



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN

Carrera de:

Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

Being a Teacher Assistant at the University: Experiences and Insights

Trabajo de Integración Curricular
previo a la obtención del título de
Licenciado/a en Pedagogía del
Idioma Inglés

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Azogues - Ecuador

Marzo, 2024

Resumen:

La presente investigación cualitativa tiene como objetivo analizar las experiencias de estudiantes que fueron ayudantes de cátedra en una universidad ubicada en Ecuador. Siguiendo un diseño fenomenológico, el estudio examina las experiencias de tres estudiantes universitarios que fueron ayudantes de cátedra por un periodo de dos semestres. Para recolectar los datos, se realizaron cuatro entrevistas a cada participante respecto a cada una de las fases relacionadas con sus experiencias como ayudantes de cátedra. La primera entrevista, enfocada en las experiencias previas hasta el fenómeno, detalló la historia vivida de los participantes antes de ingresar en la carrera, y empezar el proceso de ayudantías. La segunda y tercera entrevista se centró en la primera y segunda vez de los participantes siendo ayudantes de cátedra. Estas entrevistas profundizaron en las actividades realizadas, los roles percibidos y las interacciones de los participantes con los otros actores que están involucrados en el proceso de las ayudantías de cátedra. La última entrevista implicó la reflexión acerca del proceso de ayudantías y los diferentes beneficios y debilidades de la misma. El estudio reveló que los participantes perciben el proceso de ayudantías como una oportunidad significativa que provee oportunidades para aprender, haciendo que sean percibidos como un docente, un amigo, un modelo a seguir y una guía para los estudiantes. Estas percepciones y experiencias pueden ser útiles para los diferentes participantes involucrados en el proceso de ayudantías de cátedra asimismo como nuevos estudiantes que podrían estar interesados en ser ayudantes de cátedra.

Palabras claves: Ayudantes de Cátedra, Ayudantías de Cátedra, Entrevistas, Experiencias, Fenomenología.

Abstract:

The objective of this qualitative study is to analyze the lived experiences of students who worked as teacher assistants in a university located in Ecuador. Following a phenomenological design, the study examines the different experiences of three university students that have been teaching assistants for a period of two semesters. To collect the data, 4 interviews were conducted to each participant regarding each one of the phases related to their teaching assistantship experience. The first interview, focused on the previous experiences up to the phenomenon detailed the lived history of the participants previously to enroll in the major, and to start the assistantship process. The second and third interview focused on the participants' first and second time being a TA. These interviews delved on the activities, roles, and interactions of the participants with other actors involved in the assistantship process. The last interview entailed reflection about the process of assistantship and the different benefits and weaknesses. The study revealed that participants perceive the assistantship process as a meaningful experience that provides them with opportunities to learn, making them be perceived as a teacher, a friend, a role model and guide for students. These perceptions and experiences can be useful for the different participants involved in the process, and also new students who might be interested in enrolling to be TAs.

Keywords: Experiences, Interviews, Phenomenology, Teaching Assistants, Teaching Assistantship.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context

The following research seeks to explore a situation that contributes to the formation of future English teachers, which is the opportunity to be teacher assistants (TAs) at their university and major while being undergraduate students. Teaching assistants are defined as the supporting staff of teachers, whose main function is to help a teacher with the different responsibilities related to learning (Viktorin, 2018). This process is rooted in constructivist theories and situated learning, which refers to the learning carried out through different communities of practice. This academic phenomenon is common for graduate students around the globe; however, the situation appears to have taken an uncommon focus at an Ecuadorian public university.

The academic setting where the teaching assistantship process takes place is a public university in the province of Cañar, Ecuador. The pedagogical model of this center aims to innovate in teacher formation to improve the quality of education in the aforementioned southern country. Hence, each activity developed in the previously mentioned academic space pursues to contribute to the formation of a new generation of teachers. With this goal in mind, this university offers students with outstanding academic performance, meaning that an score 9.5/10 or above, the opportunity to serve as teaching assistants in the subjects of their preference. This educational institution offers seven majors, of which one is focused specifically on English Language Teaching (ELT); being the students of this major the subjects of this study.

As the main points of analysis are the different experiences that learners had during their teaching assistantship practice, an interpretative qualitative paradigm, with a phenomenological design was chosen, allowing the researchers to understand the different views of the participants regarding the process of being teaching assistants in the major. This study aims to get insights into their role, their thoughts on the acquired knowledge they got, the perceived influence of assistantship on their lives, and their general experience, with the different perspectives provided by each one of the undergraduate students involved in this academic phenomenon. This research will serve as the basis for the improvement of aspects related to teaching assistantship as it is one of the main foundations for UNAE's pedagogical model. Considering that the program is relatively new, the information contained in this project will be of great help to improve the

experience of the students and design further research to analyze the needs and experiences of those involved, including the professors.

1.2 Diagnosis of the situation

Empiric learning can be a useful source of knowledge and questions. When beings experience a situation, they gain first-hand knowledge that will help them in further similar situations. Moreover, this cognizance also comes with questions that can lead the subject to ask themselves how to change the outcomes, and even how to improve them. It is through this vision of learning that the problem of this research was stated.

The researchers of this project became teacher assistants when the assistantship program was starting at their university. Since it was their first time in this role, they found it useful to talk with other students from their major had been doing the same activity. Through informal talks with both teachers and teacher assistants, the researchers realized that the assistantship program at their local university was different from those offered at other institutions. In addition, these conversations allowed them to consider different viewpoints of what the process was like. Based on the previously mentioned interactions, some questions were pondered: “What is it like to be a teacher assistant? Does everyone have the same experiences? What challenges do they face? What motivates them to continue? What benefits do they get from helping the professors?”

1.3 Importance of the study

The formation of teachers has become a priority for the Ecuadorian state, and higher education institutions have become pivotal in satisfying this need (Troya & Fraga, 2019, p. 127). This situation does not only seek to satisfy the demand for teachers that the South American country needs, but also the quality of these future professionals in the educational area. Plenty of studies have been done on this topic, nevertheless, few have explored the extracurricular activities that contribute to this process. Moreover, fewer studies in the national context have explored the contribution of teaching assistantship to this area of teacher formation. Despite the significance of the role that assistants play in the university ecosystem, most of the documents about this activity focus on what the roles of students and teachers are; and those that are

researched, prefer to focus on the opinions and experiences of the professors rather than those of the students. It is because of this approach that current assistantship programs are based on professor-centered ideas. Nevertheless, those who give a voice to students, do not give an in-depth insight into their experiences.

Through the exploration of the lived experiences of the assistants, the administrators who are in charge of designing and monitoring programs like the one explored in this study, will be able to improve assistantships based on the needs and challenges that teaching auxiliars face. In studies like the one carried out by Zaldívar et. al (2017), the importance of examining these phenomena can result in not only an increment in the number of people interested in becoming TA but also in the retention of those who are already involved in the program.

However, the insight into the mentioned phenomenon will not only be of help to those involved in the administrative part of the process but also to those students who are interested in taking part in this activity. There are many students who avoid participating in assistantship programs because of the fear of not knowing what they will have to face. By letting them know how other fellow students have faced this phenomenon, the researchers will inspire more students to take part in this and other academic programs that can provide them with additional skills that could be used in their professional and academic lives.

In addition, professors from said university, and even those from other higher education institutions, will gain useful insight on how the process works and how their assistants experience it. Through this research, the academics can create better spaces for their assistants to work with them, which means taking advantage of their full potential. In this sense, the amount of effort that both subjects give would be channelized so that they can learn and share at the same time without overworking or feeling frustrated.

1.4 Research questions

Based on the provided context and situation, along with the literature review that will be later explored and examined, the following research question was proposed:

1. What are the participants' lived experiences as teacher assistants in a university setting?

To ensure that the present research covers the phenomenon accurately, two specific research questions were added.

Specific research questions:

1. How does being a teacher assistant shape the participants' views about their profession?
2. How does assistantship influence the participants' regard of their role as a teacher-assistant?

By analyzing the previous questions, it can be concluded that the focus is the experiences of the subjects, specifically the assistants. For this reason, the researchers determined that the most suitable design for a study of this nature and magnitude is interpretative phenomenology.

2. Objectives: General and Specifics

To answer the aforementioned questions, one main objective was set.

- To analyze the lived experiences of students who worked as teacher assistants in a university setting.

To achieve the main goal, two specific objectives were formulated based on the main objective and the specific research questions.

- To provide a holistic perspective of the experiences the participants who worked as teacher assistants had.
- To discover the different views of the participants in their role as teacher assistants.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Previous Researches/ Antecedents

Teaching assistants (TAs) are defined as students who provide aid to different courses in a faculty (Riese & Kann, 2020). The incorporation of TAs offers considerable benefits, as they can ease the workload of teachers, increase the allotted time for students, and guide students in different activities, especially in those classrooms where the number of students is high. This means that teaching assistants can offer invaluable help for students and teachers involved in the learning process. Regarding this process, some studies have been conducted in university settings where undergraduate students have shared their experiences as TAs.

3.1.1 Undergraduate Teaching Assistantship Experiences

One study was conducted in 2010 by Shi to demonstrate if the use of Undergraduate Teaching Assistants (UTAs), can aid large EFL classes; as the high number of pupils belittles the interaction between the teacher and students. In this study, a large EFL class that consisted of 60 was divided into groups of 15 students, and a UTA was assigned to each one of the groups to create mini-seminars for each one of the groups for a lesson. The lecture was divided into 5 stages: Pre-class discussion, Class presentation, Lecture, Group Discussion, and Evaluation. Among the different activities, students were in charge of: (1) *organizing tutoring sessions*, (2) *monitoring and providing feedback*, (3) *assisting in the development of students' skills*, (4) *helping students with special needs*, and (5) *grading*. (Shi, 2010, p. 175). From this study, Shi (2010) concluded that the implementation of undergraduate teaching assistants was “proved to be effective among students” and was also considered “highly effective in increasing interaction among students” (p. 178).

Based on this study, it is worth noting the different activities that were carried out by TAs, as these were focused on the development of the lessons and the general aid that TAs offered to the class. These duties contributed to a more interactional and personalized class, as students helped the teacher in the groups made. This proved that teaching assistantship provided a meaningful experience for students and teachers as it gives students a “sense of belonging by creating a community of learners” (Shi, 2010, p.174).

Another study conducted by Riese and Kann in 2020, analyzed the different experiences that TAs had in different Computer Science (CS) courses. In their study, 15 interviews were conducted with university students, to know the different tasks students conduct and the roles that students perceive for themselves. From this study, Riese and Kann (2020), concluded that TAs have 6 main roles that guide their practice: In their teaching assistantship practice students can be a “mentor, apprentice, tutor, grader, friend, and teacher” (p. 8). All of the mentioned activities were part of the common practice of students who participated as teaching assistants in a CS course with different duties. Based on the activities that students completed, Riese and Kann (2020) proposed three main tasks that encompass these activities “tutorials, helping students, and assessment” (pp. 4-5).

Based on these findings, each one of the tasks that were identified provide a specific dimension to each one of the roles that were perceived by students. The different activities such as giving feedback, monitoring, grading, organizing tutoring sessions, and helping in class, gave the participants a view of how they see themselves and how others see themselves, which is a key factor in their practice. Something that was noted was the similarities between the activities of the assistants due to their similar settings. This can be noted in the following table, which summarizes the main similarities between Teaching Assistants in both courses:

Table 1

Comparison between activities carried out by TAs in two university courses

Activities Carried Out	Experiences of Teaching Assistants	
	(Shi, 2010) ¹	(Riese & Kann, 2020) ²
Tutorials	Provide Tutoring Provide learning strategies for students with special needs.	Organize tutorial Sessions
Helping Students	Monitoring and provision of feedback Help on the development of study skills, and specific skills related to the subject.	Preparation to solve doubts Provide the right amount of feedback Supervise activities Identify needs and interests
Assessment	Grade assignments and tests.	Deciding on parameters to evaluate an assignment. Checking of requirements for an assignment Administering Tests

¹ Activities Carried out by TAs in an EFL university course

² Activities Carried out by TAs in a CS university course

3.1.2 Teaching Assistantship Experiences in Ecuador

In the Ecuadorian context, the process of teaching assistantship goes beyond the generalities of helping teachers with their activities. In the study conducted by Zaldívar et. al (2017) the experiences of a student who enrolled to become a teaching assistant for one of their subjects in a lower-level class in the “Instituto Tecnológico de Formacion” in Ecuador; were collected and analyzed. Zaldívar et al. (2017) concluded that assistantship is “an important tool, for establishing a connection between teachers and students” (p. 62). It can also be a source of

motivation, professional development, and many other strategies and techniques, related to the teaching process (Zaldívar et al., 2017). This means that the teaching assistantship practice encourages students to get involved in their learning process, as it provides the right tools to increase knowledge and expertise on the different teaching aspects that many instructors manage every day, which will be useful for them later on.

In another study proposed by Uyaguari et al. (2022), the experiences of teachers, students, and Pedagogical Coordination of the first process of teaching assistantship in the Ecuadorian university “UNAE”; was analyzed. This study concluded that the assistantship program proposed by the Ecuadorian university had been proven fruitful for the students who enrolled in the assistantship process as they “had the chance to learn in a different way and to put previously acquired knowledge into practice” (Uyaguari et al., p. 41).

Each one of these opportunities helps students to apply the knowledge they have acquired during the semester, and it greatly contributes to the student’s professional life. Both studies agree that teaching assistantships provide useful insights into the different factors that are attached to the teaching assistantship process along with the benefits that this practice can contribute to each one of the actors in the teaching process. Activities such as the elaboration of didactic material, content development, and classroom interaction are some of the most common duties that Ecuadorian teaching assistants carry out during the periods of practice (Almarales et al., 2017; Uyaguari et al., 2022). Each one of these tasks followed the values that were promoted in each institution, allowing learners to understand the aims and perspectives that these have on pupils’ learning while giving invaluable support to each one of them allowing them to be active participants in the process of teaching that is carried out in universities.

Something that was noted, is the lack of in-depth documentation regarding undergraduate English Major teaching assistants and especially assistants in the Ecuadorian context. Although the aforementioned articles describe and analyze the functions of TAs, they do not explore their perceptions, activities, and processes regarding being a University English teaching Assistant.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

3.2.1 *English Teaching and Learning: Core Concepts*

3.2.1.1 English Learning Theories.

Over the development of history, learning, and teaching are rooted in the common notions of human learning, this process is influenced by psychology and linguistic fields, as these play an important role in human learning. Based on these influences, learning theories can be defined as the philosophical bearings of the learning process (Lavandenz, 2011). Among these theories, one that stands out in the field of English learning is the Sociocultural theory, which is defined as the learning process that is influenced by social and cultural factors, that are maximized through interactions between students (Vygotsky, 1978). This theory, which relies on constructivist approaches bases its foundations on the interactions that students conduct with more capable others in a set environment (Lavandenz, 2011). This means that the process of interaction is fixed with the different contexts learners are involved in entailing different cultural, social, and psychological characteristics of each group.

3.2.1.2 Constructivism.

Vygotsky (1978) defines constructivism as the active process of social interaction in which learners build their knowledge with the help of a more knowledgeable other. In this process, the context acquires an important role in the learning of the student, as a device of engagement, providing experiential learning, problem-solving, and collaboration with others (Golder, 2018). Since the environment plays an important role in students' learning. Tam (2000) proposed some characteristics of constructivist learning environments:

The first characteristic is knowledge construction. In a constructivist environment, the instructor and the learner will share their knowledge between them. The second characteristic, authority, refers to the importance that students and teachers have in the environment. The third characteristic is the role of the instructors and learners in the classroom. The instructor's role in a

constructivist setting is to be a facilitator, this means that teachers will guide students in their learning process sharing equal importance in the class. Finally, the last characteristic of the environment is the group configuration. In this characteristic, small and balanced groups are recommended, in order to promote interaction and collaboration, while giving the students an autonomous role in their learning.

The process of teaching assistantship and the theory of Social Constructivism are aligned, as TAs build knowledge through the interactions with a “more knowledgeable other”. TAs interacted and collaborated both with teachers and students sharing their knowledge and also learning from the teacher, providing scaffolding and internalizing concepts they have formed into knowledge.

3.2.1.3 Situated Learning.

One of the processes involved in teaching assistantship is situated learning. According to Lave & Wenger (1991), situated learning is a theory that refers to the different cooperative activities and skills that are learned and that lead to participation in a community of practice. This means that learning is achieved by the interaction within a specific setting where a more knowledgeable other, aids in this process. A key aspect of situated learning is that it is connected to the context and culture in which the learning takes place. Learners come to acquire knowledge and skills not in the abstract, but in relation to the surroundings and environment where those capacities will be used. The different activities and practices serve as “act of participation in a system of practices that are themselves evolving” (Cobb & Bowers, 1999, p. 8).

Both of the aforementioned concepts put the context in a central role while they vary in the focus. While situated learning focuses on how knowledge is acquired through activities and interactions in a particular setting, peripheral participation addresses how learners become part of a community of practice. Both of these concepts complement each other, as the former entails the learning process and the latter focuses on the trajectory from novice to a complete participation. These processes are present in the teaching assistantship process as they form part of their journey.

3.2.1.4 Situated Cognition.

One of the components of situated learning is situated cognition. This component, proposed by Brown et al. (1989), argues that the process of learning of an individual is achieved through the context and culture students take part. Overall, this concept highlights the connection that context has with learning, determining a bounded link between the two of them. This means that on the main characteristics of situated cognition, learning is viewed as a social process which is constructed and embodied by the different members of the community. Making it not solely confined as this process is “socially distributed” (Hutchins, 1996, p. 9). Situated cognition thus implies that, learning is seen not as something that happens in a vacuum inside someone's head but rather as a conjoined process emerging organically from engagement in a sociocultural environment. The core emphasis is on the interdependency between contextual factors and the development of knowledge and skills. Learning and context have a bilateral, mutually constitutive relationship, binding them inseparably through collective societal praxis.

3.2.1.5 Communities of Practice.

Communities of practice is an important tool as they play a key role in in situated learning. According to Lave and Wenger, (1991) this refers to groups of people that share a common domain of expertise in a subject, taking as the main focus collaboration between each one of its members resulting in “engagement in everyday activities” (p. 47). This engagement results in a sense of “belonginess” and “membership” which may vary from community to community (p. 70).

These communities build engagement by sharing knowledge and collaborating with others, resulting in a meaningful membership feeling that is connected to each one. By collaborating the individuals internalize the community's knowledge and practices, fostering an individual growth in their domain. This dynamic demonstrate how membership reinforce knowledge in these communities of practice, making it useful for teaching assistants.

3.2.1.6 Peripheral Learning.

Another process involved in situated learning is peripheral learning. Peripheral learning refers to the process of mastering and improving knowledge skills that novice practitioners possess (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This process is also directly connected with the associations that beginners and experts have in the learning process. Associations such as perspectives, activities, identities, and artifacts convey the concept of *legitimate peripheral participation* which entails the complete participation of newcomers in the communities of learning previously mentioned (Lave & Wenger 1991). This requirement to become an active participant in these learning communities is the factor that grants the legitimacy of the learning, as there is a true necessity to learn. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe some components that are embedded in situated learning:

The first component, culture, entails the dimension of social practice, which establishes a framework of the productions and transformations that groups have as time elapses, and is internalized with certain interactions. The second component, participation, refers to the different behaviors that influence the praxis in each one of the communities. The last component, identity, refers to the different individualistic perceptions that learners have in the communities.

All of these concepts play an important role in the process of situated learning, and each one of them contributes to learning in a specific setting or community. Teachers serve as mentors situated within the authentic context of the disciplines they support, they guide new teacher assistants from peripheral observation to legitimate participation, facilitating adaptation through involvement in the behaviors and social practices of their field. Ultimately, teaching assistants support the components (culture, participation, and identity) that are part the situated learning expertise. Their mentored scaffolding within authentic environments transforms peripheral observers into centered participants.

3.2.2 Teaching Assistantship

Teaching Assistantship can be defined as the process which undergraduate students can carry out, to assist a teacher in a specific subject (UNAE, 2020). This refers to the different procedures that learners execute towards aiding teachers in their duties in a specific setting regarding a subject in the university.

3.2.2.1 Undergraduate Students and Universities in Ecuador.

Undergraduate students can be defined as learners who are participants in different institutions that are accredited as establishments that offer a third level of education (LOES, 2018). This refers to the different public and private authorized places for learning, such as universities, polytechnic schools, national institutes, and conservatories, where students learn. According to LOEI (2018), these organizations aim to contribute to the development of universal thought, scientific production, arts, culture, and research, strengthen reflective thinking in students, directed toward personal autonomy, and train responsible professionals in all the different knowledge fields

These students are subject to the principles of humanism, interculturalism, and science as a legal right that every person can have access to, responding to a public need, with the same opportunities for everyone (LOES, 2018). The opportunities listed range from the same opportunities of participation for everyone, no discrimination, and quality education, among other rights for students.

3.2.2.2 Teaching Assistants.

According to Viktorin (2018), teacher assistants are defined as “pedagogical workers” whose objective is to contribute to the “organization and implementation of education” (p. 321). This means that teaching assistants are actors who are part of the non-teaching staff and influence the learning process, helping in activities such as monitoring classes, conducting activities, and providing support to teachers among other duties related to learning.

Teaching Assistants can also have the opportunity to improve their competencies and knowledge regarding their practice (Ekmekçi, 2015). By immersion in the process of being a teaching assistant, learners re-inforce their previous knowledge while working on the different aspects related to the teaching practice. Teaching assistants can also guide in the accomplishment of *education plans*, providing assistance to students who have issues with their learning (Koshak, 2020). The education plans encompass lesson plans, curriculum, activities, and other monitoring processes and instruments that are related to learning in order to maximize the benefits of learning. As these authors suggest, teaching assistants play an invaluable support role in education. By assisting with organization, implementation, and student engagement, they lighten teachers' loads while improving learning. The TAs support with education plans also enables impactful personalization of instruction.

3.2.2.3 Types of teaching assistants.

According to Bovill (2017), teaching assistants are classified in accordance with their functions:

The first type *Learning Support Assistants* refers to the assistants focused on helping small groups or individual learners within the class. The second type of teaching assistant is the *Special Needs Assistant* which refers to the assistants focused specifically on students with special needs, activities such as adaptations, and close monitoring are part of this type of assistant. The third type, *Classroom Assistants* refers to the assistants whose work takes place only in the classroom lessons and does not transfer to other monitoring activities outside the class. Finally, *Higher level teaching assistants* refer to the type of assistants whose responsibilities are equal to their teachers.

In Ecuador and depending on their function, teaching assistants can be responsible for different tasks in the learning process. According to UNAE (2020), teaching assistants are classified into two main types with different tasks:

The first type of teaching assistant refers to the aid that students can give to the teacher in a determined classroom setting. The second type of assistant is focused on the help that is given

to teachers who are part of research projects in their duties, these tasks may not be fully involved in the classroom setting compared to the first type of assistant. As can be seen, each type of assistant can be described based on its functions and responsibilities, and each one of them aims to contribute to the learning process.

3.2.2.4 Roles.

3.2.2.4.1 Teacher Roles.

In the assistantship process, teachers play a crucial role, as they become guides on the development of skills and knowledge within the classrooms, adding value to learning in their classrooms by recognizing the importance of their input as a direct influence on pupils (UNISON, 2016). Based on the previously mentioned purpose and objectives of third-level institutions in Ecuador some teacher roles proposed by UNAE (2020) are:

Promote active and responsible participation of the assistant with the pupils in the subject: This refers to the management of the different activities that are going to be carried out in the process of assistantship.

Provide the necessary guidelines for the successful development of the subject: This role entails the different rules agreed to be followed in the assistantship process and also the learning process.

Evaluate assistants' activities and propose improvements to assistants' practice: This role refers to the assessment process that is carried out by teachers to the assistants in order to develop their skills and knowledge.

3.2.2.4.2 Student's Roles

As assistantships are ongoing processes where teachers and assistants interact with each other, the main aim of an assistant is to develop their learning while participating in the process of improving their skills (UNISON, 2016). Regarding this part, some student roles proposed by UNAE (2020), are:

Comply with the guidelines proposed by the teacher of the subject: This role refers to the fulfillment of the different activities, duties, and tasks that the teacher designates for the assistant.

Provide guidance to pupils about the different aspects of the subject with a permanent supporting role: This role refers to the help that assistants give to the students, constantly throughout the semester.

Promote UNAE's pedagogical model foundations in their practice: This role refers to the application of UNAE's principles of learning to the different activities and tasks in the assistantship practice.

3.3 Legal Framework Related to Teaching Assistantship in Ecuador

3.3.1 LOES, Regulation of Degree Courses and Teaching Scale

The student assistantship process and -more broadly- education in universities is regulated by the *Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior* (LOES), which is the Legislation for Higher Education. According to LOES (2018), each institution has the right to propose its evaluation methods according to its needs and the institutions' different systems. Despite this right of having the freedom to implement their methods of evaluation, the Regulation of Degree Courses and teaching scale created by CES (2019) proposes some common requirements and criteria for the teaching assistantship:

The criteria that institutions need to take into account are the number of students, the needs and objectives for the assistantship programs, and the frequency of it. The requirements proposed to be an assistant are to be a student in the same institution where they are applying for an assistantship and a grade in the subject corresponding to the highest quintile of their cohort. As UNAE is a public institution it follows the previously mentioned guidelines proposed by the LOES. Despite this, it has its own regulations which are going to be detailed along with their aims.

3.3.2 UNAE's Teaching Assistantship Regulations.

3.3.2.1 Objectives, Functions, and Requirements.

Teaching assistantship is based on the principles of “responsibility, planning, quality, continuous improvement, relevance, equality, commitment, and service”. Each one of the principles contributes and adds value to the learning process building a base of knowledge, according to UNAE's pedagogical model (UNAE, 2020, p. 5).

The functions of the teaching assistantship program at UNAE are to “offer a link between teachers and students, promote academic integration among all the actors in the learning process at UNAE, and generate learning environments examining the teaching processes towards an improvement of the learning process” (UNAE, 2020, p. 6).

Among the general requisites to be a teaching assistant, students will need to approve the fifth semester of the major in which the student wants to apply for the assistantship and not have received any disciplinary sanction before. Another requisite needed to postulate to be a teaching assistant is to have approved the subject with a minimum grade of 9.50 (UNAE, 2020).

As this university delineates, its teaching assistantship is based on the principles of responsibility, planning, quality, and others that improve learning. Assistants connect teachers and learners, promoting an integration that optimizes the classroom experience. And mutually they generate environments towards continuous betterment. With requisite excellence in their subjects and conduct, these students support and enhance education delivery while gaining formative hands-on pedagogical experience. UNAE's principles underscore assistants' multifaceted impact - their commitment and parity intrinsically improve the quality and equity of learning.

3.3.2.2 Process of teaching assistantship.

The process of a teaching assistantship starts, with the teacher's request for an assistant, which is later approved or discarded by pedagogical coordination. After that, an application committee is established. This committee is conformed of the pedagogical coordinators, the program director, and the teacher, with the role of approving or discarding the applications

UNAE (2020). According to the *Procedimiento de ayudantías de Cátedra*, the information is shared on the different communication channels the institution has, with the process that students have to follow in order to postulate to be teaching assistants, along with the list of teachers who have requested a TA. The committee analyzes each one of the applications checking if the requirements are accomplished. If two students apply to the same subject, the student that has complied with the requisites and has the highest grade is selected. If two students have the same grade, their academic performance and past achievements are analyzed in order to make a decision about it. Finally, teachers and selected students are notified about the selection process, which ends up with an induction meeting where general information about roles, activities, and platforms is explained in order to inform teachers and assistants of the process (UNAE, 2022).

3.3.2.3 UNAE's Pedagogical Model

The pedagogical model of UNAE was born due to a need for quality education, proposed by the constitution of Ecuador. Based on this need UNAE bases its pedagogical model on the concepts of constructivism, connectivism, and enactivism: which provide an active perspective of learning in which the environment plays an important role in it (UNAE, 2019).

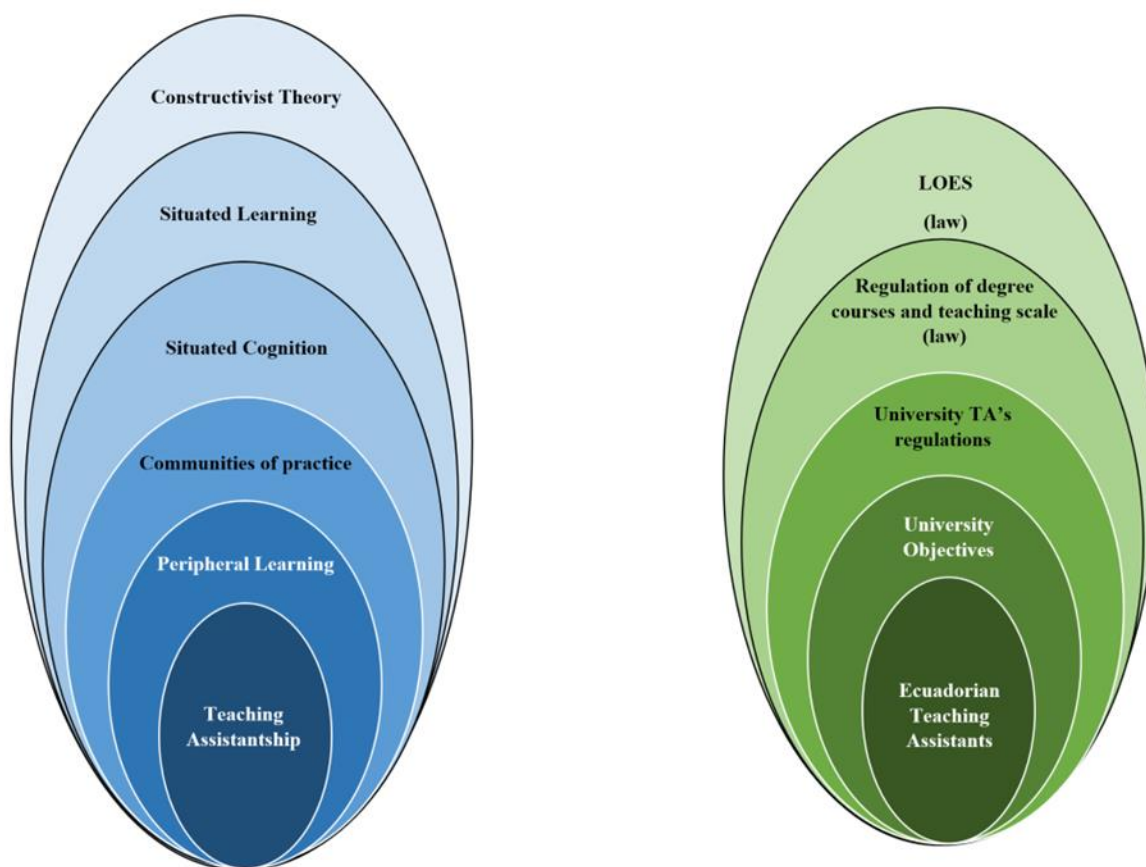
Based on the concepts previously mentioned, UNAE (2019) has proposed the following principles of their pedagogical model:

Learning by doing, Essentializing the curriculum, promoting flipped classroom, encouraging collaboration, Stimulating Metacognition, nurturing interculturality.

Each one of these principles aims for students to get a central role in their learning, where the practice is the most important aspect of their learning, as it is based on contemporary problems, trying to develop their knowledge and learning through this practice.

Figure 1

Key concepts Organizer



Note. The figure represents the major concepts of the literature review. The figure on the left represents the theoretical concepts of the teaching assistantship process. The figure on the right represents the major actors in the Ecuadorian Teaching Assistantship process

4. Methodology

4.1 Paradigm

The interpretative qualitative paradigm aims to explore the reality of individuals within a specific context or situation. As stated by Creswell & Creswell (2017, p. 29), it is “a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of reporting the complexity of a situation.” Therefore, qualitative research centers on the depth of an experience of an individual or group of individuals, even if it cannot be generalized. It is through these lenses that, unlike quantitative research, the subject is humanized, and their feelings and livings become a focal point of the narrative. Interpretative research,

another term to call qualitative research, covers social phenomena using in-depth data to understand human beings and their experiences (Jackson et al., 2007, p. 23). In other words, an interpretative qualitative paradigm allows researchers to understand how the world works through their participants' eyes using designs such as narrative inquiry, case study, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology.

Each of the aforementioned designs has a particular purpose which must be considered by the researcher at the moment of choosing one based on the research question. This richness of designs and the broad spectrum of their scope provide the researcher with a framework that will allow them to answer their research questions in a proper manner. All the information presented before is part of the initial process that every researcher must go through to build the methodological framework of their work.

4.2 Design

4.2.1 Phenomenology

From the designs mentioned in the previous section, the one chosen for this study was phenomenology since this design “focuses on an individual’s first-hand experiences rather than the abstract experience of others” (Selvi, 2007, p. 39); this means that in phenomenology the focal point is the experiences of the participants rather than them themselves. Therefore, this design fits the purpose of the proposed research which aims to collect and reflect on experiences related to the specific phenomenon of being a teaching assistant.

4.2.2 Interpretative phenomenology.

Phenomenology can be divided according to the way the data is processed and analyzed. Based on this information, two main currents stand: descriptive phenomenology and interpretative phenomenology. The descriptive approach focuses on a pure and generalizable essence of the studied phenomenon which leaves the researcher’s ideas and assumptions aside. On the other hand, Heidegger’s phenomenology understands that people change over time, as well as the studied phenomenon, and that only through this ontology is that the phenomenon can be really understood. He saw the importance of interpreting the phenomenon not only through

the participants' lenses but also those from the researcher, therefore leading to a more complex view of what is happening.

Interpretative phenomenology uses the experiences of the participants and the researchers along with the related literature to create a critical narrative that will eventually lead to an interpretation of the essence of the chosen phenomenon (Gill, 2020). Through interpretative phenomenology, the phenomenon is understood to be subjective, that is to say, that it depends on each subject and their cosmovision, therefore it cannot be generalized (Heidegger, 1988). Taking into account that both researchers have experienced the same phenomenon as the participants, interpretative phenomenology is the best option to carry out a study of these characteristics.

4.3 Techniques and instruments

To collect the data regarding the experiences of the participants, in-depth semi structured interviews will be carried out. This kind of interview fits the essence of the proposed research since it will allow the researchers to focus on their topic of interest but also to probe and respond to unexpected answers that could appear during the interview, as well as giving the participants the freedom to express themselves as if they were telling a story (Ryan et al., 2009). Since the aim of phenomenology is to discover the essence of a phenomenon, it is recommended to use unstructured or semi structured interviews to make the conversation fluid and comfortable. Nonetheless, this does not mean that participants should be interviewed in exhausting sessions since if that happened, the subject would lose interest in telling their experiences and could eventually leave the project or start to provide irrelevant or repeated information.

To ensure that the participants will feel comfortable during the multiple interview sessions that will be carried out, they will be offered the option to choose the language in which each interview will be carried out (Spanish or English), and they will also be able to choose the modality for each session (virtual or in person). In addition, the subjects will be allowed to choose the schedules that work best for them, and also the number of interviews they would like to have weekly. By providing the participants with these options, the researchers will make sure that the research does not cause any inconvenient to its participants, which will also help to keep the participants active during the interviewing period.

4.4 Participants

The participants of this study are three students who worked as teacher assistants in the English major of an Ecuadorian public university. These students have a minimum experience of two consecutive semesters being teacher assistants by the time this research starts.

4.5 Research steps

Phenomenological studies need to follow a process to ensure that research captures the essence that is the object of study. In general, phenomenology-related projects follow four steps: bracketing, intuiting, analysis, and description (Greening, 2019). By following these steps, the researcher does not only obtain an insight of the phenomenon, but also creates a narrative that is easy to understand for those interested in getting to know said event. In the case of this research, those steps are to be translated into the following.

Firstly, each subject was contacted individually to inform them about the project and asked for their participation; since there was a positive answer to the first call, the participants were given an informed consent letter to sign. For this stage, the participants were given a document with information about the study as well as a consent letter in which they state that they had been informed about the research project and what was expected from them as participants and that they agree to cooperate with the development of said project.

After that, in-depth semi structured interviews were conducted with the students using a variation of the *Three Interview Series*. Schuman (1982) and Seidman (2006) agree that in order to properly narrate a phenomenon, the participants should go through a process called the *Three Interview Series* which consists of three in-depth interviews of at least an hour and a half each. The first interview focuses on the prior experiences that led the subject to the target phenomenon. As for the second session, it should aim for the participant to narrate how they lived said phenomenon. Finally, a last meeting whose objective is to reflect on the experience should be conducted. Due to the changing nature of the phenomenon that was explored, the

researchers decided to conduct four interviews since interviews two and three would be destined to explore the lived experiences of the students in two different semesters.

To properly manage the data and ensure that the interview results are meaningful, coding was used after transcribing each session; the transcriptions were done after each interview had been finalized. Once they were condensed into themes, the systematized experiences were compared and analyzed until they showed the true essence of the phenomenon of being a teacher assistant at an Ecuadorian public university in an English teaching major.

4.6 Data analysis

As it was mentioned previously in methodology, the chosen design for this study is interpretative phenomenology, which does its data analysis by following three steps: reading, reflecting and writing. Each stage plays a pivotal role on the unveiling of the phenomenon. As for this particular study, the data analysis will follow the aforementioned steps.

In the first step, the researchers read all the transcripts from the interviews. This action allowed them to identify important words, phrases, and statements that lead to an initial and, in a further analysis, deeper understanding of the phenomenon. For this stage, coding was of chief importance.

As the researchers had experienced the process of teaching assistantship, deductive coding was used to analyze the data. Deductive coding can be defined as the process of creating themes, categories and codes based on research aims and existing literature (Flick, 2014). This process allowed the researchers to create the different codes categories and themes based on their previous experiences, the objectives of the study, and the literature review that was discussed previously.

The next step was reflecting, which could be translated into putting the findings from the previous stage into context. In this stage, the researchers went back to the purpose of the study and the literature review. By using those elements, the codes acquired a contextualized and enriched meaning that provided the researchers with data that was compared and contrasted in order to facilitate the reflecting process.

Finally, all the reflections gathered from the latter step are converted into a narrative through the process of writing. In this last step, the researchers will write a vivid analysis of what was taken from the reflective stage. Through this narrative, the phenomenon acquires an interpretation, and implications can be taken out of it. These implications could be later be transformed into suggestions for those whom this research may be of interest, such as the pedagogical coordination of the university in which this study takes place.

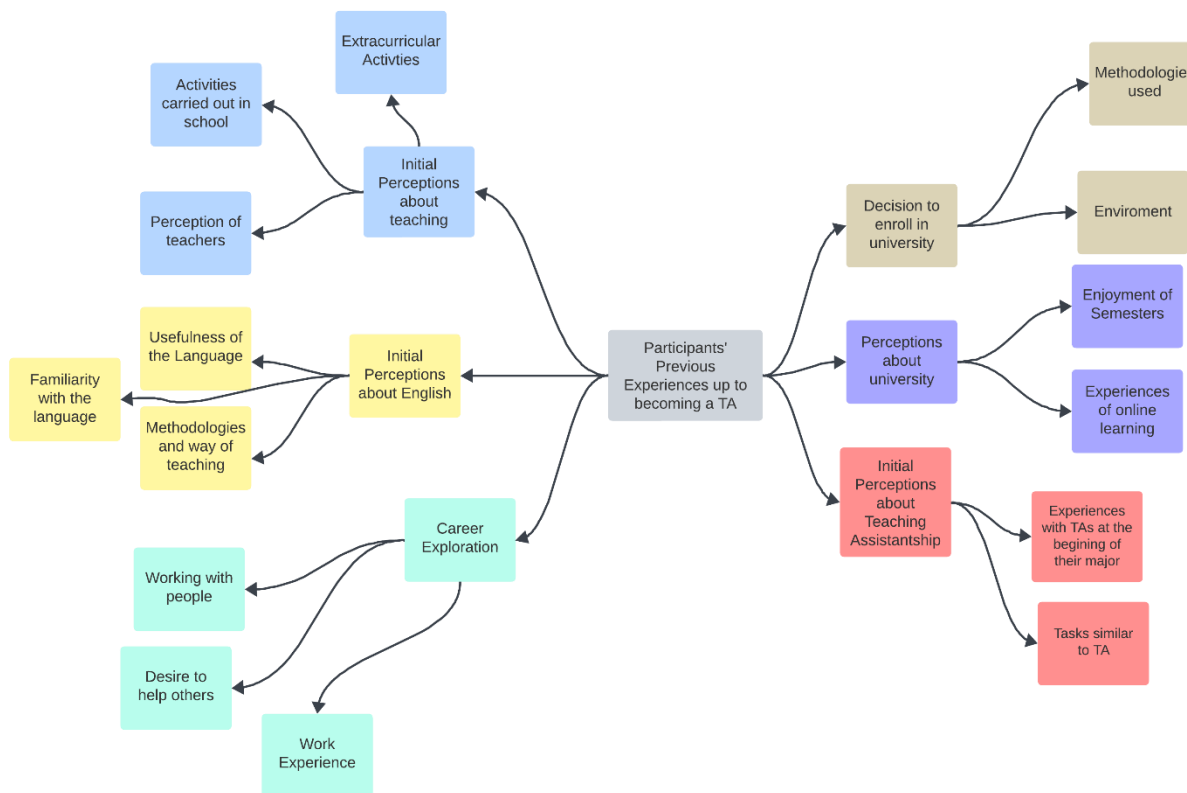
5. Results and Discussion

The results presented in this section were obtained from twelve in-depth interviews conducted with 3 teaching assistants. The interviews focused specifically on gathering data about the participants' experiences during the various phases of their teaching assistantships. Deductive coding was utilized to analyze the interview data, as described in the methodology section. The findings have been organized thematically, with categories and codes identified to summarize the key aspects of each phase of the teaching assistantship phenomenon.

Four main themes emerged from the data analysis: Previous Experiences, First Time Being a TA, Second Time Being a TA, and Reflection. The Previous Experiences theme covers participants' prior teaching and learning experiences that impacted their TA roles. The First Time Being a TA theme encompasses their initial appointments as teaching assistants and that critical first term. The Second Time Being a TA theme relates to their subsequent TA appointments and evolution as TAs. Finally, the Reflection theme captures their thoughts looking back on their overall TA experiences.

Figure 2

Participants' Previous Experiences up to becoming a TA



According to Figure two, participants shared various viewpoints related to their previous experiences related to their past experiences before becoming a TA and the decisions of choosing the English Major:

- *Initial perceptions about teaching:* This category summarizes the different initial thoughts and experiences that participants had with teaching, different extracurricular activities, the thoughts about teachers, and activities among other factors, shaped participant's decision to enroll in the English teaching major of the university.
- *Initial Perceptions about English:* This category is formed by the different thoughts participants had about English before enrolling in the major, especially on their school years. Aspects such as the perceived usefulness of the language, the familiarity of it, and the methodologies used were shared by the participants.
- *Career Exploration:* Similar to the previous category, this category entails the different aspects that were considered by the participants for them to choose what to study. In this category aspects such as previous work experience and personality traits connect with

this category as it shaped the initial thoughts the participants had prior to their enrollment in the major.

- *Decision to enroll in university:* This category consists about the factors that were taken into account by the participants in order to choose to study their major at the university. The environment that students interacted with played an important role in their decision.
- *Perceptions about university:* This category entails the thoughts and feelings that students had throughout their journey through university. Ranging from feelings of easiness to feelings of stress, due to online learning students' demonstrated that in overall they enjoyed their semesters.
- *Initial Perceptions about Teaching Assistantship:* This category is conformed by students' experiences and thoughts about teaching assistantship.

In interview one, participants shared their different experiences that were part of their lives before being a TA. Most of the participants shared an eager passion for helping others since early times. This can be appreciated by participant' one experience:

...I felt like productive. [...] I was like, okay, this is a good feeling, this is my inner self talking and saying, okay, you're doing good, you're doing good, you're being productive, you're doing this, and you're like, uh, not being... you're not being selfish, you are not selfish, you are like sharing what you know, you're not keeping that just for you, and, yeah, and they... and then, when I was able to see that they could like progress or be in an upper level of whatever they were like learning, it was like good good good,

This passion to help others aligns with the readiness to accomplish extra activities as is stated by participant one:

Whenever I had the chance, I would, I would like to sign up for a course, uh, about drawing, painting, or I would just do something related to... I mean, I wouldn't say languages, but I was all the time, you know, uh, practicing languages, and I really enjoyed sporty, sporty courses. So, for example, I was in a swimming class, I think since I was 12 up to my 15s, I would say.

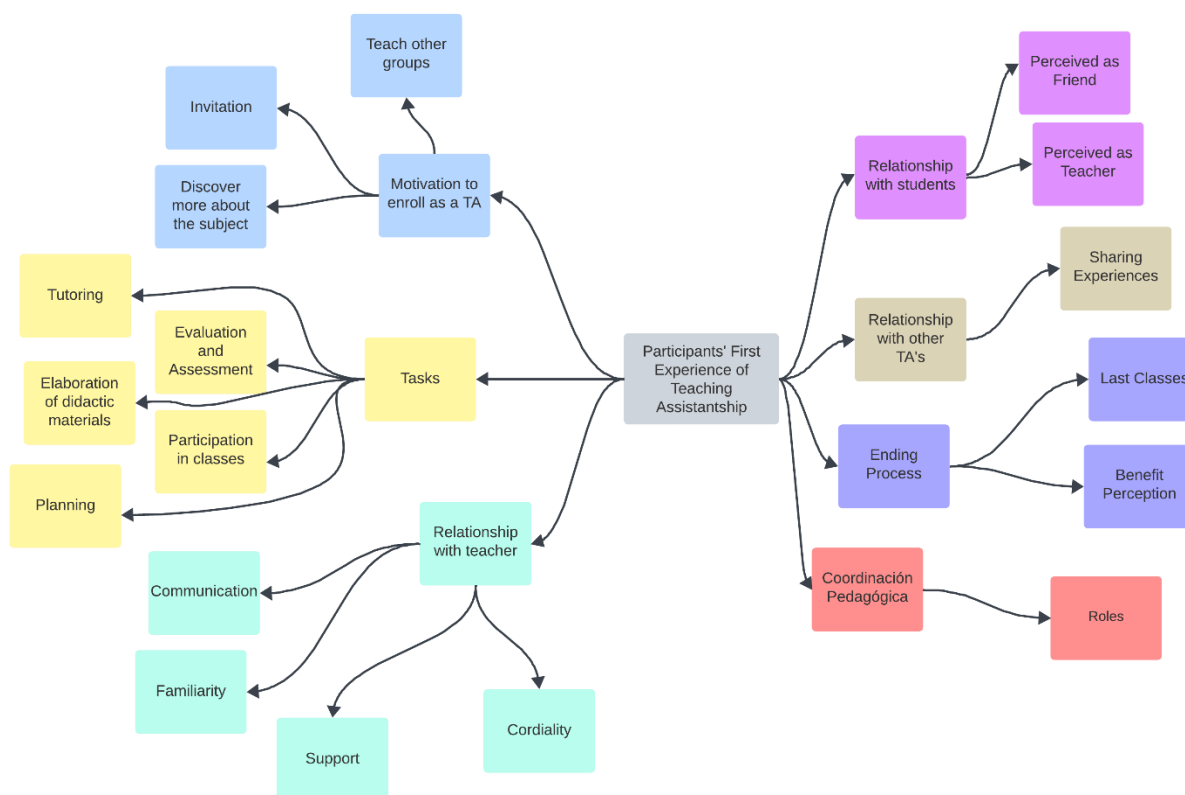
These principal factors influenced the decision of the participants to enroll in the major. Moreover, the English teachers the participants had also take part into the decision of the students to enroll in the major, as they were role models for them, as stated by participant three:

Yeah, this English teacher -luckily for me- I was able to have with this teacher, like, all three years of school. So, it was spectacular for me because, as I say, she was a very, very good teacher [...] I think that was also, my teacher was like the reason why I wanted to be an English teacher.

The different activities the participants carried out, along with a certain interest in the language that was fostered since young age, shape the participants' decision in order to enroll in the major. Each of these experiences highlights an special importance that was not captured by previous studies as they did not focus on the previous experiences that participants had before enrolling to be teacher assistants. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that although there are not mentioned, these values and personality traits shared, especially the ones related to career exploration are implicitly demonstrated by the participants of the other studies. As stated by Shi (2010), the aid that TA provide to the class has been proved to be helpful when trying to increase interactions among students, which implies that at the core of the activities there's still an underlying desire to help students with each one of the tasks carried out in the assistantship practice.

Figure 3

Participants' First experience of Teaching Assistantship



According to figure 3, seven main categories emerged regarding the participants' first experience of being a teaching assistant:

- *Motivation to enroll as a TA:* This category refers to the different ways that students started as TAs. On the highlights of this category, some students expressed that they were invited by their teachers to become TAs, other students reported that guided by the previously explained eagerness to help others, they enrolled in this process.
- *Tasks:* This category entails the different activities that students carried out. Activities such as grading, attending lessons, teaching, the creation of didactic materials and the constant tutoring are part of the activity carried out by students the first time as Teaching Assistants
- *Relationship with teacher:* This category details the different interactions that participants had with their teacher. The familiarity with the teacher, the cordiality, respect, and the communication influenced these interactions.

- *Relationship with students:* This category explains the dynamic that participants had with the students. Being perceived as a teacher and being perceived as a friend were the interactions that stood out in this category.
- *Relationship with other TAs:* This category is conformed with the interactions that the participants had with other TAs. Although they were minimum, participants expressed this helped them to share some tips and experiences with their peers.
- *Ending Process:* This category refers to the activities that were carried out once the assistantship is finished. Experiences about the last days of assistantship, and the perception of the benefits received are part of this category.
- *Coordinación Pedagógica:* This category summarizes the role that this department had on the process of Teaching Assistantship.

In the second interview students shared their first experiences when they applied to be TAs. In this first experience, the way they got enrolled stood out as most of them were asked by teachers to become assistants, based on their performance and the relationship they had with their teachers. As stated as participant one:

I was offered that position, I would say. I don't know if it's a position by three teachers. Um, they were really interested in, in me being a TA, and I had some conversations with them, and I ended up doing it with J.

Although this experience was shared by two of the participants, other factors such as the interest in the subject, the willingness to learn more, and previous relationships that participants had with the teachers played a key role in their decision.

On the activities they carried out, the participants highlighted tutoring as one of the activities they mostly carried out, was tutoring in which they acquired a pivotal role by helping students with questions with formal, pre-established sessions and also informal messages or questions that students sent to the assistants. Participant three shared:

They could message me or call me, but, well, the most common thing was for them to message me to schedule one, one, a specific day so that I could give them, a specific day

so that they could have a type of tutoring in which They showed me the product they were making, I could give them some notes, tips that could be useful to them when doing their class.

This type of interactions eventually led for TAs to be perceived as teachers but also as friends, establishing a good relationship with their students. As shared by participant two:

“I think I got good results because we established like a very respectful and friendly relationship. Um, I was helping them if they were confused with something... it was everything on classes”

Also participant one shared their experiences about relationships with students:

Um, so it was nice, and I still say hi to a lot of them, you know, whenever I meet them or they, they also recognize me. And, when I was, you know, a student, they also recognized me in, in, in the, in the halls. They're like oh my God, teacher, teacher X, teacher X, and I... for some reason, they never stopped calling me teacher, I don't know why, and anyway. So, it was pretty good because, uh, you know, even my teacher told me that I have no idea how you do it, and the other teachers were also like that, like I have no idea how the hell you do that, but they open up with you, like you, you can get to them with, without any, any effort, and they tell you things that might be good or might be bad about the teachers.

Other activities that were also highlighted by students were, the grading and checking of instruments of evaluation, the creation of didactic materials such as infographics or slides, the participation of classes, along with teaching were some of the activities carried out by students.

Among other interactions that participants had, the interaction with other TAs, and with teachers were shared by the participants. The participants shared that they didn't spend much time sharing information with their peers, but the times they do they talked about their experiences and the ways they did things. Regarding teachers their interactions were respectful with certain ways of communication such as emails or WhatsApp messages. These interactions were focused on receiving and giving support through advice. Participant three detailed:

Well, the interactions with my teacher were very good. Like, as I can mention now, also, she was, not only my teacher in the previous semester, but she was also my so our communication was quite good [...] If she needed something, she could ask me for it the moment we were in class; They were even classes that she had every day. So, she needed something, she told me, I wrote it down, and I did it. Eh, also, I mean, it was, as I say, very good, not only because we saw each other every day, and we could communicate, but also because she, she is a very open person, who knows how to listen to ideas. , who likes people to be involved in the work.

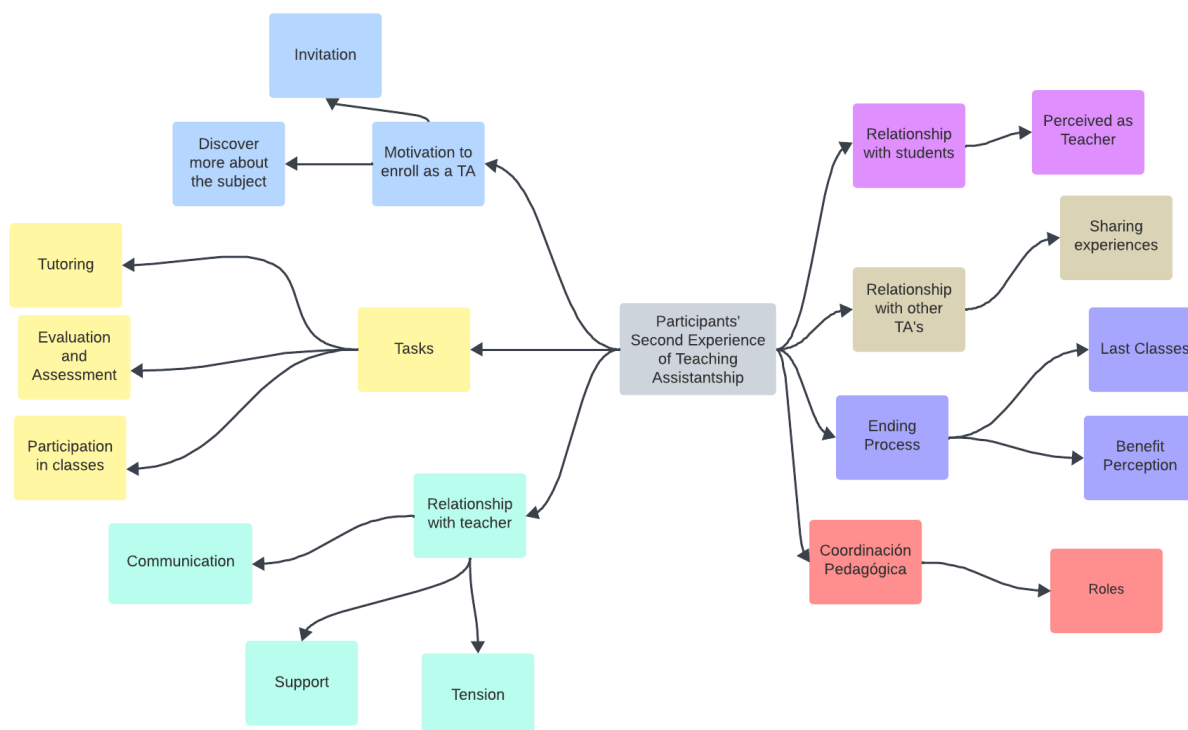
Regarding Ending process, participants shared how they ended classes, saying goodbye to their students, and the last moments after finishing the assistantship how the activities were validated, and if applicable, getting the hours counted as practicum. This validation was conducted by Coordinación Pedagógica, a department who is in charge of monitoring the whole process. Students detailed that other than the first meeting they had at the beginning of semester that socialized how the assistantship process worked, they received reminders of important dates in the process. Some students considered this first meeting a little bit lacking, as they still had some doubts about the process. As shared by participant one:

And the thing with those, with that explanation, I think, I think it was kind of like a, like the song where got lost into translation because the, the meeting was in Spanish, and I sort of understood it in a way, but my teacher understood it in the same way, and, and apparently two more people understood it that way as well, but the rest understood it in a different way from than us. So, what happened was that they told us, yeah, they told us, they told us that by doing practicums, oh, sorry, by doing the TA process during the semester, you wouldn't have to comply with practicum hours the next time, right? And that was it, and we were okay with it because I said that's great [...] So I did that, and I didn't, I didn't have, uh, to sign up for that, but they told me that I have to because I didn't have any hours of validate it, and I talked to my teacher, and she was mad as hell.

The different tasks and activities that students carried out during the teaching assistantship process are directly related to the context and subject the participant was helping with. Although this, the activities that were described by the participants are similar to the ones reported by Shi (2010), as both conducted tutoring sessions, helped students with the doubts and questions they had, fostering practice through activities and resources prepared by them, and grading and evaluating their performance during the class. Additionally, the different perceptions that participants had, are aligned with the viewpoints proposed by Riese & Kann (2020), being the perceived roles as teacher and as friend, the dominating aspects that teaching assistants detailed in their experiences. Each one of these activities, encompassed in a specific dimension, guided the different activities and interactions that participants had in their second experience.

Figure 4

Participants' Second experience of Teaching Assistantship



According to figure 4 there are also 7 categories that emerged in this third round of interviews, although the topics expressed were the same, there are substantial differences in the specific experiences that assistants had in each category.

- *Motivation to enroll as a TA:* The main reported difference between the first experience and the second that students expressed is that they were more interested in gaining more knowledge about the subject as the main reason for enrolling the second time.
- *Tasks:* In the tasks category, there was a reduction of activities being grading, tutoring, and participation in classes the main activities discussed.
- *Relationship with teacher:* Students perceived their relationship with their teachers a little bit rough, as some difficulties arose during the TA process.
- *Relationship with students:* The participants expressed they were perceived as teacher, but that didn't impede that students asked them for guidance.
- *Relationship with other TAs:* The time and interactions were reduced during the second time.
- *Ending Process:* Students shared the process they followed once their assistantship was finished.
- *Coordinación Pedagógica:* Overall, students perceived the department accomplished the same role as before.

The second time students carried the teaching assistantship process, they were guided on discovering and obtaining more information about the subject, as well as practicing and improving skill, as detailed by participant two:

I wanted to be involved on everything that was related, uh, to academic writing because I was, I was like preparing myself for the international exams, for international academic exams, and I was in my last, not, I was in my last year in the university, and I really just wanted to strengthen my grade on skills.

Since the participants were in higher semester, there was a considerable reduction in the time that was destined for conducting assistantship, leading to some restraints on the schedules of TA, exemplified with the experience of participant one:

So, the thing was that I was in eighth semester when, when, like when I was offered the job. Like I was, I was finishing seventh, oh, eight, sorry, 8th semester, and I knew for a fact that I was like, it wasn't sure, I wasn't sure if I was going to stay at that job, right? But they kind of like told me that I should stay, I should stay, I should stay, but they were uncertain about the future themselves, right? The administrators, so, what I knew from a fact, was something that my teacher like told me, like she was, she's very lovely, she said they know you're a student, they are hiring a student so they should give you the time for you to study, right? And, and when she, when she told me that, I was like oh my gosh, she's right, but because of this school, like it demands a lot of your time.

As can be seen, due to the increasement of responsibilities and other activities, the relationships that were stablished on the participants' first experiences changed drastically, especially the ones with teachers and students, participant one and two shared their experiences:

I felt like she was a bit annoyed, so I, so, in a way, I just gave her this space to process that I didn't fulfill... I mean, I did fulfill the things, but I, I, I felt like I didn't, right? So, so I wanted to let her know that I was very ashamed of it, so that I wouldn't actually even ask for things, or, or something like that. So, I never did anything special.

A second difference was the, the, the, the time that I had. If you had less time to do this thing, your experience is going to brief, you're not going to have like strong bonds with your students, but they're going to be, there's going to be still a good connection with them, and they're going to feel grateful with you. So do you.

The reduction of time, can difficult the establishment of relationships, that otherwise would be achieved through continuous interaction with the class and the teachers. Also the lack of communication between the assistant and the teacher can hinder these processes, even if the time remains the same, or increases, participant three shares:

I think one of the main differences was the communication with the teacher. As I mentioned, hey, I already had daily communication with my previous teacher due to the fact that not only was she my teacher from a later class, but she was also my teacher

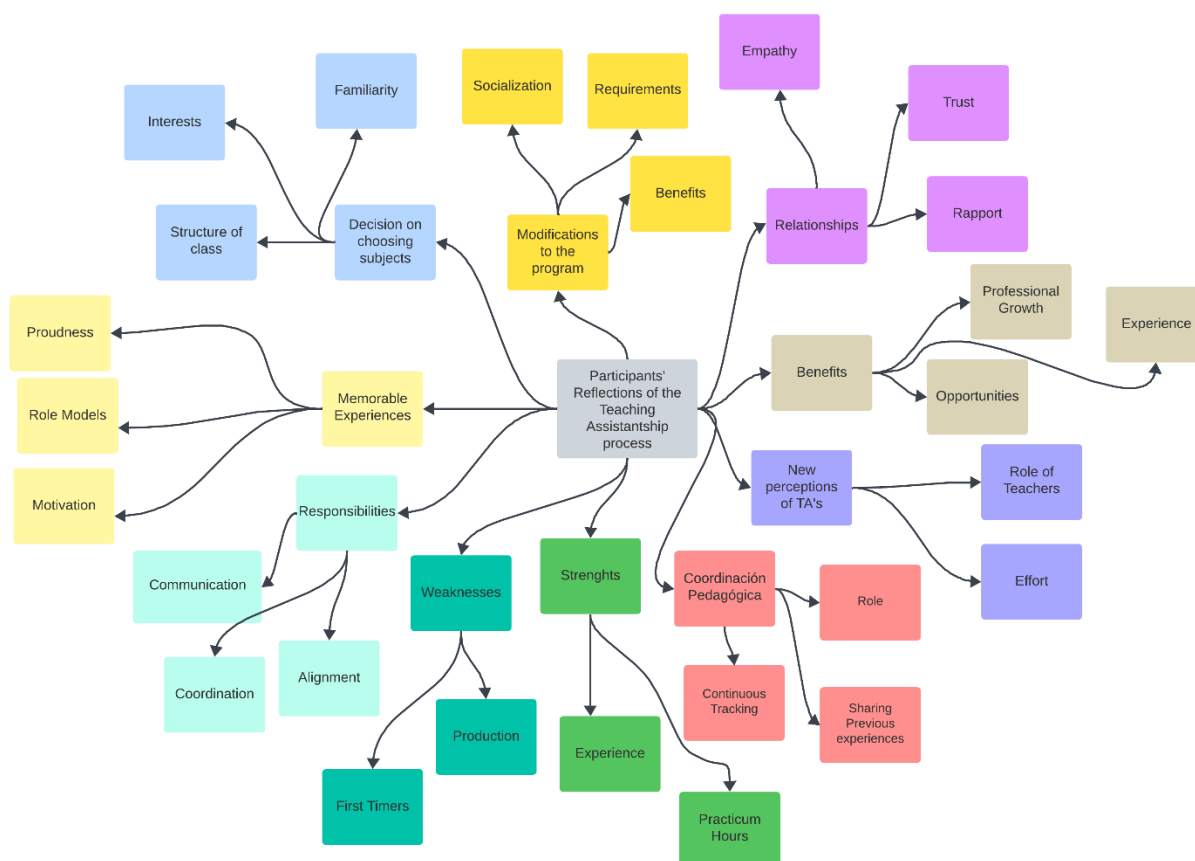
during that semester, so the communication was much better because if she had any doubt, or I had some doubt, eh, it was most likely that we were going to see each other the next day, so we could solve any situation. Eh, with this teacher, as I mentioned, eh, it was not the same because we did not see each other, eh, other than to send each other a message on WhatsApp, or to give her some tests, eh, lessons, or, or material that she needed.

Regarding the last categories, specifically the ending process, and the relationship with other TAs there weren't any major changes reported by the participants as these processes were almost the same as their first time, being slightly influenced by the dynamics of the relationships aforementioned. Other relationship that was influenced by the reduced time was the relationship between the TAs and students, as participant one states:

In the first lessons, they were like, who is this? What are we doing? Are we supposed to do this? Why are we doing that? I'm just here for the attendance part, and that's it. And, when I talked to them, like in a more personal way, they were like oh, really? Wow, that's okay, so, so lovely, and I need regular classes, whatever. So, I'm guessing it was okay, I don't know.

These feelings were present on the participants, which led them to believe this time, they were perceived as teachers, rather than friends, but that didn't stop them to give them guidance in any doubts they may have.

This second experience that participants had revealed some deeper insights onto other interactions the participants had, although these experiences are bounded to the specific context, the activities and perceptions that participants had, were almost the same as their first experiences, evidently evidenced by some major differences due to the reduction of time available that TAs had during their second time being a teaching assistant. These insights that provided valuable information about the process were not detailed in other studies, as they focused on a more-wholistic perspective of the process and their overall viewpoints.

Figure 5*Participants' Reflections of the Teaching Assistantship Process*

According to figure 5, students gave insights on several aspects of their experience, leading to the following categories:

- *Decision on choosing subjects:* This category consists of the aspects that were considered by students in order to choose the subject to be assistant of. Aspects such as interests, familiarity with teachers and subjects are key.
- *Memorable Experiences:* This category gathered the values of the most important experiences of TAs. On the core, these experiences were unique, and gave a sense of proudness and a sense of that TAs are role models for students.

- *Responsibilities:* This category entails the characteristics a TA should have in order to be responsible in their tasks. Having good communication skills, an alignment with the values of the teacher, and a clear coordination are important elements in this category.
- *Coordinación Pedagógica:* This category details the experiences that students had regarding this department, and how could it be improved. The first meeting, sharing previous experiences and the continuous tracking are the most important suggestions made by students.
- *New perceptions of TAs:* This category entails the new appreciations that students acquired after being a TA. Participants shared that they discovered new activities that were behind the Teaching Assistantship process.
- *Benefits:* This category details the different benefits that are currently bounded to the assistantship process, being experience the most important one for students.
- *Relationships:* This category constitutes of the different values that students consider creating good relationships with teachers, students, and peers. Values such as rapport, empathy, and trust were identified by TAs as core values.
- *Modifications to the program:* This category discusses the appreciation that participants had on how could the program improve. Along with the first socialization meeting, participants identified that the requirements for enrollment, and the benefits could be modified in order to meet students' needs.
- *Weaknesses:* This category consists of the perceived aspects that could be improved in the process. In this category, aspects such as the doubts with first-timers and other production and monitoring issues were highlighted as the weakest aspects of the program.
- *Strengths:* This category entails the aspects that are considered by the participants to be the benefits of the process. The opportunity to gain more knowledge and experience was the most important aspect shared by the participants.

In the last interview, the participants shared with us very useful reflections regarding their process. Starting with the decision on choosing the right subject participant one shared useful information about how to do it:

I would say the, the flow of a class. So, because I had several teachers, right? As in the whole uni process, or the whole, you know, like uni life, and, I'm guessing how they structure the class is a, is an important aspect [...] Another factor would be the teacher. I think that's the most important one actually, um, because, I don't know about my classmates, but, I definitely have an opinion on how they would teach based on their personality. [...] And, the third aspect would be the like my interest, I would say.

Taking into account the factors previously mentioned the process of choosing a subject will be easier for students, making the more interested in collaborating and giving support as an assistant resulting in a rich experience that will give the TA a meaningful opportunity to become a role model for them, as stated by participant 2:

I think they saw me as model, and that was super important for me because that allowed me also to, to be always doing my best because I could just, I had a, I had a, a model. I mean, it's like being the big sister, the older sister of the family which I am, so it was like that, it felt like that.

All this impact can be guided with the adequate support of the monitoring institutions, in this case, Coordinación Pedagógica. By using the right support and help specially for beginners this process can benefit more students as participant 3 suggest:

I think that if I had to suggest something to the Coordinación Pedagógica, it would be that, to go more in depth, in detail, into what it is to be a teaching assistant; and, and that in these meetings, a little more extensive information is given; and maybe, obviously, they draw the attention of more students because sometimes, maybe, as I say, you close yourself off because I don't know, maybe you're afraid or not, you don't want to leave that area. of comfort, but I think that the fact of presenting advantages or benefits to students of what being a teaching assistant can bring, I think it would be very useful, and then the process would also look much more, uh, more effective.

All these suggestions can aid to enhance the assistantship process, and create an environment where students feel motivated to get involved in such activities.

In the last round of interviews, the participants offered some key reflections about the journey and experiences they had during their assistantship process. On the main insights, the assistants shared the way that students perceived them, played an important role in the different interactions they carried out during the process. Being perceived as a friend as well as a teacher are some of the most outstanding roles the participants recognized during the different interactions they had with their students. This aligns with the experiences shared by Riese and Kann (2020), which along with the mentioned perceptions the participants also referred to be perceived as mentors, apprentices, tutors and graders. Although these specific perceptions are not directly recognized by the participants, they were present in the different phases they experienced during their teaching assistantship process, which were shared as the most memorable experiences the participants had in general. Activities such as checking evaluation instruments, grading homework and tests, the opportunity to learn more about the subject they are getting enrolled in, and the feeling that they are going to be role models, are some of the specific experiences shared by students aligned with the extra roles and perceptions previously mentioned.

Additionally, the perceived usefulness of the programs is in accordance with the findings of Zaldívar et al. (2017) which highlighted the process can be a source for motivation, and also can provide additional knowledge, both for the applied subject and also the teaching process. Also the ability to put knowledge into practice, aspect that was shared by the participants was also shared by Uyaguari et al. (2022), which mentions that this knowledge benefits the participants in their professional life.

6. Conclusion

In addressing the different lived experiences of teaching assistants, the participants have provided with different viewpoints and reflections about their process of assistantship. From their first interactions with the language, their attitudes, their journey since they enrolled in the major, their perceptions about teaching, and the process of assistantship; to their reflections of their experiences, the meaning of the perceived roles, and suggestions for the betterment of the process; each participant provided useful insights about their participation in the teaching assistantship program.

In regard to the holistic perspective related to the experiences that participants had, the analysis concludes that their experiences contained both positive and negative experiences. Aspects such as their need to help others, the communication with their teachers, the activities carried out, the organisms behind the control of the process and the benefits were some of the most important aspects that influenced participant's perspectives of the process of being a teaching assistant, as they shaped each one of the decisions and different interactions that led participants to enroll in the teaching assistantship process, as well as the different phases, activities, and interactions that participants had in their journey.

In light of the different views of the participants' role in the assistantship process. It is concluded that participants perceived themselves as teachers and friends of their students, an apprentice of their teachers. Each one of these roles plays an important function in the different actions and activities that participants carried out during their assistantship process. Moreover, the participants perceive the process of assistantship as an opportunity for them to grow, personally and professionally. These views affirm that the teaching assistantship process can be useful for students as it provides numerous ways to learn during the TA process. Further exploration with other actors such as teachers or Coordinación Pedagógica will provide a richer understanding, as well as provide a better contrast on these findings.

7. Implications and Limitations

The study showed the positive and negative experiences that involve being at teacher assistant at the university. If shown to the authorities in charge of the program, this study could help to improve the program, and take into account the needs of teacher assistants. Nevertheless, there were some factors that prevented this study from being as holistic as it wanted to. First of all, the number of participants that fitted into the established criteria was low. Also, the study only took into account the experiences of the teacher assistants, therefore, letting out the viewpoints of professors, administrators, and other people involved in this process. Finally, having only interviews as data collection tools makes it impossible to make the triangulation process. Therefore, it makes the data valuable but extremely subjective.

8. Recommendations

Once the data was analyzed, this study showed the richness of the teacher assistant experience at this particular university. Nevertheless, as it was mentioned before, some constraints kept this study from having the holistic view that would be required to give a full report to Coordinación Pedagógica. To do so, the researchers suggest conducting a study with participants from different majors, including teacher assistants, professors, and members from the organism in charge. In addition, using more data collection tools to carry out triangulation, so that the data can be more objective.

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10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1: Validation Tools

10.1.1 Validation Tool A



Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)



Template: Validation of the Instrument by Experts.

Evaluator's name: Carmen Maricela Cajamarca Illescas

Specialty: Curriculum and Instruction

Academic degree: Master in Curriculum and instruction

- **Authors of the Final Integrated Project:** Carlos Julio Minga Carchi and Heidi Pamela Mogrovejo Alvarez
- **Title of the research:** Being a teacher assistant at the university: Experiences and insights
- **General objective:** To analyze the lived experiences of students who worked as teacher assistants in a university setting.
- **Specific objectives**
 1. To provide a holistic perspective of the experiences the participants who worked as teacher assistants had.
 2. To discover the different views of the participants in their role as teacher assistants.

Última actualización (mayo, 2023) MEMG

1



Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)



1. INSTRUMENT TO VALIDATE THE RATING SCALE

Instruction: Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement on the statements provided below by encircling the number which corresponds to your best to your judgment.

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Undecided 4 – Agree
5 – Strongly Agree

Criteria

The items in the instrument are relevant to answer the objectives of the study.	1	2	3	4	5X
The items in the instrument can obtain depth to constructs being Measured/studied.	1	2	3	4	5X
The instrument has an appropriate sample of items for the construct being measured/studied.	1	2	3	4	5X
The items and their alternatives are neither too narrow nor limited in its content.	1	2	3	4	5X
The items in the instrument are stated clearly.	1	2	3	4	5X
The items on the instrument can elicit responses which are stable, definite, consistent and not conflicting.	1	2	3	4	5X
The terms adapted in the scale are culturally appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5X
The layout or format of the instrument is technically sound.	1	2	3	4	5X
The instrument is not too short or long enough that the participants will be able to answer it within a given time.	1	2	3	4 X	5
The instrument is interesting such that participants will be induced to respond to it and accomplish it fully.	1	2	3	4	5X
The instrument as a whole could answer the basic purpose for which it is designed.	1	2	3	4	5X

2

Última actualización (mayo, 2023) MEMG



Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)



2. COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS SECTION

1. Do you consider that the proposed items correspond to categories, unit of analysis or variables of the study?

Yes X NO _____

2. What items would you add or erase?

I find the items relevant to answer the research questions.

3. What other suggestions would you make to improve this instrument?

Evaluator's Names: Carmen Maricela Cajamarca Illescas

ID: 0105744338

Academic Degree: Master in Curriculum and Instruction



Signature: _____

10.1.2 Validation Tool B



Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)



Template: Validation of the Instrument by Experts.

Evaluator's name: Mahly Jahzeel Martínez Jiménez

Specialty: English Language Teaching

Academic degree: Phd in Education.

- **Authors of the Final Integrated Project:** Carlos Julio Minga Carchi and Heidi Pamela Mogrovejo Alvarez
- **Title of the research:** Being a teacher assistant at the university: Experiences and insights
- **General objective:** To analyze the lived experiences of students who worked as teacher assistants in a university setting.
- **Specific objectives**
 1. To provide a holistic perspective of the experiences the participants who worked as teacher assistants had.
 2. To discover the different views of the participants in their role as teacher assistants.



Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)



1. INSTRUMENT TO VALIDATE THE RATING SCALE

Instruction: Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement on the statements provided below by encircling the number which corresponds to your best to your judgment.

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Undecided 4 – Agree
5 – Strongly Agree

Criteria

The items in the instrument are relevant to answer the objectives of the study.	1	2	3	4	5
The items in the instrument can obtain depth to constructs being Measured/studied.	1	2	3	4	5
The instrument has an appropriate sample of items for the construct being measured/studied.	1	2	3	4	5
The items and their alternatives are neither too narrow nor limited in its content.	1	2	3	4	5
The items in the instrument are stated clearly.	1	2	3	4	5
The items on the instrument can elicit responses which are stable, definite, consistent and not conflicting.	1	2	3	4	5
The terms adapted in the scale are culturally appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
The layout or format of the instrument is technically sound.	1	2	3	4	5
The instrument is not too short or long enough that the participants will be able to answer it within a given time.	1	2	3	4	5
The instrument is interesting such that participants will be induced to respond to it and accomplish it fully.	1	2	3	4	5
The instrument as a whole could answer the basic purpose for which it is designed.	1	2	3	4	5

2

Última actualización (mayo, 2023) MEMG



Instructivo y procedimientos para el Trabajo de Integración Curricular y el Examen Complexivo en PINE
Comité de Titulación de PINE (abril, 2023)



2. COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS SECTION

1. Do you consider that the proposed items correspond to categories, unit of analysis or variables of the study?

Yes X NO _____

2. What items would you add or erase?

3. What other suggestions would you make to improve this instrument?

The deep interview is well organized and address all the categories of the object/phenomenon.

Evaluator's Names: Mahly Jahzeel Martínez Jiménez

ID: 1759432733

Academic Degree: Phd. In Education.

Signature:



10.2 Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Interview guide

Interview 1: Focused Life History

Objective: To explore the factors that led the participants to experience the phenomenon of being a teacher assistant at the University.

1. What was your school/high school life like?
2. What factors sparked your interest in the English Language?
 - How did your English teachers carry out their classes?
3. How did you become interested in being a teacher?
4. How did you choose to study this major at your university?
5. What was the process of becoming a student at your university?
6. Can you describe your life as a PINE student?
7. Can you describe your involvement in extracurricular activities inside your university?
 - Why did you become interested in this kind of activity?
8. Would you like to add anything more related to your life history before becoming a TA?

Interview #2: The details of the first experience

Objective: To explore the participants' first experience as a teacher assistant.

Warm-up question: How many semesters were you a TA?

- In which semesters were you a TA?
1. What motivated you to become a TA?
 2. How was the application process you followed when you became a TA for the first time?
 - Which subject did you apply for?
 - Which semester was that subject from?
 3. Could you describe the role that *Coordinación Pedagógica* had in your TA process?
 - What activities did *coordinación pedagógica* carry out?
 4. As teacher assistants, you can collaborate on a set of specific activities. Let's go over each one. Can you describe how you fulfilled the area called "Apoyo en procesos de evaluación"?
 5. Can you describe how you covered the area of "Elaboración de recursos didácticos"?
 6. Can you describe how you carried out task related to "Identificar temas que sirvan para desarrollar investigación"?
 7. Can you describe how you worked on the area called "Participación en clases sincrónicas"?
 8. Can you describe how you developed the area called "Participación en la planificación de las clases"?
 9. Can you describe how you worked on the area of "Tutorías grupales e individuales"?
 10. Apart from the aforementioned activities, were you asked to carry out any other tasks in the same subject or in different subjects taught by the same professor?
 11. Can you describe how your interactions with your teacher were?
 - How was the communication with your teacher?
 - How did you support the teacher?
 12. Describe your relationship with other TAs

- What kind of help or support did you receive from other TAs during your first time as one?
13. Describe your relationship with your students
- How did you get in contact with them?
 - How were their interactions with you?
 - How did you help or support them?
14. What was the length of the program?
- Once it finished, what did you do?
 - Did you prepare something for your students?
 - Did you prepare something for your teacher?
 - What academic or monetary benefit did you receive once you finished the process?
 - What was the process that you followed in order to obtain this benefit?

Interview #3: The details of the second experience

Objective: To explore the factors and the details that the participants lived to their second experience as a teacher assistant.

Warm-up question: How would you rate your experience being a TA in your second year?

1. How was the application process you followed when you became a TA for the second time?
 - Which subject did you choose?
2. Could you describe the role that *Coordinación Pedagógica* had in your TA process?
 - What activities did *coordinación pedagógica* carry out this second time?
3. Let's go over the activities you carry out in your assistantship process again. Can you describe how you fulfilled the area called "Apoyo en procesos de evaluación"?
4. Can you describe how you covered the area of "Elaboración de recursos didácticos"?
5. Can you describe how you carried out task related to "Identificar temas que sirvan para desarrollar investigación"?
6. Can you describe how you worked on the area called "Participación en clases sincrónicas"?
7. Can you describe how you developed the area called "Participación en la planificación de las clases"?
8. Can you describe how you worked on the area of "Tutorías grupales e individuales"?
9. Apart from the aforementioned activities, were you asked to carry out any other tasks in the same subject or in different subjects taught by the same professor this second time?
10. Can you describe how your interactions with your teacher were?
 - How was the communication with your teacher?
 - How did you support the teacher?
11. Describe your relationship with other TAs
 - What kind of help or support did you receive from other TAs during your second time as one?
12. Describe your relationship with your students
 - How did you get in contact with them?

- How were their interactions with you?
 - How did you help or support them?
13. What was the length of the program?
- Once it finished, what did you do?
 - Did you prepare something for your students?
 - Did you prepare something for your teacher?
 - What academic or monetary benefit did you receive once you finished the process?
 - What was the process that you followed in order to obtain this benefit?
14. In your opinion, what were the main differences between your first and your second time as a TA?

Interview #4: Reflecting on the phenomenon

Objective: To reflect on the experiences lived before, during, and after the assistantship process.

Warm-up: In a sentence, describe your general experience of being a teaching assistant so far.

1. Can you briefly describe a specific situation or interaction that stood out during your TA process?
 - What made it memorable for you?
 - How did you feel about it?
2. Could you tell us about the support you received from Coordinación Pedagógica during your first time as TA?
 - How did that influence your activities as TA?
 - How useful was the introductory lecture that they gave at the beginning of the program?
3. How did you make sure that you were fulfilling your responsibilities as TA in the different activities that you carried out during this process?
4. What aspects contributed to the relationship with your teacher while working as a TA?
5. How has being a TA shaped your personal and professional growth?
6. After living this experience, how has your perception of teacher assistants changed?
7. What were the strengths of the assistantship program?
8. What were the weaknesses of the assistantship program?
9. How could the program improve?

10.3 Appendix 3: Consent Forms

10.3.1 Participant 1 Consent

UNAE PEDAGOGÍA
DE LOS IDIOMAS
NACIONALES
Y EXTRANJEROS

Consent Form
Inform Letter

Being a Teacher Assistant at The University: Experiences and Insights

1. General Information

Dear participants, we are pleased to provide you with important information regarding the integration project titled **"BEING A TEACHER ASSISTANT AT THE UNIVERSITY: EXPERIENCES AND INSIGHTS,"** conducted by **CARLOS JULIO MINGA CARCHI** and **HEIDY PAMELA MOGROVEJO ALVAREZ**. The purpose of this letter is to outline the project details and invite you to participate.

2. Objective

The primary objective of this research project is to analyze the lived experiences of students who have worked as teacher assistants in a university setting. By delving into your unique perspectives and insights, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges, rewards, and overall impact of this role.

3. Participants

We are seeking teaching assistants who have a minimum of two semesters of experience in this position. Your firsthand experiences and valuable insights will be crucial in shedding light on the various aspects of being a teaching assistant.

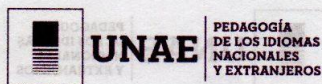
4. Instruments

Throughout the course of this research project, we will mainly employ interviews to gather data and capture your experiences. Rest assured that your privacy and confidentiality will be strictly maintained throughout the process, and all data collected will be anonymized to ensure your identity remains protected.

5. Confidentiality

We want to assure you that all information provided by you will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your responses will be anonymized and reported in aggregate form, ensuring that individual identities remain completely protected. Rest assured that the research findings will be presented in a manner that preserves the anonymity of all participants.

Date: Wednesday 20th May 2023



6. Participation

Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. If you choose to take part, you will be requested to fill in your informed consent prior to engaging in any data collection activities. You may withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions or negative consequences.

7. Contact Information:

Should you have any questions, concerns, or require further information about the project, please do not hesitate to reach out to **Carlos Julio Minga Carchi** at cjminga@unae.edu.ec or **Heidy Pamela Mogrovejo Alvarez** at hpmogrovejo@unae.edu.ec. We are more than happy to address any inquiries or provide clarification as needed.

***Thank you for considering your potential participation in this important research project.
Your input and contributions are highly valued and greatly appreciated.***

Sincerely

Carlos Julio Minga Carchi


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UNAE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

Consent Form

Being a Teacher Assistant at The University: Experiences and Insights

I [REDACTED] with I.D. number [REDACTED] agree to participate in the Integrated Project titled **"BEING A TEACHER ASSISTANT AT THE UNIVERSITY: EXPERIENCES AND INSIGHTS"**, conducted by **CARLOS JULIO MINGA CARCHI** and **HEIDY PAMELA MOGROVEJO ALVAREZ** who have discussed the project with me.

I have received, read and kept a copy of the information letter. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about this research and I have received satisfactory answers. I understand the general purposes, risks and methods of this research.

I consent to participate in the research project and the following has been explained to me:

- the research may not be of direct benefit to me
- my participation is completely voluntary
- my right to withdraw from the study at any time without any implications to me
- the risks including any possible inconvenience, discomfort or harm as a consequence of my participation in the research project
- the steps that have been taken to minimise any possible risks
- what I am expected and required to do
- whom I should contact for any complaints with the research or the conduct of the research
- I am able to request a copy of the research findings and reports
- security and confidentiality of my personal information.

In addition, I consent to:

- *audio-visual recording of any part of or all research activities*
- *publication of results from this study on the condition that my identify will not be revealed.*


Name: [REDACTED]

Mobile Phone Number and e-mail address: [REDACTED]

Signature and I.D number: [REDACTED]

Date: [REDACTED]

10.3.2 Participant 2 Consent



UNAE PEDAGOGÍA
DE LOS IDIOMAS
NACIONALES
Y EXTRANJEROS

Inform Letter

Being a Teacher Assistant at The University: Experiences and Insights

1. General Information

Dear participants, we are pleased to provide you with important information regarding the integration project titled **"BEING A TEACHER ASSISTANT AT THE UNIVERSITY: EXPERIENCES AND INSIGHTS,"** conducted by **CARLOS JULIO MINGA CARCHI** and **HEIDY PAMELA MOGROVEJO ALVAREZ**. The purpose of this letter is to outline the project details and invite you to participate.

2. Objective

The primary objective of this research project is to analyze the lived experiences of students who have worked as teacher assistants in a university setting. By delving into your unique perspectives and insights, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges, rewards, and overall impact of this role.

3. Participants

We are seeking teaching assistants who have a minimum of two semesters of experience in this position. Your firsthand experiences and valuable insights will be crucial in shedding light on the various aspects of being a teaching assistant.

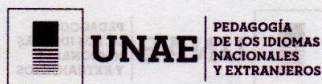
4. Instruments

Throughout the course of this research project, we will mainly employ interviews to gather data and capture your experiences. Rest assured that your privacy and confidentiality will be strictly maintained throughout the process, and all data collected will be anonymized to ensure your identity remains protected.

5. Confidentiality

We want to assure you that all information provided by you will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your responses will be anonymized and reported in aggregate form, ensuring that individual identities remain completely protected. Rest assured that the research findings will be presented in a manner that preserves the anonymity of all participants.

Date: Wednesday 20th May 2023



6. Participation

Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. If you choose to take part, you will be requested to fill in your informed consent prior to engaging in any data collection activities. You may withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions or negative consequences.

7. Contact Information:

Should you have any questions, concerns, or require further information about the project, please do not hesitate to reach out to **Carlos Julio Minga Carchi** at cjminga@unae.edu.ec or **Heidy Pamela Mogrovejo Alvarez** at hpmogrovejo@unae.edu.ec. We are more than happy to address any inquiries or provide clarification as needed.

***Thank you for considering your potential participation in this important research project.
Your input and contributions are highly valued and greatly appreciated.***

Sincerely

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UNAE PEDAGOGÍA
DE LOS IDIOMAS
NACIONALES
Y EXTRANJEROS

Consent Form

Being a Teacher Assistant at The University: Experiences and Insights

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- *publication of results from this study on the condition that my identify will not be revealed.*


Name: [REDACTED]

Mobile Phone Number and e-mail address: [REDACTED]

Signature and I.D number: [REDACTED]

Date: [REDACTED]

10.3.3 Participant 3 Consent



UNAE PEDAGOGÍA
DE LOS IDIOMAS
NACIONALES
Y EXTRANJEROS

Inform Letter

Being a Teacher Assistant at The University: Experiences and Insights

1. General Information

Dear participants, we are pleased to provide you with important information regarding the integration project titled **"BEING A TEACHER ASSISTANT AT THE UNIVERSITY: EXPERIENCES AND INSIGHTS,"** conducted by **CARLOS JULIO MINGA CARCHI** and **HEIDY PAMELA MOGROVEJO ALVAREZ**. The purpose of this letter is to outline the project details and invite you to participate.

2. Objective

The primary objective of this research project is to analyze the lived experiences of students who have worked as teacher assistants in a university setting. By delving into your unique perspectives and insights, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges, rewards, and overall impact of this role.

3. Participants

We are seeking teaching assistants who have a minimum of two semesters of experience in this position. Your firsthand experiences and valuable insights will be crucial in shedding light on the various aspects of being a teaching assistant.

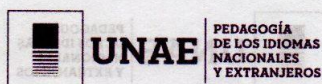
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Date: Wednesday 20th May 2023



6. Participation

Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. If you choose to take part, you will be requested to fill in your informed consent prior to engaging in any data collection activities. You may withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions or negative consequences.

7. Contact Information:

Should you have any questions, concerns, or require further information about the project, please do not hesitate to reach out to **Carlos Julio Minga Carchi** at cjminga@unae.edu.ec or **Heidy Pamela Mogrovejo Alvarez** at hpmogrovejo@unae.edu.ec. We are more than happy to address any inquiries or provide clarification as needed.

Thank you for considering your potential participation in this important research project.

Your input and contributions are highly valued and greatly appreciated.

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Name: [REDACTED]

Mobile Phone Number and e-mail address: [REDACTED]

Signature and I.D number: [REDACTED]

Date: [REDACTED]

10.4 Appendix 4: Interview Transcripts

10.4.1 Participant 1 Interview 1

Interview 1

Participant 1

00:00:00

There we go. Okay, so, hi. Welcome to this first interview of the thesis project called Being a Teacher Assistant at the University: Experiences and Insights. The objective of this first interview is to explore the factors that led you to experience the phenomenon of being a teacher assistant at the University. Before we start, do you have any questions about how we are going to carry out this procedure?

00:00:35

Um, no, Not really. You can continue.

00:00:41

Okay. So, we will begin, uh, the first interview focused on your life history. I just remind you this is all the experiences you lived before being a teacher assistant.

00:00:51

Wait. Like the... for being a teacher assistant, right?

00:01:03

Yes

00:01:04

Okay, okay.

00:01:06

So, the first question. Uh, what was your school and high school life like?

00:01:12

Um, I would say it was pretty intense in terms of like how the schedule works, because it was a constant, it was a constant. Um, let's say focusing and trying to keep up with everything that I had to do because I had other things to just aside from high school. You know, like, um, afternoon courses, not like as related to high school, but like you know, like jobs and stuff like that. So yeah, but it was pretty normal, I think.

00:01:50

So, you just mentioned you used to do some things outside of school. What kind of activities were you involved in?

00:01:58

Um, so a lot of them included, um, crafty stuff. So, for example, whenever I had the chance, I would, I would like to sign up for a course, uh, about drawing, painting, or I would just do something related to... I mean, I wouldn't say languages, but I was all the time, you know, uh, practicing languages, and I really enjoyed sporty, sporty courses. So, for example, I was in a swimming class, I think since I was 12 up to my 15s, I would say.

00:02:36

So, if you could describe you as a school student in one word, which word you choose?

00:02:48

Active. I would say active, yeah.

00:02:51

Yeah, okay. So, have you, well since you were in high school, were you interested in English?

00:03:00

Um, to be honest it wasn't a thing that I would consider like interesting because I saw it as like, as any of the any of the subjects that I had in school that I had to comply with, so that was it. I was, I was never like, oh my God, English the favorite one, you know.

Link of the complete transcription:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jBBd8wvj1OLkQQmFbukN53Di_YVZ-K0/edit?usp=sharing&oid=100542077224369070600&rtpof=true&sd=true

10.4.2 Participant 1 Interview 2

Interview 2

Participant 1

00:00:00

Okay. So, welcome participant one to the second interview of the thesis project called "Being a teacher assistant at the University: experiences and insights." The objective of this interview is to get to know the details of your first experience as a teacher assistant at the University. Um, can you tell me how many semesters were you a TA?

00:00:38

I was one... two semesters. Two semesters.

00:00:45

Which ones?

00:00:46

It was in seventh and in eighth, I think. Yeah, I'm pretty sure seven and eighth.

00:00:56

Uh, why did, didn't you try for the ninth semester?

0:58

Um, because the thing is... um, I... when I was in, in eighth semester, I was offered a job, so like I had to keep up with a lot of things, and also because I was, you know, currently working that time, uh, and it was really hard for me to just, uh, try to manage like everything, even the, the schedule. So that's why.

00:01:26

Oh, I see. You're kind of like busy.

00:01:30

Yeah. It was really hard. That was sad though.

00:01:34

Yeah, don't worry. So, let's try to remember a bit of the first experience. So, I would like you to tell me your story of being a teacher assistant. Let's begin with the first time.

What motivated you to become a teacher assistant for the first time?

00:01:54

Um, I guess I was driven by the emotion of it. I think that's the honest answer cuz I remember like I had, I was offered that position, I would say. I don't know if it's a position by three teachers. Um, they were really interested in, in me being a TA, and I had some conversations with them, and I ended up doing it with J. Can I say names?

Sorry.

00:02:28

Yes, you can, and, if you want, we later can like just censor them. Just express yourself.

00:02:34

Okay. And then, uh, it was because it was about English and the other ones. I remember I didn't hit the, I didn't hit the, uh, the minimum grade. I think for the, for one of them, and for the other ones, I was really okay with it, but I don't know. Like, I, I've always, um, I would say, thought that English was like kind of like the big deal in that sense. So, that's, that's the main reason I think.

00:03:08

So, first you said like the emotion was what drove you to this experience. When you say "emotion", what do you mean exactly?

00:3:20

So, um, so, in the previous interview, I told you about, um, how I was excited about uni, and what I was doing, and if it was really okay with me to just have some fun in it and I was really keen on experiencing it. So, the emotion of being the TA was part of saying

Link of the complete transcription:

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10.4.3 Participant 1 Interview 3

Interview 3

Participant 1

00:00:00

Okay. So, um, welcome to the third interview of the thesis-based project “Being a Teacher Assistant at the University: Experiences and Insights.” The objective of this interview will be to get to know all the facts and experiences that you lived, uh, during your second time as a teacher assistant. We will, um, follow the same mechanics as the other interviews, but, before we continue, do you have any questions about the procedures?

00:00:45

Uh, no. Everything is clear, darling.

00:00:49

Okay, yeah. Just, don't forget you can say all the names you want. Talk freely, and we... but, as it was in the latter, we will not mention any names when we write our thesis, so just talk freely.

00:01:04

Okay, okay. Thank you.

00:01:10

Sure. So, uh, first of all, how would you rate your experience being a teacher assistant in your second year?

00:01:23

In my second year?

00:01:27

The second time, or like the, yeah, the second time.

00:01:29

Oh, the second time. I would say, from my perspective, if I'm completely honest, like for my performance, if I have to grade it, it would be, uh, 3.5 out of Five, I would say.

00:01:50

Oh, why?

00:01:55

Because I think, even though I did like the same thing as the first time, it, it's actually quite interesting to see that because you're getting closer to, to doing a lot of things.

Like, for example, work and stuff like that, um, you tend to, I would say, go closer to what you would be doing in the future, so you have to decide. In my case, I did, uh, have to decide on, you know, like, whether I should, I should like be full-time the TA, or go for the opportunities, I would say. So, that's why.

00:02:34

So, you mentioned you were working at the time. What was your job?

00:02:43

The thing is, like, I was always working, but I was, I was a, I was a teacher, uh, kind of like a private teacher for a public school, I would say. But, then, I was, I was offered a job, and because they saw like my classes, I don't even know why, or why that happened, they were like okay, so we would like to, like, you know, contact you for doing other stuff; and, so, I was kind of like doing a hard decision at the moment, but it was okay. It was, it wasn't like I was saying goodbye to the TA, right? I was still doing it, but I, I wouldn't say I did like, or I put my 100% on it.

00:03:29

Oh, I see. So, this was like totally different from the first one, right?

00:03:35

Link of the complete transcription:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gVlBkT3Nw1KsG6hntCTdLwakUa-R63/edit?usp=sharing&oid=100542077224369070600&rtpof=true&sd=true>

10.4.4 Participant 1 Interview 4

Interview 4

Participant 1

00:00:00

Okay, so, here we are. Welcome to the fourth interview of this thesis-based project called "Being a Teacher Assistant at the University: Experiences and Insights." The objective of this fourth interview is to get to reflect on everything that happened during your two semesters of being a teacher assistant. So, we are going... we have been doing some reflection, but now, this is like fully reflection because you already told me everything. So, now we will just like chat about this.

00:00:45

Alright. Good.

00:00:46

So, don't forget you can say whatever you want, and I will, uh, change the names, so, don't worry. Names won't, won't be mentioned during...

00:00:59

Alright.

00:01:00

...when, when, when I do the, the transcription, okay?

00:01:05

Okay.

00:01:07

So, if you could describe, in a sentence, your general experience as a teacher assistant so far, how would you describe?

00:01:19

It, um, it was a very entertaining process. That's it.

00:01:23

Um, can you elaborate a bit more?

00:01:27

Yeah. So, I kind of like started this, um, let's say, journey, experience, whatever you want to call it, and, because I was kind of like keen on just trying to understand a bit more how, uh, the side of education or, um, you know, fourth or third level education, worked. And, I also always knew about it, but, it was a curiosity for me. It, when, whenever I was working, and, also, where I did the major, right? So, for example, not so much of new universities, I would say, would actually bet or actually dare to say it, like would implement this type of processes, or let them do that. I know that some universities do because they're more advanced in, in some, in some sort of ways, but I was... since I was in first, in first semester, I was always expecting to be like an assistant, or they call it like a teacher aid, but I never knew how. And, since I got the opportunity, it was like yay, oh my God, this is really nice. So, I will get to change, um, that I needed, I would say. So, yeah. That's it.

00:02:53

And, well, since this was like your goal since first semester, were you also thinking like about the subject you wanted? Or, you were like any subject, whatever comes?

00:03:06

Um, to be honest, I never thought of this subject; but, you know, as you grow older, I would say as in uni, you tend to have your preferences, and, I think it's, it's because of teachers. So, I mean, we're students, right? And, we're not blind that some teachers are... I don't want to sound mean, but, you know, like, some teachers are better are doing what they do, and, some others are like, they are really okay, but, it doesn't seem

Link of the complete transcription:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gQMavq1XnB6-K_5QIJQKE80DENvkE8Xq/edit?usp=sharing&oid=100542077224369070600&rtpof=true&sd=true

10.4.5 Participant 2 Interview 1

Interview 1

Participant 2

00:00:00

Okay. Uh, so hi participant two, and welcome to the first interview of the thesis-based project called "Being a teacher assistant at the University: experiences and insights." the objective of this interview is to explore the factors that led you to experience the phenomenon of being a teacher assistant at the University. Before we start the interview, do you have any questions about how we're going to work with this?

00:00:39

Um... No, I don't have anything.

00:00:41

Okay. So, uh, let's start. So, as I said, uh, the this first interview is focused on your life history; the things you experienced before becoming a teacher assistant. First, I would like to know, um, what was your school or high school life like?

00:01:09

My high school, uh, I mean, the high school where I studied?

00:01:14

Yes. How was your life as a student in high school?

00:01:21

Well, I think it was pretty cool. My high school had certain like areas where you could develop your high school. For example, electricity or well ores and stuff so I chose one, and it was amazing because it was electricity and we had like a house when we could the... where we could develop our practicums. I would say our PR, professional practicums, at high school, and yeah, it was awesome, but I remember it most because of my friends done educational talking.

00:02:03

If you could define yourself like as a student, which words will you use to describe you?

00:02:11

As a student in high school, uh, which words, um, is, um, chill, and, what else?

Energetic. Um, I could define myself feel so like very willing to do the things, uh, like willingness, energy... energetic. I already said that. Yeah, those are the words that I would use.

00:02:45

How would you describe your relationship with your classmates?

00:02:52

Awesome, awesome. It was it was like a... amazing to have my... the classmates that I had. We all had a very good environment and, when there wasn't like that, when it wasn't like that I just, like, try... tried to escape from any queen drama environment that I was with that that I was in, but most of the time it was school, and we didn't fight as the rest of the classmates so I think I... I was always like blessed with, and having good classmates from high school till uni. So that's it.

00:03:38

That's really nice to hear. And, how about your relationship with your teachers?

00:03:46

It was good, but I haven't been like a very... No, I mean, it was cool that our relationship was nice and stuff and it was like very professional. I would say because there were some classmates at high school that they were, or that they treat treated teachers like friends, and... which is very awesome, but I had... I didn't have that... I didn't have that ability to make like friends friends with my teachers. It was always

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10.4.6 Participant 2 Interview 2

Interview 2
Participant 2

00:00:00

Okay, so welcome to the second interview of this thesis-based project called "Being a teacher assistant at the University: Experiences and Insights." The objective of this interview is to explore your experience as a teacher assistant, more specifically, the details of your first experience as a teacher assistant, the first time you were a teacher assistant. So, um, before we start, do you have any questions about how we are going to develop this interview?

00:00:52

Uh, no. I don't have any.

00:00:53

Okay, so, uh, let's start with the first question. How many semesters were you a teacher assistant?

00:01:07

Um, two semesters.

00:01:07

In which semesters were you in teacher assistant?

00:01:15

I was a teacher assistant in the third, fourth, third, fourth... um, both third and fourth semester.

00:01:30

You were, were an assistant when you were on those semesters, or were you helping in those semesters?

00:01:27

I was helping on those semesters.

00:01:42

Okay, and, which semesters were you when you had the, the experience of being a teacher assistant?

00:01:54

Um, I have, um, I, I was in, okay, seventh... sorry, I'm just trying to get...

00:02:02

Don't worry.

00:02:03

Seven, seventh and eighth semester, seven and eighth.

00:02:10

Okay, and I would like you to tell me the, your story of being a teacher assistant. Let's start at, from the beginning. When you became a teacher assistant from, for the first time, what motivated you to become a teacher assistant?

00:02:31

Well, I, personally, it was, uh, it wasn't the first time that they, university was offering this, but, um, the, one of the things, one of the criteria that you have to fulfill was that you were on seventh semester or in upper semesters, right? So, I was in seventh semester, I saw the, well, I saw the notification, I saw that we could have this experience of being a teacher assistant, and teachers on the major, uh, were always talking about that they were teacher assistants when they were at the university. That it's such a great experience and so on, so forth. Okay, and, so that interests me. It was, I was super curious about that because, of course, I knew I was going to help my teacher, but I didn't know how far I could get. I mean, I didn't know how far could I get with my students, well, not my students, but with the students, or with the classes themselves. So

Link of the complete transcription:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ip6YrjPs-SoSk_FHc2gnma5cnIUK3Ugw/edit?usp=sharing&oid=100542077224369070600&rtpof=true&sd=true

10.4.7 Participant 2 Interview 3

Interview 3

Participant 2

00:00:00

Okay, here we go. uh, welcome to the, sorry, to the third interview of the thesis project called, uh, "Being a Teacher Assistant at the University: Experiences and Insights." The objective of this interview is to get to know the factors and the details that you lived to your second experience as a teacher assistant because on the last interview, sorry, you told us that you were a teacher assistant for two consecutive times. Is that right?

00:00:49

Yep.

00:00:52

Okay. So, we are going to get into detail. This is just like you telling me your story, so don't worry, um, first of all, I would like to know like, how would you rate your experience being a teacher assistant in your second year?

00:01:11

Um, I would rate it with, um, four out of five.

00:01:21

Uh, why?

00:01:23

I think, uh, that I did more in my first time, that I helped the teacher more in my, in, in the first time that I tried this, and that I didn't have like too many opportunities to be involved in the classes, and I didn't feel the same way, and it may be because the subject was totally different, and it wasn't so practical. It was more, I mean, it wasn't practical for the teacher, it was more practical for the students, and that was due to the subject, as I said. And, students were all the time producing, producing, producing, and you just got to help them through it. Of course, I did a lot of feedback. In terms of grading, I did a lot of grading. But, as I said, I would grade it like that just because I couldn't be that involved as I was at the first time.

00:02:20

I see. So, for this, I mean, for this first time, uh, you had like a good experience, but it could improve. So, I would like to go deeper into it. I would like you to tell me, uh, your story of being a teacher assistant in this subject. So, uh, first of all, I would like to know how was the application process you followed when you became a teacher assistant for the second time.

00:02:51

If I'm not wrong, it was the same. I just had to apply for the subject that I wanted to be, uh, teacher assistant, and I applied. I think I just applied for this one. Well, no, I applied for two, I think it was Academic Writing, the one in which I got in; and the other one, I think it was something related to theories, the theories and principles of the, of teaching language, of, of teaching English as a second language, something like that. And, well, I applied one day, and that was it. The organization was better cuz, um, it was right before the classes started. I think there have, there have been past like two, or two or three days, no more. And, we started immediately with this process, and with the, and with the cátedra, I would say. And well, we knew the results, I think, in a week or less, maybe. I don't remember it very well. We got the results. I saw that I got in the subject Academic Writing, and yeah, that was, it. The rest of that... I followed basically the same, and then, we have an introduction meeting, and they explained us everything. I followed everything. I had experience, so there was, it wasn't something that new for me.

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10.4.8 Participant 2 Interview 4

Interview 4

Participant 2

00:00:00

Okay, so welcome to the interview number four of the thesis project called "Being a Teacher Assistant at the University: Experiences and Insights." This fourth interview is focused on reflecting on your phenomenon, so our objective is to explore the things that happen after the teacher assistantship, and what do you think about the process because in the previous interviews, you told me a little bit about what, how was it, but now I want to know, like I want you to reflect, like go deeply into how was it, how did you feel, why did things happen, the way they happened. Okay, yeah. So, before we start, do you have any questions?

00:00:59

Ah, no, I don't.

00:01:02

Okay, so don't forget you can say all the names you want, and after the interview, we will just change them or do whatever you want, okay? So don't worry. Express freely. So first, sorry?

00:01:23

No, no. It's okay.

00:01:26

Okay. So, first of all, like in a sentence as briefly as possible, describe your general experience as a teaching assistant?

00:01:39

How, what? Can you, can you repeat, please? I couldn't hear you.

00:01:43

Sure. In a sentence, describe your general experience of being a teacher assistant.

00:01:55

It was a life-changing experience that I would definitely recommend because I, cuz I could make the best out of me as a teacher, as a professional. And the experiences that I gained, the love that I, the love, the care, and everything that I got from it, it's something that I wouldn't, that I'm not going to receive in any other experience that I would have.

00:02:29

You mentioned that this is like something unique, like a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Why do you think this?

00:02:42

That's one. It's because, well, I don't think I can do this in a, in a postgrade degree or something, but I think I wouldn't do it, um, on that time because I would be like with more things on my, on my plate that I wouldn't handle it. So, um, what, what, what is it? It's because of that. It's just once that you go to college, of course I could study another major or something, but no. So, I think that's, that's the reason, that it's just one once-in-a-lifetime experience because you're not going to have the experience again, being a teacher assistant, of course. You may be a teacher at school or something like that. You're not going to be a teacher assistant anymore cuz you're out of college.

00:03:34

Do you think that being a teacher assistant at UNAE is different than being a teacher assistant at other universities?

00:03:44

Um, I have no idea. The only reference that I have is that in other universities, you get paid, but I don't really know how is the experience, especially because I don't have

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10.4.9 Participant 3 Interview 1

Interview 1

Participant 3

00:00:00

Okay. Bienvenida participante tres a la entrevista del día de hoy. Esta es una entrevista para el proyecto de tesis "Being a teacher assistant at the University: experiences and insights." El objetivo de esta entrevista es explorar los factores que te condujeron a experimentar el fenómeno de ser un ayudante de cátedra en la universidad. Antes de empezar, ¿alguna pregunta?

00:00:29

Ah, no, no por ahora.

00:00:32

Listo. Vamos a empezar entonces con las preguntas. Relajada. Esto es igual sobre tu experiencia. Es como si contaras una anécdota. Vamos con la primera pregunta, dice, ¿cómo fue tu vida escolar cuando tú eras un estudiante? ¿Cómo era? Ah, puedo, puede ser acerca de la universidad, o de la escuela, o estamos en lo que es el colegio.

00:01:03

Pues en realidad mi vida escolar fue bastante divertida de cierta forma. Podría decir, eh, creo que aprendí mucho de mis maestros. Fue una época en la que realmente yo me puse como meta ser una buena estudiante porque cuando estuve en la escuela como que yo siento que fui un estudiante promedio, pero cuando pasé al colegio, creo que el hecho de cambiarme de una escuela a un colegio diferente me hizo como que cambiar mi perspectiva de cómo veía las cosas, eh, cómo veía el mundo, eh, cómo me tenía que interactuar con otras personas que no había conocido antes. Entonces esto también me hizo pensar que pasar al colegio tenía que ser una etapa más dura en mi vida, que obviamente no todo iba a ser fácil, porque además es lo que típicamente nos dicen los maestros, que en el colegio los maestros no van a estar encima tuyo diciéndote como tienes que hacer esto, tienes que hacer aquello, y entonces creo que sí me puse bastante la meta de ser buen estudiante. Y la verdad fue raro porque al inicio como que pensé que iba a batallar con esto de, de mejorar o alguna cosa, pero a la final sí me sirvió bastante. Eh, creo que también fue mucho la ayuda de mis maestros lo que me ayudó a lograr eso también porque, eh, tuve buenos maestros, porque en mi anterior colegio, en mi anterior escuela, la verdad sí fue un poco complicado en algunas materias por los maestros que tenía ya que algunos de ellos como que sus metodologías de enseñanza o tal vez los conocimientos que nos impartían querían que sea de una forma exacta. Sin embargo, cuando ya pasé al, al colegio fue totalmente diferente, los maestros tenían una mente más abierta. Eh, sí nos ayudaban bastante, y además también el hecho de convivir, eh, con otras personas que no había conocido en mi vida, creo que también me ayudó a abrirme más, a ser más social, a ser más... eh, ¿cómo digo?... Estudiosa, y creo que también lo que me ayudó mucho a, a mejorar mi desempeño académico fue que en esta escuela me comentaron que el, cuando tú tienes buenas notas, a la final te dan como un premio o bueno como algún certificado que luego te puede ayudar obviamente en el futuro, entonces creo que eso también a la final como que me ayudó bastante. Incluso en años que seguían, eh, esto se modificó, como que este premio digamos, así se modificó porque ya no era al final del año escolar sino cada mes, eh, te iban como reduciendo una parte de tu, de lo que pagabas de pensión. Entonces eso también me motivó bastante a ser, a ser una buena estudiante, y también creo que me ayudó, eh, mucho el hecho de estar con mis maestros, en contacto con ellos. Tenía una muy buena relación con mis maestros en la escuela. Creo que eso también me ayudó mucho.

00:04:01

Link of the complete transcription:

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10.4.10 Participant 3 Interview 2

Interview 2

Participant 3

00:00:00

Okay. Bienvenida a la segunda entrevista del del proyecto de tesis "Being a Teacher Assistant at the University: Experiences and Insights." El objetivo de esta segunda entrevista es explorar los factores que viviste durante tu experiencia como ayudante de cátedra durante tu primera experiencia. Entonces, antes de empezar, ¿tienes algunas preguntas de cómo vamos a conducir esta entrevista?

00:00:39

Ah, no, no. Por ahora no tengo ninguna pregunta.

00:00:42

Perfecto, entonces empecemos. Cuéntame, eh, ¿cuántos semestres fuiste ayudante de cátedra?

00:00:56

Bueno, fui ayudante de cátedra durante dos, que fue durante mi s..., ¿se escucha? Okay, tuvimos un pequeño problema técnico. Ah, me estabas contando en qué semestres fuiste ayudante de cátedra.

00:01:30

Sí. Eh, bueno, yo fui, como mencionaba, ayudante de cátedra durante dos ciclos, en séptimo ciclo y en octavo ciclo.

00:01:39

Muy bien. Me gustaría que me cuentes tu historia desde el inicio de que fuiste un ayudante de cátedra. Empecemos desde el inicio, valga la redundancia. Cuando fuiste ayudante de cátedra por primera vez, ¿qué te motivó a volverte a ayudante de cátedra?

00:02:04

Bueno, creo que, eh, hubieron como dos factores principales que me motivaron a ser ayudante de cátedra. El primero fue, eh, bueno, mis compañeros porque justo tenía una compañera que ya había sido ayudante de cátedra de otros maestros, y me decía que la experiencia es muy buena porque los, o sea, puedes ayudar a los profes, puedes, eh, aprender un poco más, también, si tal vez quisieras reforzar conocimientos, y así. Y también, el segundo factor por el cual yo decidí ser ayudante de cátedra, y creo que este fue el principal, es que la maestra con la que fui ayudante de cátedra en el séptimo ciclo, fue la que me pidió que yo sea su ayudante de cátedra. Ella me escribió por WhatsApp, me dijo que si yo deseaba ser su ayudante de cátedra. La verdad, eh, esto me llamó mucho la atención porque, creo que el hecho de que ella me haya pedido, me hizo sentir como un poco más segura de, de que voy a hacer un buen trabajo, de que, en realidad, ella necesita ayuda. Entonces creo que esto fue lo que me motivó, como, como un punto focal, especialmente, como el hecho de que ella me haya escrito, y me, me haya pedido el ser ayudante de cátedra.

00:03:15

Muy bien, y, ¿cuál fue el proceso que tú seguiste para volverte ayudante de cátedra esa primera vez?

00:03:21

Bueno, la verdad si fue algo, eh, un proceso como complicado para mí porque, como fue mi primera vez, yo no sabía, o sea, qué hacer, no sabía en dónde inscribirme, ni nada. Incluso, eh, los horarios como que se me complicaron un poco, pero bueno. Al inicio, lo, lo primero que yo hice fue como preguntar a mi, a mi compañera que ella, bueno, una de mis compañeras que estaba más al tanto de esto, porque ella ya había sido ayudante de cátedra como años anteriores, entonces yo le pedí a ella ayuda para que,

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10.4.11 Participant 3 Interview 3

Interview 3

Participant 3

00:00:00

Hola. Bienvenida a la tercera entrevista del proyecto de tesis "Being a Teacher Assistant at the University: Experiences and Insights." El objetivo de esta entrevista es conocer las experiencias que tuviste durante tu segunda experiencia como ayudante de cátedra. Esta segunda, esta tercera entrevista es debido a que en la anterior entrevista nos contaste que habías tenido, que fuiste ayudante de cátedra por dos periodos, entonces queremos saber un poco más sobre esta segunda experiencia. Primero me gustaría saber, si pudieras calificar tu experiencia como ayudante de cátedra en este segundo, en esta segunda oportunidad, ¿cómo lo harías?

00:00:56

, bueno, yo creo que esta experiencia la calificaría como un poco más difícil, complicada. En un, una escala de 1 al 10, lo calificaría como un seis, un cinco, eh, por el hecho de que claramente fue totalmente diferente a como yo, eh, desarrollé mis, mi ayudantía de cátedra en el primer, en el primer periodo, en el primer semestre que yo quise ser ayudante de cátedra. Entonces sí puedo decir que fue mucho más complicado que la primera vez por, eh, diferentes razones, eh, como la designación de tareas que me daba la maestra, eh, más también el tiempo que, que tenía que invertir en dichas tareas, eh, la carga de trabajo. También, eh, creo que, bueno, el hecho de que me haya dado más carga de trabajo que mi ayudante de cátedra anterior, fue un poco más, eh, chocante para mí, de cierta forma, pero fue, bueno, porque, obviamente, esto me sirvió para tener más horas de trabajo como, como para poder tener evidencia. Entonces sí, puedo decir que fue más difícil, pero, a la vez, también fue, fue bueno, aunque haya sido como una carga más grande trabajo.

00:02:04

Mm, ya veo. Entonces fue una experiencia diferente. No diríamos 100% negativa, pero sí muy diferente a la primera. Me gustaría ir un poquito más en profundidad en eso, quiero saber un poco más. Entonces, vamos a ir haciendo que me cuentes tu historia como ayudante de cátedra. En la última sesión, como te dije, me ayudaste de, me ayudaste contándome sobre tu primera vez; ahora quisiera saber sobre la segunda vez que fuiste ayudante de cátedra, ¿qué fue lo que cambió?

00:02:49

Bueno, creo que, como mencionaba, un gran cambio fue la cantidad de trabajo que tenía que hacer durante esta, durante esta segunda etapa, eh, de, de ser un ayudante de cátedra. Otra de las cosas que, que cambió es que tuve mucha más interacción con los estudiantes porque algo bueno que podría decir de aquí, de esta segunda experiencia, fue que yo pude trabajar con los chicos, eh, de mi curso. Eh, como comentaba en la anterior entrevista, yo no pude hacer eso con, con el ciclo anterior, en con mis estudiantes de la ayudantía de cátedra anterior, por el hecho de que mis clases mis clases se cruzaban con el, con las horas que ellos tenían clases entonces, obviamente, yo no podía asistir a las clases sincronizadas con, con ellos, no podía estar ahí, en contacto con ellos, más que para darles tutorías. Y, de cierta forma, eso no era conocerles mucho porque era un tiempo muy corto para, para interactuar con ellos, pero en esta segunda etapa, eh, con mi maestra, nos organizamos, obviamente, para sincronizar las actividades y vimos que en un día, eh, para mi suerte, yo tenía prácticas, eh, solo tres días a la semana, pero, y, entonces, esta vez, eh, lo que hicimos es que yo podía tomar mis lecciones a los chicos el día jueves, entonces, obviamente, yo les veía y estaba cada semana en contacto con ellos. Entonces creo que por eso también fue una experiencia

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10.4.12 Participant 3 Interview 4

Interview 4

Participant 3

00:00:00

Okay. Bienvenida participante número tres a la última entrevista del proyecto de tesis llamado "Being a Teacher Assistant at the University; Experiences and Insights." En, en las entrevistas anteriores hablamos un poco sobre qué te llevó a ser ayudante de cátedra, cuáles fueron tus experiencias en tu primera y segunda vez siendo ayudante de cátedra, y en esta entrevista, nuestro objetivo es reflexionar en todo en el fenómeno general, en las dos veces que viviste esta experiencia de ser ayudante de cátedra. Eh, la entrevista la llevaremos de la misma modalidad que siempre. Te hago unas preguntas, tú me las respondes. Si deseas parar en cualquier momento, puedes hacerlo. Si deseas mencionar nombres, puedes hacerlo. Sin embargo, te recordamos que nosotros nos encargaremos de censurar, así que puedes decir nombres con total confianza. Nosotros, eh, te prometemos que de aquí no saldrá ningún nombre.

Antes de empezar, ¿hay alguna duda?

00:01:18

No, no tengo ninguna pregunta, ninguna duda, eh, ahorita.

00:01:25

Perfecto. Si ese es el caso, empecemos. Si pudieras describir toda tu experiencia, la experiencia en general de ser un ayudante de cátedra, ¿cómo lo harías en una oración lo más breve posible?

00:01:40

Mm, yo lo describiría como una experiencia significativa por todo, pues lo que me ha traído.

00:01:53

Bueno, dijiste algo sobre lo que te ha traído. Específicamente, ¿a qué te referías con eso?

00:02:01

Creo que, eh, cuando hablo de todo lo que me ha brindado o traído en las ayudantías de cátedra, me refiero a todo lo que envuelve el ser un maestro. Eh, como mencionaba en anteriores entrevistas, eh, para mí, creo que una de las ventajas de ayudante de cátedra es que puede estar en total contacto con lo que es el conocimiento previo que ya tuvimos en ciclos anteriores. Por ejemplo, si estamos con alguna materia que sea de inglés, entonces tal vez podamos estar en, en, eh, bueno, revisando temas que tal vez hayan sido olvidados. Y, eh, creo que otra de las, eh, otra de las cosas a las que me refiero con traído es que yo cuando, eh, bueno cuando uno es ayudante de cátedra, eh, realmente como aprende diferentes metodologías, modalidades, eh, técnicas, estrategias que los maestros usan. Eh, creo que incluso yo hubiera podido aprender mucho más, más de eso si tal vez hubiera tenido más contacto con, eh, bueno participado más en las clases con los maestros, pero como mencionaba en anteriores entrevistas, no se pudo debido a mis horarios. Pero en sí, eh, diría que es esta, este aprendizaje de estrategias, eh, materiales que uno pueden implementar en sus clases, tal vez nuevas páginas que a la larga, como que los maestros que son parte de este proceso de ser un ayudante de cátedra. Nos van enseñando, nos van mostrando, y obviamente, bueno, nos, nos, como digo, nos muestran para uno también saber utilizarlas; y esto creo que es muy útil, no solo para el momento en el que estamos con los estudiantes de los cuales somos como el mini maestro, de ayudante de cátedra, sino también, eh, después, en, cuando ya vayamos a ejercer como maestros, creo que se pueden utilizar todas estas estrategias, todo lo que los hemos aprendido de los maestros.

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10.5 Appendix 5: Declaratoria de propiedad intelectual



**DECLARATORIA DE PROPIEDAD INTELECTUAL Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS DE PUBLICACIÓN
PARA EL TRABAJO DE INTEGRACIÓN CURRICULAR
DIRECCIONES DE CARRERAS DE GRADO PRESENCIALES - DIRECCIÓN DE BIBLIOTECA**

Yo, *Carlos Julio Minga Carchi* portador de la cedula de ciudadanía nro. *0107413320*, estudiante de la carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros en el marco establecido en el artículo 13, literal b) del Reglamento de Titulación de las Carreras de Grado de la Universidad Nacional de Educación, declaro:

Que, todas las ideas, opiniones y contenidos expuestos en el trabajo de Integración curricular denominada *Being a teacher assistant at the university: experiences and insights* son de exclusiva responsabilidad del suscribiente de la presente declaración, de conformidad con el artículo 114 del Código Orgánico de la Economía Social de los Conocimientos, Creatividad e Innovación, por lo que otorgo y reconozco a favor de la Universidad Nacional de Educación - UNAE una licencia gratuita, intransferible y no exclusiva para el uso no comercial de la obra con fines académicos, además declaro que en el desarrollo de mi Trabajo de Integración Curricular se han realizado citas, referencias, y extractos de otros autores, mismos que no me tribuyo su autoría.

Asimismo, autorizo a la Universidad Nacional de Educación - UNAE, la utilización de los datos e información que forme parte del contenido del Trabajo de Integración Curricular que se encuentren disponibles en base de datos o repositorios y otras formas de almacenamiento, en el marco establecido en el artículo 141 Código Orgánico de la Economía Social de los Conocimientos, Creatividad e Innovación.

De igual manera, concedo a la Universidad Nacional de Educación - UNAE, la autorización para la publicación de Trabajo de Integración Curricular denominado *Being a teacher assistant at the university: experiences and insights* en el repositorio institucional y la entrega de este al Sistema Nacional de Información de la Educación Superior del Ecuador para su difusión pública respetando los derechos de autor, como lo establece el artículo 144 de la Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior.

Ratifico con mi suscripción la presente declaración, en todo su contenido.

Azogues, 7 de marzo de 2024



Carlos Julio Minga Carchi
 C.I.: 0107413320



**DECLARATORIA DE PROPIEDAD INTELECTUAL Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS DE PUBLICACIÓN
PARA EL TRABAJO DE INTEGRACIÓN CURRICULAR
DIRECCIONES DE CARRERAS DE GRADO PRESENCIALES - DIRECCIÓN DE BIBLIOTECA**

Yo, *Heidy Pamela Mogrovejo Álvarez* portador de la cedula de ciudadanía nro. 0105184139, estudiante de la carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, en el marco establecido en el artículo 13, literal b) del Reglamento de Titulación de las Carreras de Grado de la Universidad Nacional de Educación, declaro:

Que, todas las ideas, opiniones y contenidos expuestos en el trabajo de Integración curricular denominada *Being a teacher assistant at the university: experiences and insights* son de exclusiva responsabilidad del suscribiente de la presente declaración, de conformidad con el artículo 114 del Código Orgánico de la Economía Social de los Conocimientos, Creatividad e Innovación, por lo que otorgo y reconozco a favor de la Universidad Nacional de Educación - UNAE una licencia gratuita, intransferible y no exclusiva para el uso no comercial de la obra con fines académicos, además declaro que en el desarrollo de mi Trabajo de Integración Curricular se han realizado citas, referencias, y extractos de otros autores, mismos que no me tribuyo su autoría.

Asimismo, autorizo a la Universidad Nacional de Educación - UNAE, la utilización de los datos e información que forme parte del contenido del Trabajo de Integración Curricular que se encuentren disponibles en base de datos o repositorios y otras formas de almacenamiento, en el marco establecido en el artículo 141 Código Orgánico de la Economía Social de los Conocimientos, Creatividad e Innovación.

De igual manera, concedo a la Universidad Nacional de Educación - UNAE, la autorización para la publicación de Trabajo de Integración Curricular denominado *Being a teacher assistant at the university: experiences and insights* en el repositorio institucional y la entrega de este al Sistema Nacional de Información de la Educación Superior del Ecuador para su difusión pública respetando los derechos de autor, como lo establece el artículo 144 de la Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior.

Ratifico con mi suscripción la presente declaración, en todo su contenido.

Azogues, 7 de marzo de 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidy Pamela Mogrovejo Álvarez".

Heidy Pamela Mogrovejo Álvarez
C.I.: 0105184139

10.6 Appendix 6: Certificación del tutor



CERTIFICACIÓN DEL TUTOR PARA
TRABAJO DE INTEGRACIÓN CURRICULAR
DIRECCIONES DE CARRERA DE GRADO PRESENCIALES

Carrera de: **Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros**

Yo, **Freddy Neptalí Jaramillo Ortiz**, tutor del Trabajo de Integración Curricular de Carreras de Grado de Modalidad Presencial denominado “**Being a teacher assistant at the university: experiences and insights**” perteneciente a los estudiantes: **Carlos Julio Minga Carchi con C.I. 0107413320 y Heidy Pamela Mogrovejo Alvarez con C.I. 0105184139**, doy fe de haber guiado y aprobado el Trabajo de Integración Curricular. También informo que el trabajo fue revisado con la herramienta de prevención de plagio Turnitin donde reportó el 1 % de coincidencia en fuentes de internet, apegándose a la normativa académica vigente de la Universidad.

Azogues, 04 de marzo 2024

(ver observación en la parte inferior)

Docente tutor/a

Freddy Neptalí Jaramillo Ortiz

C.I.: 0704352012

Observación:

El **Docente Freddy Neptalí Jaramillo Ortiz**, ya no se encuentra afiliado a la institución. Como Director de Carrera de PINE, firmo esta **Carta de Certificación** sobre la autenticidad de los documentos mencionados para confirmar que cumplen con los estándares académicos e institucionales necesarios.

Si se requiriese más información o verificación al respecto, no dude en ponerse en contacto a través del correo electrónico mirdelio.monzon@unae.edu.ec.

Atentamente,



Mirdelio Esteban Monzón Gómez
Director de Carrera de PINE
mirdelio.monzon@unae.edu.ec