



UNIVERSIDAD ESTATAL PENÍNSULA DE SANTA ELENA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES
PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

**“SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS’ PERCEPTIONS ON EFL PRE-SERVICE
TEACHERS’ PRACTICUM”**
RESEARCH PROJECT

As a prerequisite to obtain a:

**BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN
LANGUAGES**

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Advisor's Approval

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Sincerely,

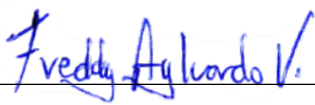


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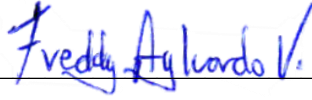


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Declaration

The information and content in this degree and research work are my responsibility; the intellectual property belongs to Universidad Estatal de Santa Elena.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work especially to my parents, Celia and Freddy, who have always supported me unconditionally; their support has been one of the cornerstones that has made this moment possible, thanks to the guidance they have offered me thus far, and to my sisters Jessica and Gabriela, who have helped me along this journey, always believing in me and encouraging me to strive, both academically and personally, to be a better person.

Abstract

Pre-service teaching practicum plays a fundamental role in the professional integration of new pre-service teachers, a process in which school principals are key figures, facilitating the administrative arrangements that allow aspiring professionals to perform their duties effectively. This research was conducted to explore school administrators' perceptions of English pre-service teachers' practicum, focusing on areas for improvement. A qualitative methodology, specifically a phenomenological study, was selected to allow for a deeper analysis. Data collection involved interviewing six school administrators from private schools in the Santa Elena Province, Ecuador, that have partnership agreements with UPSE regarding these pre-service teachers' practicum. Based on the results and the literature review, the insights provided by the school administrators offer essential suggestions for improving important aspects of these programs.

Keywords: School Administrator, EFL pre-service teacher, EFL pre-service teaching practicum, school leadership, professional competencies.

Resumen

Las prácticas preprofesionales desempeñan una parte fundamental en la integración profesional de nuevos practicantes, proceso mediante el cual los directores de las instituciones educativas tienen un rol fundamental facilitando las gestiones administrativas para que los nuevos aspirantes puedan desempeñar sus funciones efectivamente. Se realizó esta investigación con el fin de explorar las percepciones de los administradores escolares sobre las prácticas preprofesionales en inglés, enfocándose en qué aspectos se podrían mejorar. Para un análisis más profundo se usó el método cualitativo y un estudio fenomenológico. Adicionalmente, para la recolección de datos se empleó un cuestionario de 11 preguntas semiabiertas para entrevistar a 6 directores escolares de instituciones privadas que tienen convenio con la UPSE sobre prácticas preprofesionales, de la Provincia de Santa Elena, Ecuador. Asimismo, enfocado en los resultados y la revisión bibliográfica hecha se determinó que los aportes por parte de los administradores escolares sobre sus percepciones de las prácticas preprofesionales representan sugerencias esenciales en que se podría mejorar importantes aspectos de estos programas.

Palabras claves: Administrador escolar, formación de futuros docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera, prácticas preprofesionales de futuros docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera, liderazgo escolar, competencias profesionales.

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Introduction

The pre-service teaching practicum is a fundamental basis in the development of professional competences of future educators, constituting a bridge between theoretical knowledge and the complexities of the dynamics of real classroom environments. As an essential part of professional success, pre-service teaching practicum allows practitioners to gain experience in performing all the pedagogical knowledge learnt within universities into the classroom. In that sense, pre-service teaching practicum is an indispensable step that most aspirants need to transition in order to acquire the necessary expertise in their professional fields.

Within the educational scope, specifically in the context of private schools in Santa Elena, there exist entities that regulate pre-service teaching practicum and establish parameters with the purpose of making practitioners comply with their duties. As a central part of this regulation process, school administrators play a key role in pre-service teaching practicum by facilitating the practicum, exercising influence in the placement, and professional integration of pre-service teachers. For that reason, it is important to understand the performance of practitioners from the school administrators' perspective, which may reveal the most common challenges and barriers most pre-service teachers' practicum faced within their professional integration.

In addition to these challenges, the lack of good communication between schools and universities, logistics and administration such as infrastructure and limited resources, and a mismatch between pre-service teachers' academic knowledge and what is faced in EFL classrooms, raises concerns about school management and leadership. With this in mind, it is undeniable to think about the way in which these problems could be solved, or how the parties

involved in the pre-service teaching practicum could solve those prominent gaps and administrative mismatches.

For these reasons, this study has the purpose of exploring school administrators' perceptions on EFL pre-service teaching practicum, considering the pedagogical performance, main challenges, and mismatch between university teaching model and the practical realities that shape EFL pre-service teaching practicum just to determine its incidence in the practices. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that there are limited studies about the concerns of these problems and its impact on institutions and education itself.

Therefore, this study has sought for relevant information aligned with Constructivism, Sociocultural Theory, Reflective practice, and Experiential learning, which all explain how knowledge can be obtained through social interactions and experiential practices. Due to the objectives of this study, a qualitative research and phenomenological design was selected to explore the perceptions of school administrators, who can clarify what has been stated in this study, thereby ensuring the quality of information obtained. It is essential to mention that the data was collected through in-person interviews with eleven open-ended questions to maintain the accuracy of the responses.

The findings revealed vital information related to the pre-service teachers' performance, highlighting important factors that hinder their overall professional success; as a result, showing how real practices differ from what has been taught in the preparation stage. Thus, emphasizing the crucial need of aligning institutional curricula with the practical competencies demanded by school administrators, this way ensuring university programs reflect requirements that most schools demand from practitioners, ultimately noting some adjustments universities need to provide to their pre-service teachers.

To conclude, this project has built on relevant information which analyzes and reflects on pre-service teachers' practicum following the requirements aligned with local contexts.

Therefore, it is suggested to explore this field of study for a deeper understanding of pre-service teachers' practicum on EFL learners and its relationship with professional development, by exploring different perspectives in order to comprehend this topic accurately.

Chapter I

Problem Statement

The teaching practicum is an essential component for future educators, allowing them to apply the knowledge they have acquired in various settings, such as schools. This stage fosters the development of professional competencies while facilitating the transition from student to teacher (Heryatun and Septiana, 2020). This stage is a perfect opportunity for the pre-service teacher to apply all the knowledge acquired in school settings, gaining not only experience but also developing various skills.

During teacher training, students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are exposed to various theories, methodologies, and perspectives that shape their professional growth as future educators. The teaching practicum program is a compulsory practice course credited by the faculty after students successfully enrolled in teaching-related courses (Suhandra and Ariawan, 2023). Therefore, teaching practices represent a crucial stage in this process, allowing students to apply the knowledge in real classroom contexts and strengthen their teaching skills through practical experience and reflection. Moreover, pre-service teaching practicum reflects an essential stage in the preparation of future educators, offering an opportunity to apply diverse knowledge in various classrooms and experience teaching competencies firsthand through practice and reflection.

According to Maharani and Fithriani (2023), through pre-service teaching practicum, pre-service teachers are able to develop their skills such as critical analysis and reflection which are fundamental to their professional growth. In addition, principals play an essential role in organizing practicum experiences for pre-service teachers. Aketch et al. (2025), argue that the direct participation of school principals is essential to ensure the success of pre-service teachers,

given their focus and corresponding vision on student participation on practicum, thus promoting professional skills. Indeed, there are various interconnected factors that influence the training of pre-service teachers, including linguistic, supervisory, pedagogical and institutional, which can either facilitate or hinder professional growth during teaching practicums (Asrida et al., 2025).

There are constraints imposed by school administrators that directly impact pre-service teachers, with rigorous rules and regulations that must be strictly adhered to (Riffo-Salgado, 2024). Particularly, these guidelines present a lack of communication between universities and school administrators, administrative and logistical challenges, and the mismatch between what universities teach and what schools need. However, the guidelines presented are shaped by the institutional framework, which is influenced by the perceptions of school administrators who play a decisive role in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

Studies have shown that this is seen as a risk to the professional development of pre-service teachers due to a lack of communication between universities and school administrators. According to Bibi et al. (2025), without strong coordination between universities and school administrators, pre-service teachers may exhibit ineffective management resulting in poor practical experience. This lack of interaction underscores the importance of school administrators, whose role is essential for teaching training.

Logistical and administrative challenges generally have a direct impact on the work of school administrators during pre-service teaching practicum. Aketch et al. (2025) state that the administrative and logistical challenges that principals face during pre-service teaching practicum, such as insufficient infrastructure and teaching materials, also affect student teachers. In EFL contexts, when resources such as technological devices are absent, it directly affects the

implementation of L2 methodologies where the academic infrastructure is involved; consequently, refraining from effective teaching practices.

Additionally, in the Ecuadorian context, the mismatch between what universities teach and what schools actually need directly affects the institutional management of school administrators because the needs identified at the school are often not met by pre-service teachers, in which cases there exists a gap between what they have learned at the university and the realities of the school. As geopolitical variables indicate, future Ecuadorian teachers of English as a foreign language frequently face significant challenges in reconciling pedagogical beliefs with classroom practices, particularly in the development of communication skills (Reiban Garnica et al., 2024). Consequently, school principals are affected by the pedagogical limitations of pre-service teachers, which may reflect a mismatch between what universities offer and what schools require during pre-service teaching practicum.

Given these factors, there is a clear gap in pre-professional training for school principals and in the effective management of pre-service teaching practicum within schools. This directly affects pre-service teachers, stemming from perspectives such as a lack of communication between universities and administrators, insufficient resources for quality teaching, and the mismatch between what universities teach and what schools actually need, a situation that primarily impacts Ecuador.

Problem Formulation

Main Question

How do school administrators perceive the pedagogical aspects of EFL pre-service teachers in private educational institutions?

Specific Questions

1. What are the perceptions of school administrators concerning pre-service teaching practicum?
2. What are the main challenges encountered by school administrators during pre-service teaching practicum?
3. How does the mismatch between the university teaching model and the practical realities shape EFL pre-service teaching practicum?

Justification

The importance of this research lies in addressing limited research on school administrators' perceptions of EFL pre-service teaching practicum. School administrators play an important role that directly influences these practices, like the implementation and organization of the teaching practicum. Bibi et al. (2025) state that a school principal plays an important role at the school contributing to pre-service teaching practicum, including planning, coordination, and implementation.

According to Asrida et al. (2025), EFL pre-service teaching practicum provides an opportunity for future teachers to apply the knowledge they have acquired about various pedagogical theories, thereby developing different teaching styles and classroom management strategies. Therefore, exploring and understanding school principals' perceptions of these types of experiences can make a valuable contribution to the conditions under which future teachers develop various professional competencies. As Jenssen and Haara (2024) point out, research on

practicum experiences is essential because it provides insights into how to improve the quality of experiences for pre-service teachers.

Moreover, this study is developed with the sole intention of identifying the perceptions of school administrators on pre-service teaching practicum, this way contributing to existing literature on management from an empirical perspective of school administration, contributing significantly to school practices and providing valuable information for the future improvement of teaching practicum programs.

Objectives

General Objective

To analyze the perceptions of school administrators regarding the pedagogical performance of EFL pre-service teachers in private educational institutions that hold an agreement with UPSE.

Specific Objectives

1. To explore the perceptions of school administrators regarding pre-service teaching practicum.
2. To identify the main challenges encountered by school administrators during pre-service teaching practicum.
3. To analyze how the mismatch between the university teaching model and the practical school realities shapes EFL pre-service teaching practicum.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

Background

The theoretical framework is founded on a contextual, theoretical, and legal basis which allows understanding and supporting the information provided in this paper. Since school administration is not an isolated topic, but a factor that converges with pre-service teachers, especially when administration and teaching meet as a single unit. For that reason, the importance of highlighting the international and national background can provide perceptions about the reality faced in most institutions, particularly in EFL contexts where school administrators are responsible for managing pre-service teachers' acceptance and placement.

In the international background, it was found that the lack of communication and disconnection are closely related within educational contexts, where school administrators often are much worried about the compliance of their administrative duties. According to Sayed et al. (2026), effective pre-service practices occur when the principal actors such as universities, school administrators, and pre-service teachers communicate with the sole intention of reaching their common goals. In that sense, where administrators are completely unaware of what is happening within their institutions, it leads to problems such as not knowing the level of teachers in training, which directly affects the institutional and educational quality (du Plessis and Razmjooe, 2026).

In the national context, most educational institutions face numerous challenges, both pedagogical and institutional, which affect the management responsibilities of school administrators, thus indirectly affecting overall institutions and staff members. According to Chireac and Guamán Coronel (2026), principals of public schools have highlighted a lack of

competencies in pedagogical innovation, technological tools integration, and the application of teaching methodologies. It was also pointed out a prominent gap between the skills needed to address current educational challenges and actual teaching practices required. This mismatch in the training of future teachers can negatively affect pre-service teachers, which is a cause for major concerns in the Ecuadorian context. In this sense, school administrators perceive a disconnection between what is taught in university and the requirements of schools, which can influence the educational practices of schools.

Pedagogical Basis

Prakash Chand (2023) argues that constructivism is a significant theory in teaching and learning, as it enables new insights to be gained by students through previously experienced situations. Upon delving into this perspective, the entire process focuses on the construction of the subject's knowledge, who must inquire, reflect, and participate in their own formation, creating more practical and meaningful environments (Erawati and Adnyana, 2024).

In the case of pre-service teachers, this theory relates perfectly due to the fact that, when faced with practical experiences or real-world situations, it helps them construct their own pedagogical knowledge by integrating the theory acquired at university with the reality of the classroom. In this way, by transforming that knowledge into a tool that strengthens strategies and outcomes, it facilitates that the teacher develops the required professional competencies.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is widely recognized as an essential component of cognitive development, positing that learning does not occur in isolation but rather in the company of others, that is, it occurs by socializing and working with the support of others (Massa, 2024). Likewise, Sarmiento-Campos et al. (2022) point out that a beginner, by working hand in hand with an experienced person, is able to develop and expand their abilities in various

settings. These perspectives emphasize the idea that effective learning must involve collaborative interactions in order to establish support when unexpected disruptions occur within educational contexts, serving as a scaffold that pre-service teachers require in their professional process.

Following John Dewey's theory of reflective practice, Nuareni and Heryatun (2021) assert that this perspective helps analyze actions and identify areas for improvement, enabling teachers to evaluate themselves and make conclusions about their own teaching practices. For this process to be effective, educators must develop their capacity for openness to different points of view, be aware of the consequences and impact of their pedagogical decisions, and, finally, commit to self-evaluation as educators (Marshall et al., 2021).

In the same way, Harvey et al. (2020) assert that reflection occurs before, during, and after learning, which demonstrates how these processes apply to pre-service teaching practicum, since the practitioners must plan before class, adapt to any changes that occur during class, and, consequently, evaluate their results.

Rahmi (2024) mentions that experiential learning is a dynamic model that allows linking theory to the real world, and where the student and their experiences are the focus of attention. This model is based on four principles: concrete experience, which seeks student participation in new practical situations; reflective observation, which allows a holistic analysis of the experiences gained; abstract conceptualization, which focuses on building those observations into logical concepts; and finally, experimentation, where those concepts are applied to guide future practice in new settings (Villarroel Henríquez et al., 2025).

In the context of teaching, these principles are relevant to pre-service teaching practicum, since future teachers not only need to acquire theoretical knowledge but also to experience the

reality of the classroom, that is, to put what they have learned into practice, reflect on it, and make any modifications to their pedagogy as needed.

Theoretical Basis

Educational Leadership

Educational leadership is an essential pillar in educational institutions, as it influences school management, teacher performance, and the achievement of institutional goals. According to Shain et al. (2024), effective leadership impacts the entire school community, thus for teaching staff it is important to focus on their professional development and on creating environments that contribute to the institution's growth. For this reason, various schools adopt leadership models to guide decision-making. However, Katsikas (2024) explains that selecting and adhering to a single model can affect academic success. Therefore, it is ideal that each institution combines several models that fulfill its needs, thereby improving educational quality.

Among the most recognized leadership practices are transformational leadership, which seeks to stimulate teachers' interest in order to achieve shared institutional goals; instructional leadership, where educational goals, curriculum planning, and teaching supervision are central to the model; and finally, distributed leadership, which allows responsibilities to be shared among different members of the community, contributing to decision-making, collaboration, and the continuous improvement of the school (Day et al., 2020). Together, these models offer strategies that contribute to strengthening school management and developing effective educational environments. By understanding how these models are developed and implemented within an institution, the criteria and perspective used by administrators to observe and evaluate pre-service teachers can be better comprehended.

Table 1*Key Recognized Practices in Educational Leadership*

Leadership Practice	Main Focus	Key Characteristics	Contribution to Schools
Transformational leadership	Leaders build an environment of empowerment and collaboration within the organization.	Establish high standards. Strengthening community relationships. Prioritize student development.	Transform the school into a community where everyone works together for academic success.
Instructional leadership	School administrators strengthen the professional competences of the staff.	Continuous professional learning. Clear educational vision. Guidance and support.	Boost the quality of teaching and the continuous improvement of the school.
Distributed leadership	School communities share leadership responsibilities.	Shared decision-making. Clarity of roles. Collaborative learning.	Encourage inclusion and collective problem-solving.

Note. Self-elaboration based on Sasan et al. (2023) for transformational leadership; He et al. (2024) for instructional leadership; and Nadeem (2024) for distributed leadership.

Administrative Management

School administrative management is the set of processes that ensure the daily operation of a school proceeds in an orderly and proper manner. These processes, as described by Awolola (2023), range from the development of internal policies to supervision and are manifested

through activities such as joint decision-making, the design and organization of teacher training programs, and staff evaluation, among others. In this sense, administrative management through processes such as coordinating and authorizing practicums is how they build their initial perception of the practicum's impact on the school.

School Administrators' Role in Practicum

In the practicum, the role of school administrators is crucial, as their function is not limited to supervision but also has a direct impact on the future teacher's experience. According to Bao and Tran (2022), the influence of school administrators can be either positive or negative, depending on the relationship that develops between the intern and supervisor. These authors state that when supervisors provide proactive and optimistic support, it creates a motivational environment and mutual respect, where communication is constant and fluid with the pre-service teacher; however, when school administrators perceive this commitment as a burden, the pre-service teacher's learning and experience are hindered, complicating their professional development in a real-world setting.

EFL Pre-service Teachers' Practicum

In education, Teaching Practice is an important requirement in the curriculum. At this stage, pre-service teachers connect all the acquired theory, putting it into practice in a real educational setting (Lei, 2023). This experience becomes an indispensable activity for every university student as it helps them prepare for the job market, contributing to their personal and professional development.

This academic process faces greater complexity, especially in the area of English as a foreign language. Pakpahan (2023) points out that trainee teachers encounter internal challenges, such as classroom management and the need to demonstrate high linguistic competence in the

target language, as well as external factors, such as lack of motivation and low English proficiency of the institution's students. This demands that pre-service teachers constantly restructure their teaching methods to overcome these communicative complications, which shape the way they are observed and evaluated by school administrators.

There are several characteristics of EFL pre-service teachers that contribute to the effectiveness of their pre-service teaching practicum. According to Huyen Pan et al. (2024), the EFL pre-service teacher demonstrates effective organizational skills by seeking feedback, working continuously with mentors and tutors, and adapting various materials to meet current needs. After a class, student teachers generally opt for feedback from other teachers or mentors or engage in self-reflection; this suggests that continuous collaboration fosters personal and professional development. Additionally, a key characteristic is the student teacher's effort to tailor adaptive resources for the classroom.

EFL Teacher Identity

According to Shi et al. (2025), teacher identity constitutes a process that involves both the understanding teachers have of themselves and the way they interpret their role within the sociocultural context in which they develop professionally. This process is constructed and evolves through social experiences with other members of the educational community (Hashemi et al., 2021). In the case of future English teachers, professional identity is continuously developed during their pre-professional practices, as this preparation allows them to take on real teaching responsibilities, strengthen their understanding of the teaching role, and effectively operate in the educational field.

EFL Teacher Competences

In EFL, there are two fundamental competencies that encompass the profile of the English teacher. Aulia (2021) states that the competence every teacher must have is pedagogical, as it is a mandatory requirement for managing the classroom, which involves mastering skills such as designing interactive materials, assessment, and developing a reflective practice to learn from mistakes. On the other hand, linguistic competence is also important. Deregözü (2022) mentions that the teacher must have a minimum level of English proficiency, such as B2, resulting in smooth performance and highly fluent interactions. Therefore, merging these two competencies enables the teacher to conduct their class without problems while using English as the language of instruction.

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

Currently, institutional leaders increasingly emphasize the importance of pre-service teachers integrating the TPACK model into their classrooms. This model, as expressed by Dos Santos and Luque-Argulló (2025), requires a complex interaction between language knowledge, pedagogical strategies, and technology. This is why the authorities do not simply look for the isolated use of digital tools but rather evaluate how practitioners combine these three dimensions to improve language learning.

Likewise, mastering this model allows future educators to optimize the school's resources and find creative ways to deal with infrastructure limitations. For this reason, pre-service teachers demonstrate excellent management of the digital classroom, while meeting the high methodological standards set by institutional leaders through the successful implementation of the TPACK approach.

Legal Basis

To understand teacher training within the Ecuadorian education system, it is essential to examine the legal definitions that govern practices. National regulations describe the conditions under which future educators are trained and must develop their practical skills in institutions. According to Article 42 of CES (2022) guidelines, pre-professional practices are pedagogical tasks oriented toward the framework of the application of knowledge and the development of professional skills, which can take place in private or public institutions related to each university degree program. These pre-service teaching practicums may be carried out through plans, projects, or programs assigned by the higher education institution (HEI).

To ensure excellent development and effectiveness of pre-service teaching practicum, a certain number of hours and periodic evaluation by the HEI are required. As stated in Articles 43 and 44 of CES (2022), at least 240 hours will be required, allocated by each HEI; therefore, during this time, the student's performance must be evaluated by the academic staff of each HEI according to its schedule, ensuring compliance with academic performance through the knowledge acquired during the completed university years.

It is essential to recognize the objectives of UPSE University regarding pre-service teachers' practicum, as established in Article 5 of its regulations:

- a) To enable students to engage with the realities of the activities they will perform as professionals.
- b) To provide students with the opportunity to learn about and use current technologies.
- c) To gain in-depth knowledge of the processes that are the focus of their academic training.
- d) To develop links between the university and community organizations, businesses, or

public or private institutions.

e) To provide a service to the community. (UPSE, 2021).

For future teachers, it is essential to understand the requirements they must meet in order to practice their profession at different institutions, as specified by the university. According to UPSE (2021), the requirements for an institution to be suitable for the pre-service teaching practicum must ensure that it is legally compliant in all aspects and has an adequate location with good structural organization so that pre-service teachers can offer their educational services.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

This research aims to analyze school administrators' perceptions of pre-service teachers withing educational institutions. Therefore, this research employs qualitative research design, as it investigates deeper into the perspectives, experiences, and realities of school principals in educational settings. Aspects such as instruments, population, type of research, and methods to be used are found in this chapter.

Method

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a scientific method that seeks to achieve a comprehensive understanding of social phenomena through an examination that focuses on the most relevant links between them. By observing it from different perspectives, one achieves a more practical understanding that encompasses more practical solutions in its components. (Lim, 2024). For this study, this type of qualitative approach was chosen because it will allow the researcher to conduct a more in-depth analysis of school administrators' perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers on practicum.

Type of Research

This research uses a phenomenological approach to analyze the perceptions of school administrators regarding pre-service teachers at different private schools. Tavakol and Sandar, (2025) state that a phenomenological study has the main function of revealing experiences of a specific phenomenon by focusing primarily on interpretations and implications based on these types of experiences. Therefore, when analyzing personal interpretations, it is necessary to

explore the contexts in which these types of interactions can occur because most of the time it depends on their environment.

In addition, when analyzing personal interpretations, it is necessary to explore in what environments these types of interactions can occur, since most of the time it depends on the environment, such as the institutional environment such as colleges or schools. Zeng et al. (2023) argue that all educational phenomenological research methods focus on specific aspects of common experiences, especially reflection on characteristic events in academic settings. For this reason, this research conducted open-ended questions to gather information about each participant's perspectives and perceptions.

Data Collection Techniques

According to Jane (2025), a one-on-one interview focuses primarily on collecting specific data with open-ended questions through direct communication between the researcher and the participant, characterized by a more personalized interview that allows for a deeper exploration of the information required about their experience and personal opinions.

This questionnaire has 11 open-ended question that will let administrator share their perspectives and perceptions. In that regard, the Questionnaire is taken presential and is written and recorded for a suitable analysis. In interviews, recordings are frequently used where the data is transcribed through a record of questions and answers, which will be analyzed later. (McLeod, 2024).

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is an essential part of research because it helps in collecting the most important data highlighted in the research, which is why it is crucial to ensure an optimal design to avoid errors (Taherdoost, 2022). The questionnaire is an essential method that serves to collect

the most relevant data for this research, efficiently collecting and avoiding a margin of error when transcribing the answers.

Type of questions

The Questionnaire is structured with 11 open-ended questions, which are used for a presential interview, according to the participant's schedule. The purpose of this type of question is to obtain different perceptions from school administrators over the pre-service teachers in their institutions.

Data Collection Processing and Resources

Table 2

Data Collection Processing and Resources

Questions	Justification
What?	Interviews
Where?	Different private schools in the towns of Santa Elena, La Libertad, and Salinas.
When?	May, 2026
How?	One-on-one interview (11 open-ended questions)
What for?	To describe the perceptions of school administrators on pre-services teacher's performance.

Population and Sample

The interviews will be conducted to six school administrators from different private institutions that hold agreements with UPSE, administrators who have hosted UPSE EFL student teachers for at least one academic term. These professionals have extensive experience on the

institutions in the role as school administrator and the pre-services teacher programs with different universities and programs not only for PINE. Regarding the educational levels at these private institutions, some offer only primary education, while others provide secondary education and even extend up to the high school level. The survey will be essential, as it requires school administrators' insights into pre-service teaching practicum in order to develop various ways to improve these programs,

This research employs a qualitative approach to analyze data collected from individual interviews. The recorded and transcribed responses from school administrators were systematically examined to identify categories such as perceptions based on their experiences regarding the EFL pre-service teaching practicum and performance of EFL pre-service teacher; institutional challenges and collaboration during these internships; the alignment between the university and the training provided; and the practical needs of the schools. The responses were interpreted within each category to identify the perceptions and experiences expressed by the participants.

Furthermore, to ensure the rigor and quality of this study, criteria for credibility and rigor specific to qualitative research were applied. Credibility was established through audio-recorded and verbatim-transcribed interviews, while confirmability was maintained by using a standardized questionnaire consisting of 11 open-ended questions; this approach allowed the data to emerge directly from the experiences of administrators at private institutions in Santa Elena, La Libertad, and Salinas, thereby minimizing researcher bias.

Chapter IV

Analysis and Findings

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of responses obtained through interviews with six school administrators who have agreements with UPSE and prior experience supporting and observing the development of pre-service English teachers. The findings derived from the eleven open-ended questions posed in six one-to-one interviews are synthesized into a generalized interpretation, showing similarities Exploring Cooperating Teachers' Perceptions

About the Role and Purpose of Practicum in Teacher Educations and differing opinions on practicum for pre-service teachers. Exploring Cooperating Teachers' Perceptions About the Role and Purpose of Practicum in Teacher Education Exploring Cooperating Teachers' Perceptions About the Role and Purpose of Practicum in Teacher Education.

Interpretation of Data from the One-to-one Interviews

1. How would you describe your overall experience with EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Practicum?

Most of the school administrators describe the experience with EFL Pre-service teachers in a positive way, highlighting that the pre-services come with prior knowledge and preparation that allows them to adapt more quickly in the institution, and above all, in the classroom. The authorities also emphasized their willingness regarding everything that is asked by the pre-service teacher, managing to be a great help to the school.

Moreover, EFL pre-service teaching practicum is considered formative for both the school administrator and the pre-service teacher because there is a process of mutual learning, and it helps the institution stay up to date in a country where education constantly undergoes pedagogical changes. However, one of the authorities points out that some teachers during their

practicum adopt a disinterested attitude, just doing the bare minimum, and do not prioritize or take advantage of the opportunity to develop their professional skills.

These ideas align with the findings of Reiban Garnica et al. (2024), who mention that exposure to practice for pre-service teachers, who already possess theoretical knowledge, allows them to develop their professional competencies and fosters mutual learning and benefits between educational institutions and pre-service teachers.

2. What are your main expectations concerning the role of EFL pre-service teachers within this institution?

In educational institutions, various expectations regarding the role of future EFL teachers are evident. One of those expectations is intervention in the holistic development of the students. Similarly, the school administrators indicate a desire for pre-service English teachers who are willing, perseverant, and capable of using innovative teaching strategies and updated technological tools in the classroom to strengthen students' English proficiency and promote meaningful learning. This demonstrates that institutions envision the future EFL teacher as a well-rounded professional who is fully engaged in the training and well-being of their students.

These findings are consistent with those of Vanek et al. (2021), who argue that the teacher must possess personal characteristics and professional competencies that allow for a significant contribution to the education and preparation of students.

3. How do you perceive the performance of the observation stage of EFL pre-service teachers in the institution?

In general, the interviewees highlighted perceiving good performance from the future teachers during the observation stage. They assert that this experience, despite being purely observational, has allowed EFL pre-service teachers to support the teaching staff by sharing

current methodologies to strengthen the teaching process. In addition, active participation and greater familiarity with the reality of the educational context are highlighted. This indicates that the academic training they receive at the university provides them with the theoretical foundations to move toward practice. However, it is also mentioned that several pre-service teachers exhibit a fearful and introverted attitude during this stage, which highlights the need to strengthen their confidence, as it is an essential component for effective classroom performance.

In line with these findings, Rasheed (2025) argues that preparing pre-service teachers with theoretical knowledge facilitates the connection between theory and practice, favoring its application in real EFL teaching scenarios.

4. How do you perceive the pedagogical performance of EFL pre-service teachers in the institution, in the stage of teaching?

The school administrators interviewed stated that they had not encountered any difficulties during the teaching practicum. They reported that the EFL pre-service teachers performed well within the institution and, above all, in the classroom. The responses also highlight the ability of pre-service teachers to adapt easily to the educational context, especially when they had previously completed the observation practicums at the same institution. This positive perception reveals that ongoing exposure to real school contexts fosters adaptation, confidence, and professional development among future teachers, which aligns with the idea that progressive immersion in realistic environments helps pre-service teachers develop practical skills, enabling them to meet the demands of the classroom more effectively (Eğinli & Solhi, 2021).

5. According to your point of view, what are the most common challenges that you face when selecting EFL pre-service teachers in your institution?

In this question, the most challenges observed were related to factors such as attitudinal, pedagogical, and professional image (dress code). The interest and commitment of pre-service teachers were mentioned as an attitudinal aspect of regard, while the pedagogical aspects consisted of classroom management and the ability to perform in real teaching contexts. Likewise, the professional image aligns with the teacher's projection as a reference within the institution was also an important aspect mentioned by the interviewees.

All these elements, together, are interpreted as challenges associated with the selection process of interns because institutions find it difficult to identify whether pre-service teachers possess the attitudes, pedagogical competencies, and level of professionalism necessary to operate effectively in the institution. This is consistent with the idea of Kasonde and Chipindi, (2020) who point out that the selection process does not always allow recognizing certain characteristics, such as commitment or professionalism in interns, as the absence of direct interaction prior to the internships makes this evaluation difficult. absence of direct interaction prior to the internships makes this evaluation difficult.

6. What administrative or logistical challenges does the school face when accepting and integrating EFL pre-service teachers in the institution?

In this question, the responses obtained show various administrative and logistical challenges faced by institutions regarding the integration of EFL pre-service teachers. One of them consists of the availability of slots, which forces some institutions to reject the participation of several interns. Along with that challenge, school administrators express that the limited space in the institution, the organization, and distribution of the pre-service teachers constitute another

difficulty when integrating them, as they emphasize the need for each pre-services teacher to have supervision and support during their practices, so they can improve their teaching skills. Technological resources were another challenge noted because the limitation and management of such materials can affect the development of the practicum.

This shows that the integration of EFL pre-service teachers does not depend solely on the willingness of institutions to receive them, but also on the existence of organizational and material conditions that ensure a quality training experience, which aligns with the importance of adequate coordination and institutional capacity in practicum programs (Li et al., 2023).

7. Based on your experience, how do you normally describe the communication and collaboration between the school and university?

The responses to this question reveal different opinions. Communication and collaboration between schools and universities have a positive relationship, since some school administrators indicate that the level of interaction has been primarily collaborative and assertive, which has allowed the pre-service teachers to enter the institution and strengthen their pedagogical skills in real contexts. However, there are also subtle opinions that highlight the existence of limited communication process, which according to the interviewees, occurs only through emails and digital platforms, creating a notorious gap between formal communication and the expected in-person support, which is essential during the teaching practicum process. In this sense, it is suggested that, although there is a basis of inter-institutional cooperation, there is still a lack of continuous follow-up by the university during the practicum execution period.

Just as Kula and Decmirci Güler (2021) affirmed, it is essential to ensure the active participation of all the actors involved, since strengthening communication between the

university and educational institutions helps promote spaces where ideas are exchanged, as well as joint planning and evaluation processes among the agents involved in practical training.

8. How would you assess the alignment between university education and the practical needs of schools?

School administrators have different perspectives on the alignment between what the university teaches and the practical needs of the schools. Some believe that pre-service teachers appropriately adapt to institutional standards and that there is good theoretical training. However, others believe that there is a moderate or insufficient alignment, arguing that university education does not always adapt to the diverse educational realities, especially regarding working with young children and applying knowledge in real classroom situations.

Despite the fact that university education offers robust theoretical and methodological foundations, these results indicate that there are still challenges in adapting teacher training to the particularities and demands of different educational contexts. Therefore, Gunawan (2025) points out that teacher training must integrate theoretical knowledge and practical experiences, thus preparing pre-service teachers for effective English teaching, especially in early childhood education.

9. What differences do you see between what is taught in universities and what the institution requires?

In this question, the interviewees mentioned that the differences lie in the fact that the university emphasizes theory, while the schools require a more practical approach, adaptation to different student levels, and management of diverse contexts. On the other hand, school administrators have varied opinions regarding the preparation of pre-service teachers. Some consider that pre-service teachers do have sufficient knowledge to practice, while others indicate

that preparation is mainly consolidated through classroom experience, where their ability to adapt to the educational reality is evident.

This is consistent with Ghufroon (2024), who argues that the practicum is a space where the intern puts into action the knowledge acquired at the university and faces real situations in the school context, which require adaptability and the development of pedagogical competencies to effectively respond to the demands of the classroom.

10. Which competencies do you believe require more emphasis in EFL pre-service teachers during their university training?

According to school administrators, the competencies that require the most development in EFL pre-service teachers are mainly related to pedagogy, technology, and language because these allow for effective classroom management, the creation of more dynamic learning environments, the proper integration of digital tools, and the facilitation of students' understanding and acquisition of English.

These demands reflect the current requirements of institutions, for that reason, Sukyadi et al. (2025) holds that it is essential for teacher training institutions to redesign their curricula to meet the demands of an ever-changing education system, so that pre-service teachers are better prepared to face the real educational context.

11. What changes would help better align university training with the practical realities of schools?

The interviewees agree that it is necessary to make adjustments to university training. First of all, they suggest strengthening the preparation of EFL pre-service teachers regarding special educational needs such as autism, dyslexia, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Likewise, they recommend delving deeper into inclusive teaching strategies that respond to the

diversity of the classroom. Second, they emphasize expanding the links between the university and educational authorities to promote training that is more contextualized and aligned with the demands of the education system. Third, they suggest promoting teaching practice from the very beginning of training to improve professional preparation and ensure that pre-service teachers have a more meaningful learning experience.

These findings align with those of Herrera-Seda et al. (2026), who emphasize that pre-service teachers are not sufficiently prepared for inclusive education due to a lack of training in knowledge, practical experiences, and teaching strategies, which highlights the need to strengthen initial teacher training in this area.

Table 3

Analysis of Interviewees' Perceptions (School Administrators) on EFL Pre-Service Teacher's Practicum.

<i>Questions</i>	<i>How would you describe your overall experience with EFL Pre-Service Teacher's Practicum?</i>	<i>What are your main expectations concerning the role of EFL pre-service teachers within this institution?</i>	<i>How do you perceive the performance of the observation stage of EFL pre-service teachers in the institution?</i>	<i>How do you perceive the pedagogical performance of EFL pre-service teachers in the institution, in the stage of teaching?</i>
<i>Answers</i>	School administrators perceive positive experiences with EFL pre-service teachers. The theoretical foundations, prior preparation, and predisposition allow for a good perception and contribution from the trainees in the institutions, who also report a bilateral learning experience thanks to the practicum. However, some administrators feel that a few pre-service teachers do not focus as much on professional development.	According to expectations, institutions expect the pre-service teacher to have a comprehensive education that allows them to pedagogically engage with students, demonstrating commitment to teaching and promoting meaningful learning.	School administrators perceive the EFL pre-service teacher with a generally positive performance during the observation stage. The practicum allows for the socialization of current methodologies with the teaching staff, which promotes collaboration and helps the pre-service teachers become familiar with the reality of the educational context. On the other hand, nervousness and introversion are also attitudes observed by the directors, who emphasize that their confidence should be strengthened to effectively engage with the students.	School administrators reported that EFL pre-service teachers performed well in the classroom. Stakeholders highlighted the quick adaptation of the pre-service teachers in the educational environment due to the previous experience the trainees gained during the observation stage.
<i>Authors</i>	As Reiban Garnica et al. (2024) mention, exposure to practice for pre-service teachers, who already possess theoretical knowledge, allows them to develop their professional competencies and fosters mutual learning and benefits between educational institutions and pre-service teachers.	Teachers must possess personal characteristics and professional competencies that allow for a significant contribution to the education and preparation of students. (Vanek et al., 2021).	Rasheed (2025) argues that preparing pre-service teachers with theoretical knowledge facilitates the connection between theory and practice, favoring its application in real EFL teaching scenarios.	Progressive immersion in realistic environments helps pre-service teachers develop practical skills, enabling them to meet the demands of the classroom more effectively (Eğimli and Solhi, 2021).

Table 4

Analysis of Interviewees' Perceptions (School Administrators) on EFL Pre-Service Teacher's Practicum.

<i>Questions</i>	<i>According to your point of view, what are the most common challenges that you face when selecting EFL pre-service teachers in your institution?</i>	<i>What administrative or logistical challenges does the school face when accepting and integrating EFL pre-service teacher in the institution?</i>	<i>Based on your experience. How do you normally describe the communication and collaboration between the school and university?</i>
<i>Answers</i>	The interviewees encountered challenges related to attitudinal, pedagogical, and professional image aspects, as these were not easy to identify in the pre-service English teachers at first glance for their selection.	The administrative and logistical challenges faced by institutions are: lack of available slots and limited space within the institution create difficulties in the organization and distribution of interns; in turn, the scarcity of resources and technological materials prevents the practicum from being carried out effectively and the intern from performing well within the school, conditioning the quality of training.	School administrators indicate that communication and collaboration between the school and the university are good but have limitations in the communicative process, as this process is mainly carried out through emails, which hinders the expected formal interaction and in-person follow-up during the practicum.
<i>Authors</i>	Selection process does not always allow recognizing certain characteristics such as commitment or professionalism in interns, as the absence of direct interaction prior to the pre-services teaching practicum makes this evaluation difficult (Kasonde and Chipindi, 2020).	It is important to have adequate coordination and institutional capacity in practicum programs (Li et al., 2023).	Just as Kula and Decmirci Güler (2021) affirmed, it is essential to ensure the active participation of all the actors involved, since strengthening communication between the university and educational institutions helps promote spaces where ideas are exchanged, as well as joint planning and evaluation processes among the agents involved in practical training.

Table 5

Analysis of Interviewees' Perceptions (School Administrators) on EFL Pre-Service Teacher's Practicum.

<i>Questions</i>	<i>How would you assess the alignment between university education and the practical needs of schools during the teaching practicums of EFL pre-service teachers?</i>	<i>What differences do you see between what is taught in universities and what the institution requires of future teachers of English as a foreign language? Do you consider pre-service teachers are ready to face a real classroom environment?</i>	<i>Which competencies do you believe require more emphasis in EFL pre-service teachers during their university training?</i>	<i>What changes would help better align university training with the practical realities of schools?</i>
<i>Answers</i>	School administrators have diverse opinions on the alignment of university education with the practical needs of schools. While some believe that future teachers are well-prepared and receive a solid theoretical education, others argue that the alignment is moderate or insufficient, particularly in adapting to diverse educational realities. Despite a solid theoretical foundation, challenges remain in adapting teacher training to the specific demands of different educational contexts.	The interviewees indicate that the university is dominated by theory, while schools require a more practical approach and the ability to adapt to different contexts and student levels. The opinions of school administrators on the preparation of trainee teachers are diverse; some believe they have the necessary knowledge, while others emphasize that classroom experience is crucial to consolidate their training and adapt to the educational reality.	According to school administrators, the competencies that require more development in future EFL teachers are pedagogical, technological, and linguistic competencies, as these allow for effective classroom management, the creation of more dynamic learning environments, the proper integration of digital tools, and the facilitation of students' understanding and acquisition of English.	The interviewees emphasize the importance of improving the preparation of EFL pre-service teachers in educational needs, helping pre-service teachers develop inclusive pedagogical strategies, increasing collaboration between universities and educational authorities, and promoting teaching practice from the beginning of their training.
<i>Authors</i>	Gunawan (2025) points out that teacher training must integrate theoretical knowledge and practical experiences, thus preparing pre-service teachers for effective English teaching, especially in early childhood education.	Practicum is a space where the intern puts into action the knowledge acquired at the university and faces real situations in the school context, which require adaptability and the development of pedagogical competencies to effectively respond to the demands of the classroom (Ghufron, 2024).	It is essential for teacher training institutions to redesign their curricula to meet the demands of an ever-changing education system (Sukyadi et al., 2025).	Herrera-Seda et al. (2026), emphasizes that pre-service teachers are not sufficiently prepared for inclusive education due to a lack of training in knowledge and practical experiences.

In the first four questions in the interviews, school administrators describe the EFL pre-service teaching practicum as a formative and positive process; participants view the observation stage as an essential component for adapting to educational environments, and the implementation stage that involves pedagogical development in classrooms that promotes collaboration. The school administrators generally highlight challenges relating to professional responsibility, motivation, and initiative in academic contexts that influence the pre-service teaching practicum within the institutions.

Regarding challenges and communication, school administrators highlighted the fact that when selecting new candidates for pre-service teaching practicum, the main difficulties are related to attitude, teaching methods, and professional image. On the institutional level, interviewees pointed out the administrative and logistical challenges the institution faces when accepting new EFL pre-service teachers. Finally, regarding communication between schools and universities, although most school administrators consider it generally positive, others believe that relying solely on email hinders formal interaction.

Regarding the alignment between university education and the school environment, school administrators reported some viewpoints. While some believe a solid theoretical foundation others argue that this training is moderate or insufficient, Likewise, the interviewees believe that competencies as pedagogical, technological, and linguistic competences, particularly with regard to inclusive strategies should be given greater emphasis during pre-service teacher. Finally, the interviewees suggested that changes could better align university curricula with educational realities such as promoting early practicums and fostering greater collaboration between universities and educational authorities.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

This research focused on analyzing various interview findings regarding school administrators' perceptions of students participating in English pre-service teaching practicum programs, seeking to identify their perceptions, the most common challenges these students face during their EFL pre-service teaching practicum, and key points such as alignment with university goals and competencies from the administrators' perspective, which could be used in the future to ensure the improved development of these programs.

Regarding the first objective, focused on analyzing school administrator's perceptions of the pedagogical performance of EFL pre-service teachers, the results point toward a significantly positive perception by school administrators of the pedagogical aspects of foreign language student teachers, expressing confidence in the pedagogical preparation due to the contributions these students offer to various educational institutions in several areas, such as adaptability, direct support for teachers, and collaboration with the school through commitment and initiative. Therefore, according to their views, pre-service teaching practicum is considered an enriching and beneficial experience.

Addressing the second objective, which explored school administrators' general perceptions of EFL pre-service teaching practicum, the results highlight that school administrators view teaching practicum not merely as a requirement, but as a beneficial contribution to the institution's educational environment which benefits both the institution and the pre-service teachers personally by integrating current methodologies that support educational reforms. On the other hand, many of these perceptions are shaped by the dynamic nature of the

training process, ranging from an observation phase to practical implementation, during which participants address various pedagogical challenges within the educational institution.

In relation to the third objective, focused on identifying the main challenges experienced by school administrators during EFL pre-service teaching practicum, the data analysis reveals that, from the perspective of school administrators, hosting pre-service teachers presents new operational and logistical challenges due to overcrowded classrooms, which may even require hiring additional English teaching assistants or resolving technological issues. Similarly, this challenge faced by school principals due to space constraints results in limited supervision and support for student teachers. Furthermore, communication between universities and schools may be limited in some cases, which could create a gap in these processes.

To sum up, considering the fourth objective which analyzes how the mismatch between the university teaching model and practical realities shapes the EFL pre-service teaching practicum. The research findings reveal there is a mismatch between the university model and practical reality that influences teachers' practices in private schools, because certain competencies such as inclusive pedagogy, technology, and even classroom management have not been fully developed. From the perspective of school administrators, this mismatch indicates that the alignment between universities and schools does not always meet the needs of the schools.

Recommendations

Based on the interpretation of the research findings, several recommendations are proposed to guide the improvement and strengthening of pre-service teaching practicum from the perspective of school administrators. To achieve this goal, the following guidelines focus on strengthening protocols between the university and schools.

First, communication and collaboration are among the most important aspects to highlight in EFL pre-service teaching practicum between the university and educational institutions; therefore, it is recommended to continue maintaining positive communication through the various established protocols, with a special emphasis on periodic visits by university administrators and pre-service teaching practicum supervisors to the various educational institutions.

Secondly, to further enhance the alignment between university preparation and the practical needs of schools. It is recommended that the university continue fostering the theory and practice through EFL pre-service teaching practicum, which provide opportunities for experience and professional growth in diverse educational settings throughout the course of their academic training.

In addition, universities are encouraged to strengthen the various competencies of EFL pre-service teachers. Specifically, there should be a greater emphasis on technological skills, lesson planning, classroom management, phonology, and pronunciation. By prioritizing these pedagogical skills, the university consolidates the knowledge of student teachers, ensuring their excellent performance in adapting to and meeting all the requirements of various educational institutions.

Finally, further research should be conducted to explore other perspectives, such as those of stakeholders like university supervisors and mentors in both private and public educational institutions, who play a key role in the pre-service teaching practicum process and in the pre-service experience, offering new perspectives for improving or enhancing certain aspects of this process.

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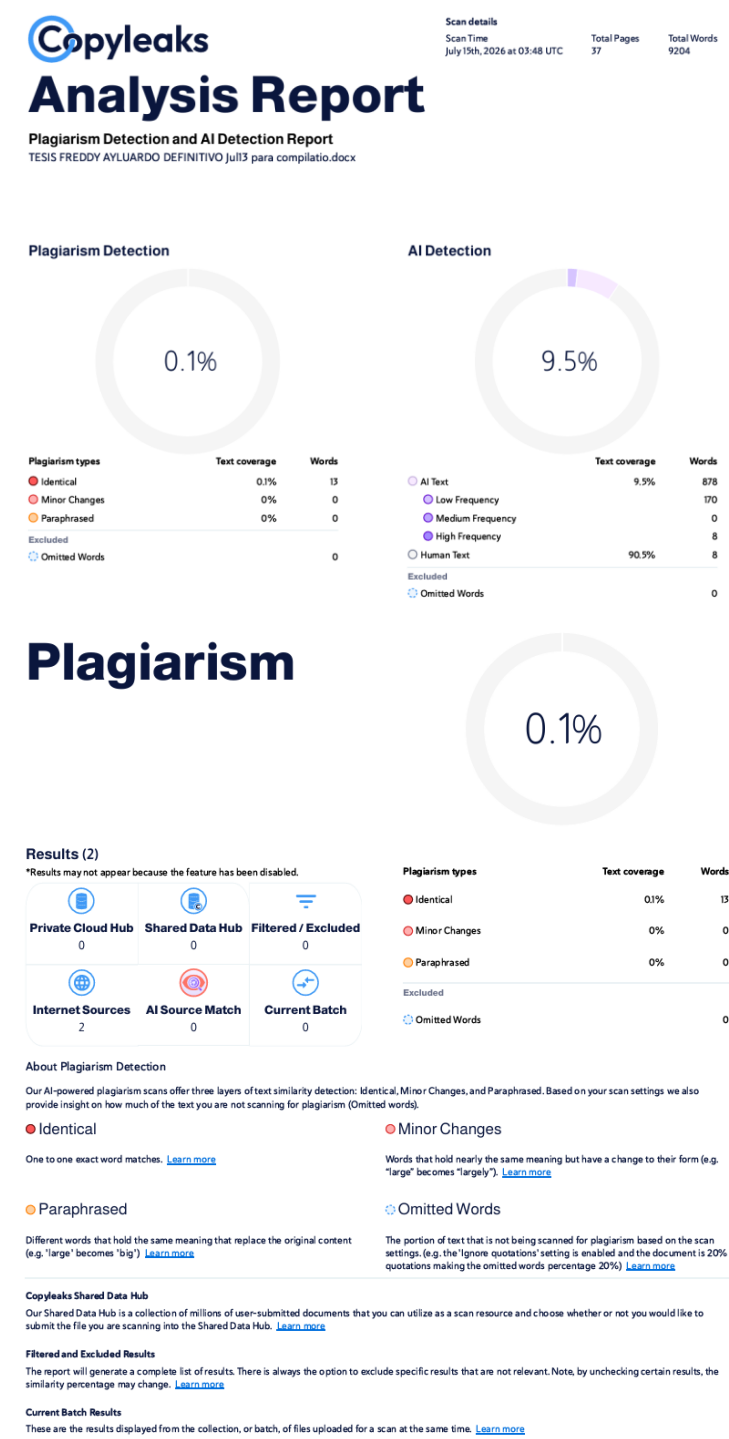
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Annexes

Annex A: Certificate of Anti-plagiarism system



Certificado Sistema Antiplagio

En calidad de tutor del Trabajo de Integración Curricular denominado **“SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS’ PERCEPTIONS ON EFL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS’ PRACTICUM”** elaborado por el estudiante **AYLUARDO VÉLEZ FREDDY XAVIER** de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros , de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación e Idiomas, de la Universidad Estatal de Península de Santa Elena, me permito declarar que una vez finalizado y revisado en el sistema anti plagio Grammarly, luego de haber cumplido los requerimientos exigidos de valoración, el presente trabajo de investigación, se encuentra con el 0.1% de detección de plagio y 9.5% de detección de uso de IA, de la valoración permitida, por consiguiente se procede a emitir el informe.

Atentamente



Lcda. Rosa Elena Niola Sanmartín, MSc.
Tutor

Annex B: Questionnaire

School Administrators' perceptions on EFL Pre-services teachers' practicum.

1. What are your main expectations concerning the role of EFL pre-service teachers withing this institution?
2. How do you perceive the performance of the observation stage of EFL pre-service teachers in the institution?
3. How do you perceive the pedagogical performance of EFL pre-services teacher in the institution, in the stage of teaching?
4. According to your point of view, what are the most common challenges that you face when selecting EFL pre-services teachers in your institution?
5. What administrative or logistical challenges does the school face when accepting and integrating EFL pre-service teachers in the institution?
6. Based on your experience. How do you normally describe the communication and collaboration between the school and university?
7. How would you assess the alignment between university education and the practical needs of schools during the teaching practicums of EFL pre-services teachers?
8. What differences do you see between what is taught in universities and what the institution requires of future teachers of English as a foreign language?
9. Do you consider pre-service teachers are ready to face a real classroom environment?
10. Which competencies do you believe require more emphasis in EFL pre-service teachers during their university training?
11. What changes would help better align university training with the practical realities of schools?

Annex C: Transcript from the interviews

Question 1. How would you describe your overall experience with EFL Pre-Services Teacher's Practicum?

Interviewee 1

As the deputy director of this institution, I have seen this experience positively, because the students really have the opportunity to gain hands-on work experience, and thus learn what an English teacher needs to do. During their pre-service teaching practicum, they have helped us a lot by drawing conclusions about the level of the children in that globally important language, allowing us to know what we need to work on more.

Interviewee 2

Our perception is satisfactory and very good on the part of the university because the student comes already trained, as they are familiar with what a teacher does, which allows them to adapt quickly to the educational institution. Pre-service teachers have always been predisposed, they have fulfilled what has been requested, everything related to the teaching work, in this case, the English area. Likewise, it greatly helps when the interns come because they learn from us and we also learn from them because they are more up-to-date with pedagogy.

Interviewee 3

The experience we have gained with the pre-service teacher is to understand the expectations they bring, the world they are facing, and, of course, what resources we as an institution can offer. It has been very formative for us because education is a constant change. So they adapt to us, and we adapt to them.

Interviewee 4

I would describe it as good because they already come with a theoretical background and are well-grounded in everything they are taught in their career. The intern can be from basic education, can be from English, or can be from physical education, but they all already have prior knowledge that they keep, and then, when they are here in practice, they showcase their skills to us.

Interviewee 5

Here, we welcome future English teachers to come and do their pre-service teacher practicum. And we discovered that they have quite positive knowledge. And they are of great help to the educational institution.

Interviewee 6

The experience with them has been intermediate because I have had pre-service here a few years ago, and I believe it is of utmost importance that they do it with the seriousness it deserves, because sometimes I feel they do it just to get it over with. They usually say to me, "sign here" and so on, and it should not be like that, as this is very important since it's what they are going to practice.

Question 2. What are your main expectations concerning the role of EFL pre-service teachers within this institution?

Interviewee 1

Overall, I hope that the teacher in training not only dedicates themselves to teaching their English subject but also gives the students five minutes to delve into the topic of values and respect, because that is for a lifetime. I truly wish for a different school, where we all get

involved and help each other, because children nowadays are quite hyperactive and we need to help them channel their emotions.

Interviewee 2

As an institution, what we expect from them and something we have always requested is international certification. We also expect to see willingness, eagerness to learn, and above all, good classroom management.

Interviewee 3

We expect them to be honest, proactive, interactive, supportive, and obviously empathetic professionals.

Interviewee 4

My expectations as the director of the institution are that every teacher or intern who comes to do their internship here must first have prior knowledge of the subject they will be teaching and know how to teach an English class, or at least be familiar with teaching strategies for that specific subject, because not all classes are the same.

Interviewee 5

I do not think we have high expectations, but as technology advances, we hope that pre-service teachers will use the tools that are gradually coming to light, like AI, for example. That is something I have seen that needs to be improved even more to be, at least, on par with other countries that are elite in foreign languages.

Interviewee 6

The main expectation is that they reach the student. They also have to be perseverant and demonstrate other teaching strategies that are truly effective, since students only see English for 3 to 5 hours a week. This is very important because we want pre-service teachers to help our

students get by with English and not just come to read a book and repeat vocabulary, as was done in my time, which didn't work.

Question 3. How do you perceive the performance of the observation stage of EFL pre-service teachers in the institution?

Interviewee 1

I perceive it positively because many trainee teachers suddenly help their mentors and instruct them on new methodologies they have recently learned at university. I like that a lot because it brings new perspectives and strengthens the teaching-learning process.

Interviewee 2

They fulfill their role. When they do their first practices, we always let the English teacher show them how he teaches his class, and there is no problem at the institution. There are also times when they help us with something, and we congratulate them for always being willing.

Interviewee 3

In the observation stage, pre-service teachers come with fear, they are shy. I would like them to be a bit more extroverted because I feel that their career demands it since they are going to teach a foreign language and therefore they need to find the appropriate methods to reach the students. We need to put shyness aside and be more extroverted.

Interviewee 4

Although the pre-service teachers come to do their observation practicum, I allow them to develop actively, that is, I do not limit them to observing the teacher, but I encourage them to participate in the classroom as learners. First, they listen and learn from the tutor in charge of the grade, and through this participation, they acquire knowledge about the dynamics of teaching.

Interviewee 5

They really handle it well, they manage to understand the teaching-learning process, know the students' responses, and become familiar with the reality of the educational context.

Interviewee 6

I perceive it as a stage of guided learning, where the pre-service teachers learn from the experience of the supervising teacher. However, I insist that their success depends on the responsibility with which they do it and the commitment they show during the observation process.

Question 4. How do you perceive the pedagogical performance of EFL pre-service teacher in the institution, in the stage of teaching?

Interviewee 1

Excellent because the pre-service teachers who come to do their practical training here are generally the same ones who came to do their observation. They are really very good and perform well in the classes. Since they have already done their pre-service teaching practicum here before, they are more confident and know the dynamics of the institution, so they are familiar with the other teachers and the students as well.

Interviewee 2

The colleagues from the English department have informed me that there are no updates regarding your performance, which means that you have met the requirements. So we are satisfied with your work.

Interviewee 3

In general, my perception of their performance at the beginning is not very good, but as time goes by, they show more confidence and a great ability to adapt when faced with the reality

of the classroom. During that stage, I see that they are gaining direct experience in the classroom, managing to apply their knowledge.

Interviewee 4

They have performed very well because they have been able to put their knowledge into practice and handle themselves appropriately in the classroom.

Interviewee 5

Over all these years, I have seen that they adapt easily to the teaching and learning process with the main teacher. And what is more, we give them the chance to explain the class, so they start getting to know how the educational environment is managed inside a classroom.

Interviewee 6

Their teaching practice is positive. I can see that during this period, they really manage to connect with the students, understand their different needs, and apply their knowledge in the classroom.

Question 5. According to your point of view, what are the most common challenges that you face when selecting EFL pre-service teachers in your institution?

Interviewee 1

I pay a lot of attention to personal presentation, so I would say that's a challenge. In this and any institution, I believe that future teachers are a role model for students, so they should project a professional and appropriate image.

Interviewee 2

The main challenge is classroom management because future teachers still do not have enough experience to handle large groups of students.

Interviewee 3

As an institution, we select based primarily on experience, but since we have an agreement with UPSE, we adhere to that, as the institution must have its own internal filters. Therefore, for interns, we do not have a direct selection process, but rather an indirect one.

Interviewee 4

One challenge I notice is making sure that future teachers actively engage in their learning process, since just being present at the institution is not enough; they need to observe, take advantage of the experience, understand the educational context, and show interest in learning from their tutors and students.

Interviewee 5

When a student from the English area comes, I usually give them a test before giving them the opportunity, because they might not have the necessary knowledge, and instead of helping the kids move forward, they could interfere with their learning.

Interviewee 6

One of the main challenges is figuring out if the future teacher really knows how to connect with students, since they might be at the top of their class but lack the experience or skills needed to handle the classroom.

Question 6. What administrative or logistical challenges does the school face when accepting and integrating EFL pre-service teachers in the institution?

Interviewee 1

The most common challenge is not having enough space for all the interns who come. Although I try to support them by giving them the opportunity to do their internships here,

sometimes there are no spots available to take them in, and therefore, I have to turn them down, and I do not like that.

Interviewee 2

We do not have challenges or problems because we already have a plan; as soon as the colleagues come to do their practice, we refer them to the English area teachers, to whom 2 to 3 pre-service teachers are assigned.

Interviewee 3

For us, organizing and placing interns within this small institution has been a challenge because it involves coordinating spaces, tutor teachers, and getting along with students and parents.

Interviewee 4

The only challenge I have come across is being able to take in interns and give them the follow-up they need, because it is not about having a lot of students doing internships, but about having the space and time to guide them so they really make the most of the experience.

Interviewee 5

The need is quite high, especially in the area of English, because it is a theoretical-practical and linguistic subject that requires a lot of technological and physical material. That is why one of the challenges is managing and having these resources, since we only have two audiovisuales to properly support the teaching process and the practice of future teachers.

Interviewee 6

My school is small in quality, as you may have noticed, so one of the challenges is integrating future teachers into a context with limited space.

Question 7. Based on your experience. How do you normally describe the communication and collaboration between the school and university?

Interviewee 1

In my opinion, the communication is not very good because it happens through emails. I have been an assistant director for 3 years, and interns always mention at the beginning that their university tutors are going to come visit them, but, really, up to today, I have not seen any visit from them.

Interviewee 2

The communication is adequate, since we have an agreement with the university that allows us to receive intern colleagues from the Language Faculty. We do not have any major issues with that, and the doors are always open for them.

Interviewee 3

Personally, it is a super active communication; we are in constant contact with the university, and that has allowed the interns to come to the institution and successfully complete their internships.

Interviewee 4

The collaboration has been positive, although in some cases it has changed due to changes in university administration, but overall, the relationship has been one of openness and mutual support.

Interviewee 5

We are always willing to collaborate with the university since we believe that education involves strengthening ties between educational communities. In that sense, the relationship between both institutions is quite positive.

Interviewee 6

The communication we have with the university, at least in my institution, is assertive on the part of the university administrators.

Question 8. How would you assess the alignment between university education and the practical needs of schools during the teaching practicums of EFL pre-service teachers?

Interviewee 1

I believe there should be more coherence, because many interns come to schools to deal with young children of 7 or 8 years old, but do not understand how to do it. I feel that they are better prepared to work with teenagers than with young children.

Interviewee 2

The alignment needs to improve because the existence of different educational realities is not being considered; a public school is not the same as a private one, so university education should adapt to these different contexts.

Interviewee 3

The pre-service teachers who have come to this school have indeed arrived well-prepared in theory, which allows us to integrate into the institution, so on that front, we have not encountered any issues with what the university teaches them.

Interviewee 4

It is moderate, because although the university teaches the theoretical foundation of English and teaching methodologies, in practice, trainee teachers still face difficulties applying that knowledge in the classroom, especially when working with young children and developing oral communication.

Interviewee 5

What they teach pre-service teachers at university is really good because most of the students who come here for their professional internships adapt to the educational standards promoted by the institution in a relatively short time.

Interviewee 6

I see it as good because I assume that the university has done research on the plans and programs that are usually carried out in schools from early childhood until they reach school, and based on that, it trains pre-service English teachers with everything they should know before doing their internships.

Question 9. What differences do you see between what is taught in universities and what the institution requires of future teachers of English as a foreign language? Do you consider pre-service teachers are ready to face a real classroom environment?

Interviewee 1

The difference is that at the university, they teach more theory and general content, while at the institution, they require the trainee teacher to work with children from six years old and apply more practical and simple methods. That is why not all trainee teachers are fully ready to face a real classroom.

Interviewee 2

What they teach at university is something that is already governed by the pedagogical approach, but in practice it's different because ministerial agreements are added, along with routes and protocols that are constantly updating, and in fact, they are not familiar with them, which sometimes makes their teaching job in the classroom more difficult.

Interviewee 3

Yes, I notice differences since at university they provide theoretical and methodological training, while in practice the teacher faces large groups, different learning levels, and various needs that students have, which means they encounter a reality different from what they were taught. Although they are prepared, it is important that they learn more about how to handle these situations in the real classroom.

Interviewee 4

I have noticed that many trainee teachers want the interaction to be entirely in English, but the institution requires them to also take into account the students' actual level, because many still don't fully understand the language, and it's necessary to adapt to that reality.

Interviewee 5

They are prepared because the university already provides them with the necessary knowledge and methodologies. However, they still need classroom experience to face the real situations that arise daily.

Interviewee 6

Some are, but others are not prepared because preparation comes with practice. The EFL pre-service teacher may come with the theory, but it is in practice where you see if the student has a knack for teaching and manages to convey what they have learned.

Question 10. Which competencies do you believe require more emphasis in EFL pre-service teachers during their university training?

Interviewee 1

The creation of didactic resources is something that should be emphasized more, as well as the pedagogical competencies to work with children according to their developmental level, because they need to see English as a more dynamic, lively, and less complicated subject.

Interviewee 2

Without a doubt, technological or digital competence, pre-service teachers need to know and get familiar with this because it is very important nowadays. Learning the ethical use of AI and handling educational platforms is something essential in their training.

Interviewee 3

The competencies they basically need to develop are phonology and pronunciation, as English is complex for many students due to the differences between pronunciation and writing. Therefore, future teachers must further develop these competencies to better reach the students.

Interviewee 4

If we talk about competencies, greater emphasis is required on classroom management, the use of technology, and the strengthening of subject area knowledge, because the teacher must know how to take advantage of the technological resources provided by the institution, such as the internet, to make learning more dynamic and better meet the needs of the students.

Interviewee 5

I would say that didactic planning, because before going to the classroom the teacher must prepare through their work plans and consider that they will encounter students of different ages and needs. That preparation is the first tool to perform properly in class.

Interviewee 6

More than anything, emphasis should be placed on pedagogical competencies, although technological ones are also important, because 21st-century students are already adept with technology. Therefore, the university must better prepare future teachers to respond to these new realities and convey their knowledge appropriately.

Question 11. What changes would help better align university training with the practical realities of schools?

Interviewee 1

I think it is necessary to strengthen it with more training on how to act with students with special educational needs, like autism, dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and so on. It is important to go deeper into the curriculum and look for strategies that help them know how to support these students.

Interviewee 2

I would suggest that there be a forum between the authorities of the District Ministry of Education and you as students to join efforts and get to know both teaching practice and pedagogical innovations, in order to achieve a more complete graduation profile in the English area.

Interviewee 3

That the practicum be constant because if you want quality professionals, teaching practice should start from day one so that when they have direct contact with what they are going to do, their learning will be more meaningful.

Interviewee 4

Before any change, no matter how small, I believe the student must have a desire for self-improvement because if the student does not have that desire or motivation, no matter if they have the best university or the best professors, they will not achieve effective learning. For that reason, this aspect should also be considered within the training process of future professionals.

Interviewee 5

Something that would improve university education in relation to educational practice is the strengthening of resources and infrastructure in institutions, such as English laboratories, as these are currently scarce in both public and private schools due to the number of students per classroom.

Interviewee 6

I think that the changes should be made by the university and should be based on the students they receive from high schools, considering their needs and the level at which they enter higher education.