Transformations of pre-service teachers beliefs about didactics in foreign language

Radeth Karina Moreno  
*Universidad de La Salle, Bogotá*

Lida Rodríguez Alfonso  
*Universidad de La Salle, Bogotá*

Johana Vargas Ballesteros  
*Universidad de La Salle, Bogotá*

Rafael Arturo Rodríguez  
*Universidad de La Salle, Bogotá*

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TRANSFORMATIONS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS’ BELIEFS ABOUT DIDACTICS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

RADETH KARINA MORENO
LIDA RODRIGUEZ ALFONSO
JOHANA VARGAS BALLESTEROS
RAFAEL ARTURO RODRIGUEZ

LA SALLE UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION FACULTY
MODERN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT
BOGOTA D.C.
2010
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RADETH KARINA MORENO
LIDA RODRIGUEZ ALFONSO
JOHANA VARGAS BALLESTEROS
RAFAEL ARTURO RODRIGUEZ

Monography as a requirement to get the teaching degree in Modern Languages

Director
Ximena Bonilla
English teacher

LA SALLE UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION FACULTY
MODERN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT
BOGOTA D.C.
2010
Tesis aprobada por:

Director:

____________________________

Jurado

____________________________

Fecha:

____________________________

Autor (es):

Nombre

____________________________

Nombre

____________________________

Nombre

____________________________

Nombre
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1. INTRODUCTION

During our experience as pre-service teachers we realized some issues in terms of teaching English as a foreign language. For example, we noticed that there was a shock when we had to face students, our idea about teaching and learning was going through a change, and we did not know how to teach them even though we “knew” how to teach. We were aware of some changes in terms of perceptions, views and opinions, that is why the aim of this research was to know how are pre-service teacher’s beliefs about Didactics in foreign language transformed before and after a didactics class and in their teaching practicum, being this class the main source students have to construct pedagogical knowledge.

This paper has been organized by the following chapters: First, you will find the rationale of the project; it describes the importance of the study at different levels. Second, the literature review in which we present an overview of the concepts that are related to this research: teacher's beliefs, methodology and teaching practicum. Third, we will present the research question and sub question, a description about the general objective of with this project, and research objectives that are the tasks or components we will undertake in order to fulfill our research aim.

Fourth, there is an detailed explanation of the research design; here you will find information about the generalities of the type of investigation we have chosen as well as information about the instruments we used in our research like interviews, observations and questionnaires; next, the data collection procedures that show the time and sessions procedures in which we implemented the instruments, plus the type of research activities and purposes, in this section there is an explanation of how we designed and applied the instruments. Subsequently we will show in the data analysis the findings of the research and the pedagogical implications of this
project. Finally we will display the conclusions that arose after analyzing all the categories.

The research methodology we used to develop our project is based on qualitative research, due to the fact that this kind of research allows understanding a specific phenomenon through descriptions and observations. The instruments from the qualitative research that can help us to reach our purpose are: interviews, questionnaires and observations. These elements gave us the opportunity to identify how are pre-service teacher’s beliefs about Didactics in foreign language transformed before and after the didactics class and in their teaching practicum because they permitted us to collect information about thoughts, feelings, perceptions and beliefs about Didactics in three different stages.

2. RATIONALE

Through the experience we had in the teaching practicum as pre-service teachers we realized that there were some factors that influenced, in different ways, our development in the teaching performance. One of these factors was the didactics class, being this the one that provides the pedagogical knowledge about teaching English as a foreign language. As the result of this reflection, we decided to find out which are pre-service teachers’ beliefs and if they are transformed or not during the three stages: before and after the didactics class and in participants teaching practicum.

Following this idea, we wanted to realize how the knowledge acquired in the didactics class affected participants’ beliefs about Didactics. We consider that our research is relevant because it will permit to have a look at what is happening with pre-service teachers. Therefore, this will help under degree students to be aware of the process they carry out during the teaching practicum and their formation as pre-service teachers.
The intention of this research was to understand the teachers' beliefs of the new pre-service teachers with the purpose of recognizing their beliefs and its transformations before and after the didactics class and in their teaching practicum. We know that teachers' beliefs, principles, feelings, thoughts and ways of thinking, influence what goes on in the classroom (Bunts-Anderson, 2004). Teacher’s beliefs have an effect on the education of other people; they might affect positive or negatively the student’s development.

We think this research project will contribute to the participants’ awareness of their teacher’s beliefs and how they transformed within the three moments, before and after the didactics class and in their teaching practicum. They will have the opportunity to be conscious of what are the most important aspects for them in terms of Didactics. Clear information about the aspects mentioned before, will permit them to make an introspection process and determine how they transformed their beliefs during the three moments. Teachers of didactics class’ may also be benefited by this project in the way in which they will be able to realize if there are some changes in pre-service teachers’ beliefs thanks to the didactics class.

3. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research started from our own experience as learners, through sharing experiences with our partners and doing some reflections about our performance during the teaching practicum, taking it as the moment in which pre-service teachers apply the knowledge they acquired about Didactics in foreign language. In this context, we found that there were some changes in the way we perceived the Didactics in foreign language as we advanced in our career. We were concerned for knowing if there were any or none transformations in beliefs about Didactics in foreign language and if they happened, how this kind of transformation occurred.

Thus, we consider the importance of this problem in the way in which its understanding could allow us to know how the didactics class has an impact in pre-
service teachers’ beliefs, and how this impact could contribute to their professional development.

From our experience in the teaching practicum, we decided the aspects that we wanted to approach in the research project were: teacher’s beliefs, methodology and teaching practicum, (for further information see Introduction and Rationale). Those aspects are the focus of the research and the constructs that leaded our investigation. Our principal expectation about this research is defined in the main question and the sub-questions posed on this paper. This research project aims to identify the transformations of pre-service teacher’s beliefs about Didactics in foreign language in three different moments, by addressing the following question and sub question:

*How are pre-service teacher’s beliefs about Didactics in foreign language transformed before and after a didactics class and in their teaching practicum?*

**SUB QUESTION**

*Which are pre-service teacher’s beliefs about Didactics in foreign language before and after the didactic class and in their teaching practicum?*

### 3.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Find out how pre-service teachers’ beliefs are transformed before and after a didactics class and in their pedagogical practicum.

- Discover the pre-service teachers’ beliefs about Didactics in foreign language before and after the didactics class and in their teaching practicum.
4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Our research is going to be focused on three major concepts: methodology, teacher’s beliefs, and teaching practicum, as they are the ones included into the transformation of the student teachers’ beliefs about Didactics in foreign language through specific moments. In this section we would like to link the concepts mentioned above by giving a look at studies made about those notions in order to understand the whole dimensions of each element. Then, briefly, we will write in our own words what we understood about methodology, teacher’s beliefs, and teaching practicum.

The first concept is methodology that has been understood in different ways by several authors. It is important to mention that books in Spanish refer to methodology with the word “Didáctica”; though the word is different, the meaning provided by authors is the same. This term is understood as a discipline that covers all the items involved in the teaching-learning process. Luis Alves de Mattos (Mattos cited in Jose Arruda, 1982) affirms that this field has as specific purpose the technique of teaching; he refers to the accurate guidance of students in their learning process through principles, norms, specific actions and procedures that the teacher has to ensue in order to reach the educational aims. López (2005) shares this idea stating that it also refers to the procedures, techniques and instruments that imply the students in the teaching-learning process and direct them to achieve the final aims of the education.

Besides, we consider that methodology deals with questions such as what, how, who, when, where, with, which, and why of the teaching and learning process (J. Wener cited in Sevillano, 2005) since the responses to these inquiries are going to lead to an appropriate way of teaching. Therefore, the methodology is recognized as any plan of education that presents particularities of teaching and has to find out successful systems, methods, technologies that teachers can apply in their classrooms in order to give some solutions to the different problems that they face in terms of teaching and, to help the students in the learning process.
Additionally, we have a specific definition of the term methodology, according to Richards and Rodgers, described by Brown, H. D. (2007):

“Methodology is the study of pedagogical practices in general (including theoretical underpinnings and related research). Whatever considerations are involved in how to teach are methodological” (p. 15)

This information above complements the one in the beginning because it invites us to think that this concept embraces all aspects of the teaching process and even include the research as an important element of methodology. In this sense, we can say that methodology (Didáctica) is a science that studies all the elements that involve the teaching and learning process in order to make both better and to help to the teachers’ wealth and students in terms of gaining knowledge.

Consistent with this idea, Frobinni (1998) affirms that Didactics is an educational science that has knowledge and a specific theory. He divides methodology (Didactics) into two fields: general methodology and a specific methodology. While the general methodology is focusing its attention on the organization and curriculum of the school, the specific methodology focuses on the program and individualism of the teaching-learning process as well as on the strategies that help students to control the different forms of the knowledge. In few words, Frobinni conceives methodology as a science which subject of study is the teaching practice.

Other authors coincide in understanding methodology as a science; this is the case of writers such as Perez Gomez, Pacios, Benedito, Tejada Fernandez, Mennert, Rosales and Olivia Gil (as cited in Sevillano, 2005). They affirm that Didactics is a science that arises from the theory and the practice on it, processes of learning-teaching are realized; likewise, it studies and guides the instructive-educational process to optimize the intellectual and integral formation of the pupil (Sevillano, 2005).
To conclude this idea, we found that authors as Medina Rivilla, Garcia Hernandez, Villalpando, Fernandez Huertas y Buyse (as cited in Sevillano, 2005) affirm that methodology has as an object the educational work and its regulation, it also studies the ways to lead the pupil towards the acquisition of knowledge and the mechanisms that help the teacher as well as the ways that improve the formative actions of the teacher.

As we can see, methodology has different connotations, and it is strongly recommended to make a review about some other concepts that are highly related to methodology like method, approach, and technique in order to understand better its definition. We can say, then, that according to Richards and Rodgers this is like an umbrella term that covers the concepts previously mentioned. One of the concepts related to methodology is method. We can start defining this concept with Comenius, (cited in Litwin, 1997), to him this is related to the criterion that gives sense of order, and it is also related to general principles that help to reach some objectives previously determined. In addition, he thinks that the method involves the possibilities that open a broad road to facilitate the understanding of new subjects tiding together the theory and the practice (Litwin, 1997).

On the one hand, some authors think that the teacher is the one totally in charge of the method. We can see this in the definition given by Pozuelo, (p.15) who considers that “the process followed by a teacher to reach a goal is called method” (Pozuelo, 1981, p.15). This author also affirms that it is dynamic because the teacher is in charge of looking for the appropriate method for his/her class and vary some of the principles in order to make it respond to the students’ interests. He also suggests that since the teaching situations are so different depending on several factors such as: age, status, level, etc. the teacher is not forced to follow firmly a method but, modify it taking into account some issues like presentation of the material, learning rhythm, natural form of learning, the alike
methodology with the center, environmental circumstances, etc. in order to make the teaching and learning successful.

Richards (1990) gives us a similar definition. He affirms that the method is the specification about how the process of teaching is supposed to be approached. In this way, the method presents a predetermined and static view of teaching in which what specific actions teachers and learners have to do are established in the teaching environment. As indicated by Brown (2002) a method is a set of theoretically unified classroom techniques thought to be generalized across a variety of contexts and audiences. Taking into account this information, the method involves several procedures that will be applied in a specific classroom based on beliefs about nature of language and learning (Nunan, 2004).

On the other hand, B. Kumaravadivelu (2003) states that there is a disjunction of conceptions between the concept of methods as the ones that have been thought and developed by people considered authorities on the subject, and as the procedures that every single teacher applies on his/her classrooms. He recognizes that nowadays what seems to be a new method it is just a mix of what has been already said which is everything that starts when teachers study and do research about the language teaching methods classified in three main categories: a) language-centered methods, b) learner-centered methods, and c) learning-centered methods. (2003). Then this committed teachers try to improve and mix those methods in order to create an eclectic one.

In relation to this, we think that method is a kind of realization of an approach through different procedures such as: activities, roles and materials that will be applied during the teaching process, and need a previous research from the teacher about the students’ context. Kumaravadivelu (2003) states about this:

“The primary task of in-service and pre-service teacher education programs is to create conditions for present and prospective teachers to acquire the necessary knowledge, skill, authority, and autonomy to construct their own
personal pedagogic knowledge. Thus, there is an imperative need to move away from a method-based pedagogy to a postmethod pedagogy” (p. 42).

As we see, nowadays it is essential for teachers to go beyond methods, to research and to try to propose and create their own methods and techniques. The education process is challenging day after day every single teacher as long as new contexts are created for students to live in as well as those new situations that teachers have to face up on the daily classroom.

The second term related to methodology is approach which has been conceived in different ways by different authors. For instance, one of those conceptions takes the approach as a group or set of assumptions and theories about the nature of a language and the language learning. Brown (2002) proposes a definition of approach that is accurate for language teaching process:

“It is the theoretical rationale that underlies everything that happens in the classroom. It is the accumulative body of knowledge and principles that enables teachers, as “technicians” in the classroom, to diagnose the needs of students, to treat students with successful pedagogical techniques, and to assess the outcome of those treatments” (p.11)

Later in 2007 he conceives the approach as the foundation to design any method in order to teach a foreign language. As we see, the term of approach is treated as a thesaurus of the philosophy that underlines the program of language teaching. This term refers to the conceptions that teachers have about the nature of language and language learning; when teachers have this clear they can start to think about how they would develop students’ skills (Richards, 1990, Stevick, 1998).

But the history of the term approach starts with the discussion of the different approaches that have been more evident in foreign language teaching. Actually it is very important to know the beginnings of all the conceptions that set our present
either theoretically or practically, as it is the history itself the main resource of the human being for not to make the same mistakes. As Wink (2005) mentioned:

“*We are a reflection of all that has gone before us; we are indebted to the people and the ideas that have preceded us. (…) I do things very differently in my classes now, but I know that what I do in classes every day is touched by all the teaching, learning, and believing that have preceded me”*. (p. 72-73)

Thus, we can start with the approach of Transmission Model (Wink, 2005). This one refers to that old pedagogy based on the teacher’s knowledge. He was the only one in charge of the whole class, transmitting his/her knowledge to the students. This early approach conceived the teacher as the only active character of the education process as the students only had to pay attention and take notes being carefully about coping exactly as the teacher said. Nowadays this approach is not considered accurate at all as every day we discover many different ways in which students learn.

Furthermore there is the approach of the Generative Model (Wink, 2005). This is one of the most relevant methods that teachers use as it gives the opportunity to the student to participate on their own learning process. Now the teacher is not the only active member in the classroom; here his/her role suffers a transformation to become a guide, person who shows the way that students have to cover by themselves.

Finally, we have the approach of the Transformative Model (Wink, 2005) that is based on the earlier ideas of Dewey and Vygotsky about meaningful learning. With this approach, the education process goes beyond the classroom as it develops critical thinking due to the study on real facts, news, likes, dislikes, etc. that are strongly attached to the students’ context. Here the students are engaged in a meaningful motivation that makes them take an interesting part in their learning process.
As we see, the term of approach comes from these original perspectives about education, which include the practice of the trial and the error. Without further ado we think that the term approach covers all the principles, key concepts and theories necessary to develop a method and then the techniques to achieve it.

It is also important to mention how the teaching of foreign languages has been seen according to these perspectives. For the transmission model, for example, it was no more than the opportunity for teacher to transfer to the students’ minds all the knowledge they had about the new language. For this first model, the teaching of a foreign language was attached to a banking process in which only teachers were the indicated to deposit certain information on the students.

Then we have the Generative Model in which we can distinguish a notion of importance on students’ opinions and ways of learning. In this model, the teaching of a foreign language becomes a collaborative process in which teachers as well as students are the main characters of the whole process and, in which, students are the ones who built their own knowledge based on the teachers’ guide.

Concluding, we get to the notion that is necessary to implement as a universal one. This is the notion that comes from the transformative model, in which the teaching of a foreign language and the act of teaching itself is reconstructed as it is not only concerned with the singulars and varied ways of learning but now it tends to get closer to the students giving them the opportunity to interact with every single aspect that is involved in his/her context. This is due to the use of authentic materials.

Notions about the teaching of a foreign language have been changing as long as new challenges and theories come up in the classroom. What we think is that we, as teachers, need to give a critical assessment to all those new conceptions that we have and the ones that are offered to us.
The third term associated with methodology is technique. Technique is conceived as “any of a wide variety of exercises, activities, or tasks used in the language classroom for realizing lesson objectives” (Brown, 2007, p. 28). In this sense, we can find that Litwin (1997) is in a strong relation with this concept when she argues that “techniques are instruments, mediums and procedures are adjusted to the different moments in which the teaching is present, these can be spaces, time and materials” (p. 35-68). Through this conception we can observe that techniques are specific tools designed for a specific teaching moment in order to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge.

Our second important concept that is going to lead our project is teachers’ beliefs because they are the ones that wrap up what people think about teaching and learning. In order to understand this concept, first we are going to give an overview to the definition of beliefs. This notion has been studied by several fields like philosophy, sociology, and anthropology. They can be understood as “the building blocks of the mind” (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 19), they can also be perceived as attitudes or opinions that represent a subjective perspective of the world that can be understood as facts stored in our mind.

Beliefs are usually related to knowledge but they also include values and perspectives towards a specific reality. Schaller (cited in Raths and Mc Aninch, 2000) affirms that “knowledge encompasses all that a person knows or believes to be true, whether is not verified as true is some sort of objective or external way”. In other words, a belief is highly related to what people think and construct during their interaction with the environment they live in, it is necessary to mention that people can have the same beliefs but the way they show are different for everybody.

After defining what a belief is, we are going to concentrate on the concept of teacher’s beliefs. They are viewed as a set of thoughts and ideas about teaching and learning, these are not are not necessarily logically structured and they may change during the experience teachers have with teaching (Raths & Mc Aninch,
Raths & Mc Aninch define beliefs as a subjective matter because not all the teachers learn the same things about teaching or learning in the practicum or other contexts; learning depends on their conceptions of professional learning and their role as student teachers. Teacher's beliefs are not only related to knowledge but also to attitudes, values, perceptions, theories and images about teaching in general terms (Raths & Mc Aninch, 2000). Another author who talks about beliefs is Frank Pajares (1992, p.309); he defines this issue saying that:

“[…] defining beliefs is at best a game of player's choice. They travel in disguise and often under alias—attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertories of understanding, and social strategy, to name but a few that can be found in the literature.”

In addition, teacher’s beliefs are constructed depending on the view that teachers have about teaching, there are two points of views: teaching as a craft and teaching as a science. If a person considers teaching as a science his/her beliefs would be based on the idea that the act of teaching is applicable in the same way to any context and that it will work on a general or global level in the classroom. Otherwise, if a person thinks that teaching is an art or craft (Trappes-Lomax, 2001), his/her beliefs would be based on the idea that the act of teaching has to take into account the dissimilarities in each context and it works in a local level in the classroom. It does not matter if teaching is regarded as an art or a science; beliefs always lead our teaching practicum.

Moreover, teachers’ beliefs can come from different sources like: their own experience of language learners, experience of what works best, established practice, personality factors, educationally based on research based principles and principles derived from a an approach or methods (Richards & Lockhart 1996). According to Crookes (2003) beliefs are also acquired along the teaching
experience of being a student, personal life experiences and experiences with other teachers. In summary, teacher's beliefs come from different origins and are supposed to be reflected on lesson planning, techniques, curriculum, classroom actions and assessment.

It is clear that beliefs come from different sources and that they lead our teaching performance; however, it is necessary to mention that those beliefs about teaching also include beliefs about learning. Learning beliefs are specially grounded on our experiences as students and the knowledge acquired in second language teacher preparation programs; in this stage we realize what techniques are the best to learn a subject and how a language is learned, but these assumptions can be changed during our experience as teachers. In the same way, teaching beliefs are grounded on our experience with teachers who taught us in school and teachers in preparation programs.

Additionally, beliefs about learning and teaching affect students and teachers knowledge, so it is very important if teachers understand their set of beliefs about the nature of knowledge and the process of learning a second language in order to: first, improve and develop in a better way the students' knowledge about the L2, and second, influence our students in a positive or negative way depending on the methodology we use in class (Bunts-Anderson, 2004). In this particular issue (Anderson, 2004) states:

“Teacher's beliefs have a highly impact on learners and they are the reflection of their own learning experiences and, sometimes, they go beyond the classroom. This mainstream has been studied for long time, and it has been identified a clear fact, the influence of those beliefs are not only seen in teacher's approach to teaching but also students’ approach to learning” (p.5)

Taking into account the information above, a clear fact has been identified, beliefs are influenced and set up by several experiences; they can be modified or improved during our whole teaching and learning experience and they are
supposed to be reflected on the classroom. The impact this fact has is quite obvious because we know that our conception about teaching and learning is reflected on lesson plans and development of the classes. In summary, beliefs are mainstream that some of us did not even notice before. They are highly important to the teaching and learning because as we can see they can affect the way in which teachers teach.

The last key concept we need to refer in this project is Teaching practicum, that according to Harmer (2007) is the moment in which pre-service teachers can apply the theory about teaching and learning and at the same time, identify possible failures and can make meaningful learning that answer the student's needs. This is one of the most important concept, taking into account the huge responsibility of this in the pre-service teachers formation. In this way and taking into account to Trigwell (1999) who said that is important to see that not all the candidates learn the same things about the practicum; learning depends on their conceptions of professional learning and their role as student teachers; in this part, we see that all the main concepts that lead our project are linked with the teacher practicum and is in this moment that every aspect interacts and affects the teacher performance.

In a professional view the preparation for teachers is characterized because it helps teachers to consolidate personal knowledge (Pennington, 1989:1990). In this case the students are given an opportunity to put knowledge into action, in this way, student teachers develop personal theories of teaching taking into account their own experience; they will also incorporate values to their conception about teaching, also teacher education has to offer chances for novice teachers to situate their abstract knowledge that allow to see the interaction between it and the performance itself.

According to Bunts (2004) the way that teachers perform in the classroom is influenced by attitudes, values, ways of thinking and being; that is why Harmer (2007) suggests that it is necessary that teaching practicum takes into account the
developing teacher’s previous experience as both teacher and learner, and potentially concern their self-conceptions and personal development in order to gather all the experiences and improve the teaching process. In order to make a balance between practice and knowledge about teaching and learning, Wallace (1991) proposes a model that conjugates both, this model is called The Reflective Model.

This reflective model takes into account the received knowledge that makes reference to all the theories, research findings that are part of the necessary intellectual content of the profession; the other part is the experiential knowledge that comes up when there is the opportunity to reflect on that knowledge. Those two elements allows construct a better teaching process and help pre-services teachers to improve their teaching practicum, since they do not see the practicum just like a requirement, but see it like a moment in which they can be reflective about their performance, and the importance of including not only the theory but also their previous experiences as learner, and in this, they can understand and enrich their practicum by recognizing themselves in an active role inside their own teacher’s formation.

As we can see, teacher beliefs, methodology and teaching practicum are the main concepts that will lead our project and they will help us to achieve our purpose. Taking into account the theory we wrote above, we consider that Methodology is defined in different ways and it involves other concepts like approach, method and technique. We consider that this notion is a science that studies every single block that constructs the big building of teaching and aids to the improvement of the teaching and learning processes. This concept deals with approach that is a set of beliefs and assumptions about nature of language learning and nature of language teaching that guides the teaching process in the classroom. Method refers to the use of a set of procedures that you apply in the classroom in order to achieve linguistic goals previously proposed, in order to achieve those goals teachers use different activities or exercises that are called techniques.
Teachers' beliefs are a set of assumptions, thoughts and ideas that teachers have about teaching and learning, it includes not only theories about learning, learning styles and teaching techniques, but also theories about teaching, teaching strategies and so on. Those assumptions are subjective and come from different sources; teachers can construct those beliefs during their experience as learners and teachers, they can modify them during their teaching practice. It is important to stand out that teachers' beliefs are an important issue during the teaching profession, so depending on what the teacher believes about teaching and learning, he/she is going to develop and focus his/her performance and obviously it will be reflected on the classroom.

Finally, we consider the teaching practicum is the moment in which pre-service teachers apply all the theory about teaching and learning acquired during the career. It is not only a requirement, but also it is a moment in which pre-service teachers can be reflective about their performance, and the importance of including not only the theory but also their previous experiences as learners. In this way, they can understand and enrich their practicum by recognizing themselves in an active role inside their own teacher's formation.

4.1 BACKGROUND

In order to give support to our thesis project, we found four different researches that complement and gave to us some important information that will help us during the development of our project, since those different researches can provide key data and enrich the entire research project.

The first document is called *Exploring teachers' beliefs and the process of change*. In this document the authors show three main ideas related with our project. The first idea is that teachers' beliefs play a central function in the process of teacher developments. With this, we can see that in order to understand how teachers move toward their work, it is necessary to be aware of beliefs they have, and how those have a huge influence in teachers' performances. The second idea is seen
from the perspective that every significant change in teachers’ practices is a result of teacher’s belief changes; through this idea we can observe that teachers’ personal constructs determine how they consider and interact during the teaching practicum. Moreover, Beliefs have an influence in the way pre-service teachers prepare the classes and choose the material they will use in their classes. The last proposal shown in this document makes emphasis on the idea that the notion of teachers change due to personal factors as well as by the professional context. At the same time, teachers can be reflective about their performance and be self aware about their own approach to teaching.

The second document is called *Teachers’ conceptions of language learning: out-of-class interactions*. In this document the author develops some important ideas that are highly related with our research. In the first idea it is shown how teachers’ beliefs and perceptions of their teacher roles have an important impact on students’ success. The second idea is related to teachers’ conception and the relation that those conceptions have to the practice. Through this idea we can observe that it is highly important to know teachers’ previous experiences, and how those can interact and have and influence into the practice. In the last idea the author explains the importance that teachers have during the learning process, since they are active participants, and it is also explained how is really important to understand teachers’ conceptions about teaching. With this idea we notice that teachers’ conceptions have an influence in every sphere and directly in the way they teach and interact with the students.

The third document is called *pre-service teachers’ conceptions of mathematics and how to teach it*. In this research the author developed an important idea which also is connected with our objective. In that idea the author shows the fact that teachers explain math depending on what they took in their classes when they were students, moreover, teachers tend to teach as they were taught, taking as models all the teachers that they had.

The last article is called *The Pre service Practicum: perspectives of Students from three Disciplines*. In this research the author show us some information found
during its research that complement our document. The first relevant information shown by the authors is that the success of the teaching practicum has a variety depending on the quality of the teacher that is in charge of monitoring the pre-service teachers’ performances. In this case we can realize the importance of the teacher in charge of all the process in during the teacher practicum since the teacher has previous experience that can help the students to enhance and to improve their skills.

Other key point found in this research was that due to the fact that students had lacked skills in self evaluation and reflection, they did not have the opportunity to realize how their work, their weaknesses, and their strengths were during that experience. With this idea we can observe the important of the self reflection during the teaching practicum since it is a door to the real work, to notice what things are necessary to change and what can stay, all these with the objective to improve the practicum.

With all these documents, we can notice that in order to understand the teachers performance it is necessary not only be aware of external factors but also internal factors, previous experiences and conception about teaching, and learning, since, all those factors interact and are shown in the practice and interaction with students. At the same time it is really important that during the teaching practicum, the teachers in charge of this process promote self-reflection like a tool to improve their performance and skills.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

During the development of this project, the approach we used in order to gather and interpret the information was the qualitative research. We chose this approach taking into account our research aim and McMillan (2004) ideas, she affirms that researchers using a qualitative approach believe that there are multiple realities represented in participant perspectives and that context is critical in providing an understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. In the same way, and continuing with McMillan, the qualitative researchers believe that behavior is best
understood as it occurs without external constrains and control, and the situational context is very important in understanding that behavior.

Besides, in this kind of research, McMillan (2004) mentions some characteristics of the qualitative research that are related with what we wanted to obtain from our research project. Those characteristics according to McMillan are:

1. **Natural setting**: all the behavior that is being investigated is observed as it occurs naturally; we made our research project in the specific pre-service teachers’ pedagogical development. There was no control of participants behavior or environments and the research process occurred in a determine setting (before and after the didactics class and during their teaching practicum). In the data collection instruments and data you can observe there is any conditioning of the students' behavior.

2. **Direct data collection**: in the qualitative research the investigators have an active and direct role in gathering the information as being observers, interviewers or who studies documents that permit to obtain information directly from the sources. The whole process of gathering information was done by us directly, all the decisions about the data collection procedure and instruments were done by us taking as a guide our research project question and the main concepts related to Didactics in foreign language. Our roles as researches expanded to be the interviewers, observers and designers of all the techniques of the qualitative research.

3. **Rich narrative descriptions**: the descriptions gather through the research process we really important since those contributed to a better understanding of participants’ behavior. In the observation formats and observations developed for this research we wrote a lot of information about students’ performance in class of it in order to recognize certain type of behavior features. After obtaining the information of the observations, we took into account the relevant data that was related to Didactics in foreign
language, in order to make a rich description that allowed us obtaining a complete understanding of the phenomenon being investigated and create the interview.

4. Process orientation: qualitative researchers want to know how and why behavior occurs. To reach that, qualitative method looks for the process through which behavior occurs, not just the outcomes or products. We made some observations of students’ performances in the teaching practicum and then an interview to find out their reasons for acting in a certain way.

5. Inductive data analysis: in order to establish how pre-service teachers’ beliefs are transformed during the three stages mentioned before, we developed interviews, observations and questionnaires that helped us not to gather information to prove or disprove hypothesis, but to synthesize the data collected, and through that generate generalizations, that make of this kind of research open to new ways of understanding.

6. Participant perspectives: in our research we needed to identify participants’ beliefs about Didactics in foreign language, so we established specific instruments that were useful to collect information about participants’ perspectives, feelings, attitudes and thoughts about this concept. Our goal, with this type of qualitative research, is to understand participants from their point of view taking into account the different subjective meaning that different people have about the same event. All participants were in the same stages, they all had been in the didactics class, teaching practicum and they had confirmed to work with us.

7. Emergent research design: every kind of research has a plan or a way to conduct the investigation, but in this case, in a qualitative study, researchers enter the investigation. Through the investigation goes and the researchers learn about the setting, people and other sources information, they discover what needs to be done to fully describe and understand the phenomena being studied. After the observations we wanted to realize what were the
reasons why participants performed in a certain way and we designed an interview based on those observations

Within the qualitative research design, there is a type of method called case study, which we consider was the most adequate to our research project, because this kind of research attempts to provide a description of the phenomenon studied. McMillan (2004) affirms that case studies concern in-depth study of a single or a few programs, events, activities, groups, or other entities defined in terms of time and place, and in the same way Wallace (1988) says: case studies concentrate on what is unique.

At this point we can observe that case study is focused on the participants, and in understanding the phenomenon studied. To complement this idea, Eisenhardt (1989) gave us a definition of what a case study is in which she explains that: “The case study is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings” (p 534). Furthermore, in the case studies it is possible to include different data collection tools such as interviews, questionnaires, and observation instruments. Eisenhardt (1989). In addition, one of the main characteristics of the case study is that it requires enough time to collect the data, interview people, review documents and make observations to the participants of the project.

According to Yin (2003) we can find single or multiple case studies, depending of if it is single or multiple; the case study can be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. In our case, the project is focused, on the one hand, in a single case study because it is centered on a single case, which in this research, is pre-service teachers’ beliefs about Didactics; it constitutes a case because the students involved were in their teaching practicum and they were studied for a long time in order to determine the changes they suffered during their process of professional development. On the other hand, it is a descriptive case study because it presents a complete description of the specific phenomenon observed.
Due to the characteristics of the case study, and taking into account that our research project is related to describe a specific phenomenon from a specific population, we choose this method because it gave us the necessary elements for developing the project in course.

5.1 Population

Taking as a reference the characteristics of the case study and our objective of identifying the transformations along three specific stages in terms of teachers’ beliefs we worked with a specific population from La Salle University. The population was defined by 45 students from the Licenciatura en lengua Castellana, Ingles y Frances career who were in their fifth semester during the second term of 2008. They were studying in the day time classes, they belonged to a middle class and their age average was between 17 and 24 years old. Most of the population were women and we had only five men in the group.

5.2 Procedure

Having clear our objective and the population we were going to work with, we started to think about the procedures we were going to use. It is necessary to make clear that this research was developed during three representative moments. The first one was carried out when students of fifth semester had not started to attend the Didactics class yet (at the end of 2nd term 2008). In that moment we applied a ranked items questionnaire in which students were asked about the beliefs they had in relation to Didactics in foreign language, the respondent was requested to give a numerical value to ten statements about teaching and learning a foreign language, number 1 was the highest value and 4 the lowest on. Those statements emerged from the main concepts of our research question which are methodology (didactics), teaching and learning a foreign language. After that we looked for information related to those concepts in order to design different definitions to each statement; we developed the matrix and we organized the items taking as a
reference (Richards and Lockhart, 1996). (See appendix 3). The objective of this questionnaire was to know students’ beliefs and assumptions about Didactics in foreign language. As soon as we collected the data from this questionnaire, we organized it in a matrix in order to find out the first commonalities.

The second moment was given when the same students had finished sixth semester and they had already taken the didactics subject (at the end of 1st term 2009). In this stage, we applied a questionnaire that contained open-response questions and its objective was to identify how the students define or/and conceive the concepts: Didactics, approach, methodology, method, and techniques. (See appendix 4). After gathering this information, we analyzed the data using the color code technique proposed by Shagoury (1999) which permitted us to find out the commonalities of this stage.

The third moment was developed in two stages. The first one was done when pre-service teachers of seventh semester were observed during their teaching practicum (during the 2nd term 2009); for this we used an observation format that helped us to determine first, how they acted in their practicum, second, to identify how the student teachers’ performance in their practicum reflected their understandings of Didactics. The observation format was divided into four specific aspects: Language focus, audio and visual aids, teacher’s role, and additional observations. (See appendix 2) Each pre-service teacher was observed during three different sessions in order to gather enough information about their performance. As soon as we finished the observations, we analyzed the data by reading it and standing out the most relevant actions; then taking into account pre-service teachers’ actions during their teaching practicum we designed our last instrument of this moment which was the interviews.

The second stage of this moment was an interview with open-ended questions made to pre-service teachers (see appendix 5). It was carried out after their teaching practicum and its objective was to identify the recent beliefs they had
about Didactics (at the end of 2nd term 2009). This instrument had two parts; the first one included opinion/value questions in which students gave opinions and impressions about the four specific aspects from the observation format. We did this in order to identify if there were transformations in pre-service teachers’ beliefs since the first moment of the process till that moment. The second part was a group of behavior/experience questions. These kinds of questions were created taking into account each students’ performance and what happened under specific circumstances, they were different for each pre-service teacher. It is necessary to clarify that the interviews were done in Spanish to get more accurate information. With this instrument we wanted to recognize if the Didactics’ conception had changed in any way during the whole process. Having collected all the information required for our project we started the data analysis which is explained in the next section.

5.3 Instruments

Since every research method has its own ways to collect the needed information; we decided to use instruments as questionnaires, observation formats and interviews; thus, they gave us a depth view of the phenomenon being investigated and at the same time they permitted us to determine which beliefs students had and its transformations.

The first instrument mentioned above is questionnaires, which according to McMillan (2004), are written documents that contain statements or questions used to obtain subject perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, values, perspectives, and other traits. In this research we used two kinds of questionnaires; one of them is called ranked items, in which the respondent is requested to situate some categories into a sequential order (applied on 10th November 2008). This kind of instrument was relevant since it helped us to obtain information directly related with what the students think, believe and know about Didactics in foreign language; its internal characteristics favor the research process we are talking about here. The other
kind of questionnaire we applied contained open-response questions and its objective was to identify how the students define or/and conceive the concepts: didactics, approach, methodology, method, and techniques. (applied on 4th May 2009) (See appendix 4)

The second instrument we used was an observation format; this data technique permits the observation in natural settings about important contextual factors that may influence the interpretation and use of the results; one of the types of observation is the inference. In this case, the person who is observing and recording the behavior makes inferences, or judgments, about what is seen or heard, the high-inference observation requires to observe relevant behaviors and to make inferences about their meaning. We used an observation format that had items like teachers' roles, visual and audio aids, language focus, etc. that allowed us to identify how pre-service teachers' beliefs were transformed in the teaching practicum. (applied between September and October 2009) (See appendix 2) This type of instrument helped us to collect direct data related to participants' specific behaviors, actions, situations and contexts in which participants were.

The last instrument was interviews that are a form of data collection in which questions are asked orally and subjects' responses are recorded. They tend to get information about facts, feelings, beliefs and intentions. In the development of an interview there is a direct verbal interaction between the interviewer and the respondent. The interviews we applied had two parts; the first one included opinion/value questions in which students gave opinions and impressions about some specific aspects, the second part was a group of behavior/experience questions. (applied on November 13th 2009) (See appendix 5). These kinds of questions were created taking into account each students' performance and what happened under specific circumstances, they were different for each pre-service teacher. It is necessary to clarify that we decided to do the interviews in Spanish so the information will be more truthful and students will be able to express correctly what they felt like. We used this instrument because it permitted us to find out
participants’ subjective matters as beliefs, attitudes, values, thoughts, etc. the use of prompts lead us to a better understanding of their perspectives and experiences in terms of Didactics.

As we see, all these three instruments validated and gave coherence of what we proposed because they provided specific information about teachers’ beliefs in terms of Didactics before and after the didactics class and in their teaching practicum.

5.4 Data analysis

Being coherent with our research question: “How are pre-service teachers’ beliefs about Didactics in foreign language transformed before and after a didactics class and in their teaching practicum?” and the data collection instruments like the interview, observation format instrument and questionnaires; the data analysis will be presented taking into account the three moments in which the research was developed. In this following part we will explain the procedure we followed in order to identify participants’ beliefs and their transformation. Then we will show an analysis of the category beliefs found and an analysis of the transformations.

To obtain the information for the first moment of our research, we used a ranked questionnaire that included some specific items related to Didactics as a foreign language. The information collected in this instrument was organized in an excel graphic that showed us the amount of people who gave the same value to a specific definition for each statement. Taking into account the charts (see appendix 7), we analyzed all the statements in order to identify the definition with the highest value to the students. Finally, the ones with the highest value were taken as commonalities. In this chart we can observe that there is a significant group of people who gave the most important value to the speaking and listening skills and, although reading and writing have the highest number of people, we took into account what they considered the most important definition.
Figure 2 shows the way the information was organized:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The English learning must be focused on:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and vocabulary</td>
<td>6 students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking and listening</td>
<td>7 students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and writing</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and speaking</td>
<td>5 students</td>
<td>5 students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the analysis of this data we concluded that there were two commonalities that referred exactly to what students thought Didactics in foreign language was, taking into account that we wanted to know which were the pre-service teachers' beliefs about Didactics in foreign language before taking the didactics class, we took them as beliefs categories. Those beliefs categories are:

- “Didactics are activities that involve amusement”
- “Didactics is the art of teaching”

It is necessary to mention that the beliefs categories that emerged in this stage were the ones that were compared with second and third stages' information in order to find out the transformation occurred along the students' process and the development of the study. In part 5.4.1 we will explain in depth the analysis of all the beliefs categories.

To obtain the information form the second moment we applied a open-response questionnaire (applied on 10th November 2008) in which participants wrote their own conceptions about the topics related to Didactics as a foreign language. The first step we followed was to read all the answers given to each question by all participants. Then, we organized them in a matrix, for us to be able to recognize
patterns. In a file of this matrix we wrote all the questions made in the second questionnaire and below all the answers given by participants. After, we used the color-coded technique proposed by Shagoury (1999), we read all the answers of all the questions looking for commonalities, we assigned a specific color to all those answers that had something in common, and each color represented a specific commonality. Some of those commonalities were:

- “Didactics are the strategies used only by teachers”
- “Didactics is the science that studies strategies and methods used to teach”
- “Didactics relies just in teachers”

*For further information, see Appendix 1*

Subsequently, we organized that information in another matrix in which we wrote the commonalities, the answers related to them, and the conceptualization of each one taking into account different authors. Then, as in the first moment, we realized that the last 5 commonalities (see appendix 1) had a relation with the first three ones because they complemented the students’ conception about Didactics. Being the students’ conceptions about Didactics the core of our research, we found out that the first three commonalities, that answered a specific question about Didactics, were going to become into belief categories because they showed a general students’ thought of Didactics in foreign language after taking the didactics class. Following this, we named the belief categories as:

- “Didactics are the strategies and procedures used by teachers”
- “Didactics is a science”
- “Didactics is a method used to teach”

In order to achieve our second stage, as soon as the information was collected, we analyzed the data by reading all the observation formats looking for specific actions or attitudes that the pre-service teachers had during the sessions. All the information gathered in the analysis of the observation format helped us to design
our last instrument that was the interview. We did the transcription of each interview and using the color-coded technique proposed by Shagoury (1999) we identified the following commonalities that were cluster into the following groups:

Beliefs about Didactics after teaching practicum

- Teachers’ and students roles
- Use of L1 and L2
- Correction in terms of vocabulary
- Development of skills *(For further information see Appendix 6)*

To find out the final category of this stage, we realized that one of those groups of commonalities was related to Didactics in foreign language itself (Beliefs about Didactics after the teaching practicum), we took it as a belief category because it reflected exactly what students conceived, supposed, considered or thought Didactics in foreign language was and, it enclosed their new belief about it. That belief category is:

- “Didactics is all the theory about teaching and learning.”

After this process, we started to select the beliefs categories from the first, second and third moment in order to compare them and know how the information changed from the beginning to the end of this research; thereby, we could identify how transformations in participants’ beliefs occurred.

It is necessary to highlight that thanks to the differentiation of the three moments in which our research was carried out, we found out our main beliefs categories while we were getting the data from the different instruments. Besides, as all the moments needed to be totally related, we had to generate a stage at the end of the first and the second moments, in order to associate the data collected and initiate the creation of the first instrument of the third moment.
In the following section we will first, explain which are pre-service teachers’ beliefs about Didactics in foreign language before and after the didactics class and in their teaching practicum; second, we will explain the transformation of those beliefs among first, second and third moment.

5.4.1 Beliefs categories

In this first part we will explain which the pre-service teacher’s beliefs were prior to and after the Didactics class. In this way, at the end of the first moment, that was represented by the first questionnaire applied to the students about beliefs they had in relation to Didactics, we found the first two main beliefs categories that represented what they understood about didactics.

A. “Didactics are activities that involve amusement”
B. “Didactics is the art of teaching”

In belief category A we can observe that for the participants Didactics involves the use of games and entertainment in the teaching process. This category is named thanks to the definition obtained in the first questionnaire applied on 10th November, 2008 like “Didactics is the creation of games in order to facilitate learning”.

On the one hand, we observed that participants thought that Didactics is a synonym of fun activities, as it represents all the tools that the teacher can use to generate a more relaxed environment to study, and at the same time, to help students to improve their foreign language proficiency. We relate this idea with the word “ludic” that derives from Latin ludus, "play" or “fun”. According to Jimenez (1998), the ludic integrates the emotional and rational part of the human cognitive process. In this way positive emotions toward knowledge encourage a successful cognitive process because it allows a pleasant access to knowledge. On the other
hand, we found within this category a commonality obtained during the first questionnaire applied on November 10th, 2008 that supports it. It says “The best way to learn English is listening to songs and watching videos”. In this sense, we can say that those activities help the learning and teaching process because they are activities that are oriented to entertainment, diversion and fun and at the same time makes the learning a comfortable and successful action. This idea can be reflected when both, pre-service teachers and teachers propose and apply dynamic activities based on students’ needs that engage them to learn, even there are some books that propose activities such as role-plays, discussion/speaking, problem/solving and, games activities etc.

The category B “Didactics is the art of teaching” arose from the high value they gave to the statement related to the Didactics’ definition in the first questionnaire. In relation to this category, Saenz (2008) states that Didactics as an art is an intellectual quality that facilitates the production of a specific artistic work, which is learning and teaching; regarding to this, we connected Didactics with art because both of them want to create a specific artistic work. One wants to create a beautiful object and, the other one wants to produce an effective learning and teaching. In this sense we can say that the teacher is the artist who makes decisions about the teaching process and he/she has knowledge about specific means to reach a specific goal, Tilghman (2005).

To support this category we stood out a commonality found in the first questionnaire applied on November 10th 2008, that says: “the English teacher is someone who guides the learning process”, according to Marquez (2006) the teacher is the artist of the teaching process, he is the one who makes decisions about what to teach and he helps to the creation of new knowledge, in this sense, we can observe that students are in agreement with this author because they both consider the teacher as the artist who molds the teaching and learning process. To make this statement stronger we found in the same questionnaire another communality in which participants considered that “English learning is better when you receive explanation from your teacher” (questionnaire applied on November
With this communality we can notice that participants still consider the teacher as the core of the learning process, so they feel more secure when the teacher is in the classroom giving them the necessary support for their acquirement of English.

Allowing for this, we can conclude that for students the English teacher is like an artist because the artist is in charge of ameliorating the artistic work and the teacher is in charge of ameliorating the teaching and learning process. Participants are in agreement with Sanchez (2008) because they both mention that the teacher is in charge of the teaching and learning process that will have as a result an individual formation. Defining Didactics as an art, we could say that the artist (teacher) is the one who leads its final master piece because he is the one who manages and molds it in order to obtain a good work.

Within this category we included other commonality that supports it “teaching is to share knowledge”; it comes from in the first questionnaire applied on November 10th. According to Saenz (2008), Didactics as an art includes a didactic teacher who is the one who explains with clarity and has the gift of communicating a subject or “knowledge” in an intelligible way; besides, the teacher is the one who improves students’ intellectual abilities in order to reach a positive effect in the students, in other words the purpose of reaching learning. Taking into account the idea that the teaching process is unpredictable due to the different features that characterized it, participants considered Didactics as an art because the teaching action needs a person who knows how to share accurately the knowledge and adapt the teaching procedures to different situations in which teaching takes place.

As we can see in the information above, at this stage students think, believe and consider Didactics in two different ways. One the one hand, the first indicates that Didactics are activities that involve amusement, for the participants it is the one in charge of inventing amusing activities that lead students to improve their foreign language proficiency. On the other hand, they considered Didactics is the art of
teaching; they conceived it in this way because they saw that teaching and the art require someone to be in charge of the creation of a master piece, the teacher is the one who leads the students’ learning process which is the art piece of teaching.

Continuing with the data analysis, at the end of the second moment, that was represented by the second questionnaire used to identify how the students defined or/and conceived the concepts: Didactics in foreign language, approach, methodology, method, and techniques. We decided to create questions involving these concepts because first, they are related to the term Didactics as we have explained in the literature review and, second, they could permit us to identify again pre-service teacher’s beliefs about Didactics in foreign language after taking the didactics class. Once we read the results, we found out different commonalities of what they thought Didactics was. These were taken as beliefs categories because they showed precisely what students thought Didactics was after taking the didactics class. The beliefs categories of the second moment were:

C. “Didactics are the strategies and procedures used by teachers”
D. “Didactics is a science”
E. “Didactics is a method used to teach”.

Those belief categories emerged from the responses to inquiries “what do you understand by Didactics?” and “in your own words define Didactics” taken from the second questionnaire applied on 4th May 2009. See appendix 4. Belief category C states that “Didactics are strategies and procedures used by teachers”. Some of the student’s answers were:

- “Didactics refers to different strategies for teaching and learning for students acquiring the knowledge adequately” (Group 1 P. 2)
- “All the strategies used to teach in a dynamic way” (Group 1 P. 7)
“Didactics are the strategies developed by teachers to have a successful result in their academic spaces” (Group 2 P. 5)

“I understand by didactics different strategies that a student who is studying languages uses for teaching a foreign language” (Group 2 P. 9)

(Students’ responses in questionnaire applied on 4th May 2009)

In relation to belief category C, we found that many authors consider Didactics as an important element of pedagogy that must be well known by the teacher, who is the one that uses it and apply it. Mattos (cited in Arruda 1982) says that Didactics is a systematic set of principles, norms, and specific procedures that every teacher must know and be able to apply to orientate safely their educational aims. Other authors as Medina Rivilla, García Hernandez, Villalpando, Fernandez, Huertas and Buyse (as cited in Sevillano, 2005) affirm that Didactics studies the ways to lead the pupil towards the acquisition of knowledge and the mechanisms that help the teacher to improve his/her the formative actions.

Belief category D is the second category from the second questionnaire and it defines Didactics “as a science” (May 4th, 2009). The name of this category appeared taking into account student responses, such as:

“Didactics is the area the study all the methods you can use for teaching a class” (Group 2 P. 3)

“It is a science that studies some strategies, process to improve, teach and learn to apply in a classroom” (Group 3 P. 2)

“It is a science that researchers about the instruments to make teaching better and help it to improve with new technologies to teach” (Group 3 P. 10)

“It is the science that study all kind of strategies to learn to teach and improve as teachers” (Group 3 P. 11)

(Students’ responses in questionnaire applied on 4th May 2009)
To support this category we found some authors that are in agreement with it because they also consider that Didactics is as science. On the one hand, Meyer (as cited in Sevillano, 2005) affirms that Didactics in a wide sense is a science that has relation with learning and teaching and include pedagogic ways, methods and means of education – learning. On the other hand, many authors as Perez Gómez, Pacios, Benedito, Tejada Fernandez, Mennert, Rosales and Olivia Gil (cited in Sevillano, 2005) coincide in understanding it as a science that arises from theory, practice and processes of learning.

Likewise, Didactics studies and guides the instructive-educational process to optimize the intellectual and integral formation of the pupil. For Franco Frabonni (1998) Didactics is conceived as an educational science that has knowledge and a specific theory; in other words, Didactics is a science which subject of study is the teaching practice. In relation to what we said above, for Comenius, (cited in Litwin, 1997), Didactics has the purpose of discovering the most effective method that the teacher is going to use to solve problems in his/her teaching process

As we can notice, students and the authors mentioned above talk about Didactics as a science, thus they suggest that the techniques and methods for teaching need to be studied by a specific field which in this case is Didactics. Furthermore, students agree with Frabonni, Perez Gómez, Benedito and Mennert’s ideas because they affirm that this is the science that studies some strategies that improve teaching and learning processes which will be applied in the classroom. At this point we noticed that there is a relationship between students and author’s ideas, due to the fact that, at that moment, pre-service teachers have already received some information about didactics, in some sense students had been influenced by the class and the theory saw in the didactics’ class and that is why they coincide with what the authors state.
The belief category E, which appears in questionnaire number two, is “Didactics is a method used to teach”. We came up with the name of this category taking into account some participant's responses, as the following:

- “Didactics is a method that the teacher apply in his class, that help with the develop and the knowledge of all students” (sic) (Group 1 P. 3)
- “All the methods used to teach in a dynamic way” (Group 1 P. 7)
- “Didactics are the methods developed to teach in our case a foreign language” (Group 2 P. 6)

(Students' responses in questionnaire applied on 4th May 2009)

We can see that participants considered Didactics in the same way as Arruda (1982) who defines didactics as a “series of methods, technologies or procedures that have the labor to guide, orientate and direct a learning process”. Students' definition is related to Arruda's because both of them talk about Didactics as methods that have the objective of reaching previous goals in order to lead and improve the learning process.

This belief category has two different elements that reinforce it. One of them is the perception participants had about approach. They considered it as starting point for the creation of the methods used to teach and the “theory of language teaching and learning”, as this is the most common definition given to this concept on the second questionnaire applied on 4th May, 2009. In agreement with Brown (2000) approach refers to the basis of all the methods that are going to be used in order to teach a foreign language. According to this, we can say that the approach is the essence of the teaching and learning process as it involves and contains the necessary theory about the nature of language and teaching, in order to create the methods that are going to guide the teaching process. Taking into account this information, we conclude that the didactics’ class had a great influence on the students’ conceptions of the elements that compound Didactics, since the content of the didactics’ class included all those terminology; also we consider that
students assimilated those concepts, we mean by *assimilation* that students took possession of them and started to include them in their life. According to Gutierrez (1986) assimilation is a cognitive process in which people have a previous established idea (A), and when they receive new information (a) they interrelate both ideas and people relate them articulating both ideas as one (A', a').

The second element that appeared through the explanation of this belief category is the conception pre-service teachers had about method. They considered that “it is related to techniques that help the act of teaching”, this element was taken from the second questionnaire applied on 4th May 2009. In relation to this, Harmer (2007) proposes that the method is the realization of the approach and in order to achieve this, it is necessary the use of techniques that are based on the nature of language learning and teaching. According to the participants those techniques had two features: “to facilitate the teaching process” and “to distinguish the teacher’s performance” (May 4th, 2009). In relation to the first one, participants showed agreement with Litwin (1997) who says that spaces, time and materials are techniques, instruments, mediums or procedures that adjust to the different moments in which teaching is given. At this point, we observed that techniques are those instruments that can be used in different academic contexts in order to make easier both the teaching and learning process. In relation to the second characteristic, techniques are chosen by the teachers so, those instruments are like a unique mark for each teacher, since they are aware of what students need and makes them select the appropriate techniques for them.

During the third moment of our research, characterized by the observation and interview, we found one belief category

F. “Didactics is all the theory about teaching and learning a foreign language”.

The elements that support belief category F come from the relation we made of the information founded in the observations and in the interviews. That information showed some characteristics that are related to certain techniques used in specific
methods. To support this idea we observed that all the participants agreed about specific principles that belong to some methods. For example, participants thought that the English language teaching must be focused 1st on listening and 2nd on speaking as you learn the mother language, (information taken from the interview made on November the 6th). This is connected to the theory of natural approach and to the direct method.

At the same time, we found that participants thought that the use of expressions in the classroom was oriented to the acquisition of vocabulary that allows the interaction in the foreign language. For instance one of our participants promoted the use of expressions in the classroom in order to students increase their background in terms of English, at the same time, she said that having a large bank of expressions like “may I got o the bathroom, Excuse me teacher, etc.” will help students to interact and express their needs in the language to be learned. She answered the following to one question about the reason why she taught several expressions in the classroom.

- **P.1**: “Porque pues igual como lo decía, todo lo se hace en el salón es a fin de que ellos adquieran vocabulario en inglés (…) Entonces nuestras clases siempre están un poquito más enfocadas en que ellos aprendieran una frasecita cada día. Entonces por eso nos enfocamos en eso”

We could observe that it had a relation with the grammar-translation method in terms of the lexical approach not in grammar because the only focus is to know vocabulary of the foreign language; it also had a link with the audio-lingual method in terms of recognition by listening to some expressions.

Another participant stated that she taught commands as “sit down, stand up, jump, clap your hands, etc.” in order students first, know the meaning of them and second, attract their attention. Her answer was the following:

- **P.2**: “Bueno. Primero pues como para que ellos conozcan algunas frases en inglés y sepan el significado de eso. Y segundo porque ellos son muy inquietos. Entonces no es solo que repitan sino que hagan la acción. Como
cuando están muy desordenados les pido que hagan estos comandos donde ellos tienen la posibilidad de expresarse de moverse, caminar y se calman un poquito, esa es la intención.”

We relate this procedure with the TPR because it is the one that promotes physical movement to engage students and at the same time, to teach them more English. As we can see, all the information that participants knew about Didactics is related to the theory, procedures and techniques that have relation to different methods to teach a foreign language.

5.4.2 Transformations

In this second part of this analysis we will show the transformation of the beliefs showed above between first, second and third moment of our research project. After the analysis of all the information presented above, we determined that the student’s understanding about Didactics changed along the process. In the first moment when pre-service teachers were in fifth semester, before taking the Didactic class, we found out that pre-service teachers defined Didactics as an art and at the same time they considered Didactics as all the activities that involve amusement. In the second moment pre-service teachers were questioned after taking the didactics class, the information revealed a transformation in the understanding of didactics. At this stage they defined Didactics in three different ways; First, Didactics as a science, second they stated that Didactics are strategies and procedures used by teachers, and finally, they affirmed that it is a method used to teach. The first transformation founded at this stage is: “The definition of Didactics from a flexible concept to a stricter one”. This is going to be explained as follows:

Taking into account the beliefs about Didactics in foreign language before and after the didactics class, we realized that students passed from a flexible conception of Didactics in which they talk about art and amusing activities, to a theoretical conception in which they gave it a stricter character using a more complex terminology as: science, method and procedures. In this sense we could say that in
the first moment pre-service teachers created a metalanguage to talk about Didactics.

To understand better this transformation we appealed to philosophers that talk about language philosophy. The metalanguage “is a language that, will give as a result the construction of a sentence in a metalanguage for that language whose principal properties will be that: it will be constructed out of non-common vocabulary and that it will be intuitively satisfied precisely by sentences of the object language” Tarski (2006). In other words, there is a language under discussion (the one to be defined), which is the object language (B), and there is another language used to explain and talk about an object language which is called metalanguage (A). A is a language that can be understood if all its sentences have meaning and it does not matter if they are true or not; what matters in this case in that B can be “defined” by A, in our case B will be related to Didactics and A related to normal or common words.

As we can see pre-service teachers used common words to refer to what Didactics is (object language); the language used in this first part had a regular vocabulary, it was different to the one that belongs to the object language because it was less elaborated. The transformation is evident when students ceased to use common words to define Didactics and started to use the metalanguage to define the object language itself, in this case Didactics.

In few words we discovered that participants ceased to use hazard and general words to define this concept and began to use a more structured vocabulary that is related to the education field (metalanguage). When they finished the didactics class they assimilated a certain amount of the terms to talk about Didactics; we noticed that to refer to it, they appealed to terminology used by the theory seen in the didactics class.

In this transformation we realized how important the Didactic’ class was for pre-service teachers, besides providing them with all the knowledge related to the education field, it also helped pre-service teachers to re-shape the beliefs they had
before taking the didactics class. Additionally, thanks to the new definition they got, we could say that participants apprehended the terminology used in the didactics class and increased their background about the elements that deal with the education field.

The second transformation between the second and third moment was: “Definition of Didactics: stronger support with a turning point into practice taking up again previous beliefs”. On the one hand, we could see that students kept on using the object language to define Didactics in foreign language, but this time they narrowed its definition to strict words and they referred to it as “all the theory about teaching and learning a foreign language”. At this stage Didactics concept is stronger and it deals only with the theory of the methods to teach and learn a foreign language. In addition, we could see that pre-service teachers went beyond the teaching process itself; so, we distinguished within the beliefs categories before and after the didactics class that participants never mentioned anything about learning; they referred only to teachers and everything about the act of teaching; as we can see in the beliefs categories C, D and E. Now in this transformation, pre-service teachers included the learning process in their new way of defining Didactics.

On the other hand, we found that there was a connection between beliefs A and F. We based our interviews on the observations we did to participants, and we noticed that all the activities done in the classroom (teaching practicum) involved in a certain way an entertainment factor (belief A). In the interview we wanted to know the reasons of their performance in the teaching practicum and participants always connected those activities to some theory of the methods they studied during the didactics class (belief F).

This transformation revealed that they had a new belief about Didactics but now this belief was highly connected to the one they had before taking the didactics class, which means that students turned to this belief. They combined the beliefs about Didactics as activities that involve amusement to all the theory about
teaching and learning. During the interviews done on November 13th 2009 we noticed that participants had a stronger concept of what Didactic is because they took into account some elements that compound Dictactics: for instance:

- **P.2**: “(…) te muestran los diferentes approach, como se dice, enfoques pues de los cuales uno puede basarse para realizar las actividades en la clase o para ver que enfoque vas a tomar en tu clase” (sic.)

As we can see they related Didactics to the theory, but when we observed their performance we noticed that they were still using procedures and techniques that involved amusement; for instance, we found in the observations that participants used different procedures as singing and listening songs, they argued in the interview that they used them because they had some relation with the EFL methods they studied during the didactic’ class. For example:

- **P.3**: “(…) fui tradicional y que me repitieran 10, 20 veces no me acuerdo cuantas veces les puse a repetir la palabra, para que también se vayan familiarizando con la palabra.”
- **P.1** “(…) yo pienso que era un poco la Grammar Translation que es cuanto a la repetición de la palabra. (...) entonces los hice repetir la palabra varias veces como para tener un énfasis mayor. (...)”

As we can see in the previous examples participants tended to use some procedures related to specific EFL methods. In addition, during the teaching practicum, participants tended to use flashcards in all their classes arguing that they belonged to the direct method. Here, we can see that participants took as true that kids learn better when they use entertainment activities and they related this idea to all the theory of the methods they studied in the didactics’ class.

In other words, it means that in the teaching practicum pre-service teachers retake that belief about Didactics as activities that involve amusement even though they
considered it as all the theory related to teaching and learning a foreign language. We could observe this transformation in the activities done in the classroom, so, activities as singing songs, doing crafts, playing games, etc. were engaging and at the same time they had a theoretical background or reason because they related them to a specific method to teach a foreign language.

Here, there is a chart that summarizes all the beliefs categories and transformations during the three moments of our research. The chart presented below has three columns and three lines; they specify the features of the moments of the research. In the first column there is a description of the three moments in which the data was collected; in the second, we mention all the beliefs found in the three moments and in the third, the transformations perceived among the moments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moments</th>
<th>Beliefs categories</th>
<th>Transformations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First:</td>
<td>A. “Didactics are activities that involve amusement”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students in fifth</td>
<td>B. “Didactics is the art of teaching”</td>
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<tr>
<td>semester</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Before Didactics class</td>
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<tr>
<td>• First instrument:</td>
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<tr>
<td>ranked items questionnaire</td>
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6. CONCLUSIONS

Teachers’ beliefs are a central element that shows teachers’ perceptions about teaching and learning and everything that involves these processes. Teachers’ beliefs came from different sources: experience of what works best, personality factors, the experience of being a student, etc. It is necessary to highlight that beliefs are also acquired and modified along the pre-service teachers’ experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second:</th>
<th>C. “Didactics are the strategies and procedures used by teachers”</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Students in sixth semester</td>
<td>D. “Didactics is a science”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- After Didactics class</td>
<td>E. “Didactics is a method used to teach”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Second instrument: open-response questionnaire</td>
<td>F. “Didactics is all the theory about teaching and learning a foreign language”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T1: The definition of Didactics: from a flexible concept to a stricter one.

T2: Definition of Didactics: stronger support with a turning point into practice taking up again previous beliefs.

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<th>Third:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Students in seventh semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>- After Didactics class and during the Teaching Practicum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Third instrument: Observation class format</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Fourth instrument: open-ended questionnaire</td>
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</table>

| T1: The definition of Didactics: from a flexible concept to a stricter one. | |
| T2: Definition of Didactics: stronger support with a turning point into practice taking up again previous beliefs. | |
as learners and teachers. In fact, teachers’ beliefs are constantly changing as pre-service teachers have more contact with the teaching experience. The intention of our research was to show how pre-service teacher’s beliefs were transformed during a specific period of their pedagogical process.

After analyzing all the information collected during our research, we discovered which the pre-service teachers’ beliefs about didactics in foreign language were before and after the Didactics’ class and during the teaching practicum. The information yield revealed that, before students took the Didactics’ class, their first belief about Didactics was activities that were oriented to entertainment, diversion and fun. To pre-service teachers this idea of Didactics as activities integrated an emotional and rational part because they help to improve the students’ cognitive processes. The second belief was didactics as the art of teaching. In relation to this, pre-service teachers thought that didactics is an art because its objective is to create an artistic work, which in this case is learning and teaching; for them the English teacher is like an artist because the artist is in charge of improving the artistic work, and the teacher is the one who improves the teaching and learning processes.

After pre-service teachers took the didactics class three new beliefs about Didactics in foreign language arose. At this stage one of the beliefs pre-service teachers had is that Didactics is a set of strategies and procedures used by teachers that have to be well known by the teacher in order to improve his/her formative actions and foster the educational aims. The second belief was Didactics is a science. Pre-service teachers thought that Didactics was in charge of studying, guiding and optimizing the teaching and learning processes; taking into account this, it also includes pedagogic ways, methods and means of education that will also help the teaching practice. Their third belief is that Didactics is all the methods that are going to be used in order to teach a foreign language; in few words Didactics is in charge of creating the methods that are going to guide the teaching process.
Subsequent to the didactics class, pre-service teachers started their teaching practicum and another belief about Didactics appeared. At this moment, pre-service teachers thought that Didactics was all the theory about teaching and learning a foreign language. As we could see in the data collected pre-service teachers related Didactics only to the theory and techniques that have relation to different methods to teach a foreign language.

As soon as we identified the pre-service teacher beliefs about Didactics in foreign language during the three moments, we started to analyze the information in order to identify if there were some or any transformations in the beliefs. The information collected proved that in fact there were some transformations along the process.

The first transformation took place before and after pre-service teachers took the didactic class. In this transformation, we noticed that pre-service teachers started to use a more structured vocabulary related to the educational field. At this stage, we realized that students passed from using general words to complex terminology to define what they thought Didactic is, they started to use vocabulary related to the object language (metalanguage) and stopped using common words to talk about it.

The second transformation was found after pre-service teachers took the didactics class and during their teaching practicum. In this second transformation, we identified that they were narrowing more and more the Didactics concept, they still used a structured vocabulary (metalanguage), but this time they were more precise about the specific elements that deal with Didactics. Alternatively, we noticed that during the teaching practicum participants returned to that belief that was related to activities that involve amusement even when they affirmed that Didactics was all the theory about teaching and learning a foreign language.

Taking as a reference the beliefs and transformations obtained during this research we inferred that, on the one hand, the didactics class helped to enrich pre-service
teachers’ pedagogical background about Didactics and the pedagogical field. This class also prompted students to re-define the beliefs they have acquired along their professional career. On the other hand, the teaching practicum was an important moment for pre-service teachers because it is the stage in which they apply all the knowledge acquired during their career and based on the experiences they had in this moment, they reshaped and redefined new beliefs about didactics.

Thanks to this research we appreciated that pre-service teachers’ beliefs can be modified and transformed along specific processes in their pedagogical formation. We also realized that the didactics class was an important element for the transformation of those beliefs because participants re-shaped them after taking this class. They came up with new and more structured ideas about it after receiving training and doing their practicum. This issue affected their understanding about Didactics, but during the practicum they took again a belief that was constructed before taking the didactics class. In summary, beliefs are constantly changing and they are influenced by the content saw in the didactics class.

7. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Through this research project we can notice some implications for the teaching practicum process, and how those implications also have an impact in the didactics program and in the pre-service teachers.

The first finding in this research was that, before students took the didactics’ class, their first belief about didactics was related to activities that are oriented to entertainment, diversion and fun, at this point we can observe that it is necessary that students of this program have previous knowledge about what Didactics is in order to avoid misunderstanding of what didactic class is. The second finding took place after pre-service teachers attended the didactics class, at this stage pre-service teachers identified the Didactics as a set of strategies and procedures used by teachers, in this case the didactic class not only
must have emphasis in the different English methods used to teach English, but also take into account the previous experience that pre-service teachers had during their process as learners, since that experience contribute with the improvement of the process itself, with the program, as well as the pre-service teachers process, because all these background will give pre-service teacher the opportunity to find out which methods and techniques can be useful during the act of teaching.

Another important implication is the creation of a space for the self reflection from pre-service teachers with the aim that they can make a connection between theory and practice seeing how that theory was reflected in the performance, and reduce the huge gap between what is taught in the didactics class and what pre-service teachers do during the teaching practicum. At the same time with the self reflection students teachers not only can enhance their professional competence but also the Didactic class, and the teaching practicum field.

A further implication of this research to the teacher education programs, is that they should not focused only on the theory about methods, approaches, techniques, because according to the final finding participants only related Didactics and their performance to the methods saw in class, but they did not take into account all the conditions in which teaching and learning were carried out. That is why it is necessary that the education programs promote a sense of sensibility of what happens in the classroom, and make pre-service teachers aware of the students’ needs in terms of learning, so they will be more prepare to face the classroom realities.

Taking as a reference the beliefs and transformations obtained during this research we inferred that, on the one hand, the didactics class helps to enrich pre-service teachers’ pedagogical background about Didactics and the pedagogical field. This class also prompts students to re-define the beliefs they have acquired along their professional career. On the other hand, the teaching practicum is an important
moment for pre-service teachers because it is the stage in which they apply all the knowledge acquired during their career and based on the experiences they had in this moment, they reshape and redefined new beliefs about didactics.

With these three ideas we can observe that this research project enhance both, the pre service teachers and the students to be aware about their beliefs because they are the ones that are reflected in our practice. At the same time this research gave important elements that will help to improve the contents, we consider that the didactics class should not only focus on the teaching of methods to teach and learn a foreign language but it should also go beyond and show students other elements that are important in the education field.
8. REFERENCES


http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludic


9. APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

- “Didactics is the method that teachers use to teach something”
- “Approach refers to theory of language teaching and learning”
- “Approach is a strategy that teachers use to develop skills and facilitate learning”
- “Method is conceive as a technique or way that helps the teaching process”
- “Methodology is the particular teacher’s performance”
- “Techniques are elements design to make easier the teaching and learning process” (First instrument used on 4th May 2009)
OBJECTIVES

- Identify how pre-service teachers’ beliefs about Didactics in foreign language are transformed during the teaching practicum.
- Discover pre-service teachers’ beliefs during the teaching practicum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE FOCUS</th>
<th>VISUAL AND AUDIO AIDS</th>
<th>TEACHER’S ROLES</th>
<th>ACT OF TEACHING</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL OBSERVATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(skills development: speaking, listening)</td>
<td>(Frequency of use)</td>
<td>(Characteristics of the materials, allow autonomous learning, correcting mistakes, allow interaction, use of L1 when it is necessary. Instruction to students)</td>
<td>(interaction with students, share knowledge, students are allowed to be active)</td>
<td>(Relevant information about the class development that were not seen in the questionnaires. Behavior and attitudes that characterize the class and fit in the definitions of Didactics)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT TEACHERS’ BELIEFS

Read the following statements about Didactics in foreign language. Then, tell us which one is the most important for giving them your own grade from 1 to 4, being 1 the most important and 4 the less important. Besides, there is an extra space if you consider there could be another definition or idea for the statement.

Questionnaire 1 applied on 10th November, 2008.

1. The English learning must be focused on: 1 2 3 4
   Grammar and vocabulary
   Speaking and listening
   Writing and reading
   Grammar and speaking
   Other:

2. The best way to learn English is: 1 2 3 4
   listening songs
   watching videos
   through grammar explanations
   doing exercises
   Other:
3. Learning is

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<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to acquire knowledge</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>to use knowledge in different situations</td>
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<tr>
<td>to follow a process</td>
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<tr>
<td>to increase our knowledge</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
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4. An English teacher is someone who

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>explains something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>guides a learning process</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>facilitates the acquisition of the language</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Corrects student’s mistakes.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Other:</td>
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5. A good teacher is someone who:

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<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>explains everything carefully</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>interacts with his/her students</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>uses dynamic activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>uses the native language to make explanations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
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6. Teaching is:
### 7. Didactics is

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<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The creation of games in order to facilitate learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The art of teaching a subject</td>
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<tr>
<td>The funniest way to teach something</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Different activities used in class</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
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### 8. English learning is better when

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<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You study by yourself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>You receive explanation from your teacher</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>You interact with your classmates</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>You follow a course book</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
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9. the teacher duties are

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<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to prepare his/her classes</td>
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<td>to provide the material related with the topic in the class</td>
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<td>to correct the mistakes</td>
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<tr>
<td>to keep up-to-date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
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10. the role of the English student is

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<tr>
<td>to be autonomous in his/her learning process</td>
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<td>to follow the teacher instructions</td>
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<tr>
<td>to participate in the class</td>
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<tr>
<td>to practice the knowledge acquired</td>
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11. Finally tell us why do you want to be an English teacher

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX 4
Questionnaire 2 applied on 4th May 2009.

I SECTION

1. What do you understand by didactics?
2. What do you understand by approach?
3. What do you understand by method?
4. What do you understand by methodology?
5. What do you understand by technique?

II section

6. What do you understand by “learning a foreign language”?
7. In your own words define didactics
8. What are the elements that you take into account when you talk about didactics?
9. What do you think are the teaching strategies that facilitate the process of learning a foreign language? (mention at least four)
10. Have you thought of including a method in your future practicum? If so, which and why?
11. What do you think are the main characteristics of a good teacher? Please name at least five of them, or more if it is necessary.
APPENDIX 5

First pre-service teachers’ Interview

**Objective:** To determine how pre-service teachers’ beliefs about Didactics in foreign language have been transformed along their pedagogical development.

**General questions**

- ¿Cuáles crees que fueron los aportes que recibiste en la clase de didáctica para tu práctica pedagógica?

- ¿Sientes que cambiaste tu concepción acerca de la enseñanza de la lengua extranjera después de la clase de didáctica? ¿Por qué?

- ¿Cuál es el énfasis que debe tener una clase de lengua extranjera en cuanto a habilidades? ¿Por qué?

  ✓ Listening
  ✓ Speaking
  ✓ Writing
  ✓ Reading

- ¿En el desarrollo de tus clases qué tan importantes consideras las ayudas audiovisuales? ¿Las utilizas? ¿Por qué?

- ¿Incentivas el aprendizaje autónomo en tus estudiantes? ¿En qué forma?

- ¿Cuándo tus estudiantes cometen errores, cuál es tu reacción?

- ¿En tu rol como profesor cómo es la relación que tienes con tus estudiantes?
- ¿Qué uso le das a la L1 en clase? ¿en qué momentos específicos usas la L1? ¿Por qué?

Personal questions
P.1

- En la clase sobre las prendas de vestir utilizaste el inglés y el español de manera combinada. ¿Por qué lo hiciste así? ¿Alguna otra razón?
- En las clases dabas primero las instrucciones en español y luego en inglés. ¿Cuál es el propósito de esto? ¿Algún otro propósito?
- En la clase de las prendas de vestir pedías a tus estudiantes de Primero que repitieran varias veces el nombre de determinada prenda ¿Cuál es el objetivo que tenías en mente cuando les pediste esto? ¿Qué clase de conocimiento didáctico se te vino a la cabeza en el momento de la hacer esto?
- En la clase sobre las prendas de vestir una de las actividades era que escribieran 3 veces el nombre de las prendas en una guía. ¿Cual era el objetivo de esta actividad?
- En las clases observadas casi siempre tú fomentas que los estudiantes canten una o dos canciones y que hagan la mímica de las canciones ¿Por qué realiza esta actividad con los estudiantes?
- Cuando los estudiantes, o sea tu haces que los estudiantes utilicen diferentes expresiones como “MAY I GO TO THE BATHROOM, PLEASE,”, “TEACHER, EXCUSE ME”, bueno, diferentes, etc. ¿Por qué fomentas el uso de estas expresiones en clase?
- Cuando los estudiantes comenten errores de pronunciación casi siempre les pedías que repitieran ¿hay alguna otra razón aparte de la que me dijiste ya que te incite a realizar, o sea pedirles que repitan cuando se equivocan?

P.2
En la clase a Transición sobre los útiles escolares pediste que escribieran los nombres de los útiles en el cuaderno. ¿Cuál es el objetivo que tenías en mente cuando les pediste esto? ¿Algún otro objetivo?

En algunas de las clases había muchos niños que estaban jugando y no te prestaban atención, tu seguías explicando y no les prestante atención. ¿Por qué reaccionaste de esta manera? ¿Que clase de conocimiento didáctico se te vino a la cabeza en el momento de la decisión? ¿Cuál era tu estrategia? Tenías alguna? Te daba cuenta de eso?

En las clases utilizas muchos comandos como por ejemplo "sit down" "silence" "stand up" etc. ¿Cuál es el propósito de utilizar comandos? ¿hay alguna otra razón?

Cuando tus estudiantes tenían errores en pronunciación o al nombrar animales y las herramientas del salón tú les pedías que repitieran después de ti. ¿Cuál es el objetivo que tienes en mente cuando les pides hacer esto? ¿hay alguna otra razón que te lleve a pedirles esto?

En las clases dabas primero las instrucciones en inglés y si no entendían la dabas en español. ¿Cuál es el propósito de esto? ¿Algún otro propósito?

Cuando en las clases introducías o repasabas los animales u objetos del salón escribías los nombres en el tablero. ¿Cuál es el propósito de esto? ¿alguna otra razón te lleva a hacerlo?

En la mayoría de las clases haces que canten 1 o 2 canciones relacionadas con el tema u otras que están relacionadas con el tema u otras que no están relacionadas con el tema. ¿Cuál es el objetivo de realizar estas canciones en clase?

Hoy en la observación de hoy trabajaste el tema de introducing myself, algo así, trabajaste más o menos eso y al final de la clase entregaste una guía de animales. ¿Qué pensamiento tenías cuando comenzaste con information personal y luego con la relación de animales?
- En la clase que diste a los estudiantes de Primero sobre colores le pediste a los estudiantes que copiaran en el cuaderno la canción que estaba en el tablero. ¿Cuál era el propósito de esta actividad? ¿hay alguna otra razón que te haya llevado a hacer esta actividad?
- En la clase sobre X tema le pediste a los estudiantes que repitieran varias veces los que tú decías. ¿Cuál es el objetivo que tenías en mente cuando les pediste esto? ¿Qué clase de conocimiento didáctico se te vino a la cabeza en el momento de la hacer esto?
- En la clase que observamos primero utilizaste el inglés y el español de manera combinada. ¿Por qué lo hiciste así? ¿Alguna otra razón?
- Dentro de la última observación usted organizó una actividad en la cual los estudiantes tenían que pasar al tablero y dibujar el objeto que usted les decía en inglés y escribir el nombre ¿cuál fue el plan de clase para hoy?
- ¿cuál cree usted que son las mejores estrategias para conservar el orden en, dentro de un salón de clase?

P.4

- En la segunda clase que te observamos pedías a los estudiantes que repitieran después de ti como se decía profesora en inglés. ¿Cuál es el objetivo que tienes en mente cuando les pides hacer esto? ¿hay alguna otra razón que te lleve a pedirles esto?
- En una de las clases hacías preguntas como por ejemplo: ¿Cómo hace un dog? ¿como es una sad face? Utilizaste el inglés y el español de manera combinada. ¿Por qué lo hiciste así? ¿Alguna otra razón?
- Describe por favor el cual era el plan de clase para esa clase.
- En la clase de niño y niña pediste a tus estudiantes uno por uno responder si era niño o niña la imagen que mostrabas. ¿hay algún conocimiento didáctico que te lleve a esto? ¿cuál era el objetivo?
• ¿cualés crees que son las mejores técnicas ó métodos para controlar un salón de clase?
APPENDIX 6  
Commonalities groups from the interview applied on 13th November 2009.

| Corrections in term of vocabulary. | • Correcting mistakes is done using different strategies as by group, and by repetition.  
• Correcting mistakes is not only a teacher duty but also needs the help of the rest of the group.  
• The repetition helps to the reinforcement of new vocabulary in order to produce what has been learnt. |
| --- | --- |
| Development of skills: | • English language teaching must be focused on listening and speaking as the mother language is learnt.  
• The use of expressions in the classroom is oriented to the acquirement of vocabulary that allows the interaction in the foreign language.  
• Expressions and vocabulary are taught to promote student’s speaking. |
| Role of materials: | • The use of visual aids encourages students to be on task.  
• Visual aids facilitate the learning process because students relate the image with the word and consequently they learn new vocabulary.  
• The use of audio aids is important because they help in the acquisition of new vocabulary. |
|  | • Teachers use the L1 when students do not |
| Use of mother L1 and 2: | understand and instruction given in English.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers use the L1 to facilitate the comprehension.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher use L1 to explain the new English vocabulary.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The use of English and Spanish simultaneously emphasized the new English vocabulary.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers tend to use both languages simultaneously with the aim of relating the two languages.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers and students' roles:</th>
<th>The relationship between students and teachers is close, and implies an effective aspect.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are concerned about the emotional aspect of the students.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Autonomous learning is related to the idea of giving students homework in order to practice what they have learnt.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs about Didactics after teaching practicum:</th>
<th>The didactic class helped students to know how to develop a lesson plan.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The didactic class helps students to know about English teaching theories.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The conception of teaching changed during the teaching practicum but not during the didactic class.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
|Didactics is all the theory about teaching and
| learning. |  |
APPENDIX 7

In the following questionnaire 1 is the highest value and 5 the lowest

1. The English learning must be focused on:  
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<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and vocabulary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaking and listening</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing and reading</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and speaking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. The best way to learn English is:  
<table>
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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>listening songs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watching videos</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>through grammar explanations</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>doing exercises</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
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3. Learning is  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to acquire knowledge</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>to use knowledge in different situations</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>to follow a process</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>to increase our knowledge</td>
<td>5</td>
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4. An English teacher is someone who  
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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>explains something</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guides a learning process</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>facilitates the acquisition of the language</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrects student's mistakes</td>
<td>6</td>
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5.

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<tr>
<th>A good teacher is someone who:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>explains everything carefully</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>interacts with his/her students</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>uses dynamic activities</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uses the native language to make explanations</td>
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<td>9</td>
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6.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching is:</th>
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<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to share knowledge</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to explain something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>to provide knowledge and skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>to give instructions</td>
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7.

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<th>didactics is</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The creation of games in order to facilitate</td>
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<tr>
<td>learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The art of teaching a subject</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>The funniest way to teach something</td>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different activities used in class</td>
<td></td>
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<td>7</td>
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9. English Learning is better when you study by yourself 1 2 3 4 
you receive explanation from your teacher 9 
you interact with your classmates 11 
you follow a course book 8 

10. the teacher duties are 

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<td>to prepare his/her classes</td>
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<td>to correct the mistakes</td>
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<tr>
<td>to keep up-to-date</td>
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9. 

10. the role of the English student is 

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<td>to be autonomous in his/her learning process</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>to follow the teacher instructions</td>
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<tr>
<td>to participate in the class</td>
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<tr>
<td>to practice the knowledge acquired</td>
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<td>9</td>
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