one hour over a ten-week period. The data collected for this case included interviews to participants, shadowing pre-service teachers' work, analysis of artefacts (such as lesson plans and teaching materials), a reflection workshop, and reflection reports. Data were collected over a ten-week term following a similar procedure as described in case 1.

### **Case Study two: Configuration of the Team**

Although the teacher coordinator played a major role in establishing the teaching project and encouraging the pre-service teachers to be part of it, as the classes commenced his role significantly receded. The teacher coordinator organized the preservice teachers in small teams and assigned the roles. He also revised the broad lesson plans for the classes and provided some general pedagogical advice. Although he intermittently observed some of the teaching sessions and offered general feedback to pre-service teachers, this was not sufficiently enough to be a meaningful assessment of practice. Therefore, much of the work pre-service teachers undertook was managed autonomously. Pre-service teachers were ultimately responsible for all the teaching decision-making, including the planning of learning activities and assessment. Characteristically, the pre-service teacher who self-identified as having the most previous teaching experience adopted an informal educational leadership role, with the least experienced member played a role as an assistant. The third member of the triad tended to share most of the teaching activities with the leader. The leader had ultimate responsibility for the effectiveness of designed classroom activities, but they all shared similar responsibilities in regards to planning, and preparing material. This implementation of team teaching can be categorized as being consistent with a *peer-mentoring* approach.

### **Data Analysis**

The complex data set derived from the range of sources outlined in the cases were recorded and fully transcribed. The data were first analysed thematically, reduced and re-examined using CHAT categories (such as *goal-oriented activity*, *actions*, *object-motive*) in each case. The first coding was undertaken by two research assistants using qualitative analysis software (*Atlas-ti*) to organise coding and relational networks. Then, the coding was refined and consolidated by the main researcher. The final analysis included a comparison of the two cases using Soransen's indicators (2014) of collaborative practice.

In order to ensure the validity of the findings, data were triangulated from the different sources and the different participants. As explained above, data collection instruments included interviews, shadowing, artefact analysis which provided a comprehensive understanding of how team teaching model was implemented in each case.

## Findings

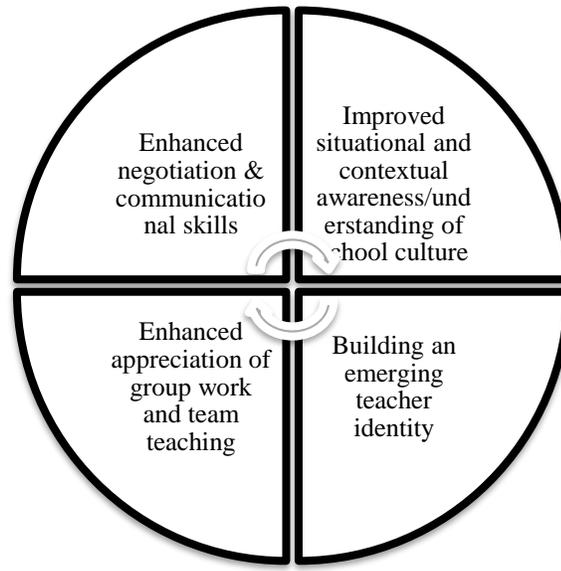
Findings are presented case by case, with subsections addressing the activities, actions, and learning outcomes. The identified affordances and constraints of team teaching in EFL pre-service teacher learning will be discussed in the light of the comparison of the two cases with a special focus on collaborative/dialogic practices.

### **Case Study One: *My First Close/Distant Encounter with Teaching***

For the pre-service teachers in the first case study site, this was their first experience at schools as prospective teachers. Although they were very enthusiastic about the school-based learning experiences, they were also anxious about the school environment and how they would meet the school's expectations. For the university program, this was a pilot experience in which team teaching was being implemented as part of the initial school-based learning experience. These four pre-service teachers had been selected to undertake this practicum, as they seemed committed to teaching and were willing to actively engage with the team teaching approach. Their initial expectations centred on survival: to cope with the assigned tasks and the uncertainty of being capable to do what was designated to an adequate level. For example, their reported primary concerns centred on the relatively small age difference with students they were teaching, and therefore such things as how to maintain an appropriate distance to students, how to use formal and informal language with students, and sustaining positive relationships with their teacher mentor. However, analysis of their interviews and observational field notes suggested that pre-service teachers found their primary motivation in meeting the expectations of university assessment for the practicum. They wanted to achieve sound grades and they understood the experience of team teaching as potentially beneficial toward achieving this outcome.

During the first shadowing experiences, it was observed that pre-service teachers adopted a relatively passive role in the classroom. They sat at the back of the room and felt the need to take notes on what the teacher and students were doing. This posture changed as they were requested more and more to work in small groups as teaching assistants. The supervising teacher planned the lessons and began to integrate at least one pre-service teacher in a group activity in each class. Pre-service teachers assisted the teacher by overseeing the activities of each of their groups repeating instructions to students, explaining vocabulary, and giving examples. Only by mid-semester, they started to meet as a group and began discussing what happened in the lessons. Pre-service teachers also began suggesting activities for strengthening student engagement, collaboratively preparing and subsequently implementing a significant learning activity by the end of the semester. Throughout the semester, it was clearly evident that the pre-service teachers' roles transformed from a passive and distant posture toward a more active and engaged stance. At the commencement of the practicum, their notes reflected their largely exclusive focus on the actions of the teacher they were observing, and their judgements towards them. As their levels of engagement increased, so the focus of their attention moved toward student learning (and what they could potentially do to enhance that learning).

Figure 1 presents a series of distinct learning outcomes from this team teaching experience. Further details of the learning gains are described below.



**Figure 1: Key learning outcomes of team teaching (Case Study One)**

1. *Professional development: enhanced negotiation skills and communicational skills* The pre-service teachers developed different strategies to deal with the school community and coordinate their actions with the rest of the school. Pre-service teachers had to navigate in a setting in which they played a peripheral role. However, as they engaged in school activities such as teachers' meetings, parents' meetings and school celebrations, they gradually learnt how to move within the organisation in more professional terms. As one participant observed, "by the end of the experience, I had managed to get to know how the system worked. I knew who to talk to for Xerox copies, tests, rooms, and things like that. The headmaster was very supportive with us. It was not that difficult as I first encountered it." (P1. R)
2. *Improved situational and contextual awareness and understanding of school culture and how teenagers learn.* This experience encouraged pre-service teachers to reflect on their role as teachers in contributing to students' learning. At the beginning, pre-service teachers were preoccupied about their own skills to overcome the challenges of the practicum. However, as they engaged in small group teaching, they began to focus on student characteristics and how they reacted to the different activities they brought to the class. As a team, they shared how students in each group have responded and exchanged advice on how to tackle different situations. A characteristic response was the following observation by one of the pre-service teachers: "I experienced what a full time teacher's job is like at school. At the beginning I felt overwhelmed by everything. The school context was tough and it was not straightforward to understand why the school was organised in that way ...but as a group we talked about what was going on and found ways to deal with the issues." (P3- R1)
3. *Enhanced appreciation of group work and team teaching.* Working as a team made pre-service teachers confront their own views of learning and teaching. As they discussed and evaluated the implemented activities and planned the next ones, they usually had to make explicit their beliefs and negotiated on the different actions they undertook in the group activities with students. For example, they agreed to design a board game activity so that

in each group students could review vocabulary and grammatical structures in a fun way. At the beginning, only one of them was very convinced of the idea, but then the others accepted that it could work. As a team, they also acknowledged their peers as a source of support both emotionally and professionally. They also became aware of collaborative tasks for students which they assessed as more difficult to plan and design, but potentially as more meaningful. As one participant observed: “I think that the tutoring in small groups has made teaching more effective, students have received more examples and feedback, and they have also had more opportunities for guided practice. Now I know that you need to plan an activity very carefully to work with them in groups, it is not just ‘do the task’.” (P 2\_R)

4. *Building an emerging teacher identity.* A key issue reported by these pre-service teachers was shaping of teacher identity. Participants referred to this as ‘confirmation of teacher’s call’. The four participants strongly reported their desires to become teachers of English. Working closely with students had shaped their future aspirations as they see themselves as student centred teachers. This is a key outcome as these pre-service teachers had expressed serious doubts of themselves as teachers at the beginning of this experience. As one participant observed “In the future I’d like to be a teacher of English who can create activities to engage students. ..I want my students to like English, to enjoy learning English.” (P\_4\_R)

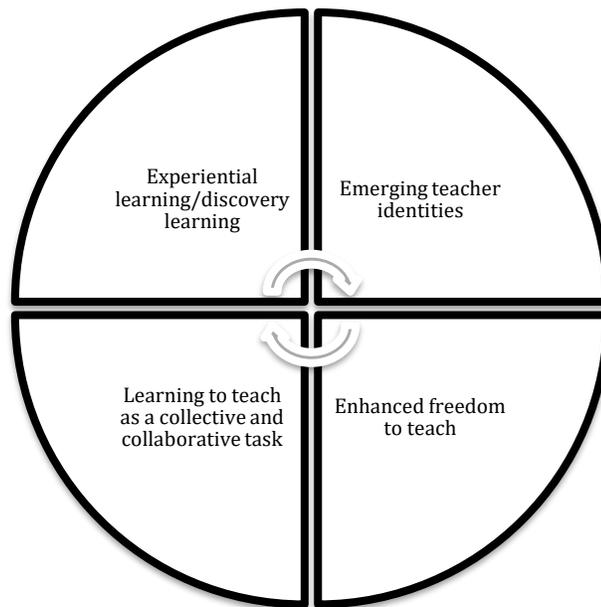
### **Case Study Two: *Learning by Discovery-Learning by Doing***

Throughout the analysis of the data generated in the second case study site, it became evident that pre-service teachers focused on three primary activities: supporting students’ learning, developing teachers’ identity and building common knowledge. In order to support students’ learning during the teaching process, pre-service teachers divided lessons into different shared components: some giving explanations, others monitoring students’ work or giving and repeating instructions and checking comprehension. During teaching sessions, it was evident that in each group the teaching team members were active and collaboratively organised these teaching tasks. Reflecting this reality, during group activities, each of them was in charge of monitoring activities of a specific group of students. In each team, the group dynamics were different, but this core orientation remained similar.

The data suggested that these processes of planning, designing material, and teaching as a group contributed to fostering their developing identity as teachers. Although the participating pre-service teachers reported that it was difficult to see themselves as teachers during the first lessons—and struggled with the dichotomy of being teachers and learners—this changed as the program progressed. This was demonstrated most vividly as the focus of the pre-service teachers moved from their own skills as capable teachers (voice, use of English, classroom management) to their awareness of how students learn best and how their actions shape that learning. The educational leader of each group played a major role in this regard, supporting the rest of the group members and shaping the nature (and resilience) of these emerging identities. This was especially apparent in one of the teams in which the leader was very committed to her role as mentor and supported the least experienced pre-service teacher, closely providing her with a space to develop as a teacher throughout the harsh experiences of the teaching.

Teaching as a team in this manifestation necessitated considerable work. It required the negotiation of differing views on teaching and learning English. Unsurprisingly—given the level of autonomy these pre-service teachers were exercising—regular dialogue was apparent around successes and failures. This tended to centre directly on specific classroom experiences and student learning and performance, as well as the sharing of potential ideas for improvement. Whilst there was evidence of the acknowledgement of each other’s expertise, decisions nevertheless had to be made and acted on collectively (even if these did not necessarily align with individual teaching philosophies). This mutual and reciprocal learning occurred as they acknowledged a common goal which required their different expertise. This collaboration also took the form of peer mentoring where they helped each other to value their strengths and work on their weaknesses.

From this case study, a series of discernible learning gains were identified. In Figure 2, the primary dimensions emerging from the data around the key learning outcomes from team teaching are summarised. Details on the nature of these learning outcomes are further described below.



**Figure 2: Key learning outcomes of team teaching (Case Study Two)**

1. *Experiential learning-discovery learning.* For these pre-service teachers, this was a first-hand experience in which they had to face authentic teaching problems (mixed ability groups, different levels of proficiency, unmotivated students, classroom management issues). They themselves had to devise and implement solutions, without directive assistance. Drawing on their previous experiences and knowledge, they consistently confronted these challenges collaboratively. Most participants reported that they had learnt experientially about effective and ineffective teaching strategies as they implemented them and observed what worked and what did not. They valued the experience as a site for learning as they genuinely had to deal with teaching problems. As one participant commented, “this was awesome because it was real. We planned a lesson

- and then implemented the strategies in the classroom. We saw its effectiveness right away; it was hand on.” (P3\_R)
2. *Emerging teacher identities.* Not only did these pre-service teachers confirm their call to be teachers, but they started enacting some imagined identities as professionals who could impact on student learning. These emerging identities as teachers were closely linked to a developing sense of self-efficacy. They valued their role as they saw their work as effective. As one participant observed: “I could actually see the effect of my actions on students’ learning. Our work became evident in our students’ outcomes; they could talk about their projects in English. It makes me proud of them and of us, too. We have grown together in our roles as teachers and learners (P.2\_R)”.
  3. *Learning to teach as a collective and collaborative task.* The team teaching experience allowed these pre-service teachers to experience teaching as a collective activity, in which their actions were orientated to a specific goal (in this case study, student’s learning of English). Unsurprisingly, the three groups worked differently and the levels of collaboration varied. However, they all faced the challenge of working as a group to plan and implement teaching, and the three groups succeeded as they planned their lessons and were able to implement their lessons for ten weeks. A typical reflection among participants by the end of the semester was, “we have learnt how to work together. We divide the tasks, but not as separate things, we bring our ideas and material, and then we decide what we are going to do. The leader creates the PowerPoint, but we all contribute, then we decide on what we are going to say in the lesson, the instructions, for example. Then, in the class, we support each other, we cover each other in case one forgets things.” (FG\_P1)
  4. *Enhanced freedom to teach.* A key learning observed in this experience is the participants’ sense of freedom and sense of ownership in their teaching. They compared this experience with the school practicum and valued the possibility to teach in an unconstrained environment. They first valued the fact that this initiative was voluntary and it was not part of their assessed curriculum. In that sense, they saw assessment as a barrier, that in this case, was absent, so it allowed them to exercise their own agency and not to respond to assessment requirements. Conversely, they also reflected on the national curriculum, school contexts and practicum requirements as sources of constraints. This sense of freedom and ownership also contributed to their sense of efficacy, as they felt capable of facing and overcoming the teaching tasks. In this sense, a characteristic comment by participants was reflected in this perspective of one of the participants: “In these workshops, we have autonomy, this is our space, we are not external agents as when we are... for the practicum. Here we can choose what to do and how to do it, we decide seat arrangements, how much noise and things like that...basic stuff, but meaningful when teaching.” (S5\_I)

### **Understanding the Nature of Collaborative Practice in Team Teaching**

Although collaboration was a key capability considered in the implementation of the two case studies described here, the apparent levels of collaboration varied significantly. This became more apparent as the data analysis was refined. Using the explanatory potential of Sorensen’s (2014) indicators, the open-coded, analysed data were re-examined and categorized identifying

dialogic learning and collaborative practices in each case. Then, the data from each case was contrasted. The results of this examination are summarised in Table 1 and discussed below. Some participants' observations are included in the discussion below as they exemplify their practices more vividly.

<b>Indicators collaborative practice</b>	<b>Case Study One: assistant teaching model</b>	<b>Case Study Two: Peer-mentoring model</b>
<b>Collective</b>	During most of the semester, they assisted the teacher mentor in the class. Their participation was limited in planning, teaching and evaluation. However, they saw the potentiality of collaboration and suggested ways to increase participation and joint work.	As a team, they collectively decided on teaching tasks to be implemented, and evaluated on the effects of their teaching strategies. This was one of the key learning gains of the participants of this group.
<b>Reciprocal</b>	They lacked opportunities to share their points of views. They met as a group only three times during the semester. Although they were grouped as a team, their actions were mostly undertaken individually.	They met every week either face to face or remotely to discuss their plans for the next lesson. Especially in two of the groups, they learnt how to negotiate and consider their classmates' views as valid. One group was not successful in doing this, and a member quit. It seemed that group (in)compatibility was an issue.
<b>Supportive</b>	These pre-service teachers developed a cordial relationship, but it was not necessarily professionally supportive as they rarely worked as a team.	In two of the three groups of this case study, pre-service teachers created a supportive environment. They felt comfortable with each other and made efforts to get to agreements and common understandings.
<b>Cumulative</b>	This indicator was no observed in this case study as there was almost no joint work among them. The teacher mentor played a directive role and her support was limited.	This was especially observed in one of the groups of the second case in which they co-constructed pedagogical knowledge to design their lessons and implement their lessons. The role of the teacher coordinator was marginal, however his presence and support was highly appreciated by the participants.
<b>Purposeful</b>	Although pre-service teachers had few opportunities to plan their own learning opportunities at school, they managed to design one activity	Pre-service teachers played an active role designing their own opportunities for learning. They used this experience as a space to learn to teach.

**Table 1: Summary of indicators of collaborative/dialogic practices in the two case studies**

*Indicators: Collective and reciprocal.* In both cases, there was an intention of working collectively for a common goal, and the emerging commitment to acknowledge everybody's expertise. However, in the second case this was more apparent. Although pre-service teachers from the first case understood the potentiality of working as a team, the experience did not afford appropriate opportunities to capitalise on this potential.

Case Study One: "Unfortunately we did not have that many chances to share our views. I would have liked to work closer with my classmates, but we never had time or were late. We should have had formal instances, but we were left to do whatever we could." (C1\_P3-R)

Case Study Two: “In my group, we meet before the class, we share some ideas, exchange our point of views, then decide what to do. If one of us cannot find a resource, makes mistakes or doesn’t know how to do something, we as a group find alternatives. Then, one prepares the PowerPoint, the other finds videos, and so on...” (C2\_P1\_I)

*Indicator: Supportive.* In both cases, the team became the most important source of support, especially in regards to emotional and affective support. Although the members of each team were not acquainted before the experience, they managed to get to know each other and construct a space that was supportive enough to undertake the required tasks. In the second case, in most of the groups they were able to hold professional dialogues and the configuration of team, which included a more experienced pre-service teacher contributed to the supportive space.

Case One: “I get along with my team, especially with one of the girls, but they are not teachers yet. I’m not sure if I can trust their suggestions about teaching. I guess we all try, but ...” (C1-P4\_I)

Case Study Two: “we generally ask each other how we are going and if we need any help. In the class, it’s like having a life saver, we can float. We support each other.” (C2\_P7\_I)

*Indicators: Cumulative and Purposeful.* In both cases, pre-service teachers valued the experience of collaboration as an effective method of learning to teach, however equally they regretted not having worked more as a team improving the experience. Most participants also expressed their remorse at not having had worked more closely with school and university teachers. In the second case, although participants expressed their intentions to continue working voluntarily, they also felt that they deserved some kind of recognition from the teacher education program, despite the project having been autonomously initiated and not designed for assessable outcomes.

Case Study One: “Though I would have liked to have more freedom to work with students, and learn what they like ..., I would have also liked to have more professional support from the university. There are too many things we didn’t know about the school context, I was not prepared. We were not guided.” (C1\_P4\_I).

Case Study Two: “This experience was richer than the practicum. Here we made it happen, I learnt a lot. The program should value this. I would like that our teachers could see what happens here.” (C2\_P8-I)

From the analysis presented here, it is clear that in the second case study site there was a higher level of identifiable collaborative practices. However, case 1 also reveals some emerging dialogic practices that would have not taken place if pre-service teachers had undertaken an individualized school-based teaching practice experience.

## Conclusions

In considering the benefits of team teaching to EFL pre-service teacher learning, this paper has examined two case studies which are illustrative of the potential of collaborative practice, particularly in the practicum dimension of EFL pre-service teacher learning. This examination has suggested that both models considered here—an assistant teaching model and peer-mentoring—have some genuine potential to become viable enhancements to the characteristic orientation to practicum experiences adopted in EFL pre-service teacher education. The data indicated that despite varying levels of collaboration—seemingly inevitable in any social engagement of this type—team teaching possesses the clear potential to enhance pre-

service teacher engagement, provide additional levels of affective support and ultimately provide opportunities for developing higher order learning. These findings confirm previous studies that argue that teacher learning experiences need careful planning that includes activities and tools that support collaborative and dialogic practices (Sorensen, 2014; Johnson & Kuerten Dellagnelo, 2013)

In the case of the assistant teaching model presented here, although the experience involved limited participation from the pre-service teachers, they managed to exercise enhanced agency as teachers and collaborated with their own activities and were more motivated to improve their orientation to teaching and learning tasks. In the second instance, the peer-mentoring model implemented provided a clearly richer potential environment for collaboration. The configuration of the team—which included some limited and more extensive ranges of teaching experiences—allowed the construction of a professionally supportive space. This provided strong affordances for an authentic form of pre-service learning and the foundation for potential new approaches to pre-service teacher development.

Emerging teacher identity was a constant theme in both cases and again additional opportunities for collaboration positively influenced the development of this nascent sense of ‘being a teacher’. As pre-service teachers engaged in these ranges of collaborative teaching (and learning) activities, their identities as teachers further developed. In collaborative and more supportive environments (such as the one described here of peer mentoring), these emerging identities were both nurtured and supported. In essence, they collectively were co-constructing who they were and they wanted to be represented as teachers (Dang, 2013).

Therefore, in turning to the critical question of whether team teaching can be a viable enhancement to practicum approaches in initial EFL teacher learning, the cases examined here would suggest that it is not only viable to implement team teaching in initial language teacher education, but that team teaching can provide authentic opportunities for potentially developmental forms of collaboration that may be of prospective impact in the longer term. Undoubtedly, despite these potentialities of team teaching in initial foreign/second language teacher education, there are some challenges that need further consideration. Team teaching implementation requires high levels of coordination among different stakeholders. This involves carefully planning that consider collaboration and reflective practices as part of the core for teaching experiences. Nevertheless, the important demonstrable benefits of team approaches suggest that the investment of energy in such work is likely to yield improved outcomes for EFL pre-service—and perhaps ultimately in-service—teacher learning.

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