

Imagining oneself as an English teacher: snapshots of the impact of PIBID on professional identity

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Abstract:

In this paper, I tell the story of Marcela, a pre-service language teacher participating in a PIBID initiative focusing on the design and implementation of English reading activities at two state schools. I discuss the impact of this experience on her professional identity. I adopt a narrative inquiry methodology, which considers narrative as both method and way of understanding experience. Storied perspectives on identity, teacher knowledge and context inform this study. The field texts include visual narratives, drawings depicting English teaching, which are contextualised by their recorded explanations, written journals and language learning autobiography, and recorded conversations. This material was gathered over the course of an academic year. Being a PIBID scholarship holder provided Marcela with opportunities to make sense of her own biography as a language learner, think about who she wanted to become as a teacher, and negotiate her imagined professional identity. This had a profound impact on her identity as a language teacher.

Keywords:

Visual narrative inquiry; PIBID; Second language teacher identity.

Resumo:

Neste artigo, conto a história de Marcela, uma professora de inglês pré-serviço, que participava de uma iniciativa de PIBID envolvendo a elaboração e aplicação de atividades de leitura em inglês em duas escolas públicas. Discuto o impacto dessa experiência em sua identidade profissional. Adoto a pesquisa narrativa como metodologia, a qual considera a narrativa tanto como método quanto forma de se compreender uma experiência. Perspectivas historiadas sobre identidade, conhecimento docente e contexto informam este estudo. Os textos de campo abarcam narrativas visuais, desenhos contemplando o ensino de inglês, os quais são contextualizados por suas explicações, diários e autobiografia de aprendizagem de línguas escritos, e conversas gravadas sobre a experiência de ser bolsista PIBID. Esse material foi coletado ao longo do período de um ano acadêmico. Ser bolsista PIBID proporcionou à Marcela oportunidades de compor sentidos sobre sua própria biografia de aprendiz de línguas, refletir sobre a professora que gostaria de se tornar e negociar sua identidade profissional imaginada. Isso teve um impacto profundo na construção de sua identidade de professora de línguas.

Palavras-chave: Pesquisa narrativa visual; PIBID; identidade do professor de línguas.

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Introduction

Nobody starts being an educator on a certain Tuesday at 4 p.m. Nobody is born an educator or marked to be an educator. We are permanently becoming educators by experiencing practice and reflecting on practice (Freire, 1991, p. 58, own translation).

Paulo Freire's observation applies to my own process of becoming as a teacher and to many of the pre-service teachers that have crossed my path at the dual language teaching degree where I lecture. With every new module I have taught at the language teaching degree programme, I would always hear: "I don't want to be an English teacher"; "I can't be an English teacher"; "I'm here just to learn the language"; "I picked the teaching degree because there was no better option". Very few identified with the profession. This attitude is typical in most language teaching degrees (see Barcelos, 2016; Brandão, 2021; Ticks; Motta-Roth, 2010). I myself began my degree with no intention of becoming an English teacher: I liked studying English and wanted to be a translator. Looking back, my own English teaching degree had limited influence on my teacher identity, even though, compared to my students' degree, I took more modules in English and teaching. In fact, dual language teaching degrees have come under criticism by applied linguists, who argue that it struggles to improve pre-service teachers' language and pedagogical knowledge (see Celani, 2010; Gimenez, 2004). Instead, my professional identity developed from teaching English in private language courses alongside my degree. At the time, I missed opportunities to relate my experiences as a student to my experiences as a teacher. Only at the end of the degree did I start to see myself as an English teacher.

As my experience as a teacher educator developed, I began to consider what would help my students live out English teaching in all its complexity throughout their degree. Drawing on my own development as a teacher educator, I realised that designing and implementing my own materials was crucial in helping me negotiate my professional identity. Therefore, I incorporated activities in which students would adapt, design and implement materials in my modules. While this was a good start, I nevertheless felt this was like the type of teacher education Britzman (2003, p. 14) describes as "a rehearsal for the real thing", and not the thing itself (i.e., not an implementation in a school). Only in their final year, after "rehearsing" for over three years, would pre-service teachers get a taste of a real school in their practicum. But then I started coordinating PIBID (Teaching Initiation Scholarship Programme) initiatives. That was when my students and I could really experience the reality of schools. I learned many lessons from this. For example, I saw that student teachers sometimes failed to recognise in-service teachers' knowledge, and that they needed more opportunities to practice their English. In spite of all the challenges, designing and implementing English activities for real pupils at real schools had a significant impact on pre-service teachers' development. They got to know the profession better while making sense of their own practice. Many publications illustrate how the school environment immersion provided by PIBID deeply influences pre-service teachers' learning and, consequently, language teaching at state schools,

¹ Translated by: Nicholas Richard Moloney.

given the opportunities they have to develop pedagogical interventions with specific teaching contexts in mind (see Brandão, 2023; Mateus; El Kadri; Silva, 2013; Silva; Roque-Faria, 2020).

Relying on the narrative inquiry methodology (Clandinin, 2013a; Clandinin; Connelly, 2000), in this paper, I delve deeper into the question of how pre-service English teachers' lives are shaped by PIBID. I tell the story of Marcela (a fictitious name), a pre-service language teacher participating in a PIBID initiative focusing on the design and implementation of English reading activities at two state schools in Mato Grosso. Specifically, I discuss the impact of this experience on her professional identity construction with the following research questions: (1) How does a pre-service teacher imagine, live out and re-imagine English teaching throughout the first year of a PIBID initiative? (2) How does this process of imagining, living out and re-imagining the profession shape her identity as English teacher? I take a visual approach by analysing Marcela's drawings depicting English teaching, which are contextualized by their explanations and other field texts, such as recorded conversations between us. Here, drawings are instances of visual narratives, in which a teacher portrays his/her teaching and learning conceptions and stories.

This paper is organised as follows. In Section 1, I outline the theoretical background of teacher identity guiding this study. In Section 2, I introduce narrative inquiry and other methodological issues shaping the study. In Section 3, I present my findings in the form of an overall narrative account of Marcela's experiences of being a PIBID scholarship holder. In Section 4, I discuss Marcela's account by retelling her experiences in the light of my theoretical background. I conclude in Section 5 by reflecting on the impact of PIBID on second language teacher education.

1 Teacher identity as a storied process

I draw on the understanding of professional identity as the *embodiment of a teacher's stories to live by* (Clandinin; Huber, 2005; Connelly; Clandinin, 1999). Such conceptualisation links identity to other narrative constructs that shape teachers' lives: context and teacher knowledge.

Context is understood through the metaphor of personal and professional knowledge landscapes, which involves "space, place, and time" and "relationships among people, places and things" (Clandinin; Connelly, 1996, p. 24). Teachers' personal knowledge landscapes include family relationships and experiences of being school pupils. Their professional knowledge landscapes, meanwhile, comprise their living as a teacher in school and university contexts, including their participation in teacher education programmes and teaching experiences.

Teacher knowledge is taken to mean personal practical knowledge, which is "composed of both kinds of knowledge [theoretical and practical], blended by the personal background and characteristics of the teacher, and expressed by her in particular situations" (Clandinin, 2013b, p. 67). It represents a teacher's "particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation" (Connelly; Clandinin, 1988, p. 25), reflecting both his/her life story and the contexts in which he/she lives. As Connelly and Clandinin (1988, p. 26) highlight, "a narrative understanding of who we are and what we know [...] acknowledges the tensions and differences within each of us." Besides, "we are, in important ways, what the situation 'pulls out' of us" (Connelly; Clandinin, 1988, p. 26). Teachers' personal practical knowledge has moral, aesthetic and emotional dimensions. Hence, "to know something is to feel something [...] value something [...] [and] respond aesthetically" to something (Connelly; Clandinin, 1988, p. 26). Moreover, it is informed by: metaphors (articulating teaching conceptions and guiding future actions); images (the ways teachers imagine teaching spaces and/or themselves in teaching situations), rules (what teachers think they should do), practical principles (teachers' practical expressions of their images of teaching), personal philosophies (the articulation of teachers' beliefs, values and action preferences), narrative unities (how teachers' rules, principles,

images and metaphors unfold and relate one to another) and rhythms (teachers' responses to schooling cycles) (Clandinin, 2013b; Connelly; Clandinin, 1988; Connelly; Clandinin; He, 1997).

Overall, teacher identity is seen here "as experiential, as contextual, as embodied, as always in the making, and as shaped at the nexus of context and knowledge" (Estefan; Caine; Clandinin, 2016, p. 2). The stories teachers live in both personal and professional landscapes continually inform their development as people and professionals. As Vinz (1997, p. 139) emphasises, becoming a teacher entails "continuous reformulations of the self", triggered by moments in which teachers confront the uncertainties of the profession and re-evaluate assumptions. In this sense, uncertainty is a catalyst for teachers' identity reconstruction.

By embracing such teacher identity perspective, I do not see pre-service teachers as *tabula rasae*, since they experience school environments long before starting their teaching degrees. They are "holders of knowledge - knowledge which can be reshaped through teacher education experiences" (Clandinin, 2000, p. 30). Thus, pre-service teacher identity formation is a process of "re-storying" oneself: "of expressing each individual preservice teacher's knowledge in practice, reflecting on the practice using personal and theoretical resources, and then trying out what we call re-storied possibilities" (Clandinin, 2000, p. 30). I assume this process involves stages, such as: (1) imagining stories of teaching, (2) negotiating imagined stories of teaching, and (3) re-imagining stories of teaching (see Brandão, 2021, 2023). While imagining stories of teaching, pre-service teachers envision the future by making sense of their past (e.g., as language learners) and present (e.g., as pre-service teachers), via discussions (e.g., about theories and teaching resources) and learning experiences in teacher education programmes. While negotiating imagined stories of teaching, they confront the uncertainties of language teaching as they live out the profession. While re-imagining stories of teaching, they review their imagined stories as teachers and reconstruct their professional expectations.

Pre-service teachers' re-storying requires opportunities for reflection on teaching and learning beliefs, pedagogical experiences and professional expectations. It also relies on opportunities to live out the profession by interacting with pupils, in-service teachers and other persons in the school landscape. Such opportunities present themselves within PIBID initiatives.

2 A narrative inquiry into the experience of being a PIBID scholarship holder

Marcela was 18 years old and in the second year of her undergraduate Portuguese-English language teaching degree. In order to explore her trajectory as a PIBID scholarship holder, I rely on narrative inquiry, a research methodology that studies experience as a storied phenomenon (Clandinin, 2013a; Clandinin; Connelly, 2000). Such methodology understands narrative as both the phenomenon under study and method of inquiry. Therefore, Marcela's trajectory at PIBID expressed and shaped by stories (the phenomenon) is analysed through a narrative view of experience (the method of inquiry). In general terms, adopting a narrative view of experience involves positioning field texts (the narrative term for data) within three commonplaces (temporality, sociality and place) to identify narrative threads (Clandinin, 2013a; Clandinin; Connelly, 2000). Temporality comprises the temporal transition of experiences. Sociality refers to personal and social conditions. Place concerns the influence of the location.

The context of this study is the first year of a PIBID initiative in which I collaborated as a teacher educator. It involved pre-service and in-service English teachers designing and implementing English reading activities at two state schools in Mato Grosso with the help of digital resources. In-service teachers and I started by discussing language learning and teaching concepts, and educational guidelines for English teaching, and held English workshops to develop PIBID scholarship holders' language knowledge. Scholarship holders began their first class observations in

the collaborating schools. Under our supervision, the holders then designed and implemented their own materials at school 1 for pupils aged 11-14, and later at school 2 for pupils aged 15-17. At the same time, they also helped organise events and participated in continuing teacher education initiatives developed at the schools.

The field texts include three drawings produced by Marcela, which are contextualised by their explanations, written journals and language learning autobiography, and recorded conversations between us. They were gathered over the course of an academic year and accompanying explanations were recorded. In the first drawing, I asked Marcela to depict an English teacher. In the second and third, I asked her to draw herself an English teacher. In the written language learning autobiography, I asked her to share her stories of learning English. In the written journals and our recorded conversations, I asked her to share her experiences of developing PIBID activities. Marcela wrote eight journals. We had five recorded conversations that each lasted between one and two hours.

The drawings were analysed by extracting the stories of Marcela's process of identity formation as an English teacher throughout the first year of PIBID. To do so, I identified the narrative threads that they articulated, "particular plotlines that threaded or wove over time and place" (Clandinin, 2013a, p. 132). I then wrote Marcela's overall narrative account - an interpretative construction of her experiences within the three commonplaces (Clandinin, 2013a; Clandinin; Connelly, 2000).

3 Narrating Marcela's trajectory in PIBID

I present the findings of this study in the form of Marcela's overall narrative account. The account is organised around the narrative threads that emerged from the analysis, and contains excerpts from field texts. Originally, the excerpts were in Portuguese and have been translated into English.

Learning English is not rocket science

Marcela had a hard time learning English at school. In general, there were endless repetitive exercises, and an excessive focus on the verb 'to be' and grammar. But she also had some positive experiences. For example, a teacher once prepared her group to sing in an event. "*From that moment on, I realised that it was really possible to learn English*", she recollected in her language learning autobiography. At university, Marcela also experienced ups and downs. She particularly enjoyed a module which was delivered entirely in English. The lecturer showed videos, got the students to sing, and shared her own experiences about learning English. However, other lecturers did not particularly encourage Marcela and her colleagues to speak in English.

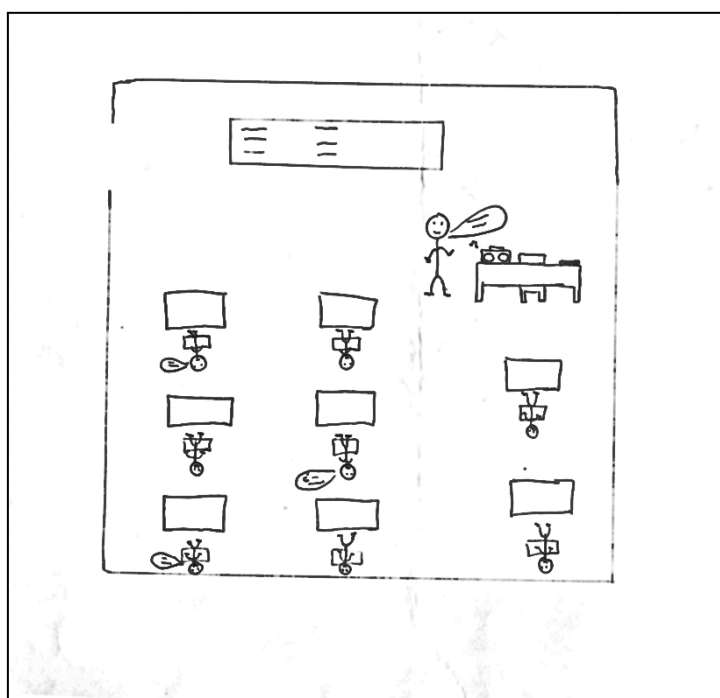
The discussions about language teaching and learning in PIBID helped her realise "*we have to explore new ways of learning, such as knowing how to use ICT*", as she wrote in her first journal. Thus, she saw spaces for teachers and learners alike, as well as resources for classes: "*we discussed themes related to teaching a lot, and this [...] made us think about the problems that Brazilian education faces [...] and reflect on what we can do to improve or even change the situation.*"

As Marcela attended the English workshops, she began to feel more confident about her language learning. "*I can see my English improving [...] it's not rocket science*", she told me in our first conversation. Nevertheless, learning English was about her personal rather than professional aspirations: "*I can have more opportunities to travel, something I love doing.*" Teaching English, on the other hand, was an impossible goal, especially because of a stubborn lack of proficiency: "*I think teaching is more complicated, I don't see myself giving an English class [...] To do so, I should know a lot.*"

Marcela's teaching personal philosophy evolved via discussions and class observations, and echoed her experiences as an English learner at school and university. Her ideal English teacher would motivate pupils: "developing [their] oral skills", "showing confidence", "loving the profession", "innovating in terms of teaching methodology", "encouraging pupils to seek knowledge", "always studying, [...] having theoretical but also [...] practical knowledge, [...] adopting an observer approach", "being demanding with pupils", and "knowing how to work with [didactic] projects." Above all, the teacher would be "convincing pupils they are capable." In other words, the teacher would show them that learning English was not rocket science.

I asked Marcela to visually represent an English teacher before her first experience of designing and implementing materials. Her first drawing (Figure 1) summarises her perceptions as both a language learner and pre-service teacher.

Figure 1 – Marcela's first drawing.



Source: Research data.

Marcela drew a classroom with pupils sitting at their desks, a teacher at the front, and a board with writing on it. On the teacher's desk lie a playing stereo (indicated by the small musical notes) and possibly a book. Speech balloons are evidence of classroom interaction. As she explained:

This teacher [...] doesn't only use the content on the board, he also takes the stereo [...] for his pupils to listen to. He talks to pupils, he asks [questions] [...] he tries to motivate his pupils, [...] to fascinate them, arouse their interest in this world, in this learning. This is my teacher. He's a creative teacher, tries to fascinate pupils, because pupils often have this idea 'wow, English is difficult [...] It's rocket science!' And this teacher tries to put an end to [...] this idea 'wow, English is rocket science'. He tries to undo this, 'no, look, English is not what you think', he tries to get this out of pupils' minds, he talks to them.

Marcela's depicted English teacher develops pupils' oral skills and knows how to interact with them, showing them that it is possible to learn English. Her drawing recalls her past as an

English learner, particularly her struggles with the language, and the experiences with teachers and lecturers that made her realise that English is not rocket science. It also captures her making sense of her teaching personal philosophy of arousing pupils' interest in English.

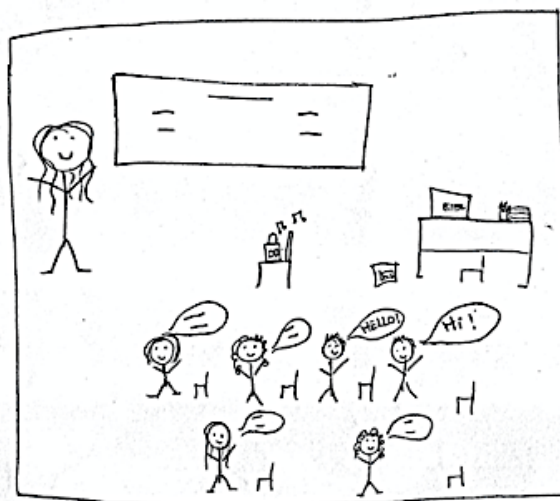
At the same time, Marcela had still not worked out what content she would teach and how she would live up to the teacher she aspired to be, as she complained in our first conversation: *"I don't want to teach only the verb 'to be' [...] I still don't know where I'll begin [...] maybe with the alphabet and then the verb 'to be' [...] I'll try to imagine 'gosh, what will make sense to them? [...] make them interested, [...] give them one more reason to learn'."* Her lack of proficiency continued to bother her: *"How am I going to relate to pupils? Talk to them? I don't know! [...] I don't know if I'm prepared, I mean, I don't feel prepared [...] I haven't mastered English in any sense to be able to teach it. I'm lacking a lot of confidence."* I reminded her that there was still much to go through before teaching in the classrooms. But for the time being, teaching English was still rocket science for Marcela.

Teaching English is not rocket science

Under the supervision of myself and the in-service teacher, Marcela designed English language materials for the first time at school 1, for pupils aged 10-11. The activities focused on reading strategies and discussed endangered animals in a Garfield comic strip. She also designed activities to practice modal verbs which featured in the comic strip. Throughout this process, Marcela learned some computer tools to design activities and download videos. More importantly, she learned to manage her confidence better. Getting to know her future pupils through class observations was very instructive. Unlike her, they were not afraid of making mistakes and asked many questions. But they often distracted each other, as she told me in our third conversation: *"they talk a lot, but they also ask about the subject-matter, about the content [...] I just think they shouldn't talk that much."* It was a struggle to keep them interested because, as she explained, *"they want something different in their classes [...] Last class, for example, [...] they screamed for music."* Marcela thought that the pupils were too routine in their problem solving: *"almost every class the teacher uses the dictionary [...] there isn't that pause to think, to imagine what is being asked."*

I asked Marcela to draw herself as an English teacher after designing English activities. Her second drawing (Figure 2), summarises her class observations and materials design experiences and how she imagined implementing her teaching personal philosophy.

Figure 2 – Marcela’s second drawing.



Source: Research data.

A large teacher stands in front of the class away from the desk. The board has some writing on it and the stereo now plays from its own chair in the centre. On her desk there are various teaching resources including a laptop. Smiling pupils (depicted in more detail in this second drawing) stand next to their chairs with their arms in the air. Their accompanying speech balloons contain greetings in English. The classroom is lively and engaged. As Marcela explained:

This is me, [...] this is the stereo, [...] the computer, [these are] my books, pencils, pens, [...] [this is] a bin, [...] these are my pupils. They're talking in English in a class. I set them to practice the language, because I think it's very important to practice it first. Here [on the board] [...] I wrote some content, some things related to greetings, how they greet [people in English] [...] afterwards, I played [...] a conversation between American people greeting each other, saying how their day was, this sort of stuff. I brought the computer because I would show a video [...] for them to learn even better [...] each of them is talking to the colleague at their side [...] and I'm there observing [...] they'll greet each other in English and, of course, they'll talk about themselves, introduce themselves [...] so I thought it was better [...] to change their places [...] for them to know each other better [...] I won't stop using the board [...] not even my books [...] but I intend to develop practice more, because I think practice is fundamental for pupils. I even think that how to speak, [and] listen should be taught first [...] and then grammar.

Once more, Marcela reconstructs her experiences as a learner in different educational landscapes. She also reconstructs her experiences of designing materials and getting to know her future pupils. As a result, her initial teaching philosophy develops into something more concrete and she envisages how to facilitate her pupils' learning, with the help of digital resources. Within a pleasant learning environment, pupils would develop oral skills through practice.

The implementation of Marcela's activities was smooth. Only at the very end of this process, pupils became unruly. Marcela told them how disappointed she was. "They realised they were wrong [...] they felt kind of guilty [...] so I found it nice they understood this", she pointed out in our fourth conversation. Upon reflection, she thought that perhaps she should have implemented a more

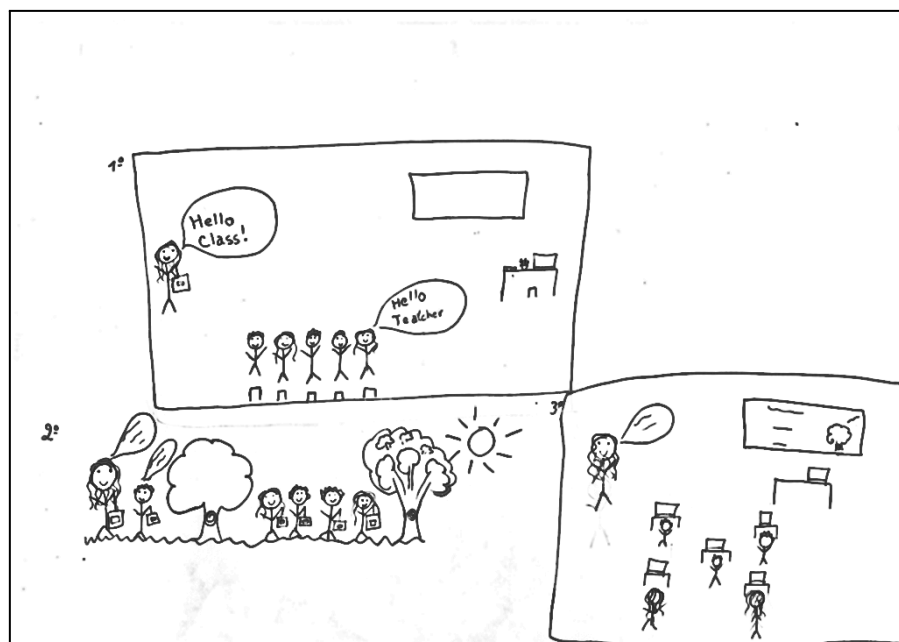
practical activity, such as a game. Despite this frustrating episode, Marcela found materials implementation very constructive: “*you discover yourself [...] when you enter the classroom, my God, it’s extra knowledge. You know yourself and you seek to know pupils better [...] you discover your difficulties, you kind of think ‘gosh, I struggle with this, I have to improve this, I have to improve that. This is good, this is not [good]’.*” She also became aware that she was able to teach English: “*after this experience of giving classes to these pupils, [...] I realised that it’s not rocket science, I can do it [...] I felt happy [...] [although] deep inside I thought ‘no, I won’t be able to do it’.*”

Feeling like an English teacher

Under the supervision of myself and the in-service teacher, Marcela also designed and implemented English activities at school 2, for pupils aged 15-16. Via a Facebook group, she developed reading strategies using an editorial cartoon. She also developed pupils’ critical literacy by focusing on how they used digital technology, the cartoon’s theme. Initially, Marcela thought this process would be much easier. However, her preparations were undermined when the classes she was supposed to observe were cancelled. Besides, dealing with an online platform made her apprehensive. As she explained in our last recorded conversation, “*I had to create a group [...] design online activities [...] it was a big class, so I wondered ‘Gee! It’s going to be very difficult to deal with them in the lab, because there aren’t enough computers for all of them’.*” On the day of implementation, Marcela was more anxious than I expected. But pupils did engage with the activities and there were no issues with discipline: “*everything worked [...] they did the activities [...] they liked it [...] all of them were doing them [...] I found pupils’ participation incredible.*”

I asked Marcela to draw herself as an English teacher after designing and implementing these activities. Her third drawing (Figure 3) summarises the impact of PIBID’s first year on her teacher identity.

Figure 3 - Marcela’s third drawing.



Source: Research data.

Marcela divided her drawing into three parts. In the first part (resembling her second drawing), smiling pupils stand in a row and exchange enthusiastic greetings with the teacher. The board, without writing, is merely outlined. On the desk there is a book, a bunch of pens and a laptop. The teacher is holding something. As she described:

This is me in the classroom with my dear pupils, and I came in already speaking in English [...] with my materials [...] They are already sitting in groups, because they know I'm keen on interaction, conversing, but they already realised they have to talk in English [...] Then they greeted me and I greeted them back [...] This is my laptop, these are pens, [...] in case some pupils forget them [...], and also the book, because I think technology is good, but it's not a question of abandoning the book [...] The book is also good, but not in the way it's being used in the classrooms [...] you need to know how to use it [...] I brought more materials too.

In the second part, the teacher and pupils are outdoors among trees on a sunny day. They have taken some things with them. The teacher is speaking with one of the pupils. As she described:

We left the classroom [...] we are in a park [...] [or] something like that [...] I invited them to have a different afternoon [...] I think teachers shouldn't only be teachers, they also have to talk to pupils, be the pupils' colleagues [...] it makes it easier for them to better understand the content [...] the purpose was learning, of course [...] it was on the weekend [...] I asked them to take some materials, a book they like [...] in English [...] because we would comment on it [...] I didn't force anyone [to go] [...] everybody turned up [...] and we studied, walked around, got to know this place [...] and had a different afternoon.

In the third part, pupils sit at their desks with computers. The teacher is saying something to them. On the board there is some writing and an image of a tree. There is a laptop on the teacher's desk. As Marcela explained:

This time, we're in the informatics lab [...] there's a projector [...] that's why there's this tree [...] I think it's important to work with images [...] images really help in English learning [...] they're all with their laptops [...] I also have mine on my desk [...] it's necessary to explain to them what to do [...] everybody is paying attention because it's something they like [...] I tried to work with something related to nature, that's why I put this tree here, [and] a bird [...] I believe it's important to develop themes like that with pupils.

Marcela not only depicted different roles and approaches, but also different resources and spaces. Her drawing represents the reconstruction of her experiences as an English learner and pre-service teacher, and the evolution of her teaching personal philosophy. As an English teacher, she was able to use different spaces and technologies, explore a series of themes and approaches, build a rapport with pupils, and interact in English. For example, she discovered technological resources apart from the stereo, and went beyond the verb 'to be' by developing themes in the classroom. Marcela's last drawing also hints at her recognition of English teaching as a possible choice of profession. As she explains, "giving an English class was impossible for me, but then I realised it's not like that, it's possible [...] nowadays I am aware that [...] I'm able to teach English someday."

In spite of these challenges, "it's very good to be an English teacher, because depending on the way you talk to your pupils, they'll get interested in [the language] and this will open doors", Marcela said in our last recorded conversation. Furthermore, "it's good to see a pupil's smile when he realises he's able" and "you can basically explore every theme in the classroom [...] [because] English gives you this freedom." Consequently, "you end up learning a lot [...] knowing many different things." Marcela was particularly excited by the idea of promoting social change: "I'm enjoying the idea of being called a teacher [...] of helping others [...] I realised I can help them not

only to learn a language, but also to better communicate, [...] [and] understand others [...] I can help them improve their circumstances.”

In her last journal, Marcela writes about the implications of her PIBID experiences on her teacher identity:

I've never been to a classroom as a teacher, so I've always been afraid of not being respected, of not being heard [...] After activities, workshops, meetings, school events and a lot of talking with professor Ana, I managed to deal with my fears [...] after preparing everything, I thought about giving up because I was so scared [...] When the big day came, I was very nervous [...] I began to speak and then I realised I was there overcoming my fears, being respected and heard by pupils [...] I really felt and saw myself as a teacher. I experienced the happiness of being able to teach someone, but also the deep sadness of seeing that some pupils weren't interested in learning [...] I had to design a single class using Facebook [...] it was difficult because I didn't know how to use this technological resource very well, and how pupils would react to it [...] after all these experiences [...] I got to know myself better [...] know the professional career better [...] the pupils, [and] schools.

By feeling and seeing herself as an English teacher, Marcela discovered new opportunities in the teaching landscape. If she wanted to, she could become an English teacher. She could make her pupils feel capable of learning a foreign language.

4 Retelling Marcela's trajectory

Marcela's stories to live by (Clandinin; Huber, 2005; Connelly; Clandinin, 1999) - her professional identity - are shaped by the “*English is not rocket science*” metaphor. This metaphor embodies the evolution of other components of her personal practical knowledge, such as her teaching image, rules, practical principles and personal philosophy (Clandinin, 2013b; Connelly; Clandinin, 1988; Connelly, Clandinin; He, 1997). It provides narrative unity for her experiences as a pre-service English teacher within personal and professional knowledge landscapes (Clandinin; Connelly, 1996) - her realisation that both learning and teaching English were achievable goals.

Initially, it was inconceivable to Marcela that she could become an English teacher, mainly because of her lack of proficiency in English. Her motivation for taking the degree was to learn rather than teach the language. At school and university, Marcela's English learning experiences were mixed. Some teachers and lecturers focused too much on grammar and took no interest in their students, while others went beyond the verb ‘to be’, developed oral skills and cared about their students. As Marcela took the English workshops provided by PIBID, she began to realise that learning English was possible, and that it was incumbent on teachers to convey this feeling to their pupils. She believed that teachers should go beyond the verb ‘to be’ and develop pupils’ oral skills. Teachers, of course, had to be proficient and demanding, but they also had to motivate their pupils and attend to their needs as learners.

As Marcela reflected on language teaching and observed classes, she incorporated more teaching rules into her personal practical knowledge: English teachers had to be discerning, innovative, effective with technology, good at controlling classes, interesting, and, above all, conscientious with respect to pupils’ welfare. Overall, Marcela's English teaching rules and practical principles echoed progressive education ideals (see Freire, 1991, 2016).

Marcela's personal philosophy was shaped by the image of the teacher showing that English is not rocket science. The metaphor served as her guide for future action as a teacher (Clandinin, 2013b) and became the image she taught by. However, she initially found it difficult in practice. She was held back by her lack of proficiency and struggled to find ways of going beyond the verb ‘to be’. But after observing her future pupils and experiencing materials design and implementation,

she “discovered herself” (i.e., her capacity for teaching English) by identifying her strengths and weaknesses. Thus, her image now served not only learners but also teachers, in the sense that *teaching* English was not rocket science. Marcela saw English teaching as an attainable profession.

As Marcela confronted the uncertainties of teaching a language she was still learning and of being different from most of her English teachers, she had to manage the emotional dimension of her personal practical knowledge. During materials design, she had to overcome her lack of teaching confidence and fear of not being respected by pupils. During implementation, she faced ups and downs: “*the happiness of being able to teach someone*” and “*the deep sadness of seeing that some pupils were not interested.*” However, these uncertainties were crucial for her to “reformulate” herself as a pre-service teacher, to use Vinz’s (1997) term, reshaping her knowledge about the profession. As a result, Marcela got to know herself better as a teacher. Besides, she gained a better sense of the English teaching landscape. She could realise her goal of showing pupils that English was not rocket science by developing themes in classes, using diverse teaching resources, and motivating them to use the language. She also recognised that a teacher was in a position to promote social change.

Marcela’s personal practical knowledge construction, her “particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation” (Connelly; Clandinin, 1988, p. 25), can be summarised in three stages. Firstly, she reconstructs her experiences of learning English and observing classes to arrive at a personal philosophy. Secondly, she reconstructs her experiences of designing materials and getting to know her pupils in order to live out her imagined identity in practice. Finally, she reconstructs her experiences of designing and implementing materials to recognise English teaching as a realistic profession. Overall, Marcela’s identity shaping as an English teacher in PIBID illustrates pre-service teachers’ learning within stages, such as: (1) imagining stories of teaching; (2) negotiating imagined stories of teaching; and (3) re-imagining stories of teaching (see Brandão, 2021, 2023). While imagining stories of teaching, she reconstructed her experiences of learning English and observing classes to envision her role as a teacher. Her ambition for pupils was that *learning* English would not be rocket science. While negotiating imagined stories of teaching, she put her imagined teacher identity into practice by confronting the uncertainties of developing English activities. Finally, while re-imagining stories of teaching, Marcela arrived at new perceptions that gave her the confidence that *teaching* English is not rocket science.

5 Final remarks

Marcela’s drawings are snapshots of her second language teacher identity reconstruction throughout the first year of a PIBID initiative. Essentially, they capture the initial stages of her identity formation as an English teacher. In this sense, we can actually “see” how PIBID facilitates pre-service teacher development. Publications focusing on the role of PIBID in language teaching degrees have highlighted the programme’s positive impact on language teachers’ development from the very initial stages of their implementation (see Mateus; El Kadri; Silva, 2013; Silva; Roque-Faria, 2020). PIBID offers pre-service teachers full access to the school experience and, therefore, opportunities to learn about the profession.

Authors like Beijaard (2019), Clandinin (2000) and Olsen (2008) understand teacher learning as a matter of identity formation, as do I. Given the well-known limitations of dual language teaching degrees, such as its congested curriculum (see Celani, 2010; Gimenez, 2004), I believe PIBID can be a powerful catalyst for second language teachers’ learning and, consequently, for their professional identity shaping. It gives language teacher educators more time and space to prepare pre-service teachers to dip into the profession, with the collaboration of in-service teachers. It provides pre-service teachers with opportunities to experience the diverse aspects of language

teaching. They can confront its uncertainties and reformulate themselves as professionals early on in their teacher education trajectories. They get to know pupils' profiles and the school landscape, design activities and reflect on improvements. As Kanno and Stuart (2011, p. 239) highlight, "the actual experience of teaching is what enables student teachers to make a transition from aspiring to become a language teacher to actually being one." PIBID makes this transition possible.

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