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The Learning Experiences of Undergraduate EFL Teacher Educators in Spain: A Holistic and Ecological Perspective

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The material presented here for examination for the award of a higher degree by research has not been incorporated into a submission for another degree.

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Declaration of authorship

I am the author of this thesis, and the work described therein was carried out by myself personally.

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To my younger self: in all the million ways you were told you are not enough, thank you for not believing even one of them. It has made all the difference.

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List of Abbreviations

CoP(s): Communities of Practice

CPD: Continuing Professional Development

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

FI: Follow-up Interview

FRI: Follow-up Retrospective Interview

LE: Learning Episode

MA: Master of Arts

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy

RLD: Retrospective Learning Experience Descriptions

SM: Supporting Materials

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

TLD: Tree of Life drawing

TLI: Tree of Life interview

TLN: Tree of Life narrative

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Abstract

The Learning Experiences of Undergraduate EFL Teacher Educators in Spain: A Holistic and Ecological Perspective

This study investigates the content, processes, and contexts of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher educators' learning by exploring their cognitions and the social contexts in which their learning occurs. Situated within individuals' social experiences, learning is conceptualised in this study as a "fundamentally social phenomenon, reflecting our own deeply social nature as human beings capable of knowing" (Wenger, 2009, p. 210) and is accepted to be "complex, contextually specific, autobiographically grounded and informed by socio-political realities" (Goodwin, 2010, p. 30). By exploring ELT teacher educators' learning and development experiences, the knowledge and skills they acquired and the mediating factors they experienced, the present inquiry aimed to explore the opportunities and content of teacher educator learning and uncover influencing factors conducive to professional development. As Smith (2003, 213-214) argues, "professional development of teacher educators is too important not only to teacher education but also to the educational system as a whole, to be left in a virginal state regarding research and documentation".

To this end, a qualitative approach was adopted. The data collection approach drew on organic and ecological approaches to gain a holistic, comprehensive, and contextualised understanding of participants' professional learning experiences. Data were collected from a sample of three EFL teacher educators in Spain in three phases. In the first phase, autobiographical accounts were gathered by implementing a self-reflective tool, Tree of Life, to identify participants' personal, educational, and professional backgrounds and the factors that shaped their cognitions and experiences. Following this, retrospective learning episodes were collected, and follow-up semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow the participants to reflect on significant past learning experiences, explore what they had learned from these experiences, and look at the challenging and facilitating factors mediating these experiences. The final phase entailed collecting weekly learning episodes from the participants for five weeks and conducting follow-up semi-structured interviews to explore their learning experiences as they happened in their day-to-day practice and lives. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data.

The findings suggest that the participant teacher educators engaged in various forms of formal and informal activities, which challenged them in many ways and offered personal and professional learning opportunities. The findings offer insights into 1) the learning activities the teacher educators engaged in, 2) the knowledge and skills they acquired, and 3) the combination of contributing and challenging factors that had an impact on their learning experiences. Moreover, the study presents significant implications for ELTE practices and professional development experiences of teacher educators, particularly in EFL contexts. These implications call for more effective research practice opportunities and the establishment of a research culture in higher educational institutions and opportunities to generate critical and collaborative professional learning opportunities and mentoring by more experienced colleagues. Morever, it is vital to regard teacher educators as 'whole people' *(Yuan et al., 2022)* with exceptional characteristics, challenges, and limitations, which are moulded by their work and life experiences.

Moreover, this study offers valuable contextual and empirical implications for teacher education research in Spain or within similar contexts and for participants with similar experiences to those in the current study, which will help critically examine the current professional development policies and plan new initiatives for teacher educators to increase their professionalism and ultimately improve the quality of teacher education. It is hoped that this study will help develop more effective learning and development opportunities for and with teacher educators and be helpful for professionals who oversee "the facilitation of the professional development of teacher educators (management), those who develop and guide it (mostly expert-teacher educators) or validate professional learning (e.g., those involved with certification)" (Dengerink et al., 2015, p. 93). Moving beyond solely improving teacher educators' theoretical knowledge towards conceptualising their learning and development as a 'whole person development' by recognising the impact of cognitive, affective, and contextual elements as the approach adopted in this study will contribute to how EFL teacher educators can be supported to advance their professional expertise, practice, and mental well-being while they mediate the changing EFL and higher education contexts and empower them to be scholars who can critically tackle power inequalities and eventually transform their social realities.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This research project examines how internal and external factors influence teacher educators' learning and development experiences in English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher education programme in Madrid and Castilla La-Mancha. In this introductory chapter, I will first provide the background and my motivation for conducting this inquiry. I will then present the aims and rationale for this investigation. Finally, I will outline the research questions, followed by a brief description of the structure of this thesis.

1.2. Background to the study

Teacher educators play a crucial and active role in the training and development of pre-service teachers by presenting opportunities and tools for continuous learning and reflection (Smith, 2003). Teacher educators are also engaged in the professional development of in-service teachers and are acquainted with the training and professional development of others. However, little is known about the professional development of teacher educators and how they develop professionally.

Within the context of teacher learning, the nature of teacher learning has stirred controversy due to various perspectives on what 'learning' means and what can be accounted for as learning. The 'acquisition' perspective suggests that learning involves the development of new knowledge and skills. This reflects a positivist view of teaching as "mastering the specific content one [is] to teach and separately mastering methodologies for conveying that content to learners" (Freeman, 2002, p. 4) and has been heavily criticised for misrepresenting the complexity of teaching. Teachers interpret new information and experiences and modify these new ideas according to their existing knowledge and beliefs rather than passively absorbing knowledge. This conceptualisation of learning as a 'constructive' process views learning as "an active and constructive process that is heavily influenced by an individual's existing knowledge and beliefs and is situated in particular contexts" (Borko & Putnam, 1996, pp. 674-675). On the other hand, the 'participation' perspective situates learning in the context of a wider community by acknowledging teachers' emotional and social concerns as

well as their personal experiences and the contexts in which these experiences occur (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). In this study, learning is conceptualised as "a fundamentally social phenomenon, reflecting our own deeply social nature as human beings capable of knowing" (Wenger, 2009, p. 210) and will be accepted to be "complex, contextually specific, autobiographically grounded and informed by socio-political realities" (Goodwin, 2010, p. 30).

Over the last three decades, the criticisms of the process-product approach to learning and teaching have led to the recognition of a *teaching mind* (Burns et al., 2015). Teacher thinking has been accepted as a crucial element of teaching. Various terms have been used in the literature to describe this *thinking* – attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, theories, images, assumptions, metaphors, conceptions, perspectives – which have collectively been called 'teacher cognition'. The primary assumption of language teacher cognition research is that "teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs" (Borg, 2003, p. 81). Much research within the language teacher cognition field has conceptualised these cognitive constructs as individual and discrete, which does not fully account for the complexity of teachers' mental lives. Although this research has provided valuable insights into teachers' mental worlds and practice, the study of individual constructs may neglect the broader understanding that teaching is an "interrelated whole comprised of many functional relationships between thinking and action" (Kubanyiova, 2012, p. 10). Consequently, there have recently been emergent calls for moving from the individualistic cognitive research approach towards a more contextualised, holistic understanding of language teacher cognition to fully capture its complexity. Regarding this, Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) propose the "ecologies of teachers' mental lives", which better describes the complexity inherent in this field. They mainly argue for a theoretical shift away from individual psychological constructs studied so far in language teacher cognition research towards a 'bottom-up' approach to language teacher cognition, which entails adopting a broader conceptualisation of teacher cognition by situating it within the contexts of practice and focusing on teachers' inner lives in terms of the full range of individual processes and actions (ibid.). In this study, a *holistic, ecological, and situated* approach will be adopted to the conceptualisation of teacher cognition, and teacher cognition will therefore be conceptualised as "a web of interacting and co-adapting beliefs, knowledge networks,

identities, emotions, motivations, and future visions" (Kubanyiova, 2012, p. 192) to embrace the complex nature of language teacher cognition and its development.

The significant role contextual factors play in language teachers' practices is investigated by exploring how the wider environment impacts teachers' thinking (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). To understand the context from a broader perspective, it is essential to situate teachers' inner worlds within their lives and environment, namely the social, cultural, and historical contexts they are embedded in. A comprehensive understanding of context is essential simply because teachers' mental lives have a dynamic tie with the immediate micro-context of classrooms and educational institutions, the contexts of local and national educational policies, which is overall embedded in the wider socio-cultural and political norms and values (Kubanyiova, 2012). Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1993) is adopted in this study since it offers a holistic perspective on the interaction between the immediate and distal environments teachers are a part of and supports the understanding of individual-environmental exchanges. Specifically, there are four levels of ecosystems - microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem, which collectively "take into account the totality of environmental factors leading to human development with a special focus on their dynamic and interactive nature" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 190). Context is therefore understood as a set of nested ecosystems with their own actors and activities. Participants' inner lives are situated within their larger lives and environments rather than simply focusing on the immediate micro-context of the classroom to gain a fuller understanding of how these broader contexts eventually impact both teachers' inner lives and their learning experiences.

1.3. Research aims and rationale

Language teacher educators spend most of their time training and helping language student teachers and qualified in-service teachers develop by taking on responsibilities ranging from classroom teaching, teaching supervision, practitioner research to ELTE management (Yuan et al., 2022). However, their professional development has been often overlooked in the literature. A seminal publication to recognise the significance of teacher educators' professional learning and development was The *Green Paper on Teacher Education in Europe* by Buchberger et al. (2000), where they underlined *the necessity of* "coherent initial

as well as a continuous in-service teacher education for teacher educators" (p. 58). Kosnik et al. (2015) underline that teacher educators are a unique group of professionals, and their professional development should conform to the complexity of their work. In their book, Lunenberg et al. (2014) listed six main roles for teacher educators: "teacher of teachers, researcher, coach, curriculum developer, gatekeeper and broker" (pp. 21–23). The authors also demonstrated that professional learning and development experiences of teacher educators is "an area of which little is known, in particular about what is effective in supporting teacher educators in their professional growth" (p. 75). The subgroups of teacher educators have received little attention, such as language teacher educators (Kosnik et al., 2015). In their study on literacy/English teacher educators, Kosnik et al. (2013) points out that more focus should be paid to the specific subjects they teach, and language teacher educators should be considered as a distinct group of teacher educators on their own rights.

The need for more research on teacher educators in the general literature is also reflected in research on Spanish teacher educators. There is a paucity of research on Spanish teacher educators with the exception of a small literature on teacher educators' ICT competence as an exception (e.g., Espinosa et al., 2018; Pozos, 2009; Prendes, 2010; 2017; Tejado & Navio, 2015). For instance, in their study measuring university-based teacher educators' digital competence, Domingo-Coscollola et al. (2020) examined the digital literacy training provided to future teachers in preschool and primary education degrees in nine Catalan universities. One of the key findings reveals the need for the professional development of university teachers and their students' digital literacy by fostering collaborative learning. In their participatory action research, Miño-Puigcercós et al. (2019) argue for a teaching and learning culture from the DIY perspective, which requires a participatory and collaborative process. The authors suggest that sharing knowledge and learning in an open-access digital platform (*DIYLabHub*) will promote a social orientation to digital technology, changing student teachers' access to information and enhancing the dialogue between teacher educators and their students.

Self-studies by TESOL teacher educators in Spain are also present. In their duoethnography, Banegas and Beamud (2022) investigated how two CLIL teacher educators, based in Argentina and Spain English language teacher education contexts, plan, and deliver CLIL courses to EFL student teachers. Their findings demonstrate the importance of providing student teachers

with real-life scenarios and opportunities to plan lessons and develop materials and activities to help them develop pedagogical reasoning and responses in line with their context-driven challenges. Nemina et al. (2022) explored how a collaborative student project, where student teachers from two countries (Italy and Spain) used digital resources to collaborate and design a project for kindergarten and primary children, positively impacted teaching practices and expanded student teachers' learning environments. In their self-study, Barros-del Río et al. (2022) investigated how an online tool designed to improve the monitoring of the learning process during the Practicum fostered interactive and effective communication among the Practicum participants and promoted critical thinking and autonomy. In their study on the implementations of Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG) in pre-service teacher education, Barros-del Rio et al. (2021) demonstrated DLGs' effectiveness at promoting self-reflection among participants, inspiring more significant commitment towards the teaching profession (see also Flecha et a., 2019; Roca et al., 2015). Other self-studies by teacher educators involve foreign language student teachers' wellbeing and their professional success (Cardoso-Pulido et al., 2022) and EFL Spanish in-service teachers' motivation (Kamstra, 2022).

The work and profile of academics have also drawn attention. Discussing the professional competencies that university professors have, Bozu and Cantu (2009) point out that new generations of professors should be trained and prepared to satisfy the requirements of the 21st century. The profile they suggest refers to university lecturers capable of selecting, updating, and using knowledge in their specific contexts and getting engaged in lifelong learning in different contexts and modalities. In their explorative international study on teacher educators' professional development, Van der Klink et al. (2017) examined teacher educators' concerns, professional development activities and developmental goals. The participants were twenty-five teacher educators from ten different countries, and there were two teacher educators from Spain. The findings related to the Spanish teacher educators revealed that their professional development activities involved visits to schools, conducting research, and writing articles. They also expressed concerns about how slow the Spanish bureaucracy is and expressed that they often relied on their own intrinsic motivation and created their own learning opportunities.

For these reasons, the aims and motivation for this inquiry are:

- To examine the learning and development activities that EFL teacher educators engage in, and the knowledge and experience underlying them with the goal of providing more effective support to teacher educators at different stages of their careers (Buchberger et al., 2000; Freeman, 2002).
- To explore teacher educators' ecologies by focusing on participants' unobservable inner lives and the observable contextual elements that shape who they are, how and what they learn, and their work as teacher educators. Research on teacher educators' cognitions (beliefs, cognitions, emotions, motivations) concerning professional development and pedagogy has notably expanded in the last few decades (e.g., Borg, 2003, 2006, 2011; Skott, 2015). The present project contributes to this tradition of research.
- To examine and identify the internal and external factors that influence teacher educators' professional learning experiences. Through my critical engagement with the present literature on teacher education and teacher educators' learning and development experiences, I noticed a gap in research on teacher educators' work and development experiences and the relationship between internal and external elements within the context of an undergraduate-level EFL teacher education program in Spain. This realisation presented me with an excellent opportunity to conduct this inquiry in an under-investigated participant group within an under- researched context. As a result, I aimed to explore and gain insights about multiple internal and external factors underlining teacher educators' actions and decisions and the complex ways in which these internal and external elements might mediate their professional development and pedagogical practices.
- In addition to recognising the professional development activities EFL teacher educators engage in, the content of such engagement, and the mediating factors that influence these learning experiences in the context of two EFL teacher educator programmes at two Spanish universities, this inquiry intends to gain insights about how teacher educators' experiences and the contexts within which they work influence their practice on a wider scale. It is pivotal to understand how these learning and development processes occur and the knowledge and experience underlying them to provide more effective support to teacher educators. Educational inquiry into these learning and development processes and the mediating factors that teacher

educators need to navigate can enhance our understanding of their mental lives, their contexts at multiple levels, and how they perceive their practices by uncovering the cognitive, affective, and contextual elements playing a role in their learning processes in other EFL contexts.

- From a personal perspective, I have always been interested in teacher learning for my own professional development as an English teacher. I was a member of the CPD team in my previous job, where I played an active role in designing and implementing training sessions for EFL instructors. My fascination with teacher learning and professional development has also motivated me as an educational researcher. I investigated the impact of EFL instructors' autonomy on their practices and professional development in my MA thesis, which enabled me to explore the literature on teacher learning and gain research experience. Building on my experience and interest in teacher learning and professional development and addressing the research gap on the professional development of EFL teacher educators compared to that of pre-service and in-service EFL teachers, I was motivated to investigate teacher educators and teacher learning in this research project.

1.4. Research questions

Research on how teacher educators learn and develop professionally is noticeably limited. Goodwin (2010) and Wideen et al. (1998) highlight the need for more research on teacher educators' learning and development. "Professional development of teacher educators is too important not only to teacher education but also to the educational system as a whole, to be left in a virginal state regarding research and documentation" (Smith, 2003, pp. 213-214). My review of recent studies on Spanish teacher education practices (restricted to those published in English and translated versions of some key publications in Spanish, though) reveals a focus on teachers' pre-service and in-service training, their professional experience, and the career paths they took to be teachers in Spain (e.g., Castaño-Muñoz et al., 2017; Martin, 2015; Sancho-Gil et al., 2017). While there is a growing body of research by Spanish teacher educators on their educational practices, a paucity of research exists on their professional learning and development. Research on teacher educators' learning is very vital since these experiences significantly influence their teaching practices and careers in the long term. In addition, understanding teacher educators' work would, in turn, contribute to language

teacher education practices both at the pre-service and in-service levels (ibid.). Therefore, as MacPhail et al. (2019) highlight, it is significant to investigate what knowledge and skills teacher educators need and, perhaps more importantly, how they obtain such knowledge and skills over the course of their careers. The present study addresses this need by exploring the opportunities and content of teacher educator learning and uncover the factors which may facilitate or hinder professional development. To investigate the content of teacher educators' learning, the study aims to address the following first research question:

1. What do English language teacher educators learn?

As underlined by Beijaard et al. (2007), questioning 'how teachers learn' is crucial since the answers to this question reveal recommendations for the improvement of the professional development of teacher educators and, ultimately, for more effective initial teacher education. The second research question is related to the process of teacher educators' learning:

2. How do English language teacher educators learn?

Finally, in order to understand how teacher cognition and the contextual elements promote or inhibit teacher educators' learning and development, two sub-questions guide this research:

a) What is the influence of internal factors on English language teacher educators' learning experiences?
b) What is the influence of external factors on English language teacher educators' learning experiences?

1.5. Structure of this thesis

This thesis comprises nine chapters. After providing the background underlying this research inquiry (Chapter One), the following chapters are structured as follows:

- Chapter Two presents a detailed description of the context of this inquiry. This chapter provides a general overview of the Spanish education system. I introduce EFL teacher education at both pre-service and in-service levels. Then, I describe the EFL university-

based teacher educators in Spain. Finally, professional development initiatives for EFL teacher educators are described.

- In Chapter Three, I present a critical review of the literature on teacher educators' learning and professional development. This chapter mainly aims to introduce the conceptual framework that the present study is based on, present the relevant literature, and identify specific gaps in research.
- Chapter Four describes this inquiry's ontological, epistemological, and methodological stance. I present a comprehensive description of the research design, the data collection methods, the data analysis, ethical considerations, the trustworthiness of the study, and researcher reflexivity, by providing my rationale for making these choices.
- In Chapters Five, Six, and Seven, I present the findings of this study in three case reports. Each case description starts with the description of participants' personal, educational, and professional backgrounds, followed by the professional development activities they described and the knowledge and skills they perceived they acquired, and the mediating factors that played a significant role in their learning experiences.
- Chapter Eight brings together the results of each case with the current literature to discuss the contributions of this research project.
- Chapter Nine summarises the main contributions of this doctoral thesis and highlights its implications for teacher cognition research, EFL teacher education and teacher educator professional development in an EFL context. Furthermore, I discuss this study's limitations, practical implications, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks entailing my reflections on conducting this inquiry.

Chapter Two: Context

2.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research context of the present study. It starts with a brief examination of the Spanish Education system by describing the socio-economic context and English language instruction at different levels of the Spanish school system and then specifically in the two autonomous communities relevant to this study (2.2). Section 2.3 outlines the structure of pre-service EFL teacher education and the qualifications and training of in-service EFL teachers. Section 2.4 describes the background of EFL teacher educators and the requirements they must fulfil to become university lecturers. Section 2.5 discusses current professional development initiatives available for EFL teacher educators. Anonymised background information about the institutions where data were collected is provided in Chapter Four, Section 4.4.1.

2.2. Spanish Education System

The 1978 Spanish Constitution decentralised the country into 17 autonomous communities (e.g., the Basque Country, the Community of Madrid, Catalonia, and Andalusia), each of which is further comprised of one or more provinces. These communities have extensive autonomy with their elected parliaments, governments, public administrations, and budgets. They have also been granted increased legislative and executive autonomy in matters of education (Van Bruggen, 2010). Education in Spain is administered according to the *Ley Orgánica de Educación* (Organic Law of Education). The Central General Administration of Education in Spain is the central government office which guarantees the right to education and ensures the consistency of education across the state through the *Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deportes* (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport). This ministry is responsible for preparing, directing, and executing government policy in education, culture and sport, as well as making decisions regarding curriculum development and implementation, teacher recruitment, funding, and other school matters. However, though the national government defines the overall framework and guidelines, the education system is steered by regional ministries. Therefore, education is a shared responsibility between the central, regional and municipal administrations and schools (European Commission, 2013).

Regarding the status of English in Spain, Spain has been committed to European policies which raise awareness of the need to learn foreign languages and foster multilingualism. Spain has become one of the top European countries in the development of Content and Language Integrated Learning (henceforth, CLIL) (Coyle, 2010). In 1996, the Spanish Ministry of Education and the British Council signed an agreement to implement bilingual Spanish-English education throughout the country (Relaño Pastor, 2018). While this agreement has created a structure for the educational system of Spain at a national level, the autonomous communities adapt this bilingual programme to their respective systems. Therefore, there are different EFL/CLIL models of English instruction across autonomous communities (Caraker, 2016). This study will focus on two of the 17 autonomous communities - the Community of Madrid and Castilla La-Mancha - and will be discussed in detail.

The Regional Government of Madrid issued a decree establishing a bilingual project in primary education and launched *Programa Bilingüe Español-Inglés* (the Madrid Spanish-English Bilingual Project) in March 2004. The implementation of this bilingual project has entailed delivering content-based subjects in English in selected primary schools where at least one-third of the 25-hour schedule is to be taught in English (although this number can be higher than 50 per cent), excluding the Spanish Language and Mathematics classes, which must be given in Spanish (Cabezuelo Gutierrez & Fernández Fernández, 2014). According to the official website of the Ministry of Education in Madrid, 32 Institutes of Secondary Education also became bilingual in order to accommodate students from the first bilingual public primary schools. It also states that the Spanish-English bilingual program in Madrid currently ranges from Primary Education to Bachillerato and is also being extended to infant schooling in public schools and some professional vocational education.

As for Castilla La-Mancha, there has been a prolific implementation of different types of bilingual programs in public and private schools since the agreement between the Spanish Ministry of Education and the British Council. As of the academic year 2018/2019, 519 bilingual projects have been implemented across the five provinces of Castilla La-Mancha (Relaño Pastor, 2018). According to the Ministry of Education of Castilla La-Mancha, the Network of Bilingual and Multilingual Centres (*La Red de Centros Bilingües y Plurilingües de Castilla-La Mancha*) regulates bilingual and multilingual projects in the second cycle of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Secondary, Baccalaureate and Vocational Training of

schools supported by public funds from the autonomous community of Castilla-La Mancha. In 2017, '*Plan Integral de Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras de la Comunidad Autónoma de Castilla-La Mancha'* (Integral Plan for the Teaching of Foreign Languages in the Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha) started to be implemented to regulate the comprehensive plan for the teaching of foreign languages of the autonomous community of Castilla-La Mancha. Some of the objectives were to develop a new regulation for teaching foreign languages through CLIL and linguistics and pedagogical training for teachers.

2.3. EFL Teacher Education in Spain

2.3.1. Pre-service EFL Teacher Education

The Spanish higher education system underwent some reforms in 2007 as a result of the Bologna Process, like other European countries. The major goal of this process was to harmonise the academic degree standards throughout European universities by creating the European Higher Education Area. In accordance with the European Commission of Education and Training, Spanish higher education consists of bachelor's degrees (*Grado*) for four-year programs, Master's degrees (*Máster*) for two-year post-graduate programs, and Doctorates (*Doctorado*) for post-master's education. Under this new system, university courses now have *ECTS* (the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) credits, and students typically take 60 of these credits each year (Caraker, 2016). Admission to Spanish universities is determined by the *nota de Corte,* which is a combination of the grade achieved from the Bachillerato exams the students take at school and the average grade (*nota de media*) obtained from the university entrance exam named *Prueba de Acceso a la Universidad* (commonly known as *la Selectividad*) that the students take at a local university. This test also includes an English language proficiency test for all the students, and those who are going to study undergraduate programs related to ELT education or English Philology are evaluated according to this test (Neff et al., 2009).

Regarding the pre-service education of English teachers in Spain, there are two routes university students can take: studying a bachelor's degree in Education or studying English Philology. As for the bachelor's degree in Education, pre-service teachers may choose a general qualification or opt for specialisation in foreign language teaching, arts, physical

education, music, nursery school or special education. There are two types of teacher training degrees: the bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education for preschool teachers (teachers of 0–6-year-old children) and the bachelor's degree in Primary School Education for primary school teachers (teachers of 6–12-year-old children) with a focus on EFL teaching. The two programmes offer a four-year degree and require training at the university and in-school placement at a local preschool or primary school for approximately 24 weeks (Lioua et al., 2020). While the curricula of these teacher training programmes may differ considerably from one university to another, generally speaking, their curricula comprise courses which provide training in the four macro language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), such as *Academic Reading and Writing*, *Listening Comprehension*, and *English Grammar*; foundational courses in General Education, such as *Didactics, Basic Psychoeducational Processes;* and *Developmental Psychology of School Children;* and specialised elective courses in English language teaching pedagogy, such as *English for Education I* and *II*, *Teaching English as Foreign Language I* and *II*, *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL), and *Methodology of Language Teaching* (Vidal, 2006). Those who aim to teach at a secondary school must follow a one-year master's course after obtaining their bachelor's degree. The master's course also requires a six-week in-school placement during which all pre-service teachers participate in school activities under the supervision of a schoolteacher (Lioua et al., 2020).

The other route to becoming an English teacher in Spain is obtaining an English Philology degree from the Department of Modern Languages. The curricula for English Philology include courses which cover the following areas: language awareness (e.g., *English Language I and II* and *Varieties of English*); discourse (e.g., *Pragmatics*, *Textual Analysis* and *Discourse Analysis*), and British and American Literature (e.g., *The British Novel in the 20th Century*, *American Fiction*, and *British Theatre*). Students are also provided with professional training through courses such as *Methodology of Language Teaching*, *Language Acquisition/Learning*, *Curriculum Development*, and *Applied Linguistics,* as most of the students become English teachers upon graduation (Vidal, 2006). Graduates of English Philology degrees are allowed to teach only in secondary education and above, on the condition that they pass a public certification exam (*oposición*) to obtain a post in public sector schools. In all cases, teachers must complete a course in the *Methodology of English*

Language Teaching (Certificado de Aptitud Pedagógica *or CAP*) before they can take employment (ibid.).

Concerning the Spanish university curricula, as previously stated, the central government transferred competencies in education to the autonomous governments; therefore, the university curricula can vary greatly and have become increasingly complex. However, a federal commission called Consejos Sociales de las Universidades Públicas Españolas (Social Councils of Spanish State Universities) regulates the compulsory subjects while each university establishes its own obligatory and elective subjects (Neff et al., 2009).

2.3.2. In-service EFL Teacher Education

Regarding professional qualifications in Spain, teachers of English in Infant Education must have an infant education degree with a level of English of CEFR B2 or higher. To teach English in Primary Education, English teachers must have a degree in primary education and have a level of English of CEFR B2 or higher (Neff et al., 2009). Secondary school English teachers can be graduates of Education, English Studies, and Translation degrees. In all cases, teachers in state schools must pass a public certification exam (*oposición*) and must complete a course in *the Methodology of English Language Teaching* (*CAP*) to obtain a position. This course is organised by an institution dedicated to teacher education within universities called *Instituto de Ciencias de la Educación* (Institute of Education) or by the Departments of Education, Pedagogy, or Psychology (Vidal, 2006). It aims to provide basic psycho-pedagogical and didactic information and to promote teaching practice and reflection. The first phase consists of four seminar courses concerning social, psychological, curricular, and didactic aspects. Once these sessions have been finished, teachers pass on to the second phase of the course: la Formación y la Práctica Profesional en la Escuela Secundaria ('Teacher Development and Teaching Practice at Secondary School'*)*, which lasts a month. The main aim of this practicum is to allow the trainees to gain teaching experience and exposure to the educational reality of schools (Garcia Doval & Sanchez Rial, 2002).

Concerning in-service teacher education, teacher training is seen as both a right and an obligation in Spain since education authorities see teacher development as a crucial factor for the quality of the educational system. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture and

Sport's website, *Institutos de Ciencias de la Educación* (Institutes of Education Sciences, ICEs) or similar institutions called CEPs (Teachers' Centres) organise courses to deal with methodological aspects of each subject in the curriculum. The formats of teacher training sessions can be courses, seminars, conferences, workshops, tutorials/counselling, and stay-abroad programs. Experienced teachers, teacher trainers, and university teacher educators provide guidance and material for all kinds of in-service teacher training (INSET) programmes. More specifically, foreign language teachers are offered courses either over several weeks within the academic year or an intensive week in July or September (Vidal, 2006).

Moreover, there are professional associations in different autonomous communities devoted to teacher training. Centro Regional de Innovación y Formación (Regional Centre for Innovation and Training) is a regional teacher training centre depending on the Ministry of Education of the Region of Madrid. It is dedicated to the training of in-service teachers both at Primary and Secondary levels, Vocational Education and Training, Adult Training and Language Schools. There are eight departments within the Regional Centre for Innovation and Training); School Organization, Counselling and Guidance, Arts Education, Environmental Education, Information and Communications Technology, Vocational Education Training, and Foreign Languages (Vidal, 2006). Similarly, in Castilla La-Mancha, the Regional Centre for Teacher Training (Centro Regional de Formación del Profesorado) offers training opportunities for teachers. According to the Ministry of Education in Castilla La-Mancha, the regional centre works on six types of training: Innovation, Research and Digital Culture; Plurilingualism; Vocational Training; Educational Inclusion and Cohabitation; Physical and Sports Activities, Art, and Creativity; and Teacher Professional Development. The training sessions are planned to cater for the needs of teachers, regional schools, and the goals of the entire educational community.

2.4. The Profile of EFL Undergraduate Teacher Educators in Spain

The formal qualifications for EFL undergraduate teacher educators mainly include a bachelor's degree, but they may also need to obtain a PhD degree depending on the position they aspire to get. They often come from the field of English Studies or Applied Linguistics. Overseas lecturers typically have a more general bachelor's degree, and they then specialize in education in their master's and PhD degrees. Lecturers might also need the

positive evaluation of ANECA (La Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación) depending on the position that is opened. According to the website of ANECA, there are two main positions available in Spanish universities. The first one is *Profesor contratado,* which refers to non-civil servant academic staff and consists of PhD Assistant Lecturer, PhD Lecturer, Non-PhD Assistant Lecturer, and Private University Lecturer. The other category is *Profesor funcionario,* which refers to civil servant academic staff and consists of Senior Lecturers and University Professors.

According to the Royal Decree on University Professor, all university lecturers are subject to evaluation conducted by ANECA, which has responsibility for and authority over all Spanish higher education institutions. ANECA's assessment of academics´ teaching and research performance is a compulsory requirement for hiring by public or private universities and is free of charge. To carry out the evaluation, ANECA has set up two different programmes. The Academic Staff Recruitment Assessment Programme runs for non-civil servant academic staff. Its major goal is to assess academics´ teaching and research performance and this programme's scope of action includes evaluation prior to recruitment by public universities. Private universities must also have at least 60% of their PhD academic staff positively evaluated by ANECA. The ACADEMIA Programme, on the other hand, is run for civil servant academic staff (Senior Lecturers and Professors). The major goal of this programme is to assess the merits and competences of the candidates and to ensure quality when selecting university academic staff to join the University Teaching Bodies.

2.5. Professional Development Initiatives for EFL Undergraduate Teacher Educators in Spain

There are two types of professional development opportunities available to undergraduate EFL teacher educators: state-run and institutional. Regarding macro level initiatives, Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional (the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training) offers grants to lecturers for visits abroad. According to the ministry's website, there are currently two study abroad programmes. The first program is called *el Programa Salvador de Madariaga* (Salvador de Madariaga Program), which is offered to lecturers who have accredited positions at universities. Its primary goals are to promote lecturers' mobility and keep them up to date. The participants receive grants for visits abroad lasting between 3 to 6 months. The other programme is called *el Programa José Castillejo* (*José Castillejo* Program)

and finances early-career lecturers who have completed their PhD degrees and have been recently hired by universities. The programme encourages the mobility of university lecturers and allows them to stay abroad for 3 to 6 months. Another available opportunity is the Erasmus+ program run by the European Commission. According to the official website of Erasmus+, lecturers working in higher education can visit an institution in an Erasmus+ Programme or Partner Country. They are expected to teach in the host university and receive financial support for stays for up to one week.

On the institutional level, the professional development opportunities offered by the two universities relevant to this study are presented. The University of Amarillo in the Community of Madrid offers training sessions to the teaching staff via The Instituto Universitario de Ciencias de la Educación (the Institute of Education Sciences - ICE). The training program of the institute, Programa de Formación del Profesorado, aims to develop the teaching competencies of staff and the quality of teaching within the university. Their sessions are specifically related to teacher training and pedagogical improvement, the promotion and development of educational research and the publishing of its results, and guidance and technical assistance on the educational problems of the University itself in the form of webinars, tutoring hours, and workshops. The two participants, Carolina and Elisabeth, from the University of X have stated that the ICE has also been very active in informing the teaching staff about online teaching over the last couple of months to deal with the changes because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The other university, the University of Rojo, offers lecturers a stay-abroad program called “estancia de investigacion”. These research stays involve the participation of the lecturers in a research project with another lecturer or a research team at the host institution. Lecturers are provided with grants to stay for one semester and are required to make a joint publication at the end of their stay. Ana, the participant from the University of Rojo in Castilla La-Mancha, has been an active participant in this research visit. Finally, both universities offer annual budgets to their staff to attend conferences both at national and international levels. Moreover, they finance innovative teaching practices within a program of “Innovación Docente” (teaching innovation) consisting of “Proyectos de Innovación Docente” (Teaching Innovation Projects) to enhance the pedagogical skills of the teaching staff and the quality of teaching within their programmes. They also encourage the publishing of the results of these projects. Concerning the professional development of EFL

teacher educators, mentioning the development initiatives during the pandemic is necessary since education had to be continued as online education and home-based with almost no physical contact (Azurin, 2020). The abrupt shift to remote teaching and the reinforcement of bimodal teaching led to the acceleration of technological transformation.

Discussing the competencies of university academic staff in Spanish universities, Bozu and Canto (2009) define a profile of lecturers who are flexible and capable of adapting to diverse learning and teaching situations and to the changes that are taking place in society. Situating teaching and research as two crucial roles of university lecturers, they highlight that conducting research plays an influential role in creating innovative knowledge underlying up-to-date teaching practices. The authors also draw attention to the tensions between these two roles since research is usually seen as the “pretty girl” while teaching is the "burden" (p. 90). Despite these tensions, the authors underline that teacher educators should place the student teachers at the centre of teaching practices and must act as facilitators and guides for the student teachers through the evaluation of their work, encouraging group work and tutorials, and guiding their teaching practices. Another comprehensive list has been suggested by Cano (2005), who defines the professional competencies of university teaching staff as the set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to carry out quality teaching and effectively address the problems they encounter. Combining the frameworks suggested by AQU (2002) and ANECA (2004), Cano (2005) suggests a comprehensive list of competencies for university teachers, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Teaching Competencies for University Teaching Staff in Spain (AQU, 2002; ANECA, 2004 in Cano, 2005)

AQU[1] (2002):	**ANECA[2] (2004):**
Specific Competencies: • Scope of knowledge. • Professionally. • Academic field.	**Specific Competencies:** • Disciplinary knowledge (to know). • Professional skills (know to do). • Academic skills.
Transferable Competencies: • Intellectual/cognitive field (reasoning, critical sense).	**Transferable Competencies:** • Instrumental: ability to analyse and synthase; capacity of organization and planning, oral and

[1] Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya
[2] La Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación

• Interpersonal sphere (group work, team, leadership). • Scope of information management • Scope of management (personal skills: planning, liability, etc.). • Scope of values ethical/professional (respect for the environment, confidentiality...).	written communication in the language native; knowledge of a language foreign; knowledge of computer science related to the field of study; information management, problem solving, decision making. • Personal: teamwork, interdisciplinary teamwork, work in an international context, communication and network skills, recognition of diversity and multiculturalism, critical reasoning, and ethical commitment. • Systemic: autonomous learning, creativity to adapt to new situations, leadership, knowledge of other cultures, spirit for initiative-taking and entrepreneurial, motivation for quality, sensitivity to environmental issues.

A review of the lists provided by AQU (2002) and ANECA (2004) shows that both organizations provide a comprehensive list of teaching competencies ranging from subject field knowledge to personal qualities and interpersonal skills. Similarly, other scholars presented lists of competencies for university-level academic staff in Spanish universities. Zabalza (2003), for instance, considers the following competencies vital for higher education academic staff: planning the teaching-learning process, selecting and preparing lesson content, offering understandable and well-organized information and explanations (communicative competence), managing and integrating new technologies, designing the methodology courses and organizing the practical activities, effectively communicating with students, tutoring, evaluating and assessing students' work, reflecting on and investigating teaching practice, and identifying with the institution and working as a team. Similarly, Pozos (2009) presents a list of key teaching skills such as planning and designing learning experiences for student teachers in face-to-face and virtual environments, development, and management of collaborative learning experiences for student teachers, and pedagogical innovation through ICT. Regarding technological competence, Espinosa et al. (2018) provide a comprehensive list of ICT competencies for university staff such as the use of new technology and online resources, integration of technologies in diverse teaching situations, providing the student teachers with enriched learning opportunities with technology, and innovating their pedagogical practices through ICT.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Simply put, it is reasonable to assume that quality teacher preparation depends on quality teacher educators. Yet, almost nowhere is attention being paid to what teacher educators should know and be able to do. – Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013, p. 334

3.1. Introduction

The act of teaching is both private and public. While the public aspect, such as teaching practice in the classroom, is observable and explicit, the private inner worlds of teachers remain unobservable and invisible to other people (Burns et al., 2015). Before the 1980s, the dominant process-product approach to research on teaching and learning resulted in a bulk of studies investigating the causal relationship between teachers' behaviours and students' learning outcomes. By placing the emphasis solely on the observable dimension of teaching, the process-product approach failed to recognise the complexity of teaching and learning. To gain an in-depth understanding of teachers and their teaching practices, it is vital to gain insights into their thinking processes and the contexts within which learning and teaching take place rather than simply describing their behaviours. The realisation that teachers' mental worlds play a pivotal role in shaping their teaching practices has led to a research shift from examining solely teachers' behaviours to researching both their thinking and practices (Borg, 2006). In addition, as Borg (2003) states, the recognition of teachers as critical, reflective, and decision-making professionals who have their own beliefs, theories, attitudes about language learning and teaching resulted in the conceptualisation of teaching as a cognitive process rather than as a discrete series of teaching behaviours and gave rise to the field of 'teacher cognition'.

The major focus of language teacher cognition research is to explicate 'teachers' mental lives' (Walberg, 1972 as cited in Freeman, 2002), also described as "the hidden side of teaching" (Freeman, 2002, p. 1), and to explore the relationship between these inner lives and teachers' professional practices within their teaching contexts (Kubanyiova, 2012). Borg (2003, p. 81) broadly defines 'teacher cognition' as "what language teachers know, believe, and think". As this definition implies, teacher cognition consists of beliefs, knowledge, principles, theories,

attitudes, thoughts, and reflections that teachers have about all aspects of their work. More recently, there has been a growing body of research on the emotional dimension of teachers' inner worlds, "what teachers feel about what they think, know, believe, and do" (Golombek & Doran, 2014, p. 103). The researchers within this emerging trend explore the interaction of emotion and cognition to increase their understanding of teachers' inner worlds and experiences (Golombek, 2015). Overall, theories of language teacher cognition highlight what is internal to a teacher and refer to "the psychological processes through which teachers make sense of their work" (Borg, 2006, p. 7). Borg (2019) re-visits both the theoretical and methodological issues within the field and provides a more up-to-date definition of teacher cognition research: "an inquiry which seeks, with reference to teachers' personal, social, cultural, and historical contexts, to understand their minds and emotions and the role these play in the process of becoming, being, and developing as a teacher" (p. 22). As this definition indicates, teacher cognition research seeks to understand teachers' mental lives by exploring their environment to foster their development. This recent conceptualisation of teacher cognition also acknowledges the shift from the bulk of cognitive work within the field towards a more holistic approach to the study of teachers' inner lives.

Considering this background, this chapter will begin by discussing the importance of conducting research on language teacher educators (Section 3.2.1) and defining their profiles (Section 3.2.2). This will be followed by the presentation of the conceptual framework of the present study (Section 3.3.), a discussion of how teachers' inner worlds have been conceptualised within language teacher cognition research (Section 3.4). This will be followed by an overview of trends in teacher educator learning (Section 3.5) and teacher educators' learning content (Section 3.6). This is followed by a discussion of two broad categories of factors impacting teacher educators' learning (Section 3.7), namely internal and external factors.

3.2. Research on Language Teacher Educators

3.2.1. Why study teacher educators?

Product-based, transmission-oriented models of language teacher education have been heavily criticised, and it is now accepted that language teaching and learning involve complex cognitive and social processes (Burns et al., 2015; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). There is now

a growing interest in developing context-sensitive, holistic, and transformation-based models of language teacher education. Kumaravadivelu (2012) argues that it is time for language teachers and language teacher educators to modify their points of view to meet the requirements of our globalising world. Freeman (2002) proposes that teacher education must be based on the rich, varied, and complex learning-to-teach process, significantly shifting our understanding of teacher education. As Calderhead and Shorrock (2003) conclude, how teachers' work and practice are conceptualised inevitably impacts how teachers must be professionally prepared, eventually leading to the improvement of teacher education.

The European Commission (2013) recognises quality teacher education as a crucial factor impacting the quality of teaching and students' achievements. Consequently, the literature on teacher educators has been growing with more emergent research on teacher educators' identity, skills, roles and professional development (Lunenberg et al., 2014). Teacher educators carry out many complex roles in their roles; however, the current literature highlights that they do not receive enough preparation or professional development opportunities to fulfil these roles (see MacPhail et al., 2019; Tack & Vanderline, 2014). Consequently, teacher education research has started to focus on teacher educators, teachers of teachers, as key actors in improving the quality of teacher education and the significance of teacher educators' professional learning and development (Loughran, 2006; MacPhail, 2011; Swennen & van der Klink, 2009), simply because it is vital to examine the skills and knowledge teacher educators need to do their work and how they might acquire this knowledge. Education for teacher educators seems to consist of induction schemes (Boyd, Harris, & Murray, 2007) and local initiatives such as those in the Netherlands (Lunenberg, 2002), Israel (Shagrir, 2010) and Canada (Kosnik et al., 2011). On the other hand, the growing number of studies on the professional development of teacher educators shows an increasing interest in teacher educators' learning (Dengerink et al., 2015).

Despite the worldwide emphasis on high-quality teacher education, the professional development of teacher educators was neglected until the last decade. While there is booming research on teachers' learning and development (e.g., Borko, 2004; Diaz-Maggioli, 2003; Sprott, 2019), studies on teacher educators' learning and development are still developing (Lunenberg et al., 2014). Murray (2005) highlights that teacher educators are "an under-researched and poorly understood occupational group" (p. 68). However, teacher

educators' experiences, the way they interpret the activities that they engage in, and the contexts within which they work have a great influence on their practice (Johnson, 2006). Moreover, it is pivotal to understand how these processes occur and the knowledge and experience which underlie them (Freeman, 2002) to provide more effective support to teacher educators once they start their teaching careers. Research into teacher educators' learning is significant as it increases our understanding of how they interpret their teaching experiences, process new information about language learning and teaching, and transfer this information into classroom teaching (Johnson, 1994) so that the journey of becoming a teacher educator would be less like "hazing and more like professional development" (Johnson, 1996, p. 48). Finally, research into teacher educators' learning and development may reveal the factors and processes which contribute to or hinder teacher learning (Freeman & Johnson, 1998) because the educational inquiry into these learning and development processes can enhance our understanding of teacher educators' mental lives and how they perceive their practices (Freeman & Richards, 1996). This may be possible by uncovering the cognitive, affective, and contextual elements playing a role in the process of their learning (Kubanyiova, 2007).

3.2.2. Who are EFL teacher educators?

Teacher education is influential in advancing pre-service and in-service teachers' capacities and qualifications. There is extensive literature on the education of future teachers and initial teacher education curriculum aiming to attend to the needs of students and schools (Flores, 2016). For the last decade, research on the work, identity and professional development of teacher educators has been expanding. A review of the current literature, however, reveals divergent conceptualisations regarding who teacher educators are, what they do, and how they develop professionally (Ping et al., 2018).

The European Commission (2013) defines teacher educators as "all those who actively facilitate the (formal) learning of student teachers and teachers" (p. 8). This comprehensive definition refers to a heterogeneous group of educational professionals concerned with teacher training who can work in multiple work contexts, such as within teacher education institutions and school-based mentors. Similarly, Vanassche et al. (2015) underline two main pathways to recruiting teacher educators: school teachers or university researchers. After

recruitment, teacher educators carry out various roles requiring professional learning and development (Lunenberg et al., 2014, Murray, 2010; Swennen et al., 2010;). As suggested by Loughran and Hamilton (2016), they must have intricate knowledge and thinking to make informed decisions and respond to complex circumstances. Compared to in-service teachers who teach English to students at schools, teaching pre-service English teachers in undergraduate programmes requires a different teaching approach (Lunenberg et al., 2014). According to Loughran (2014), the pedagogy of teacher education encompasses two main aspects: learning about teaching and teaching how to teach. Effective teacher education requires a pedagogy where teacher educators must be aware of how student teachers learn about teaching and challenge their preconceptions of teaching and prior language learning experiences. Teacher educators are expected to teach and demonstrate pedagogical aspects by formulating connections between theory, research literature, their everyday experience and student teachers' future teaching contexts. Teacher educators must therefore develop professional competencies concerning the content they teach and the pedagogical practice of teaching this content, the organisational context, and the group dynamics they are embedded in. Moreover, they must embody inter- and intra-personal intelligence and pursue personal growth to be empathetic towards others and be committed to their work (Koster & Dengerink, 2001). Teacher educators are also expected to conduct research and be consumers of research. There is a consensus that effective teacher educators must be critical consumers of research and should base their teaching on the accumulated knowledge and experience of the professional education community (Lunenberg et al., 2014). Another task of teacher educators is mediating between their departments, schools, local communities, and authorities. As a result, their work context comprises their professional backgrounds and their institutional and national contexts (ibid.). As Smith (2003) argues, teacher educators' professional development is not solely about expanding their theoretical knowledge. It is rather about whole-person development with cognitive and affective aspects.

In their review of TESOL teacher educators, Yuan et al. (2020) reveal that language teacher educators were expected to take on various responsibilities and carry out tasks ranging from classroom teaching, practicum supervision, and academic research to program management. These responsibilities meant that teacher educators need to be in contact with various actors

including their colleagues, pre-service teachers, school-based English teachers, school administrations, and educational authorities, to name a few. To advance their professional competence and successfully fulfil their responsibilities, teacher educators are required to seek continuous learning opportunities both individually and collaboratively. As teacher educators are largely described as those who prepare future teachers and engage in the continued professional development of in-service teachers, this study focuses on teacher educators who work in pre-service teacher education programmes (different from school-based mentors).

Considering their various educational and professional backgrounds, professional development for teacher educators is a prerequisite for quality teacher education quality (MacPhail et al., 2019). This study focuses on teacher educators who work in teacher education institutions and are concerned with preparing future teachers for pre-service teacher education programmes. It is essential to add that institution-based teacher educators have different expertise and backgrounds. Teacher educators do not go through formal preparation for their roles as teachers of teachers and, on many occasions, become teacher educators thanks to their expertise in a particular field. Consequently, their personal, educational, and professional experiences, along with their degrees and qualifications, impact their professional development (Tack & Vanderline, 2014). Compared to being an English language teacher, being an English language teacher educator refers to being a teacher of teachers and requires a specific pedagogy of teacher education which is based on an educational research scholarship (Dengerink et al., 2015).

3.3. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

Over the last three decades, teacher thinking has been accepted as a crucial element of classroom teaching, which has led to the acknowledgement of the notion of a *teaching mind* (Burns et al., 2015). Teachers are now acknowledged to think rather than simply do in their instructional practices (Freeman, 1996). A range of terms have been used to describe this thinking – attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, theories, images, assumptions, metaphors, conceptions, perspectives, mental lives, inner worlds – which have collectively been called 'teacher cognition'.

These networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs are practically oriented as they are grounded in some form of practice and expected to exert some influence on practice. Classroom practices shape and are shaped by a wide range of factors among which teacher cognition appears to have the most influential impact (Borg, 2003). In addition, these networks are personally defined since they are personalised by individual teachers as a result of their professional and personal experiences and interactions with their social and cultural contexts (Connelly & Clandinin, 1996). Moreover, these networks are context-sensitive, since they are influenced by the institutional, instructional, and social conditions in which they operate. It is crucial to bear in mind that teachers' decision-making processes are embedded within "complex, socially, culturally, and historically situated contexts" (Johnson, 2006, p. 239) and teachers might need to reinterpret their principles in ways which are relevant to and appropriate for specific local contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

The discussion so far has shown that teachers' inner lives have been conceptualised with reference to such cognitive constructs as beliefs, knowledge, or thoughts. Much research within the language teacher cognition field, however, has conceptualised these cognitive constructs as individual and discrete, which does not fully account for the true complexity of teachers' mental lives. Although the study of individual constructs has provided valuable insights into teachers' mental worlds and practices, it may neglect the wider understanding that teaching is a whole activity consisting of several practical relationships between thinking and action (Kubanyiova, 2012). This may, in turn, creates fragmented teacher activity and depicts isolated understandings (Kubanyiova, 2012). As a result, there has recently been an increasing emphasis on the need to depart from the individualistic cognitive research approach towards a more contextualised understanding of teachers' inner worlds to fully capture the complexity of teacher cognition. To embrace the complex nature of language teacher cognition and its development, "a host of identity-related, dispositional, motivational, and affective factors" (Kubanyiova, 2012, p. 24) need to be taken into consideration along with cognitive and contextual factors.

In this regard, Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015, p. 436) refer to the 'ecologies of teachers' mental lives', which better captures the complexity inherent in this field. They argue for a theoretical shift away from individual psychological constructs studied so far towards a 'bottom-up' approach to language teacher cognition by adopting a broader conceptualisation

of teacher cognition as “emergent sense-making in action” (p. 436). Similarly, Skott (2015) argues that the focus of teacher cognition research should move away from teachers’ beliefs and knowledge towards more dynamic interpretations of situated or contextually embedded knowing and believing in action. Therefore, the focus of research should be on “teachers’ situated, dynamic, and embodied knowing in action” (p. 438) by situating teacher cognition within the contexts of practice and focusing on teachers’ inner lives in terms of the full range of individual processes as well as their individual actions. Overall, recent research indicates a need for a shift away from the previous individualistic ontology toward more holistic, ecological, and situated approaches to teacher cognition.

As a result of the emergent situated approach to teacher cognition research, the significant role of both internal and external influences on language teachers’ practices has attracted more attention in teacher cognition research. The central goal is to uncover how different factors, including what is internal to the individual teacher and external in the social context, impact on teachers’ thinking (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). Although the importance of context (both perceived and external) has already been acknowledged within language teacher cognition research, Kubanyiova and Feryok argue for situating teachers’ inner lives within their larger lives and environments, such as the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which they occur. An additional proposal is conceptualising an understanding of context from a broader perspective since teachers’ mental lives have a dynamic relationship with their immediate micro-contexts, the meso-contexts of local and national educational policies, and the macro-contexts of socio-cultural and political norms (Kubanyiova, 2012).

The principal aim of the present research project is to explore EFL teacher educators’ learning experiences by uncovering the content of their learning and the internal and external factors influencing these learning processes. Exploring individual cognitive constructs such as beliefs and knowledge will evidently provide valuable insights into the participants’ learning experiences for the reasons stated above. However, this study will conceptualise teacher educators’ inner worlds as “a web of interacting and co-adapting beliefs, knowledge networks, identities, emotions, motivations, and future visions” (Kubanyiova, 2012, p. 192). Therefore, instead of investigating individual constructs to explore teacher educators’ mental lives, a more holistic approach will be adopted to capture the complexity of their inner worlds.

The researcher will allow the conceptual scope of the research to emerge from the context investigated instead of determining it in advance (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). In addition, those inner lives will be situated within teacher educators' larger lives and environments, rather than simply focusing on the immediate micro-context of the classroom to gain a fuller understanding of how these broader contexts eventually impact on both participants' inner lives and practices.

3.4. Conceptualising Teacher Educator Learning

Debates over the nature of learning are ongoing and there is no universally agreed definition as there are different views on what this means and what can be accounted for as learning. According to the 'acquisition' perspective, learning is understood to involve the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. The reflections of the positivist tradition have resulted in a view of teacher learning as teachers' mastering the teaching content and the methodologies they use to transfer this content to learners separately (Freeman, 2002). This view of learning, however, has been severely criticised for misrepresenting the complexity of the learning process since teachers do not passively absorb knowledge, but rather interpret new information and experiences through their current beliefs and modify these new ideas according to their existing knowledge and beliefs. Teacher learning, therefore, involves a 'constructive' process (Cobb, 1994). Borko and Putnam (1996) argue that learning entails an active and constructive process which is impacted by learners' existing cognitions and is embedded in various levels of their contexts. The fundamental characteristics of constructivism can be summed up as learning that is active, constructive, goal-oriented, and reflective (Simons, 1993 as cited in Armour & Yelling, 2007). Moreover, Simons indicates that effective learning requires self-regulated, intrinsically motivated, contextual, problem oriented social conditions. The emergence of social constructivism can be traced to the work of Vygotsky (1978), who recognised the significance of working collaboratively for effective learning. Drawing on existing research through a social constructivist lens, Kirk and Macdonald (1998) suggest that learning encompasses a creative and active process and is closely related to individuals' contexts and relationships with others. Thus, a belief in social constructivism suggests that communities of practice (CoP) (Wenger, 1998) are an efficacious instrument for learning. Actually, the desirability of creating CoPs echoes throughout the teacher professional development literature which is

based on the social constructivist learning theories of Vygotsky (1978) and Lave and Wenger (1991).

Three major traditions underlie language teacher education: positivist, progressive, and socio-cultural. The positivist tradition views teacher education as a means of providing teachers with pre-determined knowledge about teaching and learning processes (Lee & Schallert, 2016). In this view, trainee teachers are provided with coursework on theories, skills, and knowledge of teaching, and this is traditionally followed by a teaching practice period in an actual school environment to translate theoretical knowledge into practice (Wideen et al., 1998). The positivist tradition has led to two models of teaching. The first known as the craft model encourages trainee teachers to learn teaching methods by observing and imitating more experienced teachers in practice (Wallace, 1991). Diaz Maggioli (2012) defines this model as 'look and learn', and states that in the craft model of teaching, teacher learning is seen as a process of acquiring a fixed body of knowledge and strategies which can be applied to any teaching situation regardless of contextual factors and students' needs. The second model of teaching is 'read and learn', which heavily emphasises access to relevant teaching literature. This model of teaching assumes that trainee teachers will be able to teach by becoming familiar with theory and putting it into practice in the classroom. Theoretical research on teaching encourages 'one right way of doing teaching' and heavily prescribes what teaching should be like in practice.

On the other hand, the shift from what teachers should know and how they should be trained to acquire this knowledge towards exploring what they know and how that knowledge is acquired (Wideen et al., 1998) led to the progressive tradition. This tradition highlights the knowledge trainee teachers bring to the programme and traces how this knowledge changes throughout teacher education (Lee & Schallert, 2016), thus viewing teacher knowledge as dynamic and evolving (Rodrigues et al., 2018). From this perspective, *learning* can be defined as constructing new knowledge and theory through engaging in specific activities, processes and social contexts (Richards, 2008). This perspective has manifested itself as the 'think and learn' model of teaching with a shifting emphasis from knowing about teaching to reflecting on the effects of teaching. Teachers are now expected to become researchers of their own practice because reflection in and on action leads to better quality teacher learning by allowing teachers to notice gaps in their knowledge and to make sense of their actions

(Diaz Maggioli, 2012). Lastly, the shift from transmission-oriented teacher education practices towards a sociocultural perspective on teacher education led to the development–constructivist models of teacher education (Sanchez et al., 2018). This tradition of teacher education is related to the 'participate and learn' model of teaching, which views the process of learning as a collective endeavour rather than a phenomenon happening in an individual's mind. Teacher learning thus means being an active participant in the activities of a community in which all members of the community theorize their practice and practise their theory through meaningful engagement in meaningful collective teaching and learning. Although these teacher education traditions have been discussed separately for better presentation, it is essential to mention that features from different traditions may often overlap in practice depending on contextual affordances and situational demands. The learning processes discussed so far are categorised as 'formal learning' in the literature since they are arranged and highly structured activities that are consciously undertaken by teachers to learn (Hoekstra et al., 2007) and are typically classroom-focused and institutionally sponsored (Marsick et al., 2006). Formal learning happens in a structured and organised way and particularly designed for learning. It generally brings an official recognition for the learners' point of view (ibid.). It is also important to bear in mind that learning is not restricted to formal teacher education environments. As Borko (2004) states:

> For teachers, learning occurs in many different aspects of practice, including their classrooms, their school communities, and professional development courses or workshops. It can occur in a brief hallway conversation with a colleague, or after school when counseling a troubled child. To understand teacher learning, we must study it within these multiple contexts, taking into account both the individual teacher-learners and the social systems in which they are participants (p. 4).

Learning can thus occur outside formal learning contexts. Two other relevant learning types are informal and non-formal learning. Informal learning refers to instances where there is no explicit programme or structure for learning organised by external actors and learning emerges out of engagement in work activities (Hoekstra et al., 2007) indicating that learners have the primary control over their learning (Marsick et al., 2006). Informal learning can result from daily life activities, it typically does not lead to certification, and it may be intentional

but, in most cases, it is non-intentional (Bjornavold, 2000). There are various types of informal learning in the literature. For instance, Van Velzen et al. (2010) suggest that informal workplace learning can be achieved through close collaboration with colleagues. Learning through participation occurs when teachers participate in social activities (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005). Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that learning happens in communities of practice. The participants in Murray (2008), for example, reported learning from colleagues during daily practice at the micro-level within their department or team. In his study exploring informal learning activities, Lohman (2006) asked participants to report which types of informal learning activities they engaged in. The most highly reported activities were 'talking with others', 'sharing materials and resources with others, and 'collaboration with others'. Another form of collaborative activity is lesson observations, which entail reciprocally watching and critiquing a colleague's teaching (ibid.). Another informal learning opportunity is reflecting on their own practices in a systematic manner (Zeichner, 2007). This can be achieved in the form of investigating everyday classroom practice which will give the teachers opportunities to learn through teaching. Teachers, for instance, may experiment with new techniques in a form of action research and, when they reflect on their experiences, learning may also occur (Kwakman, 2003). Non-formal learning, on the other hand, is defined as "any organised, systematic educational activity, carried on outside the framework of the formal system" (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8) and consists of learning embedded in planned activities that are not explicitly designated as learning, but which contain an important learning element. Non-formal learning may occur in occupational skill training outside the formal system, such as continuing professional development programmes (Eraut, 2000). The distinctive characteristic of each learning type is the outcome of the learning activity. While formal learning outcomes are pre-determined by others, with informal learning, the learners determine the outcomes. These definitions highlight the intention to learn and the structure of learning. The intention to learn explains the centrality of the learner in the learning process, and the structure refers to the context in which learning takes place (Colardyn & Byornavold, 2004).

To better understand teacher educator learning, in this study, teacher learning is not restricted to formal learning situations since, as shown above, learning can unfold in informal and non-formal learning situations as well. According to the 'participation' perspective,

teacher educators' emotional and social concerns as well as their personal experiences and the contexts in which these experiences occur all have an impact on the process of learning (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). It is also accepted that cognition is situated socially and culturally (Murphy, 2003) and, as a result, the social and cultural contexts of new information and experiences influence what teacher educators learn (Feiman-Nemser, 2008). Arguing for a view of learning which situates learning within individuals' social experiences, in this study, learning is conceptualised as "a fundamentally social phenomenon, reflecting our own deeply social nature as human beings capable of knowing" (Wenger, 2009, p. 210) and is accepted to be "complex, contextually specific, autobiographically grounded, and informed by socio-political realities" (Goodwin, 2010, p. 30). Thus, the study seeks to explore the content, processes, opportunities, and challenges related to teacher educator learning to capture its complexity.

3.5. Trends in Teacher Educators' Learning

A review of the literature on teacher educators' education reveals that their preparation appears to be limited to induction programmes (Murray, 2005; 2008) and professional development initiatives, (e.g., Lunenberg, 2002; Shagrir, 2010; Kosnik et al., 2011). The literature on teacher educators' professional development shows that teacher educators' learning has been increasingly acknowledged in policy documents and the research literature (Dengerink et al., 2015). This literature focuses on novice teacher educators (Smith, 2003) or is centred around self-study research by more experienced teacher educators (Zeichner, 2007). Grounded on her experience at a department of education in Israel, Smith (2003) presents a list of professional development activities for teacher educators: (a) higher academic degrees, (b) in-service workshops and seminars outside the teacher education institution (c) staff development inside the teacher education institution (d) feedback on teaching (e) voluntary and forced support and (f) peer tutoring. In a more recent study, MacPhail et al. (2019) add new components to this list such as (a) self-initiated professional development, (b) professional development through collaboration with peers and colleagues, (c) accessing opportunities to improve teacher education teaching practices, and (d) the intricate link between practice and research and improving research skills. A review of the literature on teacher educators' professional development in higher education identifies trends of practice in developing academics' professional knowledge and practice in four main

categories: academic engagement, collaboration, professional development programmes, and practising wellbeing.

3.5.1. Academic engagement

A literature review on teacher educator professional learning reveals that teacher educators' academic engagement entails learning through conducting research and engaging in academic activities. Research is considered an important tool to achieve professional development, improve classroom practices and contribute to the knowledge base of teacher education (Willemse & Boei, 2013). A review of the research on teacher educators' professional development reveals that their research engagement is crucial to their professional development (see Lunenberg et al., 2014). Loughran (2014) points out that being an active researcher is critical to the teacher educator's learning trajectory and takes this further by naming teacher educators' careers as a 'research journey'. He continues that the importance of teacher educators' research engagement stems from their research being instrumental in increasing their knowledge about student teachers' learning and training, improving their teaching practices, and promoting more quality teacher education.

Teacher educators learn through doing research by conducting practitioner research, focusing on improving their practice and academic research, and developing theoretical knowledge (Ping et al., 2018). A systematic overview of the contribution of self-study research to teacher educators' learning demonstrates that conducting a self-study is an effective way of learning for teacher educators since it provides them with opportunities to improve their teaching by reflecting on and analysing their beliefs and assumptions underlying their practice. (see Russell & Russell; 2011 and Zeichner; 2007). An illustrative example is Han et al. (2014), where seven teacher educators came together to explore culturally responsive higher education pedagogy. Their collaborative self-study entailed generating interview questions, interviewing each other, and analysing the interview transcripts and other relevant documents to define being culturally responsive educators and how to enact it in their practice. The teacher educators noted several benefits of being a member of this collaborative self-study group, such as improving their CRP practices, learning various ways of becoming culturally responsive educators, receiving emotional and professional support, and boosting their productivity.

Another type of academic research refers to teacher educators' research engagement to increase their practical research knowledge. The novice teacher educators in Tanner and Davies (2009) attended a research project with more experienced researchers. Through their participation, they received research training which entailed exploring the research focus, writing research proposals, designing investigations, collecting and analysing data, and writing a research paper. Exploring processes of changes in thinking as a tool for learning about professional development, for the teacher educators Ronny and Michelle in Greenfield and Lehman (2007), professional development entailed a learning process and the construction of new knowledge since they expanded their knowledge by learning about and teaching science education and conducting educational research. In another study with teacher educators and research mentors, Griffiths et al. (2010) focused on effective mentoring practices and forms of support for teacher educators. Teacher educators in their study referred to several ways where they either lacked or received research support. Some participants mentioned undertaking master's or doctoral studies and added that they highly valued the formal research training that these programmes provided, especially the contribution of working with supervisors. Teacher educators' research engagement and becoming teacher educator-researcher have been gaining more recognition. Tack and Vanderline (2014) even conceptualised teacher educators' professional development as the development of a 'researcherly disposition' which they defined as "the tendency to engage in research and involves an inclination towards research (affective aspect), an ability to engage in research (cognitive aspect) and a sensitivity for research opportunities (behavioural aspect)" (p. 297). However, research engagement cannot be regarded as an unquestionable part of teacher educators' practice. As discussed in Section 3.2.2., some teacher educators cultivate research expertise by pursuing postgraduate studies or working in an academic department before they become teacher educators. At the same time, others come from school settings with extensive teaching experience but lack research expertise. This lack of research expertise and experience may justify why some teacher educators struggle to perceive themselves as researchers. The review by Lunenberg et al. (2014) also indicates that teacher educators who regard research as part of their work have different views on what it means to be a researcher. For some teacher educators, being a researcher refers to reading published research, while others highlight conducting research into one's practice and disseminating these results in research journals or at conferences.

Therefore, Tack and Vanderline (2014) highlight that what it means to fulfil one's role as a teacher educator-researcher needs clarification.

Teacher educators' academic engagement involves engaging in academic activities such as reading and writing articles and attending academic conferences. For Cochran-Smith (2003), teacher educators' professional development refers to the development of an 'inquiry as stance', indicating a process of systematic inquiry where they problematise and explore their assumptions and construct local and public knowledge responsive to the dynamic contexts they are embedded in. Building on Cochran-Smith's argument, Loughran (2014) suggests that being a teacher educator-researcher indicates that they need to be able to investigate their practices, at least be 'smart' consumers of research, and value the teacher educator-researcher identity. Namely, these two scholars suggest that teacher educator-researchers should conduct research (a) to progress their teaching about teaching and increase their knowledge about teacher education and (b) to increase the knowledge base on teacher education. While the former is connected to Cochran-Smith's concept of being a creator of 'local knowledge', the latter is related to her concept of being a creator of 'public knowledge'. By 'public knowledge, she points out the intentionality of making the 'local knowledge' and its dissemination public to the broader teacher education research community. As Tack and Vanderline (2014) echoed, while teacher educators are expected to improve their practice through self-study/action research (local knowledge), they are also expected to disseminate their research findings to the broader teacher education community. Within the context of a Dutch national project, 'Professional Quality of Teacher Educators,' Koster et al. (2008) analysed the goals, activities, and outcomes of the professional development process of teacher educators. Their findings revealed that reading literature and writing academic articles was their most frequently mentioned professional development activity. Similarly, the respondent teacher educators in Dengerink et al. (2015) rated reading literature very high and stated that they were interested in the more theoretical underpinnings of their work. Moreover, as Castle (2013) highlighted, teacher educators regarded attending conferences as crucial for presenting their ideas, getting feedback from other experts, and discussing with colleagues and experts in their fields. The teacher educators in Livingston et al. (2009) and Kosnik et al. (2015) regarded attending and/or presenting at academic conferences as an important professional development

activity. Similarly, the respondent teacher educators in Castle (2013) listed "conference sessions at AERA, NAEYC, NAECTE" (p. 274) and reading professional conference reports as professional development activities, among many other experiences in which they had studied teacher research. The TESOL teacher educators in Moncada and Ospina (2005) regarded attending or presenting at professional conferences in the EFL field "as a valuable means to learn how to be a better teacher educator" (p. 24). Melisa, for instance, highlighted the importance that "the TESOL Convention, the Qualitative Research Conference at the University of Georgia, and the AERA Conference have had on her professional development" (p. 24).

3.5.2. Collaboration

The situated learning perspective advocates integrating the learning activities where knowledge is built and the broader context in which these activities are situated. In this respect, Lave and Wenger famously proposed analytical lenses through which learning is perceived regarding the mutual relationship between the individual and the contexts where learning is embedded (Wenger, 2007). Within their framework, learning is a constituent element of participation in social practice and an integral part of our social worlds (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 35). In a profession that relies on the ability to work with others, teacher educators perform their daily work within groups that can be referred to as communities of practice (CoPs). Wenger's (1998) CoP theory places emphasis on individuals' learning through social interaction with others. A CoP can be a group of people who are mutually engaged in negotiating a joint enterprise and developing a shared repertoire. The co-participants are joined by a common goal or shared concern (a joint enterprise) negotiated by the community, pursue this shared goal, and learn how to improve their practice (Armour & Yelling, 2007; Deglau & O'Sullivan, 2006). Therefore, the members of a CoP are mutually dependent on each other, and their involvement in the decision-making process defines the community and is equally nurtured by it.

Participating in a CoP is seen as crucial way to improve the quality of teacher education (O'Sullivan, 2008) and provides the co-participants with the opportunity to develop a common understanding of what competence refers in a particular context (Barab et al., 2004). Wenger (1998) defines competence by combining three elements of CoPs.

The first element is *a joint enterprise* that brings members together through shared practices and a common understanding of the community (Barab et al., 2004). The second element is *mutual engagement*, where the members create the community by engaging in shared interaction (Armour & Yelling, 2007). The third element is *shared repertoire*, which stems from the joint enterprise and entails common resources among the CoP members, such as language, habits, artefacts, and stories, for meaning negotiation (MacPhail et al., 2014). Likewise, Eraut (2007) highlights the significance of learning within a group, which is echoed by Cochran-Smith (2003), who underlines "the opportunity to engage in inquiry within a learning community may be a vital part of teachers' and teacher educators' ongoing education" (p. 7). In this professional development project in a teachers' college in Israel, teacher educators first explored, with the support of experts, the theoretical underpinnings and current teaching materials in thinking education to implement this content into their practice. In the next phase, they applied the different thinking routes and patterns they learned in the previous phase to their lessons and recorded their reflections. The final step consisted of collaborative reflection on teacher educators' practices and collectively investigating thinking education and how to implement it in their teaching.

Another form of collaboration for teacher educators is 'getting input from significant others' through interacting with individuals in their work environment. The first group of significant others is their colleagues from their workplace (Ping et al., 2018). In their collaborative action research project, Selkrig and Keamy (2015) demonstrated the importance of trusted colleagues whom the teacher educators called to engage in and provide feedback on their work. Their task was to understand the background of teacher educators' work, make recommendations to improve this work, and analyse the data from a different angle. The authors conclude that teacher educators must move towards critical and transformative aspects of reflection through purposeful and collaborative conversations with others. The student teachers are the other group of significant others. MacPhail (2011), for instance, expressed how grateful she felt for receiving feedback and comments from the trainee teachers. She stated that she always seeks pre-service student teachers' feedback throughout a module to inform the future focus and adapt instruction to meet their needs, which revealed what was working well and showed what needed improvement. Kosnik et al. (2015) highlight that feedback from student teachers is vital for early career teacher educators to assess their

teaching. On the other hand, more experienced teacher educators often observe the students' growth to assess the effectiveness of their teaching through their assignments and classroom discussions. The teacher educators also highlighted that student feedback or course evaluations often did not add to the effectiveness of their teaching since some were personal critiques while others were effusive.

Mentors, often more experienced colleagues, are the last group of significant others for teacher educators, particularly at the beginning of their careers. In a self-study exploring elements of her professional development as a pre-tenured teacher education professor, Chitpin (2011) collaborated with a mentor to create an online course which entailed having weekly meetings to discuss the aims and principles of the planned online teaching, the teaching materials, and course assignments. Chitpin (2011) concludes that mentoring provides mentees with practical support that helps them gain self- confidence, solve problems, and apply critical thinking skills to situations affecting student learning. Fletcher (2000) further argues:

> Mentoring means guiding and supporting the trainee to ease through difficult transitions; it is about smoothing the way, enabling, and reassuring, as well as directing, managing, and instructing. It should unblock the ways to change by building self-confidence, self-esteem, and a readiness to act as well as to engage in ongoing constructive interpersonal relationships. Mentoring is concerned with CPPD (continuing personal as well as professional development) and not just continuing professional development. In the process, personal and professional values come under scrutiny and are subject to change (p. 8).

Relatedly, Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed *legitimate peripheral participation* to explain the interaction between new members, called “newcomers” (p. 12), and veteran members, referred to as “old-timers” (p. 12) in a CoP. As newcomers have access to exemplary members of the CoP, they learn what it means to be a mature practitioner within the group and reconstruct their identities by observing the mature practitioners. Through their participation, the "newcomers" get acquainted with

traditional practices while exploring new practices, transforming the community (ibid.).

Another collaborative aspect of teacher educators' work is their reflections. Reflection is a critical component of teacher education and an essential tool in developing teacher educators' professional competence. Therefore, Loughran (2002) argues that reflection is fundamental when professional development is conceptualised as learning through practice. Collaborative reflection refers to experiences where reflection occurs with others, whether as a planned activity or sharing a personal reflection. Capobianco (2007), for instance, recorded her reflection on a newly designed pedagogy course in her self-study. Next, she read her reflection to pre-service teachers to prompt them to reflect on their learning and ultimately make them realise the importance of reflection. Garcia et al. (2007) followed a different procedure to reflect on their past teaching experiences to link theory and practice. First, the teacher educators discussed past classroom events and detected critical incidents. The next step was critically analysing these episodes and applying theory to interpret them. These analyses led to new insights that the teacher educators attempted to validate in practice.

3.5.3. Professional development programmes

Teacher educators attend professional development programmes to improve their research expertise. Roberts and Weston (2014) investigate a writing support programme initiative for teacher educators and analyse its impacts. The teacher educators in their study attended a research skill-based workshop series to understand how to choose research topics, develop a research plan, and write for publications. They highlight how “a tailored intervention, with a focus on professional development rather than explicit and pressurised demand for publication, may be a useful strategy for increasing teacher-educator engagement in the academic writing process” (p. 713). Another important study is White et al. (2014), who studied the construction of their academic identities during an academic writing programme they attended to advance their academic writing skills. Four academics in a School of Education in the UK designed and delivered 'The Writing Support Programme', which comprised access to individual coaching with colleagues, recurring writing sessions and

writing retreats, organising seminars and publishing newsletters to present their research projects. The authors conclude that their engagement with communities of practice has been significant in developing their professional knowledge and academic identities. They also highlight the importance of self-initiated professional development for teacher educators to support their self-discovery journeys. Another research-focused project was conducted by Lunenberg et al. (2011), who ran sessions to train teacher educators to examine their teaching. The teacher educators had meetings, and their collaboration entailed guided reflection, learning about self-study research, conducting their self-studies, and being a member of this community of practice. The authors collected journal entries and conducted interviews to explore whether the self-study process contributed to participants' professional identity development. Their findings show that through their engagement in self-study research, the teacher educators in their study increased their theoretical knowledge and enhanced their self-confidence.

Another type of professional development programme, educational professional development programmes, is concerned with providing teacher educators with opportunities to support specific aspects of their profession. A review of the literature on teacher educator professional development reveals that a relevant aspect is the induction programmes for novice teacher educators. An exemplary study is Shagrir (2010), who investigated a one-year induction programme for eleven novice teacher educators in Israel. The induction programme entailed working closely with an experienced coordinator with background in teaching about teaching and with an academic coach. Through lectures and workshops, novice teacher educators were given opportunities to connect theory and practice, reflect on issues in their teaching, and discuss challenges they experienced in their work. Another relevant activity for teacher educators is attending faculty development workshops. Teclehaimanot and Lamb (2005) examined a professional development workshop for supporting teacher educators in relation to ICT integration at the faculty level. The workshop sessions entailed providing theoretical background about technology integration, providing good examples of useful approaches, and offering opportunities for teacher educators to experiment with different technological tools in their practice. Thanks to their engagement in this three-year-long

professional development programme, the faculty members from different subjects designed course syllabi that demonstrated technology use, integrated technology into their courses, and became better prepared to meet the challenge of integrating technology to enhance student learning.

3.5.4. Practising Wellbeing

Teaching can be a stressful job, and higher education is no exception. Various circumstances lead to stress for university teacher educators, such as excessive workload, long working hours, job insecurities, and pressure to conduct research and publish (Talbot & Mercer, 2018). Lee et al. (2016) assert that teachers go through various emotions in their daily practice, and how they manage these emotions is pivotal for their own emotional wellbeing and professional performance in educational settings. Golombek and Doran (2014) suggest that language teacher education focuses on interpersonal connections and brings together personally meaningful content and identities, which can be emotionally demanding. Mercer (2020) adds that language teacher education is contingent on further stressors like linguistics and intercultural demands and the recurrent practical demonstrations and methodologies. Hiver (2017) acknowledges the significance of language teachers' psychological wellbeing of language teachers. He uses the term 'teacher immunity', and connects it to teachers' psychological, emotional, and cognitive functioning in language classrooms. He emphasises how "language teachers sustain their adaptivity, openness to change, psychological wellbeing, and their sense of purpose and investment in students' learning" (p. 669). Talbot and Mercer (2018), for instance, investigated what strategies language teachers utilise to realise their emotional wellbeing. Conducting interviews with EFL/ESL tertiary-level teachers in Japan, the United States, and Austria, they show that their participants used two main emotional wellbeing strategies; strategies (a) to adapt to negativity or negative events (such as cognitive reappraisal, downward social or self-comparison, and problem-directed action) and (b) to increase or lengthen positivity or positive events (savouring and gratitude).

According to Deci and Ryan (2008), there are two wellbeing approaches; hedonic and eudemonic. Hedonic approaches, also extensively referred to as subjective wellbeing, can be defined as pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain. On the other hand, eudemonic approaches

focus on meaning and self-realisation, relying on individuals' resources for their growth (Mercer, 2020). Deci and Ryan (2008) assert that subjective wellbeing is related to and appraised by the individual. On the other hand, Mercer (2020) argues that wellbeing is also objective and social in addition to having a subjective nature. In this vein, Gillet-Swan and Sargeant (2014) highlight wellbeing as a capacity to manage difficult circumstances and significantly impact an individual's emotional, physical, and mental conditions. Following a holistic teacher wellbeing model comprising personal, professional, and social aspects, Aelterman et al. (2007) reinforce that teachers' social support systems play an important role when they are facing challenging situations impacting their personal and/or professional wellbeing. They add that teachers' personality traits and personal experiences impact their sense of wellbeing and how teachers endure social demands and teaching requirements. Examining the role of social support as potential mediator between perceived emotional intelligence (PEI) and life satisfaction in a sample of 123 Spanish teachers, Rey and Extremera (2011) reveal that PEI scores had a significant direct effect on life satisfaction. Similarly, Cook et al. (2017) confirm that having high levels of teacher wellbeing reduces the perception of stress and improves teachers' self-efficacy. As echoed by Jin et al. (2021), teachers need to be well to teach well, and in order to be well, they must be consistently supported to feel empowered and to teach to the best of their abilities. Therefore, Mercer (2020) argues that teacher wellbeing should be examined from multiple holistic perspectives, focusing on social relationships and how teachers' personal and professional lives interact.

3.6. Teacher Educator Learning Content

Section 3.5 dealt with 'how' teacher educators learn, and the discussion will now turn to 'what' teacher educators learn, more precisely, teacher educators' knowledge base. The current literature will be presented under three main categories: knowledge for teaching, pedagogy of language teacher education, and research knowledge.

3.6.1. Knowledge base for teaching

Regarding the knowledge for teaching, Goodwin's (2010) typology supports an "integrated, inquiry-based, and holistic" (p. 22) teacher learning and teaching and encompasses five

knowledge domains.

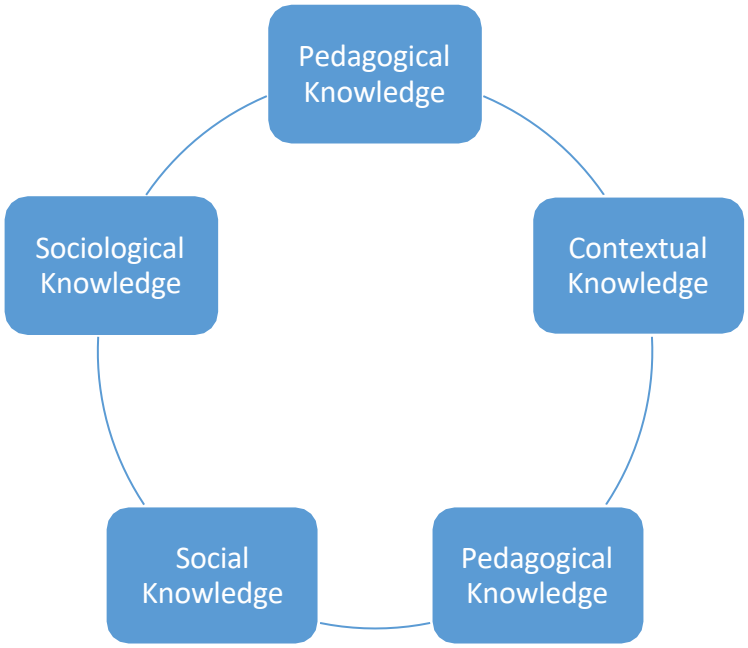

Figure 1: Five domains of teacher knowledge (Goodwin, 2010)

Personal knowledge refers to teachers' autobiographies and experiences accumulated over their lifetime, influencing their teaching philosophies. Before Goodwin (2010), Connelly and Clandinin (1996) highlighted that teaching knowledge consists of both pedagogical and personal knowledge. Goodwin (2010) referred to this as prior knowledge of teaching before entering a teacher education program: ''every student who enters a teacher preparation program has been through a laboratory in teaching and is filled with all manner of expectation, preconceived notion, implicit theory, assumption, and belief about teaching, learners, teachers, and schools'' (p. 22). She further suggests that teachers must draw on their personal knowledge, prior learning experiences, the teacher training curriculum, and the

Practicum and reconstruct these to derive personal meaning. In other words, "teacher preparation is a *transition* between what one has been in the past and will be in the future" (p. 23). As a result, teachers' life histories and previous life experiences lay the foundation for their teaching practice since personal knowledge has ''the power to shape their decision-making and pedagogical choices.

Contextual knowledge starts with the immediate classroom environment. Shulman (1986) has already highlighted the significant impact of contextual knowledge on teachers' practice. Goodwin (2010) extends the scope of contextual knowledge by stating that contextual knowledge comprises not only students' families and communities but also political, historical, structural, and cultural knowledge at the macro level. Goodwin pinpoints a conceptualisation of context beyond a sense of position or place and suggests that "contextual knowledge propels teachers beyond subject or instructional strategy to examine learners' needs as nested within multiple socio-cultural-economic-political locations" (p. 24). This has been echoed by Purdy and Gibson (2008), who state that teaching goes beyond the narrow boundaries of subject knowledge towards an understanding of and engagement with the learners in their social context. Investigating the common traits of a good teacher educator, Smith (2005) collected data from novice teachers and teacher educators. The findings show that one of the surprising points was the ability to communicate effectively. The participants expressed that a good teacher educator should have appropriate social skills to collaborate effectively with other educators and stakeholders. Similarly, in their study on the teacher educator induction period, Patrizio et al. (2011) demonstrated that novice teacher educators emphasised familiarising themselves with their institutional culture and how to interact with different actors in their departments. They underlined the skills to effectively communicate and collaborate with their colleagues as an essential component of the teacher education profession.

Sociological knowledge refers to diversity, cultural relevance, and social justice. Gonzalez et al. (2005) pinpoint the idea of sociological knowledge and its importance to teaching. They illustrate the concept of sociological knowledge through the idea of 'funds of knowledge', which accentuates the diverse knowledge rooted in students' knowledge that they bring to the classroom. In the age of globalisation, Goodwin (2010) reemphasised the notion of diversity by highlighting those teachers are more likely to encounter students from different

cultures and national backgrounds since "diversity is no longer out there but right here" (p. 26). Teachers should be aware of children's diverse cultural backgrounds, respect them, and adapt teaching strategies to cater to them are what Goodwin called sociological knowledge. Goodwin expanded on the importance of reshaping teachers' knowledge about diversity in their practice as follows:

> New teachers will need to confront their fears, prejudices, and misconceptions if they are to teach children of all races and ethnicities, children who have disabilities, children who are immigrants, migrants, refugees, (English) language learners, gay and lesbian, poor, academically apathetic, homeless, children who are different from them as well those who mirror them, and so on. (p. 26).

Social knowledge of cooperative, democratic group processes and conflict resolution refers to "the ability to participate effectively in democratic, cooperative groups is essential to teachers who are going to exert leadership in the field" (Goodwin, 2010, p. 27). Teachers need to be good at communicating with both individuals and groups, noticing the dynamics at play with each. Moreover, when teachers have experience and knowledge of "democratic group processes [they] will naturally create classroom settings where cooperation, fairness, mutuality, and equality are the norms" (p. 27). Therefore, Zeichner (2005) points out that teacher educators should be aware of socio-political debates in teacher education, such as the goals of teacher training programs and the theoretical and political issues concerning learning to teach.

Pedagogical knowledge refers to teachers' ability to explore a situation, critically assess learners' needs, and develop appropriate pedagogies in addition to adapting the existing materials according to students' specific contextual, academic, or personal needs. Goodwin (2010) argues that in our global world, learners come from different backgrounds; therefore, teaching and learning should be innovative and diversified. Teachers must evaluate students' needs, explore their environment, and adopt suitable approaches to cater to their context. To achieve that, Goodwin highlights that teachers should be able to transfer the pedagogical knowledge they have acquired in formal teacher education training to different teaching contexts with the help of other knowledge domains.

Regarding the knowledge base of language teacher education, scholars pinpoint that what counts as knowledge should be field-driven (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 2009;

Wallace, 1991). A contextually situated understanding of five relevant areas has been suggested: (a) content (role, features, and nature of English use today), (b) teachers (e.g. teacher identity, emotions, cognitions, agency), (c) learners (their prior experiences, motivations, reasons to study English), (d) pedagogy (how English is taught), and (e) language teacher education pedagogy, which is related to specific contexts and actors (Freeman, 2020; Johnson & Golombek, 2020; Le, 2020). The knowledge base of EFL teacher educators consists of theoretically informed and historically and culturally situated subject-specific knowledge and language teacher education pedagogy (Peercy et al., 2019). Goodwin's typology of knowledge for teaching aligns with ELT teacher educators' disciplinary, situational, and personal knowledge but lacks in addressing the pedagogy of teacher education, which will be discussed next.

3.6.2. Pedagogy of language teacher education

The first relevant aspect is 'learning about teaching', which is related to mastering the expertise and skills about how to teach (which have been presented in the previous section) and how student teachers learn to teach and concerns the knowledge and skills teacher educators need for teaching student teachers and supporting their learning (Ping et al., 2018). Loughran (2014) underlines that teacher educators must explore and cater to pre-service teachers' needs, beliefs, identities, and concerns and follow the development and reconstruction of their practices during their training experiences. In their exploratory study of five novice educators, Harrison and McKeon (2010) show how teacher educators' perceptions of their student teachers and their learning changed over time. The authors investigated teacher educators' teaching trends, precisely their growing pedagogical reasoning and how their teaching approaches align with the construction of professional identities. The findings demonstrate that the teacher educators started to perceive the pre-service teachers as reflective practitioners, which helped them better understand student teachers' 'learning to teach' processes and come up with strategies to support them better.

Another relevant theme is 'teaching about teaching' which suggests that teacher educators must explicate the pedagogical assumptions underlying their teaching practices to themselves and their student teachers. Johnson and Golombek (2020) underline that language teacher educators should make explicit "their motives, intentions, goals, and ideologies when designing, sequencing, and enacting LTE [language teacher education] pedagogy", which will enable them to "develop greater self-awareness and expertise to better support the teachers with whom they work" (p. 6). Role modelling is one of the approaches implemented by teacher educators when making explicit assumptions underlying their teaching to student teachers. For instance, Loughran and Berry (2005) used co-teaching to explain the goals and rationale underlying their teaching behaviours to their student teachers. This process entailed one of the teacher educators teaching the lesson while the other observed and examined the teaching behaviour. The teacher educators were engaged in a dialogue to explain the dilemmas and challenges they experienced in their teaching and how they would mediate these problems, which allowed the student teachers to develop their ability to reflect on these issues in their future teaching practices. Another noteworthy example is Allard and Gallant (2012), who conducted a self-study where they investigated the

ways they explained the underlying pedagogical reasons behind their teaching to student teachers and described the tensions they experienced. For instance, while the authors desired to demonstrate the 'what' and 'why' of their teaching practices, they also aspired to provide the student teachers with ample opportunities to contemplate and come to their conclusions. This dilemma has been echoed by Berry (2009), who shared that teacher educators need to "learn how to balance (...) desire to tell prospective teachers about teaching and to provide opportunities for prospective teachers to learn about teaching for themselves" (p. 312).

3.6.3. Research knowledge

Research knowledge refers to teacher educators' research expertise and capacity to conduct research and comprises the theoretical and methodological knowledge of research methodology, methods, and data analysis (Ping et al., 2018). Collecting data from 28 literacy teacher educators from Canada, the U.S., England, and Australia, Kosnik et al. (2015) asked their participants what knowledge they needed for their work. Their findings reveal that the teacher educators highly esteemed research knowledge, and they were research active in the form of conducting research, reading empirical articles, and integrating their research knowledge into their teaching practices. Czerniawski et al. (2017) found that the teacher educators in their study needed to improve their research skills, particularly in writing, research methodology and methods, research ethics, and data analysis. The participants needed assistance with the practical aspects of conducting research, such as improving their theoretical background of different research methodologies, accessing research, locating research opportunities, establishing a research portfolio, and writing for the 'right' journals. Morever, they needed guidance about extending their research profile beyond their institutions and contributing to national-level research frameworks. Other studies (e.g., Castle, 2013; Griffiths et al., 2010; Harrison & Mckeon, 2010) displayed that teacher educators' research capacity entails creating a theoretical framework, forming research questions, developing a research design, choosing appropriate research methods, analysing the data, and disseminating research findings.

The language teaching literature shows that research is now integral to language teacher educators' professional work and development. Johnson and Golombek (2020) suggest that a self-inquiry dimension will enable language teacher educators to make explicit their motivations, goals, and ideologies when designing, sequencing, and enacting language

teacher education pedagogy and ultimately broaden their self-awareness and expertise to better support language teachers. One of the studies investigating language teacher educators' research practices is Banegas (2020), who conducted action research with pre-service English teachers taking his English-as-a-medium- of-instruction linguistics course. Challenged by how to deliver this compulsory course in English to low-level English language student-teachers, the author collected data through journals, teaching and learning artefacts, and group interviews. Through ongoing data collection and analysis cycles, Banegas adapted his teaching, improved student teachers' English language proficiency, increased their understanding of linguistics and linked the acquired knowledge to their future teaching practice. In their collaborative action research, Yuan and Mak's (2016) investigated the professional experiences of school-based English teachers in China. Their findings demonstrate that the teacher educators had three significant challenges, 'the invisible wall' between the researchers and the language teachers, challenges in directing teachers towards research, and difficulties in encouraging the sustainability of action research on language teachers' professional work and continuing development. The language teacher educators mediated these challenges by actively negotiating with the language teachers, helping them develop their reflective abilities and promoting the influence of their action research.

A relevant theme to teacher educators' research knowledge is their research identities, which refers to the development of their professional role as a researcher and their awareness of or engagement in research (Ping et al., 2018). For instance, McGregor et al. (2010) investigated the development of the professional role as 'teacher educator-researchers' of a cohort enrolled at the Educational Doctorate (EdD) at the University of Wolverhampton. The authors demonstrated how their pedagogic practice, the Enquiry Design (ED5002) module, supported teacher educators' understanding of research and the development of their researcher identity through a socially mediated process of questioning and reflecting on their teaching practices. On the other hand, Griffiths et al. (2010) highlighted that it was difficult for teacher educators to develop a researcher identity. Their findings revealed barriers and challenges that inhibited teacher educators' research identity development, such as distinguishing their work in teacher education and doing research separately.

Diaz Maggioli states that teacher knowledge is the product of the interaction of teachers with other actors involved in the teaching and learning process and is "dynamic and in constant flux" (2012, p. 18), unfolding through enactment in real classroom situations and at times in the teachers' professional and personal history, rather than as a static construct in an individual's mind. While researchers separate teachers' knowledge into categories to define and describe it, it is vital to bear in mind that these aspects have a complex nature and are interrelated in actual practice. The complexity of what teachers learn is a significant point, and as suggested by Wilson and Berne (1999), "the 'what' of teacher learning needs to be identified, conceptualised, and assessed" (p. 203). After discussing teacher educators' knowledge base, the factors influencing teacher learning will be discussed in the following section.

3.7. Influential Factors on Teacher Educator Learning

3.7.1. Internal Factors

So far, it has been shown that the conceptualisation of teaching as a cognitive process rather than discrete teaching behaviours led to the realisation of the importance of teacher educators' mental lives. As I argue for a holistic approach to capture the complexity of teacher educators' mental lives instead of studying discrete constructs individually, in the interest of presenting the current literature, internal factors influencing teacher educators' learning will be discussed.

Teachers do not enter teacher education programs as a 'tabula rasa' since their learning-to-teach journey begins before they become teachers (Freeman, 2002). Unlike many other professions, pre-service teachers can spend thousands of hours observing their teachers teach in the classroom as schoolchildren before they begin their teacher education programmes (Borg, 2004). This observation period during teachers' prior learning experiences plays a crucial role in shaping their personal beliefs about teaching and learning, which, in turn, impact their perceptions and future teaching practices (Freeman & Richards, 1996). Lortie (1975) defines this period of observation as the 'apprenticeship of observation' and observes that what student teachers learn in their teacher education programmes is filtered by their prior learning experiences. These learning experiences are ultimately transformed

into beliefs about how languages are learnt and how they should or should not be taught. These beliefs influence the way teachers conceptualise their teacher education content and may have a substantial impact during their teaching careers (Borg, 2003). However, it is also essential to remember that the apprenticeship of observation may limit the trainee teachers' perspectives since they only "see the teacher front-stage and centre like an audience viewing a play" (Borg, 2001, p. 274). As a result, they may fail to appreciate the 'backstage' behaviours, which are a crucial part of a teacher's job, and may overgeneralise from their own previous experiences (ibid.). This overgeneralisation is typically revealed in statements such as "I learned this way, so this must be the best way to learn" and "my teachers taught this way, and I learned; therefore, it must be the best way to teach" (Anderson et al., 1995, p. 151). However, Diaz Maggioli (2012) proposes that these "fixed images of teaching and learning" (p. 20) need to be disclosed and questioned during teacher-education processes so that new understandings about teaching and learning can be built (ibid.). At this point, Kolb states that teachers should be involved as fully as possible in new experiences, reflect on their new experiences from different angles, and develop ideas and theories to be applied and solve problems. Thus, "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38 as cited in Roberts, 2016, p. 38). According to Johnson (2006), this would translate into exploring how teachers' mental lives and practices inform one another and how this transformative process informs teachers' work.

Another influential theme is teachers' beliefs, which are thought to be one the most influential factors in teachers' decision-making, instructional activities, and student learning (Johnson, 1994). Despite the emphasis on the importance of exploring teachers' beliefs, the notion of 'belief' is not easily defined, and there is no consensus about an explicit definition in the field (Skott, 2015). In an attempt to clear up the 'messiness' of the construct of beliefs, Pajares (1992) describes them as "an individual's judgement of the truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgement that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend, and do" (p. 316) while Murphy and Mason (2006) state that beliefs are "all that one accepts or wants to be true" (p. 306). Summarising common features of beliefs, Borg (2001) suggests that a 'belief' is "a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and

behaviour" (p. 186). Borg (2017) suggests that beliefs are accepted to be organised in systems resulting in a "complex, multidimensional concept" (p. 77) which consists of various dimensions such as learners, curriculum, teaching, learning, professional development, and self (Li, 2017). Teacher beliefs are generally associated with a particular situation and context and, consequently, can be better understood if explored as emergent from context. They are also personalised since these beliefs are formed as a result of teachers' experiences and interactions with their social and cultural context (Connelly & Clandinin, 1996). In this regard, it can be said that beliefs have an interpretive and reflective nature, which has subsequent impacts on action and practice (Borg, 2003). Beliefs can also act as filters through which teachers learn to teach, how they approach new information, and how this new information is translated into actual classroom environments (Richardson, 1996). Beliefs are often seen as an 'explanatory principle' for teachers' work (Skott, 2015), providing a basis for action (Borg, 2011), thus significantly impacting how teachers interpret and engage with their practice and resulting in a bi-directional relationship between beliefs and practice (Li, 2017). In short, teachers' beliefs, whether consciously or unconsciously held, are personal, affective, and evaluative; they operate in a complex, multidimensional system; and exist in a bi-directional relationship with teaching practices. Moreover, teachers' beliefs also have an impact on their professional development, the way they approach it, what they learn from it, and how they change as a result (Richardson, 1996). Loughran (2014) accentuates that teacher educator beliefs need to be acknowledged when studying professional development since they play a crucial role in explaining behaviour and constructing new knowledge. Loughran adds that identifying and studying their values and beliefs entails a personal journey for teacher educators, which is different from addressing others' beliefs and values. Studying the values underlying his practice, for example, Russell (2007) describes how he confronted the "default settings", concluding that "listening to students was a value that became an active part of my teaching . . . [it] required listening to my students and asking them to play back to me the effects of my teaching on their learning" (p. 184). Exploring the concerns, values, and beliefs of Finnish teacher educators, Maaranen et al. (2019) found that the teacher educators highly valued their students (the most frequently mentioned topic during the interviews), their research practices, their community, and their own expertise. The teacher educators in their study identified several significant matters, such as their values and enthusiasm for the profession, their professional community, including students, interaction and collaboration,

and teacher education. Their participants believed that being a teacher educator was valuable thanks to the importance of their subject and expertise, but they also contemplated research and research-based teacher education. Studying the journey of five beginning teacher educators, McKeon and Harrison (2010) concluded that teacher educators must make their teaching goals clear to both themselves and their students so that what they do reflects the thinking and intentions directing their practice.

Going back to the socio-cultural stance this study adopted, “knowledge of and for second language teaching is not, and cannot be, separated from the individuals who both internalise and enact it in the settings in which they live, learn, and work” (Johnson & Golombek, 2016, p. 12). Therefore, another significant internal theme relevant to teacher educators’ professional development is the development of L2 teacher identity. Language teacher cognition research conceptualises teacher identity as a fundamental component of what teachers know and do in the language classroom (Kanno & Stuart, 2011) since there is an “inextricable relationship between teacher identity and classroom practice” (ibid. p. 250). According to Wenger (2007), *social practice entails* engagement in activities with shared meaning for the community members. On the other hand, *identity* refers to the perception individuals construct of themselves in social settings. Therefore, relationships and identity are interwoven, and they impact one's perception of our position within the social context. Wenger (1998) asserted that learning is the vehicle to progress practices and to develop and transform identities.

There are two relevant sub-categories, namely, teacher educator identity and researcher identity. The former refers to teacher educators' role of being a teacher of teachers training student teachers, and the latter refers to their role as a researcher with research awareness or active engagement (Ping et al., 2018). Sharplin (2011), for instance, found that, although it was challenging at times, maintaining and combining her professional roles as a school teacher and a teacher of teachers proved to be useful for linking theory and practice in her teaching as a teacher educator. In their self-study, Williams and Ritter (2010), for instance, tracked their professional learning and identity development as novice teacher educators who transitioned from secondary school. Their findings revealed that they gradually transitioned out of their classroom teacher identities and into their new professional identity as a teacher of teachers. They conclude that the self-study community of practice they

engaged in was instrumental in assisting the progress of their new professional identities, and they "strongly believe that collegiality, conversation and collaboration in multiple forums is essential for the professional development of new teacher educators like us—and indeed, for all teacher educators" (p. 90). Similarly, Golombek and Doran (2016) highlight that teachers naturally go through contradicting experiences due to contextual situations. Mediating such contradictions in their identities requires a process of unifying their emotion, cognition, and activity of teaching within the practices of L2 teacher education. Roth (2007) suggests that identity is closely related to motive and emotion, indicating that emotion and motive are pivotal in understanding identity formation.

While there is a substantial body of research on the role of 'apprenticeship of observation', 'beliefs' and even 'teacher knowledge' (Borko & Putnam, 1996), Sutton and Wheatley (2003) argue that there is little research on the role of 'emotions' in the process of learning to teach, despite the fact that teaching is naturally an 'emotional endeavour' (Bullough & Young, 2002). Recently, emotions have been recognised as one of the three central elements of mental operations, together with motivation and cognition. Emotions can be either positive or negative; teachers usually experience positive emotions when they make progress toward a goal, while negative emotions may arise from sources related to goal incongruence (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Teachers' emotions may influence their intrinsic motivation, efficacy beliefs, and goals. Negative emotions resulting from challenging and frustrating experiences often reduce teachers' intrinsic motivation; conversely, positive emotions are necessary for increased intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Moreover, Bandura and Locke (2003) claim that emotions also influence individuals' efficacy perceptions of their capabilities to plan and implement necessary actions to complete planned types of performance. Beliefs of personal efficacy are the central mechanism of the human agency since they stem from the core belief that an individual has the power to produce desired results; otherwise, one would have little incentive to act or to persevere when faced with difficulties. Self-efficacy beliefs affect whether individuals think in self- enhancing or self-debilitating ways, the quality of their emotional well-being, and the decisions they make at critical points (ibid.). Furthermore, emotions might shape teachers' goals. According to Locke and Latham (1990), emotions influence individuals' choice of goals, with positive emotions leading to the choice of more ambitious goals.

Individuals proactively self-regulate over their own functioning by setting challenging goals and using their internal resources to fulfil those goals (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Emotions come out as teachers make decisions, act, and reflect on different teaching purposes, methods, and meanings (Zembylas, 2005), and they are inextricably linked to teachers' lives (Hargreaves, 2000); therefore, understanding teachers' emotions is essential in understanding teachers and teaching (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Accordingly, exploring how emotions shape (or are shaped by) the process of learning to teach may offer fresh insights about teachers and teaching and ultimately lead to new approaches for supporting teacher learning and aiding school improvement efforts (ibid.).

To sum up, the discussion of the internal factors reveals that while researching teacher educator learning and development, besides cognitive and contextual factors, "a host of identity-related, dispositional, motivational, and affective factors" (Kubanyiova, 2012, p. 24) need to be taken into consideration. In this regard, I argue that it is crucial to understand the complexity and interaction between networks of knowledge, thoughts, beliefs and emotions rather than studying these constructs in isolation from each other. This is because the inquiry into the process of learning is not only related to how teacher educators acquire and develop knowledge and skills but rather to their experiences of their context, including the challenges and frustrations that impinge on them and how they experience the real world of teaching, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.7.2. External Factors

According to sociocultural theory, learning is a lifelong process, and teacher learning is closely related to social activities and environments that teachers engage with (Johnson, 2006). Johnson (2006) states that learning to teach "entails lived practices […] and the processes of learning are negotiated with people in what they do, through experiences in the social practices associated with particular activities" (p. 237). Knowledge does not pour into a teacher's brain from the outside in, but individual teachers mediate from socially mediated activity to internal mediational control, transforming both the self and the activity they are involved in (ibid.). Thus, teacher learning involves transforming teachers' existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices rather than simply imposing new theories, methods or materials on them (Johnson & Golombek, 2003).

Socio-cultural perspectives on teacher learning are also closely related to the concept of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), which suggests that learning takes place through their work experience and teaching practice. Teachers are involved in communities of practice, and learning takes place within organisational settings where teachers collaborate to develop knowledge and skills. In a similar vein, Borg (2009) highlights the importance of context by stating that it is a key variable in understanding teaching and argues that research on language teachers' cognitions and practices that do not attend to context in which these cognitions and practices are embedded in is 'conceptually flawed'. This means that teachers' classroom activities and the institutions they work in shape their thinking, leading to a growing interest in their workplaces as learning and professional development contexts from researchers.

With a broader conceptualisation of contextual elements, the socio-historical ontology in language teacher cognition research approaches "thinking as a function of place and time, through interaction and negotiation with social and historical contexts" (Burns et al., 2015, p. 589) and underscores the situated interactions between teachers' thinking and social practices. As a result of the socio-historical, distributed, and multiple nature of the process of developing language teaching expertise, language teaching is believed to take place through the interaction between teachers' personal dispositions and social practices. As Johnson and Freeman (2001) suggest, the investigation of teachers' learning processes entails the examination of the social contexts in which these processes occur since it would not be possible to fully understand these processes without exploring the sociocultural environments in which they unfold.

As the discussion so far has revealed, the important role context plays in educational inquiry has been widely acknowledged; however, it is essential to clarify what is meant by 'context'. Discussing the factors impacting teacher educator professional development, Lunenberg et al. (2014) define 'context' to refer to professional standards or a frame of reference that recognises the complexity of teacher educators' work and determines teacher educators' knowledge base and their professional development pathways. Borg (2003) provides a definition of context as "the social, psychological, and environmental realities of the school and classroom" (p. 94), which comprise the educational institutions, colleagues, school policies, and curriculum requirements. Approaching the conceptualisation of context from a

broader perspective, the term 'ecology' is relevant here. Ecology is "the study of the relationship among elements in an environment or ecosystem, in particular the interactions among such elements" (van Lier, 2010, p. 4) by investigating the complex interactions between individuals and environmental elements. As for the conceptualisation of context in this study, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is adopted since it fits well with the argument of this study that the physical and social environment is reciprocal, and individuals' development should be investigated in socio-cultural and historical contexts. Bronfenbrenner argues that the individual has an active role since "the developing person is viewed not merely as a tabula rasa on which the environment makes its impact, but as a growing, dynamic entity that progressively moves into and restructures the milieu in which it resides" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 21). An individual is inevitably a part of their environment, and they constantly respond to their environment and actively shape it. This dynamic interplay between the individual and their environment constitutes the foundation for development. The ecological system approaches the environmental factors leading to human development by focusing on their dynamic and interactive nature (William & Burden, 1997). The environment is conceptualised as a set of nested ecosystems which have their own actors, cultural artefacts, and activities. Specifically, there are three levels of ecosystems in Bronfenbrenner's (1993) model: microsystem, mesosystem, and macrosystem.

Microsystems are "a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit, engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p. 15). A microsystem is comprised of actions, roles, and interpersonal interactions that emerge when an individual socially interacts in a specific setting and is related to the immediate processes between the developing individual and environmental influences. Components of the immediate environment include people who are directly in contact with the individual on a regular basis (Bronfenbrenner, 1995), such as students, colleagues, and managers. The mediating factors within the microsystem of the individual teacher educator are biographical, cognitive, and identity-related, which may occur within and impact the microsystem of the individual teacher educator and their practice.

The second ecosystem is *mesosystem,* which "comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person. Special attention is focused on the synergistic effects created by the interaction of developmentally instigative or inhibitory features and processes present in the setting" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p. 22). It is related to the dynamic influences that various social relationships have on the developing individual. It is also about the connections between microsystems since a mesosystem is set up when an individual steps into a new environment consisting of new environmental aspects and social relationships. Therefore, the development of the individual is a result of their institutional environment, which is perceived as a mesosystem within this ecological framework.

The last ecosystem is *a macro system*, which "consists of the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other extended social structure, with particular reference to the developmentally instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in such overarching systems" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p. 25). The macro system encompasses the values, beliefs, or policies which indirectly influence the developing individual. The elements of the macro system enter the developing person's life via social means and cultural materials such as media and social interactions. All these elements have an influence on an individual's cognitive development, beliefs, and social relationships (ibid.). Teacher educators' work is influenced by macro-level factors, such as the national education system, the national professional development frameworks, the prescribed curriculum, the textbooks, and the examination system (Andrews, 2003).

Underlying the complexity of the socio-cultural world of the developing teacher educator and the elements influencing their development, Ecological Systems Theory will be adopted in this study since it offers a more holistic perspective on the interaction between the immediate and distal environments teacher educators are a part of to understand individual-environment transactions. From this perspective, teacher educators' learning and development encompasses cognitive development, the internalisation of new knowledge, perceptions and/or beliefs, together with the (re)negotiation of their identities through the mediation between cognitions, actions and the environment (Edwards, 2021; van Lier, 2004). Teacher educators' environments present them with opportunities for mediation and further

development along with potential obstruction to their development. Thus, Kubanyiova (2012) argues for understanding context from a broader perspective since teachers' mental lives are in a dynamic relationship with the various contextual levels. Therefore, it is vital to explore teacher educators' learning and teaching histories, their institutional and socio-cultural contexts, and the nature of their engagement in professional development activities (Johnson & Golombek, 2011). Exploring the socio-cultural environments surrounding teacher educators is thus necessary to understand their learning and development experiences. In this study, teacher educators' inner lives will be situated within their larger lives and environments, rather than simply focusing on the immediate micro context of the classroom to get a fuller picture of how these broader contexts eventually impact both teachers' inner lives and their practices.

3.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the importance of researching language teacher educators (Section 3.2.1) and defined their profiles (Section 3.2.2). This was followed by the presentation of the conceptual framework of the present study (Section 3.3.), a discussion of how teachers' inner worlds have been conceptualised within language teacher cognition research (Section 3.4). Next, an overview of trends in teacher educator learning (Section 3.5) and teacher educators' learning content (Section 3.6) was provided. This was followed by a discussion of two broad categories of factors impacting teacher educators' learning (Section 3.7), namely internal and external factors, with a view to explaining the need to investigate the types of learning activities EFL teacher educators engage in, the knowledge and skills they acquire, and the mediating factors that impact these learning experiences.

In this chapter, I presented my critical engagement with the present literature to show the gaps regarding the focus of this research project and situate this inquiry within the existing literature. Through this critical engagement, I have demonstrated the need for more research on the complex, interwoven relationship between the internal and external factors that teacher educators perceive as impacting their learning and development experiences. The focus of this inquiry organically evolved as a result of my literature readings, presenting and discussing my engagement with the literature with my Lead supervisor, the cyclical data collection process and my interaction with my participants, all of which led to three research questions.

To investigate the content of teacher educators' learning, the study aims to address the following first research question:

1. What do English language teacher educators learn?

As underlined by Beijaard et al. (2007), questioning 'how teachers learn' is crucial since the answers to this question reveal recommendations for the improvement of the professional development of teacher educators and, ultimately, for more effective initial teacher education. The second research question is related to the process of teacher educators' learning:

2. How do English language teacher educators learn?

Finally, in order to understand how teacher cognition and the contextual elements promote or inhibit teacher educators' learning and development, two sub-questions guide this research:

a) What is the influence of internal factors on English language teacher educators' learning experiences?
b) What is the influence of external factors on English language teacher educators' learning expereinces?

The research methodology adopted to answer these research questions will be presented in the following chapter.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a detailed description of the methodological framework that underpins this study. Section 4.1 describes the guiding philosophical framework while Section 4.2. discusses the characteristics of and rationale for the qualitative research approach adopted. Section 4.3 introduces the type of case study used. This is followed by a critical discussion of the approaches to data collection of tentative data collection instruments, and stages of data collection (Section 4.4). Section 4.5 describes the research context, the targeted participant profile and the sampling strategy employed. Section 4.6 provides a description of the data analysis process. This is followed by a discussion of the trustworthiness of the study (Section 4.7) and of ethical considerations (Section 4.8). Finally, Section 4.9 discusses issues concerning researcher reflexivity.

4.2. The Philosophical Framework of the Study

The philosophical framework of a research project reflects assumptions "with respect to the nature of the world and how we come to know about it" (Barab & Schuh, 2007, p. 67). Consequently, it defines the ways we formulate the research problem and the research questions and determines how we collect the data to answer these questions. Creswell (2013) suggests that all research practices inevitably have some underlying philosophical assumptions, and it is vital for researchers to present and explicitly discuss these assumptions in their reports. Therefore, researchers are expected to clearly state what they think the nature of reality is and what can be known about it (ontological stance), how we can know about reality and the basis of our knowledge (epistemological stance), and how this knowledge can be acquired (methodological approach). That is to say, the ontological underpinnings of a research project will inform its epistemological assumptions, guiding its methodology and determining its data collection methods (ibid.). However, despite the consensus on the importance of describing and reflecting on philosophical assumptions, there is also a growing tendency to move beyond traditional concepts while doing that. Furthermore, the emergence of the post-positivist/post-modernist/post-structuralist paradigms has resulted in a tendency to adopt eclectic, multi-theoretical, and multi-

methodological approaches to qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). As a result of this shift towards "post" discourses within the field of qualitative research, the complexity of the research act has started to be acknowledged. Consequently, qualitative researchers have started to develop eclectic approaches to capture this complexity (Rogers, 2012), among which 'bricolage' has emerged as an organic and pragmatic approach to qualitative inquiry.

The French term 'bricolage', referring to the process of using materials at hand to construct an artefact, was first adopted as a qualitative research approach in Levi-Strauss's anthropological work (Rogers, 2012), where it was used to indicate more flexible fieldwork (Lincoln, 2001) and to refer to the use of multiple types of data sources in order to "form stories that are nevertheless new and particularised for the local context" (ibid., p. 694). Bricolage research has been further conceptualised as an eclectic approach to a social inquiry by Denzin, Lincoln, and Kincheloe's work. It is typically understood to involve employing multiple emergent methodological strategies as they are needed in the unfolding research process (Rogers, 2012). However, Kincheloe (2005) cautions that bricolage should not be understood as an approach solely concerned with multiple research methodologies. Bricolage appreciates the complexity of a research task and is therefore concerned with employing multiple theoretical, philosophical, and methodological perspectives in a research inquiry (Kincheloe, 2005; Bush & Silk, 2010). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) compare the bricolage approach to a multi-faceted crystal reflecting different colours depending on how it has been moved. This indicates a research process in which the same information is viewed through different lenses to create a differently focused interpretation and representation. Therefore, bricolage underlines research approaches which investigate phenomena from different, sometimes even competing, theoretical, philosophical, and methodological perspectives (ibid.) and entails "a critical, multi-perspectival, multi-theoretical, and multi-methodological approach to inquiry" (Rogers, 2012, p. 1). Bricolage is the piecing of diverse representations to make sense of what seems surprising or even contradictory, woven together in a way that communicates multiple layers and freedom to choose from an array of methodologies, empowering researchers to explore sensitive related topics to human behaviour. Adopting bricolage in this inquiry infused different aspects of this research such as the ontology and epistemology.

The ontological underpinnings of a research project are related to the nature of reality and what can be known about the world (Ormston, 2014). Ontological issues primarily question "whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors" (Byrman, 2016, p. 32). That is to say, ontological discussions are interested in "whether or not there is a social reality that exists independently of human conceptions and interpretations and closely related to this, whether there is a shared social reality or only multiple, context-specific ones" (Ormston, 2014, p. 5). Ontologically speaking, bricoleurs suggest that the world we live in does not have a static nature; therefore, social entities should be studied within "the contexts that shape them, the processes of which they are a part, and the relationships, connections that structure their being-in-the-world" (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 688). Therefore, researchers should acknowledge that the object of inquiry should be situated within the cultural and historical contexts. Thus, a bricoleur should aim to understand the cultural, educational, physical, psychological, and social factors that shape the phenomenon under study in as complex a way as possible (Kincheloe et al., 2011).

Considering the complexity of investigating the phenomenon of teacher educator learning, constructivism was a suitable ontological stance for this research since realities are accepted to be socially constructed (Punch, 2009) as they are being experienced and interpreted by individuals (Byrman, 2016). The reality bricoleurs engage with is not fixed (Kincheloe, 2005); therefore, they can have only one version of reality that cannot be definite; it will be specific, socially constructed, and depending on the individuals holding it (Lincoln et al., 2011). In this study, an EFL department was conceptualised as a social entity consisting of EFL teacher educators' learning processes as a social phenomenon. The participants and I were considered the social actors within this social world. The social actors, entities like mental lives and contextual factors, which played an influential part in giving or adding meaning to the social phenomenon of teacher educator learning, were crucial in forming meaning. My major goal was to explore how each participant constructed their own realities, which I further interpreted. Thus, it can be said that the participants and I took part in creating a portrayal of the participants' social reality.

Regarding epistemology, the epistemological assumptions of a research project are concerned with issues like "how we can learn about reality, what forms the basis of our knowledge?" (Snape & Spencer 2003, p. 13).and the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Ormston et al., 2014). Bricoleurs need to embrace the complexity and adopt multiple ways of seeing since a bricolage approach to research implies an epistemological assumption stating that social entities consist of various cultural, educational, physical, psychological, and social elements. Thus, bricoleurs aim to find new ways of seeing and interpreting the world to be able to ultimately produce complex, rigorous, and thick forms of knowledge (Kincheloe, 2005). Three theories fed the epistemological stance of this research project. The first theory is socio-constructivism, which suggests that reality is socially constructed and knowledge is constructed instead of uncovered (Richards, 2009). Researchers within this paradigm are thus oriented towards a worldview that is socially determined and view reality and knowledge as socially constructed. The constructivist view of learning has influenced socio-constructivism as a learning theory. Social constructivists suggest that learning is a social process, and that meaningful learning occurs when individuals engage in social activities (Vygotsky, 1978). Similarly, the bricolage approach embraces the relationships between individuals, their contexts, and the activities they are engaged in rather than studying them in isolation from each other (Kellner, 1995). The current research project aimed to investigate the teacher learning process by exploring the learning content and the influence of internal and external factors. Thus, the influence of context on the process of teacher learning was an essential dimension of this project. The significant relationship between learning and context is highlighted by Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004), stating that “each person learns in a context, but that each person is a reciprocal and mutually constitutive part of that context” (p. 168). Similarly, Lave and Wenger’s (1991) concept of situated learning is relevant to teacher educator learning since it suggests that learning occurs through practising and experiencing teaching. Teacher educators in this study were involved in communities of practice, and learning took place within organisational settings where they collaborated to develop knowledge and skills. Therefore, this inquiry investigated the learning processes of teacher educators, the professional, organisational, and national contexts. Context was conceptualised as a set of nested ecosystems, specifically levels of ecosystems in Bronfenbrenner (1993); microsystem, mesosystem, and macrosystem, which have their own social actors, artefacts, and activities.

The epistemological grounds of this research project also fell within the interpretive paradigm, which suggests that knowledge can only be constructed by interpreting the social realities of the research participants being studied (Byrman, 2016). An interpretive epistemology suggests that "a social researcher has to explore and understand the social world through the participants' and their perspectives, and explanations can only be offered at the level of meaning rather than cause" (Ormston et al., 2014, p. 24). For this reason, researchers should understand the meanings participants attach to the phenomena under investigation. Therefore, knowledge construction demands continuous cooperation between the researcher, the participants, and their social realities (Creswell, 2013). In this research project, the participants constructed interpretations of the relationship between their learning processes and the elements influencing these processes by constantly interacting with me, for instance, during interviews. My goal was to elicit their perspectives and interpretations of reality and further interpret them.

Pragmatism was the third complementary epistemological view, suggesting that researchers should focus on the phenomena under investigation and ask questions about the research problem instead of focusing on the research methods. Pragmatism was relevant to the epistemological grounds of this project in that pragmatists do not perceive reality as a definite entity. Therefore, they adopt various approaches while collecting and analysing data rather than strictly sticking to one specific method, technique, or research procedure. Pragmatism allowed me to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures that best met my needs and purposes (Creswell, 2013) and that best addressed my research aims. Since this study acknowledges the complexity of the research process, research methods were seen as evolving rather than pre-determined and definitive.

4.3. Research Approach: Qualitative

4.3.1. Conceptualisation of Qualitative Research

A qualitative approach to research is a situated activity placing the researcher in the social world and entails an interpretive and naturalistic approach to inquiry. Qualitative research entails an interpretive process to make the world visible by turning it into a series of representations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The power of qualitative research, therefore, lies in

its potential to explore the phenomenon under study in its natural setting and attempts to understand the social world of the participants "by learning about the sense they make of their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives, and histories" (Ormston, 2014, p. 4). According to Merriam (1998), "qualitative researchers are "interested in understanding the meanings people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (p. 6). Describing the features of qualitative research is perhaps a relatively more straightforward job than trying to define it. A synthesis of qualitative research from different sources reveals the following characteristics:

- *Natural setting:* qualitative researchers generally conduct their research in the context where participants experience the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
- *Participants' meaning:* qualitative researchers focus on the participants' meaning about the problem and issue (Hatch, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).
- *Multiple methods:* combining multiple methodologies, data collection instruments, perspectives, and observers to add rigour and depth to the inquiry (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).
- *Emergent design:* qualitative researchers use non-standardised, adaptable methods of data generation that are sensitive to the social context of the study and can be adapted for each participant (Ormston et al., 2014).
- *Holistic account:* one of the critical tasks of qualitative researchers is developing and portraying a complex picture of the problem or issue under study (Creswell, 2013).

4.3.2. The Rationale behind Using Qualitative Research

A qualitative approach to research proves highly valuable, particularly when the researcher aims to explore an issue to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and the contextual factors in which the participants operate. Qualitative research is accepted as "a person-centred enterprise and therefore particularly appropriate to our work in the field of language teaching" (Richards, 2003, p. 9). Furthermore, qualitative research strongly emphasises the emergent nature of social phenomena in the natural setting from an insider

perspective (Dornyei, 2007); therefore, it offers a more holistic perspective on the complexity and dynamicity of teacher learning.

As previously mentioned, this research project investigated the complex, situated, and highly individual nature of teacher educator learning. The research questions related to 'how' teacher educators learn, 'what' they learn, and the different influences involved in these learning processes. Thus, a qualitative research approach was utilised to best address these issues and to account for the multi-dimensionality that the study sought to capture, the role of teacher educators' mental lives and their current teaching context. The inductive, exploratory, and contextualised nature of qualitative research (Richards, 2009) was in line with the complexity and context-specific nature of language teacher educators' lived experiences. Conducting a qualitative inquiry entailed a process of discovery and constant learning and therefore demanded the researcher to become deeply involved in the ongoing data collection and interpretation of teacher educators' cognitions and actions in their contexts (Creswell, 2007). A review of the literature on teacher educators' learning and development reveals a significant number of survey-based quantitative studies which have been instrumental in depicting general patterns of language teacher educators' perceptions and practices. On the other hand, employing qualitative research data (e.g., interviews and learning diaries) demonstrated "sensitivity and respect towards the personalised, situated meanings constructed by language teacher educators through their social engagement and interactions in particular socio-cultural environments" (Yuan et al., 2020, p. 457). Based on this discussion, adopting a qualitative approach enabled me to:

- explore the participants' learning processes within their work environments at different contextual levels (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem) to make sense of the meanings they attached to these experiences.
- deploy different methods to understand these learning experiences better.
- collect the kind of data needed to explore these issues.
- delve into the participants' personal experiences.
- gain an in-depth understanding of the internal and external influences on the learning processes, and
- enhance my understanding of the participants' meanings behind their actions and experiences.

4.4. Research Design: Case Study

Case study research is “a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information… and reports a case description and case themes” (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). The employment of a case study entails studying the case(s) within a natural, real-life context from multiple perspectives with various data instruments and sources (Yin, 2014).

A qualitative case study was an appropriate choice to investigate teacher educators' learning and development experiences since research on EFL teacher educators is an emergent field. A case study allowed me to delve into the unchartered territory of examining language teacher educators’ cognition, collaborative experiences, and identities with an exploratory lens. Employing a case study research design facilitated the study of the phenomenon in depth by employing different data collection methods. Understanding teacher educators' cognitions and learning experiences required careful consideration of the process from different perspectives by drawing on various data sources. The multiple data sources enabled me to collect rich data and gain an in-depth understanding of teacher educators' experiences. Moreover, this inquiry sought to investigate the contextual environment in which the participants were embedded. A case study, therefore, helped me study the phenomenon in natural contexts, EFL teacher education departments, where these experiences unfolded. This study has conceptualised the context as a set of nested ecosystems. The levels of ecosystems in Bronfenbrenner (1993), microsystem, mesosystem, and macrosystem, were explored to examine the interaction between the participants and their environment within the immediate and distal environments. All in all, conducting a case study enabled me to understand the phenomenon of teacher educator learning in-depth, within its natural environment of manifestation by investigating specific units of analysis, namely the EFL teacher educators, with the goal of gaining a holistic, comprehensive, and contextualised understanding of their learning experiences.

Having explained the reasons why a case study was an appropriate research strategy to explore the complex and situated nature of teacher learning, it is now necessary to identify what type of case study was most suitable. Creswell (2013) suggests that the number of cases

and the *intent* of the case analysis decides the type of qualitative case study. In terms of the *intent* of cases, Yin (2014) distinguishes between single-cases and multiple-case designs. A researcher might conduct a single-case study when interested in a *critical, unusual, common, revelatory, or longitudinal* case to explore the phenomenon under inquiry. On the other hand, a multiple-case design might be more appropriate when the researcher aims to find out the similarities and differences between the cases (Stake, 2000). Another advantage of conducting a multiple-case study is that the researcher will be able to analyse the data both within each case and across the cases (Yin, 2014). In this study, my goal was not to study one single case which had an unusual or revelatory nature but to explore more than one teacher's process of learning. Adopting multiple-case design also enabled me to analyse the data both within each situation and across situations. In addition, the evidence gathered from a multiple case study is accepted to be strong and reliable (ibid.). Therefore, this research project employed a multiple case study design where each participating teacher educator represented a case. Furthermore, there were "embedded units of analysis" within each case, which resulted in an embedded multiple case study (Yin, 2014, p. 50). This indicates that the main units of analysis were the individual teacher educators. The influence of teacher cognition and context on the process of learning was the embedded units of analysis for each case.

As for the *intent* of the case analysis, this project adopted a collective and instrumental case study approach (Stake, 2000). A collective case study with an instrumental nature was the right option since I aimed to understand a particular phenomenon, teacher learning, across multiple cases. Since the development of a theory about teacher educator learning was an important element of this study, and the over-arching research question was about how teacher educators learn, the type of case study needed to answer this research question was instrumental in that it aimed to generate theory and insights and move beyond each case.

When employing a case study research design, it is also essential to remember that case studies are also about the relation to context. Flyvbjerg (2011) argues that "the drawing of boundaries for the individual unit study decides what gets to count as case and what becomes context to the case" (p. 301). A study which asks how teacher educators learn in relation to the process and content of their learning and the influence of internal and external factors implied multiple examinations of the same phenomenon in different contexts. Therefore, the

participant teacher educators were studied in their micro contexts, the meso context, and the macro system. All in all, choosing a case study design allowed me to gather an in-depth understanding and detailed descriptions of the experiences of learning by emphasising contextual uniqueness. In addition, conducting a case study helped me uncover, describe, and explain the processes and content of learning and how internal and external factors mediated these learning experiences.

Data Collection Phases

	Data Collection Instrument	Purpose
Phase 1 March 2020 – April 2020	**Introductory Skype Meeting**	- To virtually meet the participants to build rapport - To collect some background information - To answer any potential questions particularly about Phase 1
	Autobiographical Account: Tree of Life	- To uncover and to reflect on what values, beliefs, experiences, and knowledge have shaped/formed participants' cognitions - To collect autobiographical information about participants' personal, educational, and professional backgrounds
	Written Document Collection	- To collect information on TEs' professional trajectories - To gather demographic information
Phase 2 June – July 2020	**Retrospective Interviews**	- To provide the participants with the opportunity to reflect on significant past learning experiences

4.5. Data Collection Process

Phase 1 started with the introductory Skype meeting, which was conducted to meet each participant virtually and build rapport. The interview also provided the participants with the opportunity to ask their questions in relation to Phase 1. In April, the data collection for the *Tree of Life* started by asking the participants to share their drawings and corresponding narratives. After the preliminary analysis of these files, a Skype interview was conducted with each participant. The next step of the first phase was *Written Document Collection,* where I collected copies of the teacher educators' Curriculum Vitae (CV) to gather demographic information as well as details on their academic trajectories. The collection of written documents also included existing institutional and national policies regarding the professional development of teacher educators in Spain and any existing Continuing Professional Development materials in the participants' institutions.

Phase 2 was conducted between June 2020 and early July 2020. This phase mainly involved *Retrospective Interviews*, which were used to provide

Data Collection Phases

	Data Collection Instrument		Purpose
Phase 3 Nov. 2020 – Jan. 2021	Reporting Weekly Learning Episodes	-	To explore participants' learning experiences as they happen in their day-to-day practice and lives
	Reflection on Participation	-	To reflect on how their participation in the research project has impacted their personal and professional growth

Figure 2: Data Collection Phases

the participants with the opportunity to reflect on significant past learning experiences by exploring what they had learned from these experiences and looking at the challenging and facilitating factors which had mediated them. The implementation of this instrument entailed asking the participants to share two/three past learning experiences and support their descriptions with supplementary materials where possible. Then, they were invited for a follow-up interview.

Phase 3 started in October 2020 with *Reporting Learning Episodes*, where the participants were asked to send weekly learning episodes. They sent their first episodes in early November, and this process lasted for five weeks. After the preliminary analysis of their weekly learning episodes, each participant was invited for a follow-up Skype interview. This phase lasted until early January. In early February, I conducted individual *Reflection on Participation* interviews with the participants, where they were asked some reflective questions about their involvement in this research project.

4.5.1. Approaches to Data Collection

As previously stated in Section 4.1, *pragmatism* is one of the theories this study drew on. From a pragmatic perspective, researchers look at research methods in terms of what questions they can help answer – a 'whatever works' position (Pstrang & Barker, 2012). Pragmatism guided me to choose research methods and procedures that best meet the needs and purposes of this research project. Since this study acknowledges the complexity of the research process, research methods were seen as evolving rather than pre-determined and definitive. I focused on choosing the most appropriate data collection instruments that best addressed the research problem and helped me collect data from multiple sources to answer the research questions more comprehensively. Particularly within the pandemic conditions, at a time when I had to rethink and re-design the initial data collection plan, pragmatism helped me stay focused on the phenomena I investigated and choose context-appropriate data collection instruments that would help me collect relevant data instead of merely adopting the most convenient or conventional methods.

This study also adopted *methodological bricolage,* which appreciates the complexity of the research process and allows contextual elements to determine the data collection methods to be used (Rogers, 2012). The bricolage approach to research views the researchers' interaction with the research process as complex and unpredictable. Therefore, bricoleurs view research methods as evolving (Kincheloe, 2005). As a result, despite the tentative data collection plan I had before the actual data collection, methodological bricolage enabled me to adopt a semi-structured approach to data collection. In retrospect, particularly during the unprecedented global pandemic conditions, methodological bricolage gave me the flexibility to explore different data collection instruments and turned me into a methodological bricoleur "who can create something from a range of materials and items – bringing together a range of sources, skills, interpretations, and methods to complete their qualitative inquiry" (ibid., p. 53). More specifically, concerning the research on teacher learning, the methodological bricolage approach enabled me to capture the inherent complexity of participants' learning experiences and mental lives and the complex socio-cognitive environments in which these experiences took place even though the data were collected remotely.

In line with methodological bricolage, this project also adopted *multiple data collection approaches* since no single method can enable the researcher to explore and grasp an individual's mental life. Therefore, various data collection instruments were used to make these inner lives more accessible and understandable by collecting as much detailed information as possible about the participants' mental lives, "what they know and believe and how they think about what they do" (Borko & Putnam, 1996, p. 703). As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue, "the combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, and perspectives in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry" (p. 5). I also aimed to explore participants' learning experiences from multiple perspectives by examining the observable and unobservable dimensions of their work and experiences. To facilitate the multi-perspectival and multi-methodological approach this research project adopted, several methods, data types, and perspectives were combined. To investigate the experiences of EFL teacher educators with various roles (e.g., teacher of teachers, supervisor, mentor, and researcher), Yuan et al. (2020) pinpoint the compelling need for more systematic, in-depth studies that utilize multiple data sources. Consequently, data triangulation is essential for the trustworthiness of the study and reveals important insights about language teacher educators' engagement in different forms of practice as an essential part of their cognitive growth and identity construction (ibid.)

Another approach to the data collection process is related to the *multi-modality* of the study by collecting visual, audio, and written forms of data. Wiles et al. (2011) argue that utilising different aspects of data production and collection can enhance the agency of those involved in creating meaning. Kress (2011), in turn, points out that "multimodality focuses on the material means for representation; the resources for making texts (and thus meaning) ... that go beyond language" (p. 237). In this research project, multimodality was adopted specifically with the Tree of Life, which combined written and pictorial representation data with audio data and actively involved participants in the various stages of data production.

The data collection approach of this research project also drew on *organic* and *ecological* approaches to research. Organic approaches emphasise how research data collection is defined and redefined as the process of data collection unfolds. The implementation of an organic research approached was manifested by identifying sources of data during the

fieldwork and making adjustments while I was interacting with the participants and collecting data from them (Lewis & McNaughton Nicholls, 2014). An ecological approach to data collection refers to identification and use of pre-existing sources of data with the goal of reducing the demands on the research participants and collecting naturally occurring data (e.g., Barron, 2006; Sanchez et al., 2018). The organic and ecological approach I adopted particularly proved to be very useful in Phase 2 and Phase 3 (see Table 3). The participants discussed significant past professional learning experiences during the Retrospective Interviews in Phase 2 where I realised that some of the experiences they discussed led to future learning experiences. For instance, Ana talked about one of her stay-abroad experiences and, towards the end of the follow-up interview, she mentioned that she was currently working on a joint article with the lecturer in the host institution. Later, I decided to integrate this point into her weekly learning experiences and asked her to reflect on the publishing process. We later expanded on her publishing experience and how this formed a learning experience during the follow-up interview of the third week's learning episodes. Another instance where the organic and ecological approach proved to be helpful was at the beginning of Phase 3, where the participants were asked to send two professional learning experiences on a weekly basis. During the second week, one of the participants expressed concerns over sharing two professional experiences each week and asked if it would be possible to share less formal learning experiences. This made me reflect on the focus of this instrument and the guidelines I had prepared, and after consulting with my lead supervisor, I contacted all the participants to inform them that the focus of this instrument was extended to welcome informal and non-formal learning experiences. Carolina kept reporting about her weekly professional learning experiences, while Ana and Elisabeth sometimes shared informal and non-formal learning experiences for their wellbeing, such as nature walks, meditation, and online book clubs. All in all, the organic and ecological approaches helped me generate data that would give authentic insights into participants' learning experiences and the dynamic interaction of the participants with their environment.

Finally, the study is also *longitudinal* in nature. In this context, *longitudinal* referred to more than one episode of data collection with the same participants. The major goal of conducting qualitative longitudinal studies was to capture a process which evolved over an extended period of time and to explore the influences and outcomes that were more than short term

(Lewis & Nicholls, 2014). In addition, longitudinal data collection allowed me to explore “the full set of factors that participants perceive as contributing to change or outcomes” (ibid., p. 62). Since the over-arching research question of my study is related to the process of teacher learning and the influence of both internal and external factors on these processes, I needed to track the participants over nine months. Conducting a longitudinal investigation also enabled me to make a systematic way of collecting and analysing data for nearly eleven months.

Overall, in order to capture the complexity of participants’ learning experiences and to explore the factors that impacted on these experiences, this study approached data collection from a holistic perspective by adopting an organic and ecological approach to honour the participants and their present environments, used a combined methodology to employ the best methods that can help answer the research questions, and investigated teacher learning from multiple perspectives by collecting multimodal data over an extended period of time.

4.5.2. Online Fieldwork

COVID-19 disrupted the common systems of society: economy, health, environment, education, and politics worldwide. Schools, colleges, and universities suddenly shut down for an indefinite time, and teaching and learning abruptly shifted from classrooms to online platforms, from in-person to virtual, and from seminars to webinars (Torrentira, 2020). Many countries went into national lockdowns and announced travel restrictions. In the UK, the first phase of the nationwide lockdown began on March 23, 2020, while restrictions lasted into July 2020. The second lockdown was announced on October 31, came into force on November 5 and ended on December 2. On January 4, 2021, a third national lockdown was confirmed. The timeframe of this study from March 2021 until January 2021 fell right within the pandemic.

The field includes the academy, where research is initiated, where the people we speak with live, and the social contexts and settings in which research is funded and made available to various audiences" (Nast, 1994, as cited in Hawlett, 2022, p. 388). Inevitably, the pandemic also dissuaded the traditional practices of conducting research, particularly data collection and how fieldwork is defined. Given the travel restrictions and the social distancing rules

posed by the pandemic, the data collection methods became limited, and accessibility to data sources turned out to be quite challenging (Mishra et al., 2020). While the threat of coronavirus continued to exist, the initial tentative data collection plan for this research project suddenly became unworkable, mainly due to safety issues and worldwide travel restrictions. Therefore, I deemed it necessary to explore ways of adapting the data collection plan to online platforms (Torrentira, 2020). As we were going through very turbulent times, I needed to strategise and modify the data collection instruments and processes and be creative in pursuing data collection and conducting scholarly research within these unprecedented pandemic conditions (ibid.) I had to rethink, revamp, and redesign the data collection plan for Phase 1 (see Phases in Table 3) as an online data collection process. As the national lockdown restrictions continued until the summer of 2020, I later had to adapt Phase 2 to online data collection as well. I was hoping to travel to Madrid in September and conduct fieldwork for Phase 3. However, because of the significant increase in COVID-19 cases, particularly in Madrid, over the summer of 2020, I decided to continue with the online data collection for Phase 3 as well. Thurnberg and Arnell (2022) stated that "digital methods can work well and that they are experienced positively, making it possible for people who otherwise may not be able to participate to contribute by telling their story, giving their perspective, and being a part of the knowledge production" (p. 766). Thanks to the framework and flexibility provided by the bricolage approach I adopted, I was able to adapt and employ an adaptive version of collecting qualitative data after the initial fieldwork plan suddenly became unfeasible. I was able to identify and adopt online data collection methodologies to adapt the qualitative research design I had planned amidst the COVID-19 pandemic (see Section 4.2 for the detailed discussion of how bricolage helped me adapt to the changes caused by the pandemic). Despite being immensely challenging, these new circumstances also offered me the opportunity to develop as a novice qualitative researcher. Thanks to the crowdsourced documents initiated by the qualitative research community that guide and endorse alternate methods in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Jowett, 2020), I did readings on online data collection methodologies as a preparation for the online fieldwork. My preparation also included piloting the interview schedules and procedure with a fellow PhD student to check the camera and microphone of my computer and test out the steps of the interview procedure.

4.5.3. Getting Access to the Research Site

In February 2020, I emailed the contacts I had in Greece, France, and Spain with a detailed description of this research project and invited expressions of interest to participate. After that, a response email was sent describing the data collection instruments, consent procedure, assurance of anonymity, and the fieldwork timeline. They were also asked to pass the details of the project to colleagues that they thought would be interested in participating. I did not receive any emails from the French contacts, and I mainly exchanged emails with the Greek and Spanish teacher educators. I was able to recruit three EFL teacher educators who fit the profile I was looking for in Spain in late March 2020.

Regarding the potential research contexts, the funder of this PhD research project, the Ministry of National Education, prevented the scholarship students from collecting data in our home country and advised us to explore other research contexts in 2018. This issue was one of the main points I worked on, particularly during the first year of my PhD. After some discussions with my supervisors and the feedback of my examiners in my Confirmation panel, I decided to explore the Mediterranean countries where English is taught as an EFL as a potential research context. Considering the challenges of negotiating access, I have decided to explore other Mediterranean countries (e.g., Spain, Italy, Greece) that are more accessible and perhaps comparable to Turkey. Therefore, I made a list of these countries and started working on how to get access to different EFL teacher education departments in these countries. I managed to find contacts in Greece, France, and Spain thanks to the help from my supervisory team and members of the Department of Education at the University of Bath. After exchanging emails with different lecturers from different departments and countries, Spain became my research context. Details of the sampling strategy I employed to recruit participants will be described in Section 4.6.2.

After recruiting the participants, I conducted an introductory Skype interview with each participant before the data collection. Data collection for qualitative research requires a close relationship between the participants and the researcher. At the beginning of this collaboration, participants are encouraged to open up and share their experiences more freely while the researcher tries to navigate the fieldwork. Qualitative data collection, therefore, requires collaboration between the participants and the researcher (Lo Iacono et

al., 2016). However, I was not able to interact with my participants in person because of the global lockdown and the travel restrictions, which reduced the quantity and quality of our social contact. Therefore, I planned and conducted an introductory interview to build rapport with my participants and to establish a safe and comfortable environment which might enable them to open up and share personal and professional experiences (King & Harrocks, 2010). I introduced myself, my professional background, and the research project in more detail. I then asked the participants to talk about their personal, educational, and professional backgrounds. Before this introductory meeting, all the participants provided their informed consent via email. I also sent the guidelines for the Tree of Life in case they would like to ask questions. After this chat, I started the data collection process, which consisted of three distinct stages, as illustrated in Table 3. The detailed description of the online data collection will be described in the following section.

4.5.4. Data Collection Instruments

Altogether, four different methods of data collection (autobiographical background interviews, retrospective interviews, weekly learning diaries, follow-up semi-structured interviews, and reflection on participation interviews) were employed in three stages (within ten months). The organisation of the online data collection in this way (a) provided me with time to contemplate the collected data, b) allowed me to conduct cyclical data analysis, and c) allowed me to reflect and get insights which were instrumental for preparing the nest stage of the data collection.

4.5.4.1. Autobiographical Accounts: Tree of Life

Autobiographical accounts are collected to enable the researcher to explore participants' personal and professional experiences (Borg, 2015). Teachers' narratives of their experiences have increasingly become the focus of educational research (Barkhuizen, 2014). Participants' narratives have been highly pivotal for this research project since they provided a window into their cognitions and experiences. Borg (2015) suggests the employment of visual methods in the study of language teacher cognition and proposes the use of strategies such as elicitation techniques based on drawings to make complex mental lives visible and tangible.

As a form of autobiographical tool, I used the 'Tree of Life' (Merryfield, 1993) to identify participants' personal, educational, and professional backgrounds and the factors that have shaped their cognitions and experiences. This self-reflective tool uses a tree analogy in which the 'roots' of the tree are related to family values and early life experiences, such as significant people and events in their lives. The 'trunk' represents influential schooling experiences from childhood through high school, which might be influential in developing a worldview and significant learning experiences, and factors that have contributed to their decisions to choose teaching as a career. Each 'limb' will be a prompt to express a critical incident concerning their learning and teaching (ibid.). Besides the original elements used by Merryfield (1993), I decided to employ some additional elements to the tree analogy to be able to explore the background and experiences of my participants in more detail. I added three new elements: leaves, fruits, and bugs. The 'leaves' of the tree represent important people or relationships, for example, parents, favourite teachers, and colleagues. The 'fruits' stand for the achievements that participants have accomplished which they are proud of, and finally, the 'bugs' of the tree constitute the challenges they face in their day-to-day teaching and learning and development experiences (Khoi, 2018; Ncube, 2006).

The tree analogy was used to provide a graphic representation of the participants' cognitions, to give them an opportunity to reflect on their life experiences, and to help them express their narratives. The participants were emailed guidelines (Appendix D) and had the opportunity to discuss this instrument and ask questions in the preliminary Skype interview that was conducted before the actual data collection. They were then invited to share their drawings and narratives. Two participants chose to share their recordings, which were immediately transcribed verbatim, while one participant decided to write her narrative. After recording their narratives, they emailed the audio file to me. After the preliminary analysis of their drawings and narratives, the participants were invited for a follow-up Skype interview to expand on their narratives and experiences. These follow-up interviews allowed me to ask probing questions to gain a better understanding of the participants' backgrounds and experiences. The follow-up interviews lasted for at least 60 minutes with each participant. As mobility was globally regulated and conducting face-to-face interviews was not possible due to travel restrictions, I conducted all the interviews through Skype. Skype provided the online

platform to interview research participants using voice and video via a synchronous connection (Lo lacono et al., 2016).

Narrative inquiry enables participants to construct and reconstruct their experiences through conscious reflection and dialogue (Leitch & Day, 2000). Combining drawing and narrative allowed me to gather information on participants' personal and professional experiences in a more complete and complex manner and to "make possibilities, thoughts, interpretations and world views of interviewees more tangible" (Zweifel & Wezemael, 2012, p. 15). The 'Tree of Life' played a critical role in uncovering cognitive constructs from each participant's autobiography in line with the bottom-up approach this study adopted. The use of participants' drawings and their corresponding narratives served the purpose of helping me make their implicit inner worlds more explicit first to themselves and then to me as a composition of their life experiences. Their stories and narratives of experiences were both *personal*, reflecting their life histories, and *social*, reflecting the context in which they lived and worked. The Tree of Life, therefore, helped me narratively construct the participants' personal, educational, and professional lives as a landscape (Clandinin & Huber, 2002). Forming such a composition helped me answer the third research question about the mediating factors that impact EFL teacher educators' learning experiences and overall work.

4.5.4.2. Retrospective Interviews

Due to the interpretative nature of this study, a flexible data collection tool was required to provide the participants with opportunities to discuss and reflect on their learning experiences. Interviews are typically used to "enable participants ... to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 349); therefore, they are commonly used to understand how the participants perceive the phenomenon under investigation (Mann, 2016). More specifically, retrospective interviews give researchers the opportunity to examine experience through the participants' eyes. In a first-person retrospective verbal report, a participant is interviewed about cognitive processes and perceptions of a task after it has been completed (Erlandsson & Jansson, 2013; Whyte, Cormier, & Pickett-Hauber, 2010).

Retrospective interviews were designed to obtain participants' self-reports of their past professional learning experiences. The purpose of collecting retrospective verbal accounts was to provide the participants with an opportunity to reflect on significant past learning experiences, explore what they had learned from these experiences, and look at the challenging and facilitating factors mediating these experiences. The participants were emailed detailed guidelines (Appendix E) about the procedure they were expected to follow. They were asked to select and share two and/or three significant professional learning and development experience(s). They were invited to describe their experiences in relation to time and location, the reasons that made them significant learning experiences for them, what and how they thought they had learned, and what factors had facilitated or hindered their learning. They were also encouraged to support their descriptions with evidence of materials that they had used during these learning experiences, such as workshop materials, institutional resources, external links to the materials that they had used, and email correspondences with colleagues. All the participants emailed me their descriptions and supporting materials within one week. After the initial analysis of these descriptions and the supporting materials, a Skype interview was conducted with each participant. The major goal of this follow-up interview was to expand on their descriptions and to prompt further reflection or elaboration. The retrospective interview guide can be found in Appendix … .

The retrospective interviews provided insights into the participants' professional backgrounds and their past professional learning and development experiences, allowed other relevant topics to emerge and gave "prominence to the voice of teachers rather than that of researchers" (Mangubhai et al., 2004 p. 4). Retrospective reports provided important information about the types of learning and development activities they had engaged in, the things they had learned, and the factors that had impacted these learning experiences. The cyclical data collection and data analysis process in Phase 1 and Phase 2 shed light on the participants' personal, educational, and professional backgrounds and was a good preparation for the *Reporting Learning Episodes* in Phase 3. Overall, Phase 2 helped me collect data about the retrospective learning activities EFL teacher educators engaged in, the content of their learning and the mediating factors impacting these experiences.

4.5.4.3. Reporting Learning Episodes

Qualitative researchers have long drawn on information from participant diaries and have highlighted their importance in constructing a complex, dynamic, and subjective picture of human reality (Hewitt, 2017). Diaries can be employed in qualitative social research to explore participants' behaviours and practices and gather data about a particular topic (Bryman, 2016). The researcher-driven diaries have been developed as a specific methodological tool with the goal of gaining a "view from within" (Zimmerman & Weider, 1977, p. 484), as writing a diary encourages participants to share a retrospective account of their experiences and allows reconstruction of practice. It also provides researchers with insights into participants' worlds, which is a starting point for understanding how events are perceived and understood by the participants (Kenten, 2010). Diaries have also been used in the study of teacher learning to discover how teachers actively self-regulate their learning experiences, to examine how this regulation takes place in the workplace, what type of learning activities they engage in, and what they learn (see Meirink et al. 2007; 2009; Van Eekelen et al., 2005).

According to Krishnan and Hoon (2002), "diary entries constitute first-person observations of learning experiences that are recorded over a period of time" (p. 227). Diary entries and reflections from participants within the research field can provide first-hand, valuable insights into the experiences of the participants for the researchers (Lupton, 2020). Morell-Scott (2018) argues that the use of diaries as a data collection instrument can provide qualitative researchers with a concurrent understanding of the lived experiences of the participant completing the diary. As conducting direct observations in Madrid was not possible because of the global lockdowns and travel restrictions, I decided to collect weekly learning episodes by providing some guidelines to the participants so that they would be able to generate meaningful and relevant entries into their diaries. The major goal of this instrument was to explore their learning experiences as they happen in their day-to-day practice and lives. The implementation of 'reporting learning episodes' entailed asking the participants to complete solicited diaries for a period of five weeks with the knowledge that they would be read and interpreted by the researcher. The participants were asked to describe their learning experiences in a story-like manner: the learning activities they engaged in, what and how they had learned, and the contributing and hindering factors to gain greater insight into those learning activities that they considered relevant and important for their learning and

professional and personal growth. There were two main points each participant was encouraged to focus on. The first one was related to their learning experiences which had emerged from the retrospective interviews and were unique for each participant. For instance, Ana was in the process of publishing an article with her colleague, Carolina was running her own educational consultancy company with her husband, and Elisabeth was in the process of making a publication and running a project with her colleagues. The second point concerned their learning experiences within the current blended/online teaching mode because of COVID-19. They were asked to describe their weekly experiences in relation to what learning activities they undertook, what motivated them to do these learning activities, what they learned, and what facilitated or hindered their learning (see Appendix …. for an example guideline). As previously stated, after the second week, the focus of the weekly episodes was extended to include informal and non-formal learning activities that they had engaged in during that week. They were also asked to support their description with artefacts that were relevant to these experiences, such as a colleague's or an editor's feedback, a presentation file, online teaching materials, or photographs. After the initial analysis of their weekly episodes, the participants were then invited for a short weekly follow-up interview, where we expanded on their weekly episodes.

During the pandemic conditions, utilizing diaries to replace direct observation was the most appropriate choice for this research project. Collecting weekly learning episodes from the participants was a great tool for capturing and exploring their learning experiences and reflective thinking. Combined with episode descriptions, the follow-up interviews provided an opportunity to expand on participants' weekly learning experiences, how they adapted to the current bi-modal teaching, and how they mediated their own learning and development practices, particularly with the pandemic conditions. Collecting weekly episodes was also very instrumental in extracting meaningful constructs and themes both from diary entries and from the follow-up interview data. Phase 3 helped me collect more in-depth data about the learning activities EFL teacher educators engaged in, the content of their learning and the mediating factors impacting these experiences.

4.5.4.4. Reflection on Participation Interviews

There is a growing focus on reporting the experience of being interviewed about sensitive topics from the perspectives of the research participants. There are several studies that reported how participants experienced their engagement in the research, particularly when the collected data were sensitive or drew on participants' earlier traumatic experiences (Dennis, 2014). Participants in these studies were asked to reflect on how their participation in the research project affected their thoughts and/or behaviours (Koelsch, 2013) and one of the key findings indicates that participants can find in-depth interviewing about emotive topics a helpful, even 'therapeutic', experience (Lowes & Gill, 2006).

Although the focus of my research was not necessarily a sensitive topic, exploring participants' experiences of being engaged in my research project via online data collection, particularly within the pandemic conditions, could potentially reveal interesting data. Showing reflexivity about the impact of the research on participants (McCoyd & Scdaimah, 2007) was very relevant for this research project because, as a bricoleur, I was sensitive to the consequences of the research project on my participants. Showing such reflexivity about the potential impacts of participants' engagement in interviews and in this research project, in general, required "process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher's positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome" (Berger, 2015, p. 220). Regarding the conceptualisation of research participant experiences, Dennis (2014) proposes three approaches, namely the 'cost/benefit approach', 'the relational approach', and 'the critical consciousness approach'. The cost/benefit approach entails asking the participants to comment on a list of specific benefits and costs. If there are more benefits reported compared to the costs, the participants' experiences are then considered positive. From the relational approach, participants' experiences are interpreted through the adjacency of the relationship between the researchers and participants. When taking a relational approach to understanding participants' experiences, researchers are interested in trust, equality, and participatory structures through which the participant is engaged with the researcher in the research encounter (McCoyd & Shdaimah, 2007; Lowes & Gill, 2006). On the other hand, the critical consciousness-raising approach investigates participant experiences from the point of what becomes new in their thinking, self-reflection, and consciousness (Koelsch, 2013; Korth,

2002). As for the present research project, ‘the cost/benefit approach’ would be insufficient for the task of understanding my participants’ experiences as commenting on a list of specific benefits and costs without discussing the values involved in these perceived benefits and the experienced costs limits the way their experiences are interpreted.

I believe that both the relational approach and the critical consciousness-raising approach were relevant. The relational approach offered an opportunity to explore the relationship I created with my participants and the significant implications of the importance of this relationship for both parties, while the critical consciousness-raising approach gave the participants the opportunity to reflect on how their participation in the research project had influenced their perceptions and attitudes. To discuss their participation experiences, each participant was invited to one final Skype interview. The reflection on the participation interview had two main parts. In the first part, I summarised what we had done since the data collection started and asked the participants some questions to reflect on how their participation in the research project had influenced them. This entailed exploring what had motivated them to participate, what perceived benefits and concerns they had about their participation, if they thought their participation had constituted a learning experience for them, what they thought they had learned, whether they had any challenges during their participation and the impact of their involvement in this research project on their personal and professional growth. In the second part, I presented the Amazon voucher to each participant and thanked them for their time and commitment, particularly during the unprecedented times we had been going through.

The employment of these multiple data collection instruments enabled me to explore teacher educators' learning and development experiences in depth and created a big data set at the end of the data collection. Information about the total number of interviews and the word count is presented in Table 2 below.

T**able 2:** Data collection instruments used in the current study

Data collection stage	Data collection instrument	Ana	Carolina	Elisabeth	Total
Stage One	Tree of Life Narrative	1 (1238 words)	1 (1170 words)	1 (2915 words)	3
(February-April 2020)	Follow-up Interviews	1 (8320)	1 (6481)	1 (9626)	3
Word Count:		9558	7651	12541	26.750
Stage Two	Learning Descriptions	1 (199)	1 (1204)	1 (1101)	3
(June-July 2020)	Retrospective Interviews	1	1	1	3
Word Count:		(3227)	(3405)	(3301)	12.437
Stage Three	Weekly Learning Episodes	5 (4662)	5 (2934)	4 (4181)	14
(November 2020-January 2021)	Follow-up Interviews	5	5	4	14
Word Count:		(16.462)	(17.380)	(10.760)	56.379

4.6. Data Collection Procedure

4.6.1. Participants

In this study, the focus is on university-based teacher educators, and they are conceptualised as *teachers of teachers* who play an active role in pre-service teachers' education through pre-service courses and the professional development of in-service teachers via professional development courses (Murray et al., 2009). They are also defined as *academics or researchers* "because research productivity is typically a key component in their professional responsibilities framed by institutional norms" (Yazan, 2018, p. 144). More than two decades ago, Wideen et al. (1998) pointed out the need to examine the work of higher education professors since "a clearer understanding of the perceptions of all university professors who serve directly or indirectly as teacher educators, their background, and their images of power must be regarded as valuable and fundamental areas for investigation within the learning-to-teach ecosystem" (ibid. p. 170). More recently, Goodwin and Chen (2016) also drew attention that there should be more focus on what constitutes the work of teacher educators, what they should know to do their work, and what their preparation would entail. In line with this, McGee and Lawrence (2009) state that teacher educators work closely with teachers to support professional learning, which makes their professional learning very vital. They also argue that it is surprising that research on teacher educators' professional learning is often rare. Similarly, Cochran-Smith et al. (2020) highlight the fact that there has been little attention to the education of teacher educators; therefore, they argue that there should be more emphasis on teacher educators' professional development both in local and larger policies which will support teacher educators' professional development.

The term 'teacher educator' encompasses a heterogeneous group of professionals (Lunenberg et al., 2014), resulting in numerous definitions. Goodwin et al. (2014) describe teacher educators as "university-based, doctor prepared faculty who engage in teacher educating – that is, the preparation of pre-service or future teachers" (p. 300). More specifically, referring to language teacher educators, for Moradkhani et al. (2013), teacher educators are "those professionals who provide formal instruction and support for both teacher candidates and practising teachers during pre-service and/or in-service teacher education/training programs" (p. 124). In addition, Yazan (2018) incorporates the 'researcher'

element to his definition, stating that "teacher educators also identify themselves as academics or researchers in most cases because research productivity is typically a key component in their professional responsibilities framed by institutional norms" (p. 144) and thus underlining the fact that their institutions often require this element of their work.

4.6.2. Sampling

As previously stated in Section 4.3, this research project was an instrumental collective case study. To determine the participants, I employed concept sampling, "a purposeful sampling strategy in which the researcher samples individuals because they can help the researcher generate or discover a theory or specific concepts" (Creswell, 2013, p. 208). This entailed intentionally choosing teacher educators whom I believed to be "information rich" (Patton, 2002, p. 169) based on specific pre-determined criteria (ibid.). These criteria included characteristics such as holding a postgraduate degree related to English language teaching, working in an English language teaching department, and having at least three years of teaching experience.

After making initial contact with potential participants, I also used "snowball sampling". I contacted "cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information rich" (Punch, 2009, p. 163). The implementation involved the process where some teacher educators "who had accepted the invitation then suggested a colleague who might be relevant for the study" (Kosnik et al., 2015, p. 59). As for the sample size, I worked with three EFL teacher educators. This is a small enough group of participants which offered "ample opportunity to identify themes of the cases as well as conduct cross-case theme analysis" (Creswell, 2013, p. 157).

As a part of the confidentiality agreement between the participants and me, the real name of the universities where the participants worked, and the real identity of the participants will not be revealed throughout the study. At the beginning of the data collection, I asked each participant to choose a pseudonym for themselves to be referenced in all the documents related to this research project. The pseudonyms of the participants are Ana, Carolina, and Elisabeth, and the professional profiles of the participants are presented below.

Case One: Ana was born in Spain, and Spanish is her first language. She has loved English since she was a little kid and started to study English as an extracurricular activity outside the English classes at school. Later, she started to go to a language school (escuela de idiomas), where she studied English more intensively. She also had the opportunity to go to Edinburgh for a summer course during high school, where she realised that thanks to English, she was able to communicate with the world. This motivated her to study English Studies in her undergraduate degree. During her BA, Ana also taught English. After completing her BA, she pursued a master's in teaching English as a Foreign Language and a PhD in Applied Linguistics. When she was recruited for this project, Ana had been working as a TESOL lecturer for an undergraduate primary education degree with an EFL focus at a university in Castilla La-Mancha for eight years.

Case Two: Carolina was born in Canada, and she spoke English, French, and Spanish. She did her undergraduate in Communication Studies, and after her graduation, she moved to Madrid. She worked in different English language schools in Madrid, where she taught English and had major administrative roles. As she was interested in the use of technology for educational purposes, she pursued a master's degree in Digital Technology, Communication, and Education. Carolina also ran an educational consultancy company with her husband, which entailed organising training camps for English language learners and supporting Erasmus+ projects of different schools and organisations. She currently works in a private, English-medium university where she worked with pre-service primary school English teachers.

Case Three: Elisabeth was born in the United States, and English was her first language. She graduated with a double undergraduate degree in International Relations and Spanish. During her BA, she lived in Seville, Spain, for nearly five months as a part of a study-abroad programme, which she thoroughly enjoyed. After graduating from college in the US, she worked in accounting for three years in Philadelphia until she moved to Spain. After doing a master's in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, she worked as an English language assistant in a primary school in Madrid for one year, taught small English classes (usually one-to-one) to businesspeople, and became the Head of Studies at that language school. Then, she worked for a publishing house where she prepared and delivered training sessions for English language teachers in Madrid. She explored issues related to English language

assistants in primary schools in Madrid as a part of her PhD degree. When she joined this research, Elisabeth had been working as a TESOL teacher educator at a bachelor's degree in Primary School Education with an EFL focus on an English-medium private university in Madrid since 2017.

4.6.3. Bricolage and Online Fieldwork

Denzin and Lincoln suggest five types of bricoleurs, acknowledging the rigour and complexity of the research process (Table 2). Since these distinctions were influential for the bricolage I adopted in this study, I briefly describe how they were applied in this inquiry. I adopted bricolage as the philosophical framework of my study, which helped me draw on different ontological and epistemological theories to explore and describe the "complex, contextually specific, and autobiographically grounded" (Goodwin, 2010, p. 30) nature of teacher educator learning.

Table 3: Five Types of Bricoleurs (adapted from Denzin and Lincoln)

Bricoleur Categories	Description
the interpretive bricoleur	"understands that research is an interactive process, shaped by his or her own personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 6)
the methodological bricoleur	patches multiple data collection instruments and engages in an eclectic and creative research process
the theoretical bricoleur	"reads widely and is knowledgeable about the many interpretive paradigms that can be brought to any particular problem" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 6).
the political bricoleur	"is aware that science is power, for all research findings have political implications. There is no value free science". (Denzin, 2012, p. 85).
the narrative bricoleur	acknowledges that research represents the interpretations of the phenomenon under study since reality is subjective and cannot be "captured" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1999, p. 5).

Adopting bricolage helped me with three important aspects. The first aspect is related to the unprecedented and sensitive pandemic context which required careful planning and consideration since the participating teacher educators were experiencing the COVID-19

reality. Although I had a tentative data collection plan, the bricolage approach gave me the methodological freedom to draw on various data sources as they occurred naturally during the fieldwork. Once the data collection process started, I discovered some other sources of data (e.g., collecting CVs and official documents), which was in line with the ecological approach I adopted and proved to be valuable in supporting my understanding of teacher educators' learning experiences. This enabled me to 'patch' different data sources together to get a rich and living picture of teacher educators' learning experiences. Moreover, "the combination of multiple methodological practices and empirical materials…in a single study is best understood, as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry" (Denzin& Lincoln, 2011, p. 6). In addition, I needed to acknowledge that the pandemic reality led to abrupt changes in the participants' personal and professional lives, negatively impacting their wellbeing. Therefore, I prioritised the wellbeing of the participants and empowered them starting with the beginning stages of the inquiry. As a result of the abrupt shift to emergency online teaching and the sudden changes caused by the pandemic, I needed to be thoughtful and flexible and I was sensitive to the consequences of the research project on my participants in terms of time and energy commitments. For instance, I was planning to conduct classroom observations; however, after our initial exchanges with the participants, I realised they were overwhelmed with online teaching, and I decided not to add more pressure on them with my presence. Moreover, I was flexible and accommodating, sharing materials and scheduling interviews according to the participants' work and family circumstances (methodological bricoleur). Moreover, bricolage helped me see the participants as active agents in producing professional knowledge. I used direct quotes extensively to integrate participants' voices as the co-creators of knowledge (interpretive bricoleur) in this inquiry, increasing participants' agency (Campbell, 2018).

4.7. Data Analysis

I adopted the thematic data analysis approach suggested by Peel (2020) "to organise and simplify the complexity of the data into meaningful and manageable codes, categories, and themes" (p. 7). This approach has been formed by combining the six-phase thematic model by Braun & Clarke (2006) and the four procedures of data analysis as a spiral by Creswell (2013) in a "primarily inductive and comparative" way, as suggested by Merriam (2009, p. 175), and connecting four concurrent nodes of activity, as suggested by Miles, Huberman, and

Saldana (2014). The thematic data analysis approach then consisted of a six-stage data collection and analysis process: (1) collecting the data, (2) engaging with the data, (3) coding, (4) generating the code categories, (5) conceptualising the themes, and (6) contextualising and representing the findings (Peel, 2020). Following these steps was not a one-directional process; rather, I moved "back and forth as needed, throughout the phases" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 16, as cited in Peel, 2020). Creswell's (2013, p. 182, as cited in Peel, 2020) non-linear or spiral approach, which is defined by "moving in analytical circles," allowed me to continually (re)analyse the raw data from the first interview until the final draft. Finally, the thematic analysis process I followed was multi-directional, comparative, and ongoing.

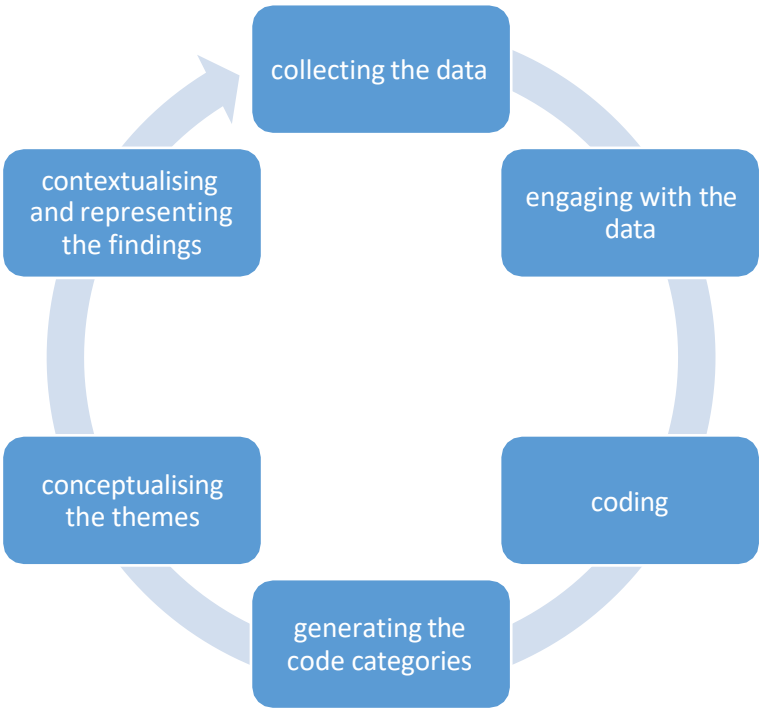

Figure 3: Thematic data analysis approach suggested by Peel (2020)

The first stage of the thematic data analysis approach started with *collecting the data* in April 2020. My qualitative analytic journey began at the very beginning of the data collection when I *engag[ed] with the data* with systematic data management. As I was required to organise the collected data, I followed a system which entailed creating various folders on the computer to store electronic data files with a backup system to protect the data according to the data collection instrument employed and the name of each participant. The next step of *engaging with the data* entailed transcribing the interview recordings and converting handwritten interview notes to text files. All audio files were transcribed verbatim after each

instrument (see a sample transcript in Appendix 7). I organised the data this way, which "progressed to sorting the data into manageable, connected chunks of related synergies" (Peel, 2020, p. 8). Based on Creswell's (2013) data analysis spiral, I conducted cyclical data analysis during the data collection as data gathered from each method was analysed for each participant before the next data collection phase. This entailed carefully reading the transcriptions and jotting down any words, ideas, or overarching themes that stood out as memos (Merriam, 2009). The research questions, the type of learning activities the participants engage in, what they learn and the facilitating or hindering factors, and the themes in the interview guides shaped the focus of the data analysis at that stage. During the cyclical data analysis, I wrote memos in the form of notes, comments, and observations (Merriam, 2009) about the drawings and narratives of the Tree of Life, the retrospective professional learning descriptions and the supplementary materials, and the weekly learning episodes as a reminder to discuss certain points with the participants in the follow-up Skype interviews.

Next, I *coded* the transcripts according to Creswell's (2013) steps for coding qualitative data. Where possible, I used colour-coding by assigning a colour to each research question or to the specific points we discussed in the interviews to help me code, search, and retrieve data. The next step, "coding the extracts from the data", entailed "identifying extracts of significance in the transcripts and […] generating initial codes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Merriam, 2009). I started by a developed template of codes that had been constructed from expected answers to the research questions while staying open to new codes. "*Interpretive bricolage*" was particularly relevant at this stage. Adopting interpretive bricolage resulted in a "pieced-together set of representations" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 5) of the participants learning experiences, the knowledge they have acquired and the facilitating and challenging factors that impacted on these learning experiences. In relation to the analysis of the data collected from the Tree of Life, the process will involve four steps:

a) searching for qualitative similarities and differences in the meaning of the image and comments,
b) comparing the data, identifying different patterns in all images and comments,
c) creating a mind-map to document the interpretations, and

d) formulating themes describing the understanding of the meaning of the images and comments (Alerby & Bergmark, 2012).

Aligned with Alerby and Bergmark (2012), the analysis was driven by my motivation to understand the studied phenomenon and to make meaning of participants' lived experiences. It is also important to note that a vital aspect is the participants' *reflections of their experiences* when the drawings were made more than *what* they depicted (Alerby, 2003). I viewed the drawings made by the participants with an open mind to get a general understanding. The drawings, the words written on the drawings, and the subsequent oral and/or written narratives were considered as a whole unit.

After completing coding, I *generated the code categories from the codes* which Creswell (2013) calls 'categorical aggregation', by reducing the codes and generating the code categories. A code category represents "a collection of similar data sorted into the same place, and this arrangement enables the researcher to identify and describe the characteristics of the category" (Morse, 2008, p. 727, as cited in Peel, 2020). Once this step was complete, I started conceptualising the themes from the codes and the code categories (Peel, 2020, p. 11) where I identif[ied] conceptually the interconnections evident in the types of activities they engaged in, what they learned and the factors impacting on these learning experiences in relation to the significant constructs that were prominent in formal, informal, and non-formal learning and development research and theory. After completing these steps of the thematic data analysis, I analysed each case and produced codes for the context and description of the case. I then advanced the analysis to look for themes that are similar and different in cross-case analysis. I also looked for meaningful metaphors or descriptors to capture creative themes to categorise contrasts across cases. Finally, I drew conclusions about the data and verified those conclusions based on the patterns which emerged. I also addressed the issue of representations of the findings of this study. The final phase, *contextualising and representing the findings*, was a process of "braiding together the data that were supported by extracts, analytic narrative, organisational tables to inform the findings" (Peel, 2020, p. 11). Overall, this process was combined with different perspectives gathered by exploring both the observable and unobservable dimensions of participants' work and experiences and then viewed in connection to one another and to larger social, cultural, psychological, and educational structures as well as the theoretical positions

adopted in this study to extend the hermeneutical circle and to appreciate the diversity of perspectives on exploring participants' learning experiences. Ultimately, this process helped the bricoleur to understand the complexity and multidimensionality of the interpretive process (ibid.).

4.8. The Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness is related to the degree of rigour in the data collection methods, the data, and its interpretation for a quality study (Lincoln et al., 2011). Lincoln and Guba (1985) asked a very fundamental question that researchers should ask themselves, how they can show that "the findings of [their] inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?" (p. 290). To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, I adopted and followed the guidelines suggested by Lincoln & Guba (1985).

The first point is *prolonged engagement* which refers to spending enough time to become oriented to the situation and to get immersed in the research context and the participants. It allows the researcher to be present in the research context long enough to build trust with the participants and avoid any problems due to the researcher's presence. As previously stated, I was not able to travel to Madrid due to the global lockdowns and travel restrictions because of COVID-19. As a result of the online fieldwork, I was not physically present in the research context, and I did not meet with my participants in person, which led to a loss of social contact and energy with the participants. As expressed by Lo Iacono et al. (2016), "when interviewing someone in person, just the act of making them a cup of tea or coffee, for example, can create a connection" (p. 11). Therefore, to build a *connection* with my participants, I followed a couple of strategies. First, I conducted an introductory Skype meeting with each participant in February 2020 after our initial contact during the participant recruitment process. In our first virtual meeting, I introduced myself and my professional background and provided them with more information about my research project and what their participation would mean. I also asked them to introduce themselves and, their background, their current work and answered the questions they had about their participation. My main goal was to start "building a rapport and establishing a safe and comfortable environment for sharing" (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtre, 2006, p. 316). Starting from this first interview, I tried to build trust to feel the participants comfortable in opening up to

me (King & Harrocks, 2018). Second, to continue our connection over time, we exchanged emails before the Skype interviews since "emailing several times before Skyping might … strengthen rapport'" (Seitz, 2015, p. 5). Third, although I was not physically in the research context, I kept reading about Spain, the Spanish education system, and professional learning and development practices in Spain, and I was working on the Context Chapter. I believe this helped me get more familiar with and better understand the context. Although "spending a lengthy period of time in the field setting" (Roulston, 2010, p. 10) was not possible, I tried to contact the participants as frequently as possible and collect the data in phases on the assumption that "the longer periods of time spent studying a topic will result in deeper and more complex understandings of phenomena on the part of the researcher" (Roulston, 2010, p. 10).

The second point is *persistent observation*, a strategy employed to guarantee the depth of experience and better understanding of the phenomenon under study and participants' experiences (Lincoln & Guba 1985). To gather better observational data, I collected the data in three phases and conducted numerous types and numbers of interviews. As previously presented, the first phase entailed collecting narratives from my participants and conducting autobiographical interviews. This was followed by Retrospective Interviews to explore significant past learning experiences in the second phase. The final phase consisted of collecting weekly learning episodes and conducting follow-up interviews. Throughout data collection, I collected supporting materials and documents from my participants where relevant. After completing the data collection, I conducted Reflection on Participation interviews, where I asked some reflective questions and tried to reflect on participants' participation experiences. Despite conducting online fieldwork, all these strategies helped me better understand their personal, educational, and professional backgrounds, current work dynamics and past and current learning and development experiences.

The third point is *member checks* which refer to the process where analytic analytical categories and interpretations are tested with research participants. This entails a process where "the provisional report is taken back to the site and subjected to the scrutiny of the persons who provided information" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 236). Therefore, I asked the participants to check their interview transcripts and make changes if they wanted to after the interviews for respondent validation. As suggested by Koelsh (2013), I completed separate

case reports for each participant and sent a written summary of the draft case reports to the participants. Moreover, direct quotations from the interview transcriptions were included in the case reports to present the participants' understanding of the phenomena in their own words.

The final strategy was *triangulation* which refers to the adoption of multiple data collection methods to ensure that the phenomenon under study is correctly presented to increase the trustworthiness of the study (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2013). In this study, I employed multiple data collection tools (e.g., drawings, interviews, collecting episodes, documents) "not simply because they allow triangulation of data but because they are more likely to capture the complex, multifaceted aspects of teaching and learning" (Kagan, 1990, p. 459). Using multiple data collection instruments in this study was also an "attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint" (Cohen & Manion, 2018, p. 195). Triangulation is particularly important in this inquiry since it explored the inner lives of teacher educators and the complex interaction between such cognitions and their learning, development, and overall work; therefore, the use of triangulation ensured that this phenomenon had been encapsulated. Methodological triangulation was achieved with multiple data collection methods (e.g. autobiographical interviews, retrospective interviews, and follow up interviews). Data triangulation involving time (i.e. the data collection process in this study was extended over a period of 9 months) and people (i.e. the process was conducted across three individual teacher educators) was also undertaken in this inquiry.

4.9. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are an important element of any educational research and are indeed related to all the stages of the research process (Creswell, 2013). In preparation for data collection, I got ethical approval (Appendix 1) for my study. This process entailed filling out two forms in which I provided detailed information about the planned fieldwork under the guidance of the Lead Supervisor. These forms were then sent to both the Head of the Department and to the Faculty Ethics person who gave the Ethics approval after examining the files.

Before starting to collect my data and following The British Education Research Association (BERA 2018) guidelines, I provided participant information sheets to make sure that participants fully understood the aims of my study and how they would contribute to it, and after that, I got their informed consent (Appendix 3). I also stated that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any phase of the project without giving an explanation. Moreover, I provided participant anonymity by concealing the identity of the participants in all documents to protect their identity as promised. During data collection, I "ensured that the participants had a chance to pre-read the consent form; they were pre-warned and asked if the interviews could be recorded; they were informed that the recording of the interview could be stopped at any time on request and that they could withdraw at any time from the research; they were given the opportunity to choose the date and time of the interview (Lo lacono et al., 2016). Regarding the protection of participants and their data, to meet confidentiality, once collected, data was transcribed and stored on a password-protected computer, and only the people involved in the project had access to the research data. The participants and the universities they worked at were assigned pseudonyms, and the participants were guaranteed privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity rights.

The last point related to ethical considerations in this research is *reciprocity*. As researchers, we enthusiastically explain our research hoping to convince potential participants to take part in our study. However, it is also important to think about giving back to the participants. To do that, at the end of the project, I got in touch with the participants to inform them about the research findings by handing out a report to each individual participant. Moreover, throughout the data collection and during our final interview, all the participants expressed that they enjoyed participating (particularly in Tree of Life tasks) and delving deeper into their experiences and found their participation very useful. As indicated by the participants, I hope their participation in this research project had a positive impact and led to increased awareness about the issues we discussed and that they will continue engaging in similar discussions. At a more personal level, I posted a personalised thank you Christmas gift along with an Amazon Voucher to thank them for their time and dedication to this research project, particularly within the pandemic conditions.

4.10. Researcher Reflexivity

There is a consensus among researchers that it is important to get 'empathic neutrality' while conducting research which entails efforts to eliminate bias and be as neutral as possible while collecting, interpreting, and presenting the data (Creswell, 2013). However, Ormston (2012) cautions that such neutrality can never be fully attained since all research will inevitably be influenced by the researcher, and there is no completely 'neutral' or 'objective' knowledge. In this point, he suggests that researchers "be reflexive about their role and the influence of their beliefs and behaviours on the research process" (ibid.). According to Creswell (2013), "researchers recognise that their own background shapes their interpretation, and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretations are shaped by their own personal, cultural, and historical experiences" (p. 25). Finlay (2002) suggests that reflexivity demands a thoughtful, conscious self-awareness and highlights the importance of understanding how human positioning affects the research process.

Ormston et al. (2014) suggest two key elements of reflexivity, namely, an understanding of the researcher's positionality and an examination of how this positionality affects the research process and outcome. In order to demonstrate the 'reflexive research practice' I followed, I kept a reflective research journal during the fieldwork, as suggested by Borg (2001), to reflect on the developing research process to note down ideas, questions, and impressions during the collection, and "to record the day-to-day decision-making entailed during the research process" (Roulston, 2010, p. 10), which proved highly helpful during the analysis and reporting the findings. These sections of my research diary were also valuable in understanding myself as a researcher throughout online fieldwork. As highlighted by Cho and Trent (2006), qualitative research entails "a deeper, self-reflective, empathetic understanding of the researcher while working with the researched" (p. 322). Noting down reflective statements also entailed reflective writing about the challenges and ethical dilemmas I faced during the research process, including the final report, since I was self-consciously aware of my *subjectivities* and kept exploring how these related to the research findings in representations of research, thereby demonstrating my reflexivity (Roulston, 2013).

Being conscious of the potential impacts of research on the participants suggests "a progressive, emancipatory process leading toward social change that is to be achieved by the

research itself" (Cho & Trent, 2006, p. 322). As a bricoleur, I was sensitive to the consequences of the research project on my participants. Similarly, Scheurich (1996) proposes the concept of 'catalytic validity', which refers to "the degree to which the research empowers and emancipates the research subjects" (p. 4). Showing such reflexivity about the potential impacts of participants' engagement in interviews and in this research project, in general, required a process of continuous internal dialogue and critical self-reflection of my positionality as a researcher as well as acknowledging that this position may have affected the experiences of the participants as well as the research process and outcome (Berger, 2015).

To investigate the content of teacher educators' learning in Spain, the study aims to address the following first research question:

1. What do English language teacher educators learn?

As underlined by Beijaard et al. (2007), questioning 'how teachers learn' is crucial since the answers to this question reveal recommendations for the improvement of the professional development of teacher educators and, ultimately, for more effective initial teacher education. The second research question is related to the process of teacher educators' learning:

2. How do English language teacher educators learn?

Finally, in order to understand how teacher cognition and the contextual elements promote or inhibit teacher educators' learning and development, two sub-questions guide this research:

a) What is the influence of internal factors on English language teacher educators' learning experiences?
b) What is the influence of external factors on English language teacher educators' learning experiences?

4.11. Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology of the present study comprehensively. The philosophical underpinnings of this inquiry (4.2), the qualitative research design (4.3), my

rationale for using case studies (4.4), the detailed description of the data collection process (4.5), the data collection procedure (4.6), data analysis (4.7), and the trustworthiness (4.8) and ethical considerations (4.9) and my reflections on researcher reflexivity (4.10). The following three chapters (Chapters 5, 6, and 7) comprehensively present the case report of each participant.

Chapter Five: Ana

5.1 Introduction

This inquiry focuses on the learning and development activities EFL teacher educators engage in, the content of such learning activities and the mediating factors. The data collected in this study comprised Tree of Life drawing (TLD), Tree of Life interview (TLI), Tree of Life narrative (TLN), Retrospective Learning Experience Descriptions (RLD), Follow-up Retrospective Interview (FRI), Learning Episode (LE), Follow-up Interview (FI), Supporting Materials (SM). The findings are presented in three individual cases: Ana (5.2), Carolina (6.1), and Elisabeth (7.1). Each participant case report has two sub-sections. The first part focuses on each participant's personal, educational, and professional background to portray who they are as a teacher educator. The next part presents the learning activities they engaged in, the content of these learning activities, and the contributing and/or hindering factors they needed to mediate to facilitate easier reading for the readers.

5.1. Ana's Portrait

5.1.1. Ana's Personal Background

Ana's early life experiences were mainly related to her parents and family. Ana wrote "kindness", "generosity", and "selflessness" in the roots of her TLD to describe her family values. She further expressed in her TLN that these values were associated with "being a good person" and described them as the core family values. Ana elaborated on these values as follows:

> I was raised by my parents and my grandma and (…) they were always talking about how important it was to be a generous person, to be always ready to help those in need (…) when I think about my early years, I think about these norms of being generous, of being a good person (…) (TLI)

During our discussion about her childhood, Ana stated that "when I think about my early years, I think about these norms of being generous, of being a good person, they were a part of being Christian" (TLI) and further expanded that she witnessed these values "through [her family's] actions" (TLI). However, Ana also shared that "some people took advantage of [her good nature]" (TLI) and she was bullied at school. She elaborated that "because when you are a kid, some kids are bossy, and they want to be in charge of everything but still as there were

some mean kids in school" (TLI). Despite this unpleasant experience, Ana underlined that that she kept believing in what she believed was right (…) and "remain(ed) true to [herself] and what [she had] learned and continued being what [she] thought was being a good person" (TLI).

Another significant early life experience was her mom's sickness and eventual death. Ana wrote "My mom got very sick. I was raised by my dad and grandma" (TLD) on the trunk of her tree of life, which was the main body of her drawing. This initial finding was an indicator of the unfolding story. Regarding my question about when she learned about her mom's illness and what her initial reaction was, Ana responded:

> Adolescence is a key stage in any person's development (…), so at that stage when I learned that my mom was sick, it was really shocking for me (…). I couldn't come to terms with the fact my mom was sick, and I didn't tell my friends, I didn't tell anybody. I couldn't put my feelings into words. So, I think the fact that my mom was sick during that very complicated stage which is adolescent made it a bit more complicated. (…) When I was a teenager, I remember only emotions being like very intense like if I was happy, I was very happy, if I was sad, I was really sad. (TLI)

Her mom's illness had been a significant life experience that impacted Ana enormously. As this quote illustrates, Ana struggled to accept and process her mom's illness and dealt with intense emotions during her adolescence. As the illness progressed, her mom started to become less present, which led Ana and her brother to grow up without their mom's company and support. As she put it, "growing up without mom's support was challenging, and of course, seeing her getting sicker and sicker every day was tough (…)" (TLI). However, Ana also shared a positive note about this painful experience. She stated that "what was most striking for me was that my mom got really ill, so from that moment on, my dad and grandma raised me, so I suppose that has an impact [on the way] (…) I see the world today" (TLN). She elaborated on their support and role in her life as follows:

> [referring to her mom's illness] I was lucky because my dad and grandma told me and my brother "don't worry about a thing, just continue with your high school studies and if you want to go to university, continue with your lives and we are going to take care of everything and we are going to look after you" so, in a way, I had that support, and thanks to that, I am the person I am today and thanks to them I am where I am of course. (TLI)

Ana felt very lucky that her dad and grandmother stepped in to support of her and her brother and expressed gratitude for their support several times during the TLI. She stated that she was able to "complete [her] studies and (…) [she] could study where [she] wanted thanks to [her] dad and grandma who made it possible" (TLI). Ana added that she had "good memories of adolescence, [her] friends at high school, [her] friends and teachers at that stage" (TLI) who helped her get through these difficult times. An interesting finding about Ana's experience regarding her mom's illness and eventual death was the bird she drew on one of the branches of her tree, which was not one of the elements she had been asked to use for her drawing. When asked about this unexpected addition, Ana responded as follows:

> I wanted to do a different drawing because that was something completely different, I mean death is natural in a way, but nobody's ever ready to say goodbye to their relatives or their loved one. (…) It was something very painful but also, to be honest, it was for her it was the best thing that could happen because things were going to get much worse otherwise. (TLI)

Drawing a bird on one of the top branches was Ana's personal touch and a way of expressing herself further, which symbolised her mom's death and the relief that she believed her mom had because of the pain she had been in. After a period of grief and soul-searching, Ana eventually made peace with her mom's death and managed to see the silver lining of this difficult experience and learned from it. Ana realised "that you have to enjoy life and you have to do what you like and in [her] case is teaching, and you have to be truthful to yourself and you have to be kind because you never know what challenges others have" (TLI). Going through such a painful experience inevitably had an impact on the professional Ana later became. As she put it, "I think that we are all experiencing [difficult life experiences], we are made of our experiences, […] the person and the teacher I am today is because of these experiences of course" (TLI). Witnessing her mom's illness and eventual death made Ana more sensitive to what other people might have experienced in life, and she grew into being more empathic towards others. This understanding and empathy also extend to her students. A more detailed discussion of Ana's qualities as a teacher educator is presented in Ana's professional background (see Section 1.3). Ana's career decisions and professional dispositions were also influenced by her educational experiences.

5.1.2. Ana's Educational Background

Ana wrote "English as an extracurricular activity" in one of the roots of her tree of life as a significant early life experience because English language had been a part of her life since an early age. She started to study English at the age of three both at school and as an extracurricular activity. When asked to reflect on these early language learning experiences, she stated that she remembered "enjoying [studying English] more as an extracurricular activity because when [she] went to primary school, the way English was taught wasn't particularly engaging or interesting; it was just vocabulary lists in isolation with no context whatsoever, so it wasn't very productive, not very fun" (TLI). While criticising the English classes at school for being out of context and unproductive, Ana also added that English as an extracurricular activity was taught "through games, watch[ing] films, and things like that, so it wasn't very academic or very serious" (TLI) and she enjoyed these activities more than the English classes at school. As a teenager, Ana attended the escuela de idiomas "an amazing (…) school of languages (…) apart from studying English in high school" (TLI). She enjoyed studying English as an extracurricular activity more than she did in school and she added that she "started learning English from the beginning there". (TLI) Regarding her motivation for starting to study English at such a young age, Ana stated that,

> [referring to her childhood] At that time, it wasn't important to learn English; now English has an important status in Spain, but at that time, I was a kid and (…) I guess they [her parents] saw it as important for my future career, so I started learning English. (TLI)

In addition to her parents' encouragement about and investment in her learning English, in retrospect, Ana explained that (her) parents were very present in her education (TLD), and that her academic success was important for them, and then added that "they care[d] because [her] mother was a teacher herself, so she used to help [her and her brother] with homework" (TLI). Ana's parents were strict about academic achievement and getting a university degree as "both of [her] parents had gone to university so somehow [she and her brother] felt like this was like the only option or the best option because all you need [is] a degree to have a job" (TLI). Ana chose to enrol in the BA in English Studies and stated that there were two significant reasons for choosing this degree. The first one was based on her success as an English language student at high school and her teachers' encouragement.

> (…) I was a good English student in high school, so my teachers encouraged me, I told them “Oh I really like English" and they told me "Oh, you should do it because I think your English is very good" and if you like it, the most important thing is to be motivated, right? Obviously, at that period, very basic level in high school. It wasn't that complicated. (TLI)

The second reason related to the summer break Ana had spent in Scotland at high school. During this visit, she realised that she was able to communicate with people from different countries thanks to English and she enjoyed it.

> When I went to Scotland, I had to use English to communicate only to Scottish people which I didn't understand a thing at that time, but (…) English was the way to communicate (…) with other students from Italy, from Czech Republic, so I was like "wow, this is something huge" because if I learned this language, I can communicate with basically everybody, so that was a turning point at that time. (…) basically, it was the fact I really liked communicating with people and the fact that I was good at it. (TLI)

Motivated to pursue this passion for English, Ana was very excited about studying a degree in English studies. She completed the first two years of her BA degree in Spain, the third year in Nottingham as a part of the Erasmus student exchange program, and then she was back to Valencia for the last two years. Ana described this degree as “a little bit of everything” (TLI) where she had studied various courses such as Linguistics foundation (“Grammar, Morphology, Lexis, Phonetics, things more related to the language itself”, TLI), American and British Literature (“Drama, Poetry, and Prose”, TLI), translation, and Applied Linguistics (“for example, how to teach English in high school”, TLI).

Regarding her Erasmus experiences, Ana explained that they were encouraged to spend a year abroad by the lecturers in the department and she wanted to join the programme as she considered it as a great opportunity to “learn the language, [to] learn how the system works there, the university” (TLI). In retrospect, Ana stated that the Erasmus experience “was very interesting at so many levels” (TLI). She not only learned about the UK higher education system but also found it “interesting to study the same modules [she] was doing in Valencia, but with a different perspective, and with a different professor” (TLI). Ana believed that it was very interesting and insightful to have this opportunity to compare the teaching and learning across two universities. She added that her experience was also very positive with the lecturers as they were very understanding and helpful throughout the process. Moreover,

Ana said that “there were lots of International students” (TLI) and that “being able to communicate with people from all over the world” was “personally a very enriching experience” (TLI). Overall, the Erasmus exchange gave Ana the opportunity to

> put into practice what I have been learning theoretically at the university for 2 years and then I got there, and I had to survive there and spend a year there. All I can say it was positive both personally and professionally. (TLI)

Ana graduated in 2013 and started a Master’s in Teaching English as a Foreign Language the same year. After her Master’s, she pursued the PhD in Applied Linguistics. As for the main motivation to pursue postgraduate studies, Ana explained that she needed to complete these two degrees to continue working at higher education which was her main career goal (discussed in detail in Section 5.2.1). Ana’s life experiences related to her educational background paved the way for her professional background and experiences.

5.1.3. Ana’s Professional Background

During our discussion about Ana’s motivation for choosing the BA in English Studies, she stated that she had chosen this degree because she loved English and knew that after her graduation, she “could be a teacher but there were more options, more opportunities” (TLI). To Ana, “[it] wasn't like "Oh, I want to be a teacher" from the very beginning” because “[she] wasn't sure if [she] wanted to teach English” (TLI). However, that changed when she finished her studies and “started working in a proper job with adults and realised that [she] really liked it” (TLI). Ana, therefore, decided to get the *Certificado de Aptitud Pedagógica* to qualify for a teaching post in the public sector and completed a school placement in high school as a part of her training. Although she had some initial doubts, “it was actually the opposite, [she] ended up learning a lot, and eventually realised that [she] really liked, that [she] enjoyed sharing one of [her] passions (English) with people” (TLI).

In 2013, Ana started teaching at the School of Education of a public university in Spain. She taught courses such as “English and Didactics (Primary and Infant Education), CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in Primary Education, and B1 and B2 preparation for Cambridge ESOL Examinations” (SM). In 2014, Ana started her PhD and she continued teaching in the department throughout her PhD which helped her “not think about the PhD” (RLI):

> I have to say that because I really love teaching, I can say that thanks to my students, some days, I was really like "Oh, the PhD, this and that". And I remember going to class, meeting my students and suddenly everything was OK. I was able to do something different, be with them, and be present with them, not think about the PhD. (TLI)

Continuing teaching and being with her students supported Ana's PhD journey. Being in the classroom helped her get away from her research and emotionally self-regulate, which seemed to assist her in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. After completing her PhD, Ana continued working at the same department as a lecturer which she included in her drawing. She dedicated one of the branches of her tree of life to "Be[ing] a TESOL lecturer at the university" signifying the importance of this role for her. As a response to my question about what she liked about this role, Ana immediately said "freedom" and continued as follows:

> It was very nice because from the beginning I have loved lots of freedom, "This is what you have to teach, this is the content, the way you do it is your choice, the methodology you choose, your style, your timing, as long as the job is done, you can do as you please". (TLI)

Ana also added that she enjoyed collaborating with her colleagues in the department as "[they] have meetings (…) try to coordinate" (TLI) about different modules and teaching in the department. Ana continued that she learned and improved her teaching practice "because of these meetings because they provide suggestions and feedback and also [she] learned many new things from experienced teachers as well" (TLI). When asked what other activities helped her learn and improve as a lecturer, Ana immediately listed some activities:

> things have helped me with my professional development is of course reading, I've spent some time reading scientific articles but (…), because I am a teacher trainer, so sometimes the reality and academic articles are two worlds apart, so I try to attend conferences and read articles not only from professional and big names researchers but also from teachers who are (…) in their classroom with the kids in the real world. Yes, I try to attend these because I learn what's going on, new techniques, new methodologies (...). (TLI)

Ana highly valued reading articles and attending conferences as professional development activities to keep a track of the state-of-the-art particularly in her research areas. She appreciated research articles and talks conducted not only by academics but also by the practitioners working in actual teaching contexts. She added that she also learned by trial and

error “by (…) for example, reading many articles, by practising, by reading, by spending time, by attending conferences, sometimes by failing as well” (TLI). The first benefit of these self-directed learning experiences for Ana is her increased awareness about the current teaching practices and relevant issues in different teaching contexts, which overall improved her contextual knowledge. In addition to gaining new perspectives and having the opportunity to reflect on her own teaching context, Ana improved her pedagogical knowledge thanks to reading articles and attending conferences as she learned about “new techniques [and] new methodologies” to apply in her classes as a teacher educator. Such planned, self-directed learning activities helped Ana keep up to date and improve her pedagogical knowledge.

Furthermore, Ana life experiences had an impact on her disposition to professional development. She wrote “hard work” in the roots of her TLD and expanded that “[she] was a very hardworking kid and [she is] a hard-working person, very perfectionist” (TLI). She thought that she got this quality from her parents and was very perfectionist in everything she did. However, over time, Ana learned to smooth this perfectionism as she believed that perfection did not exist and learned to “the best that [she] can do” (TLI). Ana continued that being a hard-working person led her to have strong “study and work ethics” (TLI), and “somehow shaped [her] experience and in the way [she] expect(s) [her] students to be hard-working as well because it's important for their future careers” (TLI).

> it's important to know that in this profession [teaching] you have to be up to date with the knowledge, with the technologies (…). It's important to work every day, to work hard because they have, as I normally tell them, they have in their hands what is most precious, which are kids, so they need to be very careful with them and they need to make sure that they are doing the right things (…) and they are competent enough to perform these tasks. (TLI)

Ana appreciated working hard and having strong work ethics throughout her education life, regardless of how demanding and challenging the situation got. This quality was later transferred to her professional life since hard work and keeping up to date were two core principles of her professional disposition. As a teacher educator, Ana cherished sharing the importance of these two qualities with the pre-service teachers she trained. She highlighted how necessary it was for teachers to keep track of new pedagogical innovations and to keep working hard to make sure they were competent enough to continue performing their job efficiently. Finally, Ana reflected on how witnessing her mom’s illness and eventual death

impacted her on a professional level. Going through such a painful personal experience made her more sensitive to what other people might have experienced in life and be more empathic towards other people. This understanding and empathy also extended to her students. Ana believed that she had become the person and the professional she was today because of some difficult life experiences, and she valued sharing these experiences with her students. She treasured building a personal relationship with her students and sharing her own life experiences with them to raise their awareness about their future careers and life in general. Ana shared that she recently had a chat with her students about 'failure':

> (…) what I try to do is first give them positive and reinforcing feedback and try to make them understand that failure is part of life, and which is a big failure for them today is probably 'failure in exam' is a learning experience because next day they can study again and retake the exam and try to get a better mark. So, what I try to do is what I have been learning all these years try to, after many reflections, tell my students to be resilient and [be] ready for failure because it is a part of life. (TLI)

In retrospect, Ana learned from failures and difficult situations in life, and managed to stand up, keep going and eventually accomplish her goals. Therefore, one of her goals was to share her experiences with her students and made them aware that difficulties and failure were a natural part of life. She highlighted the importance of being resilient in life and how crucial it was to turn what was once perceived as failure into learning experiences, which was reflected in how she approached her personal and professional life.

5.2. Ana's Learning Experiences

Ana's learning experiences will be presented under six sub-sections: pursuing a PhD, international research visits, attending professional development events remotely, publishing a joint article, going through an accreditation process, and wellbeing experiences during the pandemic. To demonstrate how each of these components was structured, a sample findings matrix is presented in Figure 4.

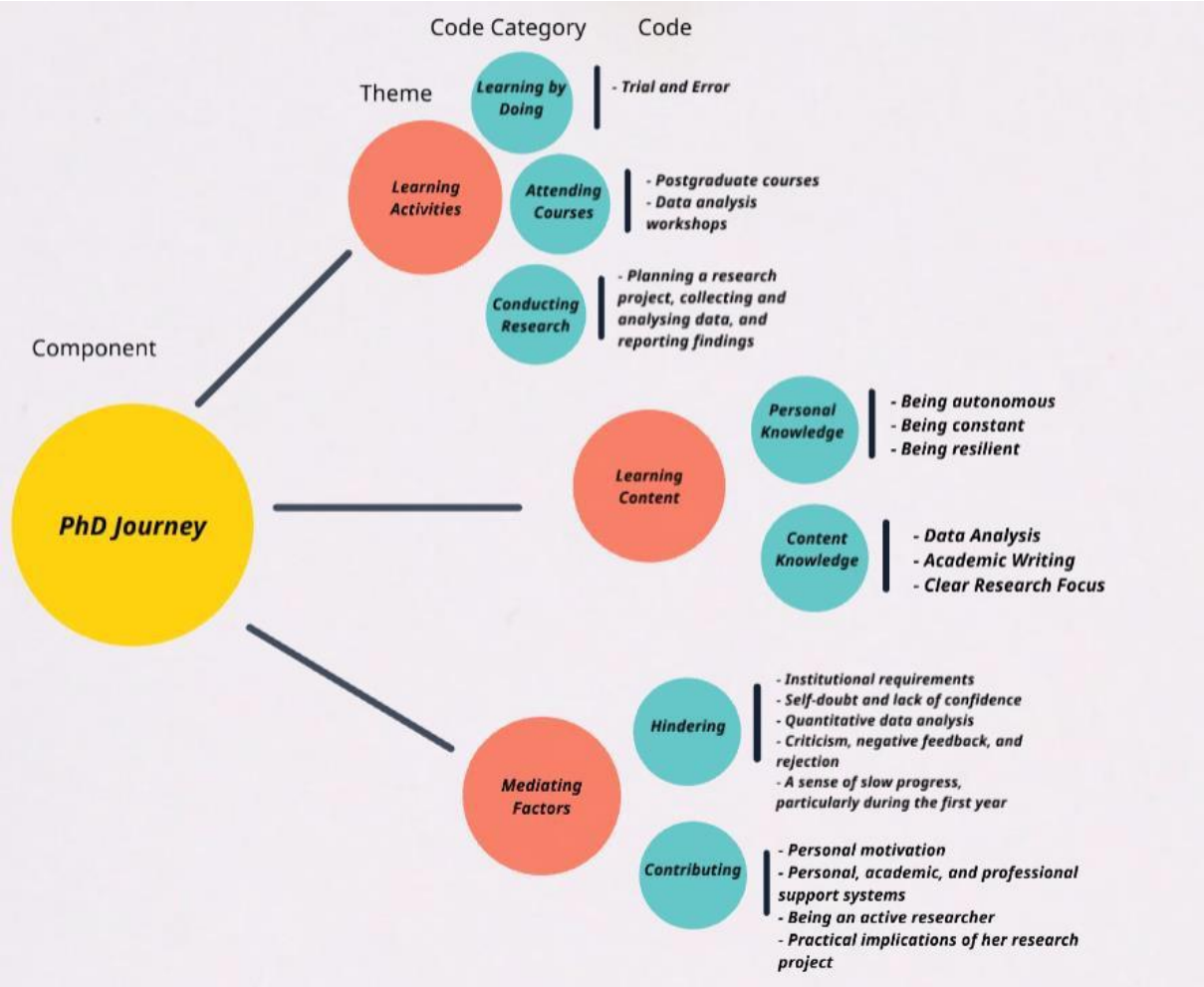

Figure 4: Ana's Sample Findings Matrix

5.2.1. Pursuing a PhD

Ana described her PhD as the first retrospective learning experience which she defined as "one of the most important moments in [her] life" (RLD). As previously discussed, (Section 5.1.3) Ana started her PhD due to external requirements. She further explained that she needed to get a PhD to keep her job at the public university ("the way it works in Spain, (…) if you want to stay, you need to get your PhD. So, I started PhD, and I was teaching at the same time", TLI). Her PhD journey started with uncertainty since she immediately discovered that "the PhD [was] not something comparable to [anything she had done before]". In comparison to her previous studies, she realised that,

> (…) here we are used to learning things by heart. In the PhD., I was asked to review the literature, to be critical about that and to try to apply to a new study, so that could not be compared to anything that I have done previously, so at the beginning, I thought "wow, would I be able to do this, I mean this is a lot to process" (TLI)

Different from her BA and MA experiences, Ana highlighted that pursuing a PhD meant having a critical perspective on different aspects of conducting a research project starting with reviewing the existing literature to planning the research methodology to conduct an original research project to address the gap(s) in the literature. This reflection revealed two professional learning activities that Ana had engaged in at the beginning stages of her PhD; conducting a critical literature review to identify the gaps in the existing literature and planning a research methodology to address these gaps. Ana admitted that she felt overwhelmed by these activities and confessed that she suffered from lack of confidence "(…) when [she] first started the PhD was like this huge challenge" (FRI), adding,

> And sometimes there were harsh times when I was doubting myself, 'will I be able to do?' … I remember when I started writing I was like 'How am I going to write 300 pages?' because in Spain, we are asked to write around that and I remember the first day, it took me 4 hours to write a page, and I was like 'This is gonna be hard, this is going to take me forever, like my whole life'. (FRI)

Besides these doubts about whether she would be able to make progress and successfully complete her PhD, Ana stated that she had the feeling that she was very passive and that she was making slow progress. She explained that the first year of her PhD "was pretty much reading and getting familiar with all the theories, main authors, all the literature that is related to affective variables in the process of learning a second or foreign language, which is my field of expertise. (...) for me reading, it was just something very passive" (FRI). However, over time she realised that she started to make progress "without realising, because I was writing faster, being more academic, being more precise in what I wanted to achieve" (FRI), and she had become an active researcher:

> I realised that when I first finished this stage of just reading and I started with data collection, I felt like I was part of the process now (…) and with data collection, you actually feel like a researcher, 'Oh, I am a researcher now because I'm conducting this investigation', and once you start preparing the possible questions, and you get the piloting, and you start running the questionnaires, you start analysing data, and it's like 'Oh, this is starting to make sense now'. When your results are in line with those found by previous authors, you feel like 'Oh, I'm on the right track' or on the other hand, when you have a different result, it's even more interesting, you are like 'Let me

> see how I'm going to analyse the variables why is this different?, is it my context?, is it my students?' (FRI)

When she started the data collection, Ana began to feel more active and in charge. She went through different phases of a research project, starting with preparing the research questions and doing the piloting, then progressing into the actual data collection, the data analysis, the interpretation of the findings and, finally, the discussion of the findings. Opposite to the passiveness she had felt during the first year of her PhD, Ana enjoyed being in the field and conducting her research and believed that she had now become a researcher. Another point Ana relished about her PhD was the discussion of her findings. She was very excited about interpreting her findings and seeing how they fitted into or differed from the literature that she had been reading since the beginning of her PhD. The feeling of progress with data collection, the creative process of interpreting the findings, and the overall curiosity and inspiration Ana possessed about her research were the elements that supported her professional learning during her PhD.

Ana stated that she had "spent three years working on [getting her PhD degree] and those were years of constant learning and self-enhancement" (RLD). However, she admitted that she had struggled with Statistics during her data analysis "because [her] background was in Languages and Humanities, so numbers were not part of the equation until that time" (FRI). Therefore,

> I had to make peace with Statistics, and I joined some courses. (...) and when I learned how to use SPSS, and when I learned what was the most suitable analysis to perform, and when the results came, I was like 'Oh, I did this, I can't believe it'. And I learned how to make sense of those numbers which had no sense for me in the past, I learned to make sense of numbers, so that was huge for me as well. (FRI)

After the initial frustration and difficulties with Statistics and quantitative data analysis, Ana took charge and attended a course, and managed to learn how to perform the most suitable analysis for her research. When she finally managed to get the SPSS results and made sense of the numbers, she felt a great sense of achievement. Being able to move beyond her comfort zone and getting over what she had once considered as a substantial challenge had a positive impact on her sense of self-efficacy. Another challenge Ana got over was academic writing, which she ended up learning about and improving in considerably. She stated that her thesis

was the first piece of work that she wrote in academic English. Although she had a background in languages and did some writing in her BA, “this can't be compared with the level of [her PhD thesis], [in terms of] how demanding it is” (FRI). Ana continued that over time “[she] was making more progress because [she] was writing faster and started to be more academic” (FRI).

On a personal level, Ana developed autonomy. Despite having “a great supervisor (…) who was very accessible, very approachable (…), at the end of the day, it's your work, so you have to be the one [to take charge]” (FRI). Hence, Ana learned to be “constant and continuing making continuous progress” (FRI). No matter how little work she managed to complete each day, Ana realised that all these little steps added up and helped her complete a phase and keep going. She also experienced some moments where she had to be disciplined and made sacrifices because the process had been challenging and at times demanding of her personal time. She “learned to sacrifice because sometimes, I'd rather be doing something else, but I learned to sacrifice sometimes my own free time” (FRI). In retrospect, Ana stated that she learned considerably during the PhD journey and after completing her PhD (“Oh, if I started my PhD now, I would change this, this, this', and I think this is very interesting because it means that you have learned something and you want to make it even better”, FRI).

There were some mediating factors that had a facilitating impact on Ana’s PhD learning experiences. One of them relates to her personal support system, such as the emotional support she received from her family and friends, especially during the ‘downs’ of her PhD (“Although they are not part of this world, they were very supportive as well. When I had some downs, they were like 'What you need is some rest and you can start again', they were very supportive as well”, FRI). Ana also referred to the academic support system, which included guidance and encouragement from her supervisor who, she said, was “encouraging, [provided] valuable insights about her work, and believed in her” (RLD). Furthermore, Ana mentioned the professional support system, which entailed encouragement particularly from her co-workers who were also doing their PhDs. Ana stated that it was easier for her to share her PhD experiences with someone who had gone through the same experiences (…) and they encouraged her “OK. Come on, you've got this. I can totally relate to this, what you are going through, and you are going to do this” (FRI).

On an opposite note, there were also some factors that had a hindering impact on Ana's PhD learning experiences. The first one is 'doubting herself'.

> … when I first started the PhD was like this huge challenge. And sometimes there were harsh times when I was doubting myself, 'will I be able to do?' … I remember when I started writing I was like 'How am I going to write 300 pages?' because in Spain, we are asked to write around that and I remember the first day, it took me 4 hours to write a page, and I was like 'This is gonna be hard, this is going to take me forever, like my whole life'. (FRI)

As previously discussed in Section 5.1.2., Ana started pursuing postgraduate studies to attain an academic post in Spanish higher education. Despite expressing a personal aspiration to do a PhD, Ana admitted that she was externally motivated, which seemed to take a toll on her self-confidence and sense of self-efficacy, particularly at the beginning of her PhD. It is also important to add that her mom had passed away right before she started her PhD. Therefore, she "was not very motivated to start or to write" (TLI) and she tried to be compassionate with herself. Over time, she was able to find the strength and motivation to start:

> the fact that I knew that she had lots of suffering from a very difficult illness made me in peace for her so in a way I found intrinsic motivation within me; I sometimes try to be gentle with myself because it was a difficult time for me so I try not to be hard, to push myself with the Ph.D., but gradually I started to feel more confident and to be more motivated to start. And the fact that she may be proud of me if she was here so. (TLI)

Feeling obligated to pursue such a big research project in pursuit of her career goals and starting the PhD process after her mom's death had a major hindering impact on Ana at the starting stages of her PhD. Ana's lack of motivation seemed to lead to a lessened sense of self-efficacy and a lack of intention to start her PhD properly. However, Ana overcame this challenging period by identifying with the reasons why she started pursuing a PhD degree in the first place, which was to achieve a life goal that she highly valued. She "gradually started to feel more confident and more motivated to start. And the fact that [her mom] may be proud of [her] if she was here" (TLI). Ana also experienced some academic challenges such as her struggles with Statistics which was the "most challenging" (FRI). However, she mediated her limited knowledge of Quantitative research and data analysis by doing readings and

attending courses. Despite her challenges, Ana felt a great sense of achievement when she determined the most appropriate data analysis to conduct and even more when she made sense of those numbers which made no sense at one point. Another challenge she needed to work with was the “rejection, negative comments, and feedback from reviewers” (TLI).

> Sometimes when you send an article and you get a 'no' or you get negative comments, it's not the comments themselves, but sometimes how they are phrased, they can be hurtful sometimes, so 'rejection'. Probably, those comments weren't really encouraging made by some reviewers in some journals. (FRI)

Despite acknowledging that “rejection is somehow part of academia, and you have to get used to it” (RLD), Ana still struggled with these comments. However, Ana learned to not take these comments personally and how to work with constructive feedback. This realisation helped her gain resilience “(…) because sometimes you got negative feedback, so you have to be resilient and to learn that this feedback is for you to improve” (TLI). Overall, Ana included her PhD as one of the fruits of her tree of life and described “getting a Ph.D. degree” (TLD) as “one of the significant achievements in [her] professional life” (TLI). She expanded on the significance of her PhD research and reflected on the pedagogical implications of her research project:

> (…) because I analysed the importance of motivation when we learn a language, so I realise that the Ph.D. is not just something written there; it was, it has a connection to real life, to reality, and to a real classroom and the findings, my modest findings could have a tiny impact on classes or students so that was very enriching for me and for my career. (TLI)

Ana noted how her involvement in doctoral research would benefit English language teaching and English language teachers. Ana’s PhD research focused on the affective variables in foreign language teaching in primary education, and she concurrently worked as a teacher educator in an undergraduate EFL primary education programme. Moreover, pursuing a PhD and simultaneously being a practitioner was a pleasure for her work. She believed that her PhD research contributed to her instruction and nurtured her teaching practices because it “made me feel so more confident in my classes (…) when I was teaching, I felt that my classes were improving, the quality of my content and the quality of my teaching was improving

thanks to research as well" (TLI). This improvement thus made Ana feel more confident about her teaching and subsequently impacted on her sense of self-efficacy positively.

5.2.2. International Research Visits

The other learning experience that Ana chose to discuss was the stay-abroad visits she did, which she described as "one of the key elements of [her] career" (FRI). Ana explained that the motivation for these visits was institutional requirements as "(…) [her] work calls for collaboration with other researchers from other parts of the world" (RLD) and "these stay-abroad are a part of our requirements in Spain; they are kind of mandatory if you want to promote (…)" (FRI). Regarding the significance of these three visits, Ana stated that "each one of these experiences impacted [her] in a very different way because she was in a very different stage of [her] professional career" (FRI). Ana visited a university in the United States of America in 2016 (RLD) and this coincided with the first year of her PhD, which "was the reading phase, and [involved] (…) some data collection" (TLI). She considered this visit significant in that [she] was very lucky because the Professor [she] worked with offered [her] the opportunity to attend some post-graduate classes on 'motivation', her PhD research topic. Therefore, Ana expressed that "[she] was very lucky that [she] got to experience that" (FRI). The second visit was to the University of Alberta in Canada in 2017 when Ana was finishing her data analysis. The key element of this visit was that the host Professor made Ana a member of her lab and suggested new ways of Quantitative data analysis that Ana could use in the future. Ana did her last visit to a university in Scotland in 2020, which Ana described as "the most fruitful" experience (FRI):

> This time, I wasn't a PhD student anymore; I had done my PhD, so everything was different. In the other two stays, I was all the time with other grad students, and this time, I was with the lecturers. It was fruitful because [the Professor] and I collaborated in so many different ways, we have 2 publications together. One book chapter and one article. We applied to create a project together in order that we can continue meeting and our universities are linked. (FRI)

Different from the two previous overseas visits, where she was a PhD student, during her visit to the university in Scotland, Ana was now a postdoctoral academic. She therefore spent most of her time with the other lecturers in the host department and had the opportunity to

collaborate and effectively work with them, which was very different from her department in Spain. Ana described her department as “very individualistic” (FRI) in relation to research collaborations. She elaborated that although she belonged to a research group with her colleagues, she mostly wrote articles on her own “because we are not encouraged to, in my department, everybody is interested in different things research wise, so it's very difficult to collaborate with somebody else” (FRI). Therefore, her visit to the university in Scotland enabled Ana to be in regular contact with the lecturers in the host department and make two publications and prepare a collaborative project with the host lecturer. Ana added that these collaborative experiences in a sense encouraged her to “get out of [her] comfort zone” (FRI).

> 'OK, this is what I do, this is what I know, this is how I write', and when I'm with them in different universities that work very different from mine, different departments, different professors, what I've learned along the way is working in groups, working collaboratively, being a part of a group, being able to listen to others' opinions and ideas. And these three professors I was with, they were very experts in the fields, so I could learn from their expertise. (FRI)

Ana reflected on the impact which her role (either as a PhD student or a postdoctoral academic) had on her learning experience during these visits. Visiting the department in Scotland as a postdoctoral academic enabled her to have access to the other academics in the host department. She believed she was perceived as an equal which boosted herself confidence and seemed to support her development and improved the outcome of her visit. Moreover, these overseas research collaborations provided Ana with opportunities to observe different practices and be exposed to relevant professional expertise. For instance, thanks to her visit to the USA, Ana had the opportunity to attend postgraduate courses particularly about ‘motivation’, her Ph.D. research topic where “one student prepared a research article and sent it to us, we have to read it and answer some questions and have a whole debate about them” (FRI). She felt “very lucky that [she] got to experience that” (FRI). Ana continued as follows:

> Every day, in my programme, it's just writing the thesis, we don't attend any classes, any modules. So, it was very interesting, and the way it was structured like the Professor was just a facilitator, the postgraduate students were the ones who were the leading the classroom and in charge. So, that was very interesting for me, and I learned a lot during this phase. (FRI)

The PhD programme Ana studied in Spain entailed mainly pursuing individual research work and did not require the students to attend compulsory postgraduate classes. Therefore, the visits to the USA and Canada as a PhD student gave Ana the opportunity to attend postgraduate classes where she shared the responsibility for class preparation with the other postgraduate students and engaged in critical classroom discussions which were different from those in her own context. In addition to learning how to be autonomous and critical, Ana learned about Statistics and quantitative data analysis thanks to the Professor she visited in Canada where she also joined a research lab and learned how to be a team member and work effectively since she had "never been a part of a lab before, where everybody was in charge of something different (…) that taught me a lot because it's very different to where I come from" (FRI). Another classroom-related experience happened during her visit to the university in Scotland where Ana had the opportunity to do classroom observations.

> (…) so I was very interested (…), sometimes I was teaching similar things, but very different approach. So, I learned a lot being there. They were treating me like a student, so if they were doing some role-plays or playing some games with the students, I was like one of them. (…) We do something similar, but I think the way they did it in Glasgow was more effective and more structured, so I definitely would like to implement that. (FRI)

Observing the micro-teaching practices of the host lecturers made Ana familiar with different microteaching approaches and expanded her pedagogical knowledge. She stated that she took notes about the implementation and added that she was determined to transfer the microteaching. She was also grateful for the kindness of the lecturers who accepted her into their classes. In fact, she added that the host researchers were very kind to integrate her into their departments during her visits. Despite having different academic positions, Ana stated that she was always treated with respect and received positive and constructive recommendations about her future academic career, which supported her professional development during these visits. Another facilitating factor was the opportunity to discuss her work with other academics and postgraduate students in the departments she visited:

> and also the people worked with them, other professors or PhD students. They were very supportive as well because I was able to, not only to discuss stuff with the professors themselves, but also with people in their environment, it was very enriching and that made me learn a lot from their different perspectives and also being able to discuss my work with people who

> were exactly on the same page and investigating same thing I was doing felt very insightful. (FRI)

Being in regular interaction with researchers who had similar research interests was enlightening for Ana and supported her professional development. She learned listening to and learning from different perspectives and suggestions.

5.2.3. Attending Professional Development Events Remotely

As discussed in Ana's professional background (Section 5.1.3.), Ana highly valued attending conferences as professional development activities. She considered conferences as opportunities to keep track of the state-of-the-art in her research areas, which was one of the core principles of her professional disposition. However, her attendance was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic:

> (…) actually, in August and now in November, I was supposed to attend two conferences, the first one was in Netherlands and the second one (…) was here in Spain. This one I normally attend every year because it's Applied Linguistics Association in Spain and I normally learn a lot and meet some co-workers every year, we attend this conference, so it's a really nice experience and highlight of the academic year so I'm gonna miss that, definitely. (LE)

Ana expressed disappointment for the cancelled events especially for the annual conferences where she got the opportunity to catch up with her colleagues. Although many events were cancelled, there were also some events that were successfully transferred to online platforms. The first online event she attended was an online symposium on CLIL, one of her areas of expertise. She was also excited about the focus of the symposium, "[CLIL] in higher education at universities", and the "national and international" scope of the event, "so [she] was very interested" (LE). Ana expressed that she learned about the state of the art in Spain and in Europe and noted down new publications that she could use for her future publications. She also had the opportunity to listen to talks about CLIL practices in Spain and to "get a bigger picture of this situation that I try to teach in this subject and (…) to have a bigger picture of the situation and being able to transmit that to my students" (FI). She also realised that

> For it to work properly, every actor of this process needs to perform properly, and have the support they need. So, yes, I learned that it's (CLIL) very popular, everybody

> is talking about it, it's very cool, but at the end of the day, in many communities, they talk about lack of support, even content teachers and language teachers co-work, and this isn't happening in many places. (FI)

Ana got the opportunity to learn about CLIL projects and practices in other European countries. She also listened to CLIL practitioners from different regions of Spain and increased her awareness about the realities of CLIL practices in different parts of Spain. Moreover, she noted down new publications she would like to read for her future research. Ana also had opportunities to reflect on her own context and, consequently, realised that there needed to be improvements in many communities in Spain about the support provided for content teachers and language teachers to better co-work (FI) because "for [CLIL] to work properly, every actor of this process needs to perform properly, and have the support they need" (FI). In addition to gaining new perspectives and having the opportunity to reflect on her own teaching practices and context, Ana improved her pedagogical knowledge thanks to attending conferences as she learned about "new techniques [and] new methodologies" to apply in her classes as a teacher educator.

There were some mediating factors that had a positive impact on her symposium experiences. A facilitating factor was the perceived opportunity to connect with researchers with similar research interest "(…) because sometimes teaching and research can be a little bit isolating if you don't have a research group or somebody that you normally publish with" (FI). Another facilitating factor Ana talked about was the Q&A discussions at the end of each session. Ana explained that

> I also learned a lot when somebody asked questions because that makes me reflect on my own practice 'oh, I never thought about it' or 'Oh, I thought about it, but I have a different opinion', so I guess we also learn by listening to others and listening to others' questions and answers" (FI).

On an opposite note, as a hindering factor Ana mentioned time limitations due to her schedule of that semester ("I would like to devote more time to research at this point, but I can't, so I wish I had more time right now to go to these, but I can't", LE).

Another remote PD event Ana attended was an online symposium about distance learning in higher education during Covid-19. Specifically, the event was about "how we are transferring our methodology, our knowledge from in-person, face-to-face spaces to online spaces now"

(LE). Ana felt that the focus of the event was to the point, and she was very motivated to attend “because right now, I am doing precisely that” (LE). The symposium was organised by a university in Madrid which already had distance learning programmes before the pandemic. There were also other lecturers from other universities in Spain who talked about the impacts of the pandemic and how they had handled teaching in their institutions and regions. Therefore, Ana was motivated to attend and learn from the speakers who were going through similar situations and challenges during the pandemic. For instance, Ana was inspired by a speaker who highlighted the importance of body language in online teaching. This made Ana reflect on “the importance of body language and gestures and so many things that I have never paid attention to. I thought 'oh, yes, that would enhance their learning process probably'” (FI). Listening to the speakers talked about how they handled teaching in their university and getting engaged in the follow-up discussions gave Ana the opportunity to reflect on her own teaching and university. Attending this online symposium reminded Ana that she was not alone, and she “felt that for that day, [she] was part of that community” (FI). Attending this symposium and learning about how other lecturers and departments had been dealing with Covid-19 supported Ana’s professional development. Interacting with other lecturers created a sense of community and soothed her anxiety about the pandemic. Related to that was the compulsory security course she had to attend. The university Ana worked at decided to go back into in-person teaching during the summer of 2020, and the security department of the university emailed all university staff and notified them about a compulsory security course before the start of the new semester in September. Ana stated that this security course was about “the new measures and security about the [pandemic] situation” (LE). She said that prior to the course, she was not very motivated to attend and during the course, she was “a bit overwhelmed about this situation [going back to in-person teaching during the pandemic]”. However, after attending this course, she felt that she was “privileged because [she] was working because many people have lost their jobs, and [she] had the possibility of continuing working during this situation” which helped her change her perspective. The focus of this security course was on daily practicalities of going back to campus; therefore, “it helped [her] a lot with lots of strategies” (LE). Similar to her experiences during the online symposium on higher education during the pandemic, this security workshop made Ana realise “that we are all on the same page” (LE). Ana had the opportunity

to listen to how other people were coping with the pandemic and felt relieved to hear that because

> It was hard for all of us when overnight, we were talking about 'OK, you have to go home and teach from there'. And even for me, this semester when they told me, if they are at home because they have been tested positive, you have to talk to them, I was like 'What!', it felt really weird. (FI)

Ana added that the course materials “were really good and very well-explained, very clarifying” (LE). After the sessions, she created a PowerPoint presentation with all the information she got from the course with “highlights about the things they have to follow” (FI). Ana explained that “by creating this PowerPoint, I've become more motivated - 'OK. This is what we have to do. It's just following some simple rules, everything's going to be OK” (FI). In addition, Ana also felt reassured as “the people in charge of this unit of security told us that we can contact them if we have any problems or questions, I felt supported by that and that I wasn't on my own (FI)”. As a result, she started to feel more confident about going back to campus. Despite this positive shift, Ana was still concerned about “being surrounded by lots of people” (FI) because she was worried about being in contact with someone who was Covid positive and transferring the virus to others. She was also worried about some students’ irresponsible behaviours about the pandemic and having to constantly warn them to wear their masks properly. However, reflecting back, Ana expressed gratitude for attending this course to gain more information about how to prepare for returning to campus, and she shared this new information with her students to raise their awareness “about this new normality” (FI) and to make a smoother transition to in-person teaching and create a safe environment for everyone.

5.2.4. Publishing a Joint Article

Ana pleasantly shared the notification she received for the joint article submission, which she briefly mentioned in a previous episode. Ana added that they had managed to submit this article in July 2020, and “the reviewer's comments were minor changes” (LE). She was delighted when she was finally notified that their article would be published and chose to include it as a weekly learning episode. Ana and her colleague decided to take the quarantine as an opportunity to finally start working on this publication. As for the motivation to publish, Ana stated that she had intrinsic motivation to collaborate and publish with a colleague as

she did not publish with somebody else but normally publishes by herself ("along the times I have collaborated with the Professor in Glasgow, this is the only time I'm collaborating with somebody else, so I am looking forward to collaborate with more people", FI). In addition, Ana had extrinsic motivation as she was aiming to fulfil institutional requirements and prepare for potential future promotions and accreditations.

> What motivated me to start writing this article was, well first some extrinsic motivation because I need for my job to publish, but also this is an article I did in collaboration with somebody at my department. (LE) (…) Here in Spain, if you are at the university, you need to publish. You need to get these accreditations that I told you, you need to constantly publish. (FI)

As for structuring and writing the article, Ana stated that she was working "more on the content part and my colleague was more on making it something more academic, making it look better" (FI). During the quarantine, they exchanged emails and had online meetings to discuss their progress, and when they were happy with the final draft, they made the submission. Ana stated that initially she was "a little bit scared, a little bit nervous, but then as the process went by", she started relaxing and felt very good because she was supported by her colleague (LE) and realised that she learned substantially from this publication process. Ana believed that by collaborating with others one can learn more, "such as different point of view, other way of doing things, processing things, understanding things" (LE). Ana described this collaboration as "enriching" (FI) and stated that she learned about "the way they process information, about how they analyse data, about how they write academically, so many things" (FI). She added that she really enjoyed the process and that she improved a lot professionally. Moreover, this experience helped Ana learn how to collaborate with colleagues, which "is not always easy because I'm not used to collaborating" and elaborated on this as follows:

> In my department, it's very small and everybody is doing their own thing, we don't share same research interests, so it's very difficult to collaborate with somebody. So, it was the second time I collaborated with somebody, so I learned to listen to other people and especially to somebody with more experience than me. (FI)

Having this collaborative experience with a more experienced colleague taught Ana how to work with other researchers. Ana had already experience of working with other postgraduate

researchers and academic thanks to her research stays abroad, and this close joint publication process helped Ana hone her skills to a further level. She learned how to set boundaries and work effectively with researchers, especially with higher academic positions.

> I had to do things like I had never done before, like to set boundaries, to make my point in a polite way (…). Definitely, it was a huge turning point for me. Especially at university, it's all about the position you are in. Sometimes, it's scary to tell somebody who is up, in a higher position. It's hard to tell people that, but the way everything is structured, at least here. (FI)

Despite the initial feeling of awkwardness to disagree with her colleague, Ana overcame this uneasiness over time. She started to express her ideas and making a solid case of her suggestions and learned how to express her own voice:

> (…) It is very nice to collaborate with someone else … but there are some points where we have some different opinions about how to do things, how to write things, but I have adopted to it very well, in a nice way because we were able to come to an agreement, I'm learning to express my own voice, to express my own opinions and something if I don't like it, I'm learning to do that, so yes, in a way, this experience also helped me say "Hey, you have a lot of experience, and I really appreciate it, but I think here, we should do this", so I think this is important to be heard. (LE)

Ana experienced some disagreements with her colleagues where they “didn't seem to agree on a point” (FI) and accepted that this situation challenged her a lot. However, she learned how to handle disagreements “to set boundaries (…) and to express [her] own voice” (FI). Ana also learned from the reviewers’ comments and suggestions “either when they provide me with 'You need to cite this, this, and this author' (…) and also, when something new is about Statistics, 'Oh, you should use this analysis instead of the other one” (FI). In addition, the reviewers’ comments helped her improve her academic writing since their feedback was also related to language use and academic English. Regarding my question about the training and support she had for publication; Ana replied as follows:

> To be honest, I've never had that kind of training. It's just I've been learning by doing it, by reading lots of papers; how they were structured. I truly learn by that. We didn't have much of a training. I suppose once we decided the journal, it's very useful to go through their guidelines. (FI)

There were some mediating factors that had a contributing impact on Ana's publication experience. The first one is her intrinsic motivation to publish since she has "a recent PhD on [English language learners'] motivation" (FI) and she was very keen on making another publication of her PhD. Ana was also motivated by the research impact even "in a very small-scale that, even regionally, that some in-service teachers read them and find out about the importance of motivation". (FI). The fact that Ana was able to collaborate with an experienced researcher "contributed a lot to [Ana's] learning because as he has a very long career in academia, has published everywhere, and always gives [Ana] advice both on form and content, and how to make a better article, more academic, and staff" (LE). On the other hand, Ana expressed concerns about accessibility because they wrote their article in Spanish and believed that "this is definitely a disadvantage" (FI) since this limited the journals where they can publish. However, they had a few journals in mind and managed to publish their article in one of them. Regarding their choice to write the article in Spanish, Ana explained that:

> it is a regional study, carried out in our region, maybe we thought people in our region who don't speak English, which is a lot, can access it because it is about the situation of bilingual schools, this CLIL that I told you about in our region, so in a way, that could be an underlying reason as well. (FI)

On a more general scale, Ana also reflected on the continuous pressure to publish in academia since "if you are at the university, you need to publish, you need to get these accreditations that I told you about in Spain" (FI). As a result of this continuous pressure, Ana expressed some concerns about the quality of the publications that are produced. She did not think that "this is something positive all the time because it only makes people feel very stressed" (FI). As a result, Ana believed that "when you are forced to publish, I get the feeling that people publish things that are like very average" (FI), sometimes compromising quality over quantity.

5.2.5. Getting Accredited

Another learning experience that Ana shared was related to the accreditation notification she had received. In the summer of 2020, Ana applied for accreditation called *acreditación de ayudante doctor* form *La Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación* and she had been waiting for the answer for months. She finally received an email notifying her that the response was positive during the third phase of data collection and shared her experience as a learning experience in her weekly learning episodes. Our discussion started by talking

about what motivated Ana to apply for this accreditation in the first place. Ana explained that "[she] needed it for [her] job" (FI) due to institutional requirements to continue working at a public university and she continued as follows:

> (…) as far as I know, it's a Spanish thing. First, you're a grad student and you are studying your PhD. Once that you have finished your PhD, if you want to continue working in a public university (…) you need this accreditation. The one I've got is the most basic one (…) So, I did my PhD and if I wanted to continue at the university, I need this most basic accreditation. With this accreditation, it's like I got promoted. I can either continue at my university or I can go to a different university whenever they are asking for this specific post with this accreditation. (FI)

Similar to the requirement to pursue a PhD degree, Ana needed to go through this accreditation process to keep an academic post at public universities in Spain. However, she added that despite the external requirement, later during the process, particularly towards the final steps, Ana also wanted to "check whether [she] was able to get this accreditation or not, so it became something more personal" (LE). Ana needed to fulfil the criteria appointed by the Ministry of Universities inside the Ministry of Education, which the Humanities committee evaluated. There were three main aspects that the committee took into account; research counted the most ("these stays abroad, seminars, conferences that you have attended if you have coordinated or been in a panel of the conference", FI), then teaching experience followed ("how many years you have been teaching at the university if you have taught or worked somewhere else, student feedback forms", FI). The third category was 'others', which included "articles, chapters in a book, research projects, everything research related" (FI).

At the beginning of the process, Ana was pessimistic about the bureaucratic aspects of the process and felt very overwhelmed with the amount of information she was exposed to and the requirement to put such a big file together. At the beginning of the process, she "wasn't very motivated, [she] was gathering all the documents, but [she] was thinking 'this is a waste of time, I'm not going to get it'" (FI). As a result, she was very stressed about the result and even more concerned about the potential consequences of a negative result. She was aware that if her application got rejected, she would have to wait for six months until she could make another attempt, so she needed to consider this and perhaps start looking for another job.

Gathering all the documents and finally uploading them to the platform made Ana realise how much she had already accomplished in her career, which supported her confidence and self-efficacy. While her confidence was increasing, Ana stated that she started to believe in herself more that she would get the accreditation:

> On a professional level, going through this journey, I realised, as I said, I have to be more self-confident, and this has definitely had an impact on my professional development as long as personal development because I think they are both interconnected. Yes, at the beginning I was telling myself 'You're not good enough for this world'. (Ana, FI)

Despite the initial doubts about this accreditation process, when she started going through her certificates and extended CV, she started feeling that “it's not that bad, Ana. This is OK. Maybe you are going to get a positive answer” (FI). Realising how much she had already accomplished motivated her to continue the process. On the other hand, there were hindering elements throughout her journey. Ana admitted that she caught herself making comparisons with her colleagues such as “oh, these people got the accreditation two years before me, why? what happened? what's the problem?” (FI). Ana also stated that she rather learned that it is heathier to compare herself with her “past self in last year or two years ago” (FI). This way, she realised that she has achieved so many things and although she is aware that she still has a lot to learn, she started to feel more confident and now she is in a different perspective both personally and professionally. Ana also talked about the unpredictability of the outcome of this accreditation process:

> because people say 'Oh, but wait, they gave it to me with five articles, and you have just two, but they are in better journals'. So, it's like very difficult to tell at some points whether they are going to give it to you or not because I even bumped into this colleague of mine, and she was like 'you never know'. And I've got this other colleague and we have the same amount and the same quality of publications, and she got more points. She didn't get an accreditation; it was very difficult to tell.

The unpredictability of an outcome was fuelled by some colleagues’ conflicting comments about the accreditation process and how this caused insecurities for her. At the very beginning of the application process, Ana stated that it was very challenging for her as some of her colleagues in the department told her that she is not going to “get it or you need more

publications, you need more stuff to get it" (FI) and she felt "very discouraged" (FI). Ana continued with a funny anecdote about the time when she got the accreditation notification, "these people are now like 'Oh, I was sure you would get it'" (FI). Ana stated that she was glad that she did not listen to these conflicting comments and trusted herself and "did [her] own thing" (FI). This experience taught Ana not to listen to discouraging, negative comments and trust her inner voice. Overall, Ana described the accreditation process as "a learning of self-respect, self-confidence, self-approval, and trying not to compare myself with others" (FI).

5.3. Ana's Wellbeing Experiences

In addition to the academic and professional activities, Ana shared wellbeing practices in her weekly learning episodes. The first wellbeing practice was doing yoga and meditation which she had been doing on a weekly basis for the last couple of years. She started these practices by her friends' suggestions and added that there were two reasons why she stuck to her regular practice. The first one was the need to take a break from her work which, she believed, was "very mental, (…) cognitively demanding" (FI), and she recognised that she needed a place "where [her] mind is resting" (FI). The other reason was that after two stressful years where she worked almost 24/7, Ana realised that she was not productive and needed to care of her mind and body:

> I realised that [yoga and meditation] were good for me, it was really nice way to, because when you are tired, 'OK, I'm gonna rest, I'm gonna watch movie, I'm gonna go for a walk', but if you don't meditate or do yoga or things like that, your mind doesn't really have a break, and since I'm aware of that and since I read about that, I thought that my mind needed a break as well, not only my body, so I always try to incorporate these practices as I said weekly. (LE)

Ana was aware of the benefits of such practices both on her mind and body, therefore, she included them into her weekly schedule. Doing regular meditation and yoga provided her with the space to slow down and unwind her mind particularly during busy periods of work. Having this awareness about the necessity of these mental breaks and the importance of looking after her mental wellbeing motivated Ana to continue these practices. The positive feelings she had while doing yoga and meditation also motivated Ana to continue to her practices. She expressed that she felt very excited before her practice, and "very relaxed, very happy,

very complete, and at the end like a new person" (LE). Ana added that these practices helped her create a personal and calm space to be with herself. She was pleasantly surprised after her very first yoga class thinking like "Oh my God! How on earth have I survived without these before, this is so nice, it feels great" (FI). She distinctively remembered how it felt like everything is connected, "your body, your mind, your spirit, it's all one piece" (FI). Therefore, doing these regular yoga and meditation practices helped her improve herself on different levels. First, she learned how necessary it is to take breaks "in order to keep learning, to keep growing, to keep evolving professionally" (FI). Doing these regular practices enabled her to take care of her body and mind. She realised that "if you push yourself like I need to finish this article today, I need to finish this lesson plan today and you spent 24 hours working, it's not worth it and you are not going to be productive at the end of the day" (LE). Moreover, she learned to let go of situations that were out of her control "because for [her] feeling like a peace of mind, peace of heart, peace of thoughts, it's very important to be calm" (FI) and she accepted that "everything has happened for a reason" (FI). Overall, through her regular practices, Ana concluded "that mental health is very important" (LE), and she learned about self-awareness and self-care. Through these practices,

> I learned about myself, I learned about negative and some self-doubting thoughts that I sometimes have or sometimes, you start to feel very negative about yourself, and these thoughts, it's like you cannot control them. (…) learning self-care, learning how to take care of myself as well, to be a better teacher, to be a better friend, to be a better daughter, a better sister. (FI)

Ana reflected on how these regular yoga and meditation practices helped her grow on a personal level. These practices helped her be present with herself, be more patient and compassionate towards herself and others, and made her a "better human being" (FI). Taking care of her mental led to a healthier mind set and personal growth, which in turn improved Ana's professional performance and development "because you cannot separate your personal life and your professional life like it's not connected. If you are OK with yourself, if you are in a good place with yourself, with your mind and body, you can be a better professional as well" (FI). This realisation had a positive impact on her motivation to do these practices more regularly and supported her learning. On the other hand, when asked if she had any challenges, Ana immediately mentioned time limitations as she would like to have more time to meditate and practice yoga:

> For example, my yoga instructor always says, when we said, 'I have no time to practice yoga', she said that 'this is when we need yoga the most'. So, I learned that from her. These days, we all have busy lives and busy schedules, but with her, I've learned we have to make ourselves and our body and mind, wellbeing a priority. (FI)

Ana admitted that when she was extremely busy, she sometimes skipped yoga practices and shortly felt as if something was missing in her life. This awareness made her shift her perception about time limitations and the business of daily life. She learned to make her well-being a priority particularly during these busy times to avoid losing track of time and forgetting to take a break for herself. Yoga and meditation practices therefore provided Ana with the opportunity to unwind her mind and keep herself grounded, particularly when she was very busy. As a result, she tried her best to stay committed to her practices. She added that she was "always very looking forward to meditating and doing yoga" and, even though she sometimes felt lazy and lacked the motivation to do them, "at the end of the day, it's worth it" (LE).

Another learning experience Ana chose to describe was going for a walk out in nature. Since she was living surrounded by nature and there are many tracking paths in the neighbourhood, Ana wanted to make the best of the surrounding nature. After these walks, she felt like "coming back to life after very stressful periods" (LE). Being in nature helped Ana "have breaks (…) to breathe fresh air, to recharge [her] batteries and then be able to be more productive and be a better teacher and a better researcher" (LE). Similar to yoga and meditation, these walks also had a positive impact on her productivity

> because when I'm marking something, I realised that I'm not that productive once I read so many essays, so many assignments. So, especially when I'm doing that, I'm like 'OK, I'm tired, I need a break, they don't deserve that I correct this tired, so I'm going for a walk, and when I'm back, I'll be fresh again'. (FI)

Ana was aware of the importance of taking breaks from her work and not pushing herself when she was tired or felt blocked. She was able to catch herself on those situations and take a break by either doing yoga or meditation or going for a walk. These walks played a crucial role in Ana's wellbeing during the pandemic as well since they gave her the opportunity to exercise, feel connected to nature, and feel rested during the pandemic:

> We spend so many hours now especially with Covid. I think we need some exercise. We need to move. With exercise and being in contact with nature, I think it helps me,

> I feel like a better human being while connected to nature. And definitely this has an impact on the professional learning as well because I feel like I'm well rested, refreshed. (FI)

Going out in nature helped Ana take a break from her desk, exercise, and feel refreshed. These walks provided her the opportunity to unplug and improved her personal wellbeing, which helped her "self-regulate and be a better human being and a better professional" (FI). She explained that going for a walk had a similar impact like meditation and gave her a personal space where she tried "not to think about work, not to think about what I needed to do next, what I had to mark, what I had to write" (FI). Ana was aware that if she "feel[s] better on a general level, I'm gonna be more productive in my job, I'm gonna be more resilient, I'm gonna be more active, more I don't know, so it's all interconnected" (FI). Through these walks, Ana

> learned that I'm taking care of myself and this would have a positive impact on my professional and personal wellbeing because some days, I'm like 'Oh, I really need to finish this, I want to finish this today', but it gets to a point where you are not even productive, so 'OK, you need the walk, you need a break, so go for the walk'. (FI)

On some occasions, Ana was joined by a friend in her walks where they would forget about work and the pandemic and "for a while, [they] talked about something else instead of work, laughed, and forgot about the Covid situation as well because it's the only safe thing to do these days, going for a walk in very open spaces, so that was very important" (LE). On an opposite note, Ana complained about how her busy schedule was difficult to mediate because

> (…) sometimes the lack of time (…) can be hindering because I would like to do that more often (…) I really want to go for a walk, and I feel I need it, but I have a deadline, something I have to submit, or an article, or I told my students I would have their marks ready for that day and I have to finish that. Yes, sometimes I would enjoy more walks if I had more time, and also not so many deadlines. (FI)

Despite having these challenging with time limitations and deadlines, like her yoga and meditation experiences, Ana came to the realisation that these busy periods were actually "when I need it the most, but it's when I say 'No, I'll do it another day, I'll do it another day', and I end up not going" (LE). Realising the significance of these walks, Ana tried to prioritise her walks because they helped her "self-regulate and be a better human being and a better professional" (FI) like yoga and meditation.

The final learning episode was related to the online book club Ana initiated with her close friends. During the third global lockdown in March 2020, they initiated regular online catch-up meetings and from time to time they did pub quizzes online. They were also sharing the book suggestions with each other, and after a while, they decided to turn these catch-up meetings and quizzes into an online book club. This allowed them to see each other and to stay connected and be a part of a small community during the lockdown. Ana felt as part a small community with her close friends despite the physical distance and "felt really confident, really happy" (LE) as she was with her friends. Although the initiation of the book club meetings was random, she ended up learning more than she expected such as "many interesting information about the authors and the books they were reading" (FI).

> The first book we read; it was HeLa Cells. It's very controversial, in the 1950s when segregation was a part of the society, there was this black woman and she had cancer. Before she died, they took some cells from her body with scientific purposes. (…) And it's very controversial, because nobody asked her formally, 'Would you like to donate these cells?'. So, this is very controversial, it talks about segregation at that time, about consent (…) (FI)

Ana vividly recalled a group discussion about the book named HeLa Cells. She very much enjoyed this book and the post-reading discussion with the group because they had the opportunity to discuss the issues in this book from different viewpoints as each club member came from a different field and brought their own background and perspective. For example, one of her friends had a PhD in Biology and they had an interesting conversation about whether "the end justifies the means" (FI) and the practice of taking consent from patients. The rest of the group shared their experiences and opinions from their research fields. Likewise, Ana shared her experiences and perspective about participant consent in educational research. Therefore, the interdisciplinarity of the club members motivated Ana and supported her development. Moreover, the online book club helped Ana cope with the lockdown as reading helped her

> unplug and do something because I read a lot for my job, papers and staff, but reading for pleasure, reading other types of texts and genres is really nice, to have actual time to do that is a pleasure because it helps me regulate, self-regulate (FI)

Ana expressed that she had enjoyed reading since an early age, but she was heavily reading academic pieces for her work recently. Therefore, she enjoyed reading books in different genres. She believed it helped her with emotional regulation and maintaining a healthy life-work balance at a period of time when she was confined to home. Ana added that the online book club experience had an impact on her professional life since, as she put it, “it's all connected” (FI). Ana elaborated on this impact as follows:

> I'm also able to recommend these kinds of readings to my students because I always try to talk about controversial issues, we talk about feminism, discrimination because of race and things like that. So, the more I know, the more I can tell them about, explain about the world. I can tell that some of the students really like reading as well. So, I think it's a nice experience when we share what we are doing and staff. (FI)

Doing readings and learning about different authors and genres provided Ana the opportunity to share this new information with her students and connect with them on a personal level. This seemed to positively contribute to her experience and motivated her, which was in line with her professional disposition and enthusiasm to connect with her students. The only challenging issue Ana reflected on was related to scheduling since they were living in different countries, and they had some scheduling issues due to different time zones at times. However, Ana added that they stayed committed to the book club and learned from the time limitations and scheduling issues since “it's the same with yoga, it's been periods of when we were busy and it's been a couple of weeks, we haven't done the book club (…), you feel like something's missing in your life, 'Oh, we didn't do book club this week'” (FI).

Chapter Six: Carolina

6.1. Carolina's Portrait

6.1.1. Carolina's Personal Background

Carolina's early life experiences were mainly related to her family. In her TLN, Carolina explained that "when [she] was drawing the roots, [she] was thinking about what was significant in [her] childhood (…) [she] did remember very clearly the immigrant experience of [her] parents shaping [her] childhood". Carolina was raised up by immigrant parents "in a comfortable, middle-class neighbourhood in Canada" (TLN). In her TLD, she drew three roots signifying three important early life experiences, namely, "defence", "solitude", and "boredom". In relation to the first root, she explained that there were two reasons why she had chosen the word "defence" to describe her early life experiences:

> My father never learned to speak English very well and I remember a great deal of stress that this generated not only for him but for us. He was always rather 'defensive' of his situation which trickled down to me. (…) My mother is also an immigrant to Canada, but while she learned to speak English very well, she was deeply affected by her time in a refugee camp. I recall being taught to always double-check the locks, never trust anyone and to be rather protective and defensive in general. (TLN)

Her dad's struggles with English language and her mom's refugee camp experiences had a consequential impact on Carolina's childhood and family life. Being an immigrant family seemed to create distance between the family and their environment, sometimes because of being "very defensive about security and interaction with people" (TLI). Due to their parents' instinct to constantly protect them, Carolina and her siblings were told to be guarded and cautious towards others. This in turn seemed to create a perception for Carolina that she needs to set boundaries with other people and protect herself. Carolina further explained that in addition to their security and interactions with others, defence was also manifested as a sense of being prepared for the worst-case scenarios in life. Her parents had the mentality that "you always have to be prepared, you always have to be cautious, you never know what can happen" (TLI). This planning and preparation for the worst days in life seemed to make Carolina pursue a sense of security and have a negative perception of risk-taking in life in her early years.

Another word Carolina wrote on the roots of her TLD was “solitude” (TLD). Carolina explained that:

> I chose the word Solitude not because I feel I had a lonely upbringing, but rather because I have two sisters who are somewhat older than me. They moved out of the house when I was ten years old, and I remember wanting nothing more than to have them move back. I chose not to put ‘bugs’ at the roots of my tree because, although the words I have chosen have negative connotations, I don’t think of them as negative experiences. Rather, it was simply my upbringing. (TLN)

As a child, Carolina spent most of her time with her older sisters who often were her primary care takers. Therefore, when her sisters left for college, Carolina ended up being the only child at home and frequently spent time alone after school until her parents came home from work. Carolina further expanded on the impact of this sense of solitude as follows:

> (…) And in terms of influencing me, I am sure it influenced me on some level, maybe I'm not even aware of what that level is, the only thing that I was very clear about when I had a family of my own is that I didn't want to have an only child, I think that came from my experience, because I lived both, having siblings and not having siblings, so that was very clear. (TLI)

Relevant to her sense of solitude was “boredom” which seemed to be very significant since Carolina drew it on the main body of her TLD. She explained that she recalled “being bored quite a bit growing up” (TLN). Later, Carolina elaborated that this feeling of boredom went with “lack of direction” since she did not “recall being particularly passionate about anything at that point in [her] life” (TLN). She expanded on this feeling as follows:

> I remember, I don't know if I was essentially bored, maybe I was bored, but I just remember going through the emotions of, you wake up in the morning, you go to schools, you do what you have to do, and I don't remember being passionate about any hobbies, or anything in particular, I don't remember anything special occupying my free time, so yes there is an element of boredom, but I think I would have to redefine it as lack of direction. (TLI)

A prevalent theme relevant to Carolina’s adolescence was the monotony she experienced, likely resulting from the sense of passiveness she went through. Falling into the routine and lacking the enthusiasm to pursue a hobby seemed to prevent Carolina from expressing herself

and her creativity and impacted her wellbeing during her adolescence. These early life experiences had an impact on Carolina's educational life and career decisions. Particularly the impact of the lack of direction she experienced in her teen years on her career chose will be presented in detail in the following section.

6.1.2. Carolina's Educational Experiences

Carolina put her undergraduate degree at the top of the trunk of her TLD signifying "a defining moment between [her] adolescence and adulthood" (TLN). She studied the BA in Communication Studies with a minor in Political Studies. Regarding her motivation for this degree, Carolina explained that she "very clearly remember[ed] having no idea what [she] wanted to study. [She] did not excel in any particular subject and no profession really caught [her] attention" (TLN). Going back to the "lack of direction" she experienced in her late teens, Carolina explained that:

> I remember thinking 'I am going to go to university because my parents told me I have to go to university and that's what people in my world do, so they finish high school, and they go to university'. So, I knew I was going to university, I wasn't clear as to why. (TLI)

Being encouraged, in a way even pushed by her parents to go to college, Carolina knew she was going to go to university, but she did not know what her own motivation was or what course she wanted to study. She expanded on this as follows:

> I chose that degree because I was sitting with a friend one afternoon and we were going through brochures of different universities and I said "I just don't know what to study" and she said "what about this, what about this" and I said "no, no" and she read the outline for Communication Studies and she said "Oh, look at these adjectives, you are good at this, and this, and this" and I said "Ok, ok" and I signed myself up for that program. (TLI)

Carolina's parents strongly encouraged her to go to university, however, Carolina seemed to lack the motivation as to why. Going back to the lack of direction she experienced in her adolescence, she was also indecisive about which subject to choose. She explained that she eventually signed up for a BA programme after a chat with a friend, where both seemed to agree that Communication Studies would be a good match with Carolina.

The sense of boredom and lack of direction followed Carolina into the first two years of her degree. Carolina did not enjoy the first two years of the degree because “in the beginning [she] didn't know necessarily why [she] was going into this degree just it was something [she] was going to do” (TLI). Carolina recalled that when she first started the degree, she felt that “it was similar to high school in that [she] said "ok, these are the courses I have to take" (TLI), not feeling excited about any specific topic or course. However, as the degree progressed, she “became more passionate about the degree” (TLN). She continued as follows:

> (…) by my third and fourth year, I was very clear about what I liked and what I didn't like in terms of studying the areas that I enjoyed, and I became very proactive by the end of the university. I don't know if it was because of that degree in particular or if it was just maturity or just the situation, but I feel like I went from kind of having no direction in the beginning, just going through the motions as I stated before, to be being very clear and focused. (TLI)

Carolina stated that studying the BA in Communication Studies “was an interesting experience and [she] really did enjoy it” (TLI). On a personal level, Carolina believed that she changed considerably in the sense that she “matured a great deal” (“again I just don't know if it was just character or if it was the situation, but I matured a great in my undergraduate degree”, TLI). Professionally, Carolina “got a taste of the professional world and what was out there, what was on offer in terms of work basically, what [she] could do after the degree” (TLI). Despite that, when Carolina graduated, she “had no idea what [she] wanted to do” (TLN). She knew “that towards the end of [her] degree, [she] wanted to get into something related to policy, something on international level; policy and training” (TLN), but she did not know what exactly this was going to be. She also knew that “[she] wanted to move back to Europe as this was where [she] had spent many summers as a child” (TLN).

Right after her graduation, Carolina moved to Madrid where she started to work as an English teacher in a private language school. The next year, Carolina decided to pursue a master’s degree because she was “impressed with [her] colleagues’ credentials” (TLN). She “also longed to be an active student again having realized that [she] now knew what [she] was passionate about studying” (TLN). As an English teacher, Carolina was interested in educational technology, therefore; pursuing an MA degree was very significant for Carolina because:

> I put my heart and soul into that Master's since in the beginning of my undergraduate degree as there wasn't a lot of direction, I felt like I didn't really have an opportunity to put a lot of effort into my education except for the last years of university, so when I did make the choice to do that Master's degree, I was really motivated because I knew it was exactly what I wanted to do, this was the perfect course for me because I had been looking around quite a while, I was very motivated to get a Master's degree, to continue my education at that point, and I really wanted to put my all into it and it really did give me the opportunity to do that. (TLI)

Contrary to the lack of direction she experienced in relation to which subject to study for her BA, Carolina was very driven to pursue this MA degree. Thanks to the experience she gained particularly at the last two years of BA, this time Carolina was very conscious about what she aimed for by studying an MA degree. After doing extensive research, Carolina chose to study the MA in Digital Technology, Communication and Education in a university in the UK, which she described as “well-designed” and overall “a very good programme” (TLI).

In retrospect, Carolina stated that pursuing an MA degree helped her on many levels. First, Carolina had the opportunity to carry out several research projects as a part of the courses she studied. Planning and conducting research helped her develop and extend her knowledge and skills. She also wrote relevant research reports, which she enjoyed because she liked “writing and research, so [she] found it quite useful, quite interesting” (TLI). As a result, she improved her academic skills and realised that she had started writing more academically and accurately. Moreover, she “learned a lot about new technologies, the way to deliver those technologies, in terms of different methodologies, different approaches to education” (TLI). Carolina had the opportunity to explore new technological tools and plan lessons around these tools. She also learned how to set up an online course and expanded her knowledge about online education. Lastly, Carolina had the opportunity to investigate and learn about the Madrid education system because she “got to take a step in and see that from a different perspective” (TLI). Carolina added that she “definitely transferred a lot of what [she] learned in that master’s degree into the activities that [she was] doing now, into [her] work in general, just [her] professional life (TLI). Pursuing this MA degree helped Carolina expand her knowledge about educational technology, improve her teaching practices and research skills thanks to her research projects, advance her English academic skills, and become more acquainted with the local education system. Likewise, pursuing this MA degree and

completing it was also very important for Carolina “because of where [she] was in [her] career at the time because [her] oldest son was 2 when [she] started it, so it was a big responsibility to take on, [she] was working full-time at that point, and it was a really important moment because it meant a lot to be able to do it, to be able to do it well” (TLI). Being driven to pursue an MA degree and completing the degree successfully while balancing personal and family obligations positively impacted her sense of self-efficacy and confidence and seemed to prepare her for her professional career, which will be described next.

6.1.3. Carolina’s Professional Background

After her graduation, Carolina decided to move to Europe. She explained that she was a dual French-Canadian citizen and had had the opportunity to “spend a fair amount of time in Europe as a child, so the move seemed very natural to [her], it wasn't something that [she] thought about too much” (TLI), and eventually “decided to come over” (TLI). When she arrived in Madrid, Carolina started to work as an English teacher. Regarding her motivation to become an English teacher, Carolina reflected on a research project experience she had in her BA. Carolina conducted a research project in Uruguay focusing on policies and international relations. Carolina realised that she “liked writing, policy, and International Relations, so in terms of getting into teaching, (she) assumed it would be a step in the direction of maybe getting into more research, getting more into investigation, something international” (TLI). At that time, she did not know if she would stick with teaching, but in the end, she did because she realised that she enjoyed teaching and thought she was good at it. Carolina got her first teaching job in a private language school in Madrid when she was 22 years old. Although she did not realise its significance at the time, in retrospect Carolina considered this first job “very influential” (TLI). She expanded as follows:

> I remember that well, to be hired, they had asked that you have an undergraduate degree, but I had no formal training as a teacher, I have done I think like a 40-hour TESOL course or something similar, and really they just threw me in the deep ends, and in retrospect, they do that on purpose because they basically said "come here on Sunday afternoon, you're going to start the next day, here's your timetable, here's your materials, you have to organise yourself" and it was very much just a case of figuring things out. (TLI)

Moving to a new city and starting a new job meant that Carolina needed to do everything independently. First, she needed to deal with daily practicalities. She started exploring Madrid

and how to get to the school, which neighbourhood to live in, and to find accommodation. Related to her new job, she needed to evaluate her students, their levels, lesson planning and English language teaching, and “all of these things simultaneously, and that was an incredible learning experience because [she] realised what [she] was capable of” (TLI). One exciting point Carolina underlined was related to the “freedom” she was given as a new teacher:

> other than being very demanding of me in a good way, they didn't really provide me any formal training to be a teacher, it was more that, for example when they did classroom observations, they would just come to observations and say "you can do better, I know you can do better than that, and the way you delivered this, I've seen the way you acted, I've seen the way you have spoken to people in other circumstances, I think you can do this in a different way" and yeah I learned a lot about how to be a teacher because I think they gave me, I don't know if it was their intention or not, but they gave me the freedom to develop my own style. (TLI)

Although initially feeling overwhelmed by all the new responsibilities, Carolina was happy about the confidence the school put in her and the freedom she was given. She had the opportunity to explore and learn independently, which gave her a sense of achievement and increased her self-confidence as a newly hired English teacher. Although she was happy at this school, Carolina “decided to quit and see if there was something better out there” (TLN). Going back to her early life experiences about defence and the mindset of always being prepared, Carolina admitted that it was “very out of character” (TLN) for her to leave her job without a clear plan. However, she felt confident that she could find another job and decided to take a risk.

Shortly after leaving her job, one of her colleagues contacted Carolina and asked her if she would come work for the company she was managing. It was an international language centre working in collaboration with a university in the USA. This new position was the first job where Carolina “got [her] first taste of working in higher education” (TLN). Shortly after, her colleague left her job and returned to the USA. Carolina was offered the position of Director of Studies in that language centre for the next three years. The centre “was dedicated to developing training courses, principally language courses, but there were other courses. And the other half of the company had an agreement with an American university in the USA” (TLI). Carolina started in that section as a teacher. Over time, she became one of the managers

after one of the original managers passed away. Then the person who took over did not have a good idea of dealing with education and running a company. That was where Carolina stepped in. By the end of Carolina's position, she was the one carrying out "all human resources, [she] was the general manager in terms of the organisation of the courses, [she] was writing and preparing some of the courses, and [she] was delivering them as well. So, it was a lot of responsibility" (TLI). Carolina appreciated all this responsibility because this experience made her realise that management was not precisely what she wanted to do, although when she first started, she had aimed to do it for a long time. After working as Director of Studies, Carolina realised that she preferred "education a little bit more, [she] preferred writing and preparing courses and working with students more" (TLI). She, therefore, realised that she "wanted the responsibility, but [she] didn't want the role and the title, so [she] wanted to work hard and [have] a job and a good work, but [she] didn't want to sacrifice everything for it" (TLI).

With this realisation in mind, Carolina set up a company with her husband in 2015, which was "a small consulting company dedicated to the development of educational content and programs" (TLN). Carolina explained that the main services they provided was "developing educational programmes and developing content for people who are interested in launching certain projects" (TLI). She expanded as follows:

> for example, we get contacted by a lot of foundations, so these foundations are interested in developing a camp and they want everything from organisation to the contacting the public, to the materials of the course and the things the children would actually be doing, we do all that. We do a little bit of everything, that's the main area that we work in. We also work with Erasmus class, so when the EU publishes certain tenders, people who want to participate in these tenders, they contact us to prepare their bits, and we do that as well. And we get contacted for other things, everything from templating, I do some coaching, I am not formally trained as a coach, but I do some coaching, and I do teach and most of that goes through the company, so it's education and consulting (TLI).

While her husband managed the company's business side, Carolina was responsible for training, organising camps for foundations and EU projects, and planning and delivering classes. She added that she did "sporadic things every now and then" (TLI) since some of her

old contacts occasionally contacted her, but they were not regular at that point in her career. So, “teaching for [her] at this point was in the university” (TLI).

Carolina started to work as a lecturer at her current department in January 2019. She was initially hired to take over the position of another lecturer who had left immediately on maternal leave. She delivered two courses to second-year pre-service primary school teachers in the first semester. One course was English Grammar, which consisted of English language proficiency and academic writing, where for instance, they worked on how to write an argumentative essay. Carolina initiated a project with the student teachers about defending an argument and developing an essay, which she described as “a challenge” (TLI) since the student teachers struggled with critical thinking and academic writing skills. Another aspect of the course was dedicated to English Grammar. Carolina devoted most of her time to improving student teachers’ English grammar proficiency and focused on “language errors because they are going to be the people responsible for teaching grammar to children in the future” (TLI). The other course she gave was ELT Methodology. While focusing on the theoretical aspects of the course, Carolina explained that she devoted most of her time to practical aspects such as “how to put these theories into practice, the best way to deliver a topic, kind of getting them comfortable as well with the idea standing up in front of a group and delivering a class in English” (TLI). Carolina added that most of her students aimed to be primary school teachers in the public sector. Therefore, she integrated some activities to get them acquainted with the Madrid education system and raise their awareness about issues in state primary schools.

6.2. Carolina’s Learning Experiences

Carolina’s learning experiences will be presented under four sub-sections: hybrid teaching during the pandemic, experiences with ICT tools, student assessment during the pandemic, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. To demonstrate how each of these components was structured, a sample findings matrix is presented in Figure 5.

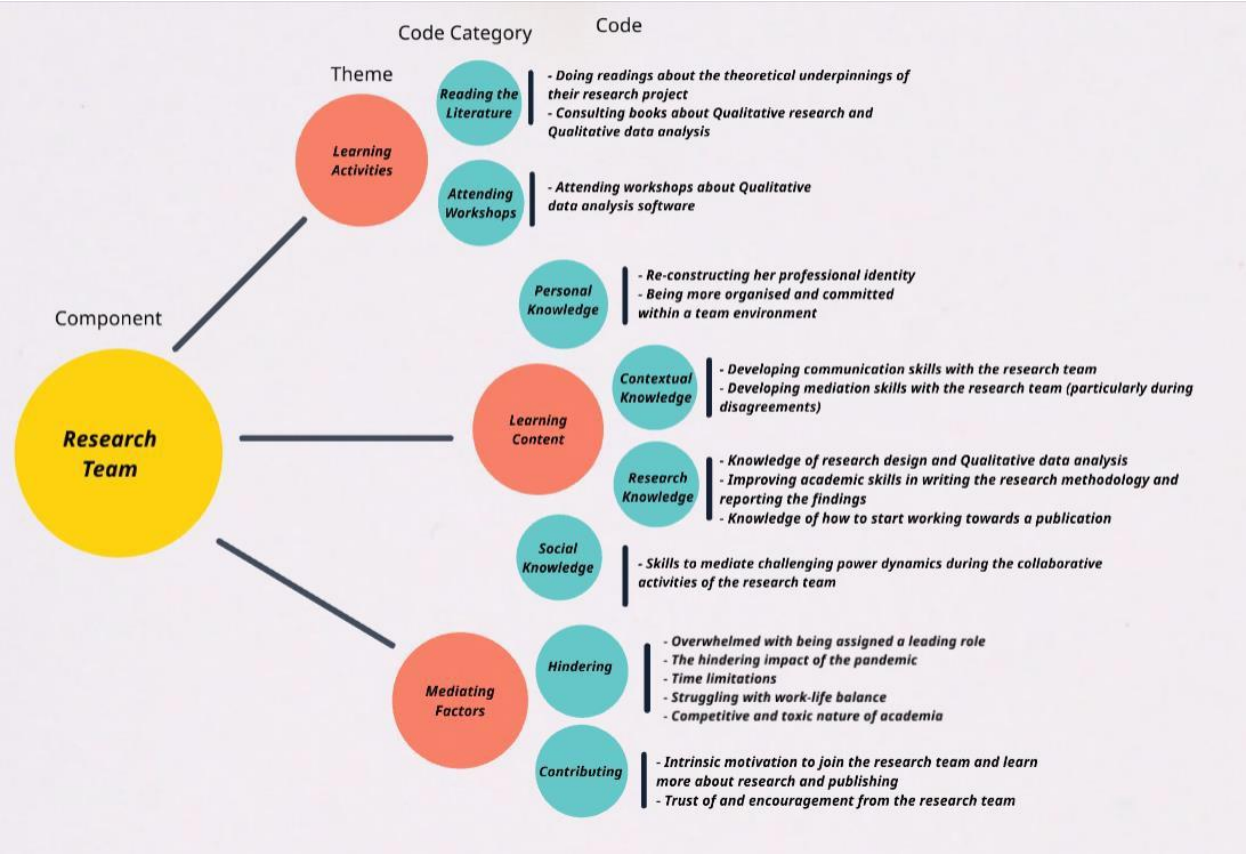

Figure 5: Carolina's Sample Findings Matrix

6.2.1. Hybrid Teaching during the Pandemic

In February 2020, the Spanish government announced the first lockdown in March 2020, and the university Carolina worked at had to shift to online teaching abruptly. Carolina admitted that neither the university nor the lecturers had a clear plan to address this sudden shift. She continued that "everything was just put into (their) hands, so they said, 'you can choose whatever method is best for you, whatever works for you as long as they get the work done'" (FI). When the first lockdown started, Carolina was in the first year of working at university, and she was still in the process of learning the system of the university and finding her way around. Carolina did not feel comfortable to email someone and ask for help whenever she had a problem because she "can only imagine how many emails they were getting because they were days that they sent out emails saying like 'Please stop sending emails'" (FI). Therefore, she refrained from sending out emails because she knew that "they were overwhelmed and they were sending out emails saying, 'We are receiving 200 or 500+ emails a day, please we will answer things when we can, and we are very busy'. And they were sending emails saying, 'Please refrain from sending

emails about this, this, and this'" (FI). She stated that in the end she "was just like 'whatever', I'll try to figure it out by myself" (FI).

Regarding my question about how she handled the shift to online teaching, Carolina explained that she "did not think she had a clear plan because everything just happened so quickly" (FI). Regarding how she handled the situation, she stated that after some research and planning, she decided to "use Padlet and Zoom and (…) regular emails so that the students can send [her] things. [She] also put some things onto Moodle like the reading assignment they would need" (FI). She expressed that at the beginning of online teaching, her students were "very overwhelmed" (FI), and she realised that she "had to go a little bit easier on them in terms of assignments" (FI). She therefore changed and adapted the assignments that she had originally planned to make them "a little bit easier because when you ask too much from people, they get very overwhelmed when they are working from a distance [she] found because they just need more guidance" (FI).

The university decided to shift to hybrid teaching in preparation for the new academic year starting in September 2020. As preparation for hybrid teaching, Carolina "planned fewer materials for each class than [she] would normally do if everything were face-to-face" (FI). However, she then observed that the students "were getting through things really well, and that it wasn't as chaotic as [she] thought it would be, so [she] just went back to the way that [she] would usually do things" (FI). Carolina expressed that she felt better now, thinking she "had things under control at the moment" (LE). Regarding how she had achieved this, Carolina responded that by "having the opportunity to figure things out as they went along, and just remembering that everybody was in the same position, everybody was in the same boat, it wasn't that [she] was put in this situation and [she] was alone and [she] had to figure out for [herself]" (FI). Carolina accepted that her colleagues were also figuring things out for themselves, and there were times when she realised that "Oh, it wasn't the best way that I could have done that" (FI), but also admitted that "OK, it was a learning experience" (FI).

Carolina shared some reflections about her experiences related to going through online teaching and bimodal methodology. On a personal level, Carolina reflected that online teaching and bimodal methodology "has been difficult for [her] because, [as you can see right now], [she's] got small kids, and [her] husband is not always available" (FI). Hence, Carolina

found working and teaching within the pandemic conditions “very stressful” (FI) as a result of the expectation of constantly being online and available. She expanded on this situation as follows:

> I think sometimes I feel like I'm not being as professional as I could simply because I have other responsibilities because instead of being able to meet with people who say 'I want to review my exams', I can't meet them at the university and specify a time anymore, I have to meet them online and sometimes the only time they are available, it's Thursday 7 o'clock, and I have to connect to them with my kids in my arms, and I would prefer not to be doing that, but that's what I have to do. (FI)

Carolina had family obligations with three young kids and admitted that she struggled with the expectation to be constantly online and available for meetings while working from home. She stated that it was easier for her to organise her schedule when she was working in person on campus, where she would be able to manage her time efficiently between her work schedule and family commitments and maintain a healthy work-life balance (work-life balance is discussed in more detail in Section 2.5). Having to carry her kids or having them in the background during online meetings seemed to negatively impact Carolina’s professional identity since Carolina shared that she felt unprofessional for having to do that.

Another challenge Carolina experienced was finding the most convenient tools for lesson delivery. The key point was finding platforms or tools that would allow collaboration since she wanted her students to be more involved. She expressed that this was a challenge because “she had to sit back and say ‘Ok, I could do this for example on Padlet but is it the best way to do this? It is the easiest way to do this but is it the best way to do this?'” (FI). That aspect of bimodal methodology was “not so much challenging, but it's time-consuming” (FI). Carolina explained that she had overcome this challenge by “trial and error essentially” (FI). She would implement a programme and eventually would say “'Oh, ok, that didn't work out the way I anticipated’” (FI) and would try the next idea she had. A relevant aspect was “actually assuming that especially because of the people [she was] working with were in their early twenties, sometimes late teens, [she] took for granted that they would know how to use certain technologies” [“for instance I mistakenly assumed that everybody knew for example how to edit short videos and they did not”, FI].

Or when they knew the programme, they were not comfortable with using it, therefore; "for them to do an assessed activity with it really flusters them sometimes" (FI).

Despite the challenges, hybrid teaching helped Carolina grow professionally:

> (…) because I was able to put into practice a lot of the tools that I had seen on my master's degree and just it made me feel confident because I found myself much more prepared than other people that I was working with who just, I think I mentioned it before, I had a colleague who just pre-retired automatically, and I've had other colleagues who just say like 'This is too much. I don't like this'. And I didn't have that problem. (FI)

Carolina has been interested in technology integration into her teaching since she started as an English teacher. This interest in ICT was the primary motivation to study the MA in Digital Technology, Communication and Education. She believed she felt more equipped to cope with online teaching during the pandemic thanks to the knowledge and tools she had acquired in this master's degree. She stated that she had always had a personal interest in discovering and integrating different tools and applications into her teaching and believed that the master's she studied enhanced her ICT knowledge and skills further. Regarding the technical support that they received from their department and university, Carolina said that "there was a session to teach [them] how to use the actual cameras that they had installed in the rooms, but that was it (…), a lot of it was figured out for themselves" (FI). Carolina added that she "would have appreciated more administrative support (…) the teachers who had been at the university a lot longer (...) comfortable enough to do what they wanted because they had been there for 10 years or more, so they feel like 'Oh, whatever. I'm gonna do what I want'" (FI).

Finally, Carolina expressed that a significant contributing factor to her teaching practices during the pandemic was having an MA degree in Digital Technology, Communication and Education. She expanded that the knowledge and skills she gained thanks to this degree helped her immensely during the pandemic. She remembered "signing up for so many trial periods during that course because [she] was trying to find the best technology to use for the lesson, but [she] was forced to do it, so [she] did it" (FI). She recalled that one of them was Padlet, "so when Covid came, [she] remembered all those programmes that [she] had seen on the Master's", and felt like "Oh, I know how to do this, I can do that" (FI). For

Carolina, the abrupt shift to online teaching gave her the platform to put into practice what she learned during her MA, which increased her self-confidence and sense of self-efficacy, particularly at a hectic time when everyone was experiencing severe difficulties with the transition to online teaching.

6.2.2. Experiences with ICT Tools

Carolina expressed that she felt equipped to cope with the shift to online teaching at the beginning of the pandemic, thanks to the knowledge and tools she had acquired in her MA. Carolina had always been interested in discovering and integrating different tools and applications into her teaching. Therefore, shifting to online teaching provided her with the space to put her background into practice. Regarding the tools she used, Carolina explained that "[she] would use platforms if [she] thought they are appropriate, but they have to be approved by the university. For example, [they] are not allowed to use Zoom" (FI).

During the first semester of lockdown, Moodle was used as the primary platform for sharing materials and staying in contact with students. Carolina clarified that using Moodle was not her personal choice but "the university policy" (FI). All the lecturers at her university had to upload the syllabus and course materials to Moodle. Carolina explained that she had been using Moodle for ten years "through different platforms as a student and as a teacher" since it was "the go-to for sharing student information and for uploading worksheets, assignments and activities" (LE). However, she "never really found it extremely user-friendly when [she] was a student, but as a teacher, [she] just hated it even more" (FI). She thought that Moodle was "one of those things that it's just so common place in education that everybody uses it, and nobody questions it" (FI). For instance, "a lot of times people say, 'Oh yeah, I'm just going to put this on Moodle', there is a lot of teachers who say, 'oh yeah, I'm going to put this on Moodle, I'll put everything on Moodle' especially right now during the bimodal setup" (FI). Carolina also used Moodle, but she emphasised that it was "for the bare minimum" (LE) because she "really dislike[d] Moodle. [She] found it chaotic, not user friendly and somewhat dated", although she was aware that "other teachers rely on it for almost everything" (LE). However, Carolina still managed to make good use of Moodle when, for instance, she wanted the students to search something online during class, she would upload the link to Moodle "because it's just easier for them, sometimes they wanna look at it afterwards. Hence, they

have access to that link" (FI). Carolina reiterated that she "used Moodle for the minimum". In contrast, some teachers used it for grades, others for revision, and some uploaded everything, including every note they took from the lesson. She also chose not to put the course slides up because "if [she] put [her] slides up, people just don't pay attention as much, in [her] experience" (FI).

In addition to Moodle, the university gave their staff two other options; using Teams or Collaborate. Carolina chose to use Collaborate "because it's already embedded into Moodle, so [she] just found that easier. (…) [she] created a page on Teams for every group she was teaching and that way, [she] had meetings with them, they did their presentations this way, or [she] just sent them emails in general" (FI). She relied more on Teams for student contact and meetings. At the same time, for the assignments, she used Turn-it-in "because it's embedded into Moodle. (…) but [she] also found that very chaotic because it's about 20 minutes just to set up the Turn-it-in page because you have to go through all the tabs when it could be much easier" (FI).

In relation to the challenges she had with Moodle, Carolina expressed that "what she found very difficult was the teachers" (FI):

> The pages we use on Moodle for the courses we teach, we have the option to upload absolutely everything and then only make certain things available to the students. And there are some people who are teaching the same course for 5 years and they have literally hundreds and hundreds of documents that are not visible to the students, but they are visible to me, but I've heard stories of 'Don't delete other people's things' because then they go looking for it (FI).

Carolina continued that she did not think that "Moodle was the place to be storing your files, but that was how it was used in the university" (FI). Therefore, she found Moodle "very messy, very chaotic" (FI). Another point Carolina found 'frustrating' about Moodle was that "it's very hard to block who has access to what, so the way the university has things set up, if there are 5 groups of the same course, for example, if [she] upload[s] an assignment, [she] can put it into the tab which corresponds to [her] name and [her] group, but that doesn't stop other people from going in there, and saying 'do we have to do this?', and it's annoying" (FI). Carolina added that "everyone used Moodle because we 'should', but no one really addressed the fact that it is horribly organised" (LE). She also underlined that she did not share her

personal opinions about Moodle with her colleagues since she “did not want to be the odd one out (…)” (FI). Having to use Moodle made Carolina think that “there has to be another alternative” (FI). However, she quickly added that “there is not necessarily a viable one that is available and so widespread because the reason everybody uses Moodle is because it's everywhere” (FI). Overall, her experiences with Moodle “taught [her] that we may need to update things, that there need to be things more available and somebody actually needs to do it” (FI). Carolina liked educational technology but was not into programming; she felt that somebody needed to be that.

Another challenge Carolina mediated was that some students got flustered with technology even though they were young and supposedly supposed to be digital natives. She realised that online learning was “not a black-and-white issue in terms of people liked it or they did not like it” (FI). Professionally, the pandemic reminded her that she “needed to stay on top of the best ICT in terms of the things that are available and whatnot” (FI). ICT was the main research interest Carolina had; she took different courses after completing her Master’s. For instance, she “took a course in programming and educational apps for the classroom [because] [she] liked seeing what's new, seeing what can be done in the classroom” (FI). She also added that she could not take such courses for the couple of years for personal reasons and Covid. However, “in terms of my professional growth, [she] need[s] to go back and update [her] skills, so that [she] can be on top of things” (FI).

6.2.3. Student Assessment during the Pandemic

Carolina shared that the students were overwhelmed with the abrupt shift to online teaching; therefore, she realised that she “had to go a little bit easier on them in terms of the assignments” (FI). She accordingly changed the assignments she originally planned to make them easier for the students “because when you ask too much from people, they get very overwhelmed when they are working from a distance” (FI). She ended up providing the students with more guidance, various options and sometimes some extra time for the deadlines. Even though she thought that “'this is pretty light', but in the end, that's what [she] had to do” (FI). For the hybrid teaching, she “planned fewer materials for each class than [she] would normally do if everything were face to face, but then [she] realised that they were getting through things really well, and that it wasn't as chaotic as [she] thought

it would be, so then [she] just went back to the way that [she] would usually do things" (FI).

On the other hand, Carolina could not approach the exams with similar flexibility because "with the exams, that's not really in [her] hands. [She] had to go by the policy" (FI). Her university was very strict with the exams and decided to conduct in-person exams on campus. The policy stated that "everything is in person. There are no exceptions except for people who are Covid positive, who are in quarantine" (...) 'No online exams. If they are Covid positive, their exams have to be rescheduled for January in order to make them up'" (FI). Carolina added that she was glad the university put these restrictions in place "because otherwise you'd have just everybody writing to ask if they could do the exam online" (FI). Carolina added that despite the specific policy guidelines, the staff had "a feeling of desperation, and people are like 'Do whatever you have to do to get it done'. We have get this done, maybe this isn't the right protocol, maybe this isn't even the right choice, but just get it done" (FI). She added that "even the university is kind of like 'do whatever you want', just make sure that this is handed in on this day and that you signed this, and we're done" (FI).

Another relevant aspect of student assessment during the pandemic was the online quizzes which were a part of students' grades, and the real challenge was "getting people not to cheat" (FI). Carolina attempted to address this by changing the percentage of the quizzes corresponding to each course. However, she failed to do so because of the official information in the legal agreement at the beginning of the term. Therefore, the only possible solution was to "get people very obviously not to cheat and not latently accusing them, which was difficult" (FI). She tried to overcome this situation by occasionally sending out two versions of the quizzes by changing one word and catching some students. Overall, Carolina thought "it would have been nice to have more help", but she added that "nobody was in this situation before so at the same time [she] couldn't blame them, [she] couldn't say 'How unprofessional'" (FI).

The final relevant aspect was carrying out student presentations during hybrid teaching. Although she was initially concerned about carrying out student presentations, Carolina shortly "discovered that it isn't as complicated as [she] had assumed it would be" (LE).

> OK, technology in classroom has always been a double edge sword because it can really help things, but it can also distract people way too easily. So, when there was the prospect of having even more technology in the classroom, I thought 'Oh my God. Nobody's going to pay attention to anything'. With people at home, presentations in particular because I know when their colleagues are speaking, they are looking at their phones under their desks even, it's pretty clear what they are doing. (FI)

While Carolina was very keen on using technology in her classes, she was also aware of the problems it caused. Her main concern was student participation and engagement, and she "was somewhat weary about how to get people to attend class on the days that didn't involve their presentations" (LE). Carolina handled this issue by "making the at-home students get involved by asking follow-up questions" (LE) and realised that "the students still get involved even though you can't see their face and might assume they are not listening because they are at home" (LE). Although she was initially concerned that the students "were going to be very disengaged, but after they did their presentations, some of the people online even asked questions, [she] was like 'wow. [She was] shocked' quite honestly" (FI). In the end, most of the students asked questions to each other and they engaged in their classmates' presentations. After the student presentations, Carolina realised that she could have trusted her students more and not be so concerned about student engagement. She also thought that hybrid teaching "was more flexible for [her], many times, [she] could make bimodal methodology work to [her] advantage" (FI).

6.2.4. Maintaining a Healthy Work-life Balance

Carolina dedicated another learning episode to timing issues within hybrid teaching. As she put it, "the biggest issue for everything was time" (FI). Since the classes were condensed, each class was an hour and a half, and everything went over that time. On a broad scale, hybrid teaching required changes in time management and planning, but she realised that once she got to the rhythm of it, "everything figured itself out" (FI). Within the hybrid teaching, Carolina reflected that she was able to be "more flexible in terms of organisation" and mostly it "has worked to [her] advantage" (LE). However, Carolina realised that she "also found [herself] far more connected online this academic year than [she] was previously" (LE). This was manifested in receiving "far more 'urgent' emails than before which require [her] to send responses when [she was] technically not supposed to be working" (LE). Carolina found this

situation “inconvenient and stressful”; however, she was not sure “it can be avoided” and hoped that this situation was not permanent (LE).

A contributing element was that Carolina considered hybrid teaching “quite honestly very easy” in terms of setting things up and getting into a rhythm since she found it “very natural (…) very comfortable” (FI). However, Carolina stated that regardless of the teaching mode, she would like to get her private life back:

> It's this necessity to always be available because people know that things can be done online now, so for example, next Monday is the staff Christmas party via Zoom, and I have to attend. Well, I want to attend. If it were face-to-face, I'd definitely like to attend and socialise with my colleagues, but I know that I'm going to have to connect, I'm going to have my kids behind me. Everybody's going to be like 'Aaaaaaaa'. I'm always the one with the kids in the background and I don't want to be that person in my job. I'd rather people think 'Oh, there is Carolina. She is very good, she is a great teacher with this course', not 'Oh, you're the one with the kid with the curly hair, right'. That's how people know me. That type of thing that I'd like to stop, but I can't right now. (FI)

When she was working on campus, Carolina was able to manage her schedule better and maintain a healthy work-life balance since she was able to have stricter boundaries between her work schedule and personal life. However, within the pandemic work conditions where she was confined to her house, the boundaries between her work and personal space almost disappeared. Consequently, she struggled to keep a healthy work-life balance. Carolina explained that she had to have meetings where she was carrying her youngest son or where her kids were playing in the background, which she was not happy about. She added that “this was where [her] personal life and professional life combined” (FI). Moreover, the academic school year for children in Spain was reduced by three hours in 2021, which meant that she had to stop working at 13.30. Having to balance family obligations with work conditions, particularly after this change, caused Carolina to feel very overwhelmed by all the work she needed to complete. She had to “condense everything into four and a half hours every single day, which means teaching, preparing, correcting, everything” (FI). As a result, she needed to prioritise her responsibilities and dedicate “more time to not just preparing [her] classes and carrying out [her] classes because that's basically all the time [she] have at this point” (FI). She tried to address that by trying to communicate with her oldest son, saying “Ok, you need to

give me an hour and a half, and in an hour and a half, we can do something" (FI); this worked most of the time. However, she had two younger sons who "just consumed all [her] time" (FI). She could not leave them with other family members because of Covid-19, and her husband was also working full-time and "was just not available" (FI) (…) "so basically, it's [her]" (FI). Working from home with three young kids, Carolina inevitably felt squeezed between family obligations and work schedule. Staying at home with her kids while balancing out her work requirements and concerns about the pandemic seem to reflect the sense of solitude she shared and reflected on during her Tree of Life interview.

Another reflection Carolina had about hybrid teaching was that she noticed "a great deal of pressure to be available for people online" (LE). Approaching the end of the semester, Carolina was working from home, and she received more requests for short meetings. Compared to in-person teaching, Carolina thought that "this simply wouldn't have happened, and people/students would have waited until after the break to be in touch with their questions" (LE). Carolina reflected that "this hyper connectivity this term has been both a blessing and a curse as [she] now feel[s] the pressure to resolve things on the spot" (LE). Related to that, Caroline reflected on work-life balance since she realised "how much [she] disliked having [her] professional life encroaches on [her] private life" (LE).

Last but not least, Carolina stated that it was "stressful because [she] could not disconnect" (FI). She felt that there was an assumption that lecturers needed to be connected, always on top of things because "there is this whole 24-hour thing, you shouldn't take longer than 24 hours" (FI). She tried to respond to people as quickly she could, but there were times where she felt that "it's just too much" (FI). Carolina tried to manage her work issues by setting a time limit to do things. For instance, she always planned to give her students their feedback in a week if they had done an exam or if they had an assignment; sometimes, she could not do it and then felt like "things are piling up (…) there was constantly something waiting for me and I did not like that feeling" (FI). Although she did not share this time limit with other people, she would like to do what she said she was going to do and stick to her to-do list. On the other hand, Carolina was aware that everyone was going through the same situation and "there are very few people that [she] talked to right now who are not running on empty basically, so" (FI).

Chapter Seven: Elisabeth

7.1. The Portrait of a Participant: Elisabeth

7.1.1. Elisabeth's Personal Background

Elisabeth's early life experiences were related to her family and some significant childhood memories. Elisabeth wrote, "respect", "love", "sharing", and "valuing each other" on the roots of her TLD. She explained in her TLN that she had acquired these values "from [her] immediate family and also from [her] grandparents" and further expressed that "these are basic core family values (…) and they are things that are valued at home" (TLI). Another root of her TLD was "nature", as her family hugely valued spending time outdoors. They lived in a neighbourhood with plenty of outdoor space in Philadelphia (USA) and had the opportunity to spend a substantial amount of time in nature. Reminiscing about these times, Elisabeth shared that:

> As a child, I can remember, on the weekends, for example, typical children like to stay inside and do things, I can remember my parents were always like 'get outside, go outside', so we were lucky enough to live in a place where we had a lot of outdoor area, space that we could play so that was always a big value, (…) it was always definitely encouraged and it was a good thing to get outside and enjoy the fresh air and so on. (TLI)

Spending time outdoors with her family was a memory that Elisabeth always cherished, and this memory went along with the family trips. Elisabeth wrote "travel/see new things" in the last root of her TLD because, like spending time outdoors, Elisabeth's family relished travelling together. In the summers:

> we would take our camper and go across the United States and so just like sleeping in different places and different campgrounds every night and we got to do many different things (…) we got to see the Grand Canyon and the Niagara Falls and all the sort of the sights around the United States that you know people don't normally get to see and you get to spend a lot of time with your family. (TLI)

Elisabeth's family valued travelling and spending time on the road together, and they enjoyed seeing new places and exploring different parts of the USA. Elisabeth confessed that when she was younger, she used to get bored and did not value these trips; however, looking back, she now recognised that these were fantastic childhood experiences to savour. She believed

that the “curiosity and sort of wanderlust that [she] always had” came from these travelling experiences. She also thought that these experiences created a sense of “independence” (TLD), to which she had always attributed a significant value since an early age:

> it's something I've always searched for and really valued a lot, so I remember wanting to be able to drive a car so that I could go out on my own and do my own things, wanting to have a job so I have my own money so I could buy my own things, and do my own things and going to college, I remember, I would drive just on a weekend, maybe drive by myself somewhere, anywhere just to get away and have a little bit of independence (…) (TLI)

Elisabeth treasured “do(ing) her own thing” and taking care of herself in every way she could was “an important part of [her] life” (TLI). She always “wanted to be independent and gain independence from [her] parents first and from everyone” (TLN); therefore, she aspired to learn to drive, have a job and earn her own money and be autonomous in her life in general. Moreover, Elisabeth cared about creating her personal space and often enjoyed going away and spending time alone. As much as Elisabeth appreciated her autonomy and valued being on her own, she also enjoyed being with other people, such as her peers from Girl Scouts. Elisabeth’s mom was a leader of Girls Scouts in her school, which allowed her to witness a different side of her mom who “did so many things, she really worked hard to give [them] new experiences and show [them] different role models and expose [them] to different things” (TLI). One particular experience Elisabeth remembered was meeting a female astronaut. Elisabeth recalled that she “was in awe” (TLI) throughout the whole class because “when [she] was really little, [she] wanted to be an astronaut (…) and that was amazing, in fact, met one of the women that trained with one of the teachers that went up to space” (TLI). Meeting a female astronaut was an astonishing experience for her, and Elisabeth believed this experience nurtured her aspiration to be an independent woman later in life. A similar experience was playing baseball. Elisabeth started playing baseball at an early age and learned considerably from this experience. She learned how to be a part of a team and how everyone had to do their part to reach a common goal:

> I think that's probably why I've always been a team player at work and so on. I'd like to work with other people, I'd rather work with other people than work independently so but I also like the fact that everyone has their own role, so their independent role contributes to the common goal as well. (TLI)

Elisabeth's early life experiences created some personal dispositions for her. Spending time outdoors in her hometown and their family trips across the USA created a sense of "wanderlust" for her. She always longed to travel and explore new places later in life. Moreover, playing on a baseball team and being a member of Girl Scouts taught her how to be a team player and impacted the professional she later became because she often preferred to work with other people rather than working independently. Elisabeth's early life experiences and the consequent personal dispositions she formed from these experiences also influenced her educational experiences.

7.1.2. Elisabeth's Educational Background

Elisabeth first shared her experiences about the summer programme she attended in Washington, D.C. (USA). The programme was organised to encourage leadership among young people, and Elisabeth "was chosen to be one of the few people from [her] state to go" (TLI), which was a total "ego-booster" (TLI). Thanks to her participation, she had the opportunity to meet government representatives and witness how the government worked, "which open[ed] [her] eyes to how politics can be, so the bad and the good of course" (TLI). Elisabeth was excited about meeting people from other parts of the country and felt privileged to have been chosen for the Model UN and to have the opportunity to travel to the capital. Meeting other students and government representatives from different states taught her how to listen to and learn from different perspectives and express her own opinions. This experience overall boosted Elisabeth's confidence and opened her eyes to different perspectives and possibilities about her future career. Although her overall experience was positive, Elisabeth drew a 'bug' in her TLD. She explained that, although participating in the Model UN event was a great experience, she believed she "went into it not being completely prepared" (TLI). She felt she could have done more research and prepared more for public speaking, considering she was very shy and did not like speaking in public. Therefore, she felt very anxious to stand up and talk in one of the committees. Elisabeth added that this realisation about the necessity of prior preparation was also transferred to her teaching in her future professional career; she believed "it influences even now when I go into a class if I don't feel prepared, if I haven't done my research, then the class isn't going to go well, and I know that" (TLI). Consequently, Elisabeth regarded lesson preparation very highly and

believed, when she felt prepared, she entered her classes feeling more confident and energised.

The Model UN experience also impacted Elisabeth's choice of BA to study. Motivated by her experiences in Washington, "[she] ended up studying Political Science and International Relations" (TLI). Elisabeth shared that her undergraduate experiences were very positive, and she described her BA as "some of the best years of [her] life" (TLI). Elisabeth described her undergraduate experiences as "coming of age really because [she] was 17" (TLI) and added that her college years were significant because they had shaped her in many ways. On a personal level, Elisabeth learned about being independent as she started to live on her own. Going back to the sense of "independence" (TLD) she was striving for, Elisabeth achieved that when she went to college. This new phase of life helped her improve herself in personal relationships as the university was the place "where you learn to be independent, you learn to live on your own, you make your own friends sort of from scratch because you don't know anyone, no one knows you" (TLI). The experience of meeting new people and building new relationships taught Elisabeth considerably about personal relationships. Another influential aspect of her undergraduate experiences was having most of the lecturers from different parts of the world:

> (…) I remember there are professors from different places around the world and I loved that. I had one from Ukraine, one from Spain, one was Asian, I think, one from Brazil, I had professors from everywhere and even though I was studying in a small town in Northern Pennsylvania, I learned a lot, just from that, I think. (TLI)

When Elisabeth "went to college, [her] eyes were opened wide in a lot of different aspects" (FI). Having lecturers and fellow students with international backgrounds immensely contributed to this experience. Having a roommate whose parents were originally from different countries was an enriching experience for her. Elisabeth recalled meeting her friend's parents, which "was so different from anyone that [she] met before, so it was really interesting and [her friend] had a lot of different experiences and opinions about things and so that influences you a lot especially when you are 17" (TLI). Elisabeth had a similar experience with another friend, Fatima, from Pakistan. "Seeing and hearing her speak on the phone with her family, being exposed to different languages, watching a couple of films with

her" (TLI) impacted Elisabeth. Witnessing how different her friends' families, backgrounds, and perspectives were showed Elisabeth different possibilities and perspectives. After leaving her small hometown for college, being exposed to different cultures and meeting people from different countries "really influenced [her] own life" (TLI) and increased her awareness of interculturality. She improved her ability to communicate effectively across cultures, think and act appropriately, and study and work with people from different cultural backgrounds who were shaped by different values, beliefs, and experiences.

As a part of her BA programme, Elisabeth joined a study abroad programme in Seville for approximately five months, which she regarded as "an excellent experience" (TLI). She was motivated to study abroad because she had always wanted to live in a different place and experience different cultures. She enjoyed her time in Spain and learned substantially about "living far away from home, about cultures and how different people live and different lifestyles" (TLI). She "enjoyed coming to Europe and seeing different cultures, a mixture of so much history" (TLI). On an academic level, at the host department, she studied courses related to Spanish cinema and literature, a dance course to learn dance de sevillanas, and a Spanish language course. Overall, Elisabeth felt that her exchange "was all sort of a cultural experience in that sense" (TLI) in that she improved her knowledge about different aspects of the Spanish culture by "immersing [herself] in the culture as much as possible as one can do in 4-5 months" (TLI). Moreover, Elisabeth continued building on the intercultural skills she gained during college through "meeting local people" (TLI) and other exchange students from different parts of Europe and the world.

Another important component of Elisabeth's BA was the final year thesis "which was a big project and that's relatively uncommon or was at that time in the United States to finish" (TLI). Conducting this research project was an enriching experience:

> because it involved taking on a big project, planning it yourself, planning it with an advisor, doing the research and putting out together, so that was a learning experience as well I think that I've taken through to do the end of master's project and my Doctorate and so on and I learned a lot from there. (TLI)

This final-year project was the very first research project Elisabeth led and conducted. She learned how to plan and conduct a research project, how to analyse and report the data, and

how to effectively work with an advisor. More importantly, she believed that this process “prompted [her] to be where [she is] now” (TLI). A couple of years later, Elisabeth decided to pursue her postgraduate studies, starting with the MA in English Language Teaching (ELT) which was followed by a PhD in ELT.

Elisabeth studied her MA while working in full-time, which meant “a lot of work” (TLI). She explained that she worked during the day and attended the MA courses in the evenings after work several days a week. Despite the heavy workload of pursuing a full-time MA while working full time, Elisabeth learned substantially from the process. She read extensively about theories of language acquisition and learning and improved her theoretical understanding of ELT. She also became acquainted with various teaching techniques, approaches, and methods, which enhanced her pedagogical knowledge. Furthermore, she conducted a research project for her dissertation on the experiences of language assistants in primary schools in Madrid, and therefore expanded her context knowledge, research knowledge and gained more experience as a researcher. Another aspect Elisabeth appreciated about her MA was the lecturers of the programme. There were “a few really great teachers, a couple who weren't so great, which always happens, but you also learn from that” (TLI). Elisabeth explained that “the not-so-great teachers, who were just very boring and very dry showed [her] what university class should not be” (TLI), but she had a few great teachers “who were really engaging, that got us up, and talking to each other, and putting things into practice” (TLI). She appreciated how these lecturers made their classes more engaging, communicative, and practical. Elisabeth added that the programme coordinator for the entire MA ended up being her PhD lead supervisor.

When Elisabeth finished her MA, two lecturers approached her separately asking "Hey, have you ever thought of going on for your doctorate?" and Elisabeth joked that her reply was "No, actually" (TLI) since she felt exhausted after the one-year MA programme she had just completed and did not consider doing a PhD at that time. After a while, she started working at an online university where a PhD was desirable and meant “a nice raise” (TLI). Therefore, she decided to pursue a PhD; however, right before she submitted her application, Elisabeth found out she was pregnant, which was also **“**a big influence, so (…) [she] said "OK. I'm ready to start my Ph.D. I wanna do something very practical, I'm pregnant, I need to do something that's not going to take me 5-10 years to do" (TLI). Elisabeth then started brainstorming

research ideas with the two lecturers from her MA and was inspired by what one of them told her: "Do something that you are passionate about because if you do something just to do it, you are not gonna finish it" (TLI). Elisabeth was motivated by her experiences as a language assistant when she first arrived in Madrid and decided to expand her MA dissertation into PhD research. She investigated the role and experiences of language assistants in elementary and primary schools in Madrid. Overall, Elisabeth's PhD experience was very positive:

> because I loved doing the research and figuring out all the logic about creating a questionnaire, putting it together, and getting people to do it, to answer, the methodology and all of the things involved, I really enjoyed. I also realised that I want to continue with research as well. (TLI)

Elisabeth enjoyed going through the different stages of her PhD research. She particularly enjoyed being in the field, collecting her data and interacting with her participants. The creative process of planning and preparing the data collection tools, the feeling of being active and doing in the fieldwork, and the overall excitement and inspiration she possessed about her research were the elements that supported Elisabeth's professional learning during her PhD. Thanks to her PhD experiences, Elisabeth realised that she enjoyed research and decided to pursue a career as a researcher, which shaped her professional trajectory.

7.1.3. Elisabeth's Professional Background

After graduating with her BA, Elisabeth kept recalling her study abroad experience in Madrid. After a period of contemplation, Elisabeth decided to return to Spain and completed a master's programme about the Spanish Language and Culture. Although she considered this experience "separate [from her ELT-related experiences] because it was a little bit different, it doesn't directly take [her] where [she is] now, it helped the situation, the environment, and [her] staying here in Madrid" (TLI). During her MA, Elisabeth found out about an opportunity to be a language assistant and applied to stay for another year in Madrid. Her application was eventually accepted, and she started working as a language assistant in primary and pre-primary education. Shortly later, Elisabeth found another job where she taught private language classes to businesspeople. After completing her contract with the primary school, Elisabeth was offered the position of Head of Studies at a private language school, where she worked for a couple of years before she started to work at a publisher.

Elisabeth worked at the publisher as a part of the teacher training department. Her role was initially related to marketing, which she had always been interested in doing. In the marketing department, they “were holding training sessions and events for teachers as a way of marketing and displaying [their] books, of course, that's always the end result really” (FI). She worked as an assistant in the department, but after observing training sessions and planning most of the events, she started running some training events herself. She then realised that she enjoyed planning and delivering teacher training sessions and interacting with teachers. This teacher training experience motivated her to join the MA in EFL to “learn a lot more and get a better methodology, better theoretical background in teaching English as a foreign language” (FI). Elisabeth realised that she “really wanted to get in a more educational environment (…) and that's when, [she] always thought "maybe someday I can work at the university" (FI).

Elisabeth’s goal to work in higher education got realised earlier than she expected. She received an offer to work as a lecturer at a university, which she accepted immediately. While at university, Elisabeth “really enjoyed the experience from day one” (TLI). She “loved being in an environment where very intellectual conversations [take place] and everyone has their field where they are passionate about and found that very stimulating and rewarding” (TLI). What she liked about being part of a university was the feeling that she was doing what she was passionate about. Elisabeth also valued being with her students. The idea of influencing the future of education positively by training teachers and, as a result, the possibility of improving education and society in general was

> what makes me passionate about what I do because education can always be better and I love even having a small part in doing it better so I have ideas that I think would make finally schools better and infant education better and so being able to give that knowledge and competences to people that can actually make a difference in school I think is an amazing job. (TLI)

Elisabeth was driven by the idea that one can improve the education system and society by training future teachers.

Another aspect that Elisabeth enjoyed about working at university was the collaboration with colleagues. She reflected on her collaboration with two of her colleagues whom she was team-teaching with this semester. Their collaboration involved joint lesson planning, module

development, and in-class co-teaching. Overall, the collaboration with these two colleagues was “a very different, an interesting experience (…) in both positive and negative ways” (TLI) because

> we support each other really well, we work relatively well together, and I've learned a lot from seeing them teach in the same classroom and also working and teaching, and their feedback to me as well as writing articles and trying to publish and so on. (TLI)

Elisabeth learned from observing her colleagues while co-teaching and getting feedback from them. Similarly, working together on joint publications was very productive for her. On the other hand, the pandemic had a negative impact on this collaboration as “there's been rough times especially working from home, it's difficult to be team-teaching with someone else and connecting with computer and constantly on WhatsApp, it's exhausting, so there has been a little bit of rough patches, communication problems and so on” (TLI). However, Elisabeth managed to mediate these challenges and learned how to coordinate with her colleagues and to communicate more effectively to avoid any misunderstandings. Elisabeth concluded that, although they were aware that their collaboration was still work in progress, overall “it's been a very positive to attempt this team-teaching strategy (…) it's been a great experience” (TLI).

The final aspect Elisabeth reflected on was the sense of “security” (TLD) that she thrived for in her professional life. She described it as an achievement because

> especially after having moved to a different country, going through different jobs, having insecurity of 'what am I going to do next year' because you really don't know, you have one year of being a language assistant you have the experience of going through a Master's, you are constantly going through experiences that are relatively short time. (TLI)

After moving to Madrid, Elisabeth worked at different training and teaching jobs with temporary contracts, which meant a long and tiring journey. Therefore, one of her major professional goals was securing a permanent lecturer position in higher education to get to a point in her professional life where she would be able to say "OK. well, actually this could be long-term, I could stay here, I feel secure, and I feel happy here after being here for a while" (TLI). She believed that “that's an achievement in itself actually” (TLI).

7.2. Elisabeth's Learning Experiences

Elisabeth's learning experiences will be presented under six sub-sections: her participation in a research team, collaborative student project, her teaching experiences during the pandemic, reflections about student engagement during the pandemic, networking and career planning, and work-life balance. To demonstrate how each of these components was structured, a sample findings matrix is presented in Figure 6.

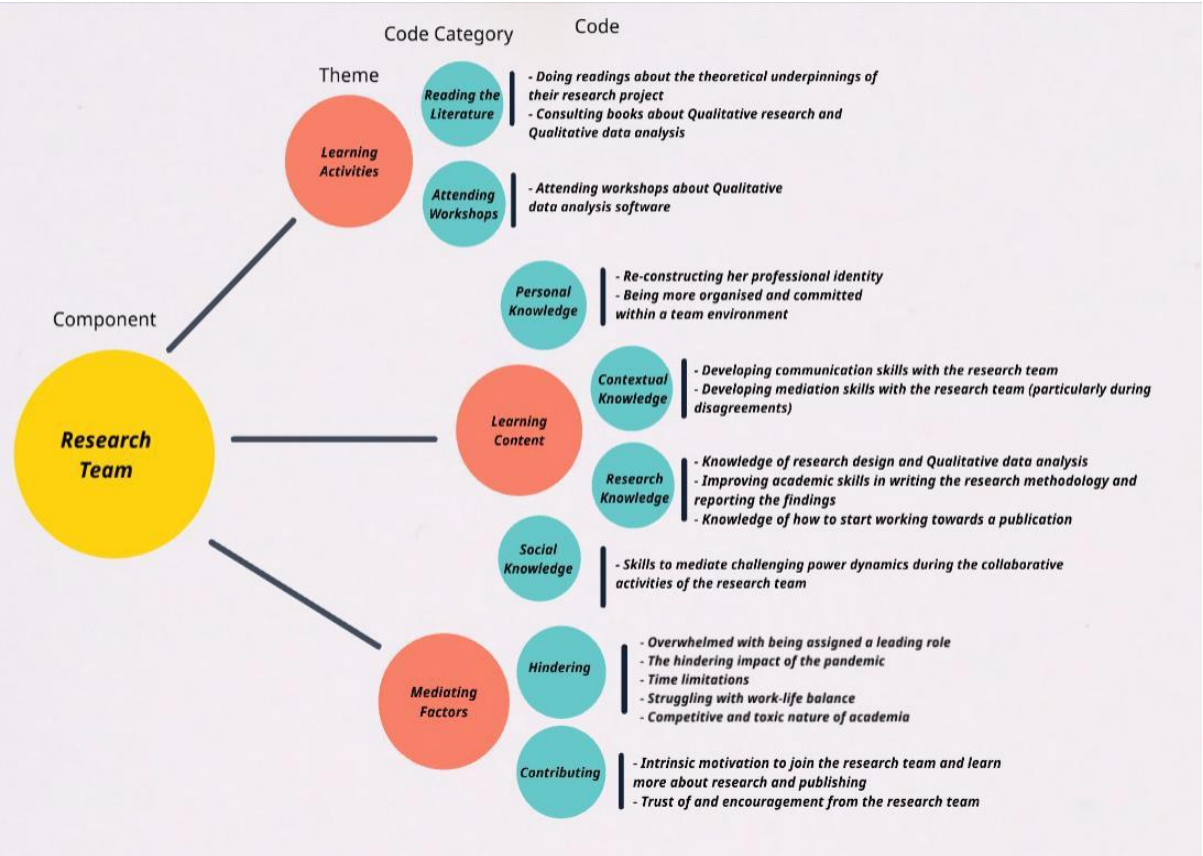

Figure 6: Elisabeth's Sample Findings Matrix

7.2.1. Research Team

Elisabeth shared one weekly learning episode about the research team she had been collaborating with. The team consisted of four researchers from different parts of Spain and Europe, and their research investigated the effect which an individual's socio-economic status had on education within bilingual primary education in Madrid. They were initially motivated by the general idea that, while a lower socioeconomic status normally had a negative effect on education, it seemed to have a lesser negative effect in the case of bilingual schools; they were particularly interested in looking into the reasons why. The team focused on the student

perspective, and they interviewed 14 and 15-year-old students in secondary school to "investigate their self-efficacy and the things that they do outside the school; bilingual students and non-bilingual students and trying to figure that out" (FI). The team started working on the project in January 2020 and managed to collect some data through focus group interviews, did some transcriptions, and some initial coding. However, "due to the COVID situation, things were put off for months because [they] couldn't have access to students to do more focus groups" (FI). At the beginning of November 2020, the team managed to complete the last few interviews and would now need to transcribe these interviews and continue their analysis. This meeting was organised for an update and planning their next steps.

As for the motivation to take part in this research project, Elisabeth stated that she saw this research project as an investment for her future career, as "something that interested [her], and something that could be valuable to [her] in the future. [She] thought this could be something [she] could specialize in, become a bit of an expert in" (LE). Her participation was significant for Elisabeth particularly because she was given the leading role within the research team. After joining the team in January 2019, Elisabeth "ended up taking the reins of this part of the process because [she] seemed to be the most adept with the program" (LE). She confessed that "at first, this was a bit overwhelming and [she] wasn't sure that [she] could effectively give the right advice. [She] was worried that [she] would make mistakes that would cause [them] to waste time and effort" (LE). However, she felt honoured that "they now rely on [her] to do this and trust [her] criteria" (LE). Participating in this research project taught Elisabeth many lessons. The first one was related to qualitative data analysis. Although she had conducted focus groups in the past for her PhD research, she later analysed them by hand in Word and Excel files. For this research project, they decided to code the data using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software "which offers many more possibilities" (LE). Elisabeth then attended a workshop about qualitative analysis using NVivo in February. During the summer of 2020, Elisabeth spent "more time reading up on the process and trying to understand it well" (LE) while she was also studying from a book about NVivo and the type of analysis she would do. She was "taking care of the master file, creating files for each of the coders, and merging them back together, as well as offering advice on how to code based on what I've read" (LE). Over time, she realised that she also got better at taking notes on the process,

which she knew would be important when reporting on the research. Moreover, attending team meetings was a learning experience in itself because she had not “led much of anything in terms of research except [her] own PhD” (FI). Therefore, attending the meetings and, more importantly, leading the conversations and guiding the rest of the team for the next steps taught her. Elisabeth recalled one meeting where one of the team members, her former PhD supervisor, “looked at [her] and said "Ok, [Elisabeth], where do we start, what do we do?" (FI). Elisabeth believed receiving these questions in itself “just saying "hey, you! you take the reins, and you lead the meeting" (FI) was significant because she learned how to organise online meetings, how to make them more productive, and how to present and explain the readings she had done to the team. Consequently, although she learned about qualitative data analysis and analysis software, Elisabeth believed that what most impacted her was “to be leading the project” (FI). This was because she was working with older and more experienced researchers. She learned “how to give recommendations and suggestions in a tactful way” (FI) so as not to show that she was “obviously younger and less experienced” (FI). She expressed her suggestions in a thoughtful way (e.g., "that's what I read, what do you think?", FI) and thus opened a dialogue with all the team members.

There were also some factors that Elisabeth needed to mediate during her participation in this research project. The first one was the hindering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The team started working on the project in January 2020, but because of the national and global lockdowns, they could not recruit more participants to conduct interviews and the project was postponed for months. Only after the pandemic restrictions started to ease did the team go back to the project to complete the rest of the focus group interviews early in November 2020. Another hindering factor was time limitations. Elisabeth explained that her participation “has also been quite a challenge as [she] really doesn’t have much time to dedicate” (LE). However, what motivated her to keep going was seeing this research project as an investment for her research career “as I’m also using NVivo in the research with the innovation group at work, and I know it will be valuable to me in the future” (FI). She mediated the time limitations by taking some time during the weekends and working on the project “little by little and continue advancing” (LE). Another contributing factor that pushed her through the challenges she had was the confidence the research team put in her. Being delegated data analysis and the management of the team was “satisfying because it means

they trust in me, though also a bit nerve-wracking because it means that I can't let them down" (LE). Elisabeth stated that, although she felt overwhelmed at times, she felt very happy about the overall experience, and shared a positive anecdote from a team meeting:

> One colleague in particular, in the meeting this morning (and a few times previously) has repeatedly thanked me and congratulated me for being able to learn this quickly, and she's expressed her relief that she didn't have to worry about it anymore. Of course, this makes me feel good, knowing that she has confidence in me and that I'm useful to the research team. (LE)

Despite initially being overwhelmed about these responsibilities, Elisabeth was able to mediate these concerns and managed to complete the tasks she had been assigned. Being able to complete these tasks and the positive feedback she received from the other team members made Elisabeth feel accomplished and happy. Overall, thanks to her participation in this research project, Elisabeth learned how to organise online meetings, how to make meetings more productive, and how to communicate with other team members.

On the other hand, she also realised that working on a team might have slowed down the process as decision making took longer than usual because sometimes, "there has to be a lot of effort to come to agreements; and it can be frustrating waiting for someone else to do their part" (FI). However, "at the same time, roles can be distributed in order to get work done more efficiently, and more [work] can be done this way" (LE). Elisabeth continued that "more importantly, all team members learn from the others. The experiences of the group are much wider than those of any individual, and this is extremely useful" (LE). She admitted that she liked to work independently because she enjoyed having her time and doing her work; however, she was also aware that she "benefits a lot from interaction" (FI) when the team was brainstorming and reflecting on their progress. That was because "it's important to have someone to bounce ideas off, to discuss something, just to talk about it" (FI). For instance, Elisabeth was working on a chapter proposal, and she felt the need to talk to someone about her ideas for the chapter and contacted one of her colleagues earlier that week. Elisabeth explained that she had ideas and thought that they were great, "but when you vocalise them, I think that validates things for you, and when you see the other person nodding, saying 'yeah, yeah, that sounds great', then you feel more confident about it" (FI). That is why she valued exchanging research ideas with other researchers.

Teamwork was the place "where [she] learns most actually and it does a lot of things" (FI). First, participating in a research team where every member had their own backgrounds with "their own strengths and weakness and (…) bring something to the table" (FI) was an invaluable learning experience because she learned from other researchers' previous research experiences, from their suggestions when they said, "we should do it this way because in the past, I've done this" (FI). Moreover, it "also pushes you to step forward and to take on a role and do all the work that's necessary to prepare yourself for (…) because you don't want to let anyone down" (FI). Elisabeth confessed that when she worked on her own research in her own time and space, she tended to say "Oh, I don't feel like it, this week, I'll take a break" (FI), but when she was "pushed by another group, other people, other researchers, then [she] felt more obligated it do it and [she] made sure [she] wanted to do it right, do it well" (FI). Therefore, teamwork pushed her to be more committed and increased her motivation to complete the tasks she needed to. Finally, on a personal level, Elisabeth "learned a lot from the more negative experiences" (FI). She learned how to protect herself and "how to step carefully and thread carefully around certain people as [she] realised that things aren't always what they seem at first" (FI). Thus, she learned how to be careful about the way she managed herself around other people and how to step forward in certain situations.

Elisabeth also shared that "unfortunately research and universities can be very competitive" (FI).

> After all, we are all competing for jobs, higher positions, grants and so on. So, in the end, many people are probably wary of working together and helping someone else because they're afraid to lose out in the end. So, while I think that we should all collaborate in different projects, I also think that we need to be careful with whom we choose to work, choosing those that are responsible about deadlines and holding up their end as well as those we feel we can trust to a point. (LE)

Through her collaboration experiences, Elisabeth learned to be more careful about choosing whom she collaborated with. She was well aware of the competitive nature of academia and learned to be conscious of different group dynamics within collaborative research projects. Elisabeth added that "there tends to be a lot of egos involved, jealousy, and things like that, so you have to be careful" (FI). Every team member had "their own experiences, their own

baggage, and their own career" (FI), so she was very aware that she had to be "very careful, to be respectful to everyone else" (FI). As a result, she learned "to see who you, more or less, get along with and who you can respectfully disagree with and argue without making anyone uncomfortable or angry or anything like that because that's not always easy" (FI). Collaborative work helped Elisabeth gain a new perspective about the power dynamics within academia and learned how to navigate them.

7.2.2. Collaborative Student Project

Another collaborative learning episode was about the collaborative student project Elisabeth co-created with a lecturer in Massachusetts (USA) with her English for Education class. After connecting their classes, the students formed groups of two or three and worked together on a collaborative project about immigration. Earlier during the week of our follow-up interview, the students had the final presentation of their final products and presented a children's story in different formats, such as a blog and a podcast. Elisabeth confessed that "it was quite a bit of work to get things together and plan the activities, but it worked out well in the end" (FI). She "very much enjoyed the final presentation and was impressed by the work that many of the students had done, as well as their oral presentations" (FI). She was very proud of her students because they had worked very hard and had overcome many difficulties to pull the final presentations off. They had been very stressed out since they had other projects to work on for other courses. Elisabeth was aware that the students had been probably prioritizing between projects and just doing their best. When the students told her about their stressful situation, Elisabeth reminded them that "this is another competence to be developed, time management and setting priorities" (LE). Despite the challenges, Elisabeth was very keen on this collaborative project because giving the students an "international opportunity has been something [she is] really interested in" (FI). Particularly during the pandemic, when international flights were strictly limited, the project was "a really good opportunity to have" (FI) for the students to connect with their peers on an international level and work collaboratively and take part in a virtual exchange.

On an individual level, Elisabeth shared that she created the project with the other lecturer whom she "worked closely together and created the project step by step and created all the activities. I learned a lot in that process, I think" (FI). One key realisation was related to the

support they gave the students. Elisabeth learned about time management, “making sure that we support the students enough so that they can do their projects, maybe giving them enough time to do it, and estimating the time that’s going to take them to do it because it’s not always easy” (FI). With the pressure online teaching put on the students, Elisabeth was more sensitive about the time and support she provided to them to be able to complete the project successfully and make the most of it. She stated that collaborative student projects were “something that [she would] like to continue forward in the future” (FI). In the future projects, Elisabeth noted that she would be more careful to “certainly plan things out, making things a little bit longer, and plan more support for the students, and make sure if there are these types of difficulties that we fix them a little better ahead of time so on” (FI). She also noted that, if possible, she would plan “bigger projects towards the beginning of the semester because students will be much more engaged in them” (FI).

There were also some challenges that Elisabeth needed to mediate along the process. The first challenge was about scheduling because the way semesters worked with the other college was very different. The university in the US had a very condensed schedule due to the pandemic and they had started the semester in late October. As a result, there were eight or ten weeks that overlapped between the two universities, and the groups had restricted time to work together. In addition to this condensed overlapping time, Elisabeth only had class on Mondays, and this semester, there were two consecutive Mondays that were holidays in Spain, which happened to be right in the middle of the project. As a result, the two groups had actually six weeks to work together, which was “a real challenge” (FI). Elisabeth managed to address these time restrictions by handling scheduling efficiently and making changes accordingly. However, “there was then the added difficulty of only half the class being on campus at any given time, so that class discussions were more awkward, having to wait for those online to contribute” (FI), which created awkward pauses in the group interactions. Elisabeth admitted that everyone needed to be patient at times as there was not much that anyone could do about it. Despite these challenges, Elisabeth added that she did not regret taking part in this project “because the students have learned a lot, but [she] leave it with a bittersweet feeling because the students have found it quite difficult to carry out. In the future, [she] want to more objectively weigh the pros and cons when deciding on this” (LE). The challenges that Elisabeth and her students had gone through made her realise the

importance of planning in advance and making a more realistic schedule for everyone. The main motivation that kept Elisabeth going was “because it’s something I believe in” (FI). Her main goal was “developing students’ intercultural competence, and I think it’s really important so it’s something that I really wanted to do” (FI). Elisabeth was very motivated about this collaborative project, and she knew that it would be motivating for most of her students and was hoping that they would also enjoy it, and she believed that they did to a point where they got very stressed towards the end of the semester. Elisabeth also felt very lucky about “being paired up with the lecturer, she was easy to work with, and we worked well together” (FI). She was happy about the synergy and enjoyed working with the other lecturer who was prompt to respond and “fun to work with” (FI).

7.2.3. Teaching during the Pandemic

The university Elisabeth worked at started online teaching in March 2020 before Spain started to suffer from high number of Covid-19 cases in the summer of 2020. After two national lockdowns, the university decided to continue with hybrid teaching in September 2020. Elisabeth described hybrid teaching as the “best of both worlds by maintaining classes on campus and alternating with online classes each week” (LE). The procedure that she followed was that they rotated as “one week online and one week in class (…) I have half the students there and half of them online, so I have to talk to the camera, and talk to the students at the same time” (FI). Elisabeth explained that it was very tiring and complicated

> because I constantly have a student or two at home so I have to connect at the same time while even if we are in class, there is a student or two at home because they've been in contact with someone or they have Covid (…) so in class we are not supposed to be using paper, I am not supposed to be walking through the classroom, nobody is supposed to be moving around basically. (FI)

When Elisabeth was informed about the decision of the university to continue with hybrid teaching, she initially felt overwhelmed. She could not decide if she should make preparation either for online or in-person classes, and how this decision would look like in practice. In the end, she decided to prepare all lesson activities and materials as if they were all online because of the social distancing rules in the classrooms. Although feeling initially concerned about the preparation she needed to do, Elisabeth immediately realised that “this is more

efficient because all these tools and resources are created and will be there for [her] to use in the future, but it's also been extremely time-consuming" (FI). She added that having small classes helped the department "to organise the two groups that's alternating on campus, so it coincides with the English groups that we have already formed so that we can all stay home, and we don't have to bi-modal all the time, which would be difficult" (FI). Consequently, Elisabeth learned new technological tools to use in her classes. She added that, in a way, she had been "forced to learn different technological tools and things like that, so that's always beneficial, and I like that sort of thing anyway so I always try to look for different tools and use them but this way, I've been forced to look for different things I wouldn't normally have looked for" (FI). This meant adopting new tools, adapting all the materials to online platforms, and uploading them to Moodle:

> only online flashcards like we do in English classes things like "pretend you are this person and ask questions", that's sort of thing, I've been doing it with online flashcards just to make it without contact instead of slips of paper, online worksheets instead of paper, online matching games and Kahoots instead of worksheets, etc. (LE).

Elisabeth also shared an important realisation that she had about hybrid teaching. She noticed the difference taking time to review lesson materials made on her teaching. She learned that "if [she] go into a class overly confident, relying on [her] experience from last year, it does not go as well as if [she] take the time to review the plan and materials in a more systematic way" (LE). After this realisation, Elisabeth paid more attention to take some time before her classes and review her lesson plan and materials. The co-teaching she did with one of her colleagues also gave her the motivation to prepare and feel more confidence because "sharing my classes with another teacher tends to force me to reflect on what I'll be doing and focus on how I'll do it because we keep a weekly calendar of what we'll be covering in each class, and we tend to discuss it from time to time" (FI). However, at the same time, co-teaching caused Elisabeth to feel more "relaxed" because "if I'm planning to cover about the same contents as my colleague, I should be on the right track. And I don't take the time to go through the materials and consider the timing of each of the activities" (LE). For that reason, Elisabeth was cognisant that

> A detailed review of the class I'll be teaching is essential before teaching the class, whether online or in person. And during this review, it's good to think about how each activity will play out in the classroom or on the online platform. This way, when I'm managing the sharing of documents, microphone and camera, breakout rooms and more, I'll already have one part of the class, the plan, under control. (LE)

Elisabeth encountered some challenges during her hybrid teaching experience. The first challenge was related to lesson planning as she had been confused about whether she should have planned for either online classes or in-person classes. In the end, she planned most of the activities as if they were all online since it was not possible to move around the classroom or use paper due to social distancing rules. Elisabeth explained that, although this adaptation at first had "been extremely time-consuming" (LE), she believed that, in the long run, it would be more efficient "because all these tools and resources are created and will be there to use in the future" (LE). Another challenge was related to time-management because "having online classes also offers a false security because [she] knew [she] had all [her] materials and information at [her] fingertips" (FI). Working from home during the pandemic caused Elisabeth to feel that she had more time because not travelling to the campus and working from home gave her a bit more time, leading her to think "I'm here, I'm home all week this week and I can get much more done" (LE). Therefore, she tried to do more in the breaks she had between classes and meetings, but Elisabeth realised that in the end, she did not do more and "probably prepared for classes a bit less" (FI). This was because she had taught most of the courses before and she knew what she would teach each day. In addition, "knowing that everything is on [her] computer and ready for access allows [her] to be a bit lazy in preparing" (FI). Before each class, she made sure that everything was accessible and, while doing so, she actually went through the materials to refresh her memory from last year. She stated that she also took advantage of this extra time "to do more research-related activities and [she] went into class with perhaps a more distracted mind. [She] did not have the 15-minute drive to work to focus on the class [she was] about to teach; instead, [she was] doing other things until 5 minutes before class" (FI). Elisabeth explained that "this realization has come to [her] through a bit of reflection on why some classes go better than others" (FI). She felt "rather frustrated" (LE) when she got to a point in a lesson where she gave "instructions that weren't completely clear because [she] hadn't reviewed the materials in detail beforehand" (LE). As a

result, she paid more attention to taking some time to go over the lesson plan and review the course materials, and to get into the right mind set before the class.

Moreover, Elisabeth reflected on hybrid teaching from the students' perspective. She shared that hybrid teaching was challenging because "they are at home, they are in their bedroom normally maybe their parents are working at the same time in the next room and there are other people around and lots of distractions, so I know it's difficult for them" (FI). Her students spent several hours online each day, looking at the screen, "the week that they have to be at home, they have 7, 8, 10 hours sometimes a day, and it's a lot, and you can tell. Thursdays, Fridays just like they are not people anymore, they are just kind of Zombies, so it's really difficult for them and it's difficult for me I notice when I have 3 classes in one day, 6 hours of class online, it's too much" (FI). Although sitting in front of the screen for hours was quite challenging for her students, Elisabeth also realised that working from home can actually be beneficial for some students because "sometimes in class, maybe they are distracted with their friends, or there is maybe peer-pressure and different sort of things they feel they have to sit in a certain place or don't want them to participate as much or whatever" (FI). Therefore, working from home could have been positive for some students as it helped them concentrate more and avoid potential peer pressure that they would have normally experienced in in-person teaching.

Finally, Elisabeth reflected on the actions the university took during the pandemic. The stance of the university was that "we have to maintain our times and maintain the same schedule" (FI), which Elisabeth disagreed with. She expressed that the university should have done things differently, allowing students more flexibility such as "having 1-hour classes plus a task that they have to do" (FI). She complained that it was actually "more difficult to get to know [her] students, some of them [she] knew from previous years but some of them [she] didn't know at all" (FI). During the in-person classes, with social distancing and the masks they were wearing, Elisabeth and her students "don't get to interact all that much even in class, and online it's worse, so [she] didn't see their faces, [she] had to tell them "Please put a picture up at least" they don't turn in their cameras of course, and it can be really difficult" (FI). These difficulties made Elisabeth's classroom management more challenging both in person and online because she needed to constantly warn her students to wear their masks properly, to turn their cameras on, or to maintain social distancing rules. Elisabeth added that student

engagement was negatively impacted since there was the rule of "only one person to talk a time" (FI). Student participation within the bi-modal teaching had been a recurring topic Elisabeth reflected on, and it will be discussed in detail in the following section.

7.2.4. Student Engagement during Hybrid Teaching

Elisabeth explained that she specifically chose to discuss "the involvement of the students who are at home due to quarantine while the rest of the group (including [her]) are on campus" (LE). To facilitate classroom discussions and speaking activities, Elisabeth used break-out rooms for the students following remotely in order "to let them work on something a little bit more practical way, to tell them to turn on their microphones and talk to two or three people at the same time and 20, so that works out" (FI). She thought that it "works to a point, it depends on the day and time, and whether they are tired whether they are really on task" (FI). Elisabeth realised that most speaking activities "are better done in the classroom" because "students do not like to use their cameras at home and speaking becomes unnatural" (LE). Utilising breakout rooms worked with varying degrees of success because

> some students are able to stay on task and take advantage of the opportunity to speak with their classmates, but many get off topic and speak in Spanish, even if it is a language-based task. In my methodology courses, the use of breakout rooms seems to be more effective than in language courses, as students tend to stay on task better. It doesn't matter as much if they speak in Spanish in order to do the task, though their oral skills are probably going to suffer as a result. (LE)

The fact that the students often tended to switch to Spanish challenged Elisabeth since some students got off track and started speaking in Spanish even in language-based classes. Elisabeth feared that students' English proficiency would suffer in the end and tried to mediate this situation by "speak[ing] to them as if they were there in the classroom, and even make a special effort to involve them in the class" (LE) to prevent them from getting disengaged. Elisabeth continued as follows:

> Some students, usually the brightest and most driven, will insist on participating from home; they'll turn on their microphones and ask questions, answer my questions and interrupt if they don't understand. However, many students tend to be quite passive when they are not present, presumably not

> wanting to interrupt the class or perhaps even disengaged and/or distracted. (LE)

Elisabeth addressed the disengagement of students at home by "assigning them a task and continuously ask[ing] them to answer questions, whether in the chat or with the microphone" (LE). Although this led to pauses in classes, Elisabeth believed that "it is worthwhile if it means that those students are more engaged and active" (LE). For instance, in a class she proposed to create small groups and teach the rest of the class to do a dance. She assigned one of the dances to two students who were at home as one group while the other two groups were made up of students in class. Although one of the two students at home was not feeling well and did not participate in the actual teaching of the dance, he did help his classmate prepare the brief presentation, which seemed to work out quite well, "much better than having them passively watch the presentations from home" (LE). Later in the same class, Elisabeth asked the students to form small groups of two or three again to create a review activity for one of the vocabulary sets of the previous units:

> The students online spontaneously chose to work with some of the students on campus through the online platform and collaborated in that way. Again, it worked out rather nicely. I was happy that the class seemed to be productive for everyone. (LE)

Elisabeth stated that "the main lesson was to get them involved, just not to forget about them because I think it's very easy when you have students in front of you, it's easy to forget about the ones that are online" (FI). She added that it had also been more difficult to figure out how to integrate both groups or at least have them all participating. Another challenge was the last-minute emails Elisabeth had received about Covid-19 positive students. It was something that usually came up last minute because

> it's like 'Oh, I've got an email this morning', and I have a class in an hour, and they say 'Oh, I'm in quarantine', so it's not always possible because I've been planning classes. This week I'm here, this week, I'm online, so it's not always easy last minute, if I'm doing a speaking activity and there is one person online, it's quite difficult to integrate them in the class. (FI)

She addressed this issue by having "a plan B as much as possible" and "trying to make an effort, but I think it reminded [her] to not forget about them and make sure they had an

alternative for them to do" (FI). She added that it was easier when there had been more than one student at home because she could put them in a breakout room, and they could collaborate and complete the activity together. However, when there was only one student online and the rest of the class was on campus, "then it's complicated" (FI). Elisabeth addressed this situation by asking the student online to summarise the classroom discussion or expressing their opinion. Moreover, she recorded classes and made all the recordings available, hoping that it would support student learning. She explained her rationale for leaving these lesson recordings as follows:

> my reasoning is that if students go back to the recording to clarify something or review, they're learning more, and it doesn't create any additional work for me whatsoever. I have, however, chosen not to record when students have asked me to because they had to miss a class. I think that there should be some sort of limit to providing everything for the student and requiring them to resolve problems in other ways. (LE)

Elisabeth believed that the lesson recordings provided an opportunity for the students to go back and review the lesson content over and over, which she hoped would improve their learning. However, she was also careful about the amount of support she gave to the students as she was also aware that students needed to be autonomous and take initiative towards their learning and the challenges they had encountered. Overall, Elisabeth expressed that, although she had some initial concerns about bi-modal teaching, through the process, she learned to be flexible and do extra planning to handle her classes more effectively. When I asked her overall reflection about the bi-modal teaching she did within the pandemic work conditions, she expressed that

> I think this year in general, teachers have to be ready for anything. I think teaching online is one thing, teaching at class is completely different and then teaching at the same time in both places is… At the beginning of the year, we thought 'this is impossible, how are they even asking us to do this?', but I think we learned a lot and I think we've learned more than anything just to be flexible and roll with the punches and just go with whatever happens. I think it requires extra planning, which is tough because planning is always difficult anyway, but a little extra planning, a little bit of flexibility, and creativity. Saying 'OK. How can I get these people to interact with others?' and having a few tools or a few techniques to bring out when necessary. (FI)

Bi-modal teaching brought some realisations for Elisabeth. After overcoming the initial shock, she managed to adapt and did her best to get prepared for the new semester. She needed to learn new technological tools and integrated them into her classes in order to promote more student participation and engagement. She also realised how important it was to plan, in certain situations actually to have extra plans, and to be flexible and patient during challenging times. Regarding the support she received from her department and university, Elisabeth thought that at the beginning of the pandemic, the university organised a lot of training sessions remotely in relation to online teaching for the staff "which was really great" (FI). The university did webinars all summer long in 2020 and left the recordings on the platform for lecturers who wanted to re-visit. Elisabeth believed that it was very helpful to learn some of the tools they had, such as Blackboard, Teams and Moodle, and she added that "that was really helpful, [the training department] did that really well" (FI). However, for the bi-modal teaching, "honestly, we had one day, one little training session, and nothing worked that day. So, it was like 'Oh, this is how it's supposed to work, and it's not working so, when you come to class, good luck!' So, that was not helpful" (FI). What helped her deal with the challenges of bi-modal teaching throughout the semester was comparing notes with colleagues, "saying 'Oh, I did this, I did this', sharing ideas and saying, 'why don't you try this?', and so on, which happened sometimes but not very often" (FI) because they were not in the same place at the same time anymore. Everyone came and left the department at different times, which made it difficult for them to encounter each other and share notes.

7.2.5. Networking and Career Planning

Elisabeth shared that she had a chat with a colleague about her future research plans. She took this chat very seriously and chose to reflect on this conversation as a learning episode because this colleague "has a permanent position in [her] university and therefore attends faculty meetings" (LE). Elisabeth placed a great importance into her colleague's networking between the university and considered this chat as significant. She continued that they discussed their mutual research interests, potential research projects, and career plans. During our follow-up interview, Elisabeth also mentioned a meeting that she was going to attend the upcoming week with a research group she participated in on a regular basis. This was a faculty research meeting where the group met from time to time to share what they were currently working on as well as "interests in future projects so that we may find

synergies among us" (LE). Elisabeth explained that such meetings were great networking opportunities because she was aware of the importance of others saying "'Oh, did you know this is the way it is or did you hear about this? (…) just a simple 'Hey, did you see this email?', or 'I received this email, you may not have, here it is" (FI).

Elisabeth realised that "it's quite important to be proactive and plan for future research, even make a tentative calendar that you'd like to follow" (LE). These chats and meetings with colleagues were therefore very important for her. Firstly, Elisabeth could proactively work toward doing research that interested her, rather than merely taking opportunities that could have come her way by chance because this way "this is likely to lead to a more fulfilling research career, forging a path toward where I want to be" (LE). Moreover, Elisabeth believed that "this practice will surely lead [her] to form relationships with like-minded researchers who have similar interests" (LE). Elisabeth believed that, if she was clear on what topics she would like to explore, when she met someone with similar research interests, then "it will be easy to recognize the affinity and consider a collaborative project" (LE). Furthermore, having clear research ideas in mind would help her "read any call for papers or funding opportunities that come up with a purpose in mind and evaluate the possibilities" (LE). Overall, Elisabeth strived for "a sense of control over [her] career" (LE) and believed that she felt "confident and optimistic about the future" (LE). Thinking about topics that she would like to explore motivated her about future research projects and "got [her] excited at the possibility of engaging in interesting and meaningful research" (LE).

Elisabeth also reflected on the importance of long-term planning in her professional life. She explained that this entailed asking herself where she aimed to be in five years and started planning accordingly. For instance, for the last few years, she had been working "toward getting a full-time position, so that's something that's always in the back of my mind and that's the reason that I do a lot of what I do" (FI). Elisabeth had been "very conscious" (FI) of this professional goal and had been working toward what she had to do to get accredited. She was aware that there were some external factors; for instance, "they have to actually open a position out and decide who they want" (FI). However, she was determined to complete tasks that were within her ability, such as publishing more papers and improving her CV. Therefore, she had "taken on too much this semester, this year because [she is] trying to get to the point where [she] can get accreditation with the organisation here in Spain" (FI). She further

explained that this was because she was still lacking "a couple nicely published articles, well-published articles in good journals, and basically [she] is saying yes to everything and anything that comes [her] way and trying to get more publications" to get to the level where she could meet the requirements for the accreditation, which was "really stressful" (FI). Elisabeth believed that she had managed to handle the extra workload and the pandemic work conditions by planning in advance, both short-term and long-term, and by managing her time strategically.

7.2.6. Work-life Balance

Elisabeth reflected on a very hectic week with all her classes in person "as well as a few extra meetings and a best practices conference and, of course, [she] also had personal obligations to attend to, which cannot be ignored when planning the week because in the end, [she is] a person with both work and family obligations" (LE). Going through such a hectic week at work while balancing family obligations is

> a learning experience because I think we have to remember to take care of ourselves as people, not only just professionally not only focusing on professional development and training and so on, but we need to remember that we are people, that we also have families and obligations at home. (…) So, I think it's a good reminder to remind ourselves from time to time that it's OK to maybe drop something for a day and say 'I need a break'. (FI)

As illustrated in this quote, Elisabeth highlighted the importance of having a work-life balance. Particularly during busy weeks, she paid more attention to giving herself breaks to rest and unwind. Although she was motivated to develop professionally to achieve her career goals, she was also aware of how essential it was to stop and breathe so as not to lose herself in the process while juggling professional and family obligations. Elisabeth added that, in the end, her week had gone quite well, and explained that this was because when she knew she had a difficult week ahead, she put more efforts to take better care of herself; for instance, she tried to "go to bed a bit earlier, try to be mindful about whatever [she is] doing at the moment, etc. And reflecting on this, [she] again saw the importance of planning ahead" (LE). She continued by reflecting on how this awareness helped her particularly during the pandemic. She realised the importance of

> be[ing] aware of the time constraints and tasks that lay ahead in order to prepare yourself mentally and physically for it. It's been a trying year, and this is more important than ever. It's essential to find time to treat yourself from time to time and invest in yourself. (LE)

Elisabeth mediated the hectic work conditions within the pandemic by breaking her agenda into smaller tasks. For instance, she set the day of our interview aside to work on the one research project that she needed to catch up with. It was the long weekend in Spain, so it was a holiday on Monday and Tuesday; therefore, Elisabeth went ahead and worked a little bit each day from Sunday to Tuesday. On Wednesday, she was finally able to sit down and say "OK, I'm doing the research project, I can actually concentrate when no one's around, it's quite" (FI). This way, she managed to handle hectic work periods by planning and breaking her tasks into smaller parts and avoided getting overwhelmed.

For her wellbeing, Elisabeth did yoga to take care of herself more physically and mentally because

> I think that really helps. Sitting here at the computer kills my neck and my shoulder, it's the same for everyone. And doing yoga from time to time really helps. I think it's the one thing I do for myself that helps me clear my mind a little bit. (FI)

Elisabeth was aware of the benefits of yoga practices both on her body and mind. Doing yoga gave her the space to slow down and unwind her mind, particularly during busy periods of work. Having this awareness about the necessity of these mental breaks and the importance of looking after her mental wellbeing, especially during busy work periods, motivated Elisabeth to pursue such practices. She added that when she could not find any time to be alone to recuperate or do the things that helped her relax, she tried "to find a very simple way to change [her] routine, such as ordering lunch out one day or taking a different route when walking or driving somewhere" (LE).

Chapter Eight: Discussion

8.1. Introduction

This chapter features the main contributions offered by this inquiry and discusses these contributions regarding the present research on the language teacher cognition and teacher education fields. This study aimed to explore what learning and development activities EFL teacher educators engage in (research question 1), the content of such learning activities (research question 2), and the facilitating and/or hindering factors which mediate these activities (research question 3). These issues/phenomena were explored within two Spanish undergraduate teacher education programmes that were distinctly under-researched. The recognition that teacher educators need distinct and tailored professional development practices is still not fully shared by their institutions, government officials and other stakeholders. For this reason, my motivation to conduct this study in Spain was increased with the aim of exploring and portraying the experiences of teacher educators within Spanish EFL teacher education. The learning and development activities EFL teacher educators engaged in, the content of such learning and the internal and external factors that impacted these learning experiences were described in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. The primary focus of the present chapter is to discuss these points in relation to the existing literature. Throughout this chapter, the major contribution of this research project is that this study produces insights into the complex interaction between different learning and development activities and contributing and hindering factors, specifically within the context of language teacher education programs in Spain.

Table 4: Summary of the Main Findings

	Learning Activities:	Learning Content	Mediating Factors
Ana	Pursuing a PhD, overseas research visits, attending professional development events remotely, publishing a joint article, going through an accreditation process, and	Personal knowledge: being autonomous, constant, resilient, emphatic; a greater awareness of self-care; re-constructing professional identity through engaging in curriculum design and adaptation during the pandemic. Contextual Knowledge: knowledge of student teachers and developing communication skills with colleagues and other stakeholders.	Macro-level factors: the availability of a frame of reference in the form of national/institutional standards (which led her to pursue a PhD degree for entry into the profession and get accredited to keep her post) and the Covid-19 pandemic. Meso-level factors: participation in departmental

	wellbeing experiences during the pandemic	Pedagogical Knowledge: ICT skills; knowledge of innovative and engaging online learning experiences for their student teachers; integrating technology and subject field lessons; adjust the curriculum and adapt the instructional materials to the new online teaching and learning environment; being competent in time management and enhancing teacher-student and student-student interactions. Social Knowledge: awareness of challenging power dynamics during collaborative activities; increasing awareness of socio-political debates in teacher education and the socio-political impacts of the pandemic on student teachers and teacher education. Sociological Knowledge: more aware of equity issues in online and/or hybrid teaching; prioritising developing student teachers' autonomy to address these inequity concerns. Research Knowledge: expanding knowledge of research design and data analysis; gaining practical skills of conducting research; expanding her knowledge and experience for academic publications.	professional networks; research practices and publications; the competitive nature of academia and power dynamics Micro-level Factors: beliefs about language learning and teaching, sense of self-efficacy, a sense of willingness to publish a joint paper, willingness to constantly improve her English, motivation to attend PD events remotely during the pandemic, and determination to take care of her well-being; inclination towards connectedness and collaboration with others
Carolina	Hybrid teaching during the pandemic, experiences with ICT tools, student assessment during the pandemic, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance.	Personal knowledge: re-constructing professional identity through engaging in curriculum design and adaptation during the pandemic. Contextual Knowledge: knowledge of student teachers; developing communication skills with colleagues and other stakeholders. Pedagogical Knowledge: ICT skills; knowledge of innovative and engaging online learning experiences for their student teachers; integrating technology and subject field lessons; increasing ability to adjust the curriculum and adapt the instructional materials to the new online teaching and learning environment; being competent in time management and enhancing teacher-student and student-student interactions. Social Knowledge: awareness of challenging power dynamics during collaborative activities; increasing awareness of socio-political debates in teacher education and the socio-political impacts of the pandemic on student teachers and teacher education. Sociological Knowledge: more aware of equity issues in online and/or hybrid teaching; prioritising developing student teachers' autonomy to address these inequity concerns.	Macro-level factors: the availability of a frame of reference in the form of national/institutional standards (which led her to pursue postgraduate studies, and work towards more publications) and the Covid-19 pandemic. Meso-level factors: participation in departmental professional networks; research practices and publications; the competitive nature of academia and power dynamics Micro-level Factors: beliefs about language learning and teaching, a strong sense of self-efficacy regarding the use of technology for pedagogical purposes; a sense of willingness to explore and use educational technology; processes of 'identity alignment', 'identity tensions', and 'identity negotiation'.

Elisabeth	Participation in a research team, collaborative student project, her teaching experiences during the pandemic, reflections about student engagement during the pandemic, networking and career planning, and work-life balance	Personal knowledge: awareness about the importance of prior preparation; a greater awareness of self-care; re-constructing professional identity through engaging in curriculum design and adaptation during the pandemic. Contextual Knowledge: knowledge of student teachers; developing communication skills with colleagues and other stakeholders. Pedagogical Knowledge: ICT skills; knowledge of innovative and engaging online learning experiences for their student teachers; integrating technology and subject field lessons; adjust the curriculum and adapt the instructional materials to the new online teaching and learning environment; being competent in time management and enhancing teacher-student and student-student interactions. Social Knowledge: awareness of challenging power dynamics during collaborative activities; increasing awareness of socio-political debates in teacher education and the socio-political impacts of the pandemic on student teachers and teacher education. Sociological Knowledge: more aware of equity issues in online and/or hybrid teaching Research Knowledge: expanding knowledge of research design and data analysis; gaining practical skills of conducting research; expanding her knowledge and experience for academic publications.	Macro-level factors: the availability of a frame of reference in the form of national/institutional standards; pursuing a PhD degree for entry into the profession and getting accredited to keep her post; the Covid-19 pandemic. Meso-level factors: participation in departmental professional networks Micro-level Factors: a sense of willingness to join a research team, regularly attend faculty research meetings, and make a long-term career plan; inclination towards connectedness and collaboration with others; processes of 'identity alignment', 'identity tensions', and 'identity negotiation'.

8.2. What professional and personal learning activities EFL TEs engage in?

8.2.1. Professional Learning Activities

The teacher educators in this study engaged in professional learning activities that were conceptualised across the participants as research engagement and publishing, reflective practice, peer collaboration, attending professional development programmes, and transcultural communication. These professional learning experiences were highly diversified and will be discussed under three main categories: academic engagement, collaborative activity, and professional development programmes.

8.2.1.1. Learning through academic engagement

Teacher educators have been found to learn through academic engagement by *doing research* and *engaging in academic activities*. The first component of learning through doing research is conducting *practitioner research* which seems to be a prevalent practice for teacher educators, providing them with opportunities for reflecting on their teaching practice and examining assumptions about learning and teaching, overall aimed at improving their work (Murray, 2010). To this end, Elisabeth conducted action research with two of her colleagues from the department. The team had been working collaboratively and co-teaching in all the methodological courses for the past three years. Their collaboration included planning joint lessons, developing modules, in-class co-teaching, writing reflective notes, and conducting post-teaching reflective meetings. The team analysed their reflective journals and meeting notes collaboratively and were now working towards a joint publication. Elisabeth's collaborative experience was like the experiences of the teacher educators in Han et al. (2014) where the teacher educators conducted a collaborative self-study to explore what it meant to be a culturally responsive teacher educator in higher education. The participants prepared interview questions, interviewed each other, analysed the data together to examine the concept of cultural responsiveness and how to implement it in their teaching. The co-teaching experience was important in enabling Elisabeth to learn and develop as a teacher educator both individually and collaboratively with other colleagues. As expressed by two of the teacher educators in Davey et al. (2011), the collaborative interactions of the co-teaching team not only provided the space "to swap war stories or exchange handy teaching ideas", but also opportunities "to really analyse carefully and thus build a genuine community of practice" (p. 194).

Different from Elisabeth's collaborative research experience, Carolina had an individual research experience in the form of action research. Carolina reflected on her MA dissertation research which entailed setting up an online course where she designed and delivered one of her classes as an online course and reflected on the effectiveness of the tools she used. Through doing action research, Carolina expanded her knowledge about new technologies and the way to deliver these technologies and transferred what she had learned in those courses and research projects into her teaching practice and her professional life on a more general scale. As conceptualised by Burns (2005), action research is an "interventionist and

subjective" methodology developed by practitioners who "deliberately change, modify and improve" their professional practices, teaching and learning processes (p. 60). Action research therefore provided Carolina with the opportunity to discover, develop, and establish a teacher researcher identity and engage in research which arose from her practice and her students, which in turn benefitted both her students and her teaching practice in general. This process gave Carolina a sense of empowerment by increasing her awareness about her professional work context and her "roles, duties, and the limitations and opportunities within [this] specific educational context" (Banegas & Consoli, 2020, p. 181). This, in the long run, enabled her to develop pedagogies which were context responsive and driven by the needs and interests of herself and her students. Highlighting the importance of teacher educators' research engagement, Cochran-Smith embraces the expression of "working the dialectic" (2005, p. 219) to underline that a teacher educator's role as a researcher is closely linked to the core of their work: teaching about teaching. Teacher educators need to engage in research activities to enhance their understanding of their practice and be better teachers of teachers.

All in all, teacher educators' engagement in practitioner research was found to be influential in this study; therefore, it is essential to discuss the concept of *teacher educating,* which "examines and informs the pedagogy of teacher educating (as distinct from the pedagogy of teaching), as well as being an active member of the larger scholarly community committed to the development and advancement of policies, practices, and programs focused on educating teachers" (Goodwin et al., 2014, p. 285). As the literature on teacher educator professional development suggests, *teacher educating* is not solely instructing preservice and in-service teachers; it is rather "a purposeful commitment to a professional life that is centred on the teaching of teachers and a deep understanding of what it means to teach about teaching" (ibid. p. 285). Elisabeth and Carolina's ability to engage in and with research and their positive disposition towards research was also mirrored in their practices. They were responsive to circumstances where a specific issue could be addressed by systematically and intentionally being investigated. Undoubtedly, their practice was characterised by regular participation in research activities, which overall encouraged them to become more reflective, critical, and analytical about their practice (Atay, 2006). Exploring teacher educators' perceptions of research, Willemse and Boei (2013) revealed that research active teacher educators placed a

greater emphasis on inquiry-based practice than their colleagues who were less involved in research. Therefore, increasing teacher educators' research background and capacity will make them more analytical of research, its methods, and outcomes, which will eventually enhance the quality of educational research and contribute to the quality of the teacher education curriculum (ibid.).

In addition to practitioner research, teacher educators may be involved in *theory-driven research,* which refers to their engagement in research projects with the goal to develop theoretical knowledge. Elisabeth joined a team of experienced researchers for a collaborative research project in primary bilingual schools in Madrid. The team was initially motivated by the general idea that, while a lower socioeconomic status normally had a negative effect on education, it seemed to have a lesser negative effect in the case of bilingual schools in Madrid, and their main goal was to explore the reasons why. The team focused on student perspectives and collected data by conducting focus group interviews with the students. Her participation was particularly significant for Elisabeth because she was later assigned the leading role within the research team. She was in charge of organising and leading online team meetings, conducted qualitative data analysis through NVIVO, and contributed to the writing process of the final research report. Along with improving her Qualitative research expertise and academic writing, Elisabeth also developed a constantly growing sense of accountability to the group, as well as to herself as an individual (Davey et al., 2011). Having the space to do "regular reporting back to sympathetic ears" (ibid. p. 192) was highly motivating, more than if she had been working in isolation. Therefore, the group became an important source of voluntary community sharing and professional learning in an environment focused on research outcomes and where Elisabeth was supported by a more experienced mentor, her PhD supervisor (see Borg, 2010 for a discussion of how mentors contribute to teachers' research engagement).

Moreover, Elisabeth considered her participation into this collaborative research project as an investment for her professional career, which is in line with the existing literature. Research-related activities are regarded as essential activities for teacher educators' professional development (Cochran-Smith, 2003, 2005; Loughran & Berry, 2005; Lunenberg & Willemse, 2006) and for improving their teaching, which is further promoted by current policies to increase the professionalism of teacher educators (Lunenberg et al., 2017). As

argued by Murray et al. (2009), the emphasis on research practices may stem from *universification* (Ball, 1998) and increase pressure on teacher educators to gain respect and status in academia as in Ana's case. Ana undertook doctoral research due to institutional requirements to obtain an academic post in higher education. Despite initially being overwhelmed by the scale of a PhD degree, Ana treasured her PhD experience and learned about different stages of a research project. Similar to the teacher educators in Tack and Vanderline (2014), pursuing a PhD degree helped Ana gain knowledge and understanding of research and research methods, ranging from forming initial research questions to writing up the final report, increased her knowledge about and practice of quantitative data analysis. Ana also improved her academic reading and writing skills and learned to be resilient and consistent in her work. She greatly appreciated her supervisor's quality written and face-to-face feedback and the confidence this generated. She also highlighted that she needed regular meetings, constructive feedback, guidance, and support about reading the literature and detailed written feedback on her drafts. Relatedly, Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed 'legitimate peripheral participation' to describe the relationship between new members, called "newcomers" (p. 12), and veteran members, referred to as "old-timers" (p. 12), in a community of practice (CoP). As newcomers have access to exemplar members of the CoP, they learn what it means to be a mature practitioner in the community and take on identities of mature practitioners. In Ana's case, she was the "newcomer" and her supervisor, the "old-timer" who acted as a guide and a mentor to her throughout her PhD with particularly ethical and social responsibilities as well as intellectually scaffolding her academic and professional advancements. Through her doctoral research, Ana developed a researcher identity, which was manifested by getting involved in doctoral research and purposefully improving her research knowledge and skills further with the supervision of a senior researcher (Bullock, 2009; Dinkelman et al., 2006). This can be seen as a response to build research capacity and improve teacher educators' academic status, explicitly focusing on generating academic knowledge through, for instance, PhD trajectories (Tack & Vanderline, 2014).

The other subcategory of learning through academic engagement refers to *engaging in academic activities* such as reading the literature, publishing, and attending academic conferences. Like the teacher educators in Dengerink et al. (2015), who reported learning by reading the literature on a particular subject and attending academic seminars and

conferences, both Ana and Elisabeth enshrined following academic journals and doing regular academic readings to keep up with recent developments and current debates in their fields. They acquired research knowledge and understanding of research methods through their PhD studies, engagement in professional learning communities, and reading the literature, which helped them be teacher-educator researchers (Kosnik et al., 2015; Koster et al., 2008). Like the teacher educators in Lunenberg et al. (2010), conducting a self-study of their practices gave the teacher educators in this study a focused approach to reading of the literature, because they wanted to become knowledgeable about the subject of their studies, frame their research questions, and underpin their findings, overall aiming for theoretical growth. Regarding research dissemination, similar to the teacher educators in Castle (2013), who valued attending conferences to exchange ideas with colleagues and experts, both Ana and Elisabeth were often involved in research dissemination activities by reading international research journals and disseminating their research findings, which often was in the form of participating and presenting at (inter)national academic conferences or publishing their research in professional journals. For Laura, one of the FL teacher educators in Moncada and Ospina (2005), "conferences have allowed [her] to learn about different trends in foreign language teaching and learning, to have access to a [new] bibliography, to become familiarized with some authors' works, compare approaches, strategies, and techniques" (p. 26). Ana and Elisabeth considered conferences a great tool to share their research, to become updated about the state-of-the-art research in their fields, and to network with like-minded researchers. Their engagement in research was built on the understanding that teacher educators should also be researchers and was grounded in their methodological and field-driven expertise (Kosnik et al., 2015). Moreover, they disseminated their work in research journals and attended research conferences to contribute to the advancement of the knowledge base of teacher education (Tack & Vanderlinde, 2014).

While Ana and Elisabeth were engaged *in* teacher research (by conducting the research) and *with* research (by reading, applying, and disseminating it) (Borg, 2010), Carolina admitted that she struggled to find the time to engage *in* academic activities as much as she would have liked to do since she could not attend academic conferences, or to conduct research or disseminate previous research findings. This resulted from the fact that she was juggling work

and family obligations, particularly during the pandemic where she did not have childcare support. However, she was keen on engaging *with* research since she consulted the literature, specifically while structuring and preparing for her lessons. As highlighted by Loughran (2014), being a teacher educator researcher entails being a 'smart' consumer of research, researching their practice, and esteeming a research identity as a teacher educator. It is also vital to point out that the great emphasis on researcher identity in the literature does not necessarily mean that all teacher educators view themselves as researchers. Carolina was in her first year as a teacher educator in higher education when the pandemic hit in the beginning of 2020, and she was still in the process of learning the system of the university and finding her way around. This finding "confirms what has been found about career phases for teacher educators (Murray and Male, 2005; Swennen, Volman, and van Essen, 2008). At the beginning of their careers, teacher educators usually have difficulties finding their way and identity. Their interest in researching their practice and experimenting with different ideas and methods often emerges after their first years of experience. On top of these responsibilities, Carolina had to deal with the sudden shift to online teaching while navigating work and family responsibilities, which played a significant hindering impact on her engagement in research. Despite being motivated to enhance her knowledge on the theoretical and methodical foundations of her work by engaging with research, she did not engage in research.

8.2.1.2. Learning through collaborative activity

Through engaging in collaborative activity, the teacher educators in the present study have been found to learn by *getting input from significant others*, which entailed conversations and discussions about their work with colleagues in their professional context. The participants' collaborative learning experiences within the category of *getting input from significant others* will be discussed in three main categories of significant others. The first category is their *immediate colleagues from the workplace*. Ana collaborated with a trusted colleague, an English lecturer from the department, whom she invited to read her work and relished her feedback and suggestions. Ana was also in contact with this colleague through regular informal chats, which helped her to improve her oral skills, learn new idioms and expressions, and increase her self-confidence in her English language knowledge and skills. Another significant collaborative experience was the process of writing a joint article with another colleague from the department. Ana cherished this collaboration since her colleague was very

experienced in academia, notably publishing. This experience created a specific space for thinking, talking, reading, and writing as an academic. Ana learned more about structuring an article, writing more academic, expressing her own opinions and voice in academic writing, and navigating the publication process. Similarly, the teacher educators in Selkrig and Keamy (2015) reported inviting trusted colleagues to comment on their work. The role of these colleagues was to understand the background and outcomes of that work, examine their data from a different perspective, and provide proofreading and feedback. Being in legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) as a "newcomer" to the publishing world, Ana initially lacked the competence to engage as a full participator, but she contributed as an apprentice at the level of her competence at that time. By observing her colleague's practice and with his guidance, Ana gradually took a more active part as her readiness for more complex activity pulled her into a more central role in the CoP with her colleague. Wenger (1998) notes that the participation of the new members is legitimate to the degree that other community members accept it. In other words, the novice member must be given enough legitimacy to be accepted as a potential member. Ana was supported and guided by her colleague throughout the different stages of the publishing process and eventually this collaboration was very fruitful for her. However, working with a more experienced colleague also created challenges, specifically regarding the power dynamics of their collaboration. Like the participants in Dye et al. (2010) and Rodrigues et al. (2018), these challenges, however, created a valuable learning experience as Ana learned how to set boundaries and express her voice. She was prompted to see challenges as opportunities for development by creating a communicative space for discussion, which in turn enabled professional learning and agency through critical and transformative dialogues (Edwards-Groves, 2013). As experienced by the teacher educators in Coronel et al. (2003), cultivating a conversation based on reciprocity and providing contexts and opportunities for the conversation between teachers was an appropriate strategy for improving teaching and professional development. Despite the hierarchical differences in their relationship, the conversations Ana engaged in with her co-author facilitated the development of a free and open exchange, which provided contexts and opportunities for the conversation between them as a formative strategy in the improvement of their professional development. Moreover, this reciprocity and openness from her colleague and overall positive experience also led to an increase in Ana's self- confidence and helped her feel more self-assured when asked to join other collaborative

research projects. However, like the teacher educators in Lunenberg et al. (2011), for Ana, this process of becoming more self-confident was not self-evident since it implied an emotional struggle demanding courage. Self-regulation describes how individuals strategically adapt within environments to achieve authentic goals. Self-regulated learners manage not only their learning activities, but also environments, resources, emotions, and motivation to help them accomplish objectives (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). To this end, Ana's active participation was peripheral to the degree that it provided her with improved performance and an understanding of how the community operated. The trust and respect she felt for her colleague were critical ingredients in her active participation, which led to a greater likelihood of risk-taking and a stronger sense of belonging. The change in the power dynamics was revealed through Ana's move to a more central position in the CoP, with Ana's increasing control over the decisions involved in the process.

In Elisabeth's case, she was approached by a more experienced colleague about her plans, which turned into a chat about academia and the importance of networking and future planning. Similar to the teacher educators in Koster et al. (2008), who received significant input by having a conversation with colleagues and administrative staff, Elisabeth received suggestions from her colleague about her potential plans and how to plan steps in academia (MacPhail, 2011). It is important to note that these informal conversations with colleagues are unstructured forms of collavorative learning which reflect the individualised character of educators' professional development (Karagiorgi & Nicolaidou, 2013). Timmerman (2003), who studied teacher educators in the Netherlands, draws attention to how long it takes to build a professional identity and underlines the value of role models as a critical factor. These informal chats and meetings with colleagues helped Elisabeth navigate the boundaries and practices of different communities (Griffiths et al., 2010). Elisabeth's engagement in such conversations was significant since guidance for career planning is often not provided, and teacher educators' professional development is seen as a personal endeavour rather than a collective institutional endeavour (Guberman & McDossi, 2019). Another relevant aspect of *getting input from immediate colleagues in the workplace* is collaborative reflection experiences. Teacher educators have been found to learn through *collaborative reflection*, where reflection is performed with others through their engagement in planned endeavours or simply sharing their reflections with their colleagues.

Ana and her colleagues conducted a group meeting to reflect on student feedback forms, and the completed semester overall. The meeting was led by the Head of Department and entailed both individual and group reflection. The group reflected on certain classroom events and student feedback. These collective professional critiques offer ways of seeing into experience since seeing different types of teaching decisions in action helps to highlight the problematic nature of teaching. Moreover, highlighting differences between action and intent raises dilemmas that offer new ways of seeing into practice (Loughran & Berry, 2005). Similar to the participants in Garcia et al. (2018), these meetings were instrumental in recognising, noticing and reflecting on significant events that had occurred in the practice of the different members of the department by engaging in a critical analysis of these events, and possibly expanding their theoretical background. The collaborative reflection experience Elisabeth had was related to the team teaching she did with two of her colleagues from the department. Observing her colleagues while co-teaching and getting feedback from them enabled Elisabeth to produce an account of her teaching by detailing her own thinking and its development. Reflection-on-action is an essential component of the learning process that constitutes professional development. It is a means for practitioners to explore the interplay between theory and practice that derives from their practice as researchers and teacher educators (Garcia et al., 2007). Through the lens of reflective practice, Elisabeth was engaged in the subsequent analysis of her own actions by applying her conceptual tools and analytical strategies to understanding and assessing her past actions. For Ana and Elisabeth, these reflection opportunities not only highlighted the importance of constant (re-)evaluation of their pedagogies and reinforced their commitment to best practice but also reshaped their understanding of what inhibited their professional development. This reframing has encouraged them to be more critical in examining their own roles as teacher educators, in challenging the taken for granted, in problematising and reconceptualising their teaching and in arriving at renewed understanding of their own classrooms. Although both participants experienced challenges during these reflective activities, these obstacles have become opportunities for their mutual gains in professional growth and inner strength.

Another group of significant others for teacher educators is the *student teachers*. Brookfield (1995) proposed four lenses through which to view practice, and 'students' eyes' was one of the four lenses suggested for teachers to discover and examine their assumptions by viewing

their practice. In Ana's department, it was common to collect student evaluation forms at the end of each semester. After receiving these forms, all the lecturers had a departmental meeting which was led by the head of the department, went through these forms, and evaluated student feedback. MacPhail (2011) appreciated the student teachers' comments and feedback, which helped her identify areas that required further improvement. Ana received positive comments from her students while she received one key criticism about the heavy theoretical content of one of her methodology classes, and the students expressed that they expected her to integrate more practical activities into the sessions. Ana expressed disappointment with this feedback since she believed she tried her best to adapt all her classes, particularly during the pandemic conditions. However, like one of the participants in Sprott (2019), receiving student teachers' feedback allowed Ana to respond to their academic needs by seeking resources and making the necessary pedagogical adjustments more effectively. Underlying the need for teachers to be more aware of their teaching contexts, Kumaravadivelu (2001) presents “the pedagogy of particularity” which requires practitioners to continuously observe their practice, reflect on it, and eventually take the necessary actions according to the contextual dynamics and students’ needs. Ana was very sensitive towards the abrupt changes happening because of the pandemic and the learners’ concerns about the shift to online teaching. Particularly during the initial chaos and confusion the pandemic caused, she suddenly ended up being the only decision maker. Showing great autonomy, she explored different technological tools and software to integrate into her practice and was in a constant reflective state while adapting the teaching materials to online platforms, delivering the online classes, and evaluating the effectiveness of her practice, which eventually led her to develop context-sensitive pedagogical knowledge.

The third group of significant others are *mentors*, often in the form of experienced teacher educators supporting their early career colleagues. In Elisabeth's case, the mentoring came through her Ph.D. supervisor during the collaborative research project (discussed in more detail in Section 8.1.1.1). Wenger (1998) states that one of the most prevalent characteristics of CoPs is shared repertoire, which includes routines, symbols, concepts, and actions. Among this shared repertoire of the research team, Elisabeth oversaw organising and leading online team meetings, conducted qualitative data analysis through NVIVO, and contributed to the writing process of the final research report, which felt very overwhelming for her at times.

Her supervisor was very instrumental in advising Elisabeth on how to handle these responsibilities (McKeon & Harrison, 2010) and how to navigate the disagreements and challenging power dynamics within the group (Coronel et al., 2003). Going back to Lave and Wenger' (1991) legitimate peripheral participation, Elisabeth, the "newcomer", and her supervisor, the "old-timer", Elisabeth's supervisor acted as a mentor throughout the research project, particularly intellectually scaffolding Elisabeth's professional advancements. Elisabeth was involved in a stimulating reflective dialogue with her supervisor, and the other team members. The potential contribution of such learning conversations was assisting Elisabeth in seeking and implementing new professional insights and transforming her professional knowledge. Despite the ups and downs of the research team experience, as suggested by Borg (2010), having her supervisor's support, her "motivation to begin and sustain a teacher research project" and "openness and a desire to collaborate with others in being research-engaged" (p. 420) were the factors that helped Elisabeth mediate these challenges. Like the teacher educators in Czerniawski et al. (2017), Elisabeth cherished collaborating with experienced colleagues and the opportunity to work with, and receive support from, her supervisor and the team. She conceived her participation in the research team as a means to engage in discussions of the present research literature, learn how to conduct research and publish and disseminate research beyond their institutions.

The teacher educators in the present study also learned by *being in a learning community*. Like the teacher educators in Coronel et al. (2003), a self-study of a critical friendship group of teacher educators at the University of Huelva (Spain), Elisabeth was involved in team-teaching with two of her colleagues from the department where most of the courses and all the methodological courses were team-tied in some ways. Elisabeth's collaborative relations with her colleagues and the use of conversation and reflection within the team can be regarded as a valid alternative in the approach to processes of teacher development and other teaching issues, as well as improvements in education. These collaborative experiences enabled Elisabeth to create a communicative space for discussion which promoted professional learning and agency via transformative dialogue with her colleagues in the department (Edwards-Groves, 2013). Another critical aspect of Wenger's (1998) theory is that CoPs consist of members from various fields and expertise who are mutually engaged while realising the community's shared purpose. Mutual engagement, "being included in what

matters” (ibid., p. 74), demands the “contributions and knowledge of others” (p. 76) and can be distinguished by harmony or “tensions and conflicts” (p. 77). Within their CoP, the mutual engagement of Elisabeth and her colleagues entailed identifying common goals based on a combination of theoretical principles and/or ongoing reflections on their practice. Then, individually or together, they constructed instructional strategies based on goals, enacted plans in practice, and monitored outcomes. They came together at regular intervals to review their instruction, talked about progress, and critically reflected on their practice.

On the other hand, opportunities for peer collaboration were lacking in Ana's department. Azorin (2020) “poor culture of networking and collaboration” in Spanish education context Although "a collaborative ethos was lacking" (Borg, 2010) in her department, Ana managed to mediate this situation and become more proactive and create opportunities for herself. She had the chance to visit a few departments abroad, where she attended postgraduate classes in the USA, joined a research lab in Canada, and did classroom observations in Scotland. Thanks to these visits, Ana could discuss her work with other postgraduate students and lecturers, improved her academic knowledge, and learned how to effectively collaborate and adapt to new, sometimes challenging, situations and environments (Harrison & McKeon, 2008). Her last visit to a university in Glasgow was particularly significant since Ana was a lecturer this time, and she collaborated with lecturers and conducted classroom observations. Consequently, her visit to Scotland was influential in building a new professional identity for Ana (Dinkelman, Margolis, & Sikkenga, 2006; Murray, 2008). Like Schneider & Parker (2013), Ana had the opportunity to dismantle her work, make judgments about her experiences, and take philosophical, pedagogical, and personal stances in defence of her decisions "only to turn on [herself] and stand within but against [her] own practice to learn" (p. 13). Overall, through these collaborative experiences, both Ana and Elisabeth dealt with the complexities of engaging in collaborative professional development experiences (Brody & Hadar, 2011). Participants' descriptions of their experiences demonstrated the impact of these experiences on their journeys towards becoming researchers and the significance of collaborating with experienced colleagues as fruitful professional learning in the workplace (Eraut, 2004). Furthermore, these collaborative experiences were instrumental in breaking through their personal and professional isolation, having conversations about student teachers' learning and training, changing notes on their teaching practices, and developing a stronger sense of

efficacy as teacher educators (Hadar & Brody, 2010). Freeman (1998) states that teaching can be an egg-box profession since teachers usually work in their classrooms in isolation. Nevertheless, Bauml (2014) highlights that collaboration with others is an important element for teachers, especially novice teachers. Goodwin (2010) underlines that the ability to work with others, express their ideas and negotiate, mediate conflicting situations and even compromise when necessary are crucial qualities for educational professionals.

8.2.1.3. Learning through professional development programmes

Teacher educators learn by *attending research-related professional development programmes* aimed at supporting their research expertise. A research record and active involvement in research are usually major requirements in the higher education recruitment process, particularly before gaining a tenure (Alhija & Majdob, 2017). To this end, Ana attended courses and workshops for Quantitative Research to enhance her research skills. During her PhD research, she struggled with Quantitative Data Analysis and therefore attended course sessions and workshops to expand her knowledge about quantitative research and data analysis. Similarly, Elisabeth had challenges with Qualitative Data Analysis and using NVivo for the data analysis of the collaborative research project, and she followed a similar path by attending workshops to learn more about the analysis and the software. Ana's and Elisabeth's experiences were different from the literature in that their attempts to improve their research skills were self-initiated. To improve participants' research skills, Lunenberg et al. (2011) developed a project to train teacher educators to research their practices. Their project consisted of four parts: (a) guided reflection, (b) information about research phases, (c) discussing and working on the individual self-study, and (d) paying attention to being part of a self-study community. Similarly, the writing support for the teacher educators in White et al. (2014) comprised individual writing coaching, regular writing workshops, seminars to present their research to their colleagues, and guidance to improve teacher educators' academic writing skills. Both Ana and Elisabeth recognised research as an important aspect of their professional role and emphasised that research was instrumental for their professional development. Like the teacher educators in Fowler et al. (2013), both participants had pursued situated learning opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of research and data analysis in education, and how data analysis software supported their data analysis practices. Ana and Elisabeth expressed that the most effective

way to improve their research skills was attending research seminars, courses, and workshops. In this respect, Loughran (2014) emphasized that being an active researcher is a crucial element of a teacher educator's learning trajectory. Therefore, formal, taught courses and specific research training can provide the structures to stimulate the wider reading of research articles and to develop a range of skills to support professional enquiry, as well as raising teacher educators' confidence to try things out experimentally (Harrison & McKeon, 2010). Like the scholarly activities of Wendy, a teacher educator from Harrison & McKeon (2010), pursuing research engagement and research training opportunities allowed Ana and Elisabeth to focus on their own research and improve their research skills and knowledge. As recommended by one of the respondents in Kyaw (2022), to boost teacher educators' research skills, the key teacher education authorities should acknowledge the need for technical support and opportunities for teacher educators to be more research-active by providing research methodology training and encouragement.

Teacher educators have also been found to learn by *attending educational professional development programmes* aimed at supporting specific aspects of their profession. At the beginning of 2020, most countries shut down schools and universities to reduce the incessant spread of COVID-19 since closing educational institutions was perceived a significant strategy for social and physical distancing among students and teachers (WHO, 2020). To navigate such crisis, the university Elisabeth worked at organised several remote training sessions about online teaching for their staff. These entailed conducting webinars and leaving the recordings on the platform for lecturers to re-visit. These workshops were influential in helping Elisabeth expand her technological knowledge by familiarising herself with tools such as Blackboard, Teams and Moodle. As a result of the abrupt university closures, Elisabeth felt that she was left "with no choice but to teach online, even if she did not feel properly prepared to do so or had little interest in online teaching" (Cutri et al., 2020, p. 523). Mediating the unprecedented pandemic circumstances in her professional life and work, Elisabeth had to navigate significantly intensified workloads as she worked not only to move teaching content and materials into the online space, but also to become sufficiently adept in navigating the requisite software to keep students engaged in learning (Allen et al., 2020) and these sessions were instrumental to help Elisabeth transition to online teaching.

8.3. Teacher Educators' Knowledge

The teacher educators in this inquiry engaged in professional learning activities that were conceptualised across the participants as research engagement and publishing, reflective practice, peer collaboration, attending professional development programmes, and transcultural communication. These learning experiences led to the acquisition of a variety of knowledge and skills which will be discussed under two main categories: knowledge for teaching and research knowledge.

8.3.1. Knowledge for Teaching

8.3.1.1. Personal Knowledge

Teacher educators enter the profession with tacit knowledge of teaching due to their experience as apprenticeship observers, and they draw on prior professional experiences as well as personal life experiences (Murray & Male, 2005). Ana, for instance, believed that witnessing her mom's illness and eventual death made her more sensitive to what other people might have gone through, and this realisation made her more empathic towards others. This understanding and empathy were also extended to her students such as the way she communicates with them and taking their interests and needs into account. Similarly, Elisabeth realised the necessity of preparation during her Model UN experience, which she believed was transferred to her philosophy of teaching. Elisabeth regarded prior preparation very highly and believed that when she felt prepared, she entered her classes feeling more confident and energised. These insights have been echoed by one of the teacher educators in Chitpin (2011), who stated, "finding out who I am as an individual and a teacher has influenced the ways I have delivered my courses" (p. 236). Teacher educators' life experiences lay the foundation for their teaching practice since this personal knowledge has ''the power to shape [teachers'] decisions, practices, and pedagogical choices'' (Goodwin, 2010, p. 23).

Another relevant aspect of teacher educators' personal knowledge was their engagement in curriculum design and adaptation due to the sudden shift to emergency online teaching. All three participants had to explore various online platforms to integrate into their online course delivery, re-design the curriculum, and adapt course materials to online teaching, which led to "a process of re-constructing a professional identity" (Bullock & Christou, 2009, p. 78). The shift to emergency online teaching also resulted in establishing new practical theories

resulting from the new teaching and learning environment. All the teacher educators in this study sought to immediately learn ways to adapt teaching and learning. Their immediate needs included up-skilling in new pedagogies (e.g., videoconferencing as the instruction delivery, online demonstration of practical pedagogical topics) associated with particular subject disciplines, adapting and/or developing course materials for online teaching, acquiring and/or developing online teaching and learning strategies (e.g., using break-out rooms for group activities, using different platforms to stay connected with students to share updates and to check on them), and reviewing their class management in online platforms. These processes provided the teacher educators with opportunities for "restructuring their cognitive maps with reformed and/or new understandings" (Richardson, 1998, p. 147) related to their teaching practices and student teachers' learning.

Finally, the disruption to teacher educators' established personal and professional routines due to COVID-19 resulted in a greater awareness of self-care. Both Ana and Elisabeth engaged in self-care routines to take care of their mental and physical health, such as meditation, yoga and going for walks. While Elisabeth reflected on the physical benefits of doing yoga as a result of sitting in front of the screen all day, Ana was more aware of the mental and emotional benefits of such practices. Both participants were aware of the connection between their personal and professional lives. They explicated the benefits of pursuing regular wellbeing practices on their professional performance and how they handled the pandemic. Being a teacher educator during the pandemic was a process of redefining the 'emotional geographies' (Hargreaves, 2001), marking the abrupt transition to online teaching for the teacher educators in this study. While the professional and personal challenges caused by the pandemic induced stress and anxiety, they also created opportunities for teacher educators to develop new professional and personal knowledge and skills as they adapted to, initiated, and facilitated changes. Signifying the importance of personal knowledge, Goodwin (2010) states that personal knowledge has "the power to shape [teachers'] decisions, practices, and pedagogical choices" (p. 23) since teacher educators draw on personal knowledge, prior experiences, the teacher preparation curriculum, and their teaching practices and eventually reconstruct these to form their meaning. As expressed by Jin et al. (2021), "to teach well, teachers need to be well and to be well, they need to be individually and systematically supported to enable them to flourish and teach to the best of their abilities" (p. 31).

8.3.1.2. Contextual Knowledge

The teacher educators in this study grew more aware of the impact of various contextual variables on their work and development. The first element of their contextual knowledge was their immediate environment, such as their classrooms and the student teachers. All three teacher educators increased their knowledge about how student teachers learn and how to teach them. As highlighted by Goodwin and Kosnik (2013), teacher educators' contextual knowledge starts with "knowledge of student teachers – who they are as adult learners, how they develop and grow, and how their histories and personal narratives shape the ways in which they perceive, define and do teaching" (p. 339). Related to this, the teacher educators increased their awareness of student teachers in their home settings during online and/or hybrid teaching as they were aware of how overwhelmed the student teachers were due to the unprecedented shift to emergency online teaching. They were knowledgeable about the challenges experienced by student teachers in their home settings, and they were weary of the negative impacts of remote teaching on student teachers' wellbeing, language proficiency, engagement, and overall learning. This led them to acquire anticipation skills about student teachers' behaviours within the online context and the potential challenges in advance and develop ways to mediate them.

Another relevant layer of teacher educators' contextual knowledge is their institutional context. A repeated theme for the teacher educators in this study was developing communication skills with colleagues and other stakeholders. All three teacher educators were aware of the importance of such communication skills since they collaborated with others through department and faculty meetings, research teams, and joint publications. Through experiencing challenges such as power dynamics, they developed communication and mediation skills with their colleagues and other stakeholders. Relevant to this, investigating the characteristics of a good teacher educator and their professional knowledge, Smith (2005) collected data from novice teachers and teacher educators. The findings show that one of the surprising points was the ability to communicate effectively. The participants expressed that a good teacher educator should have appropriate social skills to collaborate effectively with other educators and stakeholders. Similarly, in their study on teacher educator induction period, Patrizio et al. (2011) demonstrated that novice teacher educators emphasised familiarising themselves with their institutional culture and how to interact with

different actors in their departments. They underlined the skills to effectively communicate and collaborate with their colleagues as an essential component of the teacher education profession.

8.3.1.3. Sociological Knowledge

Sociological knowledge refers to diversity, cultural relevance, and social justice. The teacher educators in this study grew more aware of equity issues in online and/or hybrid teaching. As a result of the sudden shift to online teaching at the beginning of the pandemic, they were aware that most of the student teachers lacked a suitable environment in their home settings. The student teachers were stuck in their rooms, leading to concerns about their course engagement, learning, and wellbeing due to the blurry lines of work-life balance. As highlighted by Beaunoyer et al. (2020), limited access to technology, interrupted internet connectivity, and differences in student teachers' digital literacy potentiated concerns about digital inequality. Like the teachers in Ferdig et al. (2020), the teacher educators in this study grew more aware of the social realities impacting student teachers' mental and physical health during the pandemic. Therefore, the participants grew more aware of the need to create meaningful learning experiences to address the complexities created by the pandemic. They addressed these issues by offering flexible deadlines and removing penalties for late submissions. Moreover, all three participants prioritised developing student teachers' autonomy to address inequity concerns. Like Ducan and Barnett (2009), one common strategy was providing the student teachers with flexibility for self-pace learning, for instance, by making all the coursework available on Moodle before and after the classes, recording lessons and uploading them to Moodle so student teachers could re-visit them and complete coursework in ways that are suitable for their home circumstances. The teacher educators in this study also used break-out rooms effectively to divide the student teachers into smaller teams for collaborative tasks (Biasutti & EL-Deghaidy, 2014) and to encourage more active participation and meaningful engagement (Gikandi & Morrow, 2016). In addition to their flexibility with assignment deadlines, the awareness of the participants about social justice was manifested through participants readjusting the assignments to suit the student teachers with limited internet access and reduce their stress.

8.3.1.4. Social Knowledge

Social knowledge of cooperative, democratic group processes and conflict resolution refers to "the ability to participate effectively in democratic, cooperative groups is essential to teachers who are going to exert leadership in the field" (Goodwin, 2010, p. 27). Teacher educators need to be proficient at interacting with colleagues and stakeholders by mediating the different dynamics at work with each interaction. The teacher educators in this study needed to mediate challenging power dynamics during collaborative activities such as engagement in research teams and collaborative publication processes. Despite being challenging at times, these experiences enabled the participants to realise that creating a safe environment where teacher educators' voices are heard and considered allows for more efficient collaborations with a greater exchange of ideas and practices. Moreover, the teacher educators in this study raised their awareness of socio-political debates in teacher education, such as the agendas of teacher education programs and theoretical and political debates about quality teacher education practices. Notably, in Ana's case, she was very keen on updating her knowledge and practice related to CLIL in Spain and Europe. Attending symposiums and doing regular readings enabled Ana to increase her knowledge, be more critical of contemporary CLIL practices, and raise these issues to student teachers in her methodology classes. A significant point for all three teacher educators in this study was that they were aware of the socio-political impacts of the pandemic on student teachers and teacher education, such as issues of inequity. They were aware of how stressed the student teachers were and acted accordingly (such as being flexible with deadlines). Moreover, the abrupt shift to online teaching gave the participants the space "to exercise professional judgement about curricular content and instruction" (Goodwin, 2010, p. 27). Despite having institutional guidelines, the participants had opportunities for increased participation and meaningful decision-making for online and hybrid education. In addition to acquiring such social skills, teacher educators are expected to be "equally skilful at sharing this skill with students" (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013, p. 342). In Elisabeth's case, this was manifested through a collaborative student project with a department in the USA. Elisabeth considered this project as a great opportunity to enhance student teachers' intercultural competence and facilitatate a collective planning and decision-making process.

8.3.1.5. Pedagogical Knowledge

Pedagogical knowledge refers to teacher educators' ability to explore a situation, critically assess learners' needs, and develop appropriate pedagogies in addition to adapting the existing materials according to students' specific contextual, academic, or personal needs. COVID-19 required teacher educators to learn more than just ICT skills; they were required to learn how to innovate and create engaging online learning experiences for their students (OECD, 2020; Peno, 2021). Moreover, they had to be familiar with different online teaching modes, whether synchronous, asynchronous, or blended learning (Ching & Roberts, 2020). The participants were highly overwhelmed with the emergency transition to online teaching at the beginning of the pandemic. However, they quickly adapted and started exploring technological tools and ways of adapting their work to the new reality. All the teacher educators in this inquiry explored and used various new instructional technology tools and platforms. One relevant skill was using educational software in instructional designs. All the participants learned new technological tools to use in their classes, which entailed adapting all the course materials to online platforms, uploading these online files to Moodle for students, and integrating new tools into their teaching practices. Despite the initial feelings of pedagogical discomfort, they needed to reconfigure pre-pandemic online teaching practices and develop new technological skills. Regarding their experiences with educational software in instructional design, the participants in this study used Moodle, Padlet, Zoom, and Collaborate, sent regular emails, and created a Teams page for all the groups they were teaching for contact and updates. The teachers in Sari & Keser (2021) explained that they mediated online teaching with the help of Web 2.0 tools. They shared activities by setting up Blogs and Web pages, organized quizzes, and integrated them into lessons through programs such as Kahoot!

Another relevant skill was integrating technology and subject field lessons. Elisabeth explored different technological tools to integrate into her teaching, particularly for the practical demonstrations of the methodology classes. She learned how to prepare online flashcards and worksheets to demonstrate teaching skills and explored new online matching games and Kahoot to use for teaching concepts to students and demonstrate how to effectively use them. Through using web-based tools, Elisabeth increased her awareness of different ICT tools and platforms and updated her technological skills by integrating these tools into her

practice and reflecting on her classes. Considering the integration of technology and subject area lessons, most of the teachers in Sari and Keser (2021) expressed that they used Web-based educational tools. Among these tools are videos available in environments such as Okulistik, Morpa Kampus and EBA. It was stated that the videos available on these Web-based educational environments were used through screen share, and the students watched these videos to teach subjects and concepts during the lessons.

With the abrupt shift to online education, the participants had to adjust the curriculum and adapt the instructional materials to the new online teaching and learning environment. Elisabeth was very concerned that electronic content preparation would be very time-consuming, but she eventually adapted all the lesson materials and activities for online teaching since she immediately realised that this was going to be more efficient because all these tools and resources would be there for her to use in the future. Her ICT skills and knowledge, the curriculum requirements, and the expectations and challenges of the student teachers underlined these adaptations. When necessary, she also made use of ready materials such as online flashcards, worksheets, and visuals on the Internet. Despite being overwhelmed with the panacea of online materials, Elisabeth chose materials and adapted where necessary depending on curriculum goals, students' interests and needs. Most of the teachers in Sari and Keser (2021) used the ready materials available on the Internet. These materials were mostly videos, PowerPoint presentations, and photographs related to the subjects. While three of the teachers stated that they were competent in preparing materials suitable for the subjects, two of the teachers indicated that they did not prepare and use materials during online education. Such adaptations entailed technology integration into their teaching, often guided by an intuitive understanding of the complex interplay between the three essential components of knowledge (CK, PK, TK) (Baran et al., 2011). TPACK is the knowledge of the use of technology in various subjects and practising teaching methods. This knowledge makes the learning of the subject for the students easier with appropriate pedagogy and technology (Koehler & Mishra, 2009; Schmidt et al., 2009). It is aimed to go beyond techno-centrism to help teachers with creative thinking. This will be possible with the practice of TPACK, the process of curriculum sample which will reflect teachers' experiences to be more professional and newer dimension to technology for educational purposes (Mishra et al, 2012, p. 4). Similarly, to promote student learning, all the participants started

recording classes hoping that it would help student learning. They believed that the lesson recordings provided an opportunity for the students to go back and review the lesson content over and over, which hopefully would improve their learning. However, particularly Elisabeth was also careful about the amount of support she gave to the students since she was also well aware that students needed to be autonomous and take the initiative for their learning and the challenges they had encountered. The Covid-19 pandemic and its subsequent lockdown phases, therefore, spurred the need for focusing beyond routines and understanding teacher educators' role(s) as active and creative agents, negotiators and integrators of digital and pedagogical resources into meaningful teaching and learning practices.

Realising the challenges experienced by the student teachers, the teacher educators developed new strategies to motivate students and encourage their engagement in an online setting. This entailed being competent in time management, eliminating discipline problems and enhancing teacher-student and student-student interactions during classroom management. The participants needed help with classroom management during online teaching. During the course activities, they had to ask them to turn on their cameras and address them and/or each other face-to-face. Since they had to take turns talking, sometimes, students asked questions or for clarifications, which slowed the classes down, and other students might have gotten distracted by their phones. They mediated this challenge by constantly reminding the students to put pictures on their profiles since they still needed to meet some students in person. They tried to get to know the students and build a good rapport with them to keep them engaged. In a study conducted in a Russian higher education context with eighty-seven university teachers, Almazova et al. (2020) found that teachers perceived online teaching as different from conventional ways of teaching. They agreed that electronic content preparation was very time-consuming and that the lack of digital literacy, interaction with students, and inability to adapt collaborative teaching methods to online teaching were the main obstacles. According to the participants in this study, the students had sufficient knowledge and skills to perform the tasks appropriately on the online platforms; however, they needed help meeting the course datelines.

Another skill was emphasizing formative rather than summative assessment to address inequity issues stemming from the online teaching and learning context. All the teacher educators in this study illustrated an awareness that online teaching necessitates a specific

set of technological skills and competencies beyond basic pedagogic and linguistic knowledge (Colpitts et al., 2020; Hakim, 2020; Quezada et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020). As shown in Elisabeth's case, her commitment to humanizing the pedagogy stems from her acknowledgement that teacher educators should be aware of the social realities of society and cognizant of the issues of power, inequity, and representation (Freire, 1998). All three participants appreciated the experience students brought to class while understanding their learning over online teaching during the pandemic as a socio-cultural process (Moll et al., 1992). Like the teachers in Shelton et al. (2021), all the participants in this study were observant of the realities around students' mental and physical health and aimed to support them accordingly, particularly at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some students had to return to their hometowns, while others got stuck in their dormitory rooms. All the participants were conscious of the challenges the students were experiencing after the abrupt shift to online teaching.

Overall, the teacher educators in this study abruptly entered a context of social and technological change relying on a respectful, collaborative practice with their colleagues and students. The participants took from these experiences a 'pedagogy of hope' (Freire & Freire, 2004) that they can improve their teaching through active collaboration and dialogue between teacher educators, irrespective of the challenging times that contextualize their professional learning. Like the teacher educators in Auld et al. (2013), the participants in this study were also able to open up conversations about significant issues in teacher education that went beyond their immediate teaching context, and that posed questions critical to teacher educators more broadly. Moreover, they also exhibited agency and resilience (as part of their expertise) to address the challenges and refine their pedagogical and technological expertise "at the edge of chaos" (Larsen-Freeman, 2007, p. 57). These findings also reflect the notion of adaptive expertise (Hayden et al., 2013), which enabled the participants to agentively and reflectively identify and tackle roadblocks in their professional work, thus moving their expertise system to a new level.

8.3.2. Research knowledge

Research knowledge refers to "knowledge *of* research" (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2014, p. 340), teacher educators' research expertise and capacity to conduct research and comprises the

theoretical and methodological knowledge of research methodology, methods, and data analysis (Ping et al., 2018). The teacher educators in this inquiry engaged in collaborative self-study and action research where they developed a research methodology, collected, and analysed data and reported findings. Systematically studying their practices and contexts allowed them to deepen their research knowledge and expertise, gain more knowledge about teacher education, and gain credibility as academic scholars. As in Ana and Elisabeth's cases, the participants expanded their research design and data analysis knowledge. Through consulting the literature and getting involved in collaborative research teams, they learned about different data analysis possibilities and data analysis software. They also needed to improve their research skills in writing the research methodology and reporting the findings. Moreover, through their joint publication processes, they learned how to start writing for a publication and adapt their writing for different journals. Czerniawski et al. (2017) found that their participants needed to improve their research skills, particularly in academic writing, research methodology and data collection methods, research ethics, and data analysis. They needed guidance about how to conduct research and develop a research profile, how to access research opportunities, how to disseminate their research, how to write for the 'right' journals, how to integrate research findings and implications into their teaching.

8.4. The mediating factors impacting EFL teacher educators' learning experiences

Teacher educators' learning should be examined by situating their experiences within their life histories, identities, skills, values, and dispositions (Czerniawski, 2013; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Kosnik et al., 2015). Identifying such influencing factors is the first step toward forming compelling opportunities for teacher educators' personal and professional development (MacPhail et al., 2019). Therefore, it is imperative to investigate the difficulties in their practices, the obstacles that inhibit their professional development, and the kind of support they need. The mediating factors that impacted teacher educators' learning experiences in this study will be discussed under four main titles: contextual elements, teacher educators' cognitions, (lack of) collaboration, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

8.4.1. Macro-level Contextual Elements

8.4.1.1. National/Institutional Standards

The macro-level contextual elements that impacted the teacher educators in this study are the availability of a frame of reference in the form of national/institutional standards and the Covid-19 pandemic. The first category was manifested as the presence of professional standards that the teacher educators needed to accomplish. The teacher educators in this study pursued postgraduate degrees as entry regulations in terms of required qualifications and/or went through an accreditation process to keep their posts. This was because their institutions had specific measures, such as formal education to become a teacher educator, pursuing a PhD degree being one of the selection criteria for entry into the profession (Snoek et al., 2011), and getting accredited to keep their posts, specifically in Ana's case. These two measures were a reference point to understand the participants' complex work and support their professional development. Having such standards offered an understanding into the complex nature of teacher educators' work and served as a knowledge base and trajectory of professional development for them.

On the other hand, pursuing PhD degrees due to external requirements, in a way, being compelled to do so, led to their first challenge since they experienced self-doubt and lack of self-confidence about whether they would be able to successfully complete their degrees in the first place. Struggling with a lack of research knowledge and having difficulties with academic writing skills added fuel to their challenges. Being involved in a professional development activity (pursuing postgraduate degrees) due to institutional requirements (controlled external motivation) resulted in insecurities and frustration. However, this controlled external motivation was changed into a more autonomous (or self-determined) form of extrinsic motivation through identification. Here, the teacher educators identified with the personal importance of a behaviour (e.g., obtaining a PhD degree and getting accredited) and thus accepted its regulation as their own (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Through the process of identified regulation, the teacher educators consciously identified with, or personally endorsed, the value of getting a PhD degree and thus experienced a relatively high degree of volition or willingness to act (Ryan & Deci, 2020). As a result, they responded to these challenges by taking action to improve their research knowledge and skills and academic writing. Moreover, over time they started perceiving the positive effects of pursuing

a PhD degree and the research projects they conducted (e.g., noticing their improved research knowledge, advancing in academic writing, perceiving positive impacts on their teaching practices), which positively impacted their self-esteem, self-efficacy, and enthusiasm for their research and work. Another significant motivator was that the teacher educators in this study perceived pursuing a PhD degree as an opportunity to continue their professional development. Like the teacher educators in Tack and Vanderline (2014), they conducted research in their respective fields of teacher education, explicitly focusing on generating academic knowledge through PhD trajectories, and this was regarded as a crucial way to meet the expressed need to build research capacity and to improve academic status amongst teacher educators in academia. The discussion on the availability of a frame of reference for teacher educators demonstrates that the EFL teacher educators needed to advance their education to fulfil external requirements and expectations while they were also motivated to further their education and knowledge. This finding is in line with Yuan et al.'s (2020) review of university based TESOL teacher educators in different contexts. The authors highlight that most language teacher educators were externally motivated to pursue such degrees due to institutional expectations or requirements while they were also committed to advancing their professional learning since they perceived these degrees "as a crucial way to top up their knowledge and skills for educating language teachers" (p. 439). Finally, PhD studies also appeared to be a significant source for teacher educators to acquire research knowledge and experience, which will be discussed in the section on meso-level contextual elements.

8.4.1.2. The Covid-19 Pandemic

Lockdowns and social distancing measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to the closures of schools and higher education facilities in Spain. In the rapidly changing educational landscape due to the pandemic, the teacher educators in this study found themselves in a situation they were not prepared for. The immediate impact of the pandemic on teaching was the paradigm shift in how teacher educators delivered quality education. A clear impression was that the participants had to reconsider their pedagogical principles and delivery. Therefore, they sought to immediately learn ways to adapt their teaching to cover all curriculum areas. They were specific about their learning needs regarding online pedagogy and its delivery. Their immediate needs included up-skilling in new pedagogies (e.g.,

videoconferencing as the instruction delivery, online demonstration of practical pedagogical topics) associated with particular subject disciplines, adapting and/or developing course materials for online teaching, acquiring and/or developing online teaching and learning strategies (e.g., using break-out rooms for group activities, using different platforms to stay connected with students to share updates and to check on them), and reviewing their class management in online platforms. While trying their best to adapt to the sudden shifts happening in their professional landscapes, these professional challenges were heightened by changes in teacher educators' personal circumstances (e.g., the blurry lines of work-life balance due to working from home, home-schooling their kids, concerns about their families' health). However, while these professional and personal challenges induced stress and anxiety, they also created opportunities for teacher educators to develop new professional and personal knowledge and skills as they adapted to, initiated, and facilitated changes.

While online education became a panacea for the global pandemic thanks to the available platforms and online educational tools for educational professionals, it also created several challenges due to the problems while using or referring to these technology tools. The first challenge was effectively adapting the courses and teaching materials to online platforms, focusing on issues such as the availability of resources, ways of interacting with the students, and pedagogical decisions. The process was even more demanding for practice-based activities in the pedagogical courses, such as teaching demonstrations. There were no specific recommendations for the teacher educators on dealing with these practical aspects since their institutions made general recommendations pointing to the importance of maintaining the interaction with the student teachers and teaching online while making the necessary adjustments in pedagogy and assessment. Teacher educators also encountered challenges in the form of institutional restrictions on the online tools they could use for online teaching. There was also a need for more support from the university administration, as in Elisabeth's case, where many hiccups occurred during the training day for hybrid teaching. Judd et al. (2020) drew attention to the negative impact of the lack of mentoring and support on online education. The authors also highlighted challenges such as insufficient planning time, limited real-time student feedback, and limited resources at home. Research on the unexpected, abrupt transition from face-to-face to online education revealed other challenges for educational professionals, such as inadequate online teaching infrastructure, educators'

inexperience and/or lack of technology knowledge, and the complex home environment (Zhang et al., 2020).

One of the preliminary studies about teacher educators' experiences and perceptions of online education at the beginning of the pandemic was by Kidd and Murray (2020). Their participants frequently mentioned "the blurring of work-home boundaries', 'longer working hours', a sense of 'constant availability' with students and colleagues, feelings of 'cognitive overloading', and 'brain buzzing adrenaline'" (p. 548). Despite the challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic also created several opportunities for educational practitioners. Teacher educators were prompted to actively collaborate to overcome the limitations of virtual teaching and improve online teaching methods. Their institutions created initiatives and provided them with opportunities and materials for cooperation, creative solutions, and willingness to learn from others (Doucet et al., 2020). As Pokhrel and Chhetri (2021) highlighted, the immediate need for emergency remote teaching forced teacher educators to use the numerous professional development opportunities provided by their institutions. Moreover, many educational organisations offered their tools and solutions for free to help and support teaching and learning in a more interactive and engaging environment. Online education also provided opportunities to teach and learn innovatively, unlike the teaching and learning experiences in the typical classroom setting. The teacher educators in this study also disclosed that despite the blurry lines between work and life balance at times, online teaching also offered the convenience of working from home without worrying about their health and the time to travel to work. This finding is in line with Tarrayo et al. (2021), who echoed the convenience of working from home. The authors explored how English language teachers in a Philippine state university engaged themselves in the sudden shift to online/remote learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants stated that online education provided them with the convenience of working from home without worrying about contracting/spreading the virus and time and money for travel to go to their workplace. However, it is necessary to add that time was described as a double-edged sword by the teacher educators in this study. Similarly, in his study exploring the impact of the sudden shift to online education, Todd (2020) collected data from fifty-two English language teachers at a Thai university through a survey study. The findings revealed two main issues related to time concerns expressed by the participants: time spent communicating with students and time

spent checking assignments. The teacher educators in this study, particularly Carolina, expressed that they received more requests for online meetings during the pandemic when the physical boundaries of work and life became blurred. Moreover, at the very beginning of the pandemic, the teacher educators in this study had serious time concerns about whether they would be able to successfully transfer course materials to online platforms and adapt to remote education. Similarly, concerns about the time and energy required for the preparation and delivery of online education by English teachers were highlighted by other studies in the literature (Andrei, 2016; Manlapaz, 2020).

Another relevant theme to the teacher educators' teaching experiences during the pandemic was hybrid teaching. An initial challenge was their perceptions regarding the safety of the classroom environment. After the universities decided to continue with the hybrid teaching mode in the summer of 2020, the participants experienced some anxiety about going back to in-person teaching since they feared contracting COVID-19 during instructional delivery. All the teacher educators were, therefore, conscientious about social distancing in the classrooms. They avoided using paper materials as much as possible, constantly asked the students to wear their masks, and were strict with social distancing in the classrooms. These findings show that the teacher educators in this study experienced modest anxiety since they perceived the classroom environment as unsafe during instructional delivery during the pandemic. This concurs with findings from similar studies (Oducado et al., 2021; Quansah et al., 2022) where teachers feared getting infected with COVID-19 and felt uncomfortable within the teaching and learning settings. However, the teacher educators in this study mediated these fears by adopting active coping strategies and taking control. They put in efforts (such as social distancing, washing of hands, and use of hand sanitisers in the classrooms) towards preventing virus infection. Notably, in Ana's case, her institution put in interventions in the form of a compulsory workshop for staff that aimed to improve their adaptive coping resilience to promote well-being, as stressed by Wang et al. (2020).

The perception of the working environment in classrooms and educational institutions as unsafe during the pandemic highlighted the critical role of supportive working environments for teacher educators' mental and psychological wellness (Quansah et al., 2022). Since the pandemic seems to continue, teachers need to be creative and develop strategies to mediate the physical and psychological reactions, such as anxiety and stress during the pandemic.

Therefore, creating a safe and comfortable work environment for teacher educators through safety protocols, opportunities to connect with others, and support systems was instrumental in helping them conduct their duties diligently and be happy with their work. Another challenge the teacher educators faced was planning and delivering hybrid teaching. The teacher educators planned the semester for synchronous learning moments that worked for students on campus and attending remotely from their homes. They used videoconferencing technologies to connect the students in a shared social experience. They were cognizant of preparing teaching materials and activities for student teachers to actively participate and interact with each other. They believed hybrid courses needed to be planned for student teachers' engagement and asynchronous interaction. Moreover, integrating technologies in communication and collaborative activities required reconsidering lesson sequence and focusing on supporting transitions during the classes. This conforms to the experiences of the teacher educators in Creely et al. (2022), who found it most helpful to think about the locus of control and mediation as critical structural aspects in their lesson planning and design.

Teacher educators' professional development practices were another aspect of their work impacted by the pandemic. Due to the national lockdowns and travel restrictions, an immediate impact was the cancelled conferences and professional development events. Organisations and institutions responded to this abrupt change by transferring events to online platforms where possible; however, some events were postponed for an unforeseen period. While causing severe disruptions, this unprecedented pandemic also led to new learning opportunities. Teacher educators began to seek out resources actively (e.g., research articles in journals, books, and videos) to learn about design principles for online teaching and learning and to research the effectiveness of various strategies for promoting collaboration and productive disciplinary discourse in synchronous online environments (Superfine, 2020). Another learning opportunity was manifested in the form of bottom-up professional learning communities (PLCs) that emerged from the teacher educators, with entire departments becoming communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). The immediate need for emergency remote teaching forced teacher educators to consume the numerous professional development opportunities provided by their institutions within/outside their institutions. The teacher educators attended in-house training sessions and remote professional

development events, engaging in dialogues about how to continue higher education during the pandemic. Within the PLCs, they were involved in conversations and actions about the nature and direction of their coursework within the current situation with colleagues and student teachers. At a time when they were restricted to their homes, the teacher educators also managed to get involved in informal online communities and networks, which offered them the possibility of voluntarily engaging in shared learning, reflecting on teaching practices, and receiving emotional support, particularly about emergency online teaching. Macia & Garcia (2016) highlighted that bottom-up online communities and networks seemed to be an essential source of professional development and emotional support during the pandemic. Networking played a significant role in responding to Covid-19 since it provided opportunities to "prioritise collaboration and working in partnerships; stimulate multi-sectoral collaboration (education, health, social and community, among others); facilitate peer-learning (which includes sharing experience, information, challenges, ideas, solutions, and lessons learned); and strengthen communities of practice for teachers" (UNESCO, 2020, p. 28). In pursuing their shared interest in times of distress, they built relationships that enabled them to learn with and from each other. Despite having technical issues during some workshops, collaboration, solidarity, and empathy among the members of PLCs were identified as significant elements that motivated the teacher educators (Whitcomb et al., 2009). These elements created a suitable environment for teacher educators to stay connected to colleagues, try out new practices, and increase their knowledge and skills. Ironically, a time of social distancing and quarantine generated increased collaboration, joint learning, and mutual help. Azorin (2020) stated that networking and teacher collaboration was essential to the collective response to COVID-19 in Spain. Like the other levels of the Spanish education system, Spanish higher education put initiatives in place to ease the disruption caused by the pandemic. Azorin draws attention to the fact that teachers in Spain do not have a collaborative culture, which was a challenge for the educational responses needed to deal with COVID-19.

Teacher educators' research practices were another aspect that was impacted by the pandemic. The participants were already involved in research teams, planning and/or conducting research and working on joint publications with their colleagues during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This unexpected situation disrupted their research

practices by limiting their abilities to conduct educational research in school and university classrooms. In Elisabeth's case, the research team abruptly stopped data collection due to the national lockdown. However, this situation did not mean the team paused their research activities. Instead, this allowed them to align their ongoing research practices (Superfine, 2020). Due to the unexpected physical distance, the teacher educators needed to change how they worked with their colleagues. They mediated their collaborative processes by recreating communication spaces via online platforms (Zoom meetings, WhatsApp chats/calls), sharing article drafts and their feedback via emails, and having follow-up online meetings to discuss the following steps to take. The new way of communication led teacher educators to make sense of this new environment and construct new ways of acting and interacting with each other to develop new knowledge (Martinez & Stager, 2013) and successfully survive their circumstances. Moore (2016) has already predicted the challenges in the online work format as a factor that increased transactional distance. The participants put efforts into using multiple platforms to decrease the transactional distance with their colleagues. Within the survival mode of teaching and work, they were required to be comfortable with continuous learning and iteration.

8.4.2. Meso-level Contextual Elements

8.4.2.1. Teacher Educators' Institutional Contexts

Institutional contexts, such as departmental atmosphere and institutional resources, where teacher educators are embedded in, facilitate, or constrict various aspects of teacher educators' work and practices (Hwang, 2014; Smith, 2003). This trend is particularly valid considering the paucity of coherent policies on teacher educators' professional learning and development. Therefore, while teacher educators' motivation and agency play a vital part in their professional development (Berry, 2016; Smith, 2003), their professional development, to a great extent, depends on "chance, goodwill, and support from the teacher education institution" (Tack & Vanderline, 2018, p. 89).

A vital element of the institutional context for the teacher educators in this study was participation in departmental professional networks, which seemed to be a common practice and was seen by the participants as a strong drive for improving professionalism. Elisabeth, for instance, had collaborative opportunities in her department and faculty, such as team

teaching for over two years and working on a joint publication with two of her colleagues and attending faculty research meetings to explore potential research collaborations. However, it is striking that Ana mainly referred to national conferences and international collaboration opportunities, such as participation in international research stays, where she managed to build an external professional network both on national and international levels. It seems that participation for Ana was primarily perceived as formal participation outside her work setting (e.g., attending national and international scale conferences and doing three international research stays so far). Azorin (2020) drew attention to the Talis (2018) report, which revealed that within the European context, Spanish teachers were found to collaborate the least, mostly working in isolation. In comparison to the average 40 per cent in OECD countries, only 24 per cent of Spanish teachers reported that they engage in collaborative groups for lesson planning or sharing teaching resources (ibid.). However, despite feeling challenged by her department's individualistic nature, Ana took the initiative and approached her colleagues to form collaborations. She started regular chats with an English colleague to improve her English and completed and submitted a joint publication with a more experienced colleague. Although the lack of collaborative opportunities seemed a challenge for Ana, she mediated this situation by self-initiating collaborative opportunities in her department and exploring networks and PD events beyond her department. As suggested by Boei et al. (2015), "becoming a teacher educator also includes becoming familiar with the broader world of teacher educators and teacher education, knowing what networks there are and being able to make a relevant and informed choice about which networks to join" (p. 355). As in Ana's case, the lack of professional collaboration opportunities in her department, which she perceived to be a challenge at the beginning, led to new learning opportunities as she was pushed to explore new collaboration opportunities and expand her professional network.

Another influential aspect of the institutional context for the teacher educators in this study was related to their research practices. Even though being research active was not officially a part of their job remit, the teacher educators perceived research as a necessary element of their work. They considered research to improve their teaching practice (Elisabeth's action research with her colleagues), to improve their CVs (specifically Ana and Elisabeth were working towards professional accreditations to advance their academic titles) and were

motivated by the pedagogical implications of their research for the wider community (the implications of their postgraduate research for the schools in Madrid and Castilla-la Mancha). Regarding the participants' motivations, the institutional requirements to achieve professionalism merged with their personal aspirations. In this respect, a growing body of publications (Livingston et al., 2009; Lunenberg et al., 2007; Menter & Murray, 2009; Willemse & Boei, 2013) highly stresses the teacher educators' active engagement in research and being a teacher educator-researcher. Similarly, research was considered essential for their professional development, to enhance their classroom teaching, and contribute to the profession's knowledge base for the teacher educators in this study.

In addition to conducting research, publications are considered a crucial strategy to gain recognition and influence policies. Regarding the desire to publish research and/or write for publication, there were two distinct levels for the teacher educators in this study. While they expressed their desire to start working towards publications and to receive guidance on how to generate research ideas and appropriate research methodologies (as in Carolina's case), they also had some experience in publishing, implying the need to increase their publication rate and produce higher quality publications, such as publishing in peer-reviewed journals, and consider how to write for different audiences (as in Ana's and Elisabeth's cases). Similarly, most teacher educators in Guberman et al. (2021) expressed a positive disposition towards research, stating that research helps enhance their teaching and knowledge base. Being involved in research and publishing in peer-reviewed journals in English was perceived as a decisive factor in promotion and a prerequisite for professional recognition for the teacher educators in this study. However, regardless of their motivations, all the participants needed to mediate some hindering elements, such as disagreements with colleagues during joint publication processes, challenging power dynamics within research teams, and balancing heavy workloads. Not surprisingly, the teacher educators in this study consistently expressed time as a necessary professional learning need for them. Academic engagement, such as reading the literature, conducting research, academic writing, and thinking, was the most frequently identified tasks requiring more time. However, they welcomed these challenges and learned about better time management, communicating their ideas, expressing their voices, and agreeing and disagreeing with colleagues. A note-worthy contributing factor was collaborating with (experienced) colleagues since it seemed to help the participants about

how best to address the professional learning need of publishing research. Concerning mentoring, one teacher educator in Czerniawski et al. (2017) echoed this and suggested the "allocation of a mentor to help support and advise from a research background" (p. 136). Although the teacher educators in this study were not systemically allocated a mentor, they still voiced a desire for collaboration and assistance. Therefore, they self-initiated and created such partnerships by joining research teams or collaborating with more experienced colleagues in and out of their departments. Disseminating research findings in the form of publications, the pedagogical implications of their research to the broader community, the opportunity to collaborate with more experienced researchers and networking with like-minded researchers were the contributing elements that motivated them. These experiences illustrated that developing teacher educators' 'researcherly disposition' (Tack & Vanderlinde, 2014) required them to conduct research and/or study their practice and disseminate their research through publications. Furthermore, this 'researcherly disposition' required teacher educators to possess methodological expertise and theoretical knowledge about educational research and teacher education.

Another element of the institutional context highlighted by the teacher educators in this study was the competitive nature of academia. Ana reflected on the accreditation process, which entailed a long and tiring process of putting a large file together, where her academic performance was assessed through the quantity and quality of articles published in international peer-reviewed journals, the amount of teaching she had completed, the student-feedback evaluation forms, and the international stay-abroad visits she had made. Without meeting the prescribed standards, Ana faced the risk of contract termination (Yuan, 2016), which was a significant stressor for her. Influenced by the managerialism and the accountability culture in higher education contexts (Deem, 2020), she experienced immense pressure in her research and publishing processes leading up to the accreditation process. Ana suffered from the tiring process, the conflicting comments from her colleagues, and the fears about losing her job. Elisabeth was also in pursuit of research productivity. She had already planned the academic year where she was assigned classes and had previous research projects/publications to work on at the beginning of the semester. However, she shared that other research and/or publication opportunities emerged later during the term (a collaborative research project and invitations to faculty research meetings), which she

decided to accept, and she ended up taking on more research than she had initially planned. As a result, she was faced with working overtime and risking poor work-life balance in preparation for the academic promotions in her department. Against such challenges, as highlighted by previous research (Hoökkaö et al., 2012; Hwang, 2014; Yuan, 2016), the teacher educators mediated these challenges by taking agentic actions to pursue continuing professional development. They managed that by their ability to take decisions, self-regulate, and as a result, follow their goals in complex social contexts. The participants' agency was achieved through "the interplay of individual efforts, available resources, contextual and structural factors" (Biesta & Tedder, 2007, p. 137).

Power dynamics were also prevalent within the collaborations the teacher educators engaged in. Ana worked on a joint publication with a more experienced colleague, and Elisabeth was part of a research team of more experienced researchers. On the one hand, working with more experienced colleagues provided them with many learning opportunities; on the other hand, it created various challenges for them. For instance, when faced with disagreements, the participants felt hesitant to disagree and refrained from expressing their opinions and suggestions. In addition, particularly in Elisabeth's case, where she led the team for the data analysis aspect of the project, she needed to search for ways of sharing her suggestions and making recommendations to the team to avoid stepping on toes. These challenges created opportunities to learn how to set boundaries, disagree kindly, and express their voice. This finding is in line with research on teacher educators, which shows that they performed agency while negotiating their self-understanding as professionals. This act of positioning their professional identity about their colleagues and the broader work community entailed expressing, negotiating, and constructing their identity within the professional community (Hwang, 2014) and impacted the teacher educators' professional agency (Kayi-Aydar, 2015). To illustrate, the teacher educators in this study made decisions about how to present themselves in their exchanges with others by "critically shape(ing) their own responsiveness" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 971 as cited in Green & Pappa, 2021, p. 553) to their colleagues' responses and recommendations. This agentic action entailed trusting themselves, expressing their voice, and setting boundaries with others where necessary. Like the Finnish EFL teacher educators in Green and Pappa (2021), the teacher educators in this study demonstrated agency through their ability to express themselves and influence the decision-making

processes of these shared work practices, which ultimately led to a positive transformation of these collaborative processes.

8.4.2.2. Collaboration

The teacher educators in this study learned from and with colleagues in daily practice within teams and/or in their departments. They learned through participating in joint publications, informal chats with colleagues about future research collaborations, informal talks with English-native-speaking colleagues, and engaging in reflective conversations after co-teaching with colleagues. Research on teacher educators' learning and development revealed that most teacher educators had been involved in informal workplace learning, learning from colleagues in their daily practice (Murray, 2008; Harrison & McKeon, 2010; Van Velzen et al., 2010). This indicates that these informal learning experiences are rarely organised systematically, and that teacher educators' learning quality depends on the learning opportunities available in the workplace. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the workplace context and the factors impacting these learning experiences.

As contributing factors, the participants indicated a solid mutual professional and personal relationship with their colleagues, mutual respect, and the confidence and encouragement they received from their colleagues. They emphasised the importance of research collaborations for their professional development. These collaborative opportunities created the space to interact with and learn from more experienced teacher educators and receive mentoring from them. The teacher educators' emphasis on the importance of collaboration also aligns with the literature describing conducting research within 'communities of inquiry' (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Murray et al., 2009). One of the teacher educators in Willemse and Boei (2013) argued for collaborations between departments and even other teacher education institutions since teacher educators

> now all have [their] own concept of what research is and how [they] prepare student teachers for their task of inquiry. However, if [they] collaborate and share [their] ideas and experiences, [they] can improve [their] knowledge on research and develop a shared language by which [they] can better prepare students (p. 365).

According to the teacher educators in this study, collaboration with their colleagues created a shared space and understanding for research and teacher education. Moreover, the support of colleagues, particularly more experienced colleagues (Ana's joint publication with an experienced colleague and Elisabeth's research team experience with more experienced researchers), played a critical role in the participants' learning processes. In their longitudinal research on the emerging professional identities of five novice teacher educators, Harrison and McKeon (2008) demonstrated that lack of collaborative work was reported as a barrier in their professional learning, particularly in these early stages of their careers and learning conversations with colleagues were stated as a crucial facilitator. Similar to the Finnish teacher educators in Maaranen et al. (2019), the help of experienced colleagues for research projects and joint publication processes was remarkably outstanding for the professional development of teacher educators in this study since the existence of a more experienced colleague within such collaborations seemed to positively contribute to their experiences (Murray et al., 2009).

Although the teacher educators in this study had a motivation for learning with and from colleagues and becoming part of a learning community of like-minded individuals, they also encountered challenges, such as tensions stemming from disagreements with colleagues and some power struggles. Although they felt uncomfortable and challenged, they mediated this process by voicing their concerns, expressing their suggestions and ideas, and setting boundaries. As highlighted by Banegas (2022), through mentoring of more experienced colleagues, teacher educators constructed their conceptual and practical professional repertoire, which propelled them to exercise agency to reflect and act on a set of issues. In turn, this increased agency positively impacted their emotional well-being and professional identity as competent teacher educators.

8.4.2.3. Participation in a Community of Practice

The literature on teacher educators' professional development has emphasised the need for engaging in critical professional learning conversations (Hoban, 2002; Loughran, 2006), with an increasing amount of research exploring distinctively teacher educators' professional learning/development communities (Hadar & Brody, 2010; MacPhail et al., 2014). The teacher educators in this study did international research visits, attended postgraduate

courses and seminars, joined remote professional development events during the pandemic, created collaborative student projects with another teacher education institution in the USA, and participated in research teams. Like the teacher educators in Smith (2018), collaboration with colleagues was reported as a significant factor in enhancing participants' professional development. This finding is in line with the literature (Smith, 2018; van der Klink et al., 2017; Tack et al., 2018) emphasising how teacher educators desire to participate in a collaborative community where they can feel understood and share their practices and experiences.

Nevertheless, the success of the collaborative practices and experiences of the participants varied according to the human and material resources available to them. The positive qualities of their colleagues and the host researchers in the departments they visited, the mutual respect and encouragement, the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded researchers, and the quality of the presentations and session materials where they attended PD events contributed to the teacher educators' collaborative experiences. At the same time, there was an acceptance that collaboration with colleagues/teams was challenging. The central challenge was regarding lack of time as a barrier to more collaborations. They expressed numerous times that they had to adjust their workload to create more space for professional learning activities. While they were successful at managing their time efficiently for their collaborative projects, they demanded that higher-education institutions should acknowledge intense workloads and allow more opportunities for professional learning (MacPhail et al., 2019). Regardless of the type of development needed, like the teacher educators in Czerniawski et al. (2017), the teacher educators in this inquiry conveyed that they would like consistent professional learning opportunities grounded on experiential learning, such as being a team member, being mentored, and observing more experienced teacher educators. Harrison and McKeon (2008) state that teacher educators' roles emerge from their teaching, research and scholarly activities, and administrative aspects of their work. On the one hand, these aspects complement and support each other. To illustrate, the teacher educators in MacPhail et al. (2019) revealed that success in their research practices helped teacher educators advance their academic status and positions in their institutions. Some teacher educators even expressed happiness for holding such a multifaceted work. On the other hand, most teacher educators deemed that these three components inhibited each other and led to work overload and less time for engaging in professional development activities.

8.4.3. Micro-level Contextual Elements

8.4.3.1. EFL Teacher Educators' Cognitions

Alongside the literature on language teacher educators' professional engagement, several studies have also examined their cognition: what they think, know, and believe (Borg, 2003). 'Teacher cognition' is an umbrella term, and it is widely used to describe the unobservable dimension of language teaching/teacher education (Borg, 2003; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). This inclusive term encompasses several conceptual lenses, such as 'beliefs', 'perceptions', and 'knowledge', which have crucial analytical power to investigate language teacher educators' complex mental and affective worlds within the context of their work. This section will discuss five main sub-themes – namely teacher educators' beliefs, motivation, identity, agency, and (gaps in) prior knowledge and expertise- concerning how they impacted their practices and professional development.

8.4.3.1. Teacher Educators' Beliefs

The first influential factor in teacher educators' learning and development experiences was their beliefs, which were one the most significant factors in their decision-making, instructional activities, and learning and development (Johnson, 1994). As discussed in Section 8.4.1.1., the teacher educators pursued a PhD degree to get/keep their academic positions. At the beginning of their postgraduate studies, the teacher educators experienced a lack of confidence and a low sense of self-efficacy and were overwhelmed with the idea of pursuing a PhD degree and were unsure whether they would be able to successfully complete their PhD. After these initial doubts and difficulties (e.g., research methodology, different types of data analyses, academic writing), the teacher educators took charge and acted out about how to deal with these challenges. Over time, they overcame these challenges and felt a great sense of achievement. Being able to move beyond their comfort zone and getting over what they had once considered a substantial challenge had a positive impact on their sense of self-efficacy. Their perception of progress enhanced their self-efficacy and motivation, which crucially influenced the quality and quantity of the efforts they put into any given task (Dikilitas et al., 2019). Teacher educators' sense of self-efficacy provided the foundation for

their personal achievements, personal well-being, and motivation. Their self-efficacy was related to their self-control in the face of challenges, resilience in the face of failure, and effective problem-solving. They exercised their agency by confronting challenging situations and negotiating with others, which entailed a dynamic and situated action. The agency of teacher educators, who are challenged by the performativity scheme concentrating on research efficiency and productivity, can be manifested through their eagerness and endeavours to incorporate research with teaching to comply with the practical teaching requirements and extrinsic demands on research outcomes (Yuan & Lee, 2021).

The use of technology was a salient finding across the participants, and it was found to be related to the teacher educators' beliefs. Both internal (e.g., beliefs) and external (e.g., time, technical support) factors acted as mediators in their use of technology for pedagogical purposes. The teacher educators' self-efficacy beliefs influenced their experiences during the shift to emergency online teaching. At the beginning of the pandemic, teacher educators were overwhelmed by the situation and unsure of how to deal with the sudden shift to online teaching. This was the case, particularly for Ana and Elisabeth. On the other hand, Carolina felt very confident and self-efficient about the emergency online teaching. Her sense of self-efficacy seemed to stem from what she had learned from her master's degree and her personal interest in technological developments. Carolina constantly explored and integrated technological tools into her teaching and strongly believed in using technology. Similar to the teacher educators in Drent and Meelissen (2008), Carolina acted as a 'personal entrepreneur', which turned out to be instrumental for stimulating the innovative use of ICT in her practice. On the other hand, Elisabeth and Ana were unconfident and stressed about the emergency shift to online teaching. However, these negative feelings started changing throughout their practice, and so did their self-efficacy beliefs. Their ability to deal with such a challenging situation improved as they realised the accomplishments of their online teaching practices, which increased their self-efficacy beliefs (Senemoğlu, 2010). This positive shift was necessary for their practice and the development of technology integration. It is also important to note that Ana received some negative comments on the student feedback forms at the end of the semester about the way she handled the practical aspects of the ELT methodology classes. Although she expressed that she had done her best to manage these practice sessions, these student comments prompted Ana to search for different technological tools to integrate into

her teaching. This finding is in line with Dinkelman et al. (2006), who stressed that negative student reactions might be an essential catalyst for the professional development of educational practitioners. The negative feedback Ana got from the students at the end-of-year evaluations and the complaints Elisabeth got from the students during the collaborative student project led to introjected regulation ("acting to avoid sense of guilt or anxiety or to protect contingent self-worth" Parker et al., 2020, p. 1445) and new professional development opportunities for both participants. Ana started exploring ICT tools to integrate into her classes for more practical and active instruction delivery. Elisabeth had to revise the schedule and deadlines of the collaborative student project with a university in the USA, which shows that both Ana and Elisabeth identified with the value of this feedback. An excellent relevant example is Choi (2011), who considered his disappointment with the negative student feedback as the motivation for conducting self-study research. For the teacher educators in this study, efficaciousness was related to "beliefs about their abilities to support student teachers' learning in various task-, domain- and context-specific cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social ways" (Wyatt, 2018, p. 136). That is to say, while technological knowledge and skills were required for the teacher educators, they were not enough since they also desired to feel confident when using technology in teaching (Taimalu & Luik, 2019).

Moreover, classroom management was a frequently mentioned challenge for the teacher educators in this study. They needed to explore ways of keeping the students engaged and interested. Struggling with student engagement during online teaching prompted the participants to continue seeking professional development. This was because the teacher educators realised that going through such an unprecedented period would require a much more personalised and contextualised approach. This realisation led to new communication channels with the student teachers, such as one-on-one online meetings, close interpersonal communication throughout the semester, and the provision of tailor-made solutions that catered to student teachers' needs. From a self-efficacy perspective, these findings show that the emphasis was on what teacher educators believed could be achieved with technology and how technology could be managed more than their knowledge of technology and skills in using it (Al-Awidi & Alghazo, 2012). Consequently, it can be said that as teacher educators' perceptions of self-efficacy increased, the level of performance, the level of dealing with

challenges, the belief in accomplishing the tasks, and success in learning also increased. The teacher educators in this study had to improve themselves to harmonise the existing technology with pedagogical and professional competence to overcome the possible problems easily, find appropriate solutions, and develop new plans during and after the pandemic (Kazu & Erten, 2014). They acted as 'personal entrepreneurs', creating possibilities to experiment with ICT applications, reflecting on their outcomes, and exchanging ideas with colleagues (Lunenberg et al., 2014). Overall, teacher educators' perceptions of information technologies and their views on and practice in using them were important in determining their progress in technology-enhanced learning.

8.4.3.2. Teacher Educators' Motivation

The teacher educators in this study felt the need to experience a sense of willingness in their actions (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Ana was motivated to publish a joint paper, to constantly improve her English, to attend PD events remotely during the pandemic, and to take care of her well-being. Carolina was interested in educational technology and was motivated to explore new tools and integrate them into her teaching practice. In Elisabeth's case, motivation was manifested in joining a research team, regularly attending faculty research meetings, and making a long-term career plan. According to Silova et al. (2010), characteristics such as being open to new ideas and enthusiasm to learn, and willingness to share are important factors contributing to the professional development of teacher educators. Like the teacher educators in MacPhail et al. (2019), the teacher educators in this study were proactive in accessing professional development opportunities in and outside their departments. Ana and Elisabeth were self-starters in their development processes. In addition to exploring professional development opportunities in their institutes, they also accessed activities outside their departments. Personal ambition was one of the reasons for professional learning, and it pertained to teacher educators' personal interest and responsibility to learn or improve relevant aspects of their work (Peeraer & Van Petegem, 2012). The teacher educators in this study showed a strong personal desire to learn and substantial autonomy in choosing what and how to teach. They were intrinsically motivated and took the initiative for their learning and development. Smith (2017) reported that taking the initiative and being determined to get out of her comfort zone improved her professional development experiences. Dickinson (1995) adds that "individual involvement in decision-

making in one's learning enhances personal motivation to learn" (p.165). In their cross-national study, van der Klink et al. (2017) investigated teacher educators' concerns and professional development at the beginning of their careers and later as experienced teacher educators. Their findings revealed teacher educators' engagement in professional development activities like formal study programmes, informal conversations with colleagues, and research. The authors underline the critical role teacher educators' motivation plays in improving their professional development experiences.

The teacher educators in this study also felt the need for relatedness, encompassing connectedness with significant others, satisfaction with the social world, and acceptance (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Despite going through several challenges during her PhD (and during the accreditation process), Ana received support from her support systems, which motivated her to keep going. In addition, she felt accepted into the host departments during her research stays abroad, which positively contributed to her experience. In Elisabeth's case, relatedness was manifested throughout her collaborations. Elisabeth led the research team, which made her feel accepted and trusted with this responsibility. She felt satisfied with what she achieved with the research team. A colleague approached Elisabeth about her plans and informed her about faculty research meetings, which entailed discussing research interests and forming research collaborations. These findings suggest that teacher educators were inclined to collaborate and create support networks with colleagues. Research by Kosnik et al. (2011) further demonstrated that teacher educators highly value being involved in communities with colleagues where they can discuss and find solutions to the challenges they experience (Kosnik et al., 2011). Similarly, Hug and Möller (2005) highlight teacher educators' inclination towards connectedness and describe how collaboration can act as connectedness on intellectual, emotional, and pedagogical connectedness. Williams and Ritter (2010) also permeate teacher educators' need to belong to a community, especially to more experienced members of that community.

8.4.3.3. Teacher Educators' Identity and Agency

In this study, the teacher educators' identity emerged as an analytical lens for exploring and understanding their lived experiences and personal and professional development since identity is a central concept in professional learning and growth. Language teacher (educator)

identity has two components. The first is "a sense of self and the reflection of that self against one's biography and a normative expectation of what an ideal language teacher might look like" (Banegas & Gerlach, 2021, p. 2). The other component is its social construction since "teacher identities are also positioned within particular sociocultural contexts embedded with explicitly and implicitly expressed values" (Golombek, 2017, p. 19). In other words, teacher educators' identity emanates from the dynamic interplay between individuals and their environment (De Costa & Norton, 2017). The teacher educators in this study assumed multiple responsibilities leading to multiple identities, such as teachers, practicum supervisors, collaborators, and researchers. This finding is in line with the notion of 'identity in practice' since the teacher educators enacted and transformed their identities through participation in their communities (Wenger, 1998). However, the complexity of their work, particularly during the pandemic, and the changing educational landscapes seemed to make teacher educators' identity (re)construction more challenging. These identity struggles and conflicts will be discussed under the processes of 'identity alignment', 'identity tensions', and 'identity negotiation' (Yuan et al. 2022).

A type of identity alignment was related to teacher educators' identities as 'collaborator' and 'learner' as they worked with their colleagues to advance their pedagogical knowledge and improve teaching practice during the pandemic. The teacher educators in this study cultivated and strengthened their identity as co-learners with the student teachers as they engaged in joint reflection (the collaborative student project in Elisabeth's case, for instance) to negotiate and construct meaning about different aspects of language education and their teaching practices during the pandemic. In their collaborative self-study, Geursen et al. (2010) reported on how they developed students' reflective abilities in teacher education courses. One of the authors, Heer, shared how he developed his identity as a co-learner with the student teachers during the collaborative reflection process. Another alignment example was Elisabeth's collaborative action research project, where Elisabeth and her colleagues were involved in co-teaching for more than two years and worked on a joint publication. They critically examined how their teacher education pedagogies transformed, and their identities as 'collaborator' and 'researcher' were instrumental in the negotiation and continuous learning through co-teaching and working collaboratively on a publication. In their self-study, Peercy and her colleagues (2019) explored how their racial, linguistic, and economic backgrounds shaped their personal and professional identities and influenced their decision-making and teaching.

Overall, different dimensions of teacher educators' identities (‘learner’, ‘teacher’, ‘collaborator’ and ‘researcher’) were vital for their sense-making and continued learning.

Identity tensions were also inherent to teacher educators’ everyday practices and ongoing development since their identities were contested by professional and personal constraints and demands (Swennen et al., 2010). Tensions were identified as an inevitable part of their professional decision-making, practice, reflection, and growth, which was driven by ongoing attempts to reconcile multiple, often conflicting voices in identity (Akkerman & Mei-jer, 2011). Identity tensions emerged from their teaching, particularly when their instructional choices conflicted with their pedagogical dispositions due to institutional constraints. This was particularly Carolina’s case, where the university she worked at constrained the online tools the staff was allowed to use for instruction. She was not allowed to use Zoom, and she had to use Moodle to share lesson materials and make announcements, which, she strongly expressed, would not have been her personal choice and was not convenient for her. Having studied her master's on educational technology and taking a personal interest in exploring digital tools, her preference would have been different had she been allowed to choose. However, it was uncomfortable for her to conform to the institutional rules she did not resonate with, which led to a divide between her personally cultivated and externally prescribed identities. That is to say, the teacher identity Carolina developed was contested by institutional constraints and demands (Swennen et al., 2010). Although these constraints seemed to be applied to ensure quality teaching and best address the emergency shift to online education, they also risked belittling the legitimacy of teacher educators’ professional identity.

Another type of identity tension stemmed from the ‘publish or perish’ culture, which caused identity conflicts and crises for the teacher educators in their research and publishing experiences. Despite expressing personal interests, such as improving their teaching practices and researching issues in their teaching education areas, the teacher educators adopted a researcher identity due to the institutional requirements for publication (discussed in detail in Section 8.3.1.1). Elisabeth had already planned the academic year, where she was assigned classes and had research projects/publications to work on. However, other research and/or

publication opportunities arose later during the term (the collaborative research project and being invited to faculty research meetings), which she accepted, and she ended up taking on more research than she had initially planned. This showed that Elisabeth prioritised her research identity to improve her research CV before the institutional promotions. This finding concurs with the experiences of a beginning teacher educator in Yuan (2020), who had to prioritize a research identity to survive at his new institution instead of his teacher identity. Despite caring about their teacher educator identity, the teacher educators had to concentrate on research projects and publish to keep their jobs and get academic promotions, which could have stemmed from a 'fundamental dualism' (Murray et al., 2009, p. 30). They needed to update their pedagogical knowledge to adapt to the teacher education classrooms. At the same time, they were expected to conduct research and publish to contribute to the knowledge base of teacher education in their fields (Yuan & Lee 2014). As a result of such a 'fundamental dualism,' the teacher educators' professional work became complicated due to these identity tensions, conflicts, and negotiations (Livingston et al., 2009). Within the higher education contexts where research quality and productivity are prioritised, teacher educators feel pressured to conduct research and publish to renew their contracts, get academic promotions, and get accredited. The intricate balance between teaching and research is a characteristic element of the university teaching staff and must be contemplated and suitably valued by our institutions. It is quite true that some steps have been taken in this meaning, but not enough. (Espinosa et al., 2018). As a result of this work culture, teacher educators may feel obligated to prioritise research excellence, sometimes at the expense of their practical contribution teacher education (Yuan, 2019) and endangering a healthy work-life balance and well-being.

The communities of practice also played a crucial role in the teacher educators' identity development (McGregor et al., 2010; Murray, 2008; Poyas & Smith, 2007). Ana was engaged in a joint publication process with a more experienced colleague from the department. Elisabeth was a member of a research team with more experienced researchers and was in the process of a joint publication with two colleagues. The collaborative working process created some issues regarding power dynamics where there were disagreements with their colleagues, and the participants admitted this situation challenged them. However, these challenges also led to their professional identity development by navigating, negotiating, and

trying to resolve or relieve tensions that circulated in the professional discourse with their colleagues. While these tensions seemed disruptive and emotionally draining for the teacher educators, they were also productive as they engaged in a reflective process to relieve identity tensions by opening up, exploring, and road-testing new dimensions of their identities. This showed how the teacher educators interpreted and (re)constructed their identities by seeking harmony between their values and commitments and external requirements. This balancing act was an integral part of their professional development. In the face of identity conflicts, the teacher educators were agentic and engaged in critical reflection, negotiating their identities into a dynamic balance. Despite the identity tensions, they still demonstrated a robust identity that propelled them to be agentic and pursue professional development. In Murray et al.'s (2011) study, the teacher educators dealt with the teaching and research demands by enacting their professional agency and "accommodate[d] becoming and being an active researcher and an academic with a strong sense of practitioner identity" (p. 273). Despite the identity tensions emerging from their interactions with different institutional actors, they enacted their professional agency by maintaining a sense of self and pursuing professional growth regardless of these tensions (Hökkä et al., 2012). These experiences also echoed the bidirectional nature of agency and identity, showing a cyclical relationship between these two constructs. Through exercising their agency, the teacher educators expanded and transformed their professional identities, nourishing their agency in coping with unanticipated challenges. Exercising agency enabled teacher educators to develop a strong sense of empowerment, which impacted their professional identity as capable and autonomous educators who acted deliberately to enact change (Hokko et al., 2017; Vohosantanen, 2015). As a result, like the teacher educators in Banegas and Gerlach (2021), teacher identity and agency operated in a synergistic space of mutual influence as the teacher educators' awareness of agency strengthened their identity as independent professionals, which in turn enhanced their capacity for further agency.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

9.1. Introduction

This inquiry aimed to increase understanding of how EFL teacher educators develop professionally, what knowledge they acquire, and how internal and external factors influence these learning experiences in the under-researched context of English language teacher education in Spain. The following sections will discuss the contribution to existing knowledge (Section 9.2) and the implications of my research project (Section 9.3). Then, the limitations of this inquiry will be discussed (Section 9.4.), followed by the recommendations for future research (Section 9.5). Lastly, my thesis will end with concluding remarks (Section 9.6).

9.2. Summary of the Key Findings

The first research question was related to what kind of learning activities the EFL teacher educators in this study engaged in. The main findings showed that the participants engaged in several different activities which were categorised as academic engagement, collaboration with others, and attending professional development programmes. The second research question was about the content of these learning activities. The teacher educators in this study, they acquired and/or increased their personal knowledge, contextual knowledge, sociological knowledge, social knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and research knowledge through the learning activities they engaged in. The third research question explored the mediating factors that the participants mediated. The teacher educators in this study mediated several factors during their learning and development experiences. At the macro level, they encountered national/institutional standards and the COVID-19 pandemic. At the meso level, teacher educators' institutional atmosphere and collaboration were the key factors. At the micro-level, teacher educators' beliefs, motivations, and identities and agency played a key role. The professional development of the participants was strongly related to their own intrinsic motivation despite the challenges they encountered.

9.2. Contribution to Existing Knowledge

This section discusses the main contributions of this study, which are related to contextual, theoretical, and methodological aspects. These contributions have the potential to help

researchers interested in investigating the learning and development of university-level teacher educators and teacher educator cognitions, particularly within EFL contexts. Moreover, educational actors involved in the professional development of teacher educators might benefit from these contributions to better understand how internal and external influences interact with each other and consequently influence EFL teacher educators' personal and professional development and practice. Contributions to knowledge are presented under three main titles: contextual, theoretical, and methodological contributions.

9.2.1. Contextual Contributions

This inquiry was conducted with EFL teacher educators in two EFL teacher education departments in Spain. Thus, the findings have the potential to offer empirical and methodological implications for teacher education research in Spain, or within similar contexts, and with participants from similar backgrounds and experiences to those in the current study. While a small number of studies have been conducted on EFL teacher educators who work at the university level in other contexts (e.g., Halet, 2020; Ping et al., 2018), research on EFL teachers in Spain has focused on pre-service and in-service EFL teachers' professional development (e.g., Gonzalez & Manoso-Panheco, 2021) and the impact of cognitive factors on their development and practice (e.g., Bernaus et al., 2009; Gratacós & López-Jurado, 2016; Kamstra, 2022). Research on EFL teacher educators in Spain is somewhat limited and mainly focused on their ICT competencies and overall profile (see section 1.3). Although there is a strand of self-studies by teacher educators on their practice (e.g., Banegas & Beamud, 2022; Nemina et al., 2022), there is still a scarcity of research on university-level EFL teacher educators in Spain. Therefore, the present study has a significant contextual contribution since it contributes a particular data set about a participant group in an under-researched context within the existing literature.

The critical contextual contribution is relevant to EFL teacher educators' professional development activities. In their survey study with teacher educators from different European countries, Van der Klink et al. (2017) demonstrated that Spanish teacher educators revealed that their professional development activities involved visits to schools, conducting research, and writing articles. This PhD thesis supported this study’s findings since the teacher educators here learned through academic engagement as a professional development

activity. Additionally, the findings of this inquiry added that EFL teacher educators learned through collaboration (getting input from others and being in a learning community) and professional development programmes (research related and educational). One of the key insights is that the EFL teacher educators in this inquiry stated that they engaged in collaborative research teams, team-teaching, and joint publication processes and how significant collaborations were for them. All three participants expressed that they would like to have more collaborative opportunities. This finding is rather significant since teachers in Spain are reported to lack a collaborative work culture (Azorin, 2020). The Talis (2018) report reveals that Spanish teachers mostly work in their classrooms in isolation from their colleagues. In comparison to the 40% in OECD countries, an average of 24% of Spanish teachers declare that they participate in a collaborative network for lesson planning or sharing materials. Therefore, the call of the teacher educators in this study for more collaborative opportunities should be noted down.

In addition to expanding our understanding of EFL teacher educators' professional development in this context, these insights may help critically examine the present professional development policies and plan new initiatives for teacher educators to increase their professionalism and improve the quality of teacher education (European Commission, 2013). Therefore, the community of EFL teacher educators in Spain must be further investigated since valuable insights can still be gathered from EFL teacher educators, as the findings from this study indicate.

Finally, the macro/meso/micro contextual circumstances experienced by the EFL teacher educators in this study (e.g., the impact of the pandemic, the demands within academia, work-life imbalances, etc.) might relate to other teacher educators in different contexts. The isolated nature of the work environment has also made the Spanish educational context more vulnerable to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the collective response of the teacher educators in this study for more collaboration with other educational actors and taking the initiative for their well-being demonstrated how they responded to the challenges of the pandemic. This response might prove effective for supporting teacher educators against similar contextual circumstances.

9.2.2. Theoretical Contributions

The first theoretical contribution is that this inquiry combined Goodwin's (2010) teacher knowledge typology with Ping et al.'s (2018) professional learning categories, which served as a comprehensive framework to interpret and discuss teacher educators' work and professional learning. The combination of these two frameworks had been innovative and proved to be very helpful in categorising and analysing the dataset in this investigation. For instance, I could categorise professional activities such as using ICT and problem-solving which enabled participants to adapt practical pedagogical demonstrations to online platforms, as elements of pedagogical knowledge as defined by Goodwin (2010). Similarly, the teacher educators' comments and reflections about student engagement during online teaching could be defined as contributing to their contextual knowledge since they expressed concerns about student teachers' responses and engagement in the online context. As a framework of teacher professional knowledge, Goodwin's (2010) typology was comprehensive enough to map professional learning activities like academic engagement, collaboration, professional development programs, and reflection (Ping et al., 2018) with one or more knowledge domains (personal, contextual, pedagogical, sociological, and social). However, a key point concerning Goodwin's (2010) conceptual model is its lack of consideration for research skills. Although Goodwin's typology acknowledges the importance of research knowledge, it is categorised within contextual knowledge due to its connection to practice. However, the overwhelming amount of data from the teacher educators in this study about their research practices and knowledge production required a greater emphasis on research knowledge. At this point, Ping et al.'s typology granted more comprehensiveness for a fuller picture of teacher educator learning and knowledge by categorising participants' learning as academic engagement and creating a separate knowledge category as research knowledge.

The findings of this inquiry also demonstrated that some professional learning activities could be associated with more than one knowledge domain. One example was the teacher educators' academic engagement in practitioner research, which enabled them to reflect on their work, examine assumptions about learning and teaching, and improve their teaching practices. The professional knowledge framework employed in this study allowed this professional engagement to be interpreted with reference to pedagogical knowledge since

teacher educators focused primarily on examining their pedagogical practices (see Goodwin, 2010). At the same time, it could be deduced from this study that participation in practitioner research represents growth in teacher educators' contextual knowledge since they gain knowledge about their students, classrooms, and institutions. Moreover, it can be said that teacher educators' participation in practitioner research, particularly with other researchers, represented growth in terms of personal knowledge since they learned to "be open to alternative ways of doing and thinking" (ibid., p. 339) and had the opportunity to re-construct their professional identities through identity conflicts and negotiation. Moreover, thanks to the holistic approach adopted in this study, exploring teacher educators' biographies provided evidence of the impact of not only educational and professional experiences on their personal knowledge but also of their personal experiences (e.g., the impact of Ana's mother's death on heightening her sense of empathy, the impact of Elisabeth's Model UN experience on realising the necessity of preparation and its transfer to her philosophy of teaching). However, it is vital to reiterate that although categories were employed to examine professional learning and its outcomes for analytical purposes, it is important to underline this multi-dimensional impact which your holistic approach enabled me to observe and acknowledge that teacher learning is a complex and dynamic process involving the interaction of multiple actions and forms of knowledge due to the multi-dimensional nature of professional learning activities and teacher knowledge production.

The present study also offers a theoretical contribution to the current understanding of the impact of mediating factors on EFL teacher educators' development experiences. This research project revealed that teacher educators' personal and professional development were influenced by internal (e.g., beliefs, motivation, identity, knowledge, agency, emotions) and external (e.g., micro, meso, and macro level) factors. These conclusions are in line with and add to the present research literature on teacher educators' professional development, which have shown that teacher educators' learning should be situated within a complex combination of their life histories, identity, motivation, values, and dispositions ingrained within different learning communities and contexts (e.g., Czerniawski 2013; Kosnik et al., 2015). Identifying such influential factors is essential to forming compelling opportunities for teacher educators' personal and professional development (MacPhail et al., 2019). In line with this, an exciting finding of this inquiry was related to teacher educators' challenges. It was

uncovered that, although teacher educators' challenges had restricted their experiences to a certain point, they did not necessarily eventuate in failure since these difficulties also created new learning opportunities. This led to acquiring new knowledge and skills (e.g., increasing their TPACK as a result of the shift to emergency online teaching and developing well-being practices to deal with the pandemic), which increased their agency and sense of self-efficacy (e.g., Anderson et al., 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2018). The participants experienced different forms of tension as they faced challenges. One such tension was the perceived inconsistency between the demands of the context (e.g., in terms of ICT knowledge) and their perceived knowledge and sense of self-efficacy during the pandemic. This provided evidence of cognitive dissonance and of how the participants addressed this dissonance to produce relevant knowledge, and how challenges constituted learning opportunities which eventually result in teacher educators' professional growth.

Regarding the mediating factors, the teacher educators from Spain in Van der Klink et al. (2017) expressed concerns about how slow the Spanish bureaucracy was and added that they often relied on their intrinsic motivation and created their learning opportunities. The slowness of the Spanish bureaucracy, and its negative impact on her accreditation experience, has been echoed particularly by Ana (see section 8.3.2.1). This longitudinal qualitative inquiry uncovered other significant mediating factors such as the national/institutional standards at the macro level the teacher educators needed to fulfil to get accredited or promoted since these standards shaped the professional development activities they engaged in (e.g., participating in research teams and working towards publications), teacher educators' institutional contexts at the meso level, such as their (or lack of) participation in departmental professional networks, being mentored by more experienced colleagues, and research and publication, which has been considered a necessary element of their work by the participants, and the teacher educators' cognitions, such as their beliefs about ICT integration during the pandemic, their perceptions of self-efficacy and motivation towards their professional learning and development, the identity tensions they experienced and the identity negotiation and alignment they consequently needed to make. Macro level factors had a significant impact on the types of professional goals teacher educators set (e.g., getting a PhD degree, publishing in high impact journals) whereas meso and micro level factors influenced the route/journey which they followed to achieve those goals.

Another contribution to the theory is the finding that the teacher educators especially during the global pandemic crisis, were agentic and creative in seeking support in their work and personal lives, which seemed to play a role in mitigating stress and enhancing their professional and personal well-being. The links between teacher educators' overall well-being and their capacity to adapt to challenging circumstances played a crucial role in dealing with challenges in their personal and professional lives. Therefore, as highlighted by Smith (2003), teacher educators' professional development should go beyond increasing theoretical knowledge in a specialised field and be conceptualised as a 'whole-person development' by acknowledging the impact of cognitive and affective elements. In our ever-changing world (such as a global pandemic), teacher education and educational practitioners "are called upon to face new realities and challenges, being thus compelled to assume new professional roles and responsibilities, it is a fact that the improvement of quality must become the central concern or top priority in the contemporary debate on educational policy and practice" (Dios, 2020, p. 1).

9.2.3. Methodological Contributions

The first methodological contribution is related to the bricolage approach this inquiry adopted for unpacking who the EFL teacher educators are and how they practice, learn, and develop during a global pandemic and while navigating the complex landscape of higher education. Adopting bricolage proved to be a successful data collection strategy as a bottom-up approach to investigate the "complex, contextually specific, and autobiographically grounded" (Goodwin, 2010, p. 30) nature of teacher educator learning experiences. Thanks to the situational responsiveness (Patton, 2002) offered by bricolage, I could be flexible, especially before and during the data collection. This, in turn, laid the groundwork for how participants' stories unfolded and allowed for divergences during the online data collection in the unpredictability of the pandemic context. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) argue that using a combination of methods, data, or perspectives in a study is a strategy that can add rigour, breadth, and depth to any phenomenon in question. The implementation of bricolage in this research project offered insights into fluid, eclectic, and creative approaches to inquiry, particularly during a global pandemic. Concerning teacher educator learning and cognition research, the bricolage approach is appropriate because of the inherent complexity of learning and cognition. As in producing a collage, the bricolage representations of teacher

educators' experiences in this study created a coherent picture by acknowledging the individual, situated meanings built by EFL teacher educators as a result of their engagement and interactions in particular socio-cultural environments. Bricolage provided me with the freedom to choose from an array of methodologies to explore and piece together diverse representations of EFL teacher educators' learning experiences and the mediating factors impacting these experiences, woven together in a way to capture the inherent complexity of learning and cognition. The employment of bricolage in this thesis is therefore an invitation to other researchers to extend the conversation about teacher educator learning and cognition research and the bricolage approach for future research.

Another note-worthy methodological contribution is the employment of Tree of Life (Merryfield, 1993) as a data collection instrument. Using Tree of Life, particularly at the beginning of the data collection, enabled me to understand the participants' life histories and cognitions as individuals and professionals, and start collecting data about their Personal Knowledge (Goodwin, 2010). Moreover, in addition to the original elements of the tree, the roots, trunk, and the limbs, the use of new additions of bugs, leaves, and fruits to the Tree of Life drawings in this study proved useful for capturing a bigger picture of participants' life experiences and doing more probing during the follow-up interviews, particularly concerning the mediating factors the teacher educators experienced. This study also showed that these new additions to participants' drawings were also useful to added comprehensiveness and depth to the introspective process of reflecting on personal biographies and construct better interpretations of their experiences and reflections in the subsequent data collection phases. In addition, I believe the employment of Tree of Life, a self-reflective tool, can help in building rapport with the participants. All the participants expressed how much they enjoyed doing the Tree of Life tasks and how the process helped them reflect on their life and career during the follow-up interviews, which seemed to facilitate teacher educators' self-reflection on their life histories and teaching careers as professional development activity. Ana for instance stated that "I really enjoyed it. I found it really therapeutic (…). It was such an interesting way to, in a creative way to write down, to reflect about my early experiences regarding my childhood and my adolescence and my career in teaching and in academia" (TLI).

9.3. Practical Implications

This study presented valuable insights into how EFL teacher educators can be supported to advance their professional expertise, practice, and mental well-being while they mediate the changing EFL and higher education contexts. First, this inquiry has methodological implications for future research on teacher educators' professional development and cognitions, which are potentially significant for researchers adopting a constructivist, qualitative methodology. These implications are specifically relevant to those who engage with embedded case studies and employ data collection instruments such as autobiographical accounts (Tree of Life), retrospective interviews, weekly learning diaries, and field notes since this research project presents a structured, illustrative example of how a combination of such data collection instruments that may benefit other novice researchers. During the Reflection on Participation interviews at the end of the data collection, all the participants stated that the Tree of Life exercise provided them with the opportunity to reflect on their personal and professional histories and realise how much they had accomplished. The Tree of Life can thus be used for professional development when we aim to help teachers understand their professional journeys and increase their sense of efficacy and self-worth.

The findings related to the content of such learning activities indicated that teacher educators' learning content centred around the pedagogy of teacher education, research and reflection, professional identity, and different types of knowledge. The teacher educators stated that they would have liked more CPD opportunities to focus on and support their daily teaching practices, planning, and/or mental well-being, particularly during the pandemic. Therefore, the empirical implications of this research project provided an original dataset about teacher educator professional development which could be used as empirical evidence for supporting the CPD of teacher educators, notably within EFL contexts. This dataset can be used to examine teacher educators' work and learning in future research. The findings of this inquiry could be used to raise awareness of professional learning activities, challenges, other- and self-initiated opportunities, agency and creativity. The findings of this project may also provide teacher educators with opportunities to reflect on these activities, challenges, actions in relation to their own contexts and circumstances, and plan some transformative actions for their own professional growth. The findings of this research project also add to our

knowledge and practice of designing and implementing professional development sessions for teacher educators.

The findings on the mediating factors experienced by the teacher educators in this study have some implications for more effective professional learning and development practices. Studies on teacher educators' professional development should consider the difficulties they face in their practices, the obstacles that hinder their professional development, and the kind of support they need. First, for the participants to effectively engage in research practices and share their research in the future, they suggested that more improvements must be made in the organisational cultures of higher education institutions. For instance, it is vital to construct better circumstances by directly asking the teacher educators what support they need to establish a research culture. Some items that emerged from this inquiry include but are not limited to time allocation to conduct research, opportunities to disseminate research with their colleagues within their institutions and to visit external conferences on the 'what' and 'how' to research, more support on research methodologies and data analyses, more opportunities for collaborative research projects, and assistance to write scientific publications.

Furthermore, the teacher educators in this study illustrated that they learned from and with colleagues in their daily practice within their departments or teams. This finding is in line with the literature positioning collaboration and collegiality as helpful and effective processes underpinning efficacious professional learning (Murray, 2008; Harrison & McKeon, 2008, 2010; Van Velzen et al., 2010). Loughran (2014) underlines the necessity of creating initiatives for effective and collaborative learning opportunities with the increasing number of studies investigating teacher educators' professional learning/development (Hadar & Brody, 2010; MacPhail et al., 2014). The implications of this study support this literature, underlining how teacher educators wish to be part of a collaborative community where they can share their practices and experiences, feel supported, and be listened to. One of the key findings indicated that teacher educators sought to work with more experienced colleagues and mentors to develop and extend their skills and knowledge of teaching and researching teacher education. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the crucial role more experienced colleagues play in mentoring and guiding their colleagues. More experienced teacher educators must be a part of bottom-up professional development arrangements, which can

provide great opportunities for scaffolding and community building within and across EFL departments.

Finally, another crucial finding was related to teacher educators' well-being, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. The teacher educators in this study adopted different approaches to support their emotional well-being (e.g., meditation and yoga practices, online book clubs, and going out for walks). The review by Yuan et al. (2022) revealed a dominant discourse portraying language teacher educators as "supermen/superwomen" (ibid., p. 26), expected to possess a unique set of skills, to meet professional requirements and expectations, and to deal with institutional or national hardships continuously. Generally, language teacher educators are considered to have-it-all since they are responsible for providing knowledge, leading, mentoring, and supporting their communities (Yuan et al., 2022). Consequently, as noted by Barkhuizen (2021), language teacher educators might go through identity conflicts and emotional turmoil and suffer from burnout. Therefore, promoting the supermen/superwomen discourse is unsustainable because they should be provided opportunities to learn, practice, and reflect (Yuan et al., 2022). I strongly argue that language teacher educators need to be regarded as *whole people with distinct* characteristics, strengths, challenges, vulnerabilities, and constraints moulded by their work and life experiences and define who they are at the junction of English language education, teacher education, and higher education. Practical strategies employed by the teacher educators in this study included time management to balance between personal and professional lives, particularly amidst a global pandemic, relationship building through online book clubs, getting physically active through meditation and yoga practices, and going out for walks, two-way mentoring through the collaborations they engaged in.

Overall, I strongly agree with Yuan et al.'s (2022) argument that when researching, understanding, and supporting EFL teacher educators, a humanistic approach should be adopted by viewing them as "*whole people*" (ibid., p. 27) with their distinct values and dispositions as well as specific and contextualised learning needs in both in research and higher education settings. I would argue that adopting this perspective would lead to acknowledgement and respect for EFL teacher educators' biographies and situated practices, stimulation of reflection, analysis and improvement, and encouragement for better meaning negotiation and awareness of the contextual elements, which in the long run would

contribute to more sustainable English language teacher education practices. As an early career educational researcher and future teacher educator, I hope that the implications of this inquiry will help develop more effective learning and development opportunities for and by teacher educators. These implications will also be helpful for professionals who oversee "the facilitation of the professional development of teacher educators (management), those who develop and guide it (mostly expert-teacher educators) or validate professional learning (e.g., those involved with certification)" (Dengerink et al., 2015, p. 93).

9.4. Limitations

It is imperative to acknowledge the possible limitations of this inquiry when we evaluate the findings and implications of this research project. First, this study is a qualitative inquiry comprising a small group of participants; therefore, it is not possible to generalise the findings and implications as pertinent to all EFL teacher educators. Although this inquiry did not intend to apply the findings to make generalisations, replication/transferability is still possible thanks to the depth of the data collection instruments and the dataset.

Moreover, conducting online fieldwork may have impacted on the quality of the data collected. The first relevant aspect is the rapport between the participants and me. To establish a good rapport and relationship with the teacher educators, I had an initial face-to-face online meeting with each participant before the data collection started. I also spent some time responding to participants' questions, clarified unclear points at the beginning of the first interview, and sent out detailed emails with explanations and steps to follow before and during the data collection phases. I always showed empathy and patience as we went through unprecedented times, which created challenges in our personal and professional lives. I was also mindful that the participants were juggling work and family obligations; therefore, I was flexible and adaptable to interview schedules, which, I believe, helped the participants settle in and continue participating in this inquiry. Furthermore, to ensure quality data collection, as suggested by Thunberg and Arnell (2022), I did different preparations, such as getting more technical experience with Skype and sharing guidelines with the participants, conducting a few pilot interviews with my colleagues before the actual data collection, and writing a checklist of steps prior to the interviews to ensure successful interview processes (e.g., checking that the camera was on, and I was recording the interview).

As a reflexive researcher, I was always aware of the potential limitations of this research project. However, these limitations do not diminish the value of the findings and implications of this study, given the broader context of this project and the strategies employed to lessen their impact. Furthermore, they were instrumental in recognising recommendations for future research, which will be presented next.

9.5. Recommendations for Future Research

Reflecting on the contributions, implications, and limitations of this inquiry, I will present the following recommendations for future research:

- This inquiry should be replicated in similar, under-researched EFL contexts. Similar investigations help advance the trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability of the findings and implications of this research project.
- Conducting a similar inquiry on a longitudinal scale would lead to a better understanding of how each participant learns and the mediating factors impacting their learning experiences. This would allow teacher educators' knowledge to expand thanks to their involvement in a more extended self-reflection period. Additionally, it would be insightful to see what can be uncovered through the longitudinal exploration of language teacher educators' identity negotiation and (re) construction.
- It is vital to find new ways to conduct interviews and do qualitative research in circumstances where the possibilities for in-person interaction are hampered or limited for different reasons, for instance, due to geographical distance, health problems, or a pandemic such as Covid-19 (Edwards & Holland, 2020). This inquiry showed that digital visual interviews could be a good alternative for capturing participants' narratives and perspectives when other options were not possible. It would be illuminating to replicate similar inquiries in different challenging situations that provoked a significant change in teachers'/teacher educators' learning and teaching space, such as natural disasters (e.g., floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes) (Dhawan, 2020). Such inquiries might have relevant implications for teachers'/teacher educators' professional knowledge production, learning and teaching practices, and professional development policies. In addition, more investigations on what teachers/teacher educators learn while mediating challenging situations would

enable us to better understand their knowledge production as they adapt their work to significant changes happening around them.

- This inquiry revealed that EFL teacher educators engaged in learning activities due to entry requirements and institutional standards. It would be enlightening to conduct future research on the specific standards for preparing, recruiting, and evaluating EFL teacher educators. As highlighted by Yuan et al. (2022), it would be even more insightful to explore how these standards are formed, to problematise the 'owners' of these standards, and find better ways to use them to improve language teacher educators' work and learning.
- While this inquiry focused on multifaceted relationships, the interaction between teacher educators' learning and development experiences and the internal and external factors that influenced these experiences concerning student teachers' learning was not a focus of this project. Integrating student teachers' perceptions of how teacher educators' development and learning experiences might impact their learning would be very insightful for better teacher education practices.
- Considering the publish-or-perish mentality prevalent in higher education, it would be insightful to investigate how language teacher educators in EFL contexts seek ways to collaborate with other researchers to make their research more accessible and increase the impact of their research and publications within the broader language teaching and teacher education field.

9.6. Concluding Remarks

Since my undergraduate degree, studying for a doctoral degree has been my goal. As a student teacher studying for a BA in English language teaching, I had great respect for the teacher educators in the department, some of whom became my mentors and supported me throughout my career. Inspired by their work in educational research and the great careers they pursued, I always aspired to further my education in a similar lane. I aimed to become an educational researcher and a critical thinker to contribute to future research and educational practices. After being eligible for a highly competitive and prestigious scholarship by the Turkish MoNE, I pursued the PhD in Education at the University of Bath, which has been a long and challenging yet exciting and enlightening journey.

The PhD in Education has contributed enormously to my professional development as a researcher (e.g., critically analysing existing literature and identifying gaps, designing a qualitative research project, collecting and analysing data, and reporting the findings) and has enabled me to become a member of a wider research community (e.g., partaking in a government-funded research project and connecting with other doctoral students, presenting my research at conferences). My PhD journey was rooted in the process of continuous self-doubt but also constant learning while striving for my academic growth and development as a researcher. I acquired considerable knowledge and experience in qualitative research and improved my ability in qualitative research methods, thanks to which I now feel more equipped and confident about conducting research. I have also developed a better understanding of EFL teacher educators' work, such as teacher education pedagogy, teacher educator learning and development, teacher educator cognitions, and the internal and external factors that influence their work and growth. As an early career researcher who will start working as a teacher educator shortly after my PhD, I have improved my critical thinking skills and have acquired knowledge which will greatly assist me as a novice teacher educator. Therefore, I am very excited that research on EFL teacher educators is rapidly growing. With the experience and knowledge I acquired throughout my doctoral research, I am highly motivated to continue investigating related research topics and experiment with a new diversified research methodological approach for more rigorous and enlightening research on the multiple elements constituting the work of an EFL teacher educator.

On a personal note, one of the biggest challenges I mediated during this research project was navigating the impacts of the pandemic on my research project, my personal life, and my well-being. Adapting the data collection plan to online platforms, communicating that change to the participants, sustaining their motivation throughout the data collection, and ensuring the collection of quality data via a flexible, reflexive, and ethical research processes represented a very demanding journey for me. In retrospect, overcoming these challenges and putting this inquiry together have been a great achievement for me. Another significant contribution has been learning to express myself. The meetings and discussions with my Lead Supervisor, the interactions with members of the Department of Education at the University of Bath and the wider research community, and the continuous engagement with the literature have helped clarify my ideas and taught me how to express them. Moreover, particularly in the early stages

of my PhD, I have not only feared expressing myself but also found it nerve-racking to receive feedback. Throughout this journey, I have realised that this feedback and criticism have enabled me to clarify the details of this inquiry and enabled me to improve my critical thinking skills. I have learned to welcome and value constructive feedback and criticism as an opportunity for growth and how to work with it effectively, which is definitely one of the key lessons I will carry to the next chapter of my career.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical Approval Form

Department of Education | UNIVERSITY OF BATH

FORM valid from 26/09/2016

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED RESEARCH

MPhil/PhD

To be completed by the student and approved by the supervisor then submitted for approval by the Director of Studies before any data collection takes place. Before completing the form, students should read the guidelines published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA), which are available in Moodle and at www.bera.ac.uk

Introduction

Full name of student: Meltem ESKI	**Student number**: 189475381
Provisional title of your study: English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teacher Educators' Learning-to- teach Experiences in Finland (in a Finnish University)	
Justification for your study: This research project aims to explore the learning-to-teach processes of EFL teacher educators by investigating the influence of their mental lives as well as their contexts. This investigation attempts to address a number of gaps in both the learning-to-teach and the Language Teacher Cognition (LTC) literature and to ponder the implications for English language teacher education practices, particularly in EFL contexts. First of all, the study is expected to enrich the learning-to-teach and LTC literature by targeting EFL teacher educators, who constitute an under-researched group of participants in both areas since previous studies investigating learning-to-teach processes have focused largely on pre-service and in-service teachers. Moreover, a close look at the current literature reveals that studies mainly investigated individual constructs in order to explore teachers' mental lives: however, focusing on pre-determined discrete cognitions does not account for the complexity of teachers' mental lives, since they are disconnected from other dimensions of teachers' inner lives. Thus, instead of investigating individual constructs, a more holistic approach will be adopted in this research project to capture the complexity of these inner worlds. Furthermore, this study also aims to explore the relationship between these inner lives and teachers' processes of learning-to-teach within the teaching contexts. However, rather than simply focusing on the immediate micro-context of the classroom, teachers' inner lives will be situated within their larger lives and environments in order to get a fuller picture of how these broader contexts eventually impact on both teachers' inner lives and their practices.	

Participants

1. Who are the main participants in your research (such as interviewees, respondents)?

The main participants are EFL teacher educators who are currently teaching pre-service English language teachers. The data collection will be done in an English language teaching (ELT) department in a state university in Finland. Since this is a qualitative research project, I will be collecting data from a small group (4-5) of participants to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences by conducting different types of interviews and classroom observations in a tertiary context. Upon my arrival to the research context, I will also be exploring the current practices of the participants in accordance with the organic and ecological approach I follow in my data collection procedure. After getting the participants' permission, I might incorporate existing sources of data in the research context into my data.

2. How will you find and contact these participants?

The recruitment of the participants will begin by getting in touch with my main contact at a state university in Finland. Later on, I will also contact lecturers in EFL departments in Helsinki to explain the purpose of my research and ask if they would be interested in participating. I will also attach an information sheet to the emails. I will then ask them if they are willing to participate after stressing that participation in the study is voluntary.

3. How and from whom will you obtain informed consent and communicate the right to withdraw?

- I will follow The British Education Research Association (BERA) 2018 guidelines for obtaining informed consent.
- The consent forms will be handed out with the information sheet. Before getting their consent, I will make sure all the participants fully understand the purpose of my research and how they can contribute to it.
- They will be also made aware that they have the right to withdraw their consent at any point of time without providing justification. The right to withdraw will also be stated in clear terms in the consent form that will be given to them.
- After I have made sure that they have read and understood the information sheet, I will ask the participants to sign the consent form before any data collection starts.

4. Have you approached any other body or organisation for permission to conduct this research?

This research project is sponsored by the Turkish Ministry of National Education. I will thus submit a detailed plan of the data collection process to the corresponding agency in London, Turkish Education Consultancy.

5. At what stages of your research, and in what ways will participants be involved?

The participants will be involved in the following stages of my research:

1. Background Interviews: I will collect information about their personal, educational, and professional background as a form of reflective writing in addition to information about their learning processes to shed light on their cognitions and current contextual factors.
2. Classroom Observations: I will observe my participants' lessons (approximately 6-8 for each participant) and I will act as a non-participant observer in the classroom. The classroom observations will take place within the teacher education department in a tertiary institution. The observed lessons will be audio-recorded and these recordings will be combined with my field notes as a stimuli for the follow-up stimulated recall interviews.
3. Stimulated Recall Interviews: I will ask my participants to provide explanations and expand on some important classroom events after every classroom observation.
4. After the interviews have been transcribed, the participants will have a chance to check them and comment on them.

6. Have you considered how to share your findings with participants and how to thank them for their participation?

- As for sharing the findings, I am planning to get in touch with the ELT department and the language teacher educators who participated in the study to inform them about my research findings. I can do that in the form of a presentation or a report to be emailed to all my participants. I will also leave my email address with the participants in case they want to get in touch and ask about the findings of the study.
- I will also verbally thank the participants at the end of each phase of the data collection (each interview, classroom observation) for their time and cooperation.
- At the end of the data collection, the participants will receive a personalised thank you message along with a gift to thank them for their time and participation in this research project. These gifts will not be in a form of financial inducement offered to my participants but hand-made, personalised presents.

Deception and exploitation avoidance, confidentiality, privacy and accuracy

7. How will you present the purpose of your research? Do you foresee any problems?

- I will present the purpose of my study when I visit the potential participants in their department. Since I will be collecting my data in a different country, I will travel to Helsinki after submitting all the Confirmation documents on October 1st, 2019 to avoid any problems related to participant recruitment and to be able to start the data collection right after my Confirmation. I intend to create a short PowerPoint presentation to introduce myself and my research to the potential participants. The PowerPoint presentation will summarize the purpose of my study and explain how their participation will be valuable for achieving the research aims. In addition, the topic and purpose of my study will also be clearly stated in the consent forms. If participants have any questions about the purpose of the study or any other aspect, I will answer their questions and clear out their doubts before starting the data collection.
- It should also be noted that I will communicate with the participants in English, and all the forms will be in English. I do not anticipate any problems in that sense since the EFL teacher educators have a high proficiency level of English.

8. In what ways might your research cause harm (physical or psychological distress or discomfort, or threat to self-esteem) to yourself or others? What will you do to minimise this? Would access to support be available (if appropriate)?

- This study aims to explore language teacher educators' learning-to-teach experiences. The participants will not be asked to talk about any sensitive or personal topics that might cause distress.
- The participants will be made aware that my role as a researcher is not to evaluate or judge them or their teaching practices, but to explore their learning processes in relation to their cognitions and the influence of contextual elements. I will also clearly state that if they feel uncomfortable by my presence or questions in any way, they can always voice their concerns and withdraw their consent at any point.
- I am also aware that the participants might feel discomfort as a result of being interviewed and observed. I will thus only include lecturers who are happy to participate voluntarily, assure them that all data will be confidential, clearly state that they can withdraw their consent at any point, and do my best to reduce any discomfort by creating a comfortable and friendly environment during our interaction.

9. What measures are in place to safeguard the identity of participants and locations? Are there special circumstances for consideration e.g. special populations such as children under 16 years?

- As for the interview, I will have discussions with the interviewees before conducting the interview about confidentiality concerns. I will assure them that their real names will not be mentioned when

reporting their data in my thesis as I will give them pseudonyms instead. I will also remind them of their right to withdraw from the study. • After finishing my data collection, all collected data will be stored on the University of Bath IT system in a password protected computer as well as my personal password-protected laptop to protect and to restrict access to data. Data will be accessed only by the researcher and the supervisors, if necessary. • The name of the university where data collection will take place will never be mentioned in any document or platform.
10.How will you record information faithfully and accurately? • Interviews and classroom observations will be audio-recorded and then transcribed before analysing them. Participants will be given a copy of the transcriptions in order to check them for accuracy and to ensure their faithful representation of the participants' opinions.

11.Any additional information: -

Student: Meltem Eski	**Signature:** Meltem Eski **Date:** 02.07.2019
Lead supervisor: Dr Santiago Sanchez	**Signature:** Hugo Santiago Sanchez **Date:** 02.07.19
Director of Studies: Dr Gail Forey	**Signature:** Gail Forey **Date:** 14 August 2019

A copy of this form to be placed in [1] the student file, and [2] an Ethics Approval File held by the Director of Studies. The Director of Studies will report annually to the Department's Research Committee on ethical issues of particular interest that have been raised during the year.

Appendix 2: Email for Participant Recruitment

PhD Research in Spain

Meltem Eski
To:
Sun 23/02/2020 15:20

Dear

My name is Meltem Eski and I am a Ph.D. researcher at the Department of Education, University of Bath. Following Dario's email, I am writing to inform you about my intended study and to ask if you would be interested in participating. I would also be grateful if you can forward this email to a colleague whom you think would be interested. Could you please also take into consideration that I can do volunteer work in your school/department throughout the data collection process?

This current research investigates teacher learning and I aim to explore language teacher educators' learning/professional development processes. I am motivated by the lack of research on language teacher educators working in an EFL context and my study seeks to explore their learning/professional development processes by investigating the influence of their mental lives together with the impact of the contextual elements. I plan to conduct a case study in an EFL/TESOL department in Spain as I believe Spain would be an interesting EFL context for this study. I am hoping that this knowledge would be insightful in tackling the various challenges EFL language teacher educators face and in exploring ways to better support them in their professional development experiences.

Who am I?

I studied my BA in English Language Teaching, and after my graduation, I worked as an English instructor at the English preparatory school of a private university in Ankara, Turkey for three years. I also completed the MA in Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching at King's College London with a research project titled 'EFL Instructors' Beliefs and Practices of Learner Autonomy in a Private Turkish University'.

Why have you been invited to take part?

I am inviting language teacher educators working in an EFL/TESOL teacher education programme who have a Bachelor's degree or above in ELT/TESOL and higher education teaching experience in the context of the study.

Procedure

The first stage of data collection will involve a 'Tree of Life'. You will be invited to draw, and then orally describe a tree representing your personal, professional, or educational experiences. You will also be asked to hand in an up-to-date Curriculum Vitae (CV) and relevant Professional Development materials.

The second stage will mainly involve a face-to-face *Background Interview*. The interview will be based on a guide but will be flexible so as to meet your needs.

In the last stage, I will conduct observations of classes and, when applicable, of Continuing Professional Development workshops and presentations. After each observation, you will be invited for a follow-up interview to discuss some critical incidents which may have occurred during the observation. Finally, a *photo-elicitation* instrument will be used, where you will be asked to take photographs of your learning experiences. These photographs will later be discussed in an individual interview.

If you are happy to collaborate with this research study, I could elaborate more on my further plans. I would appreciate your cooperation in this matter. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this study, you may contact my supervisor, Dr. Hugo Santiago Sanchez, at H.S.Sanchez@bath.ac.uk. This project has obtained ethics approval from the Department of Education at the University of Bath. For further information about this, you may contact the Director of Studies (Ph.D.), Dr. Gail Forey, at G.Forey@bath.ac.uk.

Looking forward to hearing from you and forging a collaboration.

Should you need any further information, please do not hesitate to ask me to lay out the details of my research.

Many thanks,
Yours sincerely.

Meltem Eski
Ph.D. Researcher
Dept. of Education
University of Bath

Appendix 3: Sample Participant Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF BATH

CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title: English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teacher Educators' Learning Experiences: An Ecological Perspective

Researcher: Meltem Eski
Department of Education
University of Bath
me544@bath.ac.uk

Lead Supervisor: Dr Santiago Sanchez
Department of Education
University of Bath
hss30@bath.ac.uk

Please initial box if you agree with the statement

1. I have been provided with information explaining what participation in this project involves. ☐
2. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this project. ☐
3. I have received satisfactory answers to all questions I have asked. ☐
4. I have received enough information about the project to make a decision about my participation. ☐
5. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent to participate in the project at any time without having to give a reason for withdrawing. ☐
6. I understand that I am free to withdraw my data within two weeks of my participation. ☐
7. I understand the nature and purpose of the procedures involved in this project. These have been communicated to me on the information sheet accompanying this form. ☐
8. I understand and acknowledge that the investigation is designed to promote scientific knowledge and that the University of Bath will use the data I provide only for the purpose(s) set out in the information sheet. ☐
9. I understand the data I provide will be treated as confidential, and that on

completion of the project my name or other identifying information will not be disclosed in any presentation or publication of the research. ☐

10. I understand that my consent to use the data I provide is conditional upon the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act. ☐

11. I hereby fully and freely consent to my participation in this project. ☐

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant name in BLOCK Letters: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher name in BLOCK Letters: _____

Appendix 4: Sample Data Collection Guidelines

Dear Ana,

Thank you very much for contributing to this research project, particularly under the extraordinary COVID-19 situation our world is still going through.

I would like to thank you again for sharing your personal and professional experiences in the previous stages of the data collection. The next step will be the third and last phase, which will initially consist of reporting professional learning episodes. The major aim of this instrument is to explore your professional learning experiences as they happen in your day-to-day practice.

Below is a detailed description of the procedure which you are expected to follow:

- You are invited to report two weekly learning episodes for 5 weeks.
- There are two main points you should focus on. The first one is your learning experiences related to the publishing process with your colleague. The second point is related to your learning experiences within the current blended/online way of teaching.
- Describe your weekly experience in relation to these questions:

  - What learning activities did you undertake?
  - What motivated you to undertake these learning activities?
  - Was it a planned learning experience? If so, how?
  - Was it initiated by you or others? How? Were you alone or with colleagues?
  - What have you learned?
  - What reflections or thoughts did you have before, during, and after this learning experience? What did you feel (e.g., happy, frustrated)? Why?
  - Was there anything (collaboration with others, the materials, motivation, etc.) before, during, and after the learning experience that contributed to your learning?
  - Was there anything (time limitations, lack of motivation, scheduling, etc.) before, during, and after the learning experience that hindered your learning? How did you adapt?

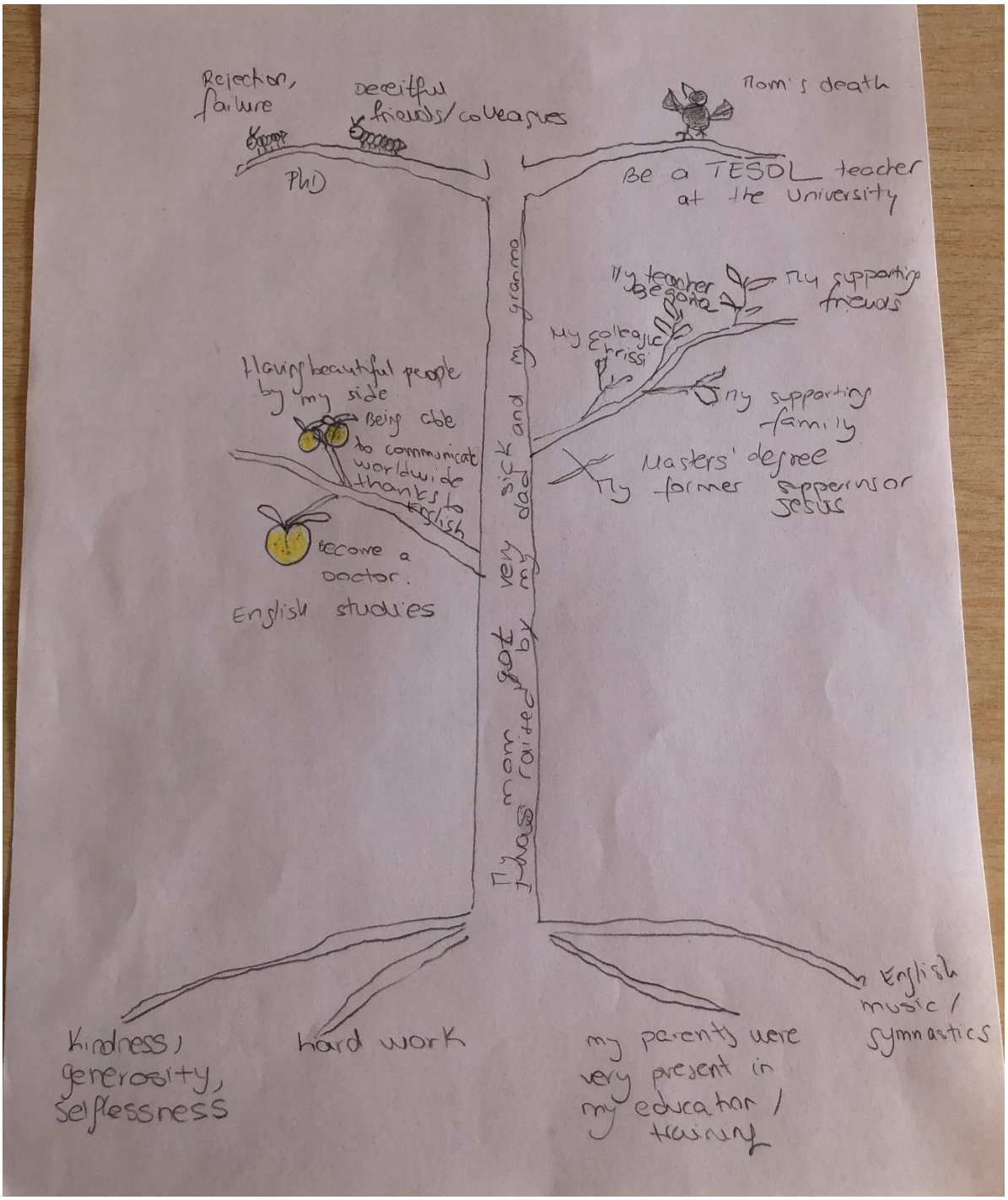
You may also support your description with artefacts that are relevant to your weekly learning episodes. For instance, an artefact can be your colleague's or an editor's feedback, a presentation file, online teaching materials, or a video. Feel free to use your creativity, any artefact is welcome as long as it is meaningful and relevant and captures your learning experience.

Once you have completed these steps (preferably within one week), please email me (me544@bath.ac.uk) your file, together with the files and/or images of the artefacts you have chosen related to the experience(s) you shared.

You will be then invited for a short weekly follow-up interview. I will get in contact to set a date that is convenient for you.

Thank you for reading this information sheet and taking part in this research. Your participation and commitment are deeply appreciated.

Appendix 5: Sample Tree of Life Drawing



Appendix 6: Sample Interview Guide

Elisabeth Follow-up Interview Guide (W4)

- You have mentioned a chat with one of your colleagues in your episode. Could you tell me about this chat and how this formed a learning experience for you?
- Why is this a significant interaction? How did you feel about it? Why?
- Could you tell me about the research group you participate in? (the goal of the group, the work you do, etc.)
- Reflecting on the work you have done with the research group so far, how do you think your participation formed a learning experience for you?
- What learned?

You have stated that your chat with your colleague and your participation in the research group have made you realise the importance being proactive and planning for future research.

- Why is it significant?
- Factors that made it easier/was helpful
- Difficulties? How did you get over them?
- Do you think this contributed to your professional growth? If so, how?
- Do you think this contributed to your personal growth? If so, how?

Appendix 7: Sample Interview Transcription (Ana)

M: So, I've got a couple of questions about yoga and meditation practices. I would like to ask you how you think they formed a learning experience for you?

A: OK. When I started this whole yoga and meditation thing because my auntie told me about it some years ago. I've heard of it, I've heard of the benefits of it, but never tried it before. So, I thought, the work we do is very mental, it's not like other things which is more practical, and it's cognitively demanding as I said, so I was thinking about, I need something where my mind is resting, and yes I read it somewhere that it doesn't matter if you go to sleep, if you watch a movie, or if you read, all the things that are going to reset your mind, they don't. What you need to do is meditation for that to work. Some people believe that, not everybody believes that of course. So yes, for me when I started to think about that and the importance of taking care of my body and my mind because I realised that, if you work 24/7 because some days of my life, it has been like that and it has been stressful 2 years of times and I realised that I wasn't productive at the end of the day. So, I decided that I needed a break, so with these experiences, I have learned that in order to keep learning, to keep growing, to keep evolving professionally, I needed these breaks. And I learned about myself, I learned about negative and some self-doubting thoughts that I sometimes have or sometimes, you start to feel very negative about yourself, and these thoughts, it's like you cannot control them. So, somehow, thanks to meditation, I learned not to control my mind because I'm not Buddha, but sometimes to let go things that I cannot control because for me feeling like a peace of mind, peace of heart, peace of thoughts, it's very important to be calm because I think of myself as a very calm person, this is what people said, so yes, I like for this to be my space, so these practices helped me accepting everything that I cannot control, understanding that everything has happened for a reason, and learning self-care, learning how to take care of myself as well, to be a better teacher, to be a better friend, to be a better daughter, a better sister.

M: (...) My next question is about the things that contributed to your practice, that helped you with your practice?

A: Yes, at the beginning when I started this practice, it was extrinsic motivation because it was an external factor, it was my auntie who told me about these practices and when I started, I thought 'Oh my God! How on earth have I survived without these before, this is so nice, it feels great'. And it felt like everything is connected you know, your body, your mind, your spirit, it's all one piece. So yeah at the beginning, it was extrinsic motivation, but now it's more intrinsic because it comes from my internal desire to do it and to be a better human being. Another factor is I think my instructor. She is amazing, everybody loves her in my town, she has a talent for being a yoga instructor. She's been to many places in Asia to learn from great yoga masters and the way she guides the process and guides you, and her sweet voice. Yes, I think she is a very motivating step of this experience. I think if it was another person, maybe I wouldn't be that motivated because there are different kinds of

yoga and some of my friends go to practices where it is not that spiritual, it's more like a sport, but my instructor, for her it is something very spiritual whatever your religion or beliefs are, yes she makes it like you are in contact with yourself, so I'd say that she was a big part of the process as well. (19:55)

M: Well, my next question is just on an opposite note. Did you have any challenges or restricting factors within your practice and learning experience?

A: I think I said it in the recording probably, lack of time at some points. For example, my yoga instructor always says, when we said, 'I have no time to practice yoga', she said that this is when we need yoga the most'. So, I learned that from her. These days, we all have busy lives and busy schedules, but with her, I've learned we have to make ourselves and our body and mind, wellbeing a priority. At some points, I was very busy, and it's been some weeks without doing these practices, and when you skip them then you feel something is missing. So, in some periods of my life, I was like 'Oh, I'm too busy, I can't do that right now'. But then I regret it, so I try to make it a part of my weekly activities.

M: Do you think doing regular yoga and meditation practices contribute to your personal growth? If so, how?

A: Yes, as I said before, it helps me being in contact with myself, being more patient with myself and others, letting go of things that I can't control, accepting things, so I think that it makes me a better human being, so it helps me grow personally. I think this has an impact professionally because you cannot separate your personal life and your professional life like it's not connected. If you are OK with yourself, if you are in a good place with yourself, with your mind and body, yes you can be a better professional as well. (24:05)

Appendix 8: Sample Weekly Learning Episode (Elisabeth)

Experience 2: Blended learning is quite complicated. While I think we are getting the "best of both worlds" by maintaining classes on campus and alternating with online classes each week, it is very tiring. It has been difficult to plan activities since we have to plan for online classes or in-person classes. In the end, I have planned many activities as if they were all online because we can't move around much in the classroom or use paper. So, I've had to adapt all my materials for all my classes to online tools: only flashcards instead of slips of paper to manipulate, online worksheets instead of paper, online matching games and Kahoots (online competitive quizzes) instead of worksheets, etc. In some cases, this is more efficient because all these tools and resources are created and will be there for me to use in the future, but it's also been extremely time-consuming.

I've learned that most speaking activities are better done in the classroom. Students do not like to use their cameras at home and speaking becomes unnatural. I've used breakout rooms in our online platform with varying success. Some students are able to stay on task and take advantage of the opportunity to speak with their classmates, but many get off topic and speak in Spanish, even if it is a language-based task. In my methodology courses, the use of breakout rooms seems to be more effective than in language courses, as students tend to stay on task better. It doesn't matter as much if they speak in Spanish in order to do the task, though their oral skills are probably going to suffer as a result.

Having online classes also offers a false security to me because I know I have all my materials and information at my fingertips. I also have a bit more time because I don't have to travel to and from school (which is not much time in my case anyway). As a result, I try to do more in the breaks I have, and I probably prepare my classes a bit less. I've taught most of the courses before, and I know more or less what I'll be teaching each day but knowing that everything is on my computer and ready for access allows me to be a bit "lazy" in preparing. I don't have to make sure that everything is accessible, and in doing so, go over the materials quickly to refresh my memory from last year. I'm also taking advantage of the time to do more research-related activities and I go into class with perhaps a more distracted mind. I don't have the 15-minute drive to work to focus on the class I'm about to teach; instead, I'm doing other things until 5 minutes before class. I've learned that I have to make myself focus on the upcoming class for at least 10 minutes before class so that I can "get my head into it" and mentally prepare for it. Lately I've seen a big difference in taking this time before class to review everything or not. I've learned that if I go into a class overly confident, relying on my experience from last year, it does not go as well as if I take the time to review the plan and materials in a more systematic way. This realization has come to me through a bit of reflection on why some classes go better than others. I've felt rather frustrated when I've got to a point in a lesson and given instructions that weren't completely clear because I hadn't reviewed the materials in detail beforehand. At other times, I feel very satisfied and happy when a class goes well, students are engaged, and I can see their results. I've also realized that sharing my classes with another teacher tends to force me to reflect on what I'll be doing and focus on how I'll do it because we keep a weekly calendar of what we'll be covering in each class and we tend to discuss it from time to time. However, at the same time, it allows me to be more relaxed because I know that if I'm planning to cover about the same contents as my colleague, I should be on the right track. And I don't take the time to go through the materials and consider the timing of each of the activities.

Final lesson learned: A detailed review of the class I'll be teaching is essential before teaching the class, whether online or in person. And during this review, it's good to think about how each activity will play out in the classroom or on the online platform. This way, when I'm managing the sharing of documents, microphone and camera, breakout rooms and more, I'll already have one part of the class, the plan, under control.

Appendix 9: Sample (Initial) Findings Matrix (Ana)

Theme	Code Category	Related Codes	Evidence	Further Comments
disposition to professional development	hard work & academic success	attending many extracurricular activities	'hard work' was written as one of the roots of her Tree of Life drawing (Ana, TLD) My parents insisted on, my mom especially wanted me to study music, I didn't enjoy music very much so finally, I convinced her to quit music, I don't think I was a good musician anyway, didn't enjoy. Regarding gymnastics, I really enjoyed it but there was a turning point when I had to decide if I want to become like more professional so that way I had to train huge amount of hours I decided not to do it because I had to sacrifice so many other things. And for me, it was a hobby at the beginning, it wasn't like competition yes, and regarding English my parents, at that time it was important to learn English, now English has an important status in Spain, but at that time, I was a kid and ok yeah they know English but it wasn't like wow. So, yeah I guess they saw it as important for my future career so I started learning English, but as you said, it was something extracurricular, so it was like, I was very small, so it was like we learned through games, watch films, and things like that, so it wasn't very academic or very serious. (Ana, TLI)	
		parents were strict about academic achievement & getting a university degree	I could tell that my achievement in school and everything related to school was important to my parents. They care because my mother was a teacher herself so she used to help my brother and me with our homework and they were very present but they were also I think strict both of my parents had gone to university so somehow we felt like this was like the only option or the best option because all you need a degree to have a job this is what I learned as a kid, which I don't agree 100 percent right now, but I guess this was because I was a very hardworking kid and I am a hard-working person I am very perfectionist I think I got that from my parents, too (Ana, TLI)	
	being a perfectionist	being a hardworking kid	I was a very hardworking kid and I am a hard-working person I am very perfectionist I think I got that from my parents, too. I am very perfectionist and everything I do has to be not perfect because I am learning that this doesn't exist but the best that I can do. (Ana, TLI)	
		having strong work ethics	I am very perfectionist and everything I do has to be not perfect because I am learning that this doesn't exist but the best that I can do. So I whenever I have to do anything related to work or it's not like 'oh, I don't want to do it', it's like I always have this study or work ethics where if you have to do it, you have to do it and that's it. (Ana, TLI)	
	the importance of improving oneself	talking to her students about the importance of improving oneself	I think this [referring to her being hardworking and having strong work ethics] has shaped somehow my experience and I think in the way I expect my students to be hard-working as well because I think it's important for their future careers, it's important to know that this profession you have to be up to date with the knowledge, with the technologies, with things like that. It's important to work every day, to work hard because they have, as I normally tell them, they have in their hands what is most precious, which are kids, so they need to be very careful with them	
			and they need to make sure that they are doing the right things and update and they are competent enough to perform these tasks. (Ana, TLI)	
	appreciating practitioner research	reading / attending events related to practitioner research	I've spent some time reading scientific articles but also I like, because I am a teacher trainer, so sometimes the reality and academic articles are two worlds apart, so I try to attend conferences and read articles not only from professional and big names researchers but also from teachers who are with kids and in their classroom with the kids in the real world. (Ana, TLI)	