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English Teachers in Mexico: Initial Preparation and the Realities of Practice

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
Requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

by

Leticia Banks

Committee in charge:

California State University, San Marcos

    Professor Manuel Vargas, Co-Chair
    Professor Patricia Stall

University of California, San Diego

    Professor Frances Contreras, Co-Chair

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Co-Chair

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Co-Chair

University of California, San Diego

California State University, San Marcos

2017

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VITA

EDUCATION

2017   Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership
       University of California, San Diego & California State University, San Marcos

1996   Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
       San Jose State University

1993   Bachelor of Arts in Spanish Translation & Interpretation
       Brigham Young University

PROFESIONAL EXPERIENCE

President   2015 - Present
Dr. Abako Inc.
Preside over non-profit organization that supports educational projects in underserved
communities in developing countries. Visit educational sites, elicit project proposals,
evaluate proposals, and report execution of projects to the board.

TEFL Teacher Trainer & Academic English Teacher   2012 - Present
American Language & Culture Institute (ALCI)
California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)
Train international English teachers, design modules of theory and practice based on
specific and measurable outcomes including methods and core language skills. Teach
academic English to international undergraduate and graduate students.

English Language Fellow
United States Department of State   2011
Santiago, Chile
Taught undergraduate students and in-service English teachers in Chile and Brazil. Led
academic and professional English workshops for Department of State programs such as
the Fulbright, Access, and American Corners programs.

Assistant Director   2007 - 2011
American Language & Culture Institute (ALCI)
California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)
Managed all academic operations of the Institute: Intensive Academic English, Semester
Abroad, Short-term English programs, Workplace English, and Teacher Training.
Performed Designated School Official (DSO) duties granting I-20s. Developed budgets,
participated in domestic and international education fairs. Supervised faculty and

administrative staff, planned orientation, class schedules, advising sessions, supervised homestay placements, and approved teaching schedules.

Academic English Teacher & Workplace Language Trainer   2000 - 2007
American Language & Culture Institute (ALCI)
California State University San Marcos (CSUSM
Taught Academic English at all levels. Designed and delivered short-term American Culture Experience programs for international students. Developed and delivered short- and long-term workplace English programs for local companies.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS
World Education Research Association, WERA
American Educational Research Association, AERA
International Leadership Association, ILA
California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, CATESOL
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, TESOL
Mexico Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, MEXTESOL
Principal's Center, Harvard Graduate School of Education

AWARDS
Puentes Summer Research Scholar, UCSD & Rice University   2015
Summer Institute Scholarship at the Center for Educational Evaluation, UCLA   2014
Chrispeels Doctoral Fellowship in Educational Leadership, UCSD   2014

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS
Banks, L. (2017). Doing Great with Less. ITESM: León, Mexico.
Banks, L. (2017). Upward & Onward. Keynote Address. Latino Graduate Ceremony, California State University San Marcos.
Banks, L. (2017). Initial Preparation & the Realities of Practice. AERA Graduate Student Seminar. San Antonio, USA.
Banks, L. (2016). English teachers, teaching, and the realities of practice. MEXTESOL: Monterrey, Mexico.
Banks, L. (2015). Teaching Business English. ITESM: Mexico City, Mexico.
Banks, L. (2015). Business English & English Teaching Strategies. ITESM: Cuernavaca, Mexico.
Banks, L. (2015). Keynote Address & English Teaching Seminars. UAA: Aguascalientes, Mexico.
Banks, L. (2014). The English Program in Mexico. MEXTESOL: Puebla, Mexico.
Banks, L. & Primicias, G. (2014). Behind the scenes: A new teacher's tool kit. TESOL: Portland, USA.
Banks, L. & Tarbox, J. (2014). The 21st Century classroom: Strategies for fostering learning with diverse populations. CSUSM Teaching Symposium: California, USA.
Banks, L. (2012). NNESTs' professional realities. CATESOL: San Diego, CA.
Banks, L. (2012). Training in-service English teachers. PNIEB: Merida, Mexico.

Banks, L. (2012). Professional development for pre-service EFL teachers. Escuela Normal Superior de Yucatán: Mérida, Mexico.

Banks, L. (2011). Classroom management. Universidad Alberto Hurtado. Santiago, Chile.

Banks, L. (2011). Grouping strategies & discipline. TESOL: Curitiba, Brazil.

Banks, L. (2011). Writing performance evaluations. English Language Fellow Program: Curitiba, Brazil.

Banks, L. (2011). Soft skills for teachers. Universidad Alberto Hurtado: Santiago, Chile.

Banks, L. (2011). Study objectives & personal statement. Fulbright Commission: Santiago, Chile.

Banks, L., De Abreu, C., Doyle, T., & Nikolova, A. (2009). Non-native language educators and ESOL teaching: From theory to practice. CATESOL: Pasadena, CA.

Banks, L. (2009). Teaching children: Myths and pedagogy. PIEI: Mali, Africa.

Banks, L (2009). Great expectations: Teaching 21st Century students. UABJ: Tijuana, Mexico.

Banks, L. (2008). Teaching strategies for elementary school language teachers. Fuyan, China.

Banks, L (2000). Conducting Needs Analysis in the Workplace. CATESOL: Sacramento, USA.

Banks, L., Barroso, K., Burkhead, K., Miranda, K., Wilkins, L. (2000). Different perspectives about teaching English in the workplace. CATESOL: Sacramento, USA.

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

English Teachers in Mexico: Initial Preparation and the Realities of Practice

by

Leticia S. Banks

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California, San Diego, 2017
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Professor Manuel Vargas, Co-Chair
Professor Frances Contreras, Co-Chair

Current English language teaching research in Mexico has shown that junior high school students are not learning English and that English teachers lack linguistic and pedagogical skills to teach the language. Research has evidenced system-wide factors contributing to low learning outcomes such as teacher shortage, poor working conditions, limited teaching resources, inadequate school support, and misaligned professional development. However, little has been said about initial teacher preparation. Therefore, this research sought to understand how English teachers in junior high schools in Mexico viewed their initial preparation program and whether the realities of practice in their specific teaching context match that preparation.

The study drew on questionnaire data of junior high school English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in three different regions of Mexico—northern, central, and southern states, from urban, suburban, and rural classrooms, including three different junior high school modalities. The aim was to understand how initial teacher preparation equipped teachers with language knowledge, teaching knowledge, and contextual knowledge for their practice. This study argues that initial teacher preparation, although a critical component for success in the classroom, has been largely treated in the periphery. This treatment may have resulted in weak initial preparation of English teachers.

This study presented both qualitative and quantitative evidence about the realities English teachers faced in their current practice as they attempted to implement the new National English Program in basic education. Some realities seemed to have been ignored and/or inadequately addressed during initial teacher preparation. Therefore, the evidence presented sought to inform English teachers, school administrators, and policy makers about the situation in the trenches. The study also sought to contribute to the current conversation about the direction and content of initial English teacher preparation programs in view of the diverse teaching contexts in the country.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Genesis of Study

Working with English as a foreign language teachers across the world, one can witness efforts and abilities to speak *the* and *about* the language, to use *the* theories, methods, and strategies to teach the language, and to learn *about* the local dynamics that impact their work. Likewise, one can observe English teachers' struggle to transfer theories and methods into teaching strategies to aid practice and further student learning thereby failing to implement their own learning. Working with pre- and in-service English teachers in international settings has rendered visible the misleading evidence upon which far-reaching generalizations about initial training preparation have been made by students, parents, teacher educators, teacher trainers, and policy makers; generalizations that conceal deep-rooted problems plaguing language education.

This intersection of theory and practice led this study to identify a disconnect between what teachers knew and what teachers did in the classroom, and between what teachers did not know and yet did in the classroom. Further observations revealed that clinical practice were void of crucial feedback and allowed little reflection about the realities of practice encountered, and conversations about how those realities needed to be addressed to support learning. Thus, this dissonance led to a close examination of what teachers did in their classroom that could be traced back to initial teacher preparation in order to identify knowledge gaps that may explain success and/or failure. The present study therefore examined the current teaching experiences of in-service junior high school English teachers in three different geographical regions of Mexico, including the

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states of Zacatecas in the north, Tlaxcala and Puebla in the center, and Chiapas in the south. The study explored the link between initial English teacher preparation and the realities teachers faced in three different modalities of junior high schools—academic junior high schools (*secundarias generales*), vocational junior high schools (*secundarias técnicas*), and distance learning junior high school (*telesecundarias*) in urban, semi urban, and rural areas.

1.1.2 Situating the Study

Although English as a foreign language has been taught in Mexican junior high schools for over 30 years (Salazar, 2002), the country has just recently introduced mandatory English classes in basic, public education (K-9), thereby challenging its academic infrastructure, its teacher preparation institutions, and its current English teaching workforce. Previous work with Mexican English teachers introduced this researcher to the limitations and objectives of professional development programs that have yet to overcome challenges and meet teachers' real needs. Seven notable studies that explored the current challenges and dilemmas of English language teaching in Mexico included *Mexicanos Primero* (2015), Ramírez-Romero, Pamplón, and Cota (2014), Ramírez-Romero and Pamplón (2012), Ramírez-Romero, Sayer, and Pamplón (2014), Quezada (2013), Sayer, Mercau, and Blanco (2013), and Sayer (2013). These studies, while informative and insightful, explored teachers' initial preparation only in the periphery. Other studies pointed to student learning outcomes as evidence of teachers' poor preparation and performance in the classroom (SIPSE, 2015; Székely, O'Donoghue, and Pérez, 2015; Toriz, 2009). There were additional studies that urged a closer examination of teachers' knowledge and habits prior to their training as a reference point

to understanding how they would apply their training in their classroom (Duch and Gil, 1988). Others suggested that teachers' practice was undeniably influenced by life trajectory, socio-educational context, pedagogical repertoire, and working sites' conditions (Díaz and Hernández, 2004). Geeregat and Vásquez (2008) pointed out that initial preparation programs have, for the most part, operated on a single track that addresses theory and overlooks the realities of practice. Thus, these unresolved dilemmas of teacher preparation and their links to the classroom, especially in an era of educational change, have consistently involved the main actors: teachers and students. Both can be fertile ground for change and progress, and both can exhibit barren conditions to prevent change from taking root (Geeregat and Vásquez, 2008).

But while the debate about how to best train English teachers continues, domestic and international assessments have sounded the verdict unequivocally clear: Mexican students are not learning English, and Mexican English teachers do not know English well enough to teach it (Székely *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, this study sought to understand how junior high school English teachers—the only level addressed in this research—rate their initial preparation program and whether the realities of practice encountered in their specific teaching context matched that preparation. Because the implications of this study can potentially extend to English teachers in preschool and elementary levels at pre-service and in-service levels, this study drew on and in turn sought to inform three academic strands: Teacher education in Mexico, in-service professional development for English teachers, and English language teaching (ELT).

1.2 Research Background

Globalization has positioned English as the unrivaled *lingua franca* of the 21ˢᵗ Century (Medgyes, 2001; Nielsen, 2003; Stosic and Stosic, 2015) and has created interdependent societies that need to navigate their place in the global village of knowledge, communication, technologies, and education *in English* (Olivas, 2015). The effect of this global and accelerated presence of English can be seen in many areas. In the academic field alone, it is estimated that 50% of the million articles published every year are in English, two-thirds of the top 100 universities are in English-speaking countries, 80% of the information stored in the world's computers is in English, approximately 1.5 billion people across the globe are either learning or speaking English as a second language, and about 250 thousand native English-speaking teachers are teaching English throughout the world (Medgyes, 2001; Nielsen, 2003; Sharifian, 2009; Secretaría de Educación Pública, SEP, 2015a; Stoci *et al.*, 2015; TESOL, 2014; Velázquez, 2015b).

As *the international* language, English is not only used in interactions between native and non-native English-speakers but also between non-native English speakers from different cultural backgrounds. These interactions have dramatically changed the world's linguistic make-up and have altered the language education landscape in at least two key ways: 1) demographically, as more than 80% of English communication takes place between non-native speakers, and 2) geographically, as more than 75 countries around the world have given English an official or special status (Lotherington and Jenson, 2011; Sharifian, 2009). Although there have been other international languages, the case of English is different because of its global reach, its cultural diversity, the vast number of domains for which it is used, and the countless number of purposes that it

serves (Dewey, 2007). This increased demand for English learning has played a major role in language education policies all over the world and has generated an almost voracious demand for qualified English language teachers (Kachru, Kachru, and Nelson, 2009); specifically, native English-speaking teachers whose linguistic competence has been heralded as the ideal role model of identity and language use (Zhang and Elder, 2011). The British Council, for example, as a top provider of English language instruction, reported having 3,000 full-time English teachers worldwide (TESOL, 2014). Yet, this number pales in comparison with the thousands of non-native English teachers currently teaching around the world. This rapid demand for English as a *lingua franca* produced native and non-native English teachers at all levels of linguistic and pedagogical competency. David Gradol, a leading expert in English language education policy, affirmed that "the lack of qualified English language teachers presents one of the largest challenges to educators and citizens across the globe" (TESOL, 2014, p. 6). This statement alone revealed the daunting challenge of teaching English to the world, not only because it encompasses a number of new literacies like technology, critical thinking, problem-solving, cross-cultural communication, and teamwork (Phillipson, 1992 as cited in Despagne, 2010; Warschauer, 2000), but also because the world urgently need teachers who are able to integrate different modes of meaning-making, different modes of learning, and different modes of experiencing the world in English (Fadiño, 2013).

1.2.1 English Language Teaching by Non-native Teachers

Twenty First Century skills, however, encompass more than a *lingua franca* and the use of technology; 21st Century skills require a language that brings together global talent with essential abilities in a native language and then in English (Lemke, 2002, as

cited in Fadiño, 2013). At the same time, the growing demand for higher-order thinking and language skills also demand teachers trained and capable of delivering remarkable teaching to meet the new and high standards and expectations of learning (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Regarding language teaching, however, neither advocates nor opponents of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) have agreed on the complexities of English teaching in the era of globalization (Warschauer, 2000) even though English teaching and learning have become top priorities in many educational policies around the world (Navarro, 2006; Warschauer, 2000). An issue that decidedly overcame debate was that teaching English to the world using primarily native English-speaking teachers (NEST) was not sustainable. Two main reasons to support this claim included that non-native speakers already outnumbered native speakers, and English was no longer the privilege of the native speaker (Dewey, 2007; Medgyes, 2001). As a result, non-native English-speaking teachers (NNEST) are joining the educational ranks and are being locally trained all over the world at pre-service and in-service levels (Alamillo, Padilla, and Arenas, 2011; Echeverria, Short, and Powers, 2006; Gándara, Jolley, and Driscoll, 2005).

1.2.2 English in Mexico

In Mexico, the truth was undeniable: educationally and economically, Mexicans needed English. Calderón (2015a) emphatically stated that every child in Mexico has the right to learn English to function effectively as a global citizen in the 21st Century. Velázquez (2015b) pointed out that with English, Mexican students would be able to move into industries with greater value added, especially in those industries in which English skills are a premium. The Mexican Corporate Council of Foreign Trade,

Investment and Technology (*Consejo Empresarial Mexicano de Comercio Exterior, Inversión y Tecnología*, COMCE, 2015) reiterated that knowing English facilitates social mobility and allows Mexican companies access to international markets and global talent. As important a tool as English has become for social mobility, it also needs to be a transformational tool that offers people lifelong learning opportunities (TESOL, 2014) so that they learn English to continue to learn in English. Yet, a market research conducted by the International Business Strategies (2008) showed that only six percent of Mexican students were enrolled in business English courses or participated in undergraduate degree programs abroad due, primarily, to low English proficiency levels. The National Council of Science and Technology (*Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología*, CONACYT) reported that seven out of ten graduate level scholarships to study abroad go unclaimed because Mexican students do not meet the English level requirements to earn them (COMCE, 2015). However, despite these dark statistics, there are glimpses of hope in the horizon. In 2015, Open Door data from the Institute of International Education (IIE, 2015) showed that in the 2013-14 academic year, 14, 779 Mexican students were sent to American higher education institutions compared to the 174, 052 sent during the 2014-15 academic year. This 15% increase in one year shows how significant English language instruction has become for Mexico.

For Mexican students, the argument is therefore settled: English is more than a commodity; it is a must-have skill to live and work at home and abroad because, as it is often said, the person who knows two languages is worth the price of two persons (Salazar, 2002). Globalization became the catalyst for Mexico to modernize its internal education structure and face a new century with a different strategic plan, and language

education—English specifically—had to be part of that plan (Castro, 2013; Chasan and Ryan, 1995). *Mexicanos Primero* (2015) zealously advocates for the right of all Mexican children to a quality and relevant education that guarantees access to learning spaces where students may learn how to learn with and in English. For *Mexicanos Primero*, education itself should be the primary tool for social mobility and a fulfilled life. Nevertheless, accepting this argument forces Mexicans to advocate for all public schools to become transformational centers where students may acquire tools and skills to improve their lives (Velázques, 2015b). In this competitive and globalized century, Mexico needs to offer an equity-driven education with standards and accountability measures to encourage continuous change. Change that obligates its public education system to do for *all children* what it has been able to do for an elite few (Reville, 2015), and this must be done at the federal, state, and local levels.

On the surface, English for all Mexicans appears as a simple proposition, but it is a complicated undertaking. Historically, most Mexicans have seen English as the cultural capital of the elite. For the masses, learning English has been seen as a cultural betrayal, an affront to patriotism, and a political alignment with an imperialist country; namely, the United States of America (Despagne, 2010; Francis and Ryan, 1998; Hidalgo, Cifuentes, and Flores, 1996). But, despite the deeply-rooted ideological prejudices, geography has facilitated close cultural, economic, and academic ties between Mexico and the United States (Ramírez, Sayer, & Pamplón, 2014); ties, that however strong, have not helped Mexicans learn English. This is the "Achilles heel" of Mexican basic public education. This is where there is an outstanding debt with Mexican students who continue to graduate with mediocre, if not dismal, English skills even after a two-billion-dollar

investment in education in the last five years (Velázquez, 2015b). The 2012 Programme

for International Student Assessment (PISA) reported that 41% of Mexican students did

not have adequate reading competencies in Spanish. Inferentially speaking, this

deficiency makes learning a foreign language much more difficult (INEE, 2012).

Additionally, the English Proficiency Index (EPI) reported that Mexican students placed

39 out of 63 countries evaluated worldwide, and sixth in Latin America, behind countries

like Peru and Argentina (Education First, 2014). For a country so positioned by

geography, these outcomes are not satisfactory and invite a closer look at how English is

being taught; who is teaching it; and how those who teach it are being prepared.

Obviously, what happens in the classroom is key to a quality education so it cannot be

left to chance.

1.2.3 Junior High School in the Mexican Education System

To contextualize the ensuing discussion about English teaching in Mexican junior

high school, or *secundaria* (hereafter *secundaria* and junior high school will be used

interchangeably), a note about where it fits in the system follows. The Mexican education

system consists of three years of pre-school (*preescolar)*, six years of elementary school

(*primaria*), three years of junior high school (*secundaria*), three years of high school

(*preparatoria* or *bachillerato)*, and four years of university (*licenciatura*). Master and

doctorate degrees follow the *licenciatura*, or bachelor's degree (See Figure 1).
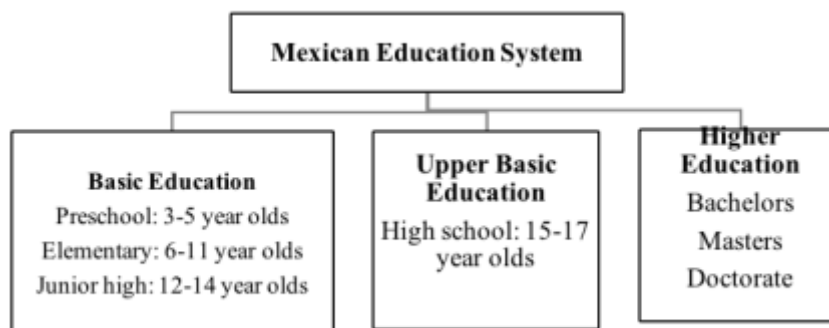
Figure 1.1 The Mexican Education System

As a subject, English became part of the junior high school curriculum in 1926

when *secundarias* became an official part of the Mexican education system (Labra, 2013;

Zorrilla, 2004). Decades later, the needs of the nation, population growth, and school

accessibility forced the creation of distinct *secundaria* modalities: in 1940, *secundarias*

generales (academic junior high school); in 1958, *secundarias técnicas* (vocational junior

high school); and in 1969, *telesecundarias* (distance-learning junior high school). By the

early 1930s, the Ministry of Education took control of all public and private junior high

schools in the country and supported a socialist agenda that incorporated English in the

curriculum but not as a priority subject (Labra, 2013; Martínez, 2001; Meneses, 1988;

Zorrilla, 2004). During the next five decades, the junior high school system went through

several initiatives and reforms that were neither 100% effective in reaching the eligible

student population in the country, nor 100 % effective in preparing those who attended it,

as evidenced by national and international evaluations (Zorrilla, 2004).

In 2009, Mexico introduced yet another reform in basic education (K-9), and this

time it put English as a foreign language in the center of change. It became apparent that

being a teacher was not getting any easier (Calderón, 2016). Mexican teachers work

within a system that tends to respond more to political and global economic demands

than to internal social and educational pressures and realities (Geeregat and Vásquez,

2008). Being a teacher in Mexico entails working in difficult conditions and facing

daunting challenges in the workplace. Many of these challenges conceal teachers'

contributions to education reforms (Mercado, 2007; Sandoval, 2007; Tavárez, 2005).

Therefore, to understand teachers' contributions, it is important to hear how teachers see

their work, their challenges, and their training.

1.2.4 Teacher Preparation in Mexico

Historically, teacher preparation programs in Mexico have failed to produce

independent thinkers, willing and able to see the vision of globalization (Tatto, 1999). At

the same time, teacher preparation programs have overlooked the economic conditions in

which teachers learn and work (Geeregat and Vásquez, 2008). In fact, most of the

problems related to the quality of education have been shown to center around the context

in which teachers work, both in terms of geography and socioeconomic status (Tatto and

Vélez, 1999). Teacher preparation institutions have also ignored society's needs and

changes and have disregarded the effects and limitations of the learning environment on

teachers' initial preparation rendering their efforts incomplete or obsolete (Tavárez,

2005). In Mexico, English teachers have not always been required to hold an English

teaching degree; many current teachers entered the English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

field through *diploma* courses that take anywhere from two months to two years to

complete and whose emphasis is on teaching techniques and on teachers' language

proficiency (Salazar, 2002). As necessary as the move might be, subsequent training

deficiencies have been addressed through professional development programs offered by

local Ministry of Education offices and/or by domestic and international professional organizations that may not be familiar with the local context of education (Salazar, 2002; Wise and Zwiers, 2013).

However, the game is changing. The increased demand for English has also increased the demand for English teacher training degrees. The 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) administered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 34 countries around the world showed that nine in ten Mexican teachers held either a bachelor's degree from a university or from the *Normal School* system—the state teacher training institution. The TALIS did not specify how many of the 4000 Mexican teachers included in the report were English teachers, nor did it mention how many of the participating teachers held English teaching degrees and from which institutions. However, the TALIS did show that seven in ten *secundaria* school teachers reported not having enough content knowledge in their subject area. This fact alone reinforces the need to look at initial preparation to address deficiencies that impact classroom performance (*Mexicanos Primero*, 2014a). Tavárez (2005) stated that when Mexican teachers are confident about their content knowledge, they are professionally autonomous to make informed decisions in their classroom, willing to critically evaluate their performance, motivated to collaborate with colleagues, eager to oversee their own continual professional growth, and committed to their work. Therefore, it is imperative to capture and examine the way in which initial teacher preparation programs contribute to the development of teachers' English knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and how that knowledge has served students in different teaching contexts.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

As previously mentioned, being a teacher in Mexico is not easy. Teachers' professional aspirations are often truncated by education authorities who vilify them, by threats of violence from organized crime groups, by injustices inflicted by corrupt union leaders, and by ungrateful and apathetic parents (Calderón, 2016). Yet, despite all this, the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education (*Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación,* INEE) reported that in 2014, Mexico's major teacher preparation institutions—Universities, *Normal Schools*, and other private and public Institutions of Higher Education (*Institutos de Educación Superior*, IES) graduated a combined number of 130, 512 new teachers. In 2015, the INEE further reported that 75% of teachers in public schools were *Normal School* graduates, and these graduates—or *Normalistas,* as they are often called—are specifically trained to teach at *secundaria* school level (2015b). Although neither number revealed how many English teachers were among them, in general, their initial preparation has failed to close the gap between the pre-service training curriculum and the realities teachers face in the classroom (Tatto and Vélez, 1997). This statement may explain why the *Normal School* system has been asked to decrease the gap between the theoretical saturation of the initial preparation *and* the social and cultural demands imposed on new teachers by the teaching contexts (Mercado, 2007). But decreasing such gap has proven difficult. A national study of the current preparation system revealed it to be heterogeneous in its administration, organization, and curriculum, and such heterogeneity inevitably has led to an unbalanced system with an unequal product and insufficient academic achievement (Arnaut, 2004, as cited by INEE, 2015b; INEE, 2015c).

Although initial teacher preparation is one of *the* biggest problems in education throughout Latin America (Carnoy, 2005), the current conversation about initial and continuous preparation of teachers is general, and it has not addressed the preparation of English teachers specifically. Pasternak and Bailey (2004) argued that initial preparation of English teachers should address three key areas: "(1) knowing about and how to use the target language, (2) knowing about and how to teach it in culturally appropriate ways, and (3) knowing about and how to behave appropriately in the target culture" (p. 9). Mexico's National English Program (*Programa Nacional de Inglés*, PRONI) has asked English teachers to know and do exactly that, and in very diverse social and cultural contexts.

To date, the literature has not described the state of English teaching in junior high schools taking into account teachers' initial preparation, different teaching contexts, the impact these two factors have had on the implementation of the PRONI, or the potential changes it may require (González, Ruíz, and Martínez, 2013; Inter-American Partnership for Education, 2015; Lengeling, Mora, Buenaventura, Arredondo, Carrillo, Ortega, and Caréto, 2013; López, 2007; López de Anda, 2013; Mendoza and Roux, 2014). The National English Program is composed of four cycles: cycle one comprises preschool through second grade; cycle two covers third and fourth grade; cycle three covers fifth and sixth grade; and cycle four covers the three years of junior high school. The entire program's curriculum was selected and organized based on international standards of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) with the expectation that upon exiting basic education, Mexican students would have foreign language skills at B1 level, or an intermediate level (SEP, 2011d). Teachers, on

the other hand, were expected to have a basic teaching profile with a B2 proficiency level of the CEFR (SEP, 2010). This level describes an independent user of the language who can, for example, interact with native speakers with fluency and spontaneity in social and public situations, can describe personal experiences and events, and can express opinions on a wide range of topics (Little, 2012).

The Ministry of Education reported that during the 2012-13 school year, only 30% of English teachers working in the PRONI had the *ideal* profile, equivalent to B1 and B2 of the CEFR, to teach English in K-6. The rest had a basic profile, equivalent to A1 and A2 of the CEFR. Additionally, only 30% had a certification to prove language mastery to teach English in third through sixth grade while more than 50% of English teachers in general did not offer any proof of language mastery (SEP, 2013). These alarming numbers revealed not only teachers' content mastery deficiency but could also signal pedagogical and curricular knowledge deficits as well. Again, initial preparation and teaching context do matter, and neither can be left to chance.

1.3.1 English Teachers as the Silent Problem

Although the National English Program has not yet been fully implemented throughout the country, a recent study of 4,727 high school students in 11 cities found that only three percent of them reached the English level expected by the program and that 79% of them did not have any knowledge of English (Székely *et al.*, 2015). O'Donoghue (2015b) reported that 97% of Mexican students reached high school lacking English skills at the most basic level even though 53% of them passed the class with high marks. Additionally, O'Donoghue stated that 86% of schools in basic education did not have an English teacher although the SEP officials insisted that *secundaria* schools all

over the country in all three modalities had English teachers (Martínez, J.M. personal communication, July 15th, 2015). Therefore, it behooves us all to know how the current English teaching workforce in *secundaria* schools has been trained, and how that training translates into language teaching in different contexts considering that geography, socioeconomic status, and cultural realities teachers find in school communities impact teaching quality. Teacher preparation program cannot and should not overlook the impact of these real factors in the professional practice of current and new English teachers.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 Purpose

In Mexico, there has been a great deal of debate about English teachers' deficiencies (*Mexicanos Primero*, 2015; Ramírez-Romero *et al.,* 2014; Ramírez-Romero and Pamplón, 2012; Quezada, 2013; Sayer *et al.*, 2013; Székely *et al.*, 2015); hence, this study sought to develop baseline data about junior high school English teachers' initial preparation and the realities encountered in their teaching context that facilitate or hinder teaching. Because Mexican teachers are and will continue to be accountable for learning outcomes, it is imperative that the system sees teachers as learners first and practitioners second. It is imperative that the system demands and provides the best practices in its preparation and development to ensure teachers enter the field as competent professionals. Unquestionably, teachers need to have knowledge and skills at their disposal to successfully solve core, job-related problems (Tatto and Vélez, 1999; Weiner, 1999) although identifying the content and how to use it remains the central question for teacher preparation programs (Ball, 2000).

There is no question that teachers should not only be prepared for practice but should also be challenged to improve it (Ball, 2015). At the same time, teacher preparation programs should "create accessible learning experiences" for all pre-service teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1998, p. 8) that will allow them to obtain and manipulate knowledge in diverse settings. In Mexico, however, there seems to be a silent paradigm about English teachers' preparation and how it has aligned to the realities teachers face in the classroom, at school, and in the community in which they work. Tatto and Vélez (1999) described this silence as an "ethos of privacy around teacher education" (p. 13) that is heavily guarded by teachers and their union. Nevertheless, the magnitude of this problem cannot remain private or silent. Some studies have reported that English teachers, in general, have an unequal and deficient preparation and often work in difficult conditions that treat them as second-class citizens, giving them neither job security nor good salaries (Ramírez-Romero and Pamplón, 2012d; Ramírez-Romero *et al.*, 2014; Tatto and Vélez, 1999). A study carried out in the state of Hidalgo, for example, echoed similar findings and showed that English teachers were deficient in content and pedagogical knowledge either because their initial preparation was inadequate or non-existent, or because some teachers with a foreign residency background in an English-speaking country were often allowed to teach English without knowing how to do it (Paredes, Godínez, Hidalgo, Espinosa, and Dzul, 2012). Quezada (2013) also provided examples of English teachers in five Mexican states who labored under difficult conditions such as lack of materials, lack of school support, lack of motivated students, and lack of parent engagement. These were some of the realities teachers face in urban,

suburban, and rural schools that, coupled with deficient content, pedagogical, and contextual knowledge, render teaching a very difficult task indeed.

Thus, what English teachers do in the classroom and how they do it has been generally studied in relation to student outcomes, but not in relation to their initial teacher preparation. This study argues that to hold teachers accountable for students' learning, teachers also need access to quality teaching during their initial preparation. Teacher learning also matters (Calderón, 2016). Mexican teachers need to have a voice in the creation and revision of new curriculum and critically analyze it and also need to assess the ethical, moral, and political implications for the context in which they work or will work (Tatto and Vélez, 1999). This study therefore proposes a bottom-up approach to understanding the situation in the trenches, from the people closest to the learning moment: teachers. They are change-makers, and they need to inform policy makers about the realities of their practice and how their initial preparation equips them for those realities. Fullan (1991 as cited in Fullan, 1993) stated that teachers are not technicians; they are pivotal stakeholders whose voices need to be heard to achieve educational changes that promote the learning of new skills and the execution of new behaviors in both teachers and students. Top-down mandates tend to ignore foundational knowledge, skill set, and teaching contexts. The literature review will show that there are system-wide factors that influence teachers' work in the classroom that amplify the deficiencies in their initial preparation.

1.4.2 Research Questions

Therefore, this research sought to answer the following overarching question: How do initial preparation programs in Mexico equip junior high school English teachers

for the realities of practice in different teaching contexts? To align this question with the

conceptual framework, the following sub-questions were added:

 a) How are teachers prepared with English knowledge?

 b) How are teachers prepared with pedagogical content knowledge?

 c) How are teachers prepared with contextual knowledge?

1.5 Significance of the Study

 Teaching is an exhausting job. It requires, but it is not limited to, content,

pedagogical and curriculum knowledge, and emotional resiliency (Shulman, 1986),

among other things. These elements should be addressed in initial preparation programs

if change is to begin there. "Initial teacher preparation and in-service training are crucial

to guarantee implementation of new curriculum" (Zorrila, 2004, p. 21). Junior high

school in Mexico, as the final step in basic education, needs to solidify students' English

knowledge gained in preschool and elementary education while preparing them for the

next step and beyond (Zorrilla, 2004). Knowing how preparation programs equipped

teachers for the realities of practice provided insights into how the new official guidelines

and other policy recommendations fit into the current teacher preparation curricula, and

where initial preparation programs need to be strengthened at local, state, and federal

levels. Calderón (2016) clearly stated teachers' plight when he said that in Mexico, there

is a tendency to speak *about* teachers but not *with* teachers. This lack of communication

with teachers has led to teacher education programs unconnected to learning,

unconnected to teaching context, unconnected to teachers' professional needs, and

unconnected to the realities of practice. Evidence has shown that teachers begin teaching

with content knowledge deficiencies and that little is offered to help them to overcome

such deficiencies throughout their careers. Similarly, there has been little evidence that professional development translates into practical application in the classroom to improve learning (TALIS, 2013). In Mexico, most professional development has been used as a tool to accumulate favors that are later traded in for better salaries or better positions while the direct accountability to learning improvements is buried under red tape (SEP, 2004). Mexico cannot expect teachers to grow professionally if their initial preparation and continual training are improvised and remain mediocre. Initial preparation programs need to meet teachers' expectations of the profession to make it a first career choice in different contexts. Ball, Thames, and Phelps (2008) have questioned teacher educators about the common professional standards all teacher preparation programs should observe and differ, and have questioned them about the professional infrastructure necessary to achieve coherent, consistent, and equitable agreement on those crucial standards. Because teachers' classroom performance will continue to be the metric for student success, this research sought to question how initial teacher preparation met the realities encountered while teaching. Teachers need to own their initial preparation to understand what they knew going into it, what they need to know more of, and what they could do with that knowledge. Knowing their knowledge base will inform decision-making processes about what and how to modify, adapt, or adopt in initial teacher preparation, and not just the preparation of *secundaria* English teachers but also those teaching in pre-school and elementary levels.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

Because teachers can and do influence learning outcomes and can be directly influenced in the education process, researchers have shown that it is worth investing in

their preparation. Therefore, how they are admitted to, and the type of initial preparation they receive determines the direction of education (Ball, 2000; Ball and Forzani, 2009; Ball, Thames, and Phelps, 2008: Darling-Hammond, 2006; Enkvist, 2014; Finocchiaro, 1983; Freeman and Johnson, 1998; Gritner, 1983; Johnston and Goettsch, 2000; Steinberger, 2010). What teachers do, or do not do, inside the classroom has multiple ramifications in and out of the school setting; therefore, as stated before, teacher preparation cannot be left to chance. It must be deliberate and consistent. The role of preparation programs in providing knowledge and tools teachers need to succeed once they have opted into the profession cannot be ignored (Edge and Mann, 2013). Much is required of children today, and schools are expected to provide high academic standards to educate children for global interaction. These expectations should be met, and this kind of "teaching requires sophisticated knowledge of content, learning, and learners" (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 77). Teacher preparation needs to help teachers situate themselves in and in front of the profession with skillful teaching and continuous professional growth (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Sancho, Correa, Giró, and Fraga, 2014). Both are urgent and imperative.

While the debate over what teachers need to know and be able to do has prompted reforms and initiatives that have sought a common and concrete language to address the problems of practice, Shulman (1986) has pointed out several knowledge categories for teachers, but for the purposes of this research, we will focus on three of them: 1) content knowledge—knowing about the subject area—; 2) pedagogical content knowledge— knowing about teaching specific content—, and 3) knowledge of the learners—knowing about the students. For the purposes of this research, knowing about the learners will be

referred to as contextual knowledge in which the teaching of the content takes place. This knowledge, or lack thereof, has and will continue to influence learning outcomes of teachers and students. And therein lies the paramount requirement to help teachers learn to manipulate content knowledge so that they are better able to deliver it to their students in their specific context (Darling-Hammond, 1998). The foundational work of Shulman (1986) made teacher knowledge crucial in the work of teaching (Ball *et al.*, 2008).

However, new reforms and initiatives tend to overlook teacher preparation curriculum and how it fits into the lives of teachers and students (Ball and Forzani, 2009). These authors have strongly advocated for allowing practice itself be the guiding compass in teacher preparation programs' curricula. The "work of teaching" (p. 497), as they call it, should also align with initial language teacher preparation content. Concerning the preparation of English language teachers specifically, Pasternak and Bailey (2004) have stated that their preparation should address three key areas: "(1) knowing about and how to use the target language, (2) knowing about and how to teach it in culturally appropriate ways, and (3) knowing about and how to behave appropriately in the target culture" (p, 9). These criteria nearly paralleled Shulman's (1986) knowledge maxims mentioned earlier, as shown below:
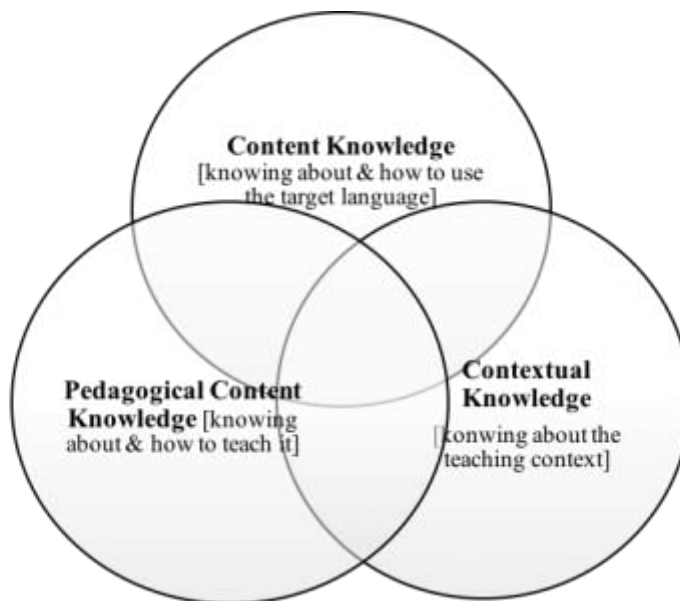
Figure 1.2 Knowledge Framework

Consequently, the challenge lies in training future English teachers that know

about and what to do with the language not only in the training classroom but also in their

real classroom—with their own students and within their own context. This challenge

necessitates learning from what happens in real practice to inform teacher preparation

programs and policymakers about how to link theory to reality (Freeman and Johnson,

1998). Dewey (1904/1964 as cited in Ball, 2000) correctly articulated the long-standing

tension between learning theory and methods that transferred knowledge into the real

world. Such tension, unfortunately, has seldom led to the integration of content

knowledge and pedagogy needed in different teaching contexts (Ball, 2000). To

counteract this tension between theory and real practice, teachers need to be equipped

with content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and learner knowledge to

inform teaching decisions in response to real learners needs (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Darling-Hammond provided some parameters that strengthen initial teacher preparation

to encourage a linkage between training and the realities of practice found in the classroom, in the school, and in the community. These included:

1. Having teachers with a deep understanding of the content they teach.

2. Having teachers who based their teaching decisions on the learner and on learning.

3. Having a curriculum that fuses content with learners' needs.

4. Having teachers who have acquired and developed a solid gamut of teaching tools.

5. Having learners, content, and curriculum operate within a social context.

This is not an exhaustive list, but it defines some of the parameters needed to make initial teacher preparation effective ((Darling-Hammond, 2006). In addition to these program-wide elements of effective teacher preparation, research on the work of teaching itself has reframed the conceptualization presented above by describing what teachers need to know and be able to do in the classroom. Ball *et al*, (2008) suggested that "high-quality instruction requires a sophisticated, professional knowledge" (p.391) that goes beyond the generic teaching rules that teachers commonly learn during their training. The authors insisted that high-quality instruction must cover four specific domains of teachers' knowledge: "common content knowledge, specialized content knowledge, knowledge of content and students, and knowledge of content and teaching" (p. 399-401). Freeman (2002) admonished that foreign language teaching and learning was not just a matter of mastering content, pedagogy, and the theoretical justification for both but emphasized that social and environmental factors needed to be part of the equation as they influence teacher and student learning. He pointed toward an ongoing tension

between content, pedagogy, and the contextual factors that teachers needed to learn to navigate to adjust teaching practices. Therefore, looking at English teaching through this framework of knowing content, knowing how to teach specific content, and knowing how to operate within diverse teaching contexts proposes a different approach to practice from those offered by the process-product paradigm (Chaudron, 1988 as cited by Freeman, 2002) in which teaching simply meant delivering content, executing classroom techniques tailored to specific methodology, and reciting the theoretical justification for it. This research proposed, on the contrary, using this *knowledge framework* to discover how initial English teacher preparation programs equipped docents for the immediate realities they found in their practice.

1.7 Overview of Methods

The literature review and the researcher's preliminary work with English teachers in Mexico yielded a mixed-methods research design with both quantitative and qualitative components (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner, 2007). The quantitative component allowed data gathering from a large number of junior high school English teachers through a 35-item online questionnaire that captured general demographic information, current teaching position, teachers' own English learning experience, current classroom practice, initial teacher preparation, and the preparation of future English teachers (see Appendix A). The researcher contacted and/or met with local Ministry of Education officials in selected research sites in Mexico, presented the study, answered questions, and secured permissions to contact English supervisors working with English teachers in *secundarias generales, técnicas,* and *telesecundarias*. Once permission was secured in each research site, local Ministry of Education authorities sent the link to the

online questionnaire to supervisors who, in turn, sent the link onto *secundaria* English teachers. In some instances, the researcher sent the questionnaire link directly to English supervisors. The data obtained was aggregated and analyzed. The results unearthed detailed information about teachers' content, pedagogical content, and contextual knowledge acquired during their initial preparation and practice. A more thorough explanation of the methodology and data analysis, including the limitations, will be described in detail in Chapter Three.

1.8 Summary

A recent Mexican education reform included an ambitious national language program that made English mandatory in basic education (K-9). For this language program to work, good teachers were and are necessary, but relying on qualified English teachers necessitates effective initial preparation. The importance of preparing and producing highly effective English teachers lies at the center of a quality English education that widens the funnel of opportunity at the beginning of children's school trajectory without narrowing it as they move through the pipeline (Velázquez, 2015a). Mexican students deserve, from the start, quality English teachers whose practice, attitudes, and values promote learning despite the socio-economic context in which they live. Mexican students need teachers whose initial and continuous training focus not only on what they learned but also on how they learned it so that children from every background may benefit from that training (Calderón, 2016).

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Programa Nacional de Inglés (PRONI), current name for the *National English Program.*

Secundaria General (*Academic junior high school*). Junior high school with an academic track as opposed to technical. Located in urban and rural areas and serves primarily a student population between 13-15 years of age. Each subject is taught by an expert content teacher in that subject.

Secundaria Técnica (*Vocational junior high school*). Junior high school with a vocational track. Located in urban and rural areas, it emphasizes technological education per the region's local economic activity. The goal is to train students for immediate entrance to the workplace. Each subject is taught by an expert.

Telesecundaria (*Distance learning junior high school*). This type of school was designed to serve students in marginalized urban, suburban, and rural areas throughout the country. It usually has only one teacher per grade who teaches with available technology and printed materials.

Normal School System. Teacher preparation schools that are common in Mexico.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a review of the literature that informed the parameters for the current research. The chapter addresses Mexico's relationship with English; presents a brief history of English teaching in junior high school; describes the National English Program and its current challenges; delineates current English teachers' situation; and illustrates English teacher preparation in modern Mexico.

2.2 Mexico and English

To situate English teaching in 21st Century Mexico, we must first recall that English is surrounded by complex ideological, cultural, and academic contradictions that influenced current Mexican attitudes, perceptions, and motivation to learn the language (Hidalgo, Cifuentes, and Flores, 1996). In Mexico, English is, first and foremost, automatically associated with the United States of America (Despagne, 2010). The nearly 2000 miles of common border define not only the two countries political, social, and cultural differences but also the perception of English as both the language of imperialism and the language of hope (Despagne, 2010; Phillipson, 2006). Such contradictions provide insights into why English and its speakers continue to pose strong emotional, academic, and professional ambivalence for Mexicans at large, and why college-age Mexicans continue to view English as a distant friend (Francis and Ryan, 1998).

One of these contradictions highlights Mexico's complicated national ethno-linguistic identity that has removed legitimacy from languages that define its heritage and

cultural values (Hidalgo *et al.*, 1996). Colonial Mexico, after all, used Spanish as *the* tool

for educating and assimilating indigenous cultures and languages into a country that, far

from realizing equality, reinforced social inequalities that an official language has not

erased, even today (*Dirección General de Educación Indígena*-DGEI, 2012). Colonial

Mexico started out as a multilingual country where Spanish was imposed over indigenous

languages, 283 of which are still alive today (Ethnologue Country Report, 2015; Hidalgo

et al., 1996). Therefore, accepting English as the *lingua franca* of the world has not

overcome the love-hate relationship between the two countries (Chasan and Ryan, 1995;

Despagne, 2010; Francis and Ryan, 1998; Hidalgo *et al.*, 1996). Ironically, modern

Mexico has placed a higher value on English than on indigenous languages and uses it

widely in everyday life (Despagne, 2010). This perceived loss of linguistic pride may

explain why English continues to evoke fears of losing national identity, fears of

abandoning certain degree of Mexican-ness, and fears of being subjugated through

English (Calderón, 2015), just as it was in the nineteenth century. Back then, English and

French were the cultural capital of the Mexican elite who studied both languages for

scientific and political purposes (Hidalgo *et al.*, 1996). And it was precisely the political

subjugation that the general population resented about the bilingual elite. Historical

events like the Mexican-American War, the Mexican Revolution, and a dictatorship's ties

to the United States planted negative perceptions of English in the country (Hidalgo *et

al.*, 1996). Independence offered Mexicans the freedom of religion but not linguistic

freedom, or the right to an equal education for 75% of the population who was illiterate

and who felt imposed upon by a dominant language (DGEI, 2012).

Furthermore, perceptions about a country can indeed impact language learning. In her study of 300 university students in the state of Puebla, Mexico, Despagne (2010) discovered that personal experiences with and political opinions about English-speaking cultures—mainly the United States, in this instance—contributed to language learning difficulties. Her study found that "45% of those who thought English was hard to learn, 61.3% of them were not attracted at all to the American culture" (p. 57). Students in her study mentioned that poor prior English learning experiences, either in private or public schools, had also contributed to English learning resistance at university level even when they understood the impact of knowing English as a graduation requirement, as a tool for graduate-level studies, and as a viable and indispensable resource for a greater earning-power. Their understanding of these advantages did not completely tear down the mental barriers about the language nor motivated them to learn it. Fifteen years earlier, another study of 370 university students in Mexico City also revealed that a previously bad English language learning experience in basic education did not necessarily improve at the university level (Chasan and Ryan, 1995). The students in that study reported that their university English classes were not better than their English classes in K-12, which consisted mainly of translation exercises and were devoid of cultural information, thus making the learning experience more difficult and less enjoyable.

English is not the only language that has faced learning resistance based on political and cultural perception; other European languages have also experienced it. There are other studies that illustrate how perceptions about a country, its culture, or its language inhibited language learning (Muller, 1998; Perrefort, 1997). Muller (1998), for example, found that society itself was the biggest pressure group that perpetuated positive

and/or negative perceptions about a given language. Muller discovered, in this instance, that France and French-speaking Switzerland experienced a difficult and unsatisfactory experience learning German due to the historical representation of Germany by teachers and society at large. Similarly, an earlier study by Perrefort (1997, as cited by Castellotti and Moore, 2002) found that French and German students' perceptions about a given language were influenced by their teachers' opinions of the country whose language they were teaching. Thus, Mexico's resistance to English learning based on perceptions about the United States and its language is not unprecedented. A second contradiction that has marked the complex relationship between Mexico and English has been the strong *attraction* to American pop culture by Mexican youth (Despagne, 2010). García (1993) noted that, thanks to the media, American pop culture can be purchased in markets as well as in boutiques across Mexico. In addition, Despagne (2010) noted that more than 50 percent of the cable programming in Mexico is in English, and even when American produced programs are translated into Spanish, they retain, and therefore promote, embedded American values.

Despite all this exposure to English, Mexican students are on a race against time. Research has shown that by the early 2000s, nearly 80 % of the Internet content was in English. In 2012 alone, 25 million foreigners were employed by American companies, and by 2020, it is estimated that two billion people all over the world would be studying or speaking English (Fishman, 1998: Ostler, 2005, Sharifian, 2009). There is no question that English has positioned itself as the medium for international education and has become *the* common language of books, academic papers, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and mega blockbuster films consumed the world over (Fishman, 1998; Ostler,

2005). However, despite all this media bombardment and the irrefutable domination of English, the Mexican youth, as well as their counterparts in other areas of the world, have not achieved English-speaking fluency (Fishman, 1998). Some English teachers have taken advantage of young people's interest in American pop culture to aid English learning (Alptekin, 1993; Cheung, 2001; Duff, 2001), but those efforts have not produced fluent speakers; learning outcomes have remained unsatisfactory. Moreover, the debate over which English-speaking country's socio-cultural norms and values should be used in the classroom has not been settled (Alptekin *et al.*, 1984; Alptekin, 1993; Atkinson, 1999). In Mexico, for example, despite the conflicting perceptions about the United States, American English has prevailed in daily interactions while British English has dominated the academic world with its materials being heavily marketed all over the country. Indeed, the British Council has had a strong presence in Mexico training in-service English teachers (British Council, 2015).

Another contradiction, and one that has put English moderately in a better light, is its usefulness in everyday life, especially in cities along the U.S.-Mexico border (Hidalgo, 1984). In Juárez, México, for example, English and Spanish have become part of the vernacular, and attitudes toward English depend on whether one needs it for work or for informal, social interactions. Hidalgo's study showed that Mexicans along the border associated English with work-related activities, and a combination of both or just Spanish, was accepted in all other interactions. Dávila and Mora (2000) likewise found that for Mexicans along the U.S.-Mexico border, English fluency impacted their geographical and occupational mobility, factors that in the end, affected the growing interdependence of the two languages and attitudes toward English (Despagne, 2010).

However, such interdependence and positive attitudes toward English have not yet translated into English fluency either.

These examples illustrate some of the complicated layers that make up the relationship between Mexico and English and highlight the obstacles to overcome when teaching it as a foreign language.

2.3 Junior High School in Mexico

To understand the dilemma English has faced in junior high schools in Mexico, it is necessary to contextualize this research by including a brief historical account of the *secundaria* school trajectory in the Mexican education system.

In Mexico, junior high school, or *secundaria*, was a daughter of the revolution, modeled after the *French Liceo* (Treviño, 2000). Its educational model boasted a strong, central government control, and an extensive curriculum that ignored most of Mexican students' contextual needs, reinforced elementary education, and took up to eight years to complete (Quiroz, 1999; Solana, Cardiel, and Bolaños, 1981; Santos del Real, 2003; Tedesco, 2001; Zorrilla, 2004). By 1926, still under complete central government control, junior high school acquired its official status and adopted a more flexible curriculum whose goal focused on meeting the nation's future needs (Cerón, 1998; Loyo, 2002; Labra, 2013; Martínez, 2001; Zorrilla, 2004). Consequently, three junior high school modalities were born: academic (*secundarias generales*) in 1940, vocational (*secundarias técnicas*) in 1958, and distance learning (*telesecundarias*) in1969. The latter employed a single teacher per grade and served rural communities, which up to that point, had been denied access to students beyond elementary level (Corona, 2008; González, Ruíz, and

Rizo, 2013; Martínez, 2001; Zorrilla, 2004). All these three junior high school modalities remain until today.

By the mid-1940s, the dismal living conditions in the country kept most Mexicans out of public school thus justifying the implementation of a socialist public agenda that permeated into the national education system but failed to increase the student population (González and González, 2008; Montes de Oca, 2008). This socialist agenda, sanctioned by the 3rd Article of the Mexican Constitution, allowed the Ministry of Education (*Secretaría de Educación Pública,* SEP) to take control over all *secundaria* schools in the country, both public and private (Montes de Oca, 2008; Zorrilla, 2004).

In 1936, the Junior High School Teacher Preparation Institute (*Instituto de Preparación de Profesorado de Enseñanza Secundaria*) was created to turn *secundarias* into a model servant of the socialist agenda (Labra, 2013; Meneses, 1988; Zorrilla, 2004), and by 1940, junior high schools had adopted the organizational structure that remains until today (Meneses, 1988; Montes de Oca, 2008). To raise graduation rates, subsequent administrations revised the junior high school curriculum to promote more progressive learning methods, but despite increasing instructional hours in key subjects and making classroom pedagogical changes, the socialist agenda remained in place (Martinez, 2001; Treviño, 2000; Zorrilla, 2004).

In efforts to improve teaching quality and teacher education programs, Mexico began to take part in national and international evaluations across levels since 1964, but in 1992, the federal government, the ministry of education, and the 31 states signed the National Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education (*Acuerdo Nacional para la Modernización de Educación Básica*) making *secundaria* school mandatory beginning

in 1993 (Castillo-Aleman, 2012; Corona, 2008; González *et al.*, 2013; Loyo; 1997; Santos del Real, 1998; SEP and OEI, 1994; Zorrilla, 2004). Thus, by the year 2000, the junior high school system in Mexico had undergone nine major curriculum changes (See Table 2.1), and in all those changes, English retained a non-mandatory and peripheral status (Martínez, J.M. personal communiation, July 13th, 2015).

Table 2.1 Secundaria school curriculum changes (Treviño, 2000)

Year of Curriculum Change	
a. 1926-1931	b. 1932-1935
c. 1936-1940	d. 1941-1944
e. 1945-1946	f. 1947-1959
g. 1960-1974	h. 1974-1993
i. 1993-2006	j. 2009-2012

The new millennium forced Mexico to work harder at improving its academic institutions to prepare millions of students for the challenge of globalization (Cerón, 1998; Loyo, 2002; Navarro, 2006: Pérez, 2006). In the last 30 years, different administrations have attempted to make education an instrument of social justice by recalibrating basic education; nevertheless, the existing system has failed to reduce deep academic deficits (Martínez, 2001; Pérez, 2006; Santuario, 2008; Zorrilla, 2004) while at the same time has aligned itself with political forces that have obstructed secondary[1] education in the country. The National Union for Workers in Education (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación*, SNTE) has been described as an obstructionist and bureaucratic force that has plagued the Mexican education system with

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[1] In this instance, *secondary* refers to both junior and high school education.

a culture of favors, exchanges, and professional nepotism (Loyo, 2002; Reséndiz, 1992) that have obstructed social justice for teachers and students.

In 2006, the Junior High School Education Reform (*Reforma a la Educación Secundaria,* RES) promised the expansion of *secundaria* schools throughout the country with stronger efforts to retain and graduate students on time and with better achievement levels (González *et al.*, 2013; Sandoval, 2015; Zorrilla, 2004), but those efforts did not bring English to the forefront; it remained in the background until the National English Program in Basic Education appeared in 2009 (*Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica*, PNIEB) making English a mandatory subject in K-9 public schools (Ramírez-Romero, Pamplón, and Sayer, 2013; Ramírez-Romero, Pamplón, and Cota, 2014; Sayer, 2013). In 2008, there were 33, 697 *secundaria* schools serving more than six million students throughout the country. Over 50% were *telesecundarias*, about a third were *secundarias generales* while approximately 13% were *secundarias técnicas* (Santos del Real, 2009). Yet, not all of them offered English as it was guaranteed by the program.

In Mexico, the Third Article of the Mexican Constitution guaranteed mandatory and free junior high school for all children between 12 and 14 years of age. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Education reported that only 7.5 of every 10 students who entered *secundaria* finished it. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012 results, between 65 to 70% of those who finished junior high school placed in the Insufficient or Elemental levels in mathematics and Spanish, thus demonstrating low academic progress (SEP, 2011a).

It is imperative to understand that *secundaria* students want to

learn within a democratic system that would afford them a

respectful learning space with interesting strategies and access to

information. It is equally vital for teachers to develop abilities to

analyze educational, collective, and institutional practices to

reevaluate the role they play in the pedagogical intervention to

favor the development of competencies in their students (SEP,

2011a, p. 15).

2.4 English in Basic Education

Despite the discouraging academic levels reported above, many Latin American

countries have adopted complex reforms in the last decade of the 20th Century in efforts

to transform their education systems (Fierro and Casillas, 2008; Kwok, 2014). Several

nations in the region had to rethink, relearn, and restructure old educational paradigms to

accommodate the economic, cultural, and social interdependence created by globalization

(Castillo and Azuma, 2012; COMCE, 2015; Sandoval, 2015), and deployed language

education reforms that integrated English in basic education curriculum (British Council,

2015; Vegas and Petrow, 2008).

Table 2.2 Countries in Latin America with English Language Programs

Country	English as a Foreign Language Program	Mandatory in Basic Education
Brazil	Languages without Borders, 2012	Tertiary Education
Chile	English Open Doors Programme (*Programa Inglés Abre Puertas*), 2003	5th grade to High School, (12 yrs.)
Colombia	General Law of Education, 1994, revised in 2006	K-11th grade (13 yrs.)
Mexico	National English Program (*Programa Nacional de Inglés,* formerly known as *Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica*), 2009 & 2012	K-9th grade (10 yrs.)
Peru	English Language Programme OR National English Plan, 2014	Junior & high school only

These reforms brought about significant changes in at least two areas: the first sought to address the expansion of mandatory basic education, and the second sought to address English language into quality education (Avalos, 2000; Daniel, 2010). Mexico was not immune to 21st Century demands, and likewise, it too deployed an aggressive and ambitious reform in basic education that made K-9 mandatory for all Mexican children and integrated English learning in the basic curriculum (Rixon, 2013: Sayer, 2013).

2.4.1 The National English Program

In Mexico, the National English Program (*Programa Nacional de Inglés*, PRONI) was first introduced in 2009 under the name of the National English Program in Basic Education (*Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica*, PNIEB). As previously mentioned, basic education in Mexico comprises nine of years: three years of preschool, six years of elementary school, and three years of junior high school (SEP, 2011; 2015a; 2015b). The Ministry of Education made it clear that the purpose of English instruction in basic education was to help students "obtain the necessary knowledge to participate in spoken and written social practices of the language with native and non-native speakers alike to satisfy basic communication needs" (SEP, 2015b, p. 12). However, implementing such an ambitious language policy in a country with deep income disparity, marginalized indigenous populations, and an education system devoid of effective accountability measures with unclear centralized and decentralized mandates was, and still is, a daunting task (British Council, 2015). Prior to 2009, some states had developed and implemented their own English curriculum in public K-6 schools (See Table 2.3), and those efforts eventually became the genesis of the national English program (Ramírez-Romero, 2012; SEP, 2015b).

Table 2.3 States with English Programs in preschool and elementary school prior to PNIEB 2009

State-sponsored English Programs		
North (9)	Center (8)	South (4)
Nuevo León	Morelos	Guerrero
Coahuila	Aguascalientes	Michoacán
Baja California	Colima	Veracruz
Chihuahua	Puebla	Quintana-Roo
Durango	Hidalgo	
Tamaulipas	San Luis Potosí	
Sinaloa	Guanajuato	
Nayarit	Jalisco	
Sonora		

The new English curriculum was designed to cover 10 of 12 years of mandatory education in four different cycles of English instruction, spanning from the last year of preschool to the last year of *secundaria* school (Ramírez-Romero, 2012). In 2009, only the first cycle of the new English program was piloted—from preschool to second grade (Rodríguez-Ramírez, 2014), but subsequently, all the 1060-1900 hours of language instruction were integrated into the general K-9 curriculum during the 2011-12 school year, but not in all the country's schools (Székely *et al.*, 2015). The first cycle of English instruction focused on introducing children to the idea of a foreign language; the second cycle concentrated on developing listening skills; the third cycle included developing more complex speaking, reading, and writing skills; and the fourth cycle sought to consolidate and expand the language skills acquired up to that point so that students could graduate with an "initial B1 level" of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages (SEP, 2015b). The CEFR refers to the target language learning progression through six levels of language ability: A1-A2 beginner, B1-B2 intermediate, and C1-C2 advanced. The B1 level aims at getting the learner to communicate freely in

spoken interactions while still having limited writing skills in the target language (Little, 2011).

The national English program, it has been argued, had noble goals, but it did not have the appropriate academic infrastructure and consistent funding to be fully implemented; therefore, it did not produce the results expected (Rodríguez-Ramírez, 2014; Sep. 2015a; Székely *et al.*, 2015). A 2014 study of 4,727 high school students from urban settings across 11 cities in Mexico revealed that 97 % of students failed to achieve the proficiency level expected by the program standards and that 79% of them did not have any knowledge of English (Székely *et al.*, 2015). Since the assumption was made that all study participants had had at least 360 hours of English instruction from their three years in junior high school, the results generated a dismal picture of the state of English learning in *secundaria* school (Martínez, 2015; Székely *et al.,* 2015). These results put the goal of producing young professionals with lifelong skills a little further back in education priorities (Rangel de Jesús, 2011), especially those in marginalized areas. By 2016, education officials stated that the National English Program had been implemented in over 33, 000 public, basic education schools including *academic* and *técnica* junior high schools. Nothing, however, was said about *telesecundarias* (Diario Official, 2015), initial teacher preparation, and/or contextual differences that could impact the program implementation.

2.4.2 Challenges of the National English Program

a. Change

In the last two decades, there have been three major curriculum changes for all junior high school teachers in Mexico, including English teachers: 1) The 1993 National

Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education (*Acuerdo Nacional para la Modernización de la Educación*), (Zorrilla, 2004); 2) the 2006 Secondary Education Reform (*Reforma de Educación Secundaria*, RES) (Sandoval, 2015); and 3) the 2009 National English Program in Basic Education (*Programa Nacional de Intglés en Educación* Básica, PNIEB*)* (Rámirez-Romero and Pamplón, 2012; Sayer, 2013*).* In practice, these education reforms have proven difficult to implement due to a bureaucratic education system that has mismanaged resources and prioritized political agendas (Castillo-Alemán, 2011). Experts have shown that the nature of educational change requires understanding the reform's main players, their agendas, their interests, their conflict, their points of collaboration, and the political context in which reforms are conceived and implemented (Avalos, 2000; Fullan, 2001a; Khaniya and Williams, 2004). These factors have fused negatively in Mexico and could explain why, despite great efforts to reform English education, real change has remained elusive (Navarro, 2006).

b. Teacher Shortage

As mentioned earlier, introducing a foreign language reform was not enough; the system required an infrastructure to sustain it. In Mexico, a shortage of well-trained and qualified English teachers working in the public sector has compounded the challenges for the language program (Sayer, 2013b). Education officials have estimated that between 85 – 95 thousand English teachers, with both proficient language skills and pedagogical know-how, are needed to implement the program throughout the country, but there is currently no capacity built-in to supply them (Sayer, 2013a; SEP, 2015). This teacher shortage deprived 11.5 million students of the 20.5 million in basic education from

receiving English classes during the 2014-15 school year. The national English program

reported that the states of Aguascalientes, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas had 100%

implementation of the program while Chiapas, Guanajuato, Michoacán, and Veracruz

had less than 10% of program implementation. These percentages did not include

telesecundarias, schools located in marginalized communities, where the program is

practically non-existent (Del Valle, 2016). The ministry of education planned on

providing English classes to 50% of preschools and elementary schools in the country by

2018 (Del Valle, 2016), but the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education

(*Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación,* INEE) reported that the *Normal*

School—the state teacher preparation system for *secundaria* teachers—has seen a 30%

decrease in general enrollment, and only half of those who graduated in 2013 did so with

adequate professional profiles to begin teaching (INEE, 2015). The obvious implication

is that lower graduation rates would no alleviate the teacher shortage situation.

c. Poor Working Conditions

Junior high school English teachers work in very difficult conditions. Some of

their challenges include large classes, heavy teaching loads, lack of materials, resources,

and textbooks (Blasco, 2003; Lengeling, Mora, Buenaventura, Arredondo, Carillo,

Ortega, Caréto, 2013; Ramírez-Romero *et al.,* 2014; Zorrilla, 2004). The lack of and

delayed distribution of textbooks has been a common complaint among English teachers

throughout the country, especially among those for whom the textbook has become the

only "methodological guide" to their practice (Ramírez-Romero *et al.,* 2014, p. 18) and

curriculum compliance. Most textbooks, however, lack suitable cultural and linguistic

content for the diverse Mexican contexts and do not align with the English program

content and objectives (Despagne, 2010; Lengeling *et al.*, 2013; Ramírez-Romero *et al.,* 2014). Up to 12 publishing companies have continued to supply unsuitable textbooks for Mexican students whose English level and cultural context are very diverse (Calderón, 2015).

In addition, inadequate budgets and a shortage of full-time positions have forced junior high English teachers to juggle between two teaching jobs to make a living wage (Calderón, 2015b). This lack of funding has created a host of part-time teachers who have no time to participate in professional development, no time to collaborate with colleagues, no time to interact with parents, and no time to bond with students and the school community (Calderón, 2015b; Lengeling *et al.*, 2013; Wise and Zwiers, 2013). Results from the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) administered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported that Mexico had the highest percentage of hourly-paid teachers and that many of them would like to have a permanent, full-time position. The 2014 Competitive Entrance Exam to the workforce (*Examen de Oposición*), for example, had no openings for full-time employment at *secundaria* level, only hourly assignments (Calderón, 2015b).

School leadership is another area that has affected English teachers who already feel excluded from the school decision-making process and ignored as crucial stakeholders within the school community (*Mexicanos Primero*, 2014d). Many teachers reported not being directly supervised by their school principals who, in many cases, ultimately determined their teaching load and the content area to teach in any given school year (López de Anda, 2013; SEP, 2011a). The *secundaria* school academic culture has allowed principals to make unilateral decisions about English teachers' terms of

employment based upon curriculum knowledge, observation of school social dynamics, and allocation of resources (López de Anda, 2013). The TALIS 2013 also revealed that most principals were males, with a bachelor's or *Normal School* degree, but without leadership training. Collins and Pérez (2013) found that principals were experienced teachers, self-taught administrators, and overly authoritarian leaders who did not like being challenged thus alienating themselves from their constituents and damaging teachers' loyalty and collaboration. The TALIS found that nine in ten principals occupied most of their time in bureaucratic work and discipline problems than in observing and giving feedback to teachers (*Mexicanos Primero,* 2014d).

These three examples illustrate some of the working conditions English teachers have faced in the workplace. Junior high English teachers need a strong academic infrastructure and a culture of collaboration that would allow reflection to learn from their teaching (Bando and Li, 2014; Delany-Barmann, 2010; Navarro and Verdisco, 2000; Sayer, Mercau, & Blanco, 2013).

2.5 English Teachers in Basic Education

In Mexico, as in many parts of Latin America, English teachers' qualifications do not often match the skill set needed to implement and sustain education reforms in basic education (Weis and Zwiers, 2013). Professional development has been the channel by which in-service teachers have been given the skills, knowledge, or motivation they lack. However, professional development has failed to address the plethora of professional and contextual needs of a diverse teaching workforce of individuals who teach in very different learning environments with an equally diverse student population (Navarro & Verdisco, 2000; Sayer et al., 2013). Mexico has, for the most part, indirectly required in-

service English teachers to be independently responsible for their own professional development through interplay of the ideal, the expected, and the feared level of proficiency (Goker, 2006). At the same time, many teachers have had to self-fund their professional development courses despite their meager salaries (Hivers, 2003; Santos del Real, 2001, as cited in Ruiz, 2002). Others have taken online training workshops paid for by the ministry of education in their respective states (Quezada, 2013). The 2013 TALIS showed that two in five Mexican teachers paid for their own professional development, either partly or in full. Others have participated in professional development targeting content and teaching knowledge deficiencies (Ramírez-Romero and Pamplón, 2012) while others have disregarded the opportunity, as there seemed to be an unspoken pact of silence regarding content mastery. For some teachers, admitting any kind of deficiency is not an option, especially in *secundaria* schools (Santibañez, 2007), where they are supposed to be experts in the subject they teach. Yet, being able to afford professional development has not guaranteed participation, as many teachers are not always released from teaching to attend (*Mexicanos Primero,* 2014a). At the same time, many teachers have found professional development to be irrelevant, fragmented, and disconnected from the realities of practice. Consequently, they have asked their authorities for professional development that reflects their teaching contexts, with real teaching dilemmas, sustained over time, and aimed at developing a culture of collaboration within schools (Lieberman and Pointer, 2010; *Mexicanos Primero*, 2014a; Musanti & Pence, 2010; TALIS 2013; Weis and Zwiers, 2013).

A survey of 370 in-service English teachers in 24 states in Mexico revealed that English teachers did not have a homogenous professional profile (Sayer *et al.*, 2013), as

seen in the Table 2.4 below. The study reported that 16.8%, or 62 of the 370 English

teachers who participated in the survey were *Normalistas*—graduates from the *Normal*

School sytem. However, the report failed to indicate where they were represented on the

table, which level they taught, or if their English teaching differed from those who

graduated from the university.

Table 2.4 General Profile of PNIEB Teachers (Sayer *et al.*, 2013)

Profile of PNIEB Teachers	Percent
University level studies	76.2%
Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) Certification	37.4%
TOEFL (Institutional)	72.7%
Trained to work with children	49.7%
Trained on National Program	88.1%

For example, the ministry of education has indicated that, at any given time in any given

secondary school in Mexico, one could find people teaching English who were trained in

different professions but whose English skills awarded them teaching positions (SEByN,

2002 as cited in Santibañez, 2007). Having non-trained teachers teaching English is not

new. Calderón (2015b) stated that "with disturbing frequency, individuals [without

teacher training] were also appointed as teachers simply because they spoke English…or

were friends with officials or union representatives…or were foreign visitors…or were

deported from the United States and had English skills" (p. 65). Some states have offered

training and certification to these non-trained English teachers, but whether there is a

mechanism to track their participation or teaching performance is unknown.

2.6 Initial English Teacher Preparation

For the past 25 years, Mexican higher education institutions have recognized the

need for a degree in English teaching. Ramírez-Romero (2007) reported that prior to

2007, there were 20 public universities that offered undergraduate degrees in English as a

foreign language while nine of them also offered master degrees in English Teaching.

Since the national English program needs to recruit approximately 85-95 thousand new

teachers, the demand for a bachelor's degree in English teaching has also increased. Both

private and public institutions at the federal and state levels offer English teaching

degrees (Ramírez-Romero, 2007; Sayer *et al.*, 2013), but the exact number of programs

across the country remains elusive. The British Council (2015) reported that, thus far, the

National English Program has been introduced to 6.7 million students—a mere 18% of

students in Mexican public schools. Therefore, the country still needs to train and recruit

over 80 thousand additional English teachers to serve more than 20 million students in

basic education. The coordinator of the national language program confirmed that only

nine million students of the 20.5 enrolled in basic education received English classes

during the 2015-16 school year and that 90 thousand teachers were needed to offer the

program to the entire country (Martínez, J.M. personal communication, July 13th, 2015).

This high demand for English teachers, however, has not yielded clear initial preparation

content guidelines. In 2015, the Ministry of Education published the desired teacher

profile for secondary education (see Table 2.5), but exactly how those requirements have

translated into initial preparation of *secundaria* English teachers remains unclear. Those

requirements assume professional skills unique to teaching that need to be taught openly

and explicitly; it is not enough to *require* a certain profile without aligning teacher

preparation content to those professional expectations (Ball *et al*, 2008).

Table 2.5 2015-16 *Secundaria* Teachers' Profile (SEP, 2015e)

Teacher Profile

Dimension 1: docents who know their students, know how they learn, and what they need to learn.

Dimension 2: docents who organize and evaluate the educational plan and apply didactic interventions as necessary.

Dimension 3: docents who see themselves as professionals and improve their practice continuously to support their students' learning.

Dimension 4: docents who accept the legal and ethical responsibilities of their profession on behalf of their students.

Dimension 5: docents who actively participate in their school functions and collaborate with the community to guarantee a successful learning experience for students.

Regarding teachers of English as a foreign language, the international association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL) has also developed specific standards to guide training and teaching for English teachers. There are three types of standards: content, pedagogy, and performance. For the purposes of this research, only content and pedagogical standards will be addressed in this review (see Table 2.6).

The literature review did not provide information about how these standards have been integrated into initial preparation of English teachers in Mexico. Nonetheless, Tatto and Vélez (1999) reported that teacher preparation programs in Mexico have historically adhered to a transmission model that does not accommodate the current knowledge society. Mercado (2007) added that Mexican initial teacher preparation programs needed a shift from a passive model of memorization, rewards, and punishments to the acquisition of skills and knowledge that would allow teachers to solve problems of practice.

Table 2.6 EFL Teacher Preparation Standards (Kuhlman and Knezevic, 2013, p.7)

Content Standards	Pedagogical Standards
Content knowledge refers to pre-service teachers' knowledge of the content they plan to teach, and their ability to explain important principles and concepts. There are two types of content standards: a. Declarative knowledge consists of what candidates know, or knowledge of concepts and facts. b. Procedural knowledge is what candidates know how to do.	These standards focus on a. how to teach, how students learn b. what is taught (the curriculum) c. effective teaching strategies to impart the specialized knowledge of a subject area (e.g., planning, instruction, analysis, and evaluation) d. students' diversity and on differing approaches to learning e. how culture influences teaching and learning f. what teachers need to know about students' preconceptions that must be engaged for effective learning g. teachers' familiarity with standards-based instruction, assessment, and learning

Reyes (1993, as cited in Rosas, 2000), voiced concerns about teacher *formation*, stating that in Mexico, the preparation of teachers entailed mere curriculum changes instead transforming an individual for the task of teaching. Rosas (2000) further stated that focusing initial teacher preparation on the *teacher* would produce personal and social changes from which more change would be possible. Yet, in Mexico, there is an ingrained notion that teachers and students should learn the same things and in the same way (Tatto and Vélez, 1999)—an attitude that has made initial teacher preparation deficient in content-specific courses (Collins and Pérez, 2013; *Mexicanos Primero*, 2014a; Santibañez, 2007). Similarly, two myths have complicated the debate about how to train teachers: a) the myth that teachers are born and not made, and b) the myth that teaching is easy (Ball, 2000). Neither, of course, is true.

Teaching in such a diverse cultural landscape as Mexico offers, requires "skillful teaching" (Darling-Hammond, 1998, p.7), and teachers must integrate a vast amount of knowledge into their own preparation by developing critical thinking skills and autonomy to face the social changes that necessitate knowing how to do and how to manipulate new

learning processes (Mercado, 2007). A *new* teacher would need to learn to balance the

tension between theory and practice and understand the content well enough to design

instruction that fits a specific teaching context (Ball, 2000). A *new* teacher would need to

develop skills and competencies that would allow them to navigate the political

infiltration that has lowered the value of their profession and has made them react to

government incentives (Cortina, 1989).

The literature revealed many variables that intervene in the process of preparing

teachers for the classroom experience. Freeman (1989) invited understanding on two

levels: "a view of what language teaching is and a view of how to educate individuals in

such teaching" (p. 29). *Secundaria* English teachers in Mexico, for instance, are supposed

to be content specialists, but many of them have relied on intuition, on their own ideas,

and on personal experiences as guides for their practice (Evans, 2002; Ramírez-Romero

et al., 2014; Santibañez, 2007). In 1991, the World Bank reported that of 565, 328

teachers in basic education, only 50% of them met the teaching qualifications and had the

appropriate content and pedagogical knowledge to be in the classroom. The study also

found that teachers serving in rural communities were the least prepared (Corcoran and

Leahy, 2003; DGIE, 2012; Dominguez and Barrera, 2009; Tatto, 1999). And these

differences in training levels have continued even though Mexico's teacher preparation

institutions—the *Normal School*, the university, and other institutions of higher education

are supposed to adhere to similar guidelines for teacher preparation. Such guidelines

should also include the context in which teachers work. Context does make the difference

in learning (Freeman, 2011). Two decades earlier, Freeman (1989) put it simply: what

teachers do is shaped by where they do it and who they do it with. Therefore, teacher

educators should understand that there is a gap between what is wanted and needed from teachers and what current initial preparation programs offer (Santibañez, 2007). Some of what is needed includes more and better pedagogical and content knowledge in pre-service programs (Collins and Pérez, 2013), more and better resources (Lengeling *et al.*, 2013), and better leadership (Jiménez and Perales, 2007).

This reality has put Mexico's two major teacher preparation institutions—the University and the *Normal School* system at the center of the problem and has urged them to prepare high caliber English teachers with effective language skills levels, strong pedagogical know-how, and tangible contextual knowledge to match the realities in the classroom (Sayer *et al.*, 2013). Calderón (2015b) stressed that Mexican teacher preparation programs have over-estimated theory and under-developed independent thinkers who have grown accustomed to consuming knowledge from publishing houses that have inserted their academic agenda in the Mexican curriculum. This situation has led to an over-reliance on curriculum guides and textbooks that rescue teachers' lack of mastery and understanding of their own content (Tatto and Vélez, 1999).

The *Normal School* system, one of the institutions that prepares *secundaria* school English teachers, still follows the 1999 Curriculum for the bachelor's degree in English Teaching (SEP, 2002). The degree can be obtained in one of these three modalities: the *modalidad escolarizada*, which offers classes during the regular school year; the *modalidad semi-escolarizada,* which offers classes on weekends during the school year; and the *modalidad mixta*, which offers classes outside of the regular school year calendar (Palacios, M., personal communication, May 9th, 2016). All modalities offer general education, teaching, and content-specific classes, but the number of hours dedicated to

content specific classes vary. For example, under the *modalidad escolarizada* only 20 of the 224 hours needed to complete the program are content specific (DGESPE, 2012). Despite these seemingly content deficiencies, the *Normal School* had the highest student enrollment in the 2013-14 school year, 72 % compared to the 15% at the University (*Universidad Pedagógica Nacional*, UPN), and 12 % in other Institutions of Higher Education (INEE, 2015b). Although there are 695 institutions of higher education nationwide, the 449 *Normal Schools* still command a respectable enrollment number compared to the 284 *Universidad Pedagógica Nacional*. These numbers, however, did not specify the number of English teachers enrolled at each institution or how the guidelines impacted their preparation, but the ministry of education noted that teacher preparation programs in the *Normal School* system were supposed to link theory and practice and that pre-service teachers were encouraged to reflect on their practice to increase content knowledge mastery (DGESPE, 2012). SEP (2015c) also reported that 63% of public and 91% of private *Normal Schools* were relatively small, serving around 350 students each. As for their graduates, 41% of them work on hourly contracts in public schools, and 88% work part-time in the private sector. The literature, however, did not substantiate either of these claims. SEP data simply listed the criteria teacher graduates from its 261 public *Normal Schools* across Mexico are expected to meet upon graduation (see Table 2.7).

Table 2.7 Junior High School Teachers' Professional Profile Components (DGESPE, 2012)

Profile Areas	Description
1.Intellectual abilities	Exhibits a consistent habit for reading
	Expresses ideas clearly and concisely, orally and in writing
	Frames-analyzes-resolves problems
	Exhibits academic curiosity and a reflective practice
2. Content mastery and purposes	Exhibits deep content knowledge
	Understand the content purposes on students' lives
	Masters pedagogical content area and content learning sequence in junior high school Understands the transition processes between elementary and junior high school
	Knows how to link the curriculum content across grade levels
	Understand the cognitive processes of students.
3. Didactic competencies	Knows how to design, organize, and apply strategies and activities for adolescents Recognizes learning styles differences and applies strategies to stimulate learning Establishes a collaborative climate within the classroom and promotes trust
	Recognizes the physical and emotional changes in adolescents
	Knows about learning materials and didactic resources available
4. Ethical and professional identity	Fosters and respects good relationships with students, parents, and colleagues
	Knows the needs, problems, and deficiencies of the Mexican education system
	Knows influencing factors in teaching context
	Values collaboration and continuous professional growth
5. Social awareness in school context	Appreciates and respects regional, social, cultural, and ethnic differences
	Values families and works closely with them
	Promotes solidarity and support toward the school community

Descriptors for areas two, three, and five are of particular interest for this research as they outline learning expectations during initial preparation; therefore, knowing how these descriptors are transferred to practice, and how effectively they work in specific teaching contexts would be valuable. In addition to these general descriptions of the ideal teacher profile, the National English Program presented a teacher profile rubric that specified requirements for language mastery level (see Table 2.8). In addition, teachers are required to have five years of academic training, and two years of teaching experience in the level they wish to teach.

Table 2.8 Teacher Profile to Teach English (SEP, 2015b)

Teacher Profile	1st Cycle Preschool-2grade	2nd Cycle Third & Fourth grade	3rd Cycle Fifth & Sixth grade	4th Cycle: Junior High School First, Second, & Third
Ideal CEFR	A2	B1	B2	C1
TOEFL iBT	30-40	41-52	53-64	65-78
Basic CERF	A1	A2	B1	B2
TOEFL iBT		30-40	41-52	53-64

These requirements notwithstanding, the Ministry of Education reported in 2013 that during the 2012-13 school year, only 30% of English teachers had the ideal profile to teach in the first three cycles of the national English program—from preschool to sixth grade. The rest had a basic profile, but only 30% had a language mastery certification to teach in the second and third cycles, and more than 50% of English teachers did not offer any proof of language mastery (SEP, 2013). This is significant because studies in which English teachers were observed teaching revealed that those with lower English proficiency taught differently. They used a more rote approach to teaching—*traditional* approaches—that utilized more repetition, memorization, and isolation of language concepts and functions. Besides the difficult work conditions English teachers encounter, those studies also pointed at the poor training as a contributing factor for teaching failures (Quezada, 2013; Ramírez-Romero *et al.,* 2012). Again, *training*, surfaced as a key element for successful teaching. Additionally, studies showed that teacher preparation varied not only from institution to institution, but also from state to state (Quezada, 2013). A study of a university teacher preparation program in southern Mexico between 2004 and 2006 found that 75% of 36 participants were satisfied with their initial training but admitted to knowing little about the education system (Domínguez and Barrera, 2009). In 2007, a subsequent study of pre-service teachers, in both public and private

Normal Schools in Mexico City found that the sociocultural background of pre-service

teachers impacted their initial preparation as sociocultural deficiencies were difficult to

bridge with pedagogy alone (Rodríguez and Negrete, 2009). But, while *Normal Schools*

prepare teachers for basic education level specifically, universities market their

preparation programs for English teachers at K-20 level. In addition, the university

curriculum listed English, as a content area, in the first six semesters of an eight or nine-

semester program while the *Normal School* listed English in the middle four semesters of

an eight-semester program. Also, there is evidence that universities have a set language

level requirement to enter an English teacher preparation program while *Normal Schools*,

on the other hand, may or may not adhere to a required language level as a requirement

for admission (Palacios, M., personal communication, May 9th, 2016). These examples

highlight the need to improve the quality and relevancy of initial preparation of teachers

in basic education across institutions. Hence, our attention shifted to initial preparation of

English teachers at *secundaria school* level.

   In response to the current teacher preparation system, characterized by "a

heterogeneity in administrative, organizational, curricular, professional" aspects (INEE,

2015b, p. 6) that have translated into an asymmetric training system with an unequal

product (Arnaut, 2004, as cited by INEE, 2015b), the National Institute for the Evaluation

of Education (*Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la* Educación, INEE) also

introduced new guidelines for teacher preparation (*Directrices para mejorar la formación*

inicial de los docentes de educación básica). These guidelines merged research

conducted by the INEE and the results from the 2014 and 2015 entrance exams to the

labor force (*exámenes de oposición*) that all Mexican teachers are required to take and

pass to secure a teaching position. The 80-page document described the development of a

common, higher education framework for the initial preparation of teachers and

presented, among other things, the prominent role of teachers as a strategic priority that

favored an active pedagogy and knowledge management in its curriculum (INEE,

2015b).

In addition to the INEE's recommendations, *Mexicanos Primero*—an independent

organization that supports the right of Mexican children to a quality education—has also

described the current preparation programs in Mexico as being too generic and lacking

learning focus (Calderón, 2016); therefore, such organization also made

recommendations for the initial and continual preparation of teachers. They argued in

favor of "using recent practice evaluations results to plan training based on real teaching

conditions, to create a specific area for teaching preparation at the Ministry of Education,

at federal and local levels, and to use successful teacher educators in teacher preparation

programs in higher education institutions" (pp. 3-4). The literature, however, did not

address whether all these recommendations and guidelines have been incorporated into

English teacher preparation programs across institutions, and/or if English teachers have

been part of any changes in the initial preparation curricula.

This relentless focus on teachers is not new. What is new is the extent to which

countries like Mexico have attributed the education crises to teachers, and through small

or big reform efforts, they have sought to impact teachers' practice with guidelines and

recommendations that take time to implement into teacher preparation programs (Avalos,

2000). Therefore, questions remain: are the realities of practice reflected in English

teachers' initial preparation? What are teachers trained to do in the classroom, and does it

fit the context in which they teach? The United Nations International Children's

Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization (UNESCO) have said that teachers are entitled to respect, a living wage,

and an *adequate preparation* that would allow them to participate in education policy

decisions and receive continuous support throughout their professional careers (Sánchez,

2015). The Regional Office of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean

(OREALC) stated that the teaching profession has earned the right to continuous learning

to achieve mastery of their subject, knowledge of teaching, and knowledge about working

in diverse contexts and with a diverse student population (Sánchez, 2015). This author

further invited teachers to foster professionalization and commit to their own practice, to

the school community, and to education itself through ethical and social competencies.

As mentioned earlier, the expectations for learning are changing (Darling-

Hammond, 2006). Teachers need to see and understand the link between their knowledge

base and their students' learning (Ball, 2000), and this knowledge base must "focus on

the activity of teaching itself; it should center on the teacher who does it, the contexts in

which it is done, and the pedagogy by which it is done" (Freeman and Johnson, 1998, p.

397). Current research has shown that, regardless of subject area, there is a foundational

teaching knowledge that allows a teacher to manipulate both the subject area and the

ability to teach it in a way that impacts not only teaching but also learning (Ball and

McDiarmid, 1989; Ball, Thames, and Phelps, 2008; Banco Mundial, 1991; Bando and Li,

2014; Freeman, 2002; Freeman and Johnson, 1998).

2.7 Summary

  The theoretical and empirical literature presented in this chapter showed that initial preparation in Mexico has been a complicated undertaking on many levels. On one hand, *secundaria* teachers have been subjected to several reforms aimed at improving the quality of education they provide while education officials overlook the initial preparation they receive. The heterogeneity that has characterized initial preparation for teachers in Mexico is composed of "superimposed geological layers of sediment accumulated over a century" (Arnout, 2004, p.7) by the many actors who, in one way or another, have influenced or resisted education policy changes. On the other hand, the Mexican Constitution is clear in that all Mexican children have the right to a quality education (CPEUM, Article 3). But a quality education requires high caliber teachers who know their subject, know what to do with it, know how to organize learning, know about teaching, know about how to organize teaching, and know how to take context into account when delivering content (Ball *et al.*, 2008). Language reforms in Mexico cannot be successful if initial preparation programs are divorced from the realities of practice teachers face in the classroom on their first day (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Elmore (2004) emphasized that the smallest unit can cause a whole system to fail; therefore, reforms begin with teachers and not with external mandates. The analysis of the existing teacher preparation system at both *Normal School* and University level revealed a need for a preparation model that equips English teachers with strong content knowledge, exceptional content pedagogical knowledge, and specific knowledge of their students' sociocultural and economic context to allow English learning to be relevant and effective

(Ball *et al.*, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Fandiño, 2013; Quezada, 2013, Sayer, 2013; Shulman, 1986).

Studies that looked at English teachers working for the National English Program since 2009 have not provided information about teachers' initial preparation or whether that preparation has translated into effective classroom practice befitting the boundaries of a given socio-economic and cultural context. The current study aims at informing that gap specifically related to English teachers in *secundaria schools* in the respective modalities. A knowledge framework (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Pasternak & Bailey, 2004; Shulman, 1986) will be used to understand current English teachers' initial preparation and to discover how it relates to the realities of practice they encounter in their respective English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design selected for this work and describes the procedures for site and participant selection, instruments used for data collection, and the analysis that followed. The research questions are reiterated to provide a reference for the study and to link the data collection strategies to the core objective: to describe the role of initial teacher preparation and teaching context in the implementation of the national English program as experienced by in-service junior high school teachers. Ethical considerations are also addressed in the last section.

3.1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate how initial teacher preparation for English teachers in junior high schools in Mexico matches the realities of practice in different teaching contexts. This inquiry took a bottom-up approach to allow English teachers to describe the realities in their teaching context and how those realities impact the implementation of the National English Program. Due to the complex characteristics of different teaching contexts, the present study was designed to use both quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to address broad and generalizable findings and to elicit detailed information to answer the questions posed in this study (Patton, 2002).

3.1.2 Research Questions

This research sought to answer the following overarching question: How do initial preparation programs in Mexico equip junior high school English teachers for the

realities of practice in different teaching contexts? The following sub-questions guided the inquiry:

     a) How are teachers prepared with English knowledge?

     b) How are teachers prepared with pedagogical content knowledge?

     c) How are teachers prepared with contextual knowledge?

3.2 Research Design

The literature review about English teachers in Mexico included several studies describing teachers' experiences teaching English under the national English program (Quezada, 2013; Ramírez-Romero, Pamplón, and Cota, 2014a; Ramírez-Romero, Sayer, and Pamplón, 2014b; Rodríguez-Ramírez, 2014; Sayer, Mercau, and Blanco, 2013; SIPSE, 2015; Székely, O'Donoghue, and Pérez, 2015; Toriz, 2009). The available research, however, was general in terms of teaching level, teaching context, and initial teacher preparation. To compensate for this generality, the present study focused on junior high school English teachers working in three different school modalities; namely, academic junior high school, vocational junior high school, and distance learning junior high school—*secundarias generales*, *secundarias técnicas*, and *telesecundarias* respectively, located in urban, semi-urban, and rural contexts in three different geographical regions of Mexico, including the states of Zacatecas in the north, Tlaxcala and Puebla in the center, and Chiapas in the south.

This study utilized a mixed-methods research design with both quantitative and qualitative components within a single 35-item questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to obtained generalizable conclusions about the sample concerning their English

knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and contextual knowledge acquired during their initial teacher preparation program.

3.2.1 Research Instruments

3.2.1.1 Questionnaire

To understand how initial preparation program outfitted *secundaria* English teachers, the study included English teachers working in three different junior high school modalities from three different teaching contexts in three areas of the country. Because a large number of participants was necessary to make the results statistically significant and generalizable (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner, 2007), the questionnaire was distributed in four different states in Mexico, targeting a potential population of approximately 4,500 English teachers.

The questionnaire used in this study was first developed by the researcher based on prior working experience with Mexican English teachers and complemented by a need analysis study of Mexican English teachers' profiles previously conducted by Sayer *et al*. (2013). That study used a survey from which a few questions were adapted to suit this study. The questionnaire was subsequently piloted with 26 elementary school English teachers in the state of Morelos, Mexico, to examine the questions' content, tone, and implications. The pilot study was conducted in June and July of 2015, before the actual research took place, and none of the teachers in the pilot study were part of the target demographic for this study. The pilot group only provided feedback and suggestions to improve the instrument. The questionnaire had its limitations, especially because the researcher could not determine how the study and the questionnaire were presented to teachers by education officials and supervisors, how many teachers received the

questionnaire link, and whether any of the intended population was left out without the

researcher's knowledge (Visser, Krosnick, and Lavrakas, 2000). A more comprehensive

discussion about the limitations is presented in a subsequent section.

The following criteria guided the questionnaire:

a)   Allow specific questions about English knowledge

b)   Ask questions that were clear, specific, straightforward, and

comprehensible

c)   Ask questions that were feasibly answerable given the time available, and

d)   Ask questions that were politically non-threatening (Davis, 2011).

The questionnaire met all these requirements, captured participants' demographic

information, and identified some realities of practice and potential solutions (Brown,

2001; Davis, 2011). The questionnaire was administered in Spanish for two main reasons:

1) to assure education officials of its academic content, and 2) to remove any concerns

about participants' English proficiency.

The 35-item questionnaire was organized into six sections: demographic

information; current job situation; teachers' English learning experience; teachers'

English teaching experience; teachers' initial preparation; and the preparation of future

English teachers. Except for the first two sections, questions were arranged to align with

the three strands of knowledge included in the conceptual framework—content,

pedagogy, and context. The questionnaire response format included multiple-choice

single answer, multiple-choice multiple answer, text entry, and Likert scales (see

Appendix C). Using the Qualtrics software, the questionnaire was distributed online in all

four research states with a potential population of approximately 4,500 English junior

high school teachers. Each state had different link to the questionnaire, and each link was opened for two months. The final sample size was *n=296*.

3.2.2 Site Selection and Rationale

This research was conducted in Mexico. Four states were selected to represent different sociocultural environments for initial teacher preparation and English instruction: the southern state of Chiapas, the central states of Tlaxcala and Puebla, and the northern state of Zacatecas. These states have junior high schools in the three modalities needed for the study; namely, *secundarias generales, técnicas, and telesecundarias* in urban, semi-urban, and rural settings. In all four states, there are federal and state schools. Federal schools are funded by the central Ministry of Education (*Secretaría de Educación Pública*, SEP) office in Mexico City while the state schools are funded by local state government. Working for a state or federal school determines teachers' employee classification, benefits, and pay scale. The type of school also determines the assigned teachers' union and the teaching schedule. For the most part, federal schools have a full-time schedule (*escuelas de tiempo completo*), from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM in elementary school, and from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM in *secundaria* school (Ocampo, J. E., personal communication, May 9th, 2016). Table 3.1 shows the approximate number of students that should have received English classes during the 2014-15 school year per *secundaria* school modality in each the participating state.

Table 3.1 Student enrollment for the 2014-15 school year *(www.planeación.sep.gob.mx)*

Secundaria *Modality*	Chiapas # of Students	Puebla # of Students	Tlaxcala # of Students	Zacatecas # of Students
Generales	81, 664	117, 048	26, 577	27, 006
Técnicas	68, 189	79, 986	26, 787	24, 834
Telesecundarias	143, 667	142, 863	16, 725	39, 115
Total	293, 520	336, 897	70, 089	90, 955

There was no information available to confirm whether all these students received English classes during this specific school year. A SEP official in Tlaxcala stated that initial teacher preparation programs in that state were exclusively for elementary school teachers who took English classes as a general subject but not as a main content area (Sánchez, A. personal communication, June 13th, 2016). From this statement, we could make two inferences: a) *Secundaria* English teachers in that state were trained somewhere else; and b) there could be *secundaria* English teachers who were trained to teach in preschool or elementary school only. Table 3.2 shows the number of teacher preparation institutions in each of the states included in this study; we were unable to confirm how many of these institutions prepared *secundaria* English teachers.

Table 3.2 Initial Teacher Preparation Institutions per participating State (DGESPE, 2016)

Type of School	Chiapas	Puebla	Tlaxcala	Zacatecas
Normal Schools	21	11	7	5
Other Higher Ed. Institutions	3	4	2	2
Total	24	15	9	7

The site selection rationale follows.

Chiapas

a) The National English Program (*Programa Nacional de* Inglés, PRONI) in Mexico has neither been implemented in every state nor at every level of basic education (Martínez, J.M., personal communication, July 13th, 2015). Chiapas is one of those states where the

PRONI has not been fully implemented and is only offered in public *secundaria* schools. This means that *secundaria* teachers begin English classes with students who have not had English instruction in preschool or in elementary school.

b) Nationally, 15-year old students in Chiapas placed in the bottom 10 of the 2012 PISA[2] results. This means that less than 30% of students obtained adequate or high learning scores in math and Spanish. These numbers represent a window into the learning situation in basic education in the state.

c) Chiapas has 18 *Normal Schools* but only less than five of them offer a bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching (ELT). There are other three institutions of higher education that also offer an ELT degree, but it was not clear if they prepar elementary or *secundaria* school teachers.

d) Chiapas has a literacy level of 15% with 30% of its population being indigenous. This means that for every 100 persons, 27 persons five years of age and up speak an indigenous language, and 14% of them, do not speak Spanish. (INEGI, 2012; INEE,2015a).

Puebla

Please see the limitations section, 3.5.2.

Tlaxcala

a) Tlaxcala is a small state with less than 1.3 million inhabitants with approximately 5000 *secundaria* schools. Since 78% of its population lives in urban areas, only 20% of junior

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[2] The Programme for International Student Assessment (**PISA**) is a worldwide study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in member and non-member nations of 15-year-old school students' scholastic performance on mathematics, science, and reading.

high school are *telesecundarias* (INEE, 2015a)*,* located in rural areas. The average level

of education in the state was reported at 9.2 years; therefore, students should graduate

with some English skills.

b) Tlaxcala started training in-service preschool and elementary school teachers in

English in 2008, a year before the PRONI was introduced in the state in 2009 (Sánchez,

A., personal communication, June 13th, 2016). However, those teachers were not initially

trained in foreign language teaching; they were regular classroom teachers who received

some English training. There was no additional information to determine if the training

had allowed implementation of the first three cycles of the National English Program in

preschool and elementary school.

d) Tlaxcala has experienced an increasing number of repatriated children (12-17 years of

age) that have challenged not only the academic infrastructure in general but also

teachers' pedagogical skills specifically. These *transnational children*, as they are called,

have reintegrated into the Mexican education system with prior English knowledge

(Vázquez and Hernández, 2014).

Zacatecas

a) Zacatecas is the only state in this study that has experienced a reduction of *secundaria*-

age students since 2013. The National Population Council (*Consejo Nacional de

Población*) projected that the number of *secundaria* students in the state would diminish

from 6.1% in 2013 to 5.7% in 2018, and to 5.0% in 2030.[3] Despite this reduction in the

secundaria student population, the state continues to have a shortage of English teachers.

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[3] Consejo Nacional de Población, Secretaría de Gobernación, and Secretaría General del Consejo Nacional de Población. (n.d.). Dinánmica demográfica 1990-2010 y proyecciones de población 2010-2030. In *gob.mx*. Retrieved from www.gob.mx

b) Zacatecas is one of 18 states that signed a national agreement called the National English Program for Everyone in Mexico (*Programa Nacional de Inglés para Todos en México*, PNITM) that offers students in basic education English scholarships to promote equity and inclusion. Enrolled students study English classes through a 15-month, six-level blended program that runs alongside the National English Program in basic education (Diario Oficial, 2015).

c) Due to a shortage of qualified English teachers, local SEP officials in Zacatecas reported that 600 English educators in 58 municipalities took an online English class for six months after which, they were all certified in English.[4]

d) Zacatecas has only two institutions for initial English teaching preparation, one public and one private (Hernández, R., personal communication, July 2016).

The rationale described above may reveal unexpected realities of practice for English teachers in each of the states included in this study. Those contextual circumstances may impact the work English teachers do in the classroom.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

3.3.1 Questionnaire

The researcher met with Ministry of Education officials in four different states to present the study and to secure permission to contact English program supervisors in each modality. Table 3.3 (see Appendix E) shows the specific departments that were contacted in each state—Chiapas, Puebla, Tlaxcala, and Zacatecas respectively.

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[4] www.seduzac.gob.mx

Because the researcher had to travel to each state to meet with Ministry of

Education (*Secretaria de Educación Pública*, SEP) officials within a period of three

months—April, May, and June of 2016—protocols in each state started at different times

and permissions were also granted at different times. The protocols consisted of a letter

of introduction, a letter from the research supervisor in the United States, researcher's

curriculum vitae, samples of teacher training workshops, and, in three states, the

researcher had personal meetings with several SEP officials and English supervisors to

present the study and answer questions. From all these meetings, the researcher learned

the approximate number of *secundaria* schools per modality in each state (see Table 3.4)

for both state funded schools (*escuelas estatales*) and federally funded schools (*escuelas*

federales).

Table 3.4 Number of *Secundaria* schools per modality in each research site

State	*Secundarias Generales*	*Secundarias Técnicas*	*Telesecundarias*
Chiapas	183 State schools		1086 State schools
	61 Federal schools	155 Federal schools	
Puebla	289 State schools	194 State schools	1408 State schools
		38 Federal schools	
Tlaxcala	67 State schools		146 State schools
	44 Federal schools	76 Federal schools	78 Federal schools
Zacatecas	78 State schools	1 State School	882 State schools
	56 Federal schools	73 Federal schools	

When asked about the number of English teachers per *secundaria* school, SEP

officials indicated that the number of English teachers assigned to each school depended

on school size, but on average, there were between one to three English teachers per

school. These figures could not be confirmed. Table 3.5 shows the English supervisors

contacted for this study for both state- and federal-funded schools (see Appendix F).

Using the Qualtrics software, the 35-item online questionnaire was distributed in all four participating states but with a different link per state. There were several reasons for this procedure: a) to gather data from each state separately in order to identify patterns within each state; b) to make subsequent comparisons and generalizations across states; c) to identify immediate professional development needs per state; and d) to have accessible information to report to SEP officials per state about general findings.

After complying with all in-country protocols and after permissions were granted in each state, the process developed in one of two ways: 1) SEP officials requested the questionnaire link to be sent directly to supervisors in their state, who, in turn, sent it to English teachers in their district via e-mail, or 2) SEP officials gave the researcher the names and e-mail addresses of all English supervisors in the state to receive the questionnaire link directly from the researcher. They, in turn, sent the questionnaire link directly to teachers via e-mail. Neither option was 100% effective as the e-mail addresses provided were not reliable, nor the preferred method of communication with supervisors and teachers. Whenever possible, the researcher corrected the contact information for all participating districts by reviewing contact records with SEP officials. This process delayed distribution of questionnaire link to some districts in all four states.

To allow English teachers time to finish the 2015-16 school year and answer the questionnaire without being pressed for time, the questionnaire links were initially opened on June 1st, and remained active through July 31st, 2016. The questionnaire links were accessible through computers, laptops, and/or mobile devices. Distribution of the online questionnaire allowed a quick and efficient data collection from numerous, anonymous, and remote respondents. In late July, one state requested its link to be active

for an additional 30 days to allow more teachers to participate in the study. The extension was granted.

The questionnaire was designed for in-service *secundaria* English teachers exclusively; it was e-mailed to them by their English supervisor or by their local SEP officials. Although the researcher did not know how many English teachers received the questionnaire link in each state, SEP officials provided an approximate sample size of in-service English teachers in each state (see Table 3.6).

Table 3.6 Approximate Number of *Secundaria* English Teachers in Research Sites

State	*Secundaria* Schools	*Secundaria* Students	*Secundaria* English Teachers
Chiapas	1485	299, 534	1227
Puebla	1949	348 854	58*
Tlaxcala	439	73, 668	1062
Zacatecas	1090	95, 589	2435
Total	4963	817, 645	4782

The questionnaire had 20 multiple-choice questions, nine open-ended questions, and six Likert scale questions giving participants a frame of reference in choosing their answers (Schuman & Presser, 1996). Brown (2001) suggested that this close-response format discouraged participants from skipping questions due to length and complexity while allowing an easier interpretation of responses. The instrument was administered solely in Spanish, with the open-ended responses presenting a small degree of translation difficulty into English. The questionnaire remained active for 60 days in Chiapas, Puebla, and Tlaxcala, and 90 days in Zacatecas. The final number of respondents was as follows: Chiapas (n=63), Puebla (n=58), Tlaxcala (n=142), and Zacatecas (n=12). Because Zacatecas returned a low number of participants, SEP officials asked the researcher to make the questionnaire available to other English teachers. Permission was granted, and the link was posted on their social media site. The name given to this group was *País*

(*n*=21) because participants from other states in the country outside the ones previously mentioned responded to the questionnaire. The total number of respondents, therefore, was *n*= 296.

3.4 Data Analysis

Once the data from each research site were collected in Qualtrics, each data set was downloaded from Qualtrics onto a single Excel spreadsheet. Questions were checked, formatted, and evaluated for quantitative and qualitative analysis. It was determined that multiple-choice questions would be analyzed in Excel, Likert-scale questions would be analyzed in SPSS, and open-ended responses would be transferred onto Word documents for qualitative analysis. Patton (2002) affirmed that quantitative research can yield broad and generalizable findings while qualitative research can yield in-depth information about the phenomena under study; thus, both methods were applied to triangulate the data obtained through a single source—the 35-item questionnaire.

3.4.1 Quantitative Analysis

Using basic descriptive analysis, multiple choice-questions were analyzed in Excel to calculate frequencies and percentages. The percentages per question were used to describe sample demographics, current job situation, and personal English experience, as seen in Table 3.7 (see Appendix G). Items [Q#15, Q#16, Q#17, Q#18, Q#20, and Q#21] were also multiple-choice questions with five choices, the last one being labeled as *other.* This *other* option produced text data that was analyzed qualitatively. There were also six Likert-scale questions [Q#25, Q#26, Q#28, Q#29, Q#30, and Q#31] related to English teaching experience, initial preparation experience, and initial preparation of future English teachers that were transferred to SPSS for statistical analysis. Given that

the Likert-scale question design yielded a large number of variables, it was decided that factor analysis would be conducted in order to "simplify and classify the meaning of a set of interrelated variables because factor analysis permits one to tease apart sets of related variables in a very objective manner" (Gardner and Lambert, 1972, p. 10). In other words, factor analysis is a statistical technique that allows the reduction of dimensions, or factors. Using SPSS for the statistical analysis allowed us to run all the pre-requisite tests for the factor analysis.

First, the Likert-scale questions were carefully read and evaluated per research site to determine how many questionnaires were *valid* for factor analysis. *Valid* questionnaires were those in which participants answered all 35 questions. After a careful examination of the data, the total number of *valid* questionnaires per site was as follows: 30 sets from Chiapas, eight from *País*, 29 from Puebla, 105 from Tlaxcala, and eight from Zacatecas. Using Nunnally and Bernsteins' (1978) suggestion of a 10 to 1 ratio, in which 10 cases per item can be factor-analyzed, our total sample of 180 *valid* questionnaires was found sufficient for further analysis. Once valid questionnaires were selected, each of the six Likert-scale questions was codified as seen in Table 3.8 (see Appendix H). The significance level was set at 0.05. With codifications in place, each statement or sub-question in each Likert-scale question was treated as a single variable; hence, Q#25 had 19 variables, Q#26 had 10, Q#28 had nine, Q#29 had 10, Q#30 had 10, and Q#31 had 10 variables. Since there was a combined total of 68 variables, factor analysis was used to condense such a large set of variables down to a more manageable number of factors by grouping interrelated questions (variables) within each question, from 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, to 31. The Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin, KMO, (Kaiser, 1974) measure of

sampling adequacy index had to range from 0 to 1, with .6 suggested as the minimum value for a good factor analysis.

The second step concerned the inter-correlation among the items. The Bartlett's (1954) test of sphericity had to be significant (*p<.05*) for the factor analysis to be considered appropriate. Third, to determine the smallest number of factors that could be used to represent the interrelations among the variables, principal components techniques were used. Consequently, Q#25, Q#26, Q#28, Q#29, Q#30, and Q#31were analyzed using factor analysis as described below.

In Q#25, which included 19 variables, teachers were asked to identify what *hindered* English teaching in their work context. Those 19 variables were subjected to principal component analysis (CPA) to find clusters of variables that would show emerging relationships between each of the variables. Principal components analysis and a close inspection of the Catell's (1966) scree plot test revealed four clusters of variables in Q#25, or components, that were preserved for further investigation. These four components and their related coefficient values are listed in Table 3.9 (see Appendix I). To aid the interpretation of these four components, a Varimax rotation (Kaiser, 1958) was performed. The rotated solution revealed the presence of a simple structure (Thurstone, 1947), with all the four components showing several strong loadings and all variables loading substantially on only one component. The term *loading* indicates how much a factor explains a variable in factor analysis (Abdi, 2003). The four-component solution explained a total of 44.48% of the variance, with Component 1 contributing 12.74%, Component 2 contributing 11.9%, Component 3 contributing 11.38% and Component 4 contributing 8.44%. To aid the interpretation of these four components, a Varimax

rotation was performed to determine the number of loadings, either large or small that each factor had.

Component 1- Teachers lacking key elements

Looking at the variables by factor higher than 0.5, Component 1 revealed that teachers lacking these three elements constituted a hindrance to English teaching across research sites:

Q#25-10 teacher autonomy (.778)
Q#25-17 teacher motivation (.658)
Q#25-16 teachers' English proficiency (.645)

This lacking component was created adding question #25's sub questions: 10, 16, 17. One sample t-test showed that most teachers believed that their lack of autonomy, their lack of motivation, and their lack of good English skills hindered their practice.

Component 2- Legal difficulties

The impact of the current political environment on teachers' practice surfaced as a hindrance to English teaching. This legal component was created adding the scores of sub-questions 18, 19:

Q#25-19 the new labor law in education reform (.700)
Q#25-18 union mobilizations and strikes (.631)

Component 3- Students' deficiencies

This third component showed teachers' belief that students' deficiencies in these three areas hindered English teaching.

Q#25-4 Students who do not speak Spanish well (.748)
Q#25-3 Students who lack Spanish literacy (.718)
Q#25-2 Students who lack cultural capital in Spanish (.710)

Component 4- Student resistance

This component was also student-related, and it was created adding sub-questions 6 and 7. They referred to students' resistance to learn English.

Q#25-6 Students who resist learning English (.845)
Q#25-7 Students who do not value learning English (.798)

In Q#26, teachers were asked to self-assess their ability to execute 10 different teaching-related items. First, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed. The principal component analysis of these 10 items and the Catell's (1966) scree test revealed the emergence of a single component which was preserved for further analysis and was labeled *teaching abilities*. This single component and the coefficients of the different questions are listed in the Table 3.10 (see Appendix J). After running one sample t-test comparing to the value 3, with p-value less than 0.0001, we could claim that most teachers believed that their abilities were less than Good.

In Q#28, teachers were asked to reflect upon their initial teacher preparation and indicate whether the nine topics provided were given enough coverage, or time, during the program. Once the nine items were assessed for data suitability for factor analysis, the items were subjected to principal components analysis (PCA). Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of .3 and above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (Kaiser, 1974) value of .904 exceeded the recommended value of .6, and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) reached statistical significance, thus supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Principal components analysis revealed the presence of one component eigenvalues exceeding 1; therefore, we concluded that all the variables contributed to the component, as shown on the Table 3.11

(see Appendix K). This single component was labeled *contextual training*. Running one sample t-test showed that most teachers believed that their initial teacher preparation was less than enough or that key topics were not discussed.

In Q#29, teachers were asked to reflect upon their initial teacher preparation and indicate their level of satisfaction with the knowledge acquired in ten different areas related to teaching English. Prior to performing the principal component analysis (PCA), the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of .3 and above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (Kaiser, 1974) value was .913, exceeding the recommended value of .6, and the Barlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Therefore, principal components analysis and a close inspection of the Catell's (1966) scree test revealed the presence of a single component that was preserved for further analysis. This component was labeled *high leverage teaching practices* as seen in Table 3.12 (see Appendix L). Running one sample t-test showed, with 95% confidence interval, that most teachers were dissatisfied with their training.

In Q#30, teachers were asked whether the topics provided were included in their initial preparation program, and Q#31 asked teachers to rank the importance of specific content to be included in the training of future English teachers. Both Q#30 and Q#31 had 10 variables each, and both sets of variables were subjected to principal component analysis (PCA). Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of .3 and above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin value of .802 for Q#30, and .876 for Q#31 exceeded the recommended value of .6. Thus, principal component analysis and

scree plots analysis for both questions revealed the presence of a single component. Table 3.13 (see Appendix M) and Table 3.14 (see Appendix N) show the component matrix and the coefficients of different variables contributing to each component. In Q#30, factor analysis showed that all topics contributed to teachers' professional training and that those topics were important for teachers in their work context. One sample t-test compared all the ten topics to the determine whether most teachers had chosen option two for all topics, as seen Table 3.8 (see Appendix H). For items two, four, nine and 10, with a significant value of p-value less than 0.05, most teachers did not study the topics despite their importance. For topics one, six, seven, and eight, most teachers indicated that those topics were not important. For Q#31, factor analysis showed that all items contributed to teacher preparation; therefore, based on the results of one sample t-test (p-value < 0.001), most teachers chose options two and three which confirm that all topics were important to include in the preparation of future English teachers.

3.4.2 Qualitative Analysis

For the qualitative analysis phase of this study, the same 35-item questionnaire was used. Q#15, Q#16, Q#17, Q#18, Q#20, and Q#21 were multiple-choice with their last option being labeled *other*. This *other* option generated short narratives that were analyzed qualitatively. For example: Q#15. Where and when did you start to learn English? Mark all that apply and give the approximate year in which you started to learn English.

    a) I learned it by myself
    b) I studied it in a language school
    c) I studied it in the Normal School
    d) I studied it in the University
    e) I studied it through SEP courses

f) *Other* (explain)

Q#19, Q#22, Q#23, Q#24, Q#32, Q#33, and Q#34 were entirely open-ended, and the data generated was collected and recorded in Qualtrics. Later, the data were transferred onto Word for coding and analysis. In this study, teachers' opinions and descriptions were the unit of analysis, and their actions were regarded as representations of their knowledge of English, teaching strategies, and their teaching context. The data analysis followed Saldaña's model (2013) involving careful reading of the data, a detailed coding process, definition of categories, and interpretation. After an initial reading of the entire data set, it was decided that a combination of descriptive, *in vivo*, and simultaneous coding would be necessary to link data to its meaning (Charmaz, 2001 as cited in Saldaña, 2013). The second reading employed descriptive codification (Saldaña, 2013) per the conceptual framework so that three overarching codes were used: Content Knowledge (CK), Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), and Contextual Knowledge (CK). Subsequent readings involved *in vivo* and simultaneous coding. The data was color-coded, and a compilation of themes was created and linked to the conceptual framework as seen in Table 3.15 (see Appendix O). Although the descriptive codes guided the analysis, some codes had a higher frequency: preparation, training, memorization, translation, communicative, lack of interest, and lack of English skills. Furthermore, to reduce bias, the coding was done pro line by line (Charmaz, 2008) resulting in a significant number of codes and concepts that were continuously compared either data with code or code with code to find connections to the descriptive codes. The results and discussion of the findings are presented in Chapter Four.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

3.5.1 IRB Protocols

The questionnaire used in this study was given to and approved by the corresponding Institutional Review Board (IRB) in the United States, and it was also accepted by each of the local Ministry of Education (*Secretaría de Educación Pública*, SEP) office in the four Mexican states included in this study. All participants were advised of the voluntary and anonymous nature of the questionnaire, and the study was supervised by the researcher's degree-granting institution in the United States. All Institutional Review Board (IRB) documents were submitted for review and approval in both English and Spanish; however, only Spanish versions of official letters and questionnaire were used in Mexico. Appendices A through D contain the documents presented to the IRB office.

3.5.2 Limitations

Conducting this research in Mexico presented a few limitations.

1. Complying with IRB protocols in the United States delayed traveling to the chosen research sites to meet with SEP officials, present study, and secure permissions to carry it out until mid-May and early June, 2016. This delay meant that English teachers had competing commitments on their professional work timeline to answer the questionnaire by July 31st, 2016, as they were preparing for the end of the 2015-16 school year. This delay restricted data collection to a couple of months, which may have impacted the respondent ratio.

2. Contacting and setting up meetings with SEP officials long distance from the United States through multiple phone calls and detailed e-mail correspondence slowed the data

collection process as well. Between two to five short visits to local Ministry of Education offices in each state were needed to meet officials in person, build relationships of trust, accelerate the permission process to activate questionnaire links, and to ensure that neither the researcher nor the study had hidden political agendas.

3. Navigating the SEP internal hierarchy in each participating state required time to build relationships of trust with key individuals who could explain and accelerate the approval process to conduct the study. The lack of time to establish those relationships impacted response rates. Zacatecas, for example, was the last site contacted, and without the advantage of a personal meeting with supervisors, the study was introduced only via e-mail, resulting in a low response rate.

4. The volatile political climate between the Mexican government and the national teachers' union impacted data collection as communication with English supervisors and teachers was disrupted. This situation was especially acute in Chiapas, Puebla, and Zacatecas. Furthermore, some supervisors requested reassurance that the study would not serve any political purposes, but whether those reassurances were credible enough to expedite their cooperation, it is hard to measure. The data collection was carried out, but the researcher could not ascertain if the entire population of English teachers targeted received the questionnaire link.

5. Regarding the instrument, the self-reported nature of the questionnaire as well as the lack of answers to some questions posed limitations on the generalizability of findings. For example, Chiapas had a total of $n= 63$, but there were some key questions that had less than 63 responses, i.e., Q#32 had $n= 27$ responses, Q#33 had $n= 25$ responses, and Q#34 had $n= 27$ responses while Zacatecas had a general, low rate of response of $n= 12$.

However, although generalizability of findings was limited to study participants, the final sample size did provide a discrete picture that hinted at potential commonalities with a larger population. In other words, our findings carry a strong signal but also carry some noise.

6. Despite the attention given to the questionnaire content, format, translation, and distribution, the researcher as well as participants encountered a few problems:

a) The questionnaire link in all four states was released and made available to SEP officials and English coordinators as soon as permission to conduct study was granted. However, not all of SEP offices passed the link onto teachers immediately. Distributing the link via e-mail proved difficult as some email addresses were inaccurate and correcting them took time, thus reducing the window of opportunity for teachers to answer the questionnaire. This situation may explain the high number of incomplete questionnaires ($n= 116$) that were, in the end, not used in the quantitative analysis.

b) Because participants had four weeks to finish the questionnaire after they first started it, it became impossible to track if the same person finished one questionnaire, or if they started another one without finishing the first one.

c) With minor exceptions, open-ended questions were answered exclusively in Spanish. However, due to technical difficulties, time constraints, or other external factors, some of the answers were vague, confusing, incomplete, or unintelligible. These factors made interpretation of some answers difficult. The researcher relied on her native proficiency and knowledge of Spanish to decipher and interpret semantic and syntactical variants in the data.

7. The state of Puebla presented another limitation to this study. Because the timeline for in-country protocols delayed data collection in the northern research site, and anticipating time constraints for a larger response rate, the researcher approached SEP officials in the state of Puebla to present the study and seek approval to be included. However, there was no interest in participating in the study. Later, a different SEP official in Puebla contacted and invited the researcher to a meeting to present the study and answer questions. The result: his district accepted to be part of the study; however, because the district represented a single *secundaria* school modality, findings were limited to that district.

3.6 Summary

The purpose of this study sought to discover whether initial English teacher preparation matches the realities of practice encountered by junior high school teachers in different teaching contexts. Drawing from data collected through a 35-item questionnaire given to junior high school English teachers in four different states in Mexico, findings were triangulated with both quantitative and qualitative questions within the same instrument. Initial preparation of English teachers continues to be a debatable and relevant topic in the Mexican education system—a system amid an ambitious foreign language reform in basic education that has made English mandatory in K-9. The results of the data analysis are presented in the following Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents research findings from a study of junior high school (*secundaria*) English teachers in four states in Mexico. The study had a mixed-methods design that included a quantitative and qualitative questions in a single 35-item questionnaire (see Appendix C). The data analysis aligned with the theoretical framework guiding this study: content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and contextual knowledge; hence, the analysis is presented in three separate sections. The analysis found evidence of teachers' deficient English knowledge, weak and insufficient pedagogical content knowledge, and poor contextual knowledge. The data revealed that none of the three areas are sufficiently attended to during initial teacher preparation and, therefore, the preparation received did not match the realities teachers encountered in the field.

4.2 Sample Description

In statistical studies, a larger sample size is preferred to account for a higher level of accuracy in data collected (Salkind, 2015); hence, data collection efforts for this study focused on obtaining a large random sample of English teachers from three different *secundaria* school modalities, namely *generales*, *técnicas*, and *telesecundarias* from urban, semi-urban, and rural schools, and in three different geographical regions of Mexico, including the states of Zacatecas in the north, Tlaxcala and Puebla in the center, and Chiapas in the south. The Ministry of Education (*Secretaría de Educación Pública*, SEP) in each state provided an approximate number of *secundaria* English teachers who could potentially participate in the study. The numbers provided reflected *secundaria*

school teachers in all three modalities and school contexts in all four states. Based on those numbers, local SEP officials reported an approximate number of active English teachers, as shown in Table 4.1. However, the researcher was unable to verify the figures provided. For the state of Puebla, however, only the 58 teachers who participated in the study, were included in the Table.

Table 4.1 Number of *secundaria* schools, students, and English teachers in each research site, as reported by local SEP officials

State	*Secundaria* Schools	*Secundaria* Students	*Secundaria* English Teachers
Chiapas	1485	299, 534	1227
Puebla	1949	348 854	58*
Tlaxcala	439	73, 668	1062
Zacatecas	1090	95, 589	2435
Total	4963	817, 645	4782

Despite the large population of *secundaria* English teachers currently working in the Mexican states selected, during the two-month data collection period, the response rate of return was low and slow. Several factors may have contributed to this low rate of return: 1) The political conflict that prevailed in Mexico between the federal ministry of education and one of the national teachers' union was at a critical point during the data collection period. This conflict limited access to local SEP officials who could authorize the study and initiate contact with English supervisors in a timely manner. Supervisors were to contact English teachers and introduce, describe, and answer questions about the study. Although local education officials worked diligently to support the study and to ensure that supervisors and teachers were contacted in a timely fashion, additional circumstances beyond their control derailed some of those efforts. One such circumstance was the conflict between one of the major teacher's union, the National Coordination of Workers in Education (*Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación,*

CNTE), and the federal government. The conflict forced many schools throughout the country to disrupt classes and carry out local teachers' strikes to protest new labor reforms in education. As the conflict grew, the union ordered national strikes and the participating states in this study were affected. 2) A national teachers' strike took place during the data collection period, thus impacting the window of opportunity for the research instrument to be distributed. Local SEP officials relied on English supervisors to inform teachers about the study, clear approval status, and distribute the questionnaire link, but whether they were successful in those efforts could not be confirmed due to the difficulty of reaching supervisors whose districts were on strike. To quicken the questionnaire link distribution process, SEP officials allowed the researcher to contact supervisors directly via e-mail. E-mail communication with supervisors, however, proved difficult due to the inaccuracy of the contact information provided. 3) E-mail communication was neither common nor the preferred mode of communication among education officials, supervisors, or teachers in all research sites. Instead, a popular texting service—WhatsApp—between cellular phones was favored for faster communication. Efforts to obtain supervisors' phone numbers also hampered the effort to introduce the study and distribute the questionnaire link. 4) Once the instrument was distributed, completing a 35-item questionnaire during the last two months of the school year may have been burdensome and may have deterred teachers from answering every question. The data analysis revealed that not all answers matched the sample size obtained. This means that a total $n= 296$ should have yielded 296 responses per question, but that was not the case. The following information about the demographic sample collected exemplifies this discrepancy: the gender question had $n=253$ responses; the age question

had $n= 256$; the school location question had $n= 253$; the school modality question had $n= 254$; and the teaching experience question $n= 251$. Data analysis therefore suggested that not all respondents completed all the questionnaire items.

Consequently, any of these four factors, or a combination of two or more of them, may have impacted not only the final sample size obtained ($n= 296$), especially in the northern region, where the rate of return was less than five percent of the total number across the four states, but also may have impacted the questionnaire completion rate. Data collection challenges notwithstanding, the small degree of variation between English teachers from all four states afforded a degree of accuracy expected for the study.

4.3 Research Questions

The overarching question driving this research asks: How do initial preparation programs in Mexico equip junior high school English teachers for the realities of practice in different teaching contexts? The following sub-questions guided this study and aligned it to the conceptual framework:

a) How are teachers prepared with English knowledge?

b) How are teachers prepared with pedagogical content knowledge?

c) How are teachers prepared with contextual knowledge?

To analyze data gathered, the study adopted a conceptual framework selected from the work on teaching by Darling-Hammond (2006), the preparation of language teachers by Pasternak and Bailey (2004), and the knowledge growth of teachers by Shulman (1986). This framework has three main strands of knowledge that look at what teachers know about English as a content area, what teachers know about teaching, and what teachers know about the context in which they teach it, be it the classroom, the

school, or the community. Because this research focused specifically on English language teachers, Pasternak and Bailey's (2004) work on preparing foreign language teachers was highlighted in the framework, especially on what these authors call declarative knowledge, or knowing about something, and procedural knowledge, or knowing how to do something (see Figure 1.2, Appendix S). This study presupposes that every circle represents an area of knowledge that should be addressed in English teacher preparation programs in order to shape a successful candidate. The integration of these three fundamental areas engages crucial teaching tasks that need to be part of any curricular agenda and must be taught explicitly to teacher candidates (Ball, 2000). Imbalance or fragmentation of this conceptualization diminishes teachers' effectiveness. Therefore, the higher the degree of convergence of the three knowledge areas, the better equipped teachers may be for their practice.

4.4 Data Analysis

The primary data source for this study was a 35-item questionnaire distributed to *secundaria* English teachers in four Mexican states. The questionnaire was organized into six sections: demographic information; current job situation; teachers' English learning experience; teachers' English teaching experience; teachers' initial preparation; and the preparation of future English teachers. Except the first two sections, questions were arranged to align with the three strands of knowledge included in the conceptual framework—content, content pedagogy, and context.

The questionnaire response format included multiple-choice single answer, multiple-choice multiple answer, text entry, and Likert scales (see Appendix C). While questions were divided into six sections, the analysis proceeded in three different phases.

The first phase focused on describing the sample size quantitatively. As explained earlier, the total sample size for this study consisted of $n = 296$ participants, yet not all participants answered all the questions posed; thus, each question has a different response rate, as indicated by the number (n) in each reference made to the sample. Demographic information such as participants' gender, age, school modality, school location, and teaching experience were included. The second phase of the analysis addressed four open-ended questions and three multiple-choice questions with an open-ended option under *other* where teachers responded openly. All open-ended answers were analyzed qualitatively using a thematic analysis that identified patterns within the data in relation to the research questions. The process of analysis started with an initial categorization of open-ended questions into the three knowledge strands associated with the conceptual framework: knowledge of English as content area, knowledge of teaching the content pedagogy, and knowledge of the teaching context (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Pasternak and Bailey, 2004; Shulman, 1986), see Table 4.2 (Appendix P). Subsequently, data were reviewed several times to ensure familiarity with content, to generate codes, to search for themes, and to name those themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The third phase of analysis involved the classification of six Likert-scale questions designed to capture a self-assessment of teachers' knowledge of pedagogical content and teaching context, see Table 4.3 (Appendix Q). The answers to all Likert-scale questions were examined and

clustered around the conceptual framework consistently used as a lens to analyze data collected for this study.

4.5 Findings

4.5.1 Teachers' Content Knowledge

With the introduction of the new National English Program in Basic Education in 2009, Mexican English teachers were asked to implement an ambitious language reform that required an independent command of the language, especially in *secundaria* school. The National English Program (*Programa Nacional de Inglés*, PRONI), the current name of the program, was divided into four cycles to be taught in the span of 10 years of basic education, with the fourth and last cycle corresponding to the three years of *secundaria* school. This last cycle, called the consolidation level, is supposed to reinforce the language knowledge and skills gained by students during the previous seven years of English language instruction, or during cycles one, two, and three prior to their arrival in *secundaria* school (Martinez, J. M., personal communication, July 13th, 2015; SEP, 2010). *Secundaria* teachers were expected to be independent users of English, equivalent to a B2 proficiency level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (SEP, 2010). An independent user of the language can, for example, interact with native speakers with fluency and spontaneity in social and public situations, can describe personal experiences and events, and can express opinions on a wide range of topics (Little, 2012).

4.5.1.1 Students' and Teachers' English

Secundaria school teachers and students are supposed to work on the consolidation cycle of the English program, and it is generally assumed that students, by

this time, have completed the foundational first three cycles of the program in a span of seven years prior to their arrival at *secundaria* school (SEP, 2011c and 2011d); however, the first finding in the data suggested that this may not always be the case. Most teachers indicated that students in *secundaria* have significant *"linguistic gaps"* in their English knowledge thus impacting the implementation of the national English program at their level. These findings are consistent with those found in a study in the northern state of Tamaulipas where students also had low foreign language skills in *secundaria* (Valladares and Roux, 2014). A few examples from our data follow:

a. *My students do not have the previous linguistic foundation for this level.*
b. *English is difficult for students because they have not had the basis in preschool or elementary school, so they arrive to secundaria school not knowing anything* [about the language].
c. [the problem] *is that it* [English] *is only taught in secundaria.*
d. [My concern] *is that we have an* [English] *plan and program that is too advanced as if students had already studied English in preschool and elementary school, but that is not the reality in my city, in my state, and in the country.*
e. *In* [my state]*, we just started the English program this school year, but the level we have been asked* [to teach] *is not adequate for secundaria because students have lost six years of language knowledge, from preschool to secundaria.*
f. *We have an English education plan that is very ambitious and unattainable because our government presupposes that when students arrive in secundaria, they should already speak the language. This is not possible because students do not have English* [classes] *in elementary or preschool. It is a pyramid with broken foundations.*
g. *Students arrive in secundaria school with either a very low level or zero knowledge of the language, and the program assumes that* [students] *have had English in elementary school, but in most cases, that was not so.*
h. [My concern] *is that children do not have a previous* [English] *linguistic baggage because few have taken English in preschool or elementary school.*

These statements highlighted a reality of practice for which teachers seemed unprepared to address. However, when pressed further and asked if having students without previous English knowledge hindered English language teaching, teachers ranked

this deficiency lower than having students who did not speak Spanish well, lacked

Spanish literacy, or lacked cultural capital in Spanish. These three elements were

considered bigger roadblocks to English teaching (see Table 3.9, Appendix I). This

finding supports the results from the Programme for International Student Assessment

(PISA) 2012 which reported that 41% of Mexican junior high school students did not

achieve significant academic progress in reading, mathematics and Spanish, thus placing

them at the insufficient or elemental knowledge levels (INEE, 2012; SEP, 2011a). The

implication is that without these competencies in Spanish, learning a foreign language, is

arguably much more difficult (INEE, 2012).

Regarding teachers' command of the English language, the data exposed a bigger

problem: teachers' English was also deficient, or inadequate for the level assigned.

Teachers were asked to self-report on their English level at the beginning and at the end

of their preparation program, as well as their current mastery level. They were given

seven levels to choose from—six levels of language ability from the Common European

Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001); namely, A1,

A2, B1, B2, and C1, and A0 to indicate zero knowledge of the language taken from the

work of *Mexicanos Primero* (2015). The analysis placed most study participants below

the independent level expected by the national English program, as illustrated in Table

4.4 below.

Table 4.4 Language level of *Secundaria* English Teachers at three different points in their career

Language Level	CEFR Level	Level description	Beginning *n=* 155	End *n=* 148	Current *n=* 151
Mexicanos Primero	A0	False Beginner Minimal User	23%	25%	24%
BASIC	A1	Basic Extremely Limited User	40%	39%	40%
	A2	Elementary Limited User	18%	18%	19%
INDEPENDENT	B1	Lower Intermediate	7%	6%	5%
	B2	High Intermediate	8%	8%	7%
PROFICIENT	C1	Lower Advanced	3%	3%	3%
	C2	Higher Advanced	Not	included	in survey

These percentages provided a startling picture of the content knowledge mastery among English teachers and revealed three crucial findings. First, teachers' English level did not change significantly even after finishing their teacher preparation program which, in most cases, may have taken up to four years to complete. Tatto and Velez (1997) noted that initial teacher preparation curriculum favored courses about general pedagogical aspects of language teaching and were, for the most part, taught in Spanish. Moreover, previous research has shown that "most teachers have a minimal command of the English language which is insufficient to cover the teaching of EFL [English as a Foreign Language] in all of México, from pre-school (Kinder) up to the third year of secondary school" (Martínez-Cantu, 2009 and Reyes-Cruz, Murietta-Loyo, and Hernández-Mendez, 2011 as cited in Quezada, 2013, p. 2). Second, teachers' current English level has not improved even after a few years of teaching experience. The data revealed that 34% of teachers have taught English between seven to 15 years; 29% have taught English between four to six years; and only 18% have taught less than three years. This is significant because the implementation of the national English program has made local Ministry of Education officials responsible for training in-service teachers through

language improvement workshops or short certification courses called *diplomados*

(Sayer, Mercau, and Blanco, 2013). However, such training is usually focused on

methodology through a teacher-centered approach where teachers have no input, no

feedback, and no accountability (*Mexicanos Primero*, 2016). Some states, where SEP

officials offered English training, received mixed reviews from teachers who were

divided in their opinion as to the usefulness of such training. Some deemed workshops

useful; others judged them impractical and would have preferred methodology instead

(Mendoza and Roux, 2014). Third, while most teachers in the study have used multiple

venues to learn English, their language level remains relatively low. The data showed that

33% of teachers studied English in the university, 30% in private schools, 12% in Normal

Schools, and 9% through SEP courses. In addition, some teachers, or 14% of

respondents, also indicated studying the language by themselves using books, videos, and

help from American relatives and English-speaking nationals. Others participated in

exchange programs abroad and/or lived in the United States prior to entering the teaching

profession. Yet, all these efforts did not produce higher returns on their language skills.

Curiously, only five percent of teachers ($n= 12$) explicitly mentioned public *secundaria*

school as a place where they started learning English while seven percent ($n= 18$)

mentioned being between 12 and 15 years of age when they first started learning

English—the *secundaria* age group. Furthermore, when asked to rate their English

ability, again, teachers rated it lower to other variables that targeted pedagogical content

knowledge (see Table 3.10, Appendix J).

  The literature review indicated that, historically, *secundaria* school has not

commanded high foreign language learning outcomes (Navarro, 2006; Rodríguez-

Ramírez, 2014; Sandoval, 2015; Sep. 2015a; Székely *et al.*, 2015; Zorrilla, 2004). Some of the reasons identified for such results were the students' lack of appreciation for the language (Despagne, 2010); the lack of academic weight English commands as a subject matter (*Mexicanos Primero*, 2015); misalignment of books and materials with the English curriculum and/or students' context (Lengeling, Mora, Rubio, Arrendondo, Carrillo, Ortega, and Caréto, 2013); and the lack of qualified teachers (Ramírez-Romero, Sayer, and Pamplón, 2014). As we shall see later, our data supported all these reasons. Thus, teachers made four specific requests to improve their language skills:

1) More English classes during initial teacher preparation and continuous teacher development to improve language mastery.

    a. *I need to prepare myself with the language.*
    b. [We need] *to take the TOEFL test at the end of our preparation with the understanding that a CI level is required to graduate.*
    c. [I need] *to master grammar and have speaking fluency to like this subject and teach it.*
    d. *[We need] English classes for teachers from the beginning of our preparation program.*

Despite these responses, when asked if the training of future teachers should include English every semester, participants ranked its importance significantly lower than learning to work with the school community, adapting the national curriculum to the local context, balancing administrative and academic tasks, and working in deficient academic conditions as seen in Table 3.14 (Appendix N).

2. More specific English teaching classes and classroom practice during initial teacher preparation.

    a. [We need] *specific courses about teaching.*
    b. [I need] *to improve my teaching strategies.*
    c. [I need] *to learn more dynamic games and be constantly upgrading my skills.*

    d. [We need] *to do more clinical practice in marginalized places.*

3) More intercultural exchanges with English-speaking countries during initial teacher

preparation.

    a. *As pre-service teachers,* [we need] *more academic preparation and cultural exchanges with English-speaking natives.*
    b. *We need the opportunity to travel to* [English-speaking] *countries to practice with native speakers and learn more vocabulary and culture.*
    c. [We need] *quality courses, foreign scholarships to perfect our language. Unfortunately, SEP does not provide opportunities in Mexico.*
    d. [We need] *more clinical practice and foreign* [educational] *exchanges.*

4) Teachers need mentors and more feedback.

    a. *We need to have practical mentoring sessions.*
    b. [We need] *continuous preparation and more class supervision.*
    c. *I need training and mentoring.*
    d. [We need] *mentoring from a native English-speaking teacher.*

4.5.1.2 Teachers' English Learning Trajectory

To understand participants' English learning trajectory and to see how initial

teacher preparation programs supported their language journey, this study asked current

teachers when and where they started to learn English. While there are many factors that

determine when and where a person starts learning a foreign language, understanding

teachers' English learning trajectory may provide a window into how their preparation

programs supported their content knowledge mastery before they began to teach it. The

first question posed to teachers was the following: "when did you start learning English?

The responses of *n=233* appeared in three different ways: a) stating a specific age as the

starting point (E.g., at 12 years old); b) stating their academic level as the starting point

(E.g., *secundaria*), in which case an age inference can be made within the academic level

range; or c) stating the year in which they started learning English (E.g., in 2005). Forty-

one percent of teachers provided either a specific age or mentioned their academic level while 33% of teachers stated a specific year as a starting point. Thus, the analysis revealed that 48% of them started to learn English at or after 18 years of age while only 21% started sometime before age 17. About 20% of teachers started learning English on or after 2000. Therefore, the data indicated that the average age at which teachers started to learn English was 22 years of age, with 33% of them started to learn it at the university level, and 12% in the Normal School. These findings are significant given that the average age of participants in this study was between 29-36 years of age which could indicate that their English learning trajectory had not been long enough to master the content at a B1 level required by the PRONI. This finding supports previous research which suggested that English teachers in Mexico need several years to develop mastery of English and that many of them may do double duty in real time by "developing proficiency in the language while learning how to teach it" (Sayer *et al.*, 2013, p. 4). Our data pointed at similar evidence as one teacher said, "*I actually learned English when I had to teach it,*" and second one said, "*my work in front of a group in a private institute helped* [my English] *level a lot because he who teaches learns twice*." Furthermore, 31% of *n=* 172 teachers recommended that English be taught in every semester during initial preparation programs. This finding may speak to the fact that teachers may need more English instruction as a content area during their own formative years of professional preparation.

In short, our findings revealed that teachers are deficient in English, but more importantly, we learned that their learning trajectories have been relatively short, that such short learning trajectories have not been strong enough to support the mastery level

required by PRONI, and that they are not getting enough support during initial

preparation.

4.5.1.3 Mexican Teachers as English Learners and as English Teachers

Since the data showed that teachers' learning trajectory has been relatively short

and that 48% of them began to learn English at or after 18 years of age, our attention

turned to teachers' experience as English learners. Thus, we asked teachers how they

were taught English and how initial preparation programs supported their language

learning process. Accordingly, 56% of $n=231$ teachers indicated that they were taught

English through memorization and oral repetition, and 55% of them noted grammatical

translation.

a. [I was taught English] *through the traditional system where the teacher explains a topic and then, assigns activities related to it.*
b. [I learned] *through translations and activities in the book.*
c. [I leaned] *through repetition and memorization.*

Not surprisingly, to help themselves learn English, 64% of teachers also reported

using memorization and oral repetition, and 44% used grammatical translations. This is

an interesting finding because these three *traditional* approaches—memorization, oral

repetition, and grammatical translation—are considered mechanical in language teaching

and there is little encouragement to use the target language in authentic situations.

Unfortunately, research has shown that these *traditional* approaches have prevailed in

Mexico for a long time (Ramírez-Romero *et al.*, 2014), and their current overuse

contradicts the teaching guidelines specified by the National English Program, which

expects teachers and students to work on the social practices of the language through

more communicative and student-centered approaches (SEP, 2012). On the other hand,

the scope of this research did not include questions about teacher educators in initial

preparation programs, so it is not possible to conclude whether they can model non-

traditional approaches in their teaching.

The data showed that 31% of *n=* 194 of teachers indicated using *traditional*

approaches—memorization, oral repetition, and grammar translation in their teaching as

well. A few examples follow:

a. *I explain and then ask them to memorize and practice through homework and tests.*
b. [My style] *is not communicative because I do not include opportunities for dialog.*
c. *My students write a lot of sentences…but they cannot communicate independently.*
d. [I use] *translation and oral repetition.*

Although the data did not show whether teachers' teaching style was influenced

by their own learning experience as language learners, previous research found that

English as a foreign language (EFL) Mexican teachers often have a negative perception

of their language abilities and therefore downplay their linguistic proficiency by relying

on teacher-centered teaching approaches that use Spanish as the language of instruction

(Griffith and Lim, 2008). As explained earlier, the national English program urged

teachers to emphasize the social practices of the language by modeling language in action

during social interactions (Carvajal, 2009; Castro, 2013; Despagne, 2010; Lengeling *et

al.*, 2013; *Mexicanos* Primero, 2015; Quezada, 2013; Ramírez-Romero *et al.*, 2014; SEP,

2011c). However, this study found that, for the most part, teachers themselves did not

learn English through that approach and may not know how it is to be done. The data also

showed that neither teacher preparation programs nor teaching experiences have effected

noteworthy changes in teachers' English level. These findings could signal that teacher

preparation programs and the real demands on English level did not match. Most teachers did not have the level required to work at *secundaria* school, and most of their students entered *secundaria* arrived at this level without prior English knowledge as well. Therefore, the next section describes how this content knowledge deficiency may have impacted teaching.

4.5.2 Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge

The teaching profession presupposes that content knowledge and pedagogical skills are foundational in the training of anyone who wishes to become a teacher, regardless of subject matter. By the same token, the teaching profession demands that teachers articulate what they know and how they know it through a process that ascertains teaching competence (Shulman, 1987). Nevertheless, the debate about what constitutes good teaching and how it is articulated, or demonstrated, continues. Researchers rely on empirical evidence to illustrate good teaching based on what teachers should know and be able to do with such foundational knowledge (Ball, 2015). In Mexico, research has shown that teachers are deficient in content knowledge and pedagogical skills (*Mexicanos Primero*, 2015; Quezada, 2013). Among the reasons identified for such deficiency are lack of consistency in time and financial investment in initial teacher preparation (OECD, 2016), lack of English integration into initial teacher preparation curriculum (Muñoz, 2015), and lack of training resources (Mendoza and Roux, 2014).

For the purposes of this research, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) refers to the integration of what teachers know about content and what they know about teaching in relation to classroom practices (Cochran, King, and DeRuiter,1991; Mishra and

Koehler, 2006; Shulman, 1986) "in the school context, for the teaching of specific

students" (Cochran *et al.*,1991, p. 4). In teaching EFL, this knowledge is a combination

of *declarative* knowledge—knowing about and how to use the target language, and

procedural knowledge—and knowing about and how to teach it (Pasternak and Bailey,

2004). Thus, this study approached *secundaria* English teachers to gain knowledge about

their pedagogical content knowledge acquired through initial preparation and teaching

experience.

4.5.2.1 Learning to Teach as Teacher Candidates

Participants were asked three open-ended questions that could provide insights

into their pedagogical content knowledge experience, first as students, and then as

teachers. To triangulate their answers, they were also asked to describe the differences

between those two experiences. Findings suggest that over 55% of *n*= 231 reported

learning English through *traditional* approaches that are characterized by a dominant

teacher presence, native language instruction of grammatical structures, little use of the

target language, group oral readings, text translations, reproduction of isolated lexical

items, and repetition of artificial language (Romo, Romero, and Guzmán, 2015). The

following examples illustrate this finding:

a. [I was taught] *grammatical explanations,* [we] *almost always started by memorizing the verb to be in present and past tense.*
b. [I was taught] *games, repetition and memorization.*
c. [I was taught] *through text translations.*
d. [I had] *oral and written practice every single class.*

Second, teachers were asked to describe their own teaching style for the following

two reasons: a) to see if their learning experience caused a paradigm shift in their

teaching, and b) to understand how initial preparation programs contributed to that

paradigm shift by outfitting teachers with different approaches to language teaching that superseded teacher-centered and grammar-focused approaches. Surprisingly, only 31% of *n= 194* participants directly aligned their teaching style to traditional approaches. A few examples from the data support this finding:

a. [My teaching style] *is a little* traditional *because I do not have enough technology in the school I work at.*
b. [My teaching style is] *traditional but anchored in communication.*
c. *The method I use is translation of grammatical exercises.*
d. *I like to explain grammar and its formulas.*
e. [I use] *translation and oral repetitions.*
f. [I use] *vocabulary lists to practice words in English.*
g. *My method is very traditional. Students collect words they are learning and put them in boxes.*

It is not within the scope of this study to dismiss the usage of memorization, repetition, or even translation in language teaching. However, the data showed that those approaches did not serve the teachers well as English learners; therefore, we expected a shift after their initial preparation program. Even though 60% of teachers characterized their teaching style with words that seemed to convey marked differences such as *communicative*, *dynamic*, *active*, *playful*, *practical*, *social*, *participatory*, *verbal*, and *functional* among others, teachers did not provide any examples to examine the extent of those differences. What we found was a mix of traditional teaching tendencies and eclectic approaches that suggested valiant efforts to do things differently. Some examples follow:

a. *There is no difference in styles; it's a deeply rooted habit to translate word for word because I don't master oral phrases.*
b. *I tried to make* [my classes] *more interactive, practical, and agreeable to students.*
c. [My style] *is the same with memorization and written repetitions.*
d. *I use concrete materials so students participate with simple sentences and help them use the dictionary.*

e. *I use audio, video, and games to teach grammar, pronunciation, and use the language in written conversations, but I also use memorization and repetition through games.*
f. *Honestly, there is no difference because it is very hard for me so I only work with words and numbers.*

In the questionnaire, teachers were asked about their knowledge regarding specific teaching behaviors that could signal a different approach to language teaching. Specifically, teachers were asked if they were satisfied with the knowledge of 10 high leverage teaching practices acquired during initial preparation, as seen in Table 3.12 (see Appendix L). The analysis revealed, with 95% confidence interval, that most teachers were dissatisfied with their training. However, although teachers were not satisfied with their training about how to planning teaching, how to select and design assessment tools, how to diagnose students' learning patterns, and how to reinforce learning behaviors in the classroom, they did not appreciate the importance of having substantial teaching practice in front of a class during initial preparation. Therefore, data on pedagogical content knowledge seemed to have the right ingredients but not the proper combination. The next section on teachers' procedural knowledge appear to make the findings more conclusive.

4.5.2.2 Teachers' Procedural Knowledge

In training language teachers, *procedural* knowledge refers to the knowledge teachers have about the target language, English in this case, and about how to teach it. This procedural knowledge combined with declarative knowledge about language and how to use it (Pasternak and Bailey, 2004) constitute their pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). Accordingly, to learn how teachers' initial preparation programs equipped them with procedural knowledge, we turned once again to the

descriptions of their teaching style. Responses from *n=* 194 teachers exemplified a

significant finding about their understanding of basic procedural knowledge in language

teaching that involves the difference between a *method* and an *approach*. Whereas an

approach is flexible in its application of a given language theory in terms of objectives,

learners, teachers, and classroom activities, a method is not. A method "is a set of

procedures that spells out rather precisely how to teach a language" (Anthony, 1963 as

cited in Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 3); thus, a method demands specificity in its application

(Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Our findings, however, showed teachers using both terms,

method and approach, interchangeably:

a. [I use] *the communicative method.*
b. [I use] *the communicative method and audio-lingual method.*
c. [I use] *the traditional method anchored in the communicative method.*
d. [It is] *not the communicative method but it is not 100% audio-lingual.*

The fact that statements *b, c,* and *d* mentioned the communicative approach and

the audio-lingual method in the same sentence may indicate insufficient understanding

about these two different concepts in language teaching, or that their distinction

notwithstanding, teachers did not view them differently. Both instances seem problematic

because Mexico is encouraging a more *communicative* approach to language teaching

while moving away from audio-lingual method and grammar-translation techniques

(Griffith and Lim, 2008). There were other descriptions that showed a weak articulation

of procedural knowledge and/or a weak understanding of teaching methodology,

approaches, and techniques. Some examples from the data follow:

a. *I like to utilize the direct method with a natural focus, coupled with suggestopedia.*
b. *I do not use just one method, but I use the symbolic, verbal method to focus on learning.*

c. [My teaching style] *is multi-method.*
d. [My teaching style] *is somewhat modern because I use technology but also passive because students do not participate in class.*
e. *Since SEP establishes the teaching method, which I adjust to the context, I can describe my teaching method as experimental because students are the actors of the language.*
f. [My method] *is based on developing the four macro abilities, especially the productive ones* [writing and speaking].
g. [My method] *is a complete one because I plan a variety of activity for my students so they can discover their stronger areas so they can take advantage of them as well as their areas of opportunity so they don't neglect them.*
h. [My method] *is communicative but semi dynamic.*
i. [My teaching style] *is auditory, participatory, active, and practical.*
j. *I basically work with the communicative, situational, and TPR approaches.*
k. *I work with the communicative method mainly, but we also follow the program's instructions, with projects. Because of students' levels, we work with TPR too, and for some explanations, I use the native language.*
l. *One of the methods I use is suggestopedia (Total Physical Response) because this method combines all the* [core] *abilities and it applies all multiple intelligences.*

These diverse descriptions that incorporate English teaching concepts, names, strategies, and techniques support our finding that teachers' pedagogical content knowledge is weak; therefore, it is not surprising that when asked what they needed to be better English teachers, 73% of *n= 205* participants unequivocally said, "*more training.*"

A few examples of what teachers said they needed follow:

a. *Continuous courses to upgrade my skills.*
b. *Strategies to better plan my classes considering individual needs.*
c. *To upgrade my teaching strategies and techniques.*
d. *Specific courses about English teaching.*
e. *Continuous courses about methodology and strategies for English teaching.*
f. *Study the language more and improve my techniques and strategies.*
g. *To know more strategies to learn a second language.*
h. *Courses to improve my English level in addition to more preparation in new teaching strategies to teach my students with playful activities.*
i. *I consider myself a prepared teacher, but I think I'm lacking guidance about teaching strategies to work with adolescents.*
j. *To apply an effective methodology to have interactive classes.*
k. *More dynamic teaching strategies.*

These statements seemed to be a strong cry for help. Teachers were clear on their

deficiencies and on their need to overcome them. Some teacher recommended that

"*English teachers be trained on the new program's curriculum*," and though several of

them mentioned SEP's new English program as a reason for teaching differently, their

statements did not support better language teaching. Instead, teachers may have viewed

the new program as a teaching alternative, as these examples indicated:

a. *We must follow the plan and program given by SEP.*
b. *I try to adhere to the official program in my teaching.*
c. [My teaching style] *must adapt to the needs of students without forgetting the curriculum given by SEP through PNIEB* [National English Program in Basic Education].
d. *Now I teach following SEP's new program.*
e. *I only used the method and program that my State's Ministry of Education provides.*
f. [My teaching style] *is not the same because the program is different.*
g. [My teaching style] follows the national program closely, and by level.
h. *I teach based on the 2011 [English] program curriculum.*

Consistent with previous answers, some teachers noted no difference in teaching

styles, with or without the new language program, and explicitly admitted using

traditional approaches. The analysis did not show if these two conflicting pedagogies

were learned during initial teacher preparation programs or if they were the result of

teaching experience. Whatever the case may be, teachers' answers could imply a certain

level of comfort in using both: "*I must admit that most times, even though I do not agree

with old* [teaching] *models I learned with*, *many times I use them, even when I plan my

lessons differently.*" Traditional approaches to language teaching seemed to be the

default.

The findings on teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, therefore, suggests that

teachers may need to understand better how to present their subject matter to their

students (Carter, 1990), and that practicality seemed to dictate their teaching approach. Many teachers in this study appeared to believe that students should know minutia about the language before using it (Kramsch, 1993), thus lectures about the language become a default. The data also indicated that teachers' capacity to transform content into accessible, manageable, and learnable forms has not yet matured, and that despite expressing a desire for more *dynamic* and *active* classes, most of them defaulted back to *traditional* grammar-and-practice techniques in their classroom (Richards, 2008). Table 3.10 (Appendix J) showed teachers' significant deficiencies in their ability to interpret and assess student learning, lead a group discussion, coordinate and adjust their teaching during class, give students oral and written feedback, and incorporate work routines that foster learning. All of this may indicate that teachers either adopt *traditional* methods, by settling for the so-called 'eclectic' middle ground, or superimpose dynamic and active classes in their teaching repertoire as a way of masking their content and/or pedagogical content knowledge deficiencies. One teacher said it succinctly: "*There is no method that works with everyone and in all contexts; we must take the contexts and adapt ourselves to it.*" The next section explores whether this practicality served them in their teaching context.

4.5.3 Contextual Knowledge

In the field of second language teaching, *context* can refer to related but distinct situational elements. In this research, context will refer broadly to the social setting in which English teaching takes place, or the social environment in which teachers work— the classroom, the school, and the immediate community. Because teaching a foreign language necessitates a linkage to the real world, "different contexts create different

potentials for learning" (Richards, 2008, p. 7). In this study, the data showed that teaching context did not, in general, support English teaching and learning. Context, therefore, cannot be overlooked as a key component of teachers' initial preparation as it envelops realities of practice that situate teaching. Furthermore, English teachers mediate a foreign culture through social interactions with students (Pasternak and Bailey, 2004), and those interactions are initiated through contextual cues that allow teachers to activate pedagogical content knowledge to present content in their specific environment. This study included English teachers working in three different *secundaria* school modalities, namely *generales, técnicas, and telesecundarias* in urban, sub-urban, and rural areas. Because each modality and social setting may represent a different context, a brief background information follows to understand the realities of practice teachers may encounter at the onset.

The three *secundaria* school modalities follow the study plan mandated by Ministry of Education, and two of the modalities, *secundarias generales* and *técnicas,* require a different teacher per subject. The latter, however, also offers additional technical training taught by teacher specialists, as opposed to the academic track that *secundaria generales* follow. In *telesecundarias*, on the other hand, there is only one teacher per grade who teaches all the subjects; hence, there are usually three teachers per school. A SEP official at one of the participating states in this study reported that "*all telesecundarias in our state teach English as a foreign language whether teachers know the language or not*" (M. Rodríguez, personal communication, May 9th, 2016). *Secundarias generales* and *técnicas* are more concentrated in urban areas of more than 15,000 people while 90% of *telesecundarias* are in highly marginalized, rural

communities of less than 2,500 people (Santos del Real, 2009). The data, *n*= 246, placed

38% of teachers in rural areas, 32% in urban areas, and 30% in semi-urban contexts.

Although *telesecundaria* students tend to live in lower social-economic conditions

compared to students in *secundarias generales* and *técnicas*, students from all modalities

qualify for financial assistance from the government through the Opportunities Program

(*Programa de Oportunidades*) to ensure that students in basic education attend school

regularly. Thus, three in four *telesecundaria* students, 30% of *secundaria técnica*

students, and one fourth of students in *secundaria generales* receive financial help from

this program (INEE, 2008). Academically speaking, it is expected that all *secundaria*

students start this level of basic education at 12 years of age; however, research has

shown that up to one fifth of *telesecundaria* students start *secundaria* later and with more

educational deficiencies in Spanish and Mathematics than those in *secundaria generales*

or *técnica*s (Santos del Real, 2009). This author explained that a reason could be that

telesecundaria students tend to repeat a grade or two in elementary school. Likewise,

telesecundaria students usually come from rural elementary schools and have a

significantly lower academic level at the start of *secundaria* than those from the other

modalities (INEE 2008; Santos del Real, 2009).

4.5.3.1 Academic Contextual Realities

The number of *secundaria* school modality varies by state, but in this study, of *n*=

241, 69 teachers worked in *secundarias generales*, 92 teachers worked in *secundarias*

técnicas, and 80 teachers worked in *telesecundarias*. To identify some contextual

teaching realities, teachers were asked what was the biggest concern in their teaching

context. The *n*= 203 respondents generated the following main challenges: 1) students'

lack of interest in learning a second language; 2) students' lack of English skills upon

entering *secundaria* school; 3) teachers' inadequate English content and pedagogical

content knowledge; and 4) other English program related issues, including lack of

teaching materials and resources, and lack of support for English classes.

1. Students' lack of interest in learning a second language

More than one third of teachers mentioned that students lack interest in learning English.

Teachers described this lack of interest with words such as *uninterested, negative*

attitude, lack motivation, apathy, and *indifference*. A few examples follow:

a. *My students are not interested in the language.*
b. *My students live in a rural community and do not see the short or long term value of learning* [English].
c. *My students don't like English because they speak an indigenous language.*
d. *My students are indifferent toward English because they lack cultural capital.*
e. *Students are not interested in learning the language and because they think it is difficult, and they do not give themselves a chance to try and learn something new.*
f. *Students are not interested in learning a second language because there are no places for them to practice it.*
g. *The student community is not interested in improving or learning another language as they don't believe they will continue with their studies after secundaria, and this discourages me.*
h. *Students are not motivated to learn English.*
i. *Students are not interested and don't have the motivation to learn English because of bad learning experiences in the past.*
j. *My biggest worry is the low motivation my students have toward learning a second language in secundaria.*
k. *Parents and students are indifferent toward English.*

This stated lack of interest across *secundaria* school students in all modalities and

settings was a surprising finding. Unfortunately, the scope of this research did not reach

far enough to find a reason that could provide a clearer explanation for this perception,

nor its potential solutions. However, nothing in the data indicated that teachers were prepared for such situations, or of how teachers addressed the problem. Nevertheless, most of the responses hinted at the existence of bigger and more complex issues across contexts. Some examples cited were the apparent low value of English in rural communities, conflicts between indigenous and foreign languages, lack of cultural capital, students' poor learning experiences and study habits, marginal language learning environments, and students' short educational goals. Our instrument, however, did ask teachers to indicate if context-related topics like these were given enough attention during initial preparation. Specifically, we asked teachers if they were trained to work with low-income students, with slow learners, with indigenous communities whose first language was not Spanish, and with parents and the school community. The results showed that, despite their importance, most teachers did not discuss those topics during initial preparation, as seen in Table 3.11 (see Appendix K).

2) Students' lack of English skills upon entering *secundaria* school

Teachers across contexts reported working with students who entered *secundaria* school with zero or minimal knowledge of English. This was another surprising finding for two main reasons: 1) It revealed that despite the Ministry of Education's efforts to expand the English program, it has not yet reached all students during the first seven years of basic education—preschool and elementary school—thus causing them to miss three cycles of foreign language instruction. 2) There is a critical problem with the student pipeline since it will likely have the same linguistic deficiencies in the near future unless other measures are taken.

A SEP official of a participating state in this study stated that as of 2016, his state did not offer English in public preschools or elementary schools; therefore, to minimize the linguistic void on *secundaria* students and teachers, efforts were underway to incorporate key content from the first three cycles of the language program into the fourth and last cycle of the English program taught in *secundaria* (Pinto, V., personal communication, May 9th, 2016). Following are some teachers' testimonials about this problem:

a. *When students enter secundaria, they don't even have the basics of the English language so we need to start teaching from zero.*

b. *The* [English] *program starts from an unrealistic beginning because most students have their first contact with English in secundaria, and I'm being asked to teach them at a level for which they have no background knowledge at all.*

c. *The study plans and the English program in secundaria are too broad, and have an advanced level. And when my students get to secundaria, they don't even know the numbers or basic English so we, teachers, have to do double work. We have to teach them the basics and then teach them the secundaria curriculum.*

d. *I work with the 2011 English curriculum because* [my state] *just started with the* [English] *program, but the level* [SEP] *is asking is not adequate and does not reflect* [our] *educational reality.*

e. [English] *is not taught in preschool or elementary school.*

f. *The program demands that we work with A1 level of the CEFR from the first year* [of secundaria] *when, in reality, students are at zero, and it is extremely stressful to catch them up in one school year when we start from zero. And the* [education] *authorities do not have an effective plan to teach the language from preschool and elementary that can be accomplished and followed up.*

3) Teachers' English content and pedagogical content knowledge

The data also revealed that by not having proficient English and teaching skills, teachers faced additional problems. Several teachers addressed the consequences of this deficiency directly, as the following examples illustrate:

a. *Often, I have a hard time planning* [my classes] *in a way that* [students] *understand.*
b. *My biggest worry is that I do no master the subject completely and don't know how to teach it either.*
c. *I don't know how to awaken and sustain students' interest so they learn without forgetting it all the next day.*
d. *My students' basic English learning is in jeopardy because I do not have mastery of English.*
e. *I do not have sufficient professional tools to develop all the competencies required to reach the learning goals.*
f. *I want to teach better because I have become dependent on translations.*
g. *I have a lot of* [professional] *weaknesses.*
h. *I need to prepare myself more with English because I still don't master the vocabulary.*
i. *My biggest worry is that my students don't understand my way of teaching because I don't master English 100%.*

Although it was not within the scope of this study to explore a possible correlation between teachers' deficient English and teaching knowledge and students' apparent disinterest for English, it was significant to hear teachers wanting to improve their English knowledge and teaching skills to *awaken* student's interest.

4) Other English Program Issues

Other realities of practice reported by teachers were related to the English program in general. These challenges included not having enough or adequate teaching materials, not having enough teaching resources, not having enough time to teach the subject, not having a good school infrastructure, or not having school and community support for their classes. These are some of their statements:

a. [We] *don't have enough materials to teach better, and the books are not adequate for* [students'] *learning needs.*
b. [Our classrooms] *don't have basic services like electricity.*
c. *There are no resources to teach English (videos, audio, interactive materials), and three hours a week is not enough time to learn the language.*

d. *The textbooks don't have content and activities for the real level of the students.*

e. [We] *need SEP to provide more materials to teach this subject.*

f. *We lack materials to teach, and we shouldn't buy it ourselves.*

g. *There should be more motivation from school administrators and parents to realize how* [English] *opens doors in their future.*

h. [There is] *a lack of support for our work from parents and SEP authorities.*

i. *English does not receive adequate attention by society—parents, students, and even teachers.*

j. *The state and education authorities do not give English enough importance to learn it because they allot only three hours per week.*

k. *I don't know what methods helps the students learn.*

j. *I need to know how to pronounce* [English] *words correctly.*

k. *I need to find strategies to teach better.*

l. *I do not have enough preparation to ensure my students learn what is expected of them at secundaria level.*

4.5.3.2 Social Contextual Realities

Teaching does not happen in a vacuum. Students belong to a social context that situates their education, and teachers need, as stated by some participants, "*to analyze where the school is located to know what they need to consider in our English teaching plans*" because "*our community is poor, and our students live in extreme poverty.*" Many of these teachers have seen first-hand the students' and families' lack of economic opportunities that make it almost impossible for students to remain in school. One teacher said it clearly: "*My biggest worry is that most of my students will leave school* [after secundaria] *because they lack financial means, and those who have the means to remain will not have the same enthusiasm, and that will affect their academic outcomes.*" The data consistently showed that *secundaria* English teachers, whether in urban or rural settings, saw "*students in extreme poverty*" who "*work and have dysfunctional families.*" In addition, teachers encountered cultural values that interfered with their ability to

motivate students to remain in school and learn a foreign language because in some areas, "*secundaria-aged students are supposed to get married, and their families expect them to do that instead of going to school,*" so these students found little value in learning a second language when starting a family life was their priority ahead. Teachers also worked with students who faced family and social problems. One teacher reported, "*I work with students who can't focus on their education because they have family and social problems. Problems like poverty, violence, delinquency, and discrimination.*"

Working in marginalized schools was another reality of practice for these teachers. Several of them acknowledged that "*teaching English is much more difficult than it is believed in the university* [during initial preparation]*"* because they worked in areas "*where parents cannot help their children because they must work.*" Other teachers worked with students "*who suffer from drug addiction, alcoholism, broken families, and poverty.*" Therefore, the pressure these social and cultural realities put on students' education led some English teachers to take on the role of counselors who "*needed to listen to students and try to understand them, and at times, also needed to be more tolerant, more supportive, and do for them what they* [teachers] *wished somebody would have done for them* [teachers]." This latter statement was very insightful and poignant in that it hinted at a certain level of empathy from a teacher who, perhaps, experienced similar things.

These examples showed that teachers in all *secundaria* school modalities and settings faced academic, cultural, and social realities that interfered and/or became part of teaching in ways they did not anticipate but that nonetheless impacted their practice. These realities of practice make it imperative for initial teacher preparation programs to

address socioeconomic training and assistance; teachers need to know what poverty does to students' brains (Eckhoff, 2016), and how to work in extreme conditions. The findings are unequivocal: teachers need to know and understand the social context of those who will receive their teaching. Several teachers expressed their need "*to know about the family and academic history of each of their students'* and requested "*courses focused on the social problems we face in different teaching context, and they* [the courses] *need to be taught by experts in that field* [social problems outside of content and pedagogy]."

Our questionnaire asked teachers to specifically rate the importance of contextual training for future English teachers, and the data showed teachers supporting initial preparation programs that teach and discuss teaching dilemmas in different social contexts, working with adolescents and the school community in order to adapt the national curriculum to students' contexts, and to make language instruction relevant for students, as shown in Table 3.14 (Appendix N).

4.6 Conclusion

Experts have researched and debated what *secundaria* English teachers in Mexico should know before they enter the classroom in terms of English knowledge and pedagogy. However, this study turned to different experts for answers: teachers themselves. They provided data that revealed that teachers want and need stronger content knowledge and skills, clear and thoroughly rehearsed pedagogical content knowledge, and contextual knowledge that will introduce them to the dilemmas that will unavoidably be part of their practice. The data yielded key teaching realities that experience alone has not resolved and uncovered strong evidence that initial preparation programs may have not effectively prepared English teachers for the academic, social,

and cultural challenges they face in *secundaria* schools.

These *secundaria* English teachers' realities of practice, if not completely uncommon or unknown, have not been properly addressed. And because we cannot tailor-made students, and national teaching curricula respond to bigger political, societal and cultural considerations, the more pliable element to equip for the task of teaching are teachers. Therefore, if we accept that teachers' success depends primarily, or partially, on their preparation, then and only then, we will accept that effective *secundaria* English teachers need three things: (1) a proficient level of content knowledge, as evidenced by oral English proficiency; (2) effective pedagogical content knowledge to deliver manageable English content to students; and (3) context knowledge about their students who will receive that teaching.

The findings presented attest to deficits in all three areas and provided evidence of deficient initial training preparation that have not served Mexican youth, or their teachers, well. The findings presented are limited to the study sample, but they represent a good starting point for a conversation that is long overdue: the proper initial preparation of *secundaria* English teachers in Mexico. Despite the limited sample from three different regions of the country, the findings presented similarities too compelling to ignore. Education as a right for all children is guaranteed by the Mexican Constitution, and social justice demands that such education be relevant and of quality for all children despite the socioeconomic differences in which they live. Education is a public good, and preparing high-caliber teachers is a good first step toward meeting that constitutional promise. Delivering a quality English education to all *secundaria* students is not easy endeavor; nevertheless; we owe it to the youth, to their parents, to their teachers, and to the nation to

step up efforts to see that promise fulfilled. The new demands on education reaffirmed teachers' crucial role in shaping the academic experience of all children. As frontline employees, teachers have the challenging task of outfitting the next generation of citizens with the skills and abilities the world needs (Fullan, 2000). Children's right to a quality education cannot be fulfilled without a quality initial preparation for their teachers, and the system that envelopes them must align their preparation, context, and needs to those who will receive their teaching (*Mexicanos Primero,* 2015; Musanti & Pence, 2010). Educating for the 21st Century has forced educators to recalibrate the way they think about initial teacher preparation (Darling-Hammond & Brandsford, 2005) because what happens in the trenches of education and to the people closest to the teaching moment is of paramount importance to society (Fullan, 2001a). The education system, educators, and *new* teachers need to be committed to initial formation of a new generation of teachers that will need to navigate the local, national, and global demands on education with confidence (Delors, 1996, as cited in Mercado, 2007).

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Discussion

This study investigated how junior high school [*secundaria*] English teachers in four states in Mexico were equipped for the realities of practice in specific teaching contexts during initial teacher preparation. Chapter Four presented data analysis collected through a 35-item questionnaire (see Appendix C) that identified shared realities of practice by English teachers across research sites. By connecting all the pieces that were involved in this study, this chapter summarizes the knowledge that emerged from this inquiry and discusses some of the key findings in light of the literature review presented in Chapter Two. Finally, further lines of inquiry a reiteration of some of the limitations of the study are presented.

5.2 Overview of the Problem

In 2009, Mexico introduced a National English Program that made English instruction mandatory in all public, basic education schools (K-9). This program requires that over 20-million students in basic education receive approximately 1, 060 to 1, 900 hours of English instruction in the span of 10 years, from the last year of preschool to the last year of junior high school (British Council, 2015; Sayer, Mercau, and Blanco, 2013). However, seven years since the program introduction have not been sufficient to guarantee strong national learning outcomes, as reported by national and international assessments (PISA 2012; SEP, 2015b; TALIS, 2013). Likewise, seven years into the program have not generated a strong English teaching workforce; on the contrary, in addition to a severe teacher shortage (Sayer *et al.*, 2013), English teachers in Mexico

have been shown to have wide language and pedagogical knowledge gaps that seem to defeat in-service training efforts. In a study about the status of English teaching and learning in Mexico, *Mexicanos Primero* (2015) reported the following:

> Concerning the teachers, more than half of participating teachers
>
> has an English level inferior to the one expected of students (B1).
>
> One in four teachers reached the A1 English level expected of
>
> fourth graders, and 12% had the A2 level expected of first-grade
>
> junior high school students. Perhaps the most disturbing result was
>
> that one in seven English teachers do not know the language at all
>
> (p. 93).

Levels A1 and A2 refer to the middle levels of English language ability of the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001). Findings from the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), administered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 34 countries around the world showed that, in Mexico, seven in ten secondary teachers reported not having enough content knowledge in their subject area despite finding that nine in ten teachers, nearly 62%, held either a bachelor's or a *Normal School* degree. Even though the TALIS report did not specify how many English teachers were in the 4,000-person sample, this contradiction redirects the debate toward initial preparation as a potential source of major content knowledge deficiencies (*Mexicanos Primero*, 2014a). The English Proficiency Index (EPI) reported that Mexico placed 39 out of 63 countries evaluated worldwide, and sixth in Latin America behind countries like Argentina, Peru, and Brazil (Education First, 2014). These outcomes are below satisfactory. Furthermore,

in 2016, the Mexican Ministry of Education (*Secretaría de Educación* Pública, SEP)

reported that of all national teachers' assessments in specific content areas conducted in

2015, "more than half of English teachers had attained an insufficient grade to teach the

language."[5] In 2015, INEE reported that 75% of the teachers in public schools were

Normal School graduates; therefore, if holding a degree was not *a* problem for most

teachers, a closer examination into the nature of their preparation was, and continues to

be, needed. There seems to be a silent paradigm that has overlooked initial preparation of

English teachers although some experts have hinted at the possible correlation between

students' outcomes and teacher preparation deficiencies (Székely *at al.*, 2015).

Undoubtedly, these numbers showed a grim reality of English teaching in

Mexico. The research available, however, has focused on student outcomes in elementary

and junior high school within the context of the national English program while research

into the quality of initial preparation of English teachers has not yet drawn enough

attention. Additionally, the realities of practice encountered by English teachers have

given way to theories and other program requirements that ignore their crucial role in

informing initial teacher preparation curricula.

Organizations such as the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education

(*Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la* Education, INEE), the Ministry of Education

(*Secretaría de Educación Pública*, SEP), through the General Office of Higher education

for Professionals in Education (*Dirección General de Educación Superior para*

Profesionales de la Educación, DGESPE), and independent organizations like *Mexicanos*

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[5] Pierre-Marc, R. (2016, March 15). http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/articulo/nacion/sociedad/2016/08/17/ingles-ensenanza-imposible-por-falta-de-maestros-en-sep. In *El Universal*. Retrieved from http://eluni.mx/1Rwm2CD

Primero, have developed general guidelines for initial teacher preparation and continuous professional development for in-service teachers. Such guidelines and recommendations, however, have fallen short of addressing English teachers' specific needs, especially at junior high school level in diverse teaching contexts. Mercau, Sayer, and Blanco (2012, as cited in Sayer *et al.*, 2013) stated that for the National English Program to work, English teachers would need three things: "(1) a *decent* level of English proficiency, in particular oral language proficiency, 2) knowledge of effective teaching methods, including communicative and sociocultural approaches, and (3) the knowledge and disposition for working with children (with various capacities and needs) in public school settings" (p. 2). These recommendations, however appropriate, did not reach far enough into the needs of current English teachers at junior high school level. The International Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) has also made specific recommendations that support initial preparation of English teachers and may balance the current theory-based training tendencies in Mexico (Tatto and Vélez, 1999).

5.3 Research Questions

The overarching question driving this research asked: How did initial preparation programs equip junior high school English teachers for the realities of practice in different teaching contexts? Three sub-questions guided this inquiry:

a) How are teacher prepared with English knowledge?

b) How are teachers prepared with pedagogical content knowledge?

c) How are teachers prepared with contextual knowledge?

5.4 Key Findings

5.4.1 Realities of Practice

To determine how initial teacher preparation equipped junior high school English teachers for the realities encountered in their teaching context, it was necessary to identify what those realities were for participants in this study. The following is a report of key findings in this area.

1. Most English teachers do not meet the language level requirement to teach it

The literature review stated that the national English program required junior high school teachers with a B2 language level of the Common European Framework of Reference (British Council 2015). However, the data showed that 88% of $n=$ 151 teachers in this study taught English without the required basic teacher language profile. As seen in Table 4.4 (Appendix R), only 7% of teachers *self-a*ssessed their current English skills at the B2 level while 40% placed their skills at the basic A1 level. Because s*ecundaria* English classes are supposed to take students beyond the contact and familiarization stages studied in preschool and elementary school as well as develop and consolidate students' English skills acquired in previous levels (SEP, 2015b), teachers' practice may be much more substandard without a proficient English level. Consequently, teachers have requested that more English courses be offered by the Ministry of Education, with native English speakers as teachers, and at a low cost. Additionally, considering that 83% of ($n=$ 151), or 125, English teachers in this study fell below the required B2 English proficiency level and considering that 39.52% of ($n=$ 253) teachers worked in rural areas, these findings echoed previous research (*Mexicanos Primero*, 2015) that students from lower socio-economic background in vulnerable areas

were not receiving quality English instruction. Consequently, teachers asked for "*English preparation for indigenous contexts using the vernacular language with which we work.*" Other teachers requested "*English* [classes] *from the beginning* [of training program] with *sustained practice* of *everyday English not just academic,*" and "*the need to master an advanced level* [of English] *before getting in front of the classroom.*" Teachers also asked for "*teacher educators with a good command of English, who could pronounce it correctly,* and *more English classes for different purposes*."

2. Most teachers' English does not necessarily improve with teaching experience

In addition to not having intermediate level English skills, we found that most teachers' English proficiency scarcely improved with teaching experience. The data showed that whether teachers had three, seven, or more years of teaching experience, their language skills showed minimal improvement (see Table 4.4, Appendix R). Even though these data was self-reported, teachers nonetheless were honest about their lack of English knowledge and about what they needed to improve it, as the following statements show:

    a. *I need courses to learn the language.*
    b. [I need] *courses to upgrade my skills in the language* [English].
    c. *We all need adequate English preparation so we can all be on the same page.*
    d. *We need constant language training.*

3. Most English teachers are still novices in the language

This study found that teachers' English learning trajectory was relatively short. The average age at which teachers in our sample started learning English was 22 years, with 33% of them starting English studies in university, and 12% in Normal School. Moreover, considering that 34% of *n= 256* teachers were at least 29 years of age, it was

surprising to find them practically novices in the language. Teachers' language skills were still developing and needed more seasoning. This reality may explain their calls for more English classes every semester as pre-service teachers; language classes with native English-speaking experts; and intercultural exchanges to English-speaking countries. It seems that the window of opportunity to learn the language before they started teaching it was relatively short and devoid of strong input. These statements support this assertion:

a. [We need] *more training, courses, certification, workshops, etc. in English, not in Spanish.*
b. [We need] *training and upgrading with native English speaking experts.*
c. [We need] *certification classes given by SEP to upgrade our skills.*
d. [We need] *the opportunity to travel to other countries to practice English with native speakers to learn more vocabulary and culture.*
e. [We need] *a minimum of one semester exchange program to an English-speaking place to perfect our English, preferably two semesters before finishing the program.*
f. [Future teachers] *need the opportunity to work with experts in linguistics who know the contents of their future classes.*

4. Most teachers learned English with traditional approaches

From its first introduction in 2009, the national English program outlined a language teaching approach that centered around authentic social interactions in the target language within its cultural norms to help students *do* with language through spoken interactions, *know* about the language through its general characteristics, and *be* with the language through shared, friendly experiences (British Council, 2015). Yet, this study found that *secundaria* English teachers lacked clarity and mastery of pedagogical content knowledge to execute the *do*, *know*, and *be* with English in English, as prescribed by the program. In other words, the specific knowledge "unique to teaching" (Ball, Thames, and Phelps, 2008) a foreign language was not clearly understood to exploit its usefulness (Gibbons, 2003)). So, while the debate over what constitutes the right criteria

for effective language teaching continues, this study posed simple general and specific pedagogical questions to learn whether participants learned and taught English differently. Findings showed that teachers own personal language learning, teacher preparation, and teaching experience did little to clarify and solidify their understanding of different English teaching methods and approaches. This lack of clarity encouraged a reliance on traditional language teaching approaches that thwarted social interactions in the classroom. For example, this study found that 55.84% of ($n=$ 231) teachers learned English through grammar translation, and 41.55% learned English through repetition and memorization. These figures revealed minimum experience with more communicative approaches that would model doing, knowing, and being in English. It is worth remembering that in the last two decades, foreign language teaching has shifted from traditional approaches like grammar translation, memorization, oral repetition to more interactive and communicative approaches (Bell, 2005). Unfortunately, teachers in our sample were not only novices in the language but did not experience a communicative learning approach either. The data also showed that their teaching style often mirrored their English learning experience despite knowing about other interactive approaches. Hence, teachers requested more pedagogy courses specific to English teaching, as the following statements show:

a. [We need] *classes that teach us how to teach English.*
b. [We need] *more didactic strategies.*
c. [We need] *to study one semester abroad and take specific courses about teaching a second language.*
d. [We need] *to practice teaching and get more feedback on our teaching.*
e. [We need] *strategies based on pedagogy, including methods to know how to teach English.*
f. [We need] *to learn how to plan our classes.*
g. [We need] *techniques and strategies to teach English*

These examples stress the need to articulate the link between theory and practice necessary to reach teacher autonomy and professionalism (Geeregat and Vásquez, 2008), and the need to infuse more practical content into initial preparation instead of continuing the theoretical saturation, especially in the *Normal School* curriculum (Mercado, 2007). A study participant stated, "*reality is different from the theory, but each one of us must adapt all available resources* [to do our job].

5. Teachers could not articulate accurate pedagogical content knowledge

Teachers' descriptions of their teaching style reflected imprecise pedagogical content knowledge specific to language teaching. Although such descriptions are common in English Language Teaching (ELT), their articulation demonstrated the need for reinforcement and clarification. Table 5.1 contains the language used to described teaching styles and shows the intertwined knowledge of learning theory, teaching method, teaching approach, and teaching techniques, as categorized for this discussion:

Table 5.1 Categorization of participants' description of their teaching style

Teaching Style	Participant Description
Learning theory	[It is] *constructivist.*
	[It is] *constructivist because we work in teams doing projects.*
	[It is] *constructivist* applying ICTs [information and communication technologies].
	[It is] *constructivist active and collaborative*
	[It is] *constructivist based on competencies.*
	[We] *construct competencies gradually in short periods of time.*
	[It is] *eclectic: constructivist, communicative, natural, and multicultural.*
Teaching method	[I use] *the method dictated by the official* [language] *program, with some modifications and omissions of some topics.*
	[I use] *the playful method.*
	[I use] *the direct method.*
	[I use] *TPR* [Total Physical Response].
	[I] *don't apply the method that I learn as it should be (the Rassias Method).*
Teaching approach	[It is] *communicative*
	[My] *focus is communicative and actionable.*
	[It is] *communicative developing the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.*
	[I] *work with the communicative method primarily.*
	[I] *work with communicative goals.*
	[I is] *communicative with a focus on competencies.*
	[It is] *active with the goal of developing communicative competencies in my students.*
	[It is] *inductive*
	[It is] *deductive*
Teaching techniques	*Using games.*
	Music and songs.
	[I use] *materials that I find online.*

6. Contextual socio-economic factors and lack of resources and support language learning

Some social contexts wherein teachers taught, there were external factors that hindered English teaching and learning. The data samples illustrated the following: "*There is no teaching method that works in all contexts so we have to adapt to the context to do our jobs*" because "*we find resistance patterns*" with "*strong social problems that influence our classes, and many times, our students are not capable of separating themselves from those problems*." One of those social problems teachers clearly identified

in the data, and perhaps the most salient, referred to the low socio-economic status of

their students. Poverty and low educational outcomes have been shown to go hand and

hand, and it has been associated with delayed language development, low literacy rates,

poor numerical skills, and limited school achievement (Geeregat and Vásquez, 2008;

Manning and Gaudelli, 2006; Székely *et al.*, 2015). In this study, poor students, poor

academic experience, poor schools, and poor school infrastructure were mentioned across

research sites, as the following statements show:

a. *In an indigenous context, there are not enough teaching materials.*
b. *We lack basic resources [in the school], like electricity.*
c. *Classrooms do not have essential tools to teach a language.*
d. *The new [education] reform has affected my students because they don't have enough resources, and now their families must pay for books that used to be free; hence, many of my students who cannot afford their education will leave school.*
e. *We lack resources, materials, and appropriate buildings to teach in.*
f. *Our communities lack so many things.*

The literature review described some of the logistical problems that the National

English program has faced since it was launched in 2009, particularly concerning

materials (Lengeling Mora, Buenaventura, Arredondo, Carillo, Ortega, & Caréto, 2013;

Ramírez Romero, Sayer, & Pamplón 2014b). Teachers in this study attested to the

prevalence of the same and other logistical problems that have plagued the English

program from the beginning:

a. *There is no support for this subject.*
b. *I wish there would be more motivation from parents and leaders to realize that this language* [English] *opens many future doors.*
c. *This subject* [English] *needs to have more weight in the curriculum.*
d. *This subject needs more hours a week because students do not have any other opportunity to hear it or practice it.*
e. *My school does not support my subject* [English].

5.4.2 Initial Teacher Preparation

Having identified the realities of practice faced by participating teachers in our study, we further combed the data for information that could revealed if those realities were discussed during initial preparation, and if teachers were given tools to lever solutions or, at the very least, help them manage real classroom dilemmas. The data exposed the following relevant points.

1. Not enough content classes during initial preparation

Participants in this study evidenced the lack of content knowledge instruction during initial preparation altogether. Although English classes were included in initial preparation, instruction was insufficient. Some teachers stated, "*when I started Normal School, we were told that we would not learn English there and that we would have to do that separately on our own time;*" but initial teacher preparation programs "*should include English every semester without exception, and I would limit theory classes to two semesters and would recommend a deeper study of English grammar.*" Therefore, for future teachers, "*I would include more English classes, different teaching strategies, and their application in the classroom.*" Initial teacher preparation programs "*should include English workshops to help us master the language 90-100%*" because teachers "*should master 90% of the English language by the time they graduate from teacher preparation programs.*" "*Learning the language should be part of the classes taken at the Normal School*" during initial preparation.

2. Deficient and poor quality pedagogical content preparation

As the literature review showed, Mexican initial teacher preparation programs overestimate and over-emphasize theory that instead of producing autonomous teachers,

produce consumers of ready-to-use materials that perpetuate lack of content and

pedagogical content knowledge (Calderón, 2015b; Tatto and Vélez, 1999). Teachers in

this study were prompt to illustrate the fallacy of such behavior during pre-service

training:

a. *What they taught me didn't help me in my classroom practice.*
b. *English, as a subject, cannot be taught with traditional approaches like translation and memorization. We need to create dynamic environments for learning.*
c. *They [initial preparation programs] need to make theory more practical, reinforce English teaching approaches, and allow more classroom experience during initial training.*
d. *They [initial preparation programs] should include more social practices of the language.*
e. *They [initial preparation programs] should include more training about multilevel classes.*
f. *They [initial preparation programs] should change the curriculum and adapt it to the realities we live in our schools.*
g. *They [initial preparation programs] also need to hire experts in pedagogy as well as native English-speakers.*

Lastly, one participant put it clearly:

> "*I did not go through teacher training, but I would suggest that initial preparation programs immerse their pre-service teachers in real classrooms so that they practice with real students and learn how to use the class time and check the resources available in the classroom. They need many practical experiences in several schools and in different contexts.*"

Some teachers were unequivocal about their teaching deficiencies and requested help to

address their pedagogical content knowledge needs. The following statements show how

teachers describe their teaching knowledge:

a. *It is bad*
b. *It is not the most correct.*
c. *It is poor.*

d. *It has not been very effective up to now since it has not been totally adequate for the needs of my students.*
e. *It is mechanical, it needs some changes.*
f. *It is basic but unpractical and boring.*
g. *It is regular because students do not know Spanish very well.*

3. Context-related dilemmas were not addressed during initial preparation

Regarding their teaching context, teachers' acknowledged that it impacted how they "interpreted, applied, and adjusted teaching strategies" (Bax, 2003 as cited by Griffith and Lim, 2008, p. 163). Therefore, teachers indicated that they needed "*training to fit the school context*" and wanted training based on "*real situations*". For example, some teachers mentioned that they would have liked to have done "*clinical practice in indigenous communities*" to learn about a potential working environment, "*its traditions and culture because eventually those things would influence their daily planning.*" Another teacher suggested that clinical practice should start with "*observations in different schools to learn about the community, and to do clinical practice with students from different areas.*" Teachers also requested that their initial preparation be aligned "*with the real dilemmas*" that were already part of the classroom experience instead of just being taught about what "*should happen in the ideal classroom.*" At the same time, teachers requested that teacher educators "*speak about their own personal professional experience in order to learn about real situations that they themselves could face in the future.*" In sum, teachers requested "*training to fit the context in which they might work.*"

5.4.3 Unexpected Findings

1. Secundaria students without prior English knowledge

Teachers in this study reported working with students who had little to zero English skills upon arrival to *secundaria* school even though the National English

Program mandated English instruction beginning in preschool and elementary school.

One participating state in this study did not offer English classes in those levels at all;

consequently, teachers were hard pressed to accommodate seven years of English

instruction into three years of *secundaria school*. Participating teachers in this study

expressed frustration at the challenge of filling in linguistic gaps while at the same time

trying to teach their own level content, as illustrated by the following examples:

a. *The reality is that most elementary schools do not offer English classes; therefore, the secundaria English curriculum is too high for some students who are taking classes in this language for the first time.*
b. *[We need to know] how to work with different educational levels and how to teach students with different levels of knowledge too.*
c. *We need to emphasize the importance of mastering English from preschool to university, and offer guidance throughout those levels to make sure that learning goals are accomplished.*
d. *It is important to know some of the basics of the language so we can continue teaching it [in junior high school].*

There are studies about the English language program in elementary schools

(Pamplón and Ramírez-Romero, 2013; Paredes, Godínez, Hidalgo, Espinosa, and Dzul,

2012; Quezada, 2013; Ramírez-Romero and Pamplón, 2012; Ramírez-Romero,

Pamplón, and Cota, 2014a; Ramírez-Romero, Sayer, and Pamplón, 2014b; Reyes,

Murrieta, and Hernández, 2011; and Sayer, Mercau, and Blanco, 2013c), and a common

thread is the lack of well-trained English teachers; therefore, we cannot expect

secundaria English teachers to shoulder the entire responsibility for four language

program cycles instead of one. The initial preparation pipeline must include K-9 English

teachers.

2. Secundaria students lack interest or motivation to learn English

Almost half the teachers in our study, 48.76% of (*n=* 203), described their students as either lacking interest in English, not being interested in learning a second language, or not being motivated to learn English. Some statements used stronger words like "*apathy"* toward the language. A few examples follow:

a. [My students] *are not interested in learning the language* [English] *because they do not aspire to continue in school.*
b. *My students do not like English because they speak an indigenous language.*
c. *My students do not learn the language because they are not interested in learning it.*
d. *There is a general disinterest in the language.*
e. *Since there are no places for students to practice English where they live, they are not interested in learning a second language.*
f. *I need to convince students that speaking a second language is very important and necessary.*

Borjian and Padilla (2010 as cited in Borjian, 2015) noted that "Mexican students take English classes for various reasons and that their motivation for learning this language is complex" (p. 165). Some students were found to be intrinsically motivated while others saw the economic value of knowing the language. However, the authors also noted a strong parental support to study the language was a key factor in their motivation or interest in learning it. But, teachers in our study experienced a lack of parental support for their subject.

3. Non-English teachers and other professionals teaching English in secundaria

The data showed that 37 of *n=* 246 respondents, or 15 %, were *other* professionals who were classroom teachers only because they have some English skills. These *other* professionals were trained as either chemical engineers, psychologists, lawyers, economists, mathematicians, accountants, dentists, computer scientists, or

trained in modern languages and pedagogy. Finding non-teacher professionals teaching

English is consistent with the literature review in which education authorities confirmed

the presence of *other* professionals, friends, foreign visitors, or former American

residents teaching English in *secundaria* schools (Calderón, 2015b; SEByN, 2002 as

cited in Santibañez, 2007). The data also revealed that 49 teachers, or 20%, admitted to

teaching English without knowing the language. One teacher candidly stated "*I'm not*

good with English because I'm a history teacher, and I don't speak the indigenous

language my students speak either." Another teacher indicated that "*telesecundaria*

requires its own special English teacher" implying that he may not the best person to

teach the language. The literature review established that teachers serving in rural

communities were the least prepared (Corcoran and Leahy, 2003; DGIE, 2012;

Dominguez and Barrera, 2009; Tatto, 1999), and these statements seem to corroborate

that claim.

5.5 Policy Implications for Initial Teacher Preparation

The findings presented have several implications for initial teacher preparation in

Mexico. Implications that will demand policymakers, educators, and teachers to work

together to discuss, draft, and implement language reforms that balance competing

agendas.

First, teacher preparation institutions need to align their training content with the

education reforms introduced by the Ministry of Education. Language has a social role;

therefore, language reforms must be explicitly discussed, learned, and understood during

pre-service training. A participating teacher in this study suggested that "*the SEP's*

[Ministry of Education] *English program should relate to the university or Normal School program*."

Second, equally important is the consolidation of initial preparation standards for English teachers across institutions. There seem to be too many initial preparation guidelines that are partially incorporated or loosely interpreted. Starting with admission standards, initial teacher preparation programs could benefit from a study that presents the limitations of English teachers with short foreign language learning trajectories to reconfigure pre-service training hours with a curriculum more befitting the current needs of teachers in the field in different social contexts.

Third, there are financial implications. The National Council of Education Authorities (*Consejo Nacional de Autoridades Educativas*, CONAEDU, 2009) stated that Mexico made a substantial financial investment in teacher training programs all over the country, but whether that investment reached initial preparation of English teachers was not clear. Similarly, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía*, INEGI, 2012) reported that over 350 million dollars were allocated for teacher professional development in 2010; however, whether that investment reached or benefited junior high school English teachers is unknown. Findings from this research unequivocally support effective professional development. Therefore, it is crucial to hear teachers' voice at the table to inform policymakers about the situation in the trenches so they can plan better intervention strategies.

Fourth, the literature review showed an unavoidable and irrevocable need for English in Mexico. English is a reality in the 21st Century, and globalization will demand more and more from Mexicans citizens; however, policymaker, educators, and teachers

will need consider the country's multi-ethnic and multi-lingual representation in the English classroom. English language education does not have to terminate or invalidate a vernacular language, but initial English teacher preparation programs need to include preparation about how work with those vernacular cultures to enrich the educational experience of children across the country. The presence of indigenous communities should invite training hours on issues that concern those communities and that could ultimately and potentially impact foreign language teaching and learning.

5.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Several lines of inquiry emerged from this study that deserve further consideration and attention. First, we suggest an in-depth study of existing initial preparation programs for English teachers across degree-granting institutions to understand the strengths, weaknesses, innovations, and commonalities of existing programs that could explain their "unequal product" (Arnout, 2004). Attention should be given to the distribution of content, pedagogy, contextual concerns, and the quantity and quality of clinical practice.

Second, because our findings characterized participating teachers as novice English speakers, a study about admission requirements into initial preparation programs across institutions could reveal the language baseline at the onset. This is crucial information to plan and provide a lattice of language support that would guarantee practical resources to graduate with a proficient language level. Because our findings further revealed that teachers employed other language learning venues outside their preparation program, identifying how those programs supported their language acquisition efforts would also inform initial preparation curriculum.

Third, further research is needed to assess the current professional status of teacher educators to understand how they support teacher candidates' English language development, especially in the *Normal School* and at the university. Our participants requested training classes with *experts*, especially native English-speaking experts; therefore, we need to understand how current teacher educators see their own role in the process, and how teacher candidates perceive educators' role to be.

Fourth, because our findings revealed a seemingly lack of interest to learn English by *secundaria* school students, there needs to be an exploration of a possible correlation between teachers' content mastery and pedagogical content knowledge and students' interest in the language. Statements like '*my students get bored in class*," "*my students are not interested in English and get distracted easily*," and "*I need to help them develop an interest and love for a second language*" do not tell the complete story. Who influences the outcome first, teachers or students? In his work with Mexican English teachers, Borjian (2015) reported what teachers themselves believed to be the major obstacles to students' interest in English: the perception that learning English is difficult, traditional teaching approaches, non-proficient teachers, lack of economic resources, and political disagreements with the United States. However, Borjian only reported teachers' beliefs. The students' voice is still missing, and its presence is required to inform if there is a correlation.

Fifth, further studies are needed to understand the foreign language learning perceptions and resistance in indigenous communities, and whether those behaviors are influenced by socioeconomic opportunities.

Sixth, there should be concrete evidence to support the claim that foreign language learning in Mexico is made worse by students' lack of Spanish literacy. Is Spanish learning supporting English learning, and how?

Seventh, *secundaria* teachers in this study consistently requested and/or recommended "*scholarships to study abroad to have real contact with the English language*" and to have "*international exchanges to practice the language.*" One teacher testified about the value of spending some time abroad: "*Personally, I had the opportunity to receive a scholarship to study abroad, and that* [experience] *complemented my preparation* [as a teacher], *which I consider as excellent because I went from knowing nothing about English at the beginning of my preparation program to ending my degree passing the TOEFL certification. None of that would have been possible without the scholarship.*" Therefore, knowing how teachers who have had such an international experience rate in comparison with those who have not would be valuable to inform policy makers about promoting international exchanges for teachers.

Finally, because professional development programs are used to fill-in initial preparation gaps, evidence is needed to assess their effectiveness and usefulness to teachers. The 2013 TALIS reported that 96% of secondary teachers participated in professional development that, for the most part, focused on pre-service training deficits and included little practical knowledge to help teachers in their diverse teaching contexts (Mexicanos Primero, 2014a; Weis and Zwiers, 2013). Similarly, Collins and Pérez (2013) pointed toward initial teacher education deficiencies that make professional development necessary, especially in pedagogical and content knowledge. Furthermore, evidence has shown that professional development programs need to be anchored in teachers' contexts,

sustained over time, and aimed at developing a culture of collaboration within schools (Musanti & Pence, 2010). Lastly, Delany-Barmann (2010) have reminded us that for professional development efforts to succeed, policy makers play a pivotal role, especially in making it accessible to teachers whose wages are low and are not paid regularly (Sayer *et al.*, 2013).

5.7 Limitations

In addition to the politico-educational conflicts experienced in Mexico during the data collection phase of this study, securing local permissions toward the end of the school year shortened the time to recruit participants. The final number of participants allowed results to be statistically significant but may not have been representative of all the teaching contexts, especially in the northern state of Zacatecas. However, given the difficulties encountered reaching English coordinators in the participating states and given the financial and logistic considerations, a larger sample size would have necessitated more time and tools to finish the study within the time allotted.

In addition, the voluntary nature of the questionnaire posed another limitation: Although the study was approved by the local Ministry of Education offices in the four different states, it is difficult to assess if the information filtered down to teachers. Consequently, participating teachers may not represent a randomly selected sample. A follow-up study could randomly select fewer participants from the original pool and work with a ratio of participants per state to make the comparisons of their responses more reliable.

5.8 Conclusion

This dissertation corroborates previous findings regarding the knowledge, skill, and situation of English teachers in Mexico and presents a bottom-up picture of the challenges they face teaching English in junior high school without a strong initial preparation. It also demonstrates the discrepancies that exist between initial preparation and the realities of practice that support a widespread deficit-based English teaching approach across research sites. We hope that these findings will prove useful to start a different conversation to improve English teaching in basic education in Mexico by providing future English teachers a quality training as learners first using, as a departing point of reference, what already happens in the classroom in different teaching contexts. Centering teacher education in practice, as Ball and Forzani (2009) suggest, would bring relevant practice issues to the forefront and would challenge initial preparation programs to address the detailed and intricate contextual realities faced by novice teachers. Although effective teachers shared a variety of skills, foreign language teaching requires specific behaviors that are grounded in second language acquisition research. This study sought to inform three academic strands: Teacher education in Mexico, in-service professional development for English teachers, and English language teaching. We hope that its findings strengthen the discussion about initial teacher preparation in Mexico to overcome education reform utopias that have remained at the door of reality and change.

APPENDIX A

Personal Letter of Introduction

English Version

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Leticia Banks, and I am doctoral student at the University of California, San Diego. This letter is to introduce myself and respectfully seek your collaboration to conduct my dissertation research with junior high school English teachers in your state. My interest lies in foreign language teaching, especially English teaching in basic education in Mexico under the new National English Program introduced by the Ministry of Education in 2009.

My research focuses on junior high school English teachers in three modalities—*generals, technical,* and *distance learning* who work in urban, suburban, and rural areas. This study seeks to understand English teachers' experiences under the new English program and how their initial preparation influences their day-to-day work. The contributions made by junior high school English teachers is important and deserves to be understood to recognize how their efforts support the National English Program, and what areas, even teachers need additional help, if that help is available, and what shape that help should take.

I respectfully request permission to work with junior high English and request your collaboration to identify and select potential candidates for my study. This study does not include any work with students or class observations. I just need to work with junior high English teachers outside of their work schedule and on a voluntary basis.

I understand that the local Ministry of Education office will require me to follow certain protocols to approve my study, and I'm willing to follow them completely. I'm attaching my resume and a letter from my Dissertation Chair in which she indicates that I have fulfilled all university doctoral requirements to do this study. My Chair is Doctor Frances Contreras, and she can be reached at contrerasf@ucsd.edu.

I reiterate my willingness to follow protocols, and I will make myself available via telephone or Skype to speak with you and explain the details of my study and answer any questions. I thank you in advance for your help, and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,
Leticia Banks
E-mail:
Phone:

Personal Letter of Introduction

Spanish Version

A Quien Corresponda:

Mi nombre es Leticia Banks y soy estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad de California en San Diego. Esta carta tiene como fin presentarme y respetuosamente pedir su colaboración para poder llevar a cabo mi investigación de tesis con maestros de inglés a nivel secundaria en su estado. Mi interés yace en la enseñanza de idiomas, y especialmente en la enseñanza de inglés en educación básica en México bajo el nuevo Programa Nacional de Inglés que la Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) introdujo en el año 2009.

Mi estudio se enfoca en los maestros de inglés que trabajan en zonas urbanas, semiurbanas y rurales en secundarias generales, técnicas, y telesecundarias. Este estudio pretende entender las experiencias de los maestros bajo el nuevo programa y como su preparación inicial influye en su trabajo día a día. La contribución tan importante que los maestros de secundaria hacen a la enseñanza de inglés a este nivel merece ser entendida para reconocer cómo su labor apoya al Programa Nacional de Inglés y cuáles son las áreas en las que los maestros necesitan ayuda adicional—si las hay, y cómo debe ser esa ayuda—si la hay.

Respetuosamente les pido permiso para trabajar con maestros de inglés de secundaria y les pido su colaboración para identificar y seleccionar a posibles candidatos para mi estudio. Este trabajo no incluye trabajo con los estudiantes ni observaciones de clases. Solamente busco trabajar directamente con los maestros de inglés fuera de sus horas de trabajo y de manera voluntaria.

Estoy consciente que la SEP estatal requiere que yo siga ciertos protocolos que autoricen mi trabajo, y estoy en la mejor disposición de cumplirlos al pie de la letra y me pongo a sus órdenes para cumplir con todos los requisitos que me lleven a obtener el permiso deseado. Adjunto mi Currículo Vitae y una carta de mi Tutor de Tesis que indica que he cumplido con todos los requisitos universitarios del doctorado para hacer este estudio. Mi tutor es la Doctora Frances Contreras y la pueden localizar por medio de contrerasf@ucsd.edu.

Les reitero mi disposición y me pongo a sus órdenes ya sea por teléfono o Skype para poder platicar y tener la oportunidad de explicar con detalle mi estudio y contestar cualquier pregunta. Les agradezco de antemano toda la ayuda que puedan brindarme y espero su respuesta.

Atentamente,
Leticia Banks
E-mail:
Teléfono:

APPENDIX B

Chair Letter of Introduction

English Version

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO   UCSD

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO   SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
9500 GILMAN DRIVE
(858) 534-3555
LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA 92093-0003
FAX: (858) 534-3868

June 1, 2016

Ministry of Education
To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to introduce Lety Banks, doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) in collaboration with California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM). Ms. Banks is in Mexico seeking your collaboration to conduct a study with junior high school English teachers. Ms. Banks has more than 20 years of teaching experience and has worked with English teachers in Brazil, Chile, China, México, and the United States. Her work in México includes the state of Aguascalientes, Querétaro, Yucatán, Morelos, Puebla, and Zacatecas. She has conducted workshops and seminars at the Tecnológico of Monterrey, campus Cuernavaca, Morelos and Mexico City, campus Santa Fe.

Ms. Banks' study has been through a rigorous review process at the two universities previously mentioned. Both institutions have approved the study with the condition that the researcher will be the sole propitiator of all the data gathered in order to safeguard the anonymity of survey and subsequent interview participants. Ms. Banks will publish the aggregate results of her study. I appreciate your understanding and support for this sensible academic research.

I have personally worked with Ms. Banks, and I can attest that she is diligent and committed to her work. Recently, she successfully defended her research proposal before her dissertation committee and that is the reason she is now in Mexico ready to collect data for her study. We believe that her research will contribute significantly to the knowledge of initial preparation of English teachers in Mexico.

Ms. Banks is a dedicated student with excellent grades, and in the last two summers has been the recipient of two research fellowships—the first one at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and the second one in Cuernavaca, Morelos sponsored by the University of California, San Diego and Rice University in collaboration with the Tecnológico de Monterrey. Both experiences have served to solidify her abilities as a researcher; therefore, we are confident that her work in Mexico will be of quality and will promote the Ministry of Education's work.

It is a pleasure to recommend Lety for this research in Mexico. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at contrerasf@ucsd.edu.

Sincerely,

Frances E. Contreras, Ph.D, Associate Professor
Director, Joint Doctoral Program
Department of Education Studies
University of California San Diego

Chair Letter of Introduction

Spanish Version

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO   **UCSD**

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FAX: (858) 534-3868

Junio 1, 2016

Secretaría de Educación Pública
A Quien Corresponda,

Por medio de la presente, me permito presentarle a la profesora Lety Banks, candidata al doctorado en Educational Leadership en la Universidad de California, San Diego (UCSD) en colaboración con la Universidad Estatal de California, San Marcos (CSUSM). La profesora Banks se encuentra en México solicitando su colaboración para conducir un estudio con los maestros de inglés a nivel secundaria. La profesora Banks cuenta con más de 20 años de experiencia como maestra y ha trabajado con maestros de inglés en China, Brasil, Chile, los Estados Unidos, y México. Su trabajo en México incluye los estados de Aguascalientes, Querétaro, Yucatán, Morelos, Puebla, y Zacatecas. También ha dado cátedras en el Tecnológico de Monterrey, campus Cuernavaca, Morelos y en el Distrito Federal, campus Santa Fe.

El estudio de la profesora Banks ha sido sometido a un riguroso proceso de revisión y autorización en las dos universidades antes mencionadas y se ha aprobado bajo la condición de que los datos obtenidos serán propiedad de la investigadora para salvaguardar la anonimidad de los participantes en la encuesta y subsecuentes entrevistas. La profesora Banks hará público los resultados del estudio y de manera agregada solamente. Le agradezco su comprensión y apoyo en esta parte tan sensible de esta investigación académica.

Yo he trabajado personalmente con la profesora Banks, y la reconozco como una persona diligente y comprometida a su labor. Ella recientemente defendió exitosamente su propuesta de investigación ante su tribunal de tesis, y por esta razón ahora se encuentra en México para empezar su colección de datos. Confiamos que su tesis doctoral contribuirá significativamente al conocimiento sobre la formación de maestros de inglés en México en sus diferentes contextos.

La profesora Banks es una alumna dedicada a su trabajo con calificaciones excelentes, y en los últimos dos veranos fue ganadora de dos becas de investigación—una en la Universidad de California, Los Ángeles (UCLA) y la otra en Cuernavaca, Morelos auspiciada por UCSD y Rice University en colaboración con el Tecnológico de Monterrey. Ambas experiencias han servido para solidificar sus habilidades como investigadora por lo que no dudamos que su trabajo en México será de calidad y promoverá el trabajo que la SEP desempeña.

Es un placer recomendar a Lety para su investigación en México. Si Ud. tiene preguntas, no dude en comunicarse conmigo a contrerasf@ucsd.edu.

Atentamente,

Frances E. Contreras, Ph.D, Associate Professor
Director, Joint Doctoral Program
Department of Education Studies

APPENDIX C

Survey: English Version

I.   Demographic Information

1. I have read the information, and I agree to participate in the survey.
☐ I have read the information, but I do not agree to participate in the survey.

2. What is your gender?
☐ Male   ☐ Female

3. How old are you?
☐ 21- 28yrs. old   ☐ 29- 36yrs. old   ☐ 37- 45yrs. old   ☐ 46- 53yrs. old
☐ 54 and older

4. Where is the school that you work located?
☐ Rural area   ☐ Suburban area   ☐ Urban area

5. What type of school do you work at? Mark all that apply.
☐ General Junior High School
☐ Vocational Junior High School
☐ Distance Learning Junior High School
☐ Elementary School
☐ Preschool
☐ Other _____

6. How long have you been teaching English?
☐ 3 yrs. or less
☐ 4-6 years
☐ 8-15 years
☐ 16- 20 years
☐ 20 years or more

7. What school shift do you teach?
☐ Morning   ☐ Afternoon   ☐ Both☐ ☐ Other

8. Where were you trained as an English teacher?
☐ Normal School
☐ University
☐ Through a SEP program. Give name of the program_____
☐ I'm a teacher, but not an English teacher. However, I know and teach English.
   What did you study?
☐ I'm not a teacher but know and teach English. What is your major?

☐ I'm a teacher and teach English, but I do not know English.

9. In what state did you train as a teacher? Please write the state and the year you graduated. If not a teacher, give your major, graduation year or when you will graduate.
_____

II.   Information about Current Job

10. What type of contract do you have?
☐   Permanent teaching position
☐   Hourly Contract
☐   Substitute Contract
☐   Other (explain)

11. What type of school do you work at?
☐☐State School
☐   Federal School
☐   Both Federal and State School
☐   Other (explain)

12. Please answer the following questions about your current position. Give totals per week.
☐   In how many schools do you work a week?
☐   How many classes do you teach a week?
☐   How many hours a week do you teach?
☐   How many students do you work with a week?
☐   How many days a week do you work?

13. Including yourself, how many English teachers work in your school? Mark the number of English teachers in each school you work at. A = first school, B= second school, and C= third school.

	1	2	3	4
Escuela A	☐	☐	☐	☐
Escuela B	☐	☐	☐	☐
Escuela C	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. How frequently do you collaborate with other English teachers in your school?
☐☐1-3 times per week
☐☐1-3 times per school year
☐☐I do not collaborate with other English teachers
☐☐Other (explain)

III. Personal English Learning Experience

15. Where and when did you start to learn English? Mark all that apply and give approximate year in which you started to learn English.
☐☐I learned it by myself
☐☐I studied it in a language school
☐☐I studied it in the Normal School
☐☐I studied it in the University
☐☐I studied it through SEP courses
☐☐Other (explain)

16. How would you describe the way English was taught to you? Mark all that apply.
☐☐Grammatical translations
☐☐Oral repetitions and memorization
☐☐The teacher would talk the entire class and leave no time for practice
☐☐Listening to music and watching videos
☐☐Other (explain)

17. What personal strategies helped you learn English? Mark all that apply.
☐ Memorization and written repetitions
☐ Classes or material from the Internet
☐ Informal conversations with friends
☐ Reading from the Internet
☐ Watching movies in English
☐ Other (explain)

18. Where do you use English? Mark all that apply.
☐ Social media
☐ Social life
☐ English-speaking conferences
☐ In classes I teach
☐ Other (explain)

19. Briefly describe the differences between how you learned English and the way you teach it.

20. How did you secure your current position?
☐ Exámen oposición
☐ Exámen de permanencia
☐ Permanent teaching position
☐ Long term substitute
☐ Other (explain)

IV. English Teaching Experience

21. How much time per class do you teach English?
☐ 10-25 minutes per class
☐ 15-35 minutes per class
☐ 15-45 minutes per class
☐ Other (explain)

22. How would you describe your teaching style?

23. What is your biggest concern as an English teacher in your academic context?

24. What do you need to be a better English teacher?

25. Read the following statements and indicate whether they hinder English language teaching (ELT) in your context. Mark Yes if it hinders ELT, No if it doesn't hinder ELT, or I don't know respectively.

	Yes	No	I don't know
Students without previous knowledge of English	☐	☐	☐
Students without cultural capital in Spanish	☐	☐	☐
Students who lack Spanish literacy	☐	☐	☐
Students who do not speak Spanish well	☐	☐	☐
Students with poor study habits	☐	☐	☐
Students who resist learning English	☐	☐	☐
Students with prior knowledge of English	☐	☐	☐
Students with different levels of Spanish/English in same class	☐	☐	☐
Lack of textbooks and teaching materials	☐	☐	☐
Lack of English teacher's autonomy	☐	☐	☐
Lack of school leadership	☐	☐	☐
Lack of specific space for English classes	☐	☐	☐
Excessive administrative work	☐	☐	☐
Inconsistency in student grade promotions	☐	☐	☐
Social assistance programs for families	☐	☐	☐
Lack of proficient English teachers	☐	☐	☐
Lack of teacher motivation	☐	☐	☐
Union marches and strikes	☐	☐	☐
The new labor law in education	☐	☐	☐

26. Reflect on your teaching experience so far, how would you rate your knowledge in the following areas? Choose whether "Excellent, Good, Normal, Regular, or Bad."

English level
Ability to explain and model English
Ability to interpret student learning
Ability to work with a large class

Ability to work with slow learners
Ability to evaluate student learning
Ability to lead a group discussion
Ability to give oral and written feedback to students
Ability to incorporate work routines that foster learning
Ability to coordinate and adjust teaching during class

V. Initial Preparation of English Teachers

27. Indicate your English level at three different points in your career. If you did not train as an English teacher, just give your current level.
Levels are equivalent to: TOEFL: A0= 0.   A1= 347-393.   A2= 394-433.   B1= 437-473.
B2= 477-510.   C1=513-547.

	A0	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1
Level at the beginning of teacher training		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Level at the end of teacher training		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Current English level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

28. How long did you study the following topics during your initial English teacher preparation program? Indicate whether "More than enough, Enough time, Less than enough, No time at all, Do not remember," or It does not apply.

You were trained to work with low income students
You were trained to work with slow learners
You were trained to work with students who do not speak Spanish as first language
You were trained to work in indigenous communities
You were trained to work with undisciplined children
You were trained to work with the school community
You were trained to work and communicate with parents
You were trained to use students' experiences as teaching resources
You were trained to reflect upon your practice to improve it

29. Reflect upon your initial teacher preparation program and indicate whether you were "Satisfied, Neither Satisfied nor unsatisfied, Unsatisfied, or have No opinion" with the knowledge acquired about the following areas.

You were taught English for teachers every semester
You were taught English teaching strategies
You were taught how to integrate listening, speaking, writing, and reading in your teaching
You were taught how to design a single lesson and a sequence of lessons
You were taught how to adapt the curriculum to the teaching context
You were taught how to plan teaching goals and objectives
You were taught how to select and design assessment tools
You were taught how to specify and reinforce learning behaviors in the classroom

You were taught how to diagnose students' learning patterns
You had plenty teaching practice in front of a class prior to graduation

30. Indicate if the following topics were included in your initial preparation and if they were important for the context in which you worked. Indicate whether you "Studied it and was important, Studied it but was not important, Did not study it and was important, or Did not study it and was not important."

English life and culture
Research in the English classroom
Students' socio-affective development
Youth literature in English
Learning styles
Educational innovation: TIC y multimedia
Society, culture, and education
Second language acquisition
Teaching English to teenagers
School management

VI. Initial Preparation of Future English Teachers

31. In your opinion, how important it is to include the following topics in the preparation of future English teachers? Please indicate whether the topic is "Very important, Important, Not important, or Do not know."

English for teachers every semester
How to teach in different social contexts
How to teach adolescents
How to work in deficient academic conditions
How to adapt the national curriculum to the local context
How to work with the school community
How to align training materials with relevant topics for students
How to balance academic and administrative tasks
Cognitive development of children and adolescents
Mediation and conflict resolution

32. If you had the opportunity to influence the initial preparation of future English teachers, what you would include in their program so that they are prepared differently?

33. If you had the opportunity to influence teacher educators, what would you tell ask them to do differently in the initial preparation of future English teachers?

34. If you had the opportunity to talk with future English teachers, how would you explain what it means to work in your context?

35. Thank you very much for participating in this survey. To learn more about the initial preparation of English teachers in Mexico, the researcher, Lety Banks, would like to interview a group of teachers personally. If you would like to be interviewed, please mark YES and give your name, last name, an e-mail address you check often, city where you live, and your WhatsApp number. If you do not want to be interviewed, simply mark NO. Thank you for your valuable help so far.

APPENDIX D

Survey: Spanish Version

I. Información Demográfica

1. Antes de continuar, por favor lea la información sobre esta encuesta en la página anterior. Una vez leída la información, indique si acepta o no acepta participar.

☐ He leído la información y si acepto participar en esta encuesta.
☐ He leído la información y no acepto participar en esta encuesta.

2. ¿Cuál es su sexo?
☐ Hombre   ☐☐Mujer

3. ¿Cuántos años tiene?
☐ 21 - 28 años   ☐ 29 - 36 años   ☐ 37 - 45 años   ☐ 46 - 53 años
☐ 54 o más

4. ¿Dónde está la escuela donde trabaja? Marque todas las zonas en que trabaje.
☐ Zona rural   ☐ Zona suburbana   ☐ Zona urbana

5. ¿En qué tipo de escuela trabaja? Marque todas las escuelas donde trabaje.
☐ Secundaria general
☐ Secundaria técnica
☐ Telesecundaria
☐ Primaria
☐ Preescolar

6. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha enseñado inglés?
☐ Menos de 3 años
☐ 4 – 6 años
☐ 7 – 15 años
☐ 16 – 20 años
☐ Más de 20 años

7. ¿En qué horario da clases?
☐ Matutino   ☐ Vespertino   ☐ Matutino y Vespertino   ☐Otro (explique)

8. ¿Dónde estudió la carrera de maestro de inglés?

☐ Escuela Normal

☐ Universidad

☐ Programa de la SEP. Dé el nombre del programa.

☐ Estudie para maestro, pero NO de inglés. Sin embargo, sé y enseño inglés. Indique
   qué estudió.

☐ Estudié otra carrera, pero sé y enseño inglés. Indique qué carrera estudió.

☐ Estudié para maestro y enseño inglés, pero no sé inglés.

9. En qué estado estudió la carrera de maestro de inglés? Escriba el estado y el año en que
se graduó o espera graduarse. Si no estudió para ser maestro, de el estado en donde
obtuvo su carrera y el año en que se graduó o espera graduarse.

II.   Información sobre su Trabajo Actual

10. ¿Qué tipo de contrato tiene?

☐ Trabajo de base

☐ Trabajo por contrato de horas específicas

☐ Interinato

☐ Otro (explique)

11. ¿En qué tipo de escuela trabaja?

☐ Escuela del estado

☐ Escuela federal

☐ Escuela estatal y federal

☐ Otra (explique)

12. Conteste las siguientes preguntas sobre su trabajo actual por semana. De númetos
totales por semana.

☐ ¿En cuantas escuelas trabaja a la semana?

☐ ¿Cuántas clases da a la semana?

☐ ¿Cuántas horas de clase da a la semana?

☐ ¿Con cuántos alumnos trabaja cada semana?

☐ ¿Cuántos días a la semana da clase?

13. Incluyéndose a Ud., ¿cuántos maestros de inglés trabajan en su escuela? Marque el
número de maestros de inglés en todas las escuelas en que trabaja. A es la primera
escuela, B la segunda, y C la tercera escuela.

	1	2	3	4
Escuela A	☐	☐	☐	☐
Escuela B	☐	☐	☐	☐
Escuela C	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. ¿Con qué frecuencia colabora Ud. con otros maestros de inglés en su escuela?
- ☐ 1-3 veces por semana
- ☐ 1-3 veces por año escolar
- ☐ No colaboro con otros maestros
- ☐ Otro (explique)

III. Experiencia Personal al Aprender Inglés

15. ¿Dónde y a qué edad empezó a aprender inglés? Marque todas las respuestas que apliquen en su caso y de el año aproximado en que empezó a aprender inglés.
- ☐ Aprendí solo/a
- ☐ Estudié en escuela particular
- ☐ Estudié en la Escuela Normal
- ☐ Estudié en la Universidad
- ☐ Estudié en cursos de SEP
- ☐ Otro (explique)

16. ¿Cómo describiría la manera en que le enseñaron inglés? Marque todas las respuestas que apliquen.
- ☐ Por medio de traducciones gramaticales
- ☐ Repeticiones orales y memorización
- ☐ El maestro hablaba más y no había oportunidad para practicar el inglés en clase
- ☐ Escuchando música y viendo videos
- ☐ Otro (explique)

17. ¿Qué estrategias personales le ayudaron a aprender inglés? Marque todas las respuestas que apliquen en su caso.
- ☐ Memorización y repeticiones escritas
- ☐ Clases y/o material en Internet
- ☐ Práctica informal del inglés con amigos
- ☐ Lectura en inglés en el Internet
- ☐ Viendo películas en inglés
- ☐ Otro (explique)

18. ¿En qué tipo de contextos usa inglés? Marque todas las respuestas que apliquen.
- ☐ Redes sociales
- ☐ Vida social
- ☐ Conferencias en inglés
- ☐ En clases de inglés que enseño
- ☐ Otro (explique)

19. Describa brevemente cómo difiere su manera de enseñar inglés de la manera en que se lo enseñaron?

20. ¿Cómo llegó a su trabajo actual como maestro de inglés?
- ☐ Exámen de oposición
- ☐ Exámen de permanencia
- ☐ Plaza asignada
- ☐ Interinato
- ☐ Otro (explique)

IV. Experiencia Enseñando Inglés

21. ¿Cuánto tiempo de clase dedica a la enseñanza del inglés?
- ☐ 10-25 minutos por clase
- ☐ 15-35 minutos por clase
- ☐ 15-45 minutos por clase
- ☐ Otro (explique)

22. ¿Cómo describiría su estilo de enseñanza?

23. ¿Cuál es su mayor preocupación como maestro de inglés en su contexto académico?

24 ¿Qué necesita para ser un mejor maestro de inglés?

25. Lea las siguientes declaraciones e indique si éstas dificultan la enseñanza de inglés en su contexto de trabajo. Marque "Si" si dificulta la enseñanza del inglés, "No" si no dificulta la enseñanza del inglés, o "No sé" si no sabe si dificulta la enseñanza del inglés respectivamente.

	Si	No	No sé
Alumnos sin previo conocimiento de inglés	☐	☐	☐
Alumnos que carecen de acervo cultural en español	☐	☐	☐
Alumnos que carecen de alfabetización en español	☐	☐	☐
Alumnos que no hablan bien el español	☐	☐	☐
Alumnos con malos hábitos de aprendizaje	☐	☐	☐
Alumnos que se resisten a aprender inglés	☐	☐	☐
Alumnos con diferentes niveles de español/inglés en la misma clase	☐	☐	
Falta de libros de texto y materiales didácticos	☐	☐	☐
Falta de autonomía del maestro de inglés	☐	☐	☐
Falta de liderazgo escolar	☐	☐	☐
Falta de un espacio específico para las clases de inglés	☐	☐	☐
Sobrecarga de trabajo administrativo	☐	☐	☐
Inconsistencia en las promociones escolares de los alumnos	☐	☐	☐
Los programas sociales de asistencia para familias	☐	☐	☐
Falta de maestros con buenas habilidades en inglés	☐	☐	☐
Falta de motivación en los maestros de inglés	☐	☐	☐
Las mobilizaciones laborales que manda el sindicato		☐	☐☐
La nueva ley laboral de la reforma educativa	☐	☐	☐

26. Reflexione en su experiencia como maestro/a hasta ahora, ¿cómo calificaría sus conocimientos en las siguientes áreas? Indique si es "Excelente, Bueno, Normal, Regular, o Malo".

Su nivel de inglés
Su habilidad para explicar y modelar el inglés ☐
Su habilidad para obtener e interpretar el aprendizaje del alumno
Su habilidad para trabajar con clases numerosas ☐
Su habiliad para trabajar con alumnos de lento aprendizaje
Su habilidad para evaluar el aprendizaje del alumno ☐
Su habilidad para dirigir una plática del grupo entero
Su habilidad para dar retroalimentación oral y escrita al alumno
Su habilidad para incorporar rutinas de trabajo y expresion oral que fomenten el aprendizaje ☐
Su habilidad para coordinar y ajustar la enseñanza durante la clase
☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
V. Preparación Inicial de Maestros de Inglés

27. Indique su nivel de inglés en tres diferentes momentos de su carrera profesional. Si no estudió para ser maestro de inglés, solo de su nivel de inglés actual.
Los niveles son equivalentes al TOEFL: A0= 0.   A1= 347-393.   A2= 394-433.   B1= 437-473.   B2= 477-510.   C1=513-547.

	A0	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1
Su nivel de inglés al empezar la carrera	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Su nivel de inglés al terminar la carrera	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Su nivel de inglés actual	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

28. ¿Cuánto tiempo se dedicó a los siguientes temas durante su programa de formación como maestro de inglés? Indique "Más de lo suficiente, El tiempo suficiente, Menos de lo suficiente, No se habló del tema, No recuerdo, o No aplica".

Le enseñaron a trabajar con alumnos de bajos recursos ☐   ☐
Le enseñaron a trabajar con alumnos de lentro aprendizaje   ☐
Le enseñaron a trabajar con alumnos que no hablan español como primer idioma ☐   ☐
Le enseñaron a trabajar en comunidades indígenas   ☐
Le enseñaron a trabajar con alumnos indiciplinados   ☐
Le enseñaron a trabajar con la comunidad escolar ☐
Le enseñaron a trabajar y dialogar con los padres de familia ☐   ☐
Le enseñaron a usar las experiencias del alumno como recursos de enseñanza ☐   ☐
Le enseñaron a analizar su práctica para mejorala ☐   ☐

29. Reflexione en su formación como maestro y responda si está "Satisfecho, Ni satisfecho ni insatisfecho, Insatisfecho, o No tengo opinión" sobre los conocimientos adquiridos en las siguientes áreas.

Le enseñaron inglés para maestros cada semestre
Le enseñaron estratégias para la enseñanza de inglés
Le enseñaron como integrar habilidades auditivas, orales, de escritura y lectura en inglés
Le enseñaron como diseñar una lección asi como una secuencia de lecciones
Le enseñaron como diseñar una lección asi como una secuencia de lecciones
Le enseñaron como planear metas y objetivos de enseñanza
Le enseñaron como seleccionar y diseñar instrumentos de evaluación
Le enseñaron como especificar y reenforzar comportamientos efectivos en el salon de clase
Le enseñaron como diagnosticar patrones de aprendizaje en los alumnos
Le ofrecieron suficientes prácticas frente a grupo antes de graduarse

30. Indique si los siguientes temas fueron incluidos en su preparación inicial y si son de importancia en su contexto de trabajo. Indique "Estudié el tema y es importante, Estudié el tema pero no es importante, No estudié el tema y es importante, No estudié el tema y no es importante".

Vida y cultura del inglés
Investigación en el aula de inglés
Desarrollo socioafectivo
Literatura juvenil en inglés
Literatura juvenil en inglés
Inovación educativa: TIC y multimedia
Sociedad, cultura, y educación
Adquisición de una segunda lengua
Adquisición de una segunda lengua
Gestión escolar

VI. Preparación Inicial de Futuros Maestros de Inglés

31. En su opinion, ¿qué tan importante es incluir los siguientes temas en la preparación de los futuros maestros de inglés? Por favor indique si el tema "Es muy importante, Es importante, No es importante, o No Sé".

Inglés para maestros cada semestre
Como enseñar en diferentes contextos sociales
Como enseñar a adolescentes
Como trabajar en condiciones académicas deficientes
Como adaptar el curriculum nacional al contexto local
Como trabajar dentro de la comunidad escolar
Como alinear los materiales presentados en la carrera con los temas relevantes para los alumnos
Como equilibrar las tareas educativas con las administrativas
El desarrollo cognitivo del niño y adolescente
Mediación y gestión de conflictos

32. Si tuviera la oportunidad de influenciar la preparación inicial de los futuros maestros de inglés, ¿qué incluiría en el plan de estudios para que ellos fueran formados de una manera diferente a como lo fue Ud.?

33. Si tuviera la oportunidad de influenciar a los maestros que tuvo en su preparación inicial como maestro, ¿qué les diría o pediría para que los futuros maestros tengan una formación diferente a la suya?

34. Si tuviera la oportunidad de platicar con los futuros maestros/as de inglés, ¿cómo les explicaría lo que significa trabajar en su contexto?

35. Muchas gracias por participar en esta encuesta. Para profundizar la investigación sobre la formación de maestros de inglés en México, la investigadora, Lety Banks, le gustaría entrevistar a un grupo de maestros personalmente. Si a Ud. le gustaría ser entrevistado, por favor marque Si y de su nombre y apellido, su correo electrónico que más usa, la ciudad donde vive, y su número de WhatsApp. Si no quiere ser entrevistado, marque NO.

Muchas gracias por la valiosa ayuda brindada hasta ahora.

APPENDIX E

Table 3.3 Ministry of Education departments contacted for this study

State	*State Schools*	*Federal Schools*
Chiapas	1. Dirección de Educación Secundaria y Superior 2. Departamento de Educación Secundarias Estatales 3. Departamento de Superación y Servicios Académicos 4. Escuela Normal Superior de Chiapas	1. Departamento de Educación Secundarias Generales 2. Departamento de Educación Técnica 3. Departamento de Telesecundarias 4. Oficina del Servicio Profesional Docente
Puebla	1. Dirección de Secundarias Técnicas del Estado, S5 2. Dirección de Secundarias Generales	1. Dirección General de Educación Básica
Tlaxcala	1. Dirección de Educación Básica de Tlaxcala 2. Dirección de Educación Terminal 3. Dirección de Formación Docente del Estado 4. Jefe del Departamento de Telesecundarias Estatales 5. Supervisión Escolar Primaria de Tlaxcala	1. Jefe del Departamento de Secundarias Generales 2. Jefe del Departamento de Secundarias Técnicas 3. Jefe del Departamento de Telesecundarias Federales 4. Jefe de Enseñanza de Inglés en Secundarias Técnicas 5. Jefe de Enseñanza de Inglés en Secundarias Generales 6. Asesor Técnico Pedagógico del Departamento de Telesecundarias 7. Escuela Normal Urbana Federal de Tlaxcala
Zacatecas	1. Subsecretaría de Educación Básica y Normal 2. Dirección de Educación Básica 3. Dirección de Telesecundaria	1. Jefe de Secundarias Federalizadas 2. Coordinación del Programa Nacional de Inglés

APPENDIX F

Table 3.5 Number of English supervisors contacted for this study

English Supervisors	Chiapas	Puebla	Tlaxcala	Zacatecas
Secundarias Estatales	Generales: 12 supervisors for 12 districts	Técnicas: 1 for 38 schools	Generales: 10 Técnicas: 1	Not available
Secundarias Federales	Generales: 9 supervisors for 5 districts Técnicas: 5 supervisors for 19 districts Telesecundarias: 17 supervisors for 73 districts	Not available	Telesecundarias: 1	Técnicas: 13 supervisors Generales: 13 supervisors

APPENDIX G

Table 3.7 Demographic information about study participants

Category	Percentage	Participants
Q#2- Gender (*n*= 253)		
Females	58%	146
Males	42%	107
Q#3- Age (*n*= 256)		
21-28yrs	21%	53
29-36yrs.	34%	88
37-45yrs.	29%	75
46-53yrs.	11%	28
54 yrs. plus	5%	12
Q#4- Secundaria Location (*n*= 246)		
Urban	32%	78
Sub-urban	30%	74
Rural	38%	94
Q#5- Secundaria Modality *(n*= 241)		
Generales	29 %	69
Técnicas	38 %	92
Telesecundarias	33%	80
Q#6- English Teaching Experience (*n*= 250)		
Less than 3 yrs.	17 %	44
4-6 yrs.	29 %	73
7-15 yrs.	34 %	86
16-20 yrs.	9%	23
More than 20 yrs.	9%	24

APPENDIX H

Table 3.8 Likert-scale questions codification

Q#25 Indicate whether the following statements hinder English teaching.
I do not know if it hinders English teaching (0)
It does not hinder English teaching (1)
It hinders English teaching (2)

Q#26 How would you rate your knowledge in the following areas?
Excellent (4)
Good (3)
Normal (2)
Regular (1)
Bad (0)

Q#28 Indicate how long you study these topics in your initial preparation.
More than enough (5)
Enough time (4)
Less than enough (3)
The subject was not discussed (2)
I do not remember (1)
It does not apply (0)

Q#29 Indicate how satisfied you are with the knowledge acquired about the following topics in your initial
teacher preparation.
Satisfied (3)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (2)
Dissatisfied (1)
I have no opinion (0)

Q#30 Indicate if the following topics were addressed during your initial preparation.
I studied the topic, and it was important (3)
I studied the topic, but it was not important (2)
I did not study the topic, and it was important (1)
I did not study the topic, and it was not important (0)

Q#31 Indicate how important the following topics are in the initial preparation of future English teachers.
It is very important (3)
It is important (2)
It is not important (1)
I do not know (0)

Table 3.9 Rotated Component Matrix[6] Results for Q#25

Roadblocks to English Teaching	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Q25_10: Lack of teacher autonomy	.778	-.017	.133	-.085
Q25_17: Lack of teacher motivation	.658	.068	-.122	.151
Q25_16: Lack of teachers' English proficiency	.645	-.098	.127	.115
Q25_12: Lack of school leadership	.498	.449	-.227	-.128
Q25_11: Lack of a specific space for the English class	.449	.357	.175	-.017
Q25_9: Lack of textbooks and teaching materials	.386	.158	.171	.061
Q25_19: The new labor law in education	-.117	.700	-.062	.030
Q25_18: Union mobilizations: marches and strikes	-.008	.631	.133	.183
Q25_14: Inconsistency in student grade promotions	.308	.490	.186	-.183
Q25_15: Social assistance programs for families	.246	.482	.160	.087
Q25_13: Excessive administrative work	.270	.436	-.122	-.123
Q25_5: Students with poor study habits	-.061	.377	.213	.121
Q25_4: Students who do not speak Spanish well	.076	.071	.748	-.036
Q25_3: Students who lack Spanish literacy	.237	.104	.718	.029
Q25_2: Students who lack cultural capital in Spanish	.005	.079	.710	-.086
Q25_8: Students with different levels of Spanish and English in the same class	.133	.363	.437	-.027
Q25_1: Students without previous knowledge of English	-.122	-.139	.290	.274
Q25_6: Students who resist learning English	.084	.061	-.041	.845
Q25_7: Students who do not value learning English	.147	.151	-.083	.798

[6] Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

APPENDIX J

Table 3.10 Component Matrix Results for Q#26

Teaching Abilities	Component 1
Q26_9: Your ability to incorporate work routines that foster learning	.841
Q26_8: Your ability to give oral and written feedback to the student	.835
Q26_10: Your ability to coordinate and adjust teaching during class	.832
Q26_7: Your ability to lead a group discussion	.822
Q26_6: Your ability to assess student learning	.814
Q26_3: Your ability to interpret student learning	.801
Q26_4: Your ability to work with a large class	.782
Q26_2: Your ability to explain and model English	.764
Q26_1: Your level of English	.724
Q26_5: Your ability to work with slow learners	.533

APPENDIX K

Table 3.11 Component Matrix Results for Q#28

Contextual training	Component 1
Q28_6: You were trained to work with the school community	.833
Q28_7: You were trained to work and communicate with parents	.810
Q28_8: You were trained to use students' experiences as teaching resources	.794
Q28_5: You were trained to work with undisciplined children	.777
Q28_2: You were trained to work with slow learners	.777
Q28_9: You were trained to reflect upon your practice to improve it	.751
Q28_1: You were trained to work with low-income students	.723
Q28_3: You were trained to work with students who do not speak Spanish as their first language	.698
Q28_4: You were trained to work in indigenous communities	.640

APPENDIX L

Table 3.12 Component Matrix Results for Q#29

High leverage teaching practices	Component 1
Q29_6: You were taught how to plan teaching goals and objectives	.859
Q29_7: You were taught how to select and design assessment tools	.815
Q29_9: You were taught how to diagnose students' learning patterns	.792
Q29_8: You were taught how to specify and reinforce learning behaviors in the classroom	.778
Q29_5: You were taught how to adapt the curriculum to the teaching context	.757
Q29_4: You were taught how to design a lesson as well as a sequence of lessons	.666
Q29_2: You were taught English teaching strategies	.347
Q29_3: You were taught t how to integrate the four core skills in your teaching	.472
Q29_10: You had plenty of teaching practice in front of a class prior to graduation	.507

APPENDIX M

Table 3.13 Component Matrix Results for Q#30

Learned during initial preparation	Component 1
Q30_7: Society, culture, and education	.708
Q30_8: Second language acquisition	.687
Q30_9: Teaching English to teenagers	.657
Q30_4: Youth literature in English	.641
Q30_2: Research in the English classroom	.628
Q30_3: Students' socio-affective development	.627
Q30_10: School Management	.597
Q30_5: Learning styles	.587
Q30_1: English life and culture	.571
Q30_6: Educational innovation: ICT and multimedia	.489

APPENDIX N

Table 3.14 Component Matrix Results for Q#31

Training future teachers of English	Component 1
Q31_6: How to work with the school community	.799
Q31_5: How to adapt the national curriculum to the local context	.769
Q31_8: How to balance academic and administrative tasks	.767
Q31_4: How to work in deficient academic conditions	.743
Q31_10: Mediation and conflict resolution	.728
Q31_7: How to align training materials with relevant topics for students	.710
Q31_3: How to teach adolescents	.708
Q31_9: Cognitive development of children and adolescents	.654
Q31_2: How to teach in different social contexts	.587
Q31_1: English for teachers every semester	.400

Table 3.15 List of descriptive, *in vivo*, and simultaneous codes

Descriptive code Content Knowledge (CntK)	*Descriptive code* Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)	*Descriptive code* Contextual Knowledge (CtxK)
In Vivo codes	*In Vivo & Simultaneous codes*	*In Vivo codes*
Repetition	Communicative	Lack of interest
Memorization	Repetition	Lack of motivation
Grammar translation	Grammar translation	Lack of materials
Communicative	Substitution	Lack of infrastructure
Writing drills	Mechanical	No English in elementary school
Readings	Memorization	No English in preschool
Traditional	Theoretical	No prior English knowledge
Deductive	Integrated skills	Lack of parent support
Inductive	Dynamic	Lack of support for subject
Vocabulary	Active	Lack of training
Theoretical	Vocabulary translations	Socioeconomic problems
Games	Grammatical explanations	Poor families
Audiolingual	Rules and formulas	Not enough English teachers
Integrated skills	Collaborative	Indigenous community
Private language school	Eclectic	Rural community
Universidad	Grammar worksheets	Lack of Spanish literacy
Training	Inductive	
Preparation	deductive	
English classes	Songs	
	Music	
	Games	
	Dialogs	
	Practical	
	Traditional	

APPENDIX P

Table 4.2 Categorization of multiple choice question, open-ended option with respective (*n*)

Content Knowledge	*n*
Q#15: When did you start learning English?	233
Q#17: What personal strategies helped you learn English?	230
Pedagogical Content Knowledge	*n*
Q#16: How was English taught to you?	213
Q#22: How would you describe your teaching style?	195
Q#19: How is your teaching style different from the way it was taught to you?	231
Contextual Knowledge	*n*
Q#23: What is your biggest concern as an English teacher in your academic context?	203
Q#24: What would help you be a better teacher?	206

APPENDIX Q

Table 4.3 Categorization of Likert-scale questions

Likert Scale	**Pedagogical Content Knowledge**	*n*
5-point value	Q#26: Reflect upon your teaching experience so far, how would you rate your knowledge in the following areas.	210
6-point value	Q#28: Indicate how much time did the following topics receive during your English teacher preparation program.	194
4-point value (a)	Q#29: Reflect upon your initial teacher preparation program and indicate how satisfied you are with the knowledge acquired in the following areas.	196
Likert Scale	**Contextual Knowledge**	*n*
3-point value	Q# 25: Indicate whether the following statements hinder English in your (ELT) in context.	212
4-point value (b)	Q#30: Indicate if the following topics were included in your initial teacher preparation program and if they are important in your teaching context.	195
4-point value (c)	Q#31: How important is it to include the following topics in the initial preparation of future English teachers?	198

APPENDIX R

Table 4.4 Language level of *Secundaria* English teachers at three points in their career

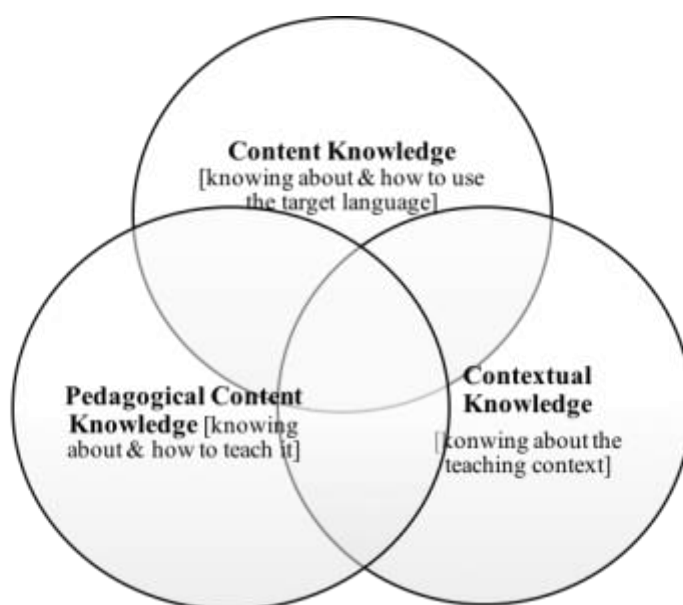| Points in Career	CEFR Level	Level description	Beginning $n= 155$	End $n= 148$	Current $n= 151$
	A0	False Beginner Minimal User	23%	25%	24%
BASIC	A1	Basic Extremely Limited User	40%	39%	40%
	A2	Elementary Limited User	18%	18%	19%
INDEPENDENT	B1	Lower Intermediate	7%	6%	5%
	B2	High Intermediate	8%	8%	7%
PROFICIENT	C1	Lower Advanced	3%	3%	3%
	C2	Higher Advanced	NA	NA	NA

Figure 1.2 Knowledge Framework

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