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1 Collaborative and dialogic reflection in Second Language Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the enhancement of collaborative and dialogic reflection through the use of both journals and group reflection sessions. Eight pre-service teachers of the English language undergraduate programme from the University of Quintana Roo, Mexico, participated in a study that analysed and evaluated the effects of an intervention aimed at promoting reflective practice. The study considered the use of a number of reflective tools and strategies that were deployed throughout five cycles of action research. Pre-service teachers' opinions at the end of the study showed that group reflection was the preferred activity. The novice teachers valued opportunities for collaborative and dialogic reflection within a supportive environment where they could share their experiences of teaching practice and exchange opinions and ideas

1. INTRODUCTION

This article begins with a discussion of the value of a collaborative dimension to reflection, as this is one of the key features of the featured intervention. Then, the article will provide a brief explanation of the importance of promoting reflection from early stages of training of future teachers or pre-service teachers (PSTs). After that, the methodology of the research will be described. This is followed by the findings and discussion section that presents the results of an intervention to promote collaborative reflection through the use of a dialogic journal and participation in group-reflection sessions. Finally, we summarise the main outcomes and implications.

There are undoubtedly a wide range of different tools and approaches that are being used to support reflective practice (RP). In Richards' words, "many different approaches can be employed if one wishes to become a critically reflective teacher, including observations of oneself and others, team teaching, and exploring one's view of teaching through writing" (1995, p. 60). In the same vein, Xu (2009), Orlova (2009), Maarof (2007), Ward and McCotter (2004), and Bailey, Curtis and Nunan (2001), among others, state that reflection can be achieved through different instruments and methods, such as journals, checklists, rubrics, portfolios, recordings, peer observations, and self-observation. Additionally, there is literature on means which can facilitate reflection through, for example, the use of stimulated recall through videotaping and autobiography (Day, 1985; Griffiths & Tann, 1991), the use of metaphor (Mann, 2008; Munby & Russell, 1989, 1990;

Tobin, 1990), image (Clandinin, 1989), photography (Griffiths & Tann, 1991), and other techniques such as poetry, drawing, sculpting, narrative, role play simulations and drama (Moon, 1999). Farrell talks about teacher groups for professional development. He categorizes three types of groups: "peer groups within the school, teacher groups that operate out of the school and within a school district, and virtual groups that can be formed anywhere on the Internet" (2008, p. 3).

In the current study, the use of a journal and the participation in group reflection sessions with peers were emphasised in order to encourage reflection. Likewise, the study paid particular attention to questioning or thinking questions (Wright & Bolitho, 2007) as one of the main strategies to prompt and support reflection during the intervention. Considering that reflection is a mental process, some strategies such as questioning can make reflection "become more effective and produce better results" (Chen, Wei, Wu, & Uden, 2009, p. 283). King (1994) classifies prompt questions into memorization, comprehension, and integration questions, the last two types being high level questions. According to Chen, Wei, Wu, and Uden (2009, p. 284), "providing high level prompts is a key factor for promoting reflection […] [and] are more helpful for constructing new knowledge". Likewise, Williams (2001) indicates that critical questioning promotes critical reflection through discussion and dialogue about experience. Moreover, when including critical incidents as a means to trigger reflection, a set of guiding questions is generally provided to analyse the critical incident; analysis "is perhaps even more important than the incident itself" (Williams, 2001, p. 31) because it provides valuable means in understanding essential assumptions and beliefs (Kim, 1999; Smith, 1998; Minghella & Benson, 1995; Kottkamp, 1990).

The next section focuses on the role and importance of collaborative reflection in an educational context.

2. COLLABORATIVE AND DIALOGIC REFLECTION

A number of studies have provided evidence that collaboration promotes reflection, development of teachers' skills, and professional growth (e.g. Kuusisaari, 2014; Meirink, Meijer, & Verloop, 2007; Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolwort, 2001; Putnam & Borco, 2000; Day, 1999). As stated by Kuusisaari (2014, p. 46 and 49), collaboration and "social support also help teachers to learn from each other, […] and give teachers access to a far wider range of ideas"; moreover, "participants build upon each other's ideas to jointly construct new meaning". According to Schneider and Watkins (1996, p. 157), social interaction is essential for learning and development, "not only as a source of stimulation and feedback, but as the very means by which individuals' psychological functioning [such as problem solving] comes to be". The growing recognition of the importance of this kind of collaborative dialogue in development owes a great deal to the view of learning promoted by the Russian philosopher Lev Vygotsky. Subsequent accounts in the tradition of socio-

cultural theory (SCT), influenced by Vygotsky (1978), view learning as a social process where learners interact with expert teachers or with peers. Such social interactions, involving dialogue, discussion and debate, help learners to actively construct their own understandings. In terms of teacher education, Johnson has written extensively on the value of SCT (e.g. Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2011). One key concept is Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). According to Vygotsky, the ZPD "is the distance between the actual development level (as determined by independent problem solving) and the level of potential development (as determined through problem solving […] in collaboration with more capable peers") (1978, p. 86). Although most research on Vygotsky's SCT and ZPD investigates facilitated and scaffolded collaboration between teacher and students in a classroom setting, it is possible to use Vygotsky's concepts as a way of considering the role of teacher training involving tutors or mentors. It is also possible to see SCT as relevant for peer interaction. Maggioli (2012) refers to this as reciprocal scaffolding (i.e. learning from one another). In other words, SCT provides a way of looking at reflective practice as a supported process in novice teachers' development (whether this process is supported by tutors, mentors or peers).

In the current paper SCT is seen as the theoretical basis for the promotion of collaborative and dialogic reflection in a Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE) programme, in which the collaboration is peer-to-peer (e.g. PSTs), with the presence of the researcher as a figure who provides guidance and is also sometimes involved in group reflections by prompting and posing "thinking questions" (Wright & Bolitho, 2007). Similar to research conducted by Kuusisaari, relevant points of Vygotsky's ZPD theory are: "collaboration between capable peers, and fruitful interconnection [dialogue] of […] everyday experience" (2014, p. 48). According to Walsh (2013, p. 6), "in a teacher education/development context, and from a sociocultural perspective, teachers [or PSTs in the case of the current article] are 'scaffolded' through their 'zones of proximal development' to a higher plane of understanding through the dialogues they have with others … ". In this sense, conversations or "scaffolded dialogues" are central to reflective practice since they allow the participants to clarify issues and to achieve new "levels of understanding" (Walsh, 2013, p. 6).

Reflective practitioners and researchers have acknowledged the importance of collaboration and dialogue in the development and the process of reflection of teachers. There are a number of terms that have attempted to capture this sense of collaboration and dialogue. For instance, Stenhouse (1975) introduces the term "critical friend", Hatton and Smith (1995) offer "dialogic reflection", Edge (2002) argues for "cooperative reflection", Zwozdiak-Myers (2012) foregrounds Ghaye and Ghaye's (1998) "reflective conversations". Calderhead and Gates (1993) express the view that discussions of reflective teaching frequently drive teachers' individual capacity to analyse and evaluate practice and the context in which it occurs. There is also evidence that advocates the position that reflection requires a supportive environment (e.g. Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Jay & Johnson, 2002).

Calderhead and Gates go further when they say that "it may only be within a culture of collaboration that beginning teachers are encouraged to develop as reflective practitioners" (1993, p. 5). When we speak with others, we have the opportunity to express our ideas, exchange information, respond to, and understand our practice. Lieberman and Miller (1984) assert that without authentic dialogue novice teachers might not feel that they are in a supporting environment. As Rogers and Babinski (2002, p. 45) state, "it is almost impossible for them to develop and grow" without dialogue. Furthermore, Walsh states that "through talk, new realisations and greater insight come about" and that "it is this kind of 'light bulb moment' which professional dialogue can create" (2013, p. 122).

Peer interaction provides a dialogic environment where praxis can be articulated. Praxis is the mindful connection between theory and practice and it can be informed by feedback and suggestions received, ideas for improvement offered, and perspectives shared. Edge (2002) says there are three ways of learning: through our intellect, our experience, and through articulation. "We learn by speaking, by working to put our own thoughts together so that someone else can understand them" (Edge, 2002, p. 19). As Greene (1986, p. 73) states, "it is difficult to imagine students discovering what they think and what they do not yet know if there is no space of conversation, no space of engagement in diversity". Additionally, according to Underhill (1992), through interaction with peers we can create a supportive climate that helps participants feel safe enough and be more sincere with themselves and others. In addition, Knill and Samuels (2011) state that, without challenge and confrontation from others' perspectives, reflection may not lead to new ways of thinking and acting. This paper wants to foreground the importance of the "other" in supporting, facilitating, provoking and enabling reflection. Both Underhill (1992) and Edge (2002) emphasise the significance of reflecting in an honest and open environment; otherwise, the reflection would not be effective. We share this position. It is unlikely that authentic reflection can happen, if these values are absent. Edge (2002) proposes the following as necessary ingredients: agreement between the people to work together, respect, empathy, and sincerity. To this, Bassot (2013) adds that a critical friend (as the person you reflect on with) should be someone whom you know and can trust, who asks questions and challenges your thinking, who is positive, constructive, and encouraging, and who is a good listener. The work done in cooperative development (Edge, 2002) values opening up a space for reflection which is supported by others (e.g. peers, colleagues), for the purposes of allowing the individual to get further in their own reflection. Here the individual "speaker" evaluates elements of their own practice (Edge, 2002). A critical friend is different in emphasis and perhaps allows more scope for the evaluation to come from the peer (rather than just from the individual reflecting teacher).

Up to this point, most of the literature in this article focuses on spoken interaction. However, written reflection can also be promoted as a collaborative and dialogic reflection. The usefulness of journals in terms of the interaction that can be achieved with peers and mentors is pointed out by a number of researchers. For instance, Gebhard and Oprandy

(1999) argue that writing journals can also be seen as a viable tool that offers a place for articulation and exploration of beliefs and practices. Moreover, although journals are generally used to promote individual reflection, Bolton (2010), Lee (2008), Moon (1999), Brookfield (1995) and Richards (1995) have all acknowledged the usefulness of journals as an opportunity for interaction and collaboration with peers and mentors. In this regard, Bolton (2010, p. 140) states that "journals often inform dialogic work with supervisor, tutor or mentor". Lee (2008, p. 118) classifies different kinds of journals that foster the interaction and collaboration between the student teacher and the teacher (e.g. "dialogue journals" and "teaching journals"). As Bolton (2010, p. 140) states, "journals often inform dialogic work with supervisor, tutor, or mentor […] and give a sense of respect and being valued". It is suggested (e.g. Bolton, 2010; Williams, 2001; Hancock, 1999; Wong, Kember, & Yan, 1995; Mezirow, 1990) that dialogue through journals is one strategy for stimulating critical reflection, by giving the opportunity to the educator to question "origins of the [practitioner] self perceptions and the consequences of holding them" (Williams, 2001, p. 31). Writing a journal is a personal and essentially private interest, "yet parts can fruitfully be shared with confidential trusted others" (Bolton, 2010, p. 125). In that way, collaborative reflection is promoted and brings many benefits to the teacher candidates' process of reflection.

Now that we have addressed the usefulness of collaborative reflection, the following section focuses on the usefulness of promoting reflection from early stages in teachers' training.

3. REFLECTION FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

Researchers have conducted studies to establish that reflection is both important and feasible. Studies have found that practitioners receive benefits from engaging in RP. Benefits include improving teaching abilities, and, at the same time, becoming more aware of their own performance (Underhill, 1999). For novice teachers in particular, reflecting on their experience and learning in teaching practice is essential. RP helps to connect training input with actual classrooms and language learners. Understanding what is appropriate and necessary in the classrooms contexts is an important stepping-stone in our continuing development as teachers. There are plenty of arguments for the significance of initiating reflection when student teachers are being educated to be teachers (e.g. Fat'hi & Behzadpour, 2011; Orlova, 2009; Xu, 2009; Larrivee, 2008; Lee, 2008; Maarof, 2007; Ward & McCotter, 2004). This body of work has established that the early introduction of reflection helps student teachers to understand and improve their work, as well as gain a sense of ownership and agency. RP helps them to react, examine, and evaluate what they need to consider in their past and future teaching practice. Developing a reflective dimension helps teachers to make decisions on the desirability and appropriacy of changes in methodology,

assessment, attitudes, and beliefs. This is especially important at this initial stage of their profession.

It is not necessarily easy for novice teachers to become reflective, and, as Rodman (2010) argues, it needs to be a major goal for teacher education to facilitate and demonstrate such reflective, self-monitoring practice. In other words, RP needs to be promoted and exemplified as a valuable, critical and active habit that can help improve pre-service teachers' pedagogical ability. Teacher educators need to consciously help and encourage the development of reflective processes and skills. LaBoskey states that one of the aims of reflective teacher education programmes should be to help PSTs "become reflective teachers by teaching them what it means to be reflective and how one goes about reflecting" (1993, p. 26). An important part of fulfilling such an aim is to make clear to novice teachers that it is beneficial for them to talk to others, ideally in a supportive environment of collaboration, about their actions, beliefs, problems, and the puzzles and concerns that they face during their practicum (Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Moon (1999) has provided a strong argument in favour of teaching students to reflect. Novice teachers need help and encouragement in starting and maintaining the habit of reflecting on practice (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). In summary, teacher educators need to build an understanding of the process of reflection in PSTs (e.g. how they think about their practice, how reflection influences what they do or stop doing, and how their thinking is affected by alternative course designs and new theories). In this way, we "can develop in novice teachers an improved understanding of the nature and potential of reflection" (Calderhead, 1989, p. 9).

4. METHODOLOGY

In this methodology section, we establish the nature of the intervention and offer a brief description of the participants. We also make clear important steps and procedures, as well as detailing tools used during the intervention.

4.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopted a qualitative and sociocultural view of how reflection was fostered. We investigated the concept of dialogic reflection by concentrating on the voice of the participants and the interactions they engaged in, within their specific social context. Creswell states that we can conduct qualitative research (QR) when we need to explore a problem or issue and identify non-easy-to-measure variables; because we want to empower people being studied or involved in order to share their stories and to hear their voices; and because we need complex and detailed comprehension of the issue, people, and context of participants. According to Creswell (2013, p. 48), this "can only be established by talking directly with people and allowing them to tell the stories unencumbered by what we expect

to find or what we have read in the literature". As Richards (2003, p. 9) states, QR is mainly a "person-centred enterprise".

One of the purposes of the study was to understand the process that the PSTs followed when reflecting, as well as their opinion about the use of reflective tools and strategies, how they used them, and the impact of RP on the PSTs. We wanted to investigate the effects that an intervention had on PSTs' reflection. In order to achieve this goal, an Action Research (AR) approach was adopted.

According to Burns (2005), the distinguishing feature of AR is the simultaneous focus on action and research. Action, in the view of Burns, requires an intervention in which participants are exposed to concrete strategies, processes or activities. This intervention "occurs in response to a perceived problem, puzzle or question" (Burns, 2005, p. 58) that can emerge in myriad areas and contexts in applied linguistics and education. Some of these areas can include: school management or administration, curriculum implementation (Burns, 2005), school improvement programme and policy development (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), teaching methods, attitudes and values, continuing professional development of teachers (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011), among others.

AR is often adopted when a social practice is the focus of the research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), and where a key purpose "is to understand better some aspects of professional practice as a means of bringing about improvement" (Richards, 2003, p. 24). In other words, AR seeks not only to describe and understand a problem, but also to intervene in order to improve, involve participants, and interpret the results in light of the evidence provided by participants (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Burns, 2005; Zubber-Skerrit, 1996; Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Zubber-Skerrit (1996, p. 83, cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p. 345) suggests that the goals of any AR project "are to bring about practical improvement, innovation, change or development of social practice", and allow the practitioners to understand their practices.

Another key feature of AR is that it is carried out as a cyclical or spiral process. Usually, it is planned as a series of steps that teachers can use to investigate their practice and answer questions related to that practice (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012; Richards, 2003; Gebhard, 1999). The step-by-step process is frequently "monitored over varying periods of time and a variety of mechanisms (e.g. questionnaires, diaries, interviews and case studies)" in a way that the researcher is able to modify, adjust, and redefine actions as many times as are needed in order to afford lasting benefits to the ongoing process (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012, p.51). According to Burns (2005), there are four essential elements that fuel the action research cycle:

Plan ⇨ Act ⇨ Observe ⇨ Reflect

The aim of this action research study was to foster dialogic and collaborative reflection, as well as to detail features of the participants' focus and level of reflection. The

study introduced various reflective tools and strategies to the PSTs within five cycles of AR in a period of four months. The research aimed to be reflexive about the effects of the intervention on the PSTs reflective practice.

4.2 PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the study were students enrolled in the last year of the English language undergraduate programme of the University of Quintana Roo, Mexico. We felt that it was important that involvement in the AR was optional. Consequently, two groups of the Teaching Practice (TP) 2 module were invited to join the study (29 students in total); however, only eight students or pre-service teachers (PSTs) agreed to participate. Participants were allocated pseudonyms for the purpose of ensuring confidentiality.

4.3. PROCEDURE

At the beginning of the intervention, the participants were offered various tools to be used during the research. They initially chose the use of a journal, participation in group reflection sessions and a Facebook group, the recording of their class (video) and the recording of their reflection on their mobile (voice recording). However, mainly due to the PSTs' workload, during the intervention the number of tools decreased and only the Dialogic journals (DJs) and the Group reflection sessions (GRs) were maintained. This paper focuses on data from the DJs and the GRs. In the following sections, we describe the steps we followed to introduce and use the DJ and the GRs in order to promote collaborative reflection during the intervention.

4.3.1 JOURNALS

As part of the requirements for the Teaching Practice 1 module, the PSTs are usually asked to write journals or diaries in order to articulate their experiences during their teaching practices. They normally use "event-contingent" diaries that demand participants to provide a self-report each time they engage in teaching practice (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 157). The purpose of PSTs keeping diaries during the intervention was for them to reflect on what happened during their lessons. These accounts were also used to gather evidence of the participants' experiences, processes, and levels of reflection during the research. During the intervention, it was an important aim to show the PSTs how to make this tool more interactive and productive for them by generating direct and constant written communication and feedback in collaboration with the researcher (R), as described in Figure 1 below. Based on their concerns about time demands, a decision was made to ask them to write only five entries of the DJs, one every two or three weeks, mainly because it would not be overwhelming for the students (as it might have been to write daily reflections), and it

would give them time to write their reflection and follow the process that was recommended in Figure 1:

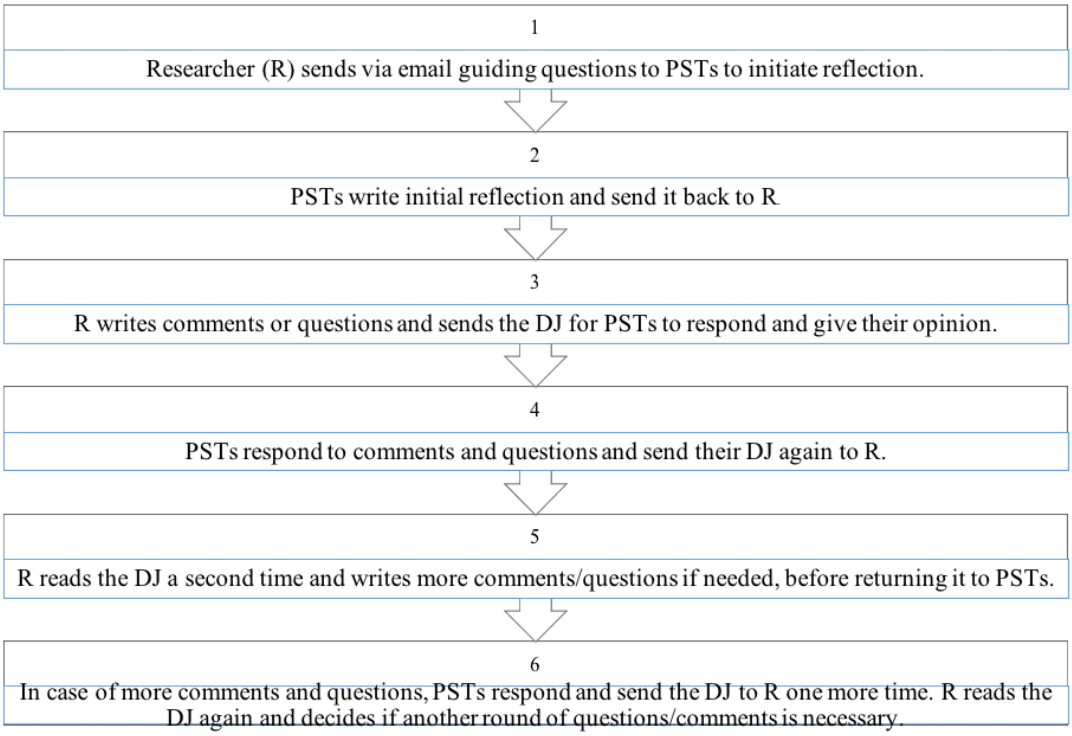


Fig. 1. Process for DJ

For this task, a three-column form was created for the PSTs to engage in more dialogic reflection (Figure 2):

REFLECTION No. _____

Name: _____ Entry (date): _____

REFLECTION	QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS	RESPONSES

Figure 2. Dialogic Journal (DJ) form

In the first column, they had to write their initial reflections, based on the instructions and guiding questions provided by the researcher via email. The second column was

a space for the researcher's first reactions to the PSTs' reflections, including questions or comments. In the last column, they had to respond to these questions and comments (this was considered a first round of the DJ). In case there were more questions or comments to their responses in column three, the researcher used a different colour to write, and they had to reply using another colour in the third column. The intention of using different colours was for the researcher and the participants to be able to distinguish a second, or sometimes a third round of the dialogue created. For the purpose of this article, the colours were chanced to different fonts (See Figure 3):

REFLECTION 4

Name: [redacted] Entry: 20/04/14

REFLECTION	QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS	RESPONSES
In the last two weeks of my immersion I have felt very satisfied with my performance. I have noticed that I nearly hesitate when speaking in front of my students. However, I still use certain Spanish during my classes. This happens as I already mentioned when it is time for giving instructions. I assign my students to do an activity and they are like not understanding anything and I can see their 'poker face'. When I realize of this situation I have to give the instructions in Spanish. It is worth mentioning that this happens no more than twice in class. The good things about my teaching practice are that I don't feel nervous anymore, being honest I got a feeling but I think it is more excitement than nervousness. Another thing is that now I can design my lesson plans faster than before. I am able to plan according to what I know about my students. I mean that i know what type of activities they are interested in, what they enjoy doing the most and how they like working. It has helped me a lot while planning and has made me work easier.	⇦ Good! I am so happy ☺ ⇦ What other options do you think you have to explain something they did not understand without using Spanish? ⇦ Can you say that you enjoy teaching? What is your favourite part of teaching and why? Good!!	I have thought of using gestures or mimicking them what they are supposed to do in the activity. Yes, I think these are good options ☺ Yes I do. The most enjoying part is when I notice that they understand the lesson and they even tell me that they like the class and understand what I just taught them. Good! This can be a very rewarding profession.
I always considered myself patient but now I am even more patient. I am saying this because I do not mind repeating instructions, clarifying students' doubts or answering questions. I always put in my mind that the most important thing is teaching. Regarding to my teaching experience so far I feel satisfied because I have noticed my progress and i have learned much from my students. What I like the most is to see that my students are learning and understanding what I am teaching. I like when my students say that they prefer to have me as teacher rather than my peer. I believe this occurs since she…	⇦ I don't know you very well, but I can see that you are! What other aspects of your personality do you think have helped you as a teacher? ⇖ What do you mean exactly when you say 'teaching'? ⇦ How do you usually confirm they are learning and understanding something?	I consider myself friendly and this helps me to have a good communication with my students. I like joking this way the class is not boring and my students feel comfortable. I agree, but taking into account that your students are your age, How do you think this friendly attitude could affect (or not) your class? **They might think I am just their friend because they could see I am their age and they would not take my class seriously…**

Figure 3. Sample of a DJ

The initial questions sent to all the participants were general questions (e.g. How did you feel during your teaching practice? What was your biggest concern during your teaching practice? What happened during your class?). The PSTs were told that they did not need to answer all of them but use them to generate ideas for their writing in the DJ. The subsequent rounds of questions were asked depending on the PSTs' individual needs and engagement with the process after the first set of questions. Since collaborative reflection was also emphasised during this study, it was suggested that PSTs shared their written reflections with a peer in order to get feedback. However, the exchange of communication and dialogue in the DJ was with the researcher in the main.

4.3.2. GROUP REFLECTIONS

Based on the literature about the benefit of collaborative and dialogic reflection, we decided to include this activity in order to give the PSTs the opportunity to reflect as a group, to share their reflection on their practice, share ideas to help each other with possible problematic situations, and have a supportive group during the process of learning to be English teachers. There were five sessions that were video-recorded and that helped the researcher to know the participants better, as well as distinguish their needs in terms of strategies and teaching tips. A relaxed environment was created by being friendly with the PSTs and by promoting the free expression of ideas. Even though there was a list of questions to lead every session, we preferred to follow the flow of the conversations, asking the students to provide details and their personal opinions about recent experiences with their teaching, trying to focus their attention on their practice and on how they had been feeling, if they had faced any special situations or critical incidents.

For the purpose of this article, we have focused on how collaborative and dialogic reflection were triggered in the DJs and the GRs. In order to learn about how collaborative reflection was perceived by the PSTs, a group interview (GI) was conducted at the end of the study.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data from the final GI, the DJ and the GRs are featured in this section in order to exemplify how collaborative reflection was perceived and generated during the intervention, as well as to present a discussion of the results. This section is sub-divided in order to present the outcomes in the GRs and the DJ.

5.1. GROUP REFLECTION SESSIONS

The benefits of collaborative reflection were more evident for the PSTs in the GRs, probably because there was a sense of cooperating with a group of peers helping each other and because the responses to their doubt or questions were immediate. In the final GI, PSTs were asked if they preferred individual or collaborative reflection. They all answered that collaborative reflection was their preferred way to reflect as it had worked better for them. When they were asked why they thought that, they referred mainly to the GRs and expressed the view that working together in the sessions was very helpful to them. For instance, Laura said that she thought that participating in the GRs was "interesting because […] it was an exchange of ideas and information, and we knew what was happening [to each other], so we could share solutions and strategies" (GI/Laura/T165). To this, Sunny added that "that way we can clear our doubts about what is happening to us and understand our teaching and learn from our classmates" (GI/John/T170). Social interaction and collaboration during the current study gave the PSTs the opportunity to share concerns about teaching, to receive feedback, and to get ideas for learning and improving.

The kinds of comments included in the paragraph above support a socio-cultural perspective on Pre-service English teacher training (PRESETT). There is strong evidence here that learning through social and direct interaction with peers in collaborative talk is perceived by participants as important. There were many examples of collaboration, mediation, and dialogue in the full data-set. Rogers and Babinski (2002, p.15) state that novice teachers' narratives in a group discussion "do more than just assist teachers in communicating with each other; their stories provide a powerful vehicle for engaging with others, as a means to share and better understand their own practice".

At this point it is worth showing an example of GR interaction. This extract is a good example of what Lieberman and Miller (1984) call an authentic dialogue. It shows that the novice teachers feel that they are in a supportive environment, where they are comfortable in exchanging opinions on a critical incident. Without such an environment, "it is almost impossible for them to develop and grow" (Rogers & Babinski, 2002, p. 45). The example below is typical of the dialogic interaction generated in GRs and it is also worth noting that such dialogue in the GRs was more direct and immediate than in the DJs, which usually took one to three weeks to be sent and returned. During the third GR, the PSTs were discussing an incident in which an experienced teacher, observed by one of the PSTs (Chicharito), made a decision that caused disagreement among the PSTs participating in the GR. This interaction features a discussion of what appears to be quite a controversial way of dealing with classroom discipline:

Line	**Speaker**	
244	Peter:	We can say that it makes sense, in a certain way,
245		inside the teacher's head and after all the measures
246		that Chicharito says she has taken to control this
247		kid… but from an ethical point of view and from an
248		institutional perspective I believe is not the right
249		thing to do.
250	Researcher:	[…]
251	Chicharito:	If the parents actually see it, maybe they'll say
252		something to the teacher; but honestly, if that was
253		my son… I don't know.
		[…]
257	Researcher:	What would you all do in this kind of situation?
258	Lea:	Well, I don't' believe it was a good thing… As a
259		teacher I don't allow that to happen. I think children
260		can be (well, I don't want to use that word but)
261		"punished" in other ways… But, to encourage him
262		to punch back?! It's kind of out of place because it is
263		aggressive. And if other children see this, they are
264		going to think it is the right thing to do… Or the
265		normal thing to do. And then they are going to start
266		hitting each other in the classroom.

267		Well, I think it is not the way to solve this situation.
268 269 270	Chicharito:	Well, I think that… I imagine they've tried many different ways and they don't work on the student… because, to be honest, he is quite rebellious.
271 272 273 274 275 276 277	Sunny:	Maybe it's just a strategy that the teacher had applied before. Maybe that's why she decided to do that… I believe she is an experienced teacher and she had dealt with this kind of situations before and it worked; that's probably why she decided to do it… If that's the case, I think it's okay, because if it worked then it's okay to do it.
278 279 280 281		Still, if it is against the school policy because (let's say) you are promoting violence among the children, then, that's where everything becomes a bigger issue.
282	Researcher:	[…]
289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296	Lea:	It's just that I feel that students may see it as something that is normal. I mean, if they see that the kid is punching back… Imagine if, let's say, they see that he does something to me [pointing the person next to her] and I just do the same to him… I mean, if that happens among other students, they are just going to copy the actions they see around them during their lessons…

It can be observed in the conversation that the PSTs were highly engaged in articulating their differing positions. It must be noted that the presence of the researcher may have prompted them to further engagement. However, this critical incident arouses a variety of reflection that encompasses speculation (line 251 "maybe" and 291 "imagine"), pragmatic justification (line 268 "I imagine they've tried"). There are also attempts to tie the incident to issues at a macro level (line 278 "school policy"). Such dialogic reflection makes sense of experience and builds collaborative knowledge (Ghaye, 2011). One of the most interesting features of the extract above is the tension between one set of values (inherent in the teacher's action) and another set of more humanistic values that are being evoked. It is well established in the literature (e.g. Zeichner & Liston, 1996) that PSTs tend to focus time on negotiating what was correct or not (with reference to a particular situation or classroom choice). Extracts like the ones above support the argument that "experiential knowledge is best supported by collaborative discussion" in which the participants articulate and reformulate their thoughts and ideas about their practicum for better understanding (Walsh & Mann, 2015, p. 6). Dilemmas and confusions need to be worked through. As Edge (2002, p. 25) argues, by cooperating with others, teachers "work together with equals in order to develop", and that one way of doing this is through "articulation" that serves "to formulate what is initially inchoate, or confused, or badly formulated" (Tay-

lor, 1985, p. 36). Edge (2002, p.19) adds that "we learn by speaking, by working to put our thoughts together so that someone else can understand them".

5.2. DIALOGIC JOURNALS

In the current study, the usefulness of collaboration and the dialogic approach in the DJs was confirmed in the GI that was conducted at the end of the study. In the GI, the PSTs stated that writing their DJs fostered dialogue and seemed "natural […] because it felt more like a conversation I was having with you [the researcher] instead of writing an essay or something like that" (GI/Luna/T31). As Lea also indicated, the conversations with her peers and the researcher during the DJs made her feel that she "was not doing a monologue" (GI/Lea/T48). As Gebhard states, using a DJ "removes typical feelings of isolation" and enables student teachers "to see that feelings, issues, accomplishments, and problems about teaching are common" (2009, p. 253).

In the DJs, the dialogue was created from the beginning in collaboration with the researcher. The PSTs usually responded directly to the guiding questions. In most cases, second or third rounds of the DJ were considered depending on the PSTs needs and engagement. That is, when they were not providing much insight, questions to elicit more detailed reflection were asked. The PSTs response to these rounds was generally immediate. Moreover, they did not only respond to the questions but also asked questions, expressed doubts or included more comments and details for the reader or researcher to understand their practice and decisions. As discussed by some academics (e.g. Bolton, 2010; Williams, 2001; Hancock, 1999; Wong, Kember, & Yan, 1995; Mezirow, 1990), dialogue through journals is one strategy for stimulating critical reflection, by giving the opportunity to practitioners to "question their practice" (Williams, 2001, p. 31). In Figure 4 below, it can be observed how the interaction was established between the researcher and a PST. First the PST wrote about his or her concerns, usually a description of the class and events. In the second column, the researcher asked more questions and made comments related to what he or she wrote in order to trigger more reflection. In the third column, the PST provided more insights, responding to the researcher's questions and also giving more time to the understanding of the events (e.g. "I really would like to know why those things happen […] if they do that because of us […]". Underlined section in Figure 4, third column):

REFLECTION 2

Name: [redacted] Entry: March 8,2014

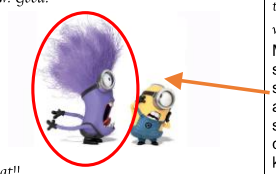
REFLECTION	QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS	RESPONSES
I was scared and nervous the first day we went to the CENDI even though I wouldn't give the class, since most of the comments we heart about those children were about how difficult it was to control them. I was aware that the first class wouldn't be easy. It is important to mention that I totally refused to give the very first class as I wanted to know the kids first and detect some problems that could arise during our class. Thus, I would have a better idea of what I would be facing for my class and the following moths. It did work actually. I noticed who the problematic kids were, the students' reactions about all the activities and what kind of problems could happen in the classroom. All that helped me to design my lesson. For my 1st class in which I had to teach the classroom commands, I decided to do activities in which the children had to move a lot because I noticed they like to participate. Moreover, I knew for sure that I had to grab their attention since the beginning; consequently, I thought in bringing a huge teddy bear to the classroom to use it as a puppet to do the classroom commands. Also, I wasn't sure if they would be distracted by how big and cute the bear was or if they would pay attention to the activity. But I wanted to try anyway. Additionally, I had the discipline strategy we had agreed on, which was telling the children that we will give them a star if they were paying attention and quiet, and the one in which I have to tell the children: Class, class, class, and they have to respond: Yes, yes, yes!. I was really surprised and happy…	⇦ *Good strategy! And what about now? Have you planned observing the kids in order to detect other kind of situations? Do you usually ask other teacher(s) about how to manage different situations (real or hypothetical)?? How is your previous knowledge on the topic (from books, articles, discussion in class) helping you with this experience?* ⇖ *How did you deal with them when you were the teacher? What other kind of problems do you usually want to know/learn about the children? What else do you pay attention to (from inside or outside the classroom?* ⇦ *Wow! Good!*  ⇦ *Great!!*	I mainly observe when Mary presents the topic: how she presents it and what she does when the children are making noise. Also, what the children do when doing an activity or when they are mad or distracted. However, these last weeks I have noticed that some kids do not participate at all; they are just quiet looking at the others, or some kids throw tantrums because of simple things like they are not given what they want or we don't do what they want. I really would like to know why those things happen; for example, if they do that because of us, their classmates, their mood that day and more. I know we can learn a lot from observing and I believe in the long run we will know more about our students by observing each other, the kids and when we ourselves give classes. *Yes! And please, consider also what experts say about working with kids this age. It is important to read and reflect on what they say and suggest and try to see how it works with your kids, in this specific context.* My mom is a teacher; nonetheless, she works with teenagers. She sometimes gives me ideas for my activities and some discipline strategies and what happens in her classes. She has never worked with kids; thus, she really doesn't know how to control 32 minions. *Hahaha* Moreover, two of my closest aunts…

Figure 4. Sample of interaction in a DJ

Using a DJ not only allowed the PSTs to have an opportunity to receive feedback and be challenged to think over more specific aspects of their practicum, but also allowed the researcher to monitor and follow up the PSTs' development and provide caring support during the reflective practice (Lee, 2004). In terms of the reflective tool, having a specific column to respond to questions and to write comments was useful for both the researcher and the PSTs. For example, Peter noted "it was like feedback sharing and you would reply or ask about our reflection, and that would nourish our teaching" (GI/Peter/T50). It was important for them to have constant feedback and enquiry from the researcher. This gave them the feeling that they were being guided through the process and made them feel more confident about what to write in their journals.

6. CONCLUSION

The PSTs acknowledged the usefulness of the intervention for them in improving their reflections and teaching practice. This was emphasised during the final GI in which PSTs stated that they were "grateful" that they were given the tools and strategies "to make a better reflection" (GI/Peter/T04), because "we realised of the options we have to reflect that we didn't know before" (GI/Luna/T457). They added that the questions asked during the study "were guiding and encouraging to notice certain aspects to take into account

about the practicum" (GI/Lea/T08) and "helped us understand what we should be reflecting about" (GI/John/T429). Moreover, they were able to reflect on their teaching and look "at the bigger picture from different perspectives" (GI/John/T429). That is, the intervention seemed to help them develop not only a better teaching practice or performance (Scrivener, 2005), but also improve the reflective process itself (Ward & McCotter, 2004). Collaborative and dialogic reflection with their peers and the researcher also activated personal reflection, based on others' comments and experiences. As expressed by Lea, the sessions were "helpful because listening to what they [peers] said made me think of my own teaching" (GI/Lea/T48). Prawat (1991) states that reflection can also be a process of inner dialogue and conversation with self. Knill and Samuels (2011) argue that with no challenge and confrontations from other's views, reflection may not lead to change of perspective and improvement of practice. This is in agreement with Mann and Walsh (forthcoming, 2017: 22) who state that "[d]ialogue allows meanings to be co-constructed, new understandings to emerge and professional learning to develop". In this regard, Laura indicated that "we get involved in a good dynamic, a dynamic with a purpose of learning and improvement" (GI/Laura/T92) when having an exchange of ideas with peers and the researcher in both the GRs and the DJ. Lea (GI/Lea/T517) summarised this in the final group interview:

> [Talking to the researcher] I think your research was really useful. For example, I think the [group] sessions were entirely useful. They were worth the time. Before this [intervention], I hadn't considered the opportunity to come here, I didn't even know the importance of reflecting on my lessons and learn about the things I do during class and the impact they have on the class and students. It also helped me to have a team who all of a sudden told me suggestions about what to do, and activities that I hadn't planned before […]. Helping each other helped us improve ourselves, especially now that we are going to be teaching on our own… For me it was extremely useful.

The usefulness of collaborative and dialogic reflection was also perceived by the PSTs as an opportunity to feel accompanied in the process of reflection. At the end of the study, it could be said that the PSTs appreciated the fact that they had a direct communication and constant feedback from someone to help them in both the GRs and the DJs. The GRs and the DJs allowed the PSTs to find guidance and support from both the researcher and their peers. Having direct communication was considered by the PSTs as important and useful. They were happy to "be able to tell what we were experiencing, and even get immediate advice from you [the researcher] and classmates […] It's better to share your experience with the people who can understand what you are doing." (GI/Lea/T172).

Overall, results indicated the need of PSTs to have constant support from mentor teachers in order to guide them through the process by promoting (written or spoken) dialogue and interaction, creating a good atmosphere, as well as providing a variety of tools and strategies for reflection. This research has given us a better and clearer idea of how to

promote collaborative reflection in a second language teacher education programme. Indeed some of these findings have informed Chapters 6 and 7 of Mann and Walsh (2017). If you are new to RP this publication offers guidance and tools. Farrell (2007) is a good starting point.

Even though the benefits in the promotion of dialogue and collaboration in this study, it has to be said that this work might involve a great deal of time for the researcher or mentor teachers in a second language teacher education context. It is necessary to evaluate the feasibility of including these types of activities at universities despite the fact that teacher educators are usually involved in many tasks. The suggestion, then, is that the amount of work be shared with two or three more mentor teachers able to provide effective and prompt feedback to the reflective practitioners.

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