

Reflective practice through peer coaching among English as foreign language preservice teachers' practicum

La práctica reflexiva a través de coaching entre pares del prácticum de los docentes en pre-servicio del inglés como lengua extranjera

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Miriam Eucevia Troya-Sánchez¹

Universidad Nacional de Loja, Ecuador

miriam.troya@unl.edu.ec

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7798-8684>

Karina Alexandra Celi-Jaramillo²

Universidad Nacional de Loja, Ecuador

karina.celi@unl.edu.ec

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8613-2893>

María Patricia Rodríguez-Ludeña³

Universidad Nacional de Loja, Ecuador

maria.p.rodriguez@unl.edu.ec

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-7141-1753>

Abstract

The aim of this study was to inquire how peer coaching promoted preservice teachers' reflective practice during their practicum. From a qualitative approach through a case study and interpretative approach, six voluntary preservice teachers in the seventh semester of the Teaching English as a Foreign Language Undergraduate Program from Universidad Nacional de Loja (UNL) were selected. A content analysis method assisted the researchers in organizing the transcriptions from pre-observation and post-observation meetings and records from classroom observation guides. Findings revealed that peer coaching promoted EFL preservice teachers' reflective practice, especially during peer classroom observations when preservice teachers assumed the role of observers, allowing them to have more time to reflect and identify the negative and positive teaching events performed by their peers.

Keywords: constructive feedback, peer-class observation, peer coaching, reflective practice

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio fue investigar cómo las fases de coaching entre pares promovieron la práctica reflexiva entre los docentes en formación del séptimo semestre durante su práctica pedagógica. Desde un enfoque cualitativo, mediante un estudio de caso de tipo interpretativo se seleccionaron 6 estudiantes voluntarios del séptimo ciclo de la Carrera de Pedagogía del Idioma Inglés como Lengua Extranjera de la Universidad Nacional de Loja. El método de análisis de contenido ayudó a las investigadoras a organizar las transcripciones de las conversaciones previas y posteriores a las observaciones de clases, así como también las guías de observación. Los hallazgos revelaron que el coaching entre pares promovió la práctica reflexiva de los futuros docentes de ILE, especialmente durante las observaciones de clase, cuando asumieron el papel de observadores, lo que les permitió tener más tiempo para reflexionar y darse cuenta de los eventos de enseñanza negativos y positivos realizados por sus colegas.

Palabras clave: retroalimentación constructiva, observación de clase, coaching entre pares, práctica reflexiva

Introduction

The practicum provides opportunities to get involved in professional learning in the classroom where preservice teachers (PSTs) can improve their teaching skills by creating supportive learning environments (Heikonen et al., 2020). Therefore, the practicum is a crucial component for the initial formation of English as a foreign language (EFL) preservice teacher who need to apply their knowledge base to real teaching experiences (Razeq, 2022). In this regard, Philip et al. (2019) claim that EFL preservice teachers' knowledge base consists of such key elements as knowledge of the students, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), and general pedagogical knowledge. Although knowledge and experience have traditionally been the main pillars of EFL teacher education, they should be mediated by reflection to grow professionally (Castro, 2022).

Overall, teacher education provides PSTs opportunities to experiment with their theoretical knowledge in authentic classroom contexts. Each program's use to immerse their PSTs into these settings varies depending on its affordances and constraints. Similarly, the undergraduate program for EFL teacher education in Ecuador, specifically at Universidad Nacional de Loja comprises 360 hours divided into 4 semesters: the third, the sixth, and the seventh semester with 80 hours each, and the final semester with 120 hours. During the third and sixth semesters, PSTs are limited to observing and assisting the cooperating teachers. It is not until the seventh and final semesters that PSTs start to impart their lessons. It is worth mentioning that half of the total hours are devoted to planning and systematizing the experiences during the practicum, and the other half is the actual practicum in which PSTs observe, assist, or impart their lessons in primary and secondary schools.

From the experience of the researchers as teacher educators, PSTs receive guidance to conduct their practicum. They design chronograms with some activities that include elaborating and implementing lesson plans, instructional materials, and legal documentation to access the educational institution. As previously mentioned, the research participants of this study were the seventh-semester students who had to carry out their practicum during 80 hours from which they had to impart their lessons for 40 hours, and to plan and report their teaching experiences in the other 40 hours. Thus, the time PSTs must achieve or refine their teaching skills is too short. Teaching is a complex process, especially for prospective teachers who are supposed or expected to gain teaching competencies by putting theory into practical experiences in authentic classrooms (Flores, 2019). Moreover, PSTs usually get confused and disengaged when they find disagreement between theoretical knowledge and real practice, and in-service teachers' reluctance to change (Abou, 2022; Çapan and Bedir, 2019; Sulistiyo et al., 2021).

Concerning assistance and observation to cooperating teachers, empirical studies have revealed that preservice teachers claimed that it was useless because they (cooperating teachers) demanded PSTs to use their teaching strategies, such as repetition drills and translations from English to students' mother tongue (Çapan and Bedir, 2019). Likewise, the researchers of this study have observed Çapan and Bedir's issue in the Ecuadorian context, where some cooperating teachers, especially the ones with too many years of experience, refused to change their teaching performance and felt threatened by young PSTs who usually make an effort to manage the class by implementing innovative teaching techniques. What is more, they force PSTs to apply their

techniques because they do not want to change the pace of their teaching style. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that some other cooperating teachers, even the most experienced ones, have opened their classroom doors to let PSTs implement new teaching practices and have enhanced collaboration through peer coaching without being judgmental, but proactive.

Furthermore, Loman et al. (2020) reported that large classes of prospective teachers are an issue for teacher educators whose supervision time is too limited to observe every PSTs' practicum. In this respect, Çapan and Bedir (2019) claimed that traditional supervision hinders PSTs' collaboration among them to reflect on their teaching performance.

These constraints have also been found in the teacher program of English as a foreign language at Universidad Nacional de Loja in which the researchers as teacher educators attempted to solve these issues by implementing peer coaching among the seventh-semester PSTs with the aim to foster collaboration and reflection during their 80-hour practicum.

Previous studies confirm that peer coaching improves not only PSTs teaching skills but also enables them to reflect on their teaching experiences to overcome their weaknesses mediated by their dialogic interaction before and after their lessons (Abou, 2022; Çapan and Bedir, 2019; Sulistiyo et al., 2021). Since most of these past empirical studies have been done in Asian countries such as Turkey, Japan and Indonesia, this research fills a critical gap by addressing this topic in the Ecuadorian context whose standards demand EFL teachers reflect on their practices and work collaboratively to improve the educational system in teaching and learning English as a foreign language (Ministerio de Educación, 2012).

Therefore, this research aimed to inquire how the stages of peer coaching promote seventh-semester preservice teachers' reflective practice during their practicum. This objective generates the following research questions:

- What aspects of teaching are reflected during the peer coaching stages?
- Which peer coaching stage is the most and least powerful to involve preservice teachers in reflective practice?

1.1. Literature review

1.1.1. Peer coaching

Peer coaching has been widely applied as a model for professional development not only in the field of education but also in the fields of sports, business, arts and health (Colorado and Corcino, 2014). Undeniably, peer coaching has gained a lot of ground in the field of education, specifically in teachers' pedagogical skills. Some authors define peer coaching as an approach to teachers' professional development in which educators work collaboratively to improve their teaching competencies (Ben et al., 2018; Gottesman, 2000; Joyce and Showers, 2002). For Arslan and Sahin (2022), peer coaching enhances reflective practices through pair or group work whose members share similar job positions and make cooperative efforts to improve their performance through

proactive interactions and constructive feedback. Loman et al. (2020) and Carlson et al., (2020) claimed that teacher programs should include peer coaching to enhance preservice teachers' teaching skills as well as their reflective practice.

Showers and Joyce (1996) are well known for their vast experience in addressing peer coaching to help in-service and prospective teachers acquire teaching skills. They confirmed that collaboration with peers encourages teachers to share planning decisions, develop or collect instructional materials, develop the curriculum, and reflect on their teaching performance. After 15 years of experience, these authors updated their theoretical foundations for peer coaching related to some aspects. One of the most outstanding and surprising features was the omission of the pre and post-meetings between peers aimed to give and receive feedback since they realized that peers assumed the role of supervisors and eliminated the nature of the non-evaluative process of peer coaching.

Even though a large body of literature displays the stages of peer coaching in different fields, this paper attempts to show the stages found in the EFL teacher programs with preservice teachers. From the perspectives of several authors, the stages of peer coaching differ somewhat from each other. For instance, Çapan and Bedir (2019) implemented peer coaching among EFL PSTs by using three phases: 1) initial phase which included peer coaching training, classroom observation to in-service teachers, and dialogues between peers; 2) peer classroom observation in which peers observed and compared their teaching practice to identify weaknesses and strengths; and 3) post-observation meetings to receive psychological support and feedback from experienced teachers and peers, and to write reflective journals. Like Çapan and Bedir (2019), Goker, (2021) and Okumura (2020) followed the same stages with some extra steps. For instance, in the initial phase, PSTs had to choose their peers by affinity, and classroom observations were made through video recordings to be discussed in the post-meeting sessions (Çapan and Bedir, 2019; Okumura, 2020).

1.1.2. Preservice teachers' challenges during peer coaching

Even though a wide range of benefits of peer coaching to PSTs, there are some challenges that they face during peer coaching in their practicum. For instance, Capan and Bedir (2019) reported that despite the fact that PSTs could increase their sense of collaboration before, during, and after the lessons, they were not able to manage the classroom properly, and classroom disruptive behaviour emerged too many times during their practicum. Similarly, Loman et al., (2020) argued that PSTs' disposition to collaborate was highly related to identifying their strengths and weaknesses during their teaching performance; however, they did not plan to improve the negative items for their future lessons. This implies that post-observation meetings did not work well or did not exist since PSTs did not make any plan to resolve the observed problems.

Sulistiyo et al. (2021) have demonstrated that the lack of communication between the university authorities and cooperating teachers from the educational institutions, where PSTs carried out their practicum, did not allow to fully reach the great benefits of peer coaching for both preservice and in-service teachers. The same authors claimed that peer coaching offers an opportunity for permanent reflection which can lead to professional growth according to the context needs.

As observed by Evişen (2021), during the classroom observation stage of peer coaching, the observers–teachers were able to capture the positive and negative pedagogical skills of their peers while imparting their lessons; nevertheless, this effect would not have been possible if selected peers had not had a good relationship or enough confidence to observe each other which might have impeded to collaborate between each other. According to Arslan and Sahin (2022), post-observation meetings, the third stage of peer coaching, were considered worthless by preservice teachers as they mentioned they lacked the expertise to give and receive constructive feedback. The same authors demonstrated that preservice teachers' inexperience in peer coaching resulted in changing their role from observers to assisting their peers which hindered the normal development of the lesson. Even so, peer coaching helped them increase their reflection process which simultaneously allowed them to identify the limitations of peer coaching for future interventions.

1.1.3. Reflective practice

Since English instruction has worldwide gained great demand to improve human beings' competencies in several areas of their way of living, teacher education programs, stakeholders, and the educational industry attempt to enhance teaching skills to guarantee EFL learners' language acquisition successfully. While theoretical courses, workshops, seminars, and conferences are good sources to clarify EFL teachers' doubts and concerns, the reflective practice boosts their teaching performance based on their experiences in authentic classroom settings (Farrell, 2020; Richards and Lockhart, 1994).

Schön (2017) proclaims that teachers' pedagogical skills to solve problematic situations with their students are too complex cases that standardized theories or methods fail to solve. In consequence, reflective practice fills this gap. Reflective practice is a systematic inquiry about the relationship between the initial intentions of doing something, the actual things done, and their results (Korthagen, 2014). Teaching is a social practice that requires dialogical interactions among peers who can reveal hidden aspects that hinder teachers' professional development (Golombek and Johnson, 2017). Thus, reflective practice leads to collaboration among peers whose feedback aids in refining their teaching performance (Shabani, 2016).

1.1.4. Teaching performance

Regarding teaching performance, Richards and Lockhart (2009) explain that what is written in a lesson plan differs from what is actually done during its implementation due to the complexity of real-world teaching interactions. Thus, he presents four dimensions found in a lesson plan execution: openings, sequencing, pacing, and closure

1) The opening dimension entails the first 5 or 10 minutes to develop the initial steps of a lesson through warmups and/or lead-ins (Richards and Lockhart, 2009). In a recent article Siljan et al.(2024) pointed out that during the openings, teachers usually activate students' prior knowledge with the new content of the lessons through an objective discussion which attempts to capture students' attention and motivation throughout the lesson delivery. The same authors stated that the openings should comprise both the cognitive and affective dimensions to make the lesson more memorable and meaningful.

2) The sequencing dimension encompasses the logical order for developing the lesson contents and activities which should be related to each other (Richards and Lockhart, 2009). In fact, each teacher organizes and manages the lesson events according to his/her context, and justifies every step in the process which eventually leads to reaching the lesson objectives (Lerner and McDougal, 2023).

3) The pacing dimension is related to the time allocated for each activity to progress the lesson (Richards and Lockhart, 2009). Even if the sequencing dimension seems to be properly justified, the pacing dimension makes the sequence of events more accurate. Teachers usually take into account students' learning styles and interests to manage classroom time correctly which avoids to overwhelm or bore students either with too short or too long periods of time per activity. Classroom time should always be productive for both teachers and students (Mcneill et al., 2008).

4) The closure dimension includes several ways a teacher uses to end a lesson (Richards and Lockhart, 2009). Webster (2011) highlights the relevance of this dimension since it recalls the contents of the lesson and summarizes it to make it more memorable. These dimensions were the focus of analysis of this research work as presented in the following section.

Methodology

2.1. Research approach

This investigation employed a qualitative approach since the researchers as teacher educators evaluated the effect of peer coaching on their EFL preservice teachers' reflective practice during their practicum in authentic classroom settings (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, this is a case study which, according to Tomaszewski et al. (2020), is suitable for evaluating and extending a theory. Furthermore, the same authors state that case studies examine defined systems and show participants' behaviors, perceptions, and experiences regarding a specific phenomenon. Under these characteristics, the type of this research is interpretative since its researchers tried to explain preservice teachers' experiences during their practicum embedded by a social context that framed their teaching performance.

2.2. Setting and participants

Six preservice teachers in the seventh semester of the Teaching English as a Foreign Language Undergraduate Program from Universidad Nacional de Loja (UNL) were the research participants of this study. UNL is located in Loja, Ecuador. They were selected through a purposive sampling technique because they met the criteria for the study as they had to carry out their practicum through the peer coaching model. Even though the sample size was small, they provided the required information to delve in-depth into their experiences during the peer coaching process and their practicum. Sarfo et al., 2021 explain that too many case study participants may underestimate the investigation's major focus. Moreover, the saturation effect made the researcher decide on the sample size since more informants did not provide new information, and the quality of the

information supplied by the sample was good enough to answer the research questions (Sebele, 2020).

2.3. Data sources

Transcripts from conversations between peers before and after the lessons and classroom observation guides, provided the information that EFL preservice teachers generated during their practicum through the peer coaching model.

2.4. Data analysis

A content analysis assisted the researchers in organizing the transcriptions from pre-observation and post-observation meetings and classroom observation guides. First, an initial analysis process based on patterns from the data allowed codes and categories. A subsequent analysis helped to organize data in four broad themes: openings, sequencing, pacing and closure. Each theme contained somewhat similar categories and codes depending on each peer coaching stage.

As content analysis is a systematic and objective approach employed for the examination of qualitative data as text or visual materials, this method also entailed the identification and quantification of codes and categories using frequencies and percentages of patterns, and codes per each category in order to derive meaningful insights (Kleinheksel et al., 2020).

2.5. Procedure

At the beginning of the semester, preservice teachers were trained about how to perform their practicum through the peer coaching protocol which emphasized that one peer had to observe, and the other one had to teach. Their roles had to change in each one's classroom so that they could benefit from each other about their experiences as an observed teacher and as an observer. Additionally, preservice teachers had to follow these stages:

First stage: Peers identification by affinity

Since they were in their penultimate semester, they had already built some friendship and confidence among themselves. For this reason, we, as teacher educators, allowed them to choose their peers by affinity to guarantee confidence to be observed, and to give and receive feedback.

Second stage: Pre-observation meetings

These meetings took place before every lesson with the purpose of agreeing the items to be observed. These items were the focus of attention as they represented the issues or challenges, they believed or perceived that they had to face during the lessons.

Third stage: Classroom observations

This stage was done during the implementation of the lessons. The observer had a classroom observation guide to register the agreed events in the previous stage. The observer had to only observe his/her peer while implementing the lesson. He/She did not have to assist neither his/her peers nor the students.

Fourth stage: Post-observation meetings

At the end of each lesson, preservice teachers had to reflect on the observed items. They were trained to give feedback without being judgmental, but being proactive by giving suggestions for future improvement. During these debriefings, the observed preservice teacher had to start the conversation by explaining his/her perceptions about his/her lessons. The observer had to take the role of a good listener and tried to make sense about what the observed preservice teacher expressed with what he/she registered in the classroom observation guides.

After a 12-hour period of training, preservice teachers started their practicum in elementary schools with children between 8 and 12 years old. The practicum lasted 12 weeks in which preservice teachers completed 40 hours of instruction.

It is evident that the peer coaching stages revolve around the implementation of the lesson. As explained by Richards and Lockhart (2009), what is written in a lesson plan differs from what is actually done during its implementation due to the complexity of real-world teaching interactions. Thus, he presents four dimensions found in a lesson plan execution: 1) The opening dimension that entails the first 5 or 10 minutes to develop the initial steps of a lesson through warmups and/or lead-ins. 2) The sequencing dimension that comprises the logical order for developing the lesson contents and activities which should be related to each other. 3) The pacing dimension is related to the time allocated for each activity to progress the lesson. 4) The closure dimension that includes several ways a teacher uses to end a lesson. These dimensions were the focus of analysis of this research work as presented in the following section.

Results

3.1. Research question 1: What aspects of teaching are reflected during the peer coaching stages?

Table 1

Teaching Aspects agreed for the Observation during Pre-observation Meetings.

Themes	Categories	Codes	f	%
Openings	Warmups	Students' engagement towards the initial phase of the lesson	3	3%
		Subtotal	3	3%
Sequencing	Instruction	Proper organization and implementation of the lesson, the topic, and the objectives.	25	28%
		Eliciting students' responses	1	1%
		Observe student engagement with flashcards	2	2%
		Supporting understanding of new words	6	7%
		Content explanation	5	6%
		Grammar explanation	2	2%
		Integration of instructional materials throughout the lesson	2	2%
		Subtotal	43	48%
	Practice activities	Grouping arrangement & collaboration	9	10%
		Ensure students' active participation and interaction	12	13%
		Subtotal	21	24%
	Assessment	Observe the assessment methods	3	3%
		How mistakes are corrected	3	3%
		Subtotal	6	7%
Pacing	Instructional time	Check if the teacher implements all the stages of the lesson plan.	1	1%
		Length of the activities according to the scheduled time	9	10%
		Transitioning to new topics	6	7%
		Subtotal	16	18%
Closure	na	na	0	0%
		Total	89	100%

Table 1 presents the results obtained from the transcriptions of the pre-observation meetings between peers which took place just before the classroom observation. A variety of aspects were agreed to be observed from which three broad themes emerged from the analysis: openings, sequencing, and pacing. The theme of sequencing recurred throughout the data since it came up with several categories such as instruction, practice activities, and assessment. It seems that preservice teachers were more concerned with the way they presented and explained the lesson; rather than the strategies for opening or closing the lesson which were the least recurrent

categories during the conversations in the pre-observation meetings. In fact, the closure of the lesson did not even emerge in this first stage. There must be a balance at each stage of the lesson.

When analyzing the indicators from the openings, preservice teachers appeared to underestimate the importance of this dimension since just a few times they agreed with their peers to observe how students got engaged during this phase. Probably they were not totally aware of the positive impact of starting a lesson through active warmups and clear lead-ins to inform about the lesson objectives and to motivate students' participation and motivation throughout the lesson implementation.

As previously mentioned, the results concerning to the sequencing dimension registered the majority of the categories agreed to be observed. It is notable that preservice teachers were concerned about the correct organization and implementation of the lesson paying special attention to the alignment of the topic and lesson objectives. These results might suggest that preservice teachers' transition from theory to practice is a complex process that requires self-confidence to face real-life classroom situations. As usual, the lack of expertise in any field generates several fears that practitioners may manage to overcome in a real classroom setting; however, this is a gradual process that requires practice, reflection, collaboration, and lesson rehearsals to refine their teaching skills.

Further examination of the data displayed in Table 1 demonstrated that preservice teachers' conversations before the lessons tackled the topic of classroom management related to the pacing dimension. They wanted their peers to observe if they followed the time allocated per each stage as established in their lesson plans. When it comes to the closure dimension, prospective teachers did not mention anything about ending the lesson. It seems that they underestimated the opportunity to summarize all the contents, or to verify if all students the contents under study.

3.2. Research question 2: Which peer coaching stage is the most and least powerful to involve preservice teachers in reflective practice?

Table 2

Peer Classroom Observation. Actual Events Observed during the Lesson.

Themes	Categories	Codes	f	%
Openings	Warmups	No warm ups*	10	3%
		Students' disruptive behavior during warmups*	10	3%
		Students showed interest during warmups	18	5%
	Lesson objective presentation	No presentation of lesson objectives*	20	6%
		Presentation of lesson objectives	32	9%
		Subtotal	90	26%
Sequencing	Instruction	Questioning to recall students' previous knowledge	8	2%
		Clear revision of the topic	4	1%
		Inductive approach for presenting the topic	8	2%
		Deductive approach for presenting the topic	2	1%
		Using flashcards to present vocabulary	12	3%
		Eliciting students' responses	15	4%
		Subtotal	49	14%
	Practice activities	Explanations with examples in English and Spanish	14	4%
		Solving practice activities from the textbook	28	8%
		Students write their sentences	14	4%
		Group work activities	7	2%
		Peer evaluation	8	2%
		Individual work	16	5%
		Giving feedback	9	3%
		Some activities were not clear, and teachers did not provide help*	6	2%
		Subtotal	102	30%
	Assessment	Homework in the textbook	11	3%
		Homework in the notebook	12	3%
		Monitoring students	18	5%
		Subtotal	41	12%

Pacing	Instructional time	Good and clear transition of the topics	13	4%
		The teacher checks if everyone worked on the activities in the allocated time	25	7%
		Some students cannot finish activities in the allocated time*	5	1%
		Students were noisy and the teacher lost control of time*	6	2%
		Students interrupted the teacher's explanation*	7	2%
		Subtotal	56	16%
Closure		Ends the class with a summary of the lesson	6	2%
		Subtotal	6	2%
		Total	344	100%

Note * negative event.

Table 2 shows a variety of aspects that were captured during classroom observation. Like Table 1, the sequencing dimension got the largest number of registrations; inside it, the section for practice activities got the highest rate. According to the listings, most events performed by preservice teachers during practice activities seemed to work. For instance, solving comprehension exercises from the textbook was the most recurrent practice activity. In addition, some individual, pair, and group activities were developed to reach the lesson objectives. Even though most events during the sequencing dimension were effective for students' learning, the observer noticed that sometimes instructions were not clear enough for students to solve the exercises. This situation explains why preservice teachers' feedback was too low.

The opening dimension got the second-largest number of registrations. This suggests that preservice teachers did observe what they agreed in the pre-observation meeting. Essentially, this indicates that they were concerned about getting students' motivation and engagement at the outset of the lesson. From the findings, it is clear that most of the time, they were able to get students involved in the context of the lesson either to warm up or to communicate the lesson objectives; however, sometimes students' disruptive behavior hindered their objectives. Likewise, from time to time, preservice teachers did not present the lesson objectives in the initial part of the lesson.

In the context of instruction, whose occurrences are less than half of practice activities, preservice teachers tried to activate students' prior knowledge before presenting the lesson topic. Furthermore, it is important to note that prospective teachers sometimes attempted to elicit students' responses related to the lesson topic. This suggests that their talking time was too long which may have limited students' active participation. Additionally, the data reveals that the assessment dimension was restricted to homework in the textbook or notebook at the end of the lesson; that is summative assessment. Nevertheless, monitoring students appeared to indicate a way to control students' progress, which may be interpreted as formative assessment.

When analyzing the data from the pacing dimension, strong evidence of preservice teachers' skills to transition topics was not good enough to have students finish their practice activities within the given time. This inconsistency may have been due to preservice teachers' inexperience related to

classroom management which ultimately reduced their power to control the time, and the students' classroom behavior. When it comes to the closure dimension, the low percentage of occurrences demonstrated that preservice teachers did not use to wrap up the lesson at the end of it. This situation may lead to such disadvantages as omitting the opportunity to consolidate students' learning, overlooking feedback, leaving gaps; in short, reducing the effectiveness of the lesson.

Table 3*Post-observation Meetings.*

Themes	Categories	Codes	f	%
Openings	Warmups	The warm-up was attractive enough to engage and motivate students	38	22%
		Warm-up caused students' disruptive behavior*	5	3%
	Lesson objective	Students were aware of the objectives of the lesson.	18	10%
		Subtotal	61	35%
Sequencing	Instruction	Unclear teachers' questions or instructions to elicit students' responses*	13	7%
		The instructional materials facilitated the lesson development	25	14%
		Subtotal	38	22%
	Practice activities	Worksheets helped students practice the lesson contents	9	5%
		Implementation of effective activities during the lesson	22	13%
		Students' disruptive behavior during practice activities*	10	6%
		Subtotal	41	23%
	Assessement	Formative assessment to monitor students' progress	16	9%
		Summative assessment to evaluate students' knowledge	4	2%
		Subtotal	20	11%
Pacing	Instructional time	Lesson objectives were partially achieved*	4	2%
		Activities not completed in the allocated time*	12	7%
		Subtotal	16	9%
Closure	Closure	na	0	0%
		Subtotal	0	0%
		Total	176	100%

Note *: negative event

Table 3 illustrates the aspects under reflection during the post-observation meetings after every lesson or classroom observation. Overall, the conversations between preservice teachers, that is between peers, reduced to half of the points observed during the lesson. Surprisingly, the category practice activities did not reach the highest number of occurrences as it happened during the classroom observation. It is worth mentioning that the opening dimension was the focus of attention of the post-observation meeting and the pre-observation meeting, too. These results seem to imply, that preservice teachers were aware of the significance of starting a lesson with a

strong sense of achievement; even so, some students' disruptive behavior appeared to block the overall effectiveness of a lesson as shown in the development of the lesson.

The results obtained from the sequencing dimension demonstrate that preservice teachers reflected on the positive and negative impacts of their teaching performance. For instance, even though they managed to get students involved in the lesson through a variety of instructional materials, they failed to elicit students' responses during the instructional time because their instructions or questions were not clear enough. As a consequence, it is almost certain that some students could not solve the proposed practice activities, and even some students misbehaved during this lesson stage. Despite these negative impacts, preservice teachers' reflections exhibited some gains regarding the use of worksheets as useful materials for students' practice activities.

When it comes to the pacing dimension, preservice teachers' conversations exposed their weaknesses in time management for the development of the lesson. This suggests that students may have not understood all the material which simultaneously may have led to decreased productivity. As a matter of fact, poor classroom time management limits lesson success. That being the case, preservice teachers could not progress to carry out the closure dimension of the lesson as shown in Table 3.

3.3. Discussion

3.3.1. How do peer coaching stages promote seventh-semester preservice teachers' reflective practice during their practicum?

Findings have demonstrated that PSTs were immersed in an ongoing process of reflection before, during, and after the lessons, as evidenced in the registrations in Tables 1, 2, and 3. Peer coaching involved practitioners in permanent collaborative work during their practicum. Their conversations and classroom observations allowed them to put into practice their knowledge base by elaborating their lesson plans and their subsequent implementation. These findings are consistent with those of Arslan Dönmez and Sahin (2022), who confirmed that peer coaching promotes reflective practices by involving pairs or groups of individuals in similar roles who collaborate to enhance their performance. This is achieved through active engagement and the exchange of constructive feedback. Alongside this, Schön (2017) states that teaching methods expressed in theories are not vast enough to solve the complexities of real-world classrooms. With this in mind, reflective practice bridges the theory and practice in authentic classroom settings, and peer coaching reinforces this process through dialogic interaction between peers.

3.3.2. What aspects of teaching are reflected during the peer coaching stages?

When it comes to the pre-observation meetings, the instruction aspects indicated that PSTs' major concern was related to the alignment of the topic and lesson objectives, and the correct organization and implementation of the lesson. These findings agree with Lerner and McDougal (2023) who claim that the correct management of the sequence dimension of the lesson leads to the achievement of the lesson objectives. Regarding the initial agreements made in the pre-observation meetings, they did not completely match with the aspects observed during classroom observations as discussed in the next section. This is consistent with Showers and Joyce (1996) who after years of experience on teachers' peer coaching, found that pre and post- meetings were ineffective because teaching performance in real-life classrooms is versatile and dynamic.

3.3.3. Discussing peer coaching stage: Classroom observation

As presented in the results, PSTs observations allowed them to identify the upsides and downsides of their PSTs' teaching performance. For example, they observed how their peers used worksheets successfully to help students to develop their practice activities; however, they found that their peers could not manage the time according to the lesson plan, which provoked students' disruptive behavior. This is in agreement with Capan and Bedir (2019) who demonstrated that PSTs' lack of experience hindered them in managing the pacing dimension of the lesson which weakened their classroom management skills. Despite these pitfalls, classroom observations reinforced PSTs' pedagogical skills and reflective practice by observing their peers' teaching performance. These findings are consistent with those of Arslan Dönmez and Sahin (2022) who highlighted that peer coaching fosters reflective practices by engaging individuals in pairs or groups with similar professional roles, encouraging collaboration to enhance their performance through active participation and supportive feedback. A possible explanation for these results may be the short time allocated for training PSTs in peer coaching. In fact, it is not an easy duty to develop both peer coaching skills and pedagogical skills at the same time.

3.3.4. Discussing peer coaching stage: post-observation meetings

Results showed that the events under reflection were reduced to half of those observed during classroom observation. Their focus of attention was on the sequencing dimension of the lesson in which reflections about students' disruptive behavior seemed to delay practice activities. In consequence, the pacing dimension seemed to be the most controversial one as preservice teachers' conversations demonstrated they were not able to control the time according to the scheduled lesson plan. The frequency of not pacing the lesson correctly was fairly high which revealed that PSTs' conversations were not constructive enough to plan properly for future lessons. These results agree with the findings of Loman et al., (2020), who considered that peer coaching generated reflection and collaboration among peers during the lessons; however, they did not plan to improve the negative items for their future lessons. Likewise, Showers and Joyce (1996), after many years of experience in peer coaching, warned practitioners that post-observation meetings should be omitted because peers assume the role of supervisors which overlooks the non-evaluative process of peer coaching.

3.3.5. Which peer coaching stage is the most and least powerful to involve preservice teachers in reflective practice?

It is evident that the most powerful stage of peer coaching is peer classroom observation in which the observer registers positive and negative teaching performance done by his/her peer. It is interesting to note that the PST with the role of observer can reflect by observing their peer teaching in an authentic classroom setting that provides a unique opportunity to critically analyze and evaluate teaching practices, strategies, and classroom interactions without the pressure of actively teaching. These findings confirm what Showers and Joyce (1996) state about the roles that teachers take during the process of coaching. They state that the coach is the observed teacher since he or she is implementing the lesson in a real-world classroom and is developing several instructional methodologies for the observer to follow or to improve.

Peer classroom observation helps teachers critically reflect on lesson delivery by identifying successes, challenges, and areas for improvement through reflective questions like what worked well or bad; or what could have been done differently; or why these events happened are reflective inquiries that both in-service and preservice teachers raise to make sense of their teaching performance. These findings corroborate the ideas of Korthagen (2014) who claims that reflective practice is a systematic inquiry about the relationship between the initial intentions of doing something, the actual things done, and their results.

On the other hand, the least powerful stage to get preservice teachers involved in reflective practice was the pre-observation meetings, in which they had to agree on the items to be observed during the lesson. During these meetings, PSTs preservice teachers underestimated the relevance of the opening dimension of the lesson, and what is more, they did not mention the closing dimension. A possible explanation might be their fear of being evaluated or their inexperience in teaching. It is encouraging to compare these findings with those found by Showers and Joyce (1996) who decided to omit pre-observation and post-observation meetings during teachers' peer coaching since they hinder the non-evaluative nature of this model.

Conclusions

Pre-observation meetings revealed that preservice teachers prioritized the sequencing dimension but overlooked openings and closures, highlighting a need for balanced practice and peer-supported reflection

Peer classroom observations revealed important insights into the reflection process. Preservice teachers emphasized lesson sequencing and student engagement but struggled with instructions, pacing, classroom management, and closures, highlighting the need for improved formative assessment and balanced lesson delivery.

Post-observation meetings focused on lesson strengths and weaknesses, but preservice teachers failed to plan improvements, rendering discussions ineffective. Due to limited time from academic demands, this peer coaching stage should be omitted in future research, with more time allocated to peer coaching training and practicum.

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Universidad Nacional de Loja, Ecuador



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