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Becoming Blended. A Case Study in Teacher Identity

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MASTER OF ARTS TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

BECOMING BLENDED A CASE STUDY IN TEACHER IDENTITY

Tesis profesional para obtener el grado de

MASTER OF ARTS TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

El presente caso de estudio explora las identidades de dos maestros en el Programa Semipresencial de una Universidad mexicana durante un periodo de tres meses. El objetivo es descubrir cómo la agencia crea diversos tipos de impacto y en diferentes formas en la identidad de los profesores en el mencionado programa.

Becoming blended, a case study in teacher identity

Submitted by

Victoria Renteria Navarro

To University of St Mark and St John as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts by advanced study in Education (special field: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), November 2014.

I certify that all the material in this dissertation which is not my own work has been identified and that no material is included for which a degree has been previously been conferred upon me.

Victoria Renteria Navarro

November 2014

ABSTRACT

This case-study explores the identities of two teachers in the English Blended Program of a Mexican University during a four month period. The aim is to discover how agency creates different kinds of impacts on teacher's identity in the context of a blended program. Through an interpretive and sociocultural perspective an analysis was conducted by examining data gathered from face-to-face class observations, teacher's Moodle pages, teacher's journals and interviews, as well as questionnaires applied to students, other teachers and Program coordinator. The study shows how the teacher's educational and cultural background as well as their experience and knowledge play an important role to promote or hinder agency. The findings reveal key differences and similarities in teacher's identities, the diverse approaches they adopt when teaching and how they have achieved agency at contrasting paces and why. Also, evidence is presented to support the claim that the Blended Program is an ideal place to observe agency since technology continually changes and demands very active, flexible, creative and experienced teachers. This is such, that it is clear that the e-tutoring course teachers take doesn´t guarantee success. In the end, strong networks of teacher support are proposed as vital to catalyze the confidence necessary to demonstrate agency and overcome resistance to join blended programs. Besides teacher agency, which should be studied in other contexts, it is argued that further research is also required into student agency and how it contributes to successful learning.

It is hoped this study contributes to the understanding of the kind of teachers blended programs need and how to help teachers not only join and stay but succeed in accomplishing educational objectives.

Acknowledgements

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KEY CONCEPTS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APP: a computer program created to be used on smart phones, tablets, computers or any mobile device.

BLENDED PROGRAM: The English Course of the University which combines face-to-face sessions and online work in the Moodle Platform.

BLOG: A journal that is available on the internet.

E-JOURNAL OR REFLECTIVE JOURNAL: A journal carried out by students in the Blended Program or teachers in the e-tutoring course

E-TUTORING COURSE: Training course offered to teachers who wish to become proficient in teaching online or blended environments.

E-TUTOR: The teacher who conducts and leads the e-tutoring course.

E-TIVITY: An online language learning activity.

FORUM: an online forum is a discussion site where people can interact online on a given subject o subjects.

M31: Research Methods in TESOL a previous module of the Master's Program.

NEST: Native English-speaking Teacher.

Non-Nest: Non-Native English Speaking Teacher.

Plug-in: software component that adds a specific feature to an existing software application.

Becoming Blended, a Case Study in Teacher Identity in a Mexican University

CHAPTER 1

1 INTRODUCTION

English teachers today have encountered significant challenges and transformations in their practice due to the arrival of online resources. The Internet and the dynamic applications of the Web have introduced teachers to an ever expanding array of options and responsibilities that have seriously influenced their outlook. Teacher identity, more than ever, has become a critical component in understanding professional development and training; it is a field of research that has "emerged as a central topic in educational research since the 1990's" Hao (2011:3).The amount of new resources and tools available online have encouraged teachers to modify their practice. Institutions require a new kind of professional, thus it is of vital importance to understand who this new teacher is or should be, to create better training programs. If we understand professional identity we may be able to "engage with innovation and change and understand the impact of our actions on the teachers we work with." Kiely (2012:1).

Technological change has set forth a new perspective towards language acquisition and has opened up new learning environments. English teachers now interact with new virtual communities and the new resources available have brought about transformations in teacher's attitudes and beliefs and in the conceptualisations they have of themselves. The profession now demands not only knowledge in pedagogy and proficiency of the English language, but also technological knowledge or the right disposition to learn how to use it in the language classroom. These new demands have opened up new questions to explore. What elements of identity make some teachers able to respond successfully to these demands? What elements of the institutions where teachers work can help or obstruct them to participate actively in decision making processes? The following paper aims to explore these questions through the identities of two teachers in a Blended Program in a Mexican University.

In this chapter an introduction to the following paper is presented. It includes the context in which the study was carried out, the reasons for the research, its value, general layout and research questions.

1.2 Background of the research: *A key event that changed the scenario.*

In 2009, the University where the present study was conducted faced a national health contingency (Flu, virus H1N1) and the authorities ordered all schools closed for a period of three weeks. Many businesses followed suit and took radical measures to avoid having large quantities of people together. Most people were working and studying from home, mainly by means of online resources. These circumstances catalyzed the development of blended courses in the University. This event changed how teachers worked with Internet resources; they became more concerned on how they were using technology. It was no longer a matter of how technology can complement education but how education actually needs technology. Networks of colleagues support were created, and the way teachers worked changed literally overnight. A critical event triggered a need for immediate adaptation and with that first change many more have unfolded. How were teachers going to understand their concept of self in this new scenario? Who was going to be better prepared for the challenge?

Some teachers were prepared to work online, but others were not. In a short interview with the University´s Online Resources Coordinator, she said: "Our team registered evidence of an increase in the use of the Moodle platform during the health contingency. Our working schedule was expanded to help all those teachers who required assistance. For the following period, there was much more interest from teachers and Academic Coordinators seeking online support for the face-to-face courses through the Moodle platform". The necessity to foster professional development in the technological area became more vital. In particular, I asked myself if we were going to be ready for such a challenge, and more importantly, how we were going to modify our practice so fast and whether these changes would alter our individuality.

The next section presents an account of how the English Blended learning program was implemented.

1.3 The creation of the Blended Program and its impact.

In the spring of 2010, the English Blended Program was created in the University. In the beginning, the program had only 1 teacher and 9 students. In recent years, the program has grown exponentially. The program coordinator confirmed that during the 2014 spring term they had 18 teachers and 287 students (See Appendix 1). The Blended Program is aimed at students that range

from a lower intermediate to a higher intermediate level of English; that is from level 4 to 8 that corresponds to the face-to-face program of the University which goes from level 1 to 8. In the Blended Program teachers and students meet in person once a week for two or four hours depending if it is taken in a semester or bimester basis and the rest of the work is done online. Both the face-to-face and the Blended programs of the University use the same textbook but they differ in the syllabuses; the Blended Program has two extra components (See Appendix 2): e-tivities and reflective journal. The way students are evaluated in the Blended Program changes as well since the new components are considered.

The Blended Program has expanded its boundaries. More and more students are choosing this new modality and as a consequence more trained teachers are required. Today, even teachers who are members of the face-to-face program have taken courses to learn tools and skills that blended course teachers' use with the result that the gap between the face-to-face program and the Blended Program has become less apparent. With technological change and an open interest of teachers to incorporate new tools a new kind of professional is suddenly appearing. During an interview the Coordinator of the Blended Program of the Language Centre explained:

> "Teachers who are open to use technology, who are creative and happy explorers, a person who is always looking for new ways to teach because right now blended learning is like the wild wild west, there are no paths. Technology changes and so we have to play catch up with technology."

Something I have witnessed is that most teachers now work with a computer and a projector in class, using a wide array of applications that range from videos and online exercises to more sophisticated tools such as audio journals, blogs, vokis (customized speaking character created online) and self-designed web pages. The stage has changed and so have the actors involved.

Apart from the new kind of demand the University is facing, authorities have encouraged its members to become proficient in online teaching. All teachers have a Moodle platform and are responsible for its contents. The institution's 2014-2024 Academic Plan encourages all its teachers to be proficient in the use of online resources. Moreover, it has demanded all the University´s departments to have a percentage of blended or online courses. The Language Centre has not only been a pioneer in blended teaching but also a leader in the percentage of blended and online courses offered in the University. In words of the Language Centre´s Blended Program Coordinator:

"We actually got congratulated, all the Language Centre, because other departments had a 10% of their classes online or blended and we were already there a year and a half ago. At the beginning of 2014 we were closer to 20%".

The Language Centre administrators are now asking more teachers to take a special course to join the Blended Program to respond to institutional policy and student demand. The situation has therefore created a new English teacher profile. This is why I decided to conduct a study in 2012 to explore how teachers experienced the Blended Program and its challenges. Next, I present the results.

1.4 A previous study

In a small study I conducted (Rentería, 2012) as part of the Research Methods module of this Master's programme, relevant information was gathered regarding the kind of English teachers that joined the Blended Program. This research allowed me to understand how the program changed teachers and how differently they reacted to new teaching resources and ways of developing knowledge. The most important findings were:

- The majority of the teachers identified change in the way they conducted and organized classes.
- They reported professional development and confidence as they gained more experience in the field of blended education.
- Some mentioned having acquired a new attitude towards technology.
- Some were able to support others and innovate, propose changes in teacher's meetings and even participate as tutors in the training course.

During the research I also discovered that while some teachers were very successful others decided not to teach in the Blended Program anymore. There seems to be a relationship between teacher's knowledge, background and attitude that allowed some teachers to recognise courses of action at important moments. The choices that teachers make are crucial for their positioning in a social space. Taking all that into consideration, new questions have risen.

1.5 Research questions

Based upon my previous study, I present the following questions:

HOW DOES THE BLENDED PROGRAM IMPACT TEACHERS' IDENTITY?

HOW DOES AGENCY IMPACT TEACHERS' IDENTITY?

The following is a case-study which aims to explore the professional identities of two English Teachers in the Blended Program of a Mexican University. To have an idea of what kind of teachers participated in the study see Appendix 3, for a description. Having two teachers in the study may allow us to see how teachers do things and respond differently to the context and then participate in the Blended Program decision making processes in a different way. In other words, how agency is a fundamental factor to aid professional development. For the purposes of the present study we will understand agency as: "The capacity of actors to critically shape their responses to problematic situations" Biesta and Tedder (2006:11). The study seeks to understand how teachers do things and take decisions in a certain way when a critical situation arises. Also, to explore how the organizational structure of the institution as well as the relationships of authorities and teachers can promote active participation of teachers or not. This study aims to present the researcher's interpretation of the reflections and perceptions of the participants in the study.

1.6 Reasons for the Research

As a member of the University I have also been affected by recent changes regarding the incorporation of technology in the language classroom. I have observed changes in myself and in my practice. I have incorporated new resources and struggled to use technology in a meaningful way. The present study may help me comprehend a new teaching and learning scenario. Understanding this new kind of English teacher has many advantages. It could aid the Language Centre authorities to know:

- The perceptions and beliefs that teachers have of the program.
- Why they conduct classes differently and how this impacts their practice.
- Whether there is a solid network of mutual support among teachers.
- What changes could be made to the training course that prepares teachers for the blended courses.

1.7 Organisation

This paper is organized in five chapters. Chapter one introduces the research question, the background of the research and the purpose and value of the study. Chapter two reviews the relevant literature for the study. Chapter three describes the research framework and the methodology used in the case-study. Chapter four describes the results and discusses the findings of the research. Chapter five presents an overall summary, with conclusions, limitations and questions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I will first explore the concept of identity and then link it with the sociocultural perspective. Secondly, I will describe key elements that inform teacher identity. Then, I will define the concept of *agency* and describe how it impacts identity and present its significance for the present study. To conclude, I will briefly describe blended learning and teaching and how this emerging field has specific implications for teacher identity.

2.1 Identity: from an individual to a social perspective in context.

Who we are is defined by many factors, from nationality, languages we speak, hobbies we have, sporting allegiances, people we live and work with. We can start defining who we are by identifying ourselves with categories such as female, male, Mexican, fan of the Doctor Who show, member of a University or member of a book club. A person can identify herself with certain concepts that are part of who she is. But who we are is not only defined by personal characteristics because as human beings we belong to different social groups which have an impact on our identity. In the early and middle part of the 20th Century identity was understood more as an individual or self image a person had. Then, social psychologists like Erickson, Vygotsky and Moshman defined identity as a "situated dynamic process of individuals developing conceptions of themselves as rational beings over time" (in Olsen: 2008:4)

As we belong to different social groups our understanding of who we are changes. Identity is not static since we adapt and change to new conditions. These conditions become the context in which we are immersed in.

There are key elements that commonly appear in the literature regarding identity: it is co-constructed, negotiated and enacted. It is co-constructed through language, culture and communication. It keeps elements that are constant and in permanent change. Miller (2009) presents an analysis of the elements that are common in identity in the second language teaching field and mentions some of the most relevant studies in the area.

The element of culture provides not only a sense of social environment but also the idea that time and belonging to a specific group defines who we are. According to Hall (1990) "Identity is a social

construction that provides individuals a sense of *being* and expectations for ways of acting social behaviour". To him, cultural identity provides the individual with a set of categories to identify with and a set of rules and pre-established ideas to follow; to know your place in society. Therefore, cultural identity is a matter of *becoming* as well as *being*. A person changes through time and redefines who she is; identity is dynamic. But a person also *is* and has essential and unique characteristics within herself that distinguish her from others.

We adopt different identities through our lifetime. If you change the place where you live, your musical preferences, your political ideas, if you change your workplace, consciously or unconsciously you adapt or adopt other ways of *being.* When we confront "the other" we see differences but also similarities. A teacher is part of a context, and interacts with others. The conditions where the teacher works have characteristics that may influence the teachers' practice and those conditions change through time, even more so in the Blended Program where the element of technology plays an important part transforming the practice as innovations for teaching are incorporated. For these reasons, teacher identity should include studying the self conceptualization of the teacher, the relationship she has with students, colleagues and authorities and the way she incorporates technology in her practice.

2.2. Teacher Identity

Teacher identity has implications in the language classroom. Hamacheck (1999:209) makes an interesting statement: "consciously we teach what we know, and unconsciously we teach who we are". Our training background, our education, all the teachers we have observed, play a part on the way we act and take decisions but also our conceptions and deep reflections on that past. When teaching, our personality, our deep *self* is also there. In addition to that, identity is shaped by the social spaces we work in. Regarding teachers, the classroom is the environment in which the relationship between teachers and students is established, where language is negotiated. In a blended program, the study of the physical classroom has to be complemented with the virtual scenario where students and teachers interact, in the case of the present study: the teacher's Moodle platform.

There are many definitions of identity in the literature and they have elements in common. There is one definition that connects better with the original questions of this paper: "Identity is how a

person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how that person understands possibilities for the future". Norton (2000:5).

Norton's definition seemed to me the ideal one, she implies that the person is *active* since construction requires action, it involves relations to others and also reflection and change; how the person is able to make sense to herself and foresee future scenarios. Depending on the context and time we are in we may adopt a different identity.

2.3 Elements that inform teacher identity

Within a context, many factors can have an impact upon a teacher's identity. For example, we have a voluntary membership with certain groups that share our hobbies and interests and we also have a membership which is involuntary such as nationality, religion, culture. Though in some cases, you can choose to unsubscribe to a certain nationality or religion. A teacher can be Mexican, catholic, middle class, non native English teacher and free lance photographer. A teacher's *self* concept also varies from the personal dimension (biography), her belonging to a category such as native or non-native, her beliefs and knowledge to social-interactive elements such as the colleagues the teachers work with online or face-to-face. The concept of Native and Non Native English teacher is relevant since teachers in the Blended program belong to both categories; it constitutes an important element to explore.

2.3.1 Native and Non-Native English Teacher: acquiring languages.

The majority of the teachers in the Blended Program are Non-NESTs. There are 19 teachers, 13 are women and 6 men. From those, 6 are NESTs. Medgyes (1994:430) provides a traditional definition of Native English Speaker Teachers as "someone who speaks English as her native language, also called mother tongue."

While the study was carried out students made frequent comments that they preferred Native English Teachers, therefore I wanted to see if this was true and its implications. Moreover, I wanted to see how the two teachers in the case study made sense of this concept.

In teacher identity studies, the dichotomy native-non-native teachers of English is an element that has been considered, see Tsui (2007), Lengeling (2010), Duff and Uchida (1997), Xu (2012), Amin (1997), Golombek and Jordan (2005), Park (2007), Varghese et.al (2005). These authors study how

being a NEST or non-NEST has implications in the Language classroom and the way teachers are understood by others and themselves.

Lengeling considers the understanding of NESTs and Non-NESTs and speculates: (2010: 67) "many non-native speakers must overcome barriers in the construction of a new language identity" (2010:67). Non-NESTs teachers go through a process when acquiring a new identity, but probably NESTs could also confront barriers of a different kind.

Norton (2000) comments on the significance of language affiliation and how language command has much to do with identity formation:

> "It is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person gains access to - or is denied access to - powerful social networks that give learners the opportunity to speak". (p. 5)

This discussion is helpful for the present study since both teachers in the case study had to acquire English and both share a common interest in learning foreign languages. Both had to emigrate to learn the language. Proficiency in a language gives a person the right to express what she feels and thinks.

In the next section, we will explore how agency and power can complement the equation when understanding teacher identity.

2.4 Agency

Just as organisms adapt to different conditions of the environment, teachers adapt and *take actions* to work in an institution. In this section, we will first explore teacher agency.

In chapter 1 we defined agency as: "The capacity of actors to critically shape their responses to problematic situations" Biesta and Tedder (2006:11). When a teacher confronts a difficult situation that demands doing things differently she will first reflect upon the problem, use her previous knowledge, her beliefs, consider the rules of the institution she works for and take a decision using the resources available to her; even imagining the outcome of her action. In a single *action* she incorporates her past (her personal and professional history), her present (beliefs, social structures, resources) and imagines the future outcome.

Priestley et al. conducted a study to understand why agency "is achieved differently in different settings by teachers who have broadly similar values, beliefs and levels of experience in common" (2012:2). If we ask experienced teachers what "good teaching" is or what conditions foster learning they may provide us with similar views, but if we observe their classrooms we will see how differently they teach and react in given moments, how differently they relate to students and colleagues. Priestly et al. also establishes that teachers act by means of the places they are in. Depending on the conditions and resources available to them in a given moment, they will proceed to reflect and take a course of action.

> "Actors always act by *means* of their environment rather than simply in their environment…
> the achievement of agency will always result from the interplay of individual efforts, available
> resources and contextual and structural factors as they come together in particular situations".
> (Biesta and Tedder 2007:137)

Agency is then not something that people *have* but something that people *do.* If we understand agency in this form we can see why teachers react differently in given contexts and how they are enabled and limited by their social and material environment. The relationships a teacher can establish in an institution as well as the resources available to her can affect the way she is in the language classroom. Imagine a teacher who has been able to create a solid group of support among other teachers: to share ideas and materials, someone who has technological resources available and the knowledge to use them, someone who works in an institution that invites teachers to participate in decision making processes. In this scenario, the action opportunities of this particular teacher will be broader than those of a teacher who isolates herself, does not have sufficient resources or works in a an institution where rules and procedures and inflexible.

Priestley et al. (2012) build on the theory of Emirbayer and Mische (1998) who suggest that agency should be understood as a configuration of influences from the ***past,*** orientations towards the ***future*** and engagement with the ***present***. In a given situation, a teacher will react to a problem by using previous knowledge and experience, via her imagination to foresee a possible solution and by emitting a present judgement. Her solution to the problem is thus informed by the three elements.

Emirbayer and Mische (1998) refer to **past**, **present** and **future** as the ***iterational,*** the ***practical evaluative*** and the ***projective.*** For the purposes of the present study we will adopt the latter terms.

Thus, they understand agency as: "a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past, oriented toward the future and acted out in the present". (Ibid. 170)

Priestly, Biesta and Robinson understand Agency as shown in diagram 1:

```
                        ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                        │ Practical evaluative        │
                        │                             │
                        │ Cultural                    │
                        │                             │
                        │      Ideas Values Beliefs   │
                        │                             │
  ┌──────────────┐      │ Structural                  │      ┌──────────────┐
  │ Iterational  │      │                             │      │ Projective   │
  │              │      │ Social structures (rules,   │      │              │
  │ Life Histories│  ⇒  │ power)                      │  ⇐   │ Short term   │
  │              │      │ Material                    │      │              │
  │ Professional │      │                             │      │ Long term    │
  │ Histories    │      │ Resources                   │      │              │
  └──────────────┘      │                             │      └──────────────┘
                        │ Physical environment.       │
                        └─────────────────────────────┘
                                     ⇓

                              **AGENCY**
```
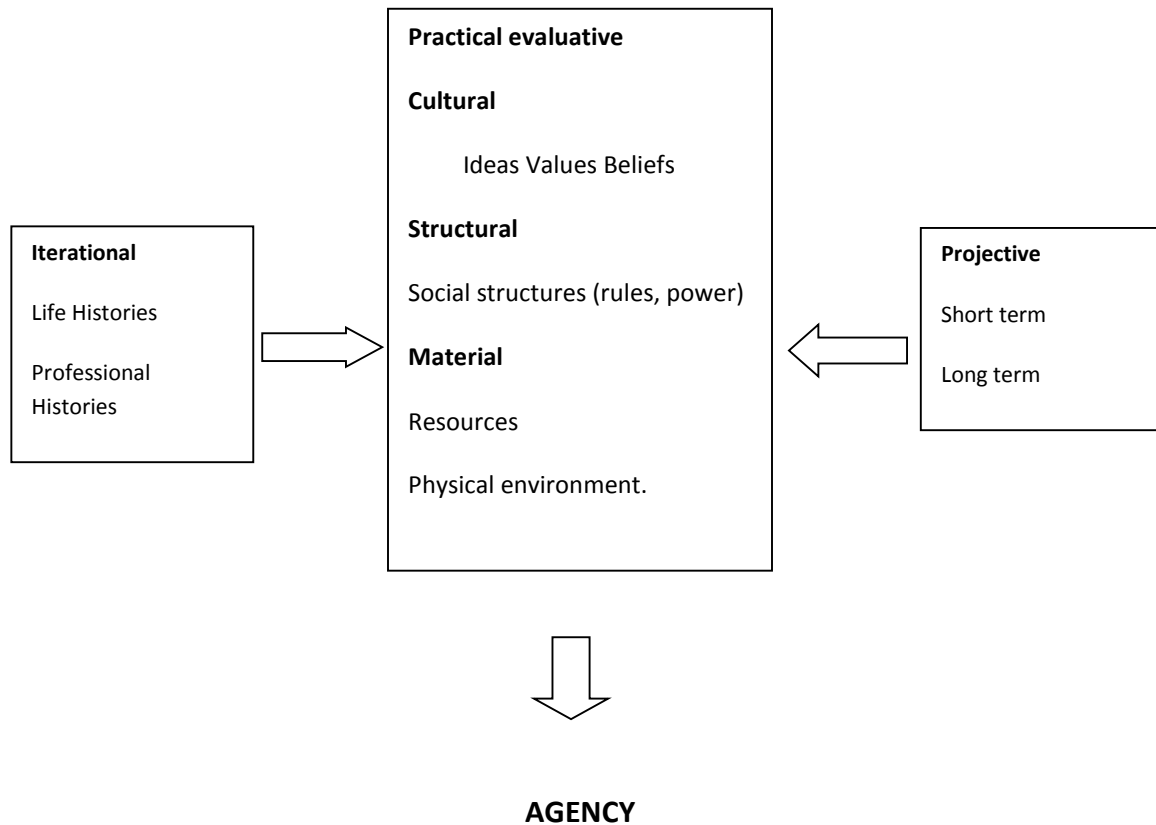
Diagram 1. Taken from Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2012:5)

To comprehend the diagram we need an example: Imagine a teacher in the Blended Program who discovers that her students are not having sufficient and proper speaking practice. She discovers that most teachers are using chats and forums for students to practice their speaking, but it is not enough. She will use her *past* knowledge and experience to start reflecting upon the problem: **iterational agency**. She will then take a decision in the *present* based on her beliefs and considering the resources available to her (for instance computers, internet connection and Skype). She contacts language centers in other Universities where English is a native language and organizes for foreign language students who are learning Spanish to practice with the teacher's students, to have an

interchange in both English and Spanish. This will be her **practical-evaluative** agency. Finally, when taking that decision the teacher is also able to imagine the *future* using her **projective agency**: whether the students will benefit from this intercultural interchange or not. Her course of action was different to that of others teachers, it was a critically considered action. She demonstrated agency.

Diagram 1 above will be used to analyse the data from the present study to see in which occasions teachers have demonstrated agency. Teacher's decisions can abide by the institutional system as it is or can create changes that go against the rules.

Duff (2012:15) observes:

> "Agency, power and social context are therefore linked because those who typically feel the most in control over their lives, choices, and circumstances also have the power they need to succeed."

The more a teacher is in control over her professional practice and the decisions she takes, the more this person will be able to use agency in a given context.

2.5 Blended learning and teaching: an emerging field.

The present paper explores teacher's identity in the Blended Program of a Mexican University. For the purposes of the study Blended Learning and Teaching will be understood as:

"The thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences." (Garrison and Kanuka 2004:96).

In a previous study (Renteria 2012), I conducted a study with the teachers of the Blended Program from the same University where this research was carried out. Blended teachers expressed very similar views and concerns. However, the way they conducted their classes and produced their Moodle pages was altogether different. Some teachers designed Moodle pages that were very well organised, full of resources to practice the 4 skills, with very clear rubrics and instructions, engaging, and that constantly incorporated new apps and functions. Whereas other teachers had pages that were not easy to work with, with limited resources and that remained the same for a longer period of time.

The way teachers design and organize their Moodle Page, communicate with students, evaluate e-tivities, use online resources and conduct classes varies with them; in the same way that they use agency differently. Garrison and Kanuka (2004:97) add:

> "Blended learning represents a fundamental reconceptualisation and reorganization of the teaching and learning dynamic. In this respect, no two blended learning designs are identical".

The differences in teacher's practice opened up new questions. Agency may be creating an impact. I believe that since technology constantly changes, it presents new learning opportunities and a Blended Program is an ideal scenario to study agency. Teachers in this situation are compelled to confront more challenges and develop new skills: conforming to a rigid teaching model, resisting constant innovation, inability to improvise and lack of creativity seriously compromises their performance and effectiveness.   Therefore, I decided to get closer to teachers in this context and conduct a case-study. In the next chapter the methodology will be presented.

CHAPTER 3

3 RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of this chapter is to describe and provide a rationale for the research process followed in this study. I will state again the research question and the aim of the study. Then I will explain the methodology applied for this research and the validation for the case study approach. After that, I will list the instruments used for the research and explain how the process was carried out. Then, I will explain how data was analysed.

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

The people that participated in this research were:

- Two teachers (female and male) as case studies.
- The coordinator of the Blended program.
- The students from the case study teachers.
- Some teachers from the Blended Program who answered a questionnaire.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

The aim of this study was to identify:

HOW DOES THE BLENDED PROGRAM IMPACT TEACHERS' IDENTITY?

HOW DOES AGENCY IMPACT TEACHERS' IDENTITY?

3.3 REASONS FOR A CASE STUDY

The method used for this study is a qualitative contextualised case study approach. The reasons to select the two teachers were:

- They joined the Blended Program at the same time, and are relatively new to it.
- They have very different backgrounds and personalities.
- Both teachers are non-NESTs and had to emigrate to learn English.

- They are considered "good teachers" by the Coordinator of the program (Teachers who have been given good evaluations by their students and who did very well in the e-tutoring course).

The case study approach was selected because this study fulfills the profile described by Yin (2009), since it:

- Calls for an in-depth analysis.
- Draws on previous theoretical literature in order to conduct data collection and analysis.
- Provides new evidence for future research.
- Relies on multiple sources of evidence (Yin 2009:18).

According to Yin (2009:10) the case study approach is appropriate to research experiences where the aim is to find an answer to what and how certain things happen. It may allow me to see the problem from different perspectives.

3.3.1 Validation of the case study approach

When conducting a qualitative case-study approach several strategies have to be considered to enhance its validity. Merriam (1998) proposes basic strategies of which I followed:

A) Triangulation: using multiple sources of data and different authors in the investigation. Cross-checking the observations of the teachers in the case study with those of other teachers in the program.

B) Member checks: transcribing the interviews and sending them back to the case study teachers and the coordinator to see if the texts were verbatim.

C) Long Term observation: conducting 5 face-to-face observations in both groups and checking the teacher's Moodle Platform frequently for the period of two months.

D) Peer examination: inviting one of my Master´s cohort colleagues who is in the Blended Program to read the present paper and the transcripts from the interviews for feedback.

E) Researcher biases: clarifying my assumptions throughout the different stages of the research by asking the case-study teachers for feedback on particular areas of the interview and considering the opinions of other teachers in the Blended Program as well as the coordinator´s.

I was conscious all the time that by analysing reality from my perspective a subjective element was something to consider. However, reading the literature on interpretive studies I discovered that even though subjectivity might be present, the depth of the study could provide rich data. If results and theory could be linked, contributions could be useful to other researchers. In the next section, a brief explanation of interpretive studies is provided.

3.4 AN INTERPRETIVE CASE STUDY APPROACH.

The present study is a contextualised interpretation of the things that I observed and analysed. It presents a subjective view of the researcher. According to Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991:3) interpretive studies:

> "Assume that people create and associate their own subjective and intersubjective meanings as they interact with the world around them. Interpretive researchers thus attempt to understand phenomena through accessing the meanings participants assign to them".

Even though interpretive studies imply a subjective view they allow the researcher to have a deep and consistent analysis of the situation. During the study, I was able to see the two teachers in both a face-to-face and online modes. Interpretive research demands several things from the researcher: self-reflection and challenging skepticism regarding analysis and results and a systematic and organised analysis. In the next section, a brief explanation of the data collection instruments and the rationale for the analysis will be presented.

3.5 DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS RATIONALE.

Case study teachers and the coordinator of the program were formally invited to participate in the study in June 2014. A letter of consent was sent to them and the research began.

Data was gathered using the following instruments and components:
- Case Study Teacher Journals
- Case Study Teacher In-depth interview (See Appendix 4)
- Academic Coordinator Interview (See Appendix 5)
- Student Questionnaire (See Appendix 6)
- Case Study Teacher classroom observation notes
- Blended Program Teachers Questionnaire (See Appendix 7)
- Case study teachers Moodle page description (See Appendix 8)

3.5.1 Case study teacher journals.

I requested case-study teachers to write a weekly journal from July to September 2014. In the journals they included their reflections about their classes in the Blended Program. The goal of the journal was to see how they understand their teaching practice, make them think how they do things and why. In the beginning, journal entries seemed extremely brief and did not provide enough evidence of deep reflection. Therefore, I asked teachers to write journal entries the sooner they could after class and to think upon a relevant action they took that gave them positive or negative results. Once all the information was gathered it was carefully read to find evidence of agency.

3.5.2 Case-study teacher In-depth Interviews

Interview questions were organised following a timeline of past, present and future to provide a link to how agency works. Originally, more questions were created but after careful consideration and a pilot interview with a colleague, the number was reduced. They interview was probably the instrument that proved to be most helpful to understand identity together with observation. The teachers provided me with very rich anecdotes, reflections, feelings and an opportunity to see how they have used agency in their process to acquire a language and the type of teachers they are. Conducting a good interview is not an easy task, it is a flexible tool to collect data and it is useful to use multi-sensory channels: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011:409).

 Both interviews were conducted in the same place and under the same conditions. The interviews were later transcribed, sent back to the teachers to see if they had something to add or correct and then coded. The names of the teachers were changed to protect their privacy.

Appendix 4 presents the instrument with highlighted questions in yellow. Those questions were especially helpful and brought relevant information regarding agency. They helped the teachers to connect their previous learning experiences with their actual practice and to reflect upon how they do things in the classroom.

3.5.3   Academic Coordination Interview

This instrument also included a timeline to keep the same strategy regarding agency. To see how the coordinator has seen and understood the Blended Program through the years. The interview was also rich and productive. Ann (not her real name) was very prolific in her answers and her reflections helped me a lot to have a broader comprehension of how blended and online learning is being implemented in the University. I understood what challenges this kind of learning implies. Apart from providing a general impression on the Blended Program she also expressed her views and impressions of the two case study teachers. The instrument is in Appendix 5 and the highlighted questions were the ones that provided more relevant information. The interview was transcribed, sent back to the coordinator to see if she wanted to add or correct something. Later, I found the most useful parts of the interview connected to teacher identity, challenges the program has and the type of relationship the members of the program hold; whether teachers actively participate and how.

3.5.4   Student Questionnaire

This instrument located in Appendix 6 is the only instrument in the study which demanded a quantitative analysis. The questionnaire was originally designed in Spanish to avoid misunderstandings; a translation in English is provided in this paper. It was created in this way considering student and teacher time. In the beginning of the instrument the conditions of the research are stated and students were asked to sign it if they agreed to participate. The questionnaire has a set of statements that students have to mark as always, sometimes or never. Given the case that students answered never, students were asked to explain why. During the design of the instrument I decided to add two open questions and interestingly they yielded more straightforward results. The first question is about students preferring a native or non-native English teacher and the reasons why. The second one simply asks the pupils to describe their teacher. This last question produced more interesting descriptions and comments, since my objective was not to evaluate teacher performance but to comprehend how the students perceive their teachers.

3.5.5   Case study teacher classroom observation notes.

Class observation was fundamental in this study. I observed teachers 5 times for a period of one hour thirty minutes. The classroom constitutes the context in which teachers and students construct and negotiate meaning; it is the scenario where actors come to play. Observing is not just looking,

it is "looking systematically and noting systematically people, events, behaviours, settings, artifacts, routines and so on" Simpson and Tuson (2003:2). When investigating teacher identity this is a method that brings reality. As Robson says (2002:310), "observation provides a reality check, observation also enables the researcher to look afresh at everyday behaviour". Since agency implies action, doing observation is a method that allowed me to see agency at first hand.

Originally, I had designed an observation guide, but in the end I used it only once and then discarded it, it was a guide designed to evaluate teacher performance. Even though it was well structured, field notes proved more useful to see how teachers work and what aspects of their personality come "alive" in class.

3.5.6   Blended teachers questionnaire

The blended teacher's questionnaire is in Appendix 7 and has 7 questions. The original idea was to conduct a focus group but because of teacher's time and differences in schedules it was not possible. Blended teachers are very busy and normally work in several institutions. The questionnaire was sent by e-mail. From the 19 teachers in the program 14 replied. The objective was to compare teacher's views regarding the program, the type of students it has, the rate of collaboration among its members and whether the structure of the program allows teachers to participate and generate change (questions 4-6). This questionnaire was useful, it helped me to compare other teacher's view of the program, the challenges, the type of students it has with that of the case-study teachers. I found many similarities among blended teachers and the case-study teacher's perceptions and understandings.

3.5.7 Case-study teachers Moodle Page description.

From August to October 2014 I was allowed by the case-study teachers to access their Moodle pages as a guest. During that time I conducted a virtual observation and could also see the type of interactions students and teachers had. Like the face-to-face observation, this was a vital place to observe agency and identity. I took field notes and attempted to provide a description of the teacher's pages and the type of interactions I found. In Appendix 8 you will find a description of the two Moodle pages together with an extract from the pages.

This study demanded careful analysis, a clear focus on the original questions of the investigation and a practical way to select only the most relevant information for the purposes of the study. In the next section I will describe the methodology for the analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis

The amount of information generated in this case study constituted a great challenge. As we could see in the previous sections the data gathered are in different formats, such as journals, interviews, observations, online and face-to-face and questionnaires. For the Analysis, I used diagram 1 presented in Chapter 2 from Priestley et al (2012:5) as a basis to identify agency. The three dimensions of agency: iterational, practical evaluative and projective were considered to construct the interviews for the case-study teachers and the coordinator. The first thing I did was analyse each case study following diagram 1 in Chapter 2. Then, I compared both case-study teachers and found similarities and differences. Then, codes (Miles and Huberman: 1999:58) were used to group data. Then I cross-checked my results from the case-study teachers with data generated from the coordinator of the program, the students and the group of Blended teachers that answered a questionnaire. The following Diagram presents the procedure followed.

TEACHER IDENTITY

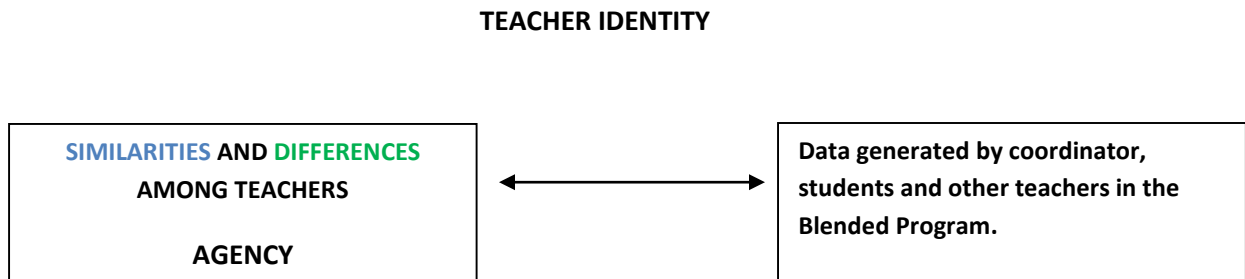| SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES AMONG TEACHERS AGENCY	⟷	Data generated by coordinator, students and other teachers in the Blended Program.

Diagram 2. Data analysis procedure

Next a list of the similarities and differences found among the case study teachers:

Similarities:

- Personal stories
- Professional histories
- Values and beliefs

Differences:

- Values and beliefs

- Personality

- Moodle page design and logistics

- Relationship with students

- Participating in decision making processes

- Confronting challenge.

In the following chapter the similarities and differences found among the case study teachers will be presented and discussed.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The objective of this chapter is to present the results from this study. First, I will describe the similarities and differences found among the case-study teachers using codes related to what the interviews present. I will complement the information generated by the case-study teachers with that of the coordinator of the program, the students and other Blended Program teachers who answered a questionnaire. Finally, I will briefly describe how agency has been achieved differently by each case-study teacher and its implications. It is important to add that the names of the participants were changed to protect their privacy.

In this chapter, I also seek to give "voice" to the case-study teachers and the other participants since it is through the use of language that we expose our identity to others. Their words, feelings, and ideas are presented in different sections. According to Richards (2006:3):

> "Every time we speak we reveal - whether deliberately or accidentally - something of ourselves and who we take ourselves to be".

4.1 Similarities found among case-study teachers.

In this section a set of similarities found among the teachers is presented.

4.1.1 Personal stories

- **Straight-A students:** The teachers defined themselves as very good language students who always worked hard to get top grades.
  Monica defined herself as "a very dedicated one… a straight-A student".
  Richard mentioned: "I was a very good language student, I was a straight-A student, Honor Society, all that".

- **Languages: English as an opportunity:**
  Monica comes from an Eastern European country. She is fluent in 5 languages. She had to learn three during her childhood, two that are obligatory and English as a second language. To her, English meant: "a way out of my country. Even if I was very young, I understood that English could be my chance for the future." Her country was going through a very hard economical and political crisis when she was a child and she won a scholarship to study in

the United States. Her mother advised her to learn English to be able "to leave and find opportunities".

Richard is Mexican and fluent in 3 languages and considers himself "able to communicate in French". He learned English in the United States during High School and joined a bilingual program in the U.S. To him, English also meant an "opportunity to have a better future, to be able to study a degree in the States".

- **International Experience**: Both teachers have lived in different countries and adapted to new conditions. Both teachers have learnt new languages and in turn they have gained recognition and the ability to delve into cultural meanings.

- **Blended program transformation:** Both teachers expressed that the Blended Program has created transformations in their practice, by pushing them to be very well organised and to spend long hours exploring the web for suitable teaching resources. To them, the greatest challenge has been dealing with the fact that students are very teacher dependent, that they are not used to working online because it demands much self-management.

4.1.2 Professional Histories

- **Studying a degree in the United States**: Monica has a B.A. in International Communication and a Spanish Minor. Richard started his studies in Mexico and completed them in the U.S; he has a B.A. in English Language Teaching.

- **A Master's in Education**: Both teachers have a Master's degree in Education. Monica conducted her studies in a University in Guadalajara. Richard joined an online program with a Spanish University.

4.1.3 Values and Beliefs

No pain, no gain: Monica and Richard believe that for a student to succeed in learning a language hard work and commitment are necessary.

During the interview Monica expressed:

"I mean you gotta do what you gotta do. Lazy students can´t make it. Where I grew up we were actually monitored to sit properly, we would sit straight with our back against the chair and we would sit with our arms crossed in front of us… the teacher dictated and you wrote it down. I grew up with no fun activities and I learnt well".

Richard said:

"I don´t believe that things happen by osmosis and you won´t have like an epiphany and the Virgin is not going to speak to you. Things happen when you go to class, you do your

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homework and you practice. I would say that as a student you are responsible for like the 67% of what happens".

He also mentioned a teacher that he admired a lot in High School and who helped him a lot in different ways. His teacher made him write in English so much that he actually saw the effect in his hand: "Can you see this little bump on my finger? I have it because I had to write and write like crazy, but I am actually so grateful, she made me a great student".

- **Students should do the talking:**

Richard was a teacher trainer for many years and added "I am very self-conscious, in the classroom you have to be careful with teacher talk time".

In a journal entry Monica expressed: "That is why I try not to interfere, students should do the talking, not me".

4.2 Differences found among case study teachers.

Every teacher has unique characteristics and ways of understanding themselves and the profession. There is a relationship between knowledge and identity, as teachers we project ourselves in our teaching. We teach what we know but also what we are:

"The forms of knowledge that we produce and use are often closely related to perceptions that we have of ourselves and the projections of ourselves that we undertake". (Goodson and Hargreaves 2003:3)

4.2.1 Values and beliefs

MONICA

When Priestley et al. (2012) conducted their study to observe agency the teachers who participated in the study had broadly similar values and beliefs. However, in the present study significant differences were found among the case-study teacher's backgrounds and beliefs that lead to the discovery of two things:

First, that iterational agency does not always have positive effects. And second, that if professional experience is rich a person is capable to imagine different courses of action when faced with different settings and still create change. This was actually Monica's case: her school days in an extremely strict and inflexible environment have apparently influenced the way she believes

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education should be, that background embedded in her could limit her agency. However, because of her wide professional experience she has had the possibility to reflect upon her past and imagine how different the learning process could be.

Because of my concern on this matter I decided to contact Dr. Priestley by e-mail and he told me:

> "In answer to your question, I would suggest that the historical conditions and national identity are extremely significant. This lies in the iterational dimension of agency particularly, as teachers identities, skills and values developed from past practices are significant in enabling them to achieve agency. In the case of your teacher, this could work against her agency, if for example her professional training and experience was narrower than that of her Mexican counterparts. In turn, her professional wide experience might more easily allow her to imagine different alternatives for action, and be more capable of thinking beyond the contingencies of the present. Both the strong iterational and projective dimensions to teacher agency, in turn allow a wider repertoire for manoeuvre in the present".

The next paragraph shows how Monica follows a strict approach to teaching, but also how thanks to her professional experience she showed agency in creating a special project for her pupils.

On the first hand, Monica believes that things should be done in a strict way and following institutional policy without exception. On the second hand, she believes that her students should be given authentic opportunities to learn. She is the only Blended Program teacher who created a unique project for her class: the international project. It is a Skype speaking interchange among her students and other students from Jamaica, New Zealand and Australia. Her students get to practice their English while the foreign students practice their Spanish. She worked hard and in her words, "sent thousands of e-mails" to Universities around the world which had a language centre and a Spanish class. She got responses from the language coordinators of three Universities and together they organized the exchange. Her students have responded positively to the project and she has reported that they are very motivated.

As we can see, even though she is a strict teacher that resists improvisation, she has also been able to generate positive transformations through creativity and innovation. Apart from her international project Monica has also started to design and adapt a lot of materials for her class. In a journal entry she wrote: "and I have come to realize that the course book is not enough".

RICHARD

Richard seems to be a more flexible and relaxed teacher. During class observation I noticed that some students regularly arrive late and he does not use the course book much either. Speaking to his students he uses phrases like "guys", "my friends".

Richard has also demonstrated agency in different ways. He has been creating or adapting materials: he noticed that the course book was not preparing students well for the exams. Therefore, he created or adapted materials. He also decided to allow his students to work with I-Pads, lap tops and smart phones in class when pupils are asked to do research or writing exercises. Instead of restricting phone use he invites students to use their digital devices for class purposes.

4.2.2 Personalities

Monica is a straightforward person. She considers herself an "outgoing and also very active person… I am a do it all type of person". As a teacher she is conscious of her teaching style:

> "Probably a lot of them don´t like me because of my strictness. We have strict policy and I stick
> to it, I don´t care what they think, I am just doing my job. I think they get to appreciate me later,
> you know"

Richard considers himself a very "sociable and talkative person, a friendly person. I think I know how to connect to people". As a teacher he considers himself friendly "someone who makes students feel at ease".

4.2.3 Moodle page design and logistics.

In appendix 8 of this paper, an example and a detailed description of the teacher's Moodle pages is provided. In this section the main differences are provided.

Monica's page:

- Many resources available.
- Very well organized with clear instructions and rubrics.
- Interactions tend to be formal most of the times.
- Student's interactions tend to be more accurate than fluent.
- All course activities are ready from day one.

Richard´s page:

- Full of colour and emoticons.
- Most of the resources are grammar exercises.
- Interactions are mostly informal.
- More fluency than accuracy among students in the chats and forums.
- Course activities are available on a weekly basis.

4.2.4 Relationship with students

Monica´s relationship with her students is formal and straightforward. In class, she follows a no Spanish policy. Next, I present a list of phrases mentioned by her students in the student questionnaire to define their teacher (Appendix 6, open question 2):

Strict, knowledgeable, rigid, with lots of experience, seems to be in a bad mood, she speaks too fast, unfair, cold, like a dictator, knows how to explain, professional.

Richard´s relationship with his students is friendly and relaxed. In class, I observed his students often smiling, some speaking in both Spanish and English. In the student questionnaire students defined him using these words:

Responsible, tolerant, dedicated, clear, practical, nice person, patient, with good pronunciation, kind, knowledgeable.

During the present study, an issue appeared that became relevant: whether students had a preference for a native or a non-native teacher. The students from the two case-study teachers were asked if they preferred a NEST and the great majority answered affirmatively. Other teachers in the Blended Program were also asked (Appendix 7, last question) if the dichotomy NEST or non-NEST has had an impact in their practice. All the NESTs replied that some of their students reported a NEST preference. To see the results and follow this discussion, see Appendix 9. Since only two groups of students participated in this study the results, although interesting, should not be considered conclusive; a wider sample of students is necessary to verify a general preference.

4.2.5 Contributions to the Blended Program.

For Monica, her main contribution has been the International project idea to foster speaking practice.

Richard considers his main contribution to be his prompt reply to students when they participate in forums, chats or e-tivities, in order to make them feel accompanied and attended.

4.2.6 Teacher performance (Coordinator perception)

The coordinator of the Blended Program rated Monica's performance as adequate and Richard´s performance as more than adequate (exceeding expectations). In the interview she added:

"When it comes to personality Monica is super intelligent and very capable but I find her more by the book sort of person, in the way she conducts class she is very strict and that can limit some things. Richard is more like let´s do something and experiment and that feels more natural, it is his attitude, his willingness and commitment. I feel his classes demonstrate more creativity".

4.2.7 Confronting challenge.

The coordinator reported that it has been easier for Richard to adapt to the program because he seems more able to take risks and try new things in his classes. Monica's past in a rigid educational system has somehow limited her ability to innovate. However, gradually she has started to propose new things. In words of the coordinator: "Monica has blossomed in blended learning as well; she is just trying new things now".

4.3 Teacher's Agency and the Blended program

For the coordinator, the type of teacher that the Blended Program needs is: tech savvy and open to discover, someone who can "constantly learn and adapt new ways,… teachers who are happy being explorers, who can take risks".

For the other Blended teachers who participated in the study an ideal Blended teacher should be someone who:

- Is willing to try new online resources as they appear
- Enjoys exploring
- Is flexible
- Has expertise in computers

The case-study teachers expressed very similar views. They also added that a Blended teacher should be very well organized and patient.

All agree that the greatest challenges the Blended Program has are:

- A lack of technological teacher support
- Improving enrollment system for students
- A predominance of teacher-dependent students
- Unwillingness of teachers to become Blended

The coordinator explained that other Universities have a group of technological support who help teachers construct and design their Moodle pages, but in this University teachers are the ones who have to design, adapt and create resources. The coordinator added "we have had to make even without any budget, any support, we just had to find or own way". As a group the blended program team of teachers has demonstrated agency in terms of innovation and challenge.

The Blended Program constitutes the ideal place to demonstrate agency, it demands teachers who are active, constantly learning and willing to take risks. As technology advances and more and more students join this program the need for a new kind of teacher is urgent. A transformation in teacher identity will be more observable in the years to come as more teachers incorporate to the Blended Program. The two teachers who participated in this study have achieved agency distinctively and at a different pace. The Blended Program seems to have caused a transformation in the way they teach as they have incorporated different resources and thus different ways to approach learning. In the next chapter, this discussion will be expanded and the need for further research will be presented.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, limitations and future research.

"Man is still the most extraordinary computer of all."
- John F. Kennedy (1963)

5.1 Conclusions

The original questions of this paper were how the Blended Program and agency create an impact on teacher identity. In this chapter, I will explain how both the program and agency are creating changes in teachers, how the situation of the program in the University is now and how this paper can contribute to train teachers and foster collaboration. Then, the limitations of the study will be addressed and questions for future research presented.

5.1.1 Teacher identity and context

Studying teacher identity can help understand why teachers do what they do. The context in which they work plays a fundamental factor in shaping their practice. To this respect, Johnson (2006) comments:

> "Teacher's prior experiences, the interpretations of the activities they engage in, and most important, the contexts within which they work are extremely influential in shaping how and why teachers do what they do". (Johnson 2006:236)

Context means contact with people and that context means an exchange of ideas, sharing and learning. If context is a puzzle, a teacher is a piece of that puzzle that has to find a way to fit, and as she does she adapts and transforms herself.

The Blended Program in the Mexican University where the present case-study took place has created an impact on teacher identity in different ways:

- It demands teachers to use technology, then produce materials using that technology and train pupils to use it.
- It transforms the way teachers design and conduct classes by including a considerable amount of online resources and ways of interacting with students.

- It helps teachers to tailor activities and tasks for specific student needs in an asynchronous way.
- Time and space represent a change allowing teachers to work at different rhythms.
- It demands teachers to be in constant training as technology advances.
- It has opened up new challenges and possibilities for professional development: teachers who joined the program can later become e-tutors.

   To succeed in the Blended Program teachers should:

A) Learn new ways to communicate with students in a virtual environment.

B) Learn how to use technology for educational purposes.

C) Promote learner autonomy.

D) Learn ways to give students feedback online.

E) Constantly explore the web to find new teaching resources.

F) Create a network of support among teachers in the program or other groups online to share resources and solve questions.

G) Find a balance for students to practice reading, listening, speaking and writing online and face-to-face.

H) Develop a critical awareness to teach students to use technology with a purpose in mind and in a meaningful way.

Change is a key concept in this program. Teachers who are passive will not be prepared to meet the challenge. Change is the result of incorporating new knowledge, reflecting on the new conditions, using the resources available and taking action. Blended teachers then should be active, creative, flexible and constantly learning. Quoting Paul Saffo (1997):

> "It's my belief that technology does not drive change. Technology merely enables changes. It creates options and opportunities that as individuals and as communities and as entire cultures we choose to exploit."

Technology is indeed a powerful tool but it does not guarantee learning. No matter how many resources a teacher has online, if those resources are not easily handled by students and meaningful to them they will just be accessories whose potential is lost. The e-tutoring course should then not only train teachers how to use technological resources but how to establish effective communication with pupils. Teachers should understand that information is not enough, and that clarity and engaging messages are necessary to maintain student's attention.

A major problem the Blended Program has is that it lacks a strong technological support team. Teachers are practically alone when they wish to design online activities and materials. There is not a group of technology experts who will design what teachers propose. Therefore only those who constantly learn and cooperate with each other will succeed. According to Reinders (2009:232) the discussion today in the field of education is:

> "The development of standards for teacher educators in the area of technology, an area where language education has not yet made much progress…there is currently nothing like a professional body of technology teacher educators in place".

Even though the language centre where this study was carried out is the only one in the University that has an e-tutoring course and the one where most blended and online programs are offered, there is a pressing need for more technology teacher educators. And there is also the necessity to have a platform with more plug-ins to guarantee an optimal performance.

5.1.2 Networks of teacher support.

During the study I discovered that the case-study teachers as well as the other blended teachers reported that they feel free to express their views in academic meetings and that the majority of the modifications they have proposed have been implemented. This provides a healthy environment to invite teachers to take part in decision making processes. Teachers were also asked to rate the collaboration among them in the Blended Program (See Appendix 7) and 85% rated the collaboration as follows: "we collaborate well during formal meetings, caring for the decision making that affects the program objectives". This is positive, but the collaboration happens only in formal meetings and not much in the everyday practice. This opens up an opportunity for the Blended Program: if more teachers create networks of support to share ideas and help their colleagues, there may be a stronger sense of belonging and new teachers may feel reassured to meet the challenge and become part of the program. Hanson-Smith (2006) describe the importance of informal networks of support for language teachers. They explain that they allow teachers to gain confidence and help teachers share, contributing to a positive give and take relationship. Malderez and Wedell (2007:27) add to this discussion the importance of having a *sense of belonging:* "It is necessary to make teachers accustomed to seeing themselves as members of a professional community as a recognized professional body". This may allow teachers in the Blended Program to feel part of a team they can trust.

5.1.3 The future of the Blended program

The present study also provided a clearer picture of how the Blended Program has been growing exponentially thanks to increasing student demand. Today, more and more students combine work and study and find this program a good option to optimize time. Moreover, the program Coordinator expressed that the number of students in the University is also growing and soon there will not be enough classrooms to accommodate all students, adding extra pressure on teachers and students to migrate to blended or online education. There seems to be a lack of teachers interested in joining the Blended Program; in words of the Coordinator:

> "We have people who I have even pleaded with even to try it. There are teachers who have
> done one term and then either they say they don´t like it or they weren´t ready for this…
> the program is growing and it is harder to fill these spots".

This constitutes a problem, there seems to be fear or rejection to the program by some teachers and it demands further research. This paper could be useful for teachers to know more about this program, to generate a reflection on the benefits teachers can get from it. Rather than adopt technology teachers must adapt to it and understand that the future demands blended or online learning.

5.1.4 Agency: the need for skillful, creative and flexible teachers

Agency is fundamental for professional development and identity formation. According to Duff (2012: 15):

> "Agency refers to people's ability to make choices, take control, self regulate, and thereby
> pursue their goals as individuals leading, potentially, to personal or social transformations…
> it enables people to imagine, take up, and perform new roles or identities, and to take
> concrete actions in pursuit of their goals".

This study presents two teachers in the Blended Program who have achieved agency differently. In the case of the female teacher, her rigid educational background has played a fundamental part in her practice restricting her agency. Her past has been a strong influence to determine who she is. To this respect authors such as Louden 1991 and Goodson 1992 reveal that biography affects the practice and professional identity of a teacher, they connect experience with an understanding of

our own life. We reflect upon our past and take decisions based on what we consider proper or effective and that creates an impact on identity.

On the other hand, Monica's experience, the knowledge she has acquired and the context has allowed her to take important decisions to progressively transform the way she teaches and create original projects for her students. There are two forces pulling her: one, the beliefs that she acquired as a student and second, her professional experience and context demanding a different approach. Her construction of identity, thus, seems to be in struggle between conflicting identities. According to He (1995:216) "identity is a process of continual emerging and becoming" and this has been part of Monica's process. She has been changing with time and with ongoing practice.

Richard's case proved how important it is to establish a close and trustworthy relationship with students, to listen to them and create an environment where they feel understood and constantly guided. Students need constant help to know how to use technology. Richard's relationship with his pupils has allowed him to try new things in his classes. His creativity has been a key factor in his success in achieving agency. According to Csikszentmihalyi and Wolfe (2000:81) "creativity is the one that takes place in a context of previous cultural and social achievements" and this is true in the case of Richard, he has studied and worked in institutions that had appropriate elements that allowed him to innovate.

Having two teachers in this study was useful to discover that agency is part of identity and it varies from teacher to teacher. In a context where teachers are asked to follow strict policy and uniformity in their teaching, agency will be affected; transformation will not be possible. A place that allows teachers to participate in decision making processes and that promotes communication and sharing among its members will conduct to teacher agency.

Using a metaphor, the Blended Program demands teachers to be like jazz players, skillful musicians who are able to improvise and constantly innovate within a common theme. The classical or baroque musician can be an excellent performer but will always be limited in incorporating new instruments and rhythms.

5.2 Limitations

One of the most important limitations found in this study was time. In the majority of identity studies a longitudinal approach is followed. The present study was conducted for a short period of time restricting the amount of classes and teachers observed. Originally, I also wanted to conduct research on power and its relationship with teacher identity to see if by gaining power in the program teachers were able to produce more transformations in their practice but because of restrictions of time and space in this paper I decided to discard it. Finally, another limitation constituted the way I carried the observations, they should have been video recorded to have material ready for further analysis. A second interview would have been desirable too, it might have given me and the case-study teachers another chance for reflection and to identify further change in teacher's practice.

5.3 Further Research

This study opened new and pressing questions regarding the Blended Program. In the specific context of the University, why are teachers afraid or dubious about joining it? What do they think and feel? Why have some teachers who joined the program then quitted?

This is from the teachers' side, but: What do students think about this program? Which students are getting better results: Blended or face-to-face? How is the learning process for them?

And on the bigger scale: How are other Universities in Guadalajara conducting Blended Programs in ESL? What are the implications for teacher identity in other Universities? How do other contexts foster agency differently?

This study, together with this Blended Master's program, has created an impact in my own identity. It has given me the opportunity to be a blended program student and researcher. It has led me to question what blended learning is like with its benefits and great challenges. Our generation seems to be migrating from face-to-face to blended or online learning programs. There is no looking back, it is no longer a matter of "I like it or not", it is a matter of being prepared to teach and learn in a different way. Globalization and technological advance are unstoppable, we have to take the e-path, embrace it and do our best to make the journey easier for our students. After all, they are the very heart of the learning process.

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Blended Program Statistics

BLENDED PROGRAM

Number of students

	Jan-March	March-May	Sem	Spring	Summer	Aug-Oct	Oct-Dec	Sem	Fall	Annual
2010	9	5		14	0	35	5		40	54
2011	66	32		98	62	121	64		185	345
2012	168	70		238	97	166	58		224	559
2013	183	55		238	110	145	62	51	258	606
2014	140	52	84	276	102	85	100	140	350	950

*Números sujetos a cambios
** Proyection for the summer
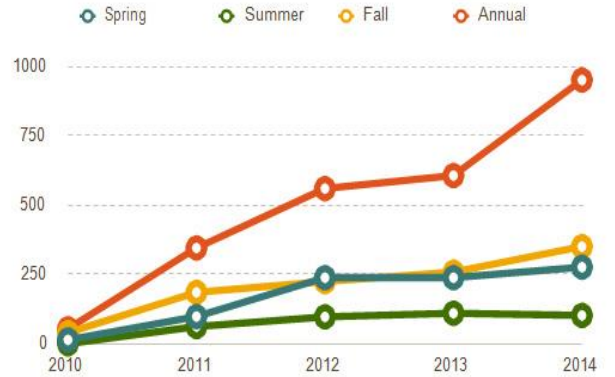
Number of groups

	Jan-March	March-May	Sem	Spring	Summer	Aug-Oct	Oct-Dec	Sem	Fall	Annual
2010	1	1		2	0	2	1		3	5
2011	3	3		6	4	10	7		17	27
2012	14	8		22	8	15	8		23	53
2013	15	6		21	10	12	6	5	23	54
2014	11	6	8	25	10	12	13	17	42	77

*Números sujetos a cambios
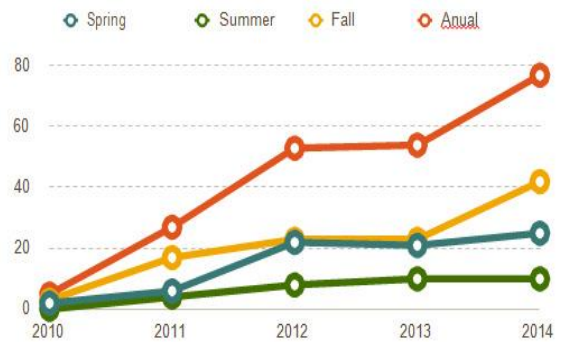
APPENDIX 2

Evaluation parameters Blended Program

EVALUATION PARAMETERS FOR THE BLENDED PROGRAM

Levels 5 and 6		Levels 7 y 8	
Midterm Exam	20%	Midterm exam	20%
Cumulative Final exam	30%	Cumulative final exam	40%
Quizzes (2)	10%	Assignments (2)	10%
Reflective journal (6)	10%	Reflective journal (6)	10%
E-tivities (6)	20%	E-tivities (6)	20%
In class assignments (4)	10%		
Total	100%	Total	100%

Note: The Face-to-Face program includes midterm and final exams , quizzes, assignments and laboratory visits. This incorporates two different evaluation parameters: reflective journal (audio journal) and e-tivities.

APPENDIX 3 TEACHER'S DESCRIPTION

3.1 MONICA (Not her real name)

Monica comes from an Eastern European country. She is in her 30's and is married. She spent 16 years in her native country and then she moved to the United States to conduct her High School and University studies. She has a B.A. in International Communication and a Spanish Minor. She has a Teacher Certificate and a Master's in Education Sciences.

When she finished her studies in the United States she immigrated to Mexico and spent 3 years in one part of the country and then came to Guadalajara where she has been living for the last 8 years. She currently works in three Mexican Universities. She has been working for a year in the Blended Program of the University where the present study was carried out. She has also taught in the Face-to-Face programme and she recently started teaching a content subject. She is fluent in 5 languages and very keen on technology. She is currently participating in the creation of an e-book for English for Public Secondary Schools that will be used as an official e-book in all Public Secondary Schools in Mexico.

Monica in the face-to-face classroom: The impression that one gets when observing Monica is one of a very organized and professional English Teacher. She promotes order, discipline and work. She is a person who speaks quite fast and produces a lot of language.

She is punctual and demands the same from her students. She does not allow her students to talk to her in Spanish. She is very strict concerning homework and online work. For her, discipline and hard work are essential for success. In her interview she defined herself as an "outgoing and very very active person" and also a strict teacher "Maybe a lot of students don´t like me because of my strictness, so probably a lot of them don´t like me but I think they get to get to appreciate me later".

Monica as an online teacher: Monica´s Moodle page (See appendix 7 for a description) shows some elements in common with her classroom: order, lots of resources to practice the 5 skills, clarity in instructions and procedures and all the resources presented in advance, from day 1. She makes sure students understand what to do, for which day, and how they will be evaluated.

3.2 RICHARD (Not his real name)

Richard is from a Northern state in Mexico. He is in his late 30's and is single. He lived for 20 years in his hometown and then moved to the United States, where he lived for 7 years. He then went to Czech Republic for a year and then came back to Mexico, where he lived in 3 different states until he came to Guadalajara where he has been living for the last 9 years. He has a B.A. in English Language Teaching which he completed in the United States. He has a Master's in Teaching English as a Foreign Language which he took in an online programme with a Spanish University. He has worked as a Teacher Trainer and also as an Academic Consultant for an editorial that produces books for TEFL courses. His Master's Dissertation was about Material Analysis. Richard is currently participating in the creation of an e-book for English for Public Secondary Schools that will be used as an official e-book in all Public Secondary Schools in Mexico. He has been working for a year in the Blended Programme of the University where the present study was carried out as well as the Face-to-Face programme. He is keen on technology and enjoys working on line. Richard is fluent in English, Spanish and Italian and knows "a little bit of French".

Richard in the face-to-face classroom: The impression that one gets when observing Richard in is one of a friendly, flexible and creative teacher. His students are frequently smiling and participating in English and sometimes in Spanish. The students seem to be at ease and they tend to be working with i-pads and laptops in class. His classes include a variety of resources, from videos, listening, writing and speaking exercises. A major part of his classes is dedicated to grammar. He also includes games for the students. He seems to know his students and their backgrounds well. Regarding personality, he mentioned in an interview: "I am talkative, friendly…I´m a people´s person and I can be flexible and open up depending on the situation." As a teacher he defined himself as "I tend to be flexible, well, depending on the place… I like getting feedback from my students… I like to make them feel at ease".

Richard as an online teacher: Richard´s Moodle page has many features in common with his face-to-face classes. For a detailed description of his page see Appendix 7. He has a friendly way to explain activities to the students, he uses informal English in his instructions and more than telling students what to do he seems to be inviting them to participate. His instructions are brief. He seems to upload activities to his page as the course advances. When his students interact among themselves online language is informal and using emoticons.

APPENDIX 4

Case Study Teachers Interview

Dear Colleague, as part of the Dissertation of my Master's I am conducting an Interview among two teachers in the Blended Program at this University. I am asking your help to answer the following questions. The interview aims to find out who are you as a person and as a professional, what are your views about the program, the students and the policies that guide this program. The data will be used for this research purpose only. Once the data is gathered and analysed your name will be changed to protect your privacy. The interview will be recorded and it will last around 45 minutes.

Iterational Agency (The Past) Life Histories and Professional Histories.

1. - Through your life you have lived in different places. Why did you live in those places? (What took you there?)

2.-What kind of language student were you?

3.-Do you recall a particular language teacher who left a good impression on you? Can you tell me about him or her?

4.-Do you recall a particular language teacher who left a bad impression on you? Can you tell me about him or her?

5.-How many languages do you speak?

6.-Female Teacher: Why did you study a B.A. in International Communication?

   Male Teacher: Why did you study a B.A. in English Language Teaching?

7.-How did you become an ESL teacher? Please describe in detail how you started to be a teacher.

8.-Do you recall a particularly positive situation as an English Teacher? What happened?

9.-Do you recall a particularly difficult situation as an English Teacher (difficult group, difficult student, problems with the authorities of the school)? How did you handle that situation?

Practical evaluative Agency (The present) Personal and professional considerations

Personal considerations

10-How would you describe your personality?

11-How is your relationship with your students?

12.-What does the term Native English Language Teacher mean to you?

Professional considerations

13.-Female teacher who works in different places: From the different places that you work in, in which one do you feel more comfortable?

14.-So far, which has been the greatest challenge you have confronted as a Blended program teacher?

15.-**Female teacher**: In a previous questionnaire you said that Blended program students are laid back but hardworking. Why is that?

Male teacher: In a previous questionnaire you said that Blended program students are sometimes responsible and hardworking and others seem careless. Why is that?

16.-How comfortable do you feel to express your views about the program when you have a CD (Academic Coordination) meeting?

17.-Which have been the main contributions you have given to the Blended Program?

18.-Have your suggestions or proposals been implemented?

19.-What do you think is the perception that other teachers in the Program have about you?

20.-What do you think is the perception that your students have about you?

21.-What changes have you observed in yourself in the time you have worked in the Blended Program?

Projective Agency (The future)

22.-Where do you see yourself in 5 years

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

APPENDIX 5

Academic Coordination Interview

Dear Colleague, as part of the dissertation module of my Master's I am conducting an in-depth interview about the blended program at Iteso and its members. This instrument aims to obtain further information about the program and clarify certain things mentioned in a previous exploratory questionnaire. The data will be used for this research purpose only. Once the data is gathered and analysed your name will be changed to protect your privacy. The interview will be recorded and it will last around 45 minutes.

Iterational: Past.

1.-In the days that you began as a coordinator what were the most important challenges the program confronted?

2.-How has the program been improved through the years?

3.-Have you noticed any changes in the kind of teachers that began in the program and the ones it has now?

4.-Have there been any teachers who successfully completed the e-tutoring course and initially joined the program and then dropped out? Why?

Practical Evaluative, present

5.-In the exploratory questionnaire you answered before you mentioned that the requirements to hire a teacher for the program are: creativity, technology and passing the e-tutoring course with a recommendation. Can you expand your answer telling me what you mean by creativity and technology?

6.- When you have let's say 3 teachers, and the 3 of them fulfil the requirements for the program but there is only 1 teaching position, what aspects of the teacher will be more valuable?

8.-In a previous exploratory questionnaire you rated the female teacher's profile as adequate and the male teacher's profile as more than adequate (exceeding expectations) can you please explain why?

9.-According to the "Institution's General Academic Plan 2014-24" the University is aiming to train all of its teachers to work on line and be able to respond to new a kind of pedagogical demand. Do you think that the expansion of the Blended Program has anything to do with this?

Projective, the future

10.-How will the teacher's profile for the Blended Program be in the near future?

Thank you for your help.

APPENDIX 6 ORIGINAL STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

CUESTIONARIO EXPLORATORIO PARA ALUMNOS

Hola, como parte de Investigación para mi tesis de Maestría estoy llevando a cabo un cuestionario exploratorio que tiene como finalidad captar la opinión que tienes de tu maestro y del curso. El cuestionario es completamente anónimo y toda la información que me proporciones será únicamente utilizada para los fines de esta investigación. La información será guardada en mi computadora personal y protegida por un password. Tu participación no es obligatoria y tienes el derecho de negarte a participar en la investigación si así lo deseas. Te agradezco profundamente tu colaboración y tu honestidad.

Acepto participar en la investigación con sus términos y condiciones:

_____

Firma del alumno

En esta clase el maestro….	SIEMPRE	ALGUNAS VECES	NUNCA
1.Explica claramente los objetivos, requerimientos y procedimientos de evaluación del curso			
2. Establece altos estándares de trabajo para sus alumnos			
3. Hace que la clase sea relevante e interesante			
4. Utiliza el tiempo de la clase de manera efectiva			
5. Demuestra conocimiento sobre los temas expuestos			
6. . Utiliza una gran variedad de materiales didácticos como Videos, listenings, foros, blogs, etc.			
7. Reconoce el esfuerzo de sus alumnos			
8. Me mantiene informado de mi progreso			
9. Se muestra dispuesto a ayudarme si lo necesito			
10. Fomenta y respeta las diferentes opiniones			
11. Ejerce las reglas de manera clara y consistente			
12. Me inspira confianza			
13. Promueve a que piense por mí mismo, autonomía.			

Si contestaste NUNCA, explica por qué en hoja anexa con el numero de relativo que corresponda

1.-Cuando tienes la oportunidad de escoger entre un maestro nativo o no nativo por cuál te inclinas? Por qué?

2.- Describe cómo es tu maestro de manera clara y honesta.

APPENDIX 6 STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH)

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Hello, as part of my Master´s Dissertation I am conducting an exploratory questionnaire that aims to know your opinion regarding your teacher and the course. This questionnaire is completely anonymous and all the information that you give will only be used for the research purposes. The information will be stored in my personal computer and will be protected with a password. Your participation is not obligatory; you have the right to deny your participation. Your participation and honesty are appreciated.

I accept to participate in the investigation under its terms and conditions*:*

_____

Student signature

In this class the teacher…	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
1.Clearly explains objectives, requirements and evaluation procedures of the course.			
2. Establishes high standars of work for students.			
3. Makes the class interesting and relevant.			
4. Uses time effectively.			
5. Demonstrates knowledge on the subject matter.			
6. Uses a variety of learning materials such as videos, online resources, listening exercises, etc.			
7. Recognises and acknowledges student effort.			
8. Keeps me informed about my progress.			
9. Is willing to help me if I need her.			
10. Promotes and respects different opinions.			
11. Is consistent with rules and procedures			
12. Makes me feel at ease to make questions			
13. Makes me find solutions on my own, promotes Autonomy.			

If you answered never please explain why and include the number of question it refers to.

1.-When you have the opportunity to select between a Native English teacher and a Non Native English teacher, which one do you prefer? Why?

2.-Describe how your teacher is. Please answer in an honest and clear way.

APPENDIX 7

TEACHERS IN THE BLENDED PROGRAM

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Colleague, as part of the Dissertation of my Master's program I am conducting this anonymous questionnaire. All the information collected will only be used for the purposes of this research. The information provided will be stored in my personal computer and will be protected by password. You can stop answering the questionnaire at any time if you consider it necessary. I greatly appreciate your time and **honesty**. There are only 7 questions and it may take you around 10 minutes to complete it.

1.-What type of teachers are Blended Course Teachers?

2.-What are the greatest challenges for Blended Course Teachers?

3.-What are the main challenges the Blended Program has these days?

4.-How comfortable do you feel to express your views about the program when you have "Coordinación Docente" meetings?

5.-What proposals or suggestions made by the teachers of the Blended Program have been implemented by the coordination?

6. - How would you rate the collaboration among the members of your "Coordinación Docente" in the Blended Program? **Select one answer.**

A) There is a high sense of collaboration at all times, we always work as a team and share ideas among teachers even outside formal meetings.

B) We collaborate well during formal meetings, caring for the decision making that affects the Program Objectives.

C) Some members collaborate in formal meetings with ideas/proposals while others prefer not to participate. Therefore, decision making is partial and hard to achieve.

D) I don´t see much collaboration among my colleagues only if specifically asked to do so .Decision making is hardly achieved.

E) There is no collaboration at all; we tend to work on our own. Decision making is conflictive and counterproductive.

7.-Do you think that the dichotomy Non Native English Teacher and Native English Teacher has an impact on your practice, if so, why?

APPENDIX 8 MOODLE PAGES EXAMPLES AND DESCRIPTION

8.1.1 MONICA'S MOODLE PAGE EXAMPLE AND DESCRIPTION

○ Welcome to our course!

Listen to the avatar for the instructions. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to e-mail me at

VERY IMPORTANT: Please, bring your Student Book and Work Book to our first class! COPIES ARE NOT ALLOWED!

- ○ NewsForo
- ○ Level 5 Course SyllabusArchivo
- ○ WRITING: Writing BasicsPágina
- ○ WRITING: The Writing ProcessPágina
- ○ WRITING: Correction CodePágina
- ○ Writing basicsArchivo
- ○ INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROJECTArchivo

○ 1

Unit 1 - FRIENDS.

NOTE: All of the work is to be done by 5:30 p.m. on the date indicated (it's part of the name of each link).

For the **grammar exercises**, make sure you get a screen shot of every exercise you do, paste them all on the same word document and them upload them on the link called "Grammar - my answers".

For the **video and reading**, make sure you submit your work under the appropriate link too.

IMPORTANT: you get your online attendance for doing all the resources (listening, reading and grammar) on time.

- ○ August 20th - Getting to know you ForumForo
- ○ August 20th - Video: being friends with an ambassadorURL
- ○ August 20th - Reading: Friendship in VietnamURL
- ○ August 20th - Reading: Friendship in PolandURL
- ○ August 20th - Video & Reading: My Notes I.Tarea
- ○ August 27th - Grammar: Questions Types - ExplanationURL
- ○ August 27th - Grammar: Wh- Questions - Exercise 1URL
- ○ August 27th - Grammar: Wh- Questions - Exercise 2URL
- ○ August 27th - Grammar: Wh- Questions - Exercise 3URL
- ○ August 27th - Grammar: Adverbs of Frequency - Exercise 1URL

8.1.2 MONICA'S PAGE DESCRIPTION

The first impression one gets by accessing Monica´s Page is one of order and a great amount of resources and exercises per session (class) and per Unit. The sections above highlighted in yellow correspond to instructions.

Instructions: As you can see the teacher aims to make very clear what the student is supposed to do before class. In the first highlighted section she is asking the students to bring both course books to the first class. This is something that very few teachers ask for, some ask the students to bring the book to the second session and some others are not even using the course book. There has been a general move for teachers to create their own material, but for Monica the textbook is important and she does use it in class.

Monica establishes very clear instructions all the time. For instance, the very first class activity is a Forum which appears to be an opportunity for the students to get to know each other. However, very special rubrics are added. Students are told how many words to use per interaction, to avoid using informal English, to reply to at least other 4 students and to check any grammar, spelling and syntax errors before responding..

Language: the type of language the teacher uses is very straightforward. It ´s main objective seems to be to make things clear to the students. It is full of modals such as: you should, must, have to, can´t, etc. Each activity has its own instructions and when a student is asked to carry out an activity rubrics are given to the student so she knows how her grade will be given. There are no emoticons used.

Resources: her page is full of resources for students to have lots of practice in the five skills. She uses a wide range of videos, listening and readings that are connected to international culture. Her videos include speakers from different countries and with very different accents. She does not limit her resources to American or British English. She includes speakers from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, New Zealand.

Special features: Monica created a special assignment called International project. She contacted language centres from around the world to see if her students could have interaction with other students in both English and Spanish. She got a positive reply from 3 Universities: from New Zealand, Australia and Jamaica. She got in contact with the language centre coordinators of those Universities and together they created the project. Students get to practice both languages by having Skype sessions during the semester half the session is conducted in Spanish and half the session is conducted in English, so students help each other with the language in turn. Monica designs her Moodle page in advance.

8.2 RICHARD'S MOODLE PAGE EXAMPLE AND DESCRIPTION

o   Welcome to this Blended Course Level 7 (Fall-2-2014). 😊

Look at the dates for the exams:

Midterm Exam: November 5, 2014

Final Exam: December 3, 2014

Beautiful people ¡ May we all have a productive and successful bimester,

Richard 😊

E-tivity 1Foro: Come and tell us about yourself!

Below you will find a comment box by Disqus, you can login in using a Twitter, Facebook, Google + or Disqus account, or you can simply write your name and email to post. Please make sure to write your name so we know who you are.

You can also drag any type to media to the comment box to add an image, audio or video to your post.

Tell us something about you, share a funny photo, your likes and dislikes, an interesting or hilarious anecdote, a joke, our favorite music or films, the sky is the limit!

Remember also to make sure your Moodle profile has a photo or avatar to help everybody get to know you and recognize you online.

o
o   E-journal 1Tarea
o   Verb Structures Archivo
o   Too, so, either, neitherArchivo
o   Tag questionsArchivo
o   Tag Questions Archivo
o   Indirect QuestionsArchivo
o   Review of tensesPágina

8.2.1 RICHARD'S PAGE DESCRIPTION

The first impression one gets by accessing Richard's page is one of colours and not many instructions to follow, it is not easy to tell at first glance what corresponds to each session or Unit. There is order in the topics proposed but it is necessary to explore the page well to understand what the student is supposed to do in each activity. There are also emoticons present in all the instructions.

Instructions: The student has to click in the links provided to know what to do and expect from each activity. There are not many e-tivities to do before class compared to Monica´s page, but the e-tivities are well explained to students once accessing the links. Students more than anything are invited to participate in the activities. The teacher sometimes tells the students what to do and the deadlines to do it, but not in all cases. There are no rubrics for the majority of the e-tivities: students are not told how they are going to be evaluated in terms of e-tivities. The instructions are most times followed by words such as: please, you are welcome to, you can, and you could, why don´t you, it would be great, etc.

If we compare the first activity students are supposed to do for the first online class with Monica's page, we will see that Richard invites students to introduce themselves in a very friendly way. He even asks students to upload "a funny photo", tell a joke, share an anecdote, and say something "funny" for the pupils to know each other. The aim is only for the students to have a first interaction and they are free to participate in the way they wish. There are no requirements of number of words, or type or language or anything of the sort.

Language: The type of language that Richard uses in his page to address his students is informal and uses a lot of emoticons at the end of instructions or comments. He sometimes addresses his pupils as "guys" or "beautiful people". He uses phrases such as "let´s", "**we** are going to", "**we** can now"; he tends to include himself in the instructions, he becomes part of the group.

He seems to use language such as in spoken form, even when he gives instructions.

Resources: He provides students with a lot of grammar exercises to be done before each class. The exercises differ in style and logistics.

Something that I notice in the kind of resources he uses is material that seems appropriate for teenagers and young people. For instance, he includes a video of a teenager speaking about his experience with his parents and how his parents embarrass him.

Other resources make connections to music and sitcoms popular with young people.

Special features: Even though his page includes a lot of grammar exercises, once accessing the links the student is sent to a page that has an exercise from an internet source. However, there are no instructions for the student before accessing the pages.

One thing I discovered while accessing Richard´s page is that he designs his page as the course advances. During the first weeks the page appears with only a few activities. But as time passes he adds more resources.

APPENDIX 9 THE PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS AND BLENDED TEACHERS: NATIVE VERSUS NON-NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS

**EXPLORATORY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS RESULTS**

PERCENTAGES REGARDING THE PREFERENCE FOR A NATIVE OR NON NATIVE TEACHER

9.1 RICHARD´S GROUP

Number of students present when the questionnaire was applied: 10

Question:

1.-When you have the opportunity to select between a Native English teacher and a Non Native English teacher, which one do you prefer? Why?

Preference between Native-non Native Teachers

- Native
- Non native
- Didn´t answer
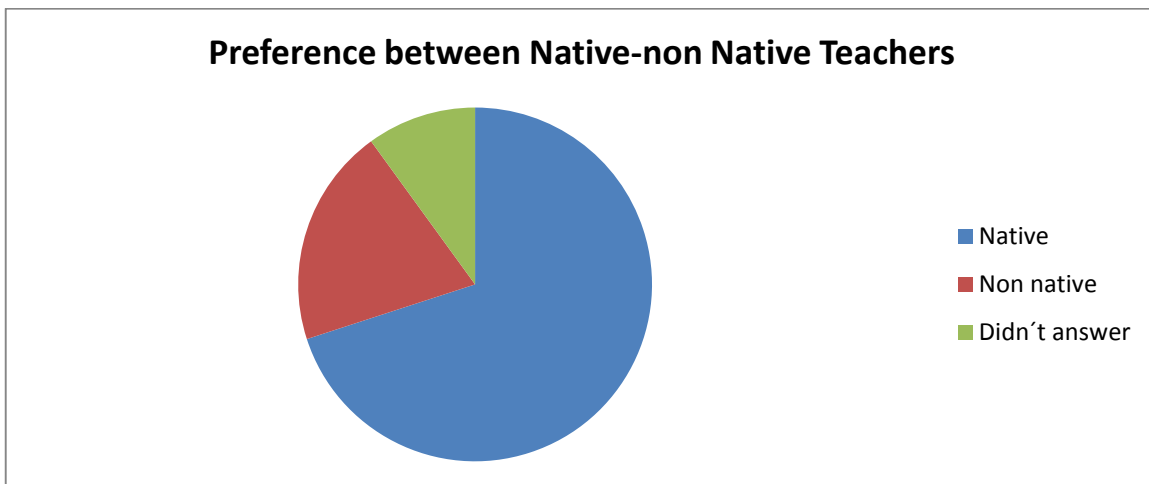
Results: From the 10 students who the answered the questionnaire 7 prefer a Native teacher. 2 students prefer a non-Native teacher and 1 student did not answer.

The reasons mentioned in terms of preference for a Native teacher are:

"If he explains something in English it sticks to my memory", "A native has more knowledge on the topics and better vocabulary and obviously a better pronunciation", "Is much more used to using the language correctly", "because she will represent a challenge for me to understand", "because of pronunciation", "pronunciation".

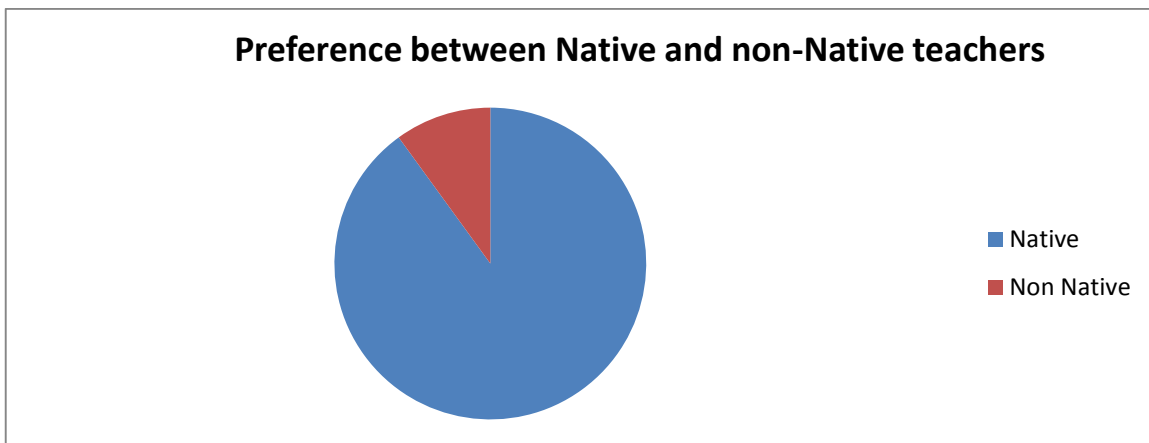The reasons mentioned in terms of preference for a Non-Native teacher are:

"It is easier to understand what he says", "he can understand me better, he had to learn the language too."

9.2 MONICA´S GROUP

Number of students present when the questionnaire was applied: 10

Question:

1.-When you have the opportunity to select between a Native English teacher and a Non Native English teacher, which one do you prefer? Why?

Preference between Native and non-Native teachers

■ Native
■ Non Native

As you can see from the chart above, 9 of the students who answered responded that they prefer a Native teacher, only 1 student mentioned that she preferred a non-Native.

The reasons mentioned in terms of preference for a Native teacher are:

"I can learn more from her", "They speak better, they don´t speak in Spanish", "that forces you to speak in English", "Better pronunciation", "To push myself to speak in English", "They understand their language better", "they are better", "Their English is much more authentic, as in real life", "They know more vocabulary".

9.3 RESULTS PROVIDED BY BLENDED TEACHERS REGARDING NATIVE AND NON NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS

Blended teachers were asked whether the term Native and non-Native has had an impact in their practice. From 19 teachers, 14 replied. From those 14, 10 of the teachers who answered are non native and 4 are native teachers.

From 10 non-native teachers, only 2 mentioned that being a Native or non-Native teacher has had an impact on their practice.

The 4 Native Blended teachers reported that students frequently tell them they prefer a Native English teacher: "students still think and generalize that a Native teacher is more effective", "they like to have native teachers to get more exposure to differences in usage, accents", "most students would choose a Native teacher given the choice with a non Native", "they have told me that they like native teachers because of pronunciation".

If we compare the results from students and teachers we can see that the majority of the students who participated in the study in that time preferred a Native English teacher. Some of their reasons provided for the preference seem to match what the native teachers mentioned.

APPENDIX 10

LETTER OF CONSENT

Title: Becoming Blended, a case study in Teacher Identity.

Researcher: Victoria Renteria Navarro. MA in TESOL, University of St Mark and St John: Centre for International Language Teacher Education (CILTE). Contact info: victoria@iteso.mx. Mobile phone number: 044 331 16 96 842.

Objectives: To study teacher identity in the Blended Program of a Mexican University and develop a better understanding of the elements that inform teacher identity.

The undersigned, _____, agrees to participate in the research study entitled Teacher Identity in the Blended Program of a Mexican University, to be undertaken by Victoria Renteria as part of her dissertation for her Master's in TESOL, University of St Mark and St John, under the following terms and conditions:

1) The participant will write a journal from July to October about relevant aspects from her/his professional practice.
2) There will be two to three interviews during the course of the study. They will be audio-taped and fully transcribed and sent to the participant for him/her to provide feedback to the researcher.
3) The participant will also grant the researcher the permission to enter his/her course Moodle page to conduct an analysis of the content of it.
4) The researcher will conduct two class observation visits during the study, the observation will be audio or video recorded. The students will be provided a letter of consent in L1. If they wish their image or voice to be deleted or concealed the procedure will be done by the researcher.
5) The participant has the right to withdraw his/her assistance from this project at any time without penalty, even after signing the letter of consent.
6) The participant will be entirely free to discuss issues and will not be in any way coerced into providing information that is confidential or of a sensitive nature.
7) Pseudonyms will be used to conceal the identity of the participants.
8) Data will be stored on the researcher's personal computer (password protected) and will be destroyed within 12 months of the completion of this research.
9) This project was approved by the Research Ethics Board from the Centre for International Teacher Education (CILTE) University of St Mark and St John.

   I, _____ , agree to the conditions stated in this letter of consent and certify that I have received a copy of the consent form.

   _____

   Signature and date