"Inglés y mucho más" - Teacher Professional Identities at the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano-Cali

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To mom, dad, my siblings, my sister-in-law, nieces and nephew.
And to those at work who gave me the final push to embark on this M.A.

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ABSTRACT

This research project aimed to describe the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali (CCCA) teachers' views of their teacher professional identities and the process of CCCA teacher professional identity formation. Besides, it aimed to explore teachers' views of the contribution of the CCCA to their professional identity. The data was collected through an online questionnaire, interviews and narratives in which 9 teachers participated. The findings indicated the teachers' awareness of their professional selves, the relevance their didactical and pedagogical components of teacher professional identity have had throughout their teaching careers, and the identification of six groups of mechanisms through which the CCCA has contributed to its teachers' professional identity formation.

KEY WORDS: Teacher identity (TI), teacher identity Formation, teacher professional identity, components of teacher professional identity, English teachers

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF GRAPHS

1. INTRODUCTION

"We have a power, we have magic tricks…But we all have a bank of tricks,
we use them, modify them. And that makes us different from others"
(Teacher 6, Narratives – May 3rd, 2021)

This is a quote of an English teacher who, at the age of 20, started working at the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano[1] Cali (CCCA). As described by him, when he first started working at the institution, he was discovering who he was as a teacher. In his narrative, he talked about the programs he has taught at, the struggles he has had both in and out of the classroom, and his doubts and self-criticism towards what he was doing. He also opened up his heart to describe the multiple feelings he has had throughout his career at the CCCA, his learnings, his interactions with his colleagues, and his gains as a teacher. He described his path to become the "hell of a teacher" he says he is now.

As seen in Teacher 6's fragment, language teachers' voices bring multiple stories on their teacher professional identities. The term teacher professional identity has been defined by researchers in different ways. However, the following couple of concepts cited in Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) guided this report. The first one stated by Knowles (1992), related professional identity to teachers' perceptions of themselves as an influential component of how they teach, how they form themselves as teachers, and their attitudes towards what happens in their educational contexts. The second concept of professional identity was suggested by Tickle (2000), and it considered the contributions of the society's preconceptions on how the teacher is supposed to perform, and the teachers' own perspectives of what is relevant to their work based on their own teaching experiences and backgrounds.

Throughout the years, the English teacher´s roles have changed in response to the students' new demands and new educational trends. One of those changes involve teacher awareness on his professional identity through its different components and how these impact on his teaching practices and his students' effective language learning. In Colombia, several studies have been carried out about the in-service language teachers' professional identity and the need for innovative professional development programs that encourage them to take a more active role in their own professional growth by being more analytical of their professional selves; and how their context influence their identity formation.

As a CCCA teacher that I have been for more than 20 years, I have also made a stop several times to think about myself as a teacher and how the perceptions of my

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[1] www.colomboamericano.edu.co

career have changed throughout the time. Even during my Master's studies in teaching English as a foreign language at ICESI university, I have reevaluated some of my teaching practices to incorporate my newest views of language, pedagogy, didactics and even my language proficiency. Now, as a CCCA academic-administrator, one of my main concerns has been to identify teachers' perceptions of themselves in their teaching roles in order to come up with innovative ideas on how to provide them with the right tools to empower them, raise their awareness on the great professionals they are and help them grow professionally. Considering all the afore-mentioned, the aims presented in this research are to describe the CCCA English teachers' views of their teacher professional identities and process of CCCA teacher professional identity formation; as well as to explore teachers' views of the contribution of the CCCA to their professional identity. To achieve these goals, the concepts of professional teacher identity and its components, framed under the study of Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt (2000) were explored. In addition, through the responses given by CCCA teachers to an on-line questionnaire, an interview and their narratives, the influence of the CCCA in its nine teachers' identity formation was determined.

2. BACKGROUND

The CCCA is a binational center in Cali with more than 65 years of history and a countless list of teachers who have worked there: local and foreigners, teachers who work in all its programs or just in a specific one, teachers who have left and came back, and many that have stayed for several years; but most importantly, teachers who have helped their students succeed in their language learning processes. Thus, the institution has seen lots of teachers grow in many different ways and has had some kind of impact on their professional lives. This means that the CCCA has a huge responsibility on teachers' education and might have had an influence on its teachers' professional identity development. Precisely, the understanding of the CCCA teachers' perspectives of the professionals they are, their attitudes towards their job, and to what extent the institution has had an effect on their identity formation, has become an interest and the main motivation to carry out this study.

I have been a language teacher at the CCCA for more than 20 years. I have also combined this role with the one of a teacher administrator in charge of running the English programs and making decisions about teachers' educational needs. As a teacher, I have experienced the dynamism of the different identities I have had throughout my career. Besides, the CCCA has been the only place where I have performed as a teacher and where I have become the teacher and the professional I am. As a teacher administrator, I think the institution has missed some opportunities to address training, teacher education, and some of its policies and decisions based on an informed perspective of our teachers' distinctive characteristics. Hence, having an understanding of the CCCA teachers' professional identities, what the connection of their identities with their actual performance and teaching practice is, and how the CCCA has influenced their professional identity formation have become my growing interests.

On the other hand, it is also important to mention that at the CCCA there has always been a teacher's profile with the specifications of the kind of teachers we could hire according to the national regulations regarding the teacher's experience, language proficiency, and educational background, among other aspects. However, it could be interesting to contribute to the institution with other elements to be taken into account for the desired teacher profile that could emerge from this study based on the teachers' discourses of their values, beliefs, and commitments towards their discipline. Furthermore, through this research, I would like to contribute a comprehensive characterization of the CCCA teacher identity that might serve as an important input for the design of institutional policies, teacher education programs, activities and benefits the institution might want to provide teachers with.

3. OBJECTIVES

General Objectives

- To describe CCCA teachers' views of their teacher professional identities and the process of CCCA teacher professional identity formation.
- To explore teachers' views of the contribution of the CCCA to their professional identity.

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Specific Objectives

1. Describe the CCCA teachers' perceptions of what teacher identity is.
2. Explore the CCCA teachers' views on the components of teacher professional identity formation.
3. Explore CCCA teachers' views on the mechanisms the CCCA has implemented that might have influenced their teacher professional identity formation.
4. Determine to what extent, from the teachers' own viewpoint, the CCCA has contributed to its teachers' process of professional identity formation.

4. AN OVERVIEW OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND TEACHER IDENTITY FORMATION

Different authors have attempted to provide a definition for teacher identity (TI) from different framings such as the psychological, sociocultural, anthropological, sociopolitical, and holistic. However, as concluded by Beijaard et al. (2004) in their revision of studies conducted on professional identity formation, most of these studies defined TI differently, or it was not defined at all. Mockler (2011) also claimed the complexity of defining TI. In the review of literature of this study that difficulty was also faced. Nevertheless, Beijaard et al. (2000) cited different authors to come up with a short description of the variations the TI concept has had. They started with Mead (1934) and a description of TI which focused on one's perception of the self. Then, they referenced Wah Tan (1997) who suggested that the self-perception is sustained through social interactions and the negotiations that they entail, or through the social roles played. The study conducted by Beijaard (1995) was also cited to define TI from the perspective of who the person is, but also from the meaning given by the self and others.

The TI definitions that came after, as Beijaard et al. kept citing, added the component of a continuing conscious reflection process. For instance, Kerby (1991) asserted that TI was constructed and reconstructed throughout all the experiences a person has. On the other hand, Cooper and Olson (1996) added that the construction and reconstruction of one's identity goes through a self-evaluation process that is informed, and goes along with one's career evolution and interaction with others. From these references provided by Beijaard et al. (2000) components of TI such as reflection, self-evaluation, self-perception, meaning given by self and others, and a timeline is to be considered in this study that seeks to describe CCCA teachers' views of their teacher professional identity.

In the more recent conceptualization of TI, elements such as the context have been included. Olsen (2008) stated that the context in which the teacher is situated interacts in a reciprocal and dynamic way with the individual shaping who the teacher is throughout the time. Consequently, for him, TI is composed of the influences from previous construction of the self, the interaction with others, the meaning systems from different moments and contexts, and the contexts in which one is situated. This view of TI is shared by Beauchamps and Thomas (2009, p.180) in what they have named as the five characteristics of both personal and professional identity: "identity is the negotiated experience of self, involves community membership, has a learning trajectory, combines different forms of membership within an identity, and presumes involvement in local and global contexts."

Alternatively, Pennington and Richards (2016) not only did they suggest that the context plays a key role in teacher identity but also incorporated a new element to the definition that has to do with the teacher's perceptions of the proper behavior that rules his identity. Moreover, they asserted that what the teacher brings to the classroom at a particular moment over his career is a conjunction of the teacher's perspectives of his institutional role and his unique personal identity. Elements such as the features of students and the teaching context impact teachers' aspirations and practices. Additionally, based on the analysis of the data collected in his study on the distinctive characteristics of language teachers, Borg (2006) suggested that what makes language teachers different has to do with the particular contexts and teachers' own experiences in specific educational settings. Therefore, the distinctiveness of the teachers' characteristics is socially constructed and can be characterized according to different contexts. Akkerman (2011) cited Flores and Day (2006) to refer to the social nature of teacher identity by reporting on the strong contextual influence the place of work had on tailoring one's teacher identity and alluded to Cohen's (2010) discussion on the role played by the collaborative exchanges with the colleagues on teacher identity formation. Based on these assertions, reflections on the powerful effect that not only the interactions with colleagues but what teachers perceive from their peers have on their views on themselves.

To tailor the framework under which the CCCA teachers' professional identities have been described, the conceptualization of professional identity has also been considered. Beijaard et al. (2000) categorized teacher professional identity in terms of the teacher as a pedagogical, didactical, and subject matter expert.

As a ***pedagogical expert***, the teacher takes account of the moral and ethical dimensions of their jobs in their everyday interactions with their students and the relationships they construct with them. Within the context of the CCCA, this description fits in teachers' conceptions of their acts when they face students who struggle to achieve the course goals, or when they have to grade students and make decisions on whether they pass or fail for instance. Marr and English (2019) presented a more complete description of pedagogical expertise. To them, it involves the comprehension of the correlations between theory on learning, the methodology used, and the actual classroom practices.

Beijaard et al. (2000, p. 754) described the teacher as a ***didactical expert*** as "a teacher who bases his/her profession on knowledge and skills regarding the planning, execution, and evaluation of his teaching and learning processes." This dimension considers the teacher's perceptions of his roles in the classroom, which could be evidenced every time the teacher adopts new views of teaching that imply changes in the roles he plays, as noticed in classrooms where there has been a shift from teacher-centered to student-centered teaching. As a consequence, these changes have demanded the development of other kinds of teaching skills, that allow the teacher to

give more control to students on their language learning process. It would be interesting to know the CCCA teachers' thoughts regarding this dimension of their professional identities in the institutional context where they have been required to follow student-centered approaches to teaching and it has been known that some teachers have successfully adapted to it, whereas other teachers have made more efforts to comply with it. It could be thought that going deeper into the teachers' perceptions on this dimension of their identities might provide the CCCA with more tools to find better ways to help teachers comply with the institutional requirements and improve the teachers' professional development that at the end, would be reflected on better teaching practices and more successful learning experiences for students.

In addition to the pedagogical and the didactical expertise, the teacher as a ***subject matter expert*** was explained as an important dimension of teachers' professional identity that empowers them to discuss and present information at a high level of domain of the subject matter, carry out effective tasks, make informed changes to the programs, be totally clear of students' actual understandings and misunderstandings, and deal with them properly.

In the field of the teachers at the CCCA, the subject matter has traditionally been identified as the English language. However, regarding this area, Marr and English (2019, p. 93) have referred to it as in addition knowledge about language itself, describing it as the "explicit knowledge that any subject specialist develops through reading, through study, and thorough research." This expertise has nothing to do with the proficiency in the language per se, but with the knowledge of the linguistic components that teachers must know about such as phonetics, morphology, phonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics; and that would help them guide their students in their understanding of language.

One more expertise that would be considered in this study because of the relevance in the context of the CCCA, and that was presented by Marr and English (2019) is the ***expertise in using the language***. This aspect has to do with the language proficiency level the teacher has which ideally meets the requirements of his contexts. In the case of the CCCA, it means that the teacher has reached at least a C1 level according to the scale of the Common European Framework of reference, and is able to teach any of the levels of its English programs.

Although there are varied ways to approach the conceptualization of TI, the professional identity in terms of the pedagogical, the didactical, subject matter, and the proficiency in the language areas of expertise suggested by Beijaard et al. (2000) and Marr and English (2019) would be the framework under which the identification of the CCCA teachers' professional identities proposed for this research will be developed because of its relevance to the context of the institution.

4.1 Characteristics of Teacher Identity and Teacher Identity Formation

In order to provide more elements for a better comprehension of what teacher identity is and how it is formed, it is key to discuss some of its salient features. To begin with, it could be said that TI is polysemic as implied in the multiple meanings and shades that have been given to it and the different traits that can be recognized in it. According to Palmer (2017, p.13), TI is "an evolving nexus where all the forces that constitute my life converge in the mystery of self." Based on this definition, it can be pointed out the evolutionary characteristic of TI. In the case of professional TI, the evolution takes place throughout the teacher's professional life, and it is nourished by different factors at different times. Through its evolution, TI might diversify, change, and develop. This author has also spotlighted the integrity feature of TI. This means that different aspects of TI join to make a "new wholeness" (p. 13) that represents who a person is.

Researchers like Tsui (2007) have acknowledged the dynamism TI has, as seen in the interrelations of the teacher's own perceptions and the different roles the teacher plays because of the social approaches he faces. The dynamic nature of TI can also be appreciated in the interactions teachers have with different conflicting situations they embrace and deal with on an on-going basis. Another exemplification of how TI is dynamic can be given by the different identities a teacher can have throughout a career-long time, and how these identities relate to each other. In Tsui's exploration of a teacher's identity, he highlighted the participative feature of TI. This means that since teachers belong to a community of practice, and they become a collection of experiences they live in that community, its members had to do with reification and participation in the construction of teacher identity.

Many authors have conveyed that TI formation does not stop. It is an on-going path that involves the creation and re-creation of identifications, as referred to its discontinuity feature by Akkerman (2011), and as implied by Mockler (2011, p. 519) who quoted Butler's words (1993): "identifications are never fully and finally made." Furthermore, Kerby (1991) has been cited by Beijaard et al. (2000) to bring up the continuing characteristic given to TI. For him, the process of TI formation is continuous and entails the definition and re-definition of identities through the experiences the teacher has lived. This could indicate that a teacher's identifications might change from one moment in time to another as different elements influence his views of what he does. It would be interesting to determine to what extent CCCA teachers who have had previous teaching experiences at other institutions or are currently working at the CCCA and somewhere else perceive their identity formation stopped with their other jobs or kept on evolving through the new experiences they have collected at the CCCA.

At last, the multi-faceted nature of TI could not be left behind. As Mockler (2011) suggested, identity formation is not linear, but it could have different facets and adopt

different dimensions, one of them the professional dimension which is the one this study addressed. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) also commented on the multidimensionality of TI when inferred on the different ways in which identity can be perceived. And, through Beijaard et al. (2000), it can be deduced that TI is multifaceted because of the multiple basis on which it has been defined. Because of this characteristic, it can be advocated that both teachers and institutions or teacher educators, open spaces for reflection on the teachers' perceptions of their professional selves on an established periodicity so that it becomes an important input for teachers' identification of their needs and actual interests, as well as opportunities for institutions and teacher educators to get some data for the design or adjustment of their professional development programs and support for teachers.

4.2 Factors Influencing TI and Teacher Identity Formation

Beijaard et al. (2000) grouped different factors that influence TI and its development into three categories: teaching settings, teachers' experiences, and teachers' biographical perspectives.

4.2.1 Teaching Settings

For Beijaard et al. the context seems to be a determining factor on teachers' professional identity and TI formation. The teaching context has been explained by Nias (1989) as referred by Beijaard et al. (2000) as the classroom environment and the culture of the institution which involves the shared values, perspectives, institutional policies that guide the way work is done. The authors also cited Duffee and Aikenhead (1992) who named the stakeholders' expectations on the curricula, and the physical and material atmosphere as important aspects of the teaching context. At last, Yinger and Hendricks-Lee (1993) are also mentioned by Beijaard et al. because of their assertion that TI depends more on the teachers' particular situations and interactions with the context than on the individuals.

From a socio-cultural point of view, Holland and Lachicotte (2007) stressed the fact that within their social contexts, teachers develop and keep their identity in relation to self and the others' views of their roles, and those views and interactions, could either constrain or strengthen teacher identity formation. In their study, they implied that teacher identity construction and reconstruction occur as a reply to varied socio-cultural events and different conflicting situations. This illustrates the role of TI in the mediation of personal experience and the enactment in tailoring social interactions and changes.

Furthermore, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) acknowledged the influence the teaching context has on tailoring TI and its changes. Elements found at institutions such as the work atmosphere, the nature of students, the effect of both fellow teachers and institutional staff, and the emotions the teacher finds in the institutional setting and brings from outside, influence not only beginner teachers' identities but also the experienced ones. Because of this rationale, it becomes paramount to the institutions to be aware of the role they play on the tailoring of TI, and it is key for this study to determine to what extent an institution such as the CCCA has influenced its teachers' professional identity formation.

On the other hand, Pennington and Richards (2016) argued that who the teacher is in the classroom is a reflection of different aspects including the teacher's perspectives of his role at the institution, their autobiography, the students' characteristics, and the context. The last one involves the classroom, the institution, and local and national entities which might influence teachers' practice, desires, and interests. These aspects of the context and their influence on TI are represented in the following examples provided by the authors. A first example has to do with the teachers' formal or informal identities which they use according to students' ages or behaviors and help teachers manage the class in an appropriate and sometimes expected, way. Another example suggests that the teacher adjusts his roles in order to establish a positive rapport with his students, decisions made under the considerations of their educational and cultural frameworks. A third example lies in the institution's expectations, established policies, and requirements that might affect teachers' decisions on the roles they will adopt in front of their students and the institutional staff. All in all, it is suggested that teachers regularly try to find a balance between who they actually are and what is contextually suitable.

Pennington and Richards (2016) also described other elements from the context that could provide conditions that either favor or disfavor the evolution of teacher identity. Among others, they listed class size, equipment, the institution's facilities, resources, benefits, the support they find in the administrators, the institutions' reward system, and compensation. This means that when the conditions are favorable, teachers are more likely to meet their ideals and their classroom identity which keeps their motivation high. But, when these conditions are disfavoring, teachers' motivation might be lost or diminished as they feel that their identity at that particular moment does not match their values. This information provides an important insight into the considerations the institutions should make regarding their teachers: the working environment, institutional policies, welfare activities, resources they provide, etc.

In Salinas' (2017) study on English as a foreign language (EFL), teacher identity and the impact of macro and micro contextual factors in education reform in Chile, she referred to the demands of institutions and the institutional context as factors impacting TI. In spite of the fact that these demands attempt to achieve students' linguistic

competences, and high academic standards in the target language, as well as to comply with some administrative tasks, their effects on TI might not always be favorable. Depending on the teachers' kind of interactions with these factors, aspects such as agency, commitment, motivation, and accountability of teachers' practices might be positively or negatively impacted, which could derive in either better or worse students' results.

The contributions of the context where teaching takes place appear to be a determining factor for the formation of teacher identity. Because of it, careful attention was given to what CCCA teachers' perceptions are of what the institution has had to do with the construction of their professional identities and the specific influencing items.

4.2.2 Teachers' Experiences

According to Beijaard et al. (2000), the knowledge of an experienced teacher is more specialized and organized compared to that of a beginner teacher, which facilitates many cognitive processes for him. And, as concluded by Kagan, cited in Beijaard et al. (2000), in their move from beginner teacher to an experienced one the teacher becomes more aware of how to monitor class activities, the level of efforts that are invested in the classroom dynamics, the extent to which his performance is led by personal experience, and the extent to which teachers can make predictions of what might happen in the classroom. Teaching experience allows teachers to act promptly to solve classroom situations, and to make decisions on the kinds of content and language students need in compliance with the curriculum and institutional guidelines.

4.2.3 Teachers' Biographical Perspectives

The third category of factors that influence TI is what Beijaard et al. (2000) cited from Carter and Doyle (1996): the interaction between the teacher's personal experiences and his professional life. For these authors, the evolution of TI stresses the teachers' adjustments to their institutional realities and their class performance. It has also been thought that teachers' incidents and conflicts do have an impact on the tailoring of their work. Experiences from private life are also connected to teachers' professional life, as exemplified by Huberman (1993), in Beijaard et al. (2000): teachers who are parents, seem to be more tolerant towards their students. And, he added that age can affect teachers' motivation and commitment to teaching classes seriously.

Mockler (2011) identified some other factors of the teacher's personal life which could be found out of his professional domain, but have some influence on his identity: gender, class, and race. Mockler also included in the category of personal life the teachers' interests, activities they do in their spare time, and those activities in which they engage either in or out of their teaching context, like with their families or the

communities they belong to. Other factors might involve family aspects such as their perspectives and experiences on parenting and raising children.

4.2.4 Other Factors Influencing TI and Teacher Identity Formation

Different authors have referenced some more specific factors that somehow impact TI and its development. To start with, English and Marr (2019, p. 92) reported on what they had called the "social and pedagogical" and "vocational" perspectives of the teachers' work as perceived by teachers themselves. These aspects included the teachers' desire to have an impact on other people's lives, their dreams of meeting people from different places, their wishes to share their knowledge with others, their willingness to design materials and implement creative teaching methodologies, and the satisfaction of students' proficiency improvements, accordingly. Other aspects might include the teachers' satisfaction with their own improvements regarding their proficiency levels. The above-listed perceptions seem to have something in common which is the teacher's ego involvement since they all generate some kind of satisfaction for the teacher, even when the actions are intended to benefit others.

In the context of bilingualism and second language education, Morgan (2004) noted that race, gender, and language are factors that influence TI and are perceived mostly through students - parents and administrators could be included. Unfortunately, these factors still appear to present teachers more challenges than rewards as shown in Amin's example (1999) as reported in Morgan's paper: in an English as a second language context, students described their ideal English teacher as an anglo man, who is white and speaks an accentless variety of English. Whereas a woman of color, who is a non-native speaker of English showed up to teach a class in the same ESL context, she was challenged in a way that their ideal anglo, male, and white teacher was never going to be.

Another key factor that influences TI and its development in such a way that could even cause conflicts for the teacher, is communicative language teaching (CLT.) This pedagogical approach is being used in the context of the CCCA and is mentioned here for the interest of this research. In Tsui's study (2007) about the narratives of an EFL teacher, he commented on the struggles of an EFL teacher who dealt with his institution's demands for the use of CLT and his own perceptions of the ineffectiveness of his use of it; while he strongly believed in other methods through which he learned the language. On the other hand, Marr and English (2019) expressed their concerns for the misunderstandings and myths that have been created around CLT that have given teachers some difficulties to make it work in their language classrooms. These struggles do not necessarily reflect the teacher's lack of experience or mastery of the approach. It could represent the lack of coherence between the approach and the context where it is used, or it might mean that the institution has not been that clear about the approach

and its implementation, or it could have failed to train teachers on the appropriate use of it. It could also imply a wrong view that has been presented by the publishing houses, and wrong conceptions acquired about it throughout the years.

4.3 Implications of Understanding TI and Identity Formation

4.3.1 For the Teacher

Different studies agreed that the main implication of the understanding of the teachers' perceptions and TI formation lies in the teacher's professional development. In her framework for a conceptualization of TI, which included three domains: personal experience, professional context, and external political environment, Mockler (2011) pointed out that teacher's professional learning, their enactment to get engaged in politics of education activities, and personal growth lie at the different intersections between these three components. A more specific example was given regarding teachers' attitudes towards their work which can be impacted by the intersection of the teacher's personal experience and the external political environment dimensions, Consequently, understanding TI and how it is formed, benefits teachers at different levels and could help them be more critical of their own practices and make informed decisions about their pedagogy, didactics, and personal growth.

On the other hand, Bukor (2015) referred several researchers such as Borko (2004), Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), Crasborn, Hennissen, Brouwer, Korthagen, and Bergen (2010), Freeman and Johnson (2005), Gao (2012), Lunenberg and Korthagen (2009); and Tarone and Allwright (2005) as believers of the importance of teachers' understanding of their professional selves as a comprehensive aspect of their continual professional development. This view is shared by Pennington and Richards (2016) who noted that the awareness of teacher identity as based on values and beliefs, provides teachers with the mental images they need to keep track of their performance and evaluate it. For this reason, it could be concluded that one of the implications of the understanding of TI has to do with the teachers' self-evaluation and monitoring of their performance as part of their contributions to their own professional development.

In addition to the implications of teachers' understanding of themselves have on their own professional development, Bukor (2015) concluded that teachers' comprehension of how their professional and personal aspects are interconnected, would facilitate the understanding of themselves and so, they would develop a more emphatic position towards their peers and students, and why not, the institution. It could be added that it would help teachers manage their reactions and attitudes towards the other members of the community they belong to.

Moreover, Van Lankveld, Schoonenboom, Volman, Croiset, and Beishuizen (2017) recognized five fundamental psychological aspects that favor TI construction and its development and are strongly related to belonging to a community of practice such as the institutions where teachers work. These five processes are the sense of appreciation a community provides, sense of connection to each other, acknowledgment of teachers' competence, sense of commitment, and role models that inspire teachers' careers. Based on this, the authors highlighted the importance of building community for the teachers. However, it can be said that this responsibility should not rely merely on institutions and that teachers play a key role in this as well. It is because of it, that this information has been presented in this section. Understanding the influence of these factors on TI formation and development could encourage teachers to take an active role in their communities of practice for the self and the others. Hopefully the CCCA teachers participating in this study would provide fruitful information on their interactions with their community of practice at the institution and to what extent the psychological aspects listed by Van Lankveld et al. are present and have benefited teachers' professional identity formation.

4.3.2 For the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano

As Mockler (2011) noted, the understanding of teacher identity is a significant tool for those in charge of educating pre-service and in-service teachers. Being the CCCA an institution in charge of touching pre-service and in-service teachers' professional lives, having a comprehensive view of what TI is and the factors involved in TI formation, could help the CCCA integrate into its programs activities that make teachers realize how their identities are evolving as they are getting ready to become teachers, or as their teaching careers develop. Regarding the educational processes with in-service teachers, Grounderwater-Smith and Mockler (2009) were cited by Mockler (2011) to claim for a more differentiated professional education for teachers, so that it is placed at their context and helps them enhance a more comprehensive perspective of their teaching practices and their correlations with their students. Based on this, it could be suggested that at the CCCA, the professional development programs intentionally have more room for teachers to find strategies to reflect on their professional identities, how different contextual factors have influenced them and how those factors reflect on their behaviors towards their jobs, the institution and most importantly towards their classroom dynamics.

On the other hand, Van Lankveld et al. (2017) highlighted the relevance the context has on teacher identity construct because it can either support or limit its development. In their study, they have identified the direct work environment, the education setting, the teacher-student interactions, and the development activities designed for teachers as factors that could impact TI in different ways. The findings they

reported illustrate that factors such as teacher-student interactions and teacher development programs influenced TI positively, while the aspects related to the education setting, in the case of the study of Van Lankveld et al. is higher education, did not favor TI formation; and, a direct work environment could either strengthen or undermine TI.

From the influencing factors they reported, the direct work environment seems to have a special correlation with the context studied in this paper. Van Landkveld et al. (2017) pointed up the role the work environment has on teachers because it is where they feel whether they value their jobs or not. The trend could be marked by the teachers' perceptions of their institutions' implicit and explicit messages of how important teaching is, and the role the leaders of the different areas play in the development programs. Hence, close attention needs to be paid to the CCCA, and the local and national legislation for education which constitute the context of the teachers who participate in this study. Based on this, it could be said that the institution's understanding of their teachers' perspectives towards their profession and the formation of TI are aspects to be considered in the decision-making process of the design of its teachers' professional development programs, creation and implementation of the institutional policies, its package of benefits or welfare activities for teachers, and the way the teachers' evaluative processes will be conducted, among others.

Another important implication of the TI understanding for the institutions has to do with building a community of practice for teachers where they feel appreciated, connected to their peers and the rest of the staff, recognized because of their competences, a sense of commitment has been created and where they find inspirational people for their future careers. As previously said, this is not just the responsibility of the institution, but it is shared with the teachers. However, the institutions could be more thoughtful on the kind of activities they implement for their staff development activities so that they ensure the five psychological aspects mentioned by Van Landkveld et al. (2017) are considered. Then, it is key that institutions find their ways to commit to make their workplace a positive influencing environment.

4.4 Connections Between Teaching Identity and Teaching Practice

Throughout this paper, it has been seen that TI reflects directly on the teacher's teaching practices. A more comprehensive view of it is explained as follows. Bukor (2015) highlighted that the emotions constitute an important influencing factor in TI and its formation. Bukor cited Damasio (1994) and (2003) who declared that emotions are key to the process of decision-making and are interrelated with the cognitive process and are affected by factors such as the teacher's biography, the sociocultural context,

and external factors. Bukor also referred to Sutton and Wheatley's (2003) empirical study which implied the students' awareness of their teachers' emotions and the influence they have on them. So, if the teacher brings anger or frustration (negative emotions) to the classroom that might result in a poor teacher's performance and students' demotivation. In contrast, the teacher's positive emotions result in a positive performance, expressions of care for students, and therefore, students' motivation, engagement and in general, attitudes towards the class are raised.

On the other hand, Borg's exploratory study (2006) illustrated the distinctiveness of EFL teachers as perceived by themselves, their students, colleagues, and specialists from other subjects assuming that there is an understanding of what being a language teacher is. These characteristics are brought in because of what they represent for teachers in the language classroom, and they are involved in their teaching practices. Borg named Girard's (1977) list of perceptions language learners had on their teachers: "makes his course interesting, teaches good pronunciation, explains clearly, speaks good English, shows the same interest in all the pupils, makes the pupils participate and shows great patience" (p. 6). Additionally, Borg presented Prodromou (1991), whose list of what students value in a teacher included items like friendliness, giving students good marks, playing games, humor, and not pushing struggling students. Finally, Brosh (1996) came up with a list of characteristics that both EFL teachers and students identified as desirable (cited by Borg, 2006, p. 6): "knowledge and command of the target language, ability to organize, explain and clarify, as well as to arouse and sustain interest and motivation among students; fairness to students by showing neither favoritism nor prejudice; and availability to students." As found in the above-presented lists, these qualities could be defined and grouped into personal qualities, pedagogical skills, classroom practices, disciplinary knowledge, and attitudes which all are influential in the teacher's teaching practices.

Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) stood out the role of teacher's reflection in the effectiveness of their teaching practices as cited by Beauchamps andThomas (2009). They also suggested that "reflection, directed at identity and mission, is what is needed to tap into a sense of self." In the correlation between TI and teaching practice, reflection is key because it contributes to the teacher's professional development and consequently, students will benefit from their teachers' improved teaching practices.

The literature reviewed about teacher identity and teacher identity formation has provided the light this research will follow toward the understanding of CCCA teachers' perceptions of their professional identities and their process of teacher identity formation in correlation with the framework under which this study has been conducted. This review has contributed to a better understanding of the characteristics of TI and its formation process, as well as the factors that influence it. Thus, there is a clearer idea of the role the context plays in the TI formation process, and it could be more easily

connected to the secondary objectives of this paper. Finally, this bibliographical review provided lots of insight into the implications of TI for both teachers and institutions.

5. METHODS

5.1. A Socio-Academic context of the CCCA

5.1.1 Background information of the CCCA teachers

The Centro Cultural Colombo Americano is a binational center which provides English quality instruction and promotes both the American and Colombian culture, with more than 65 years of experience offering to the community of Cali, other cities and towns nearby English classes, teacher trainings, cultural services and some other services related to the English language. For decades, the CCCA has had more than a hundred teachers working in its English for Adults, Kids and Teens, and Institutional programs.

The following information provides some background data regarding the CCCA teachers: by April 2021, the CCCA had 122 teachers in all its programs from which 81% (98 teachers) are currently teaching in either the Adult and Kids and Teens programs, Adult and Institutional programs, or either the Adult or Institutional program. Meanwhile, 19% of the teachers (23 teachers) are working exclusively in the Kids and Teens program (*Graph 1 – Percentage of teachers working at the CCCA English programs*.)
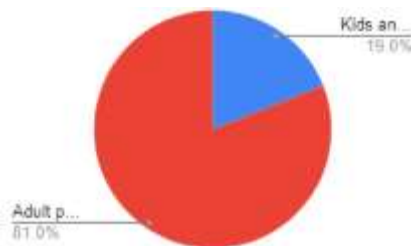
Graph 1- Percentage of teachers working at the CCCA English programs

On the other hand, *Graph 2- CCCA Teachers' proficiency level* shows that 93% of the teachers (113 teachers) at the CCCA certified a C1 - C2 level of proficiency in English, whereas 7% of them are B2. Within the group of teachers, there are 30 of them who perform as teachers and also as administrative workers within the institution.
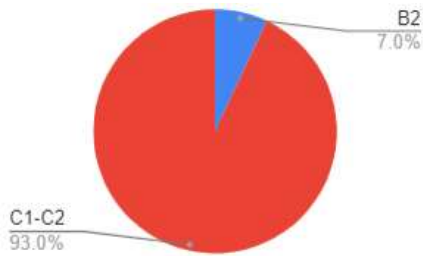
Graph 2- CCCA Teachers' proficiency level

Regarding education, based on the information provided in *Graph 3- CCCA Teachers' level of education*, it can be said that 5% of the CCCA teachers (6 teachers) hold a master's degree in linguistics, language teaching or education, 53% of the CCCA teachers (65 teachers) hold BA in languages or education, 18% (22 teachers) are professionals or have certified their studies in other areas, and 24% (29 teachers) are students of languages or education.
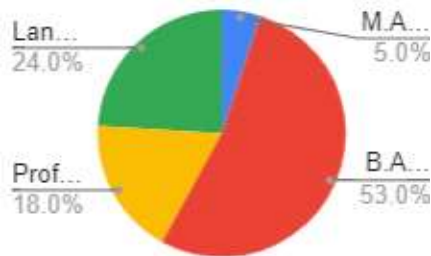
Graph 3- CCCA Teachers' level of education

As for the current teachers' working time at the institution, *Graph 4- Current CCCA teachers' working time at the institution*, reveals that 7% of them (9 teachers) started working at the CCCA between 1988 and 2000, 16% (20 teachers) became CCCA teachers between 2001 and 2010; and 77% of the teachers (93 teachers) joined the CCCA between 2011 and 2021.
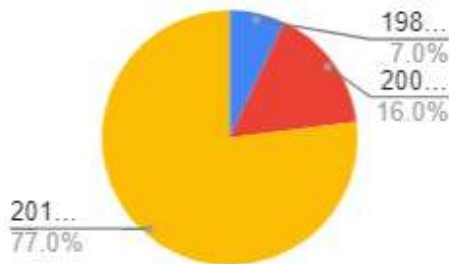
Graph 4- Current CCCA teachers' working time at the institution

5.1.2 Professional Development at the CCCA before and after the Pandemic 2020-2021

In January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a public health emergency because of the COVID-19 that started at the end of 2019 in Wuhan, China and rapidly spread around the world. In March 2020, the WHO announced that COVID-19 had been characterized as a pandemic. Through decree number 417 of March 17th, 2020, the president of Colombia declared the outbreak, and days later, the national quarantine. After that, the Ministry of Education urged the institutions to continue providing their educational services through the use of technology. As a consequence, the institutions had to make adaptations to their programs so that they continue teaching to their already registered students. Many schools, universities and language institutions switched from face-to-face classes to the virtual ecosystem, and they dealt with the many challenges that the change implied.

For language institutions such as the CCCA, whose all programs were carried out in face-to-face mode, it took about a month and a half to set up the new virtual conditions to keep providing its services to its students. It required that the institution identified how digitally competent its teachers were and the design of training sessions for them, to find out whether students had the resources and basic digital competencies to continue their courses virtually, and to think how its language teaching and learning model was going to be affected to restructure its courses in all the programs. Besides this, several technological and logistical adjustments were needed so that the administrative area kept functioning from home; and some of the academic staff's duties were redistributed or dropped in order to comply with the new demands of the circumstances.

As it happened to many companies and educational institutions in the country, the pandemic caused by COVID-19 brought several socio-economic consequences for the CCCA. Among others, there was a cutback in the administrative area's workforce and about 38% of the teachers' contracts, which expired in the middle of the year, could not be renewed. The extra benefits provided by the institution to its employees as part of its welfare program were wiped out. And, since the number of students went significantly down, teachers had fewer courses assigned, which affected their monthly incomes.

One of the most impacted areas of the CCCA was the Academic, which has been traditionally the biggest in the number of employees. It used to be composed mainly by an academic director, an assistant director of academic development and its group of 10 coaches and 2 researchers, who were in charge of the teachers' professional development; the assistant director of academic management and its group of 8 coordinators, who led the supervision of teachers; 13 support teachers, who are a group of teachers that combine their roles as teachers with some administrative

duties, and the regular teachers. As of the beginning of 2021, the Academic area has been led by the CCCA general director, one assistant director, who now leads both the professional development and supervision aspects in the head of 1 researcher, now known as a curricular advisor; 5 academic advisors (previously known as coaches,) and 5 coordinators. Additionally, there are 14 support teachers and the number of teachers started to increase as students little by little demand for English classes, especially in some specific schedules such as the night and Saturday's schedules.

Before the pandemic, the CCCA's professional development program consisted of a mentoring program (as described by Portilla, 2016) which by 2017 was redefined as a coaching program. Through the coaches, the program aimed at providing teachers with the support and guidance they needed to perform and improve their teaching practices at the time that they were given the tools to carry out reflective teaching. This group of coaches also addressed, through virtual professional development courses, some of the main issues teachers needed to work on, as found in the class observations they conducted. Teachers also found opportunities to improve their teaching competencies in the academic in-service sessions that took place every two months and that provided teachers with information on institutional policies, results of indicators, academic news, etc. as well as with teaching tools. Even though the CCCA had its Advanced English courses, ELT Conference, Teacher Training Course and Teaching as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Certificate Course for the community of Cali and its surroundings, CCCA in-service teachers were allowed to enroll in them for their professional growth.

Once the pandemic was declared and due to the awkwardness of the transition to the virtual ecosystem, the CCCA stopped offering its ELT Conference, Teacher Training and TEFL Certificate Courses, as well as the professional development courses. Instead, the efforts were addressed to train teachers on the use of the platforms chosen for the CCCA's English programs and some other digital tools to spice up their lessons through specific training and in-service sessions. On the other hand, the coaches reduced the number of observations to focus on providing emotional, teaching and technological support to teachers.

Later on, with the restructuring of the Academic area at the beginning of 2021, the in-service sessions were planned to happen monthly and with an emphasis on creating spaces for teachers to have academic conversations on different pedagogical aspects, and to develop the competencies required by the institution in the teacher's job description (see appendix 1: CCCA Teacher's Job Description) which are a) *corporate competencies*: customer service and interpersonal relationships; b) *role competencies*: teaching methodology and digital skills. Additionally, the academic advisors were given a class observation plan that was created based on 2020 annual teachers' evaluation results; and they actively participated in the design of an observation form that guided both academic advisors and teachers on the expected implementation of the principles

of the teaching approach used at the institution. Considering teachers' needs of improvement, and their degree of awareness and reflective practices as implied by Portilla's study (2016) in regard to CCCA teachers' perceptions of its mentoring program, it was decided that the academic advisors were going to continue encouraging teachers to carry out reflective processes on their teaching practices, but at the same time were going to explicitly point out teachers' strengths and weaknesses skipping the reflections with those teachers who preferred to be told what to work on.

Other professional development opportunities the academic staff and teachers have benefited from are found in the increasing number of language teaching webinars and conferences online they can attend. Finally, using the virtuality to its advantage, the CCCA transformed its Teacher Training and TEFL Certificate courses into a new course named E-Teaching Certificate course which provides out comers and in-service teachers with the pedagogical background and technological tools to teach English in virtual environments.

It was important to consider this contextualization of what the CCCA and its teachers have been through during 2020 -2021 because all the changes described above might have had an influence on the teachers' professional identity formation and development.

5.2. Participants

For this master's report, 20 teachers from all the programs at the CCCA were invited to participate, but only 9 of them confirmed their interest in being part of it. Out of the 9 participants, 3 are female and 6 are male. As seen in *Graph 5 - Age*, 33% of the participants (3 teachers) are between 26 to 30 years old. Another 33% (3 teachers) are in the range of 31 to 35 years old, 11% (1 teacher) is between 36 to 40 years old, and 22% (2 teachers) are within the 46 - 50 age group.
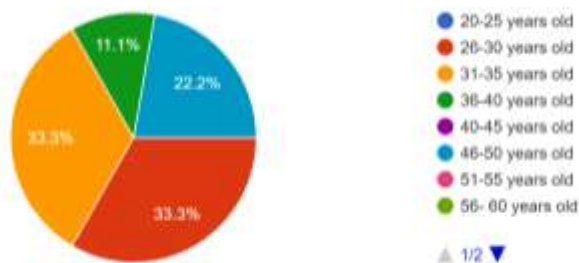
Graph 5- Age

Currently, 3 of the teachers participating in this report work exclusively in the Adult Program, although in the past they have performed in other programs too. In contrast, 5 of the teachers work for more than one program; mainly Kids and Teens and Adults, and just one of the teachers works only for the Kids and Teens Program. Most of them have taught at different levels from the most elementary to the higher levels.

Graph 6 - Total Years of Teaching Experience shows that the participants' total years of language teaching experience ranged from 2 to 25 years. Meanwhile, the time the participants have worked at the CCCA fluctuates between 2 and 11 years.
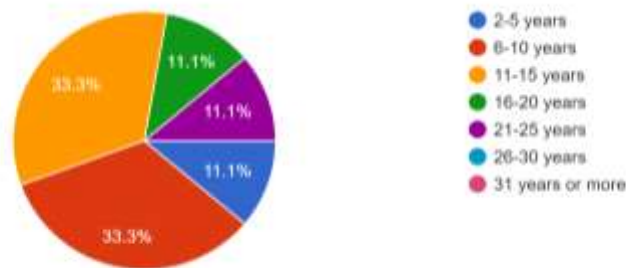
Graph 6 - Total Years of Teaching Experience

Regarding the level of education of the teachers participating in this report, it can be said that 77.8% of them (7 teachers) hold a bachelor's degree in language teaching, while 11% (1 teacher) holds a master's degree in educational technology, and 11% (1 teacher) is about to finish his B.A in education (see *Graph 3. Level of Education.*)
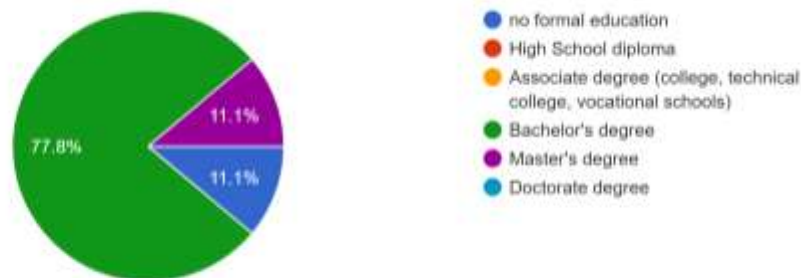
Graph 7 - Level of Education

5.3. Research Design

Considering that this study addressed a particular group of teachers within an institution and is based on these teachers' professional careers development as perceived and described by themselves, it will be carried out under the principles of the qualitative research type known as ethnography. As referred to by Nunan (1992), this research method was expected to allow for a more comprehensive view of the interactions between the participants and their context -the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano - which was the heart of this research. Besides, this study was mostly based on the participants' beliefs and views of their professional identities as teachers.

The qualitative component of this research approach could be evidenced in data collection tools such as the interviews that were conducted to the participants and the narratives that they were asked to record. On the other hand, there is a quantitative part taking place in this study in the information gathered in stage one of the methodologies which was collected through a questionnaire in which teachers had to rank on a given scale, their views on the components of the teacher professional identity in two different moments: at the beginning of their teaching careers at the CCCA, and the current time.

5.4. Methodology

This research paper aimed at identifying CCCA teachers' perceptions of their professional identities, and the process of their professional identity formation influenced by the institution. To achieve this, the methodological framework used was partially grounded on the methodology proposed by Beijaard et al. (2000) in their study about teachers' perceptions of professional identity. To collect data, they developed a four-part questionnaire for the participants that included a first part of background information, a second part in which the teachers' professional identities were represented in the three components of professional identity suggested by the authors: subject matter, pedagogical and didactical expertise. In the third part, through different items related to the three aspects of professional identity, it was compared the teachers' subjective views of their professional identities with their more objective items that represented their identities. A final part of the questionnaire involved the teachers' agreement with some factors influencing professional development given in the questionnaire.

In the case of this master's report, the data collection followed a variation to the framework of Beijaard et al. (2000). Here, the first stage is a questionnaire as well. It was composed of four parts: 1. participants' background information, 2. teacher's views of teacher identity and the CCCA teacher, 3. the teachers' perspectives on the components of professional identity when they started working at the CCCA and their

current perceptions; and 4. teachers' learning experiences during their teaching careers at the CCCA. It is important to note that the learning experiences provided in the questionnaire were given to teachers according to the four components of the professional identity explored in the framework chosen. Teachers were also given the chance to mention learning experiences they have had. A second stage involved interviews with the participants to explore their views on the contributions the CCCA might have had on their teacher identity formation in regards to the different components of professional teaching identity. On the third stage, teachers were asked to record some narratives on their teaching careers at the CCCA. And at the last stage, the analysis of the information collected took place.

Stage One: CCCA Teachers' Views of Teacher Professional Identity

The first stage for carrying out this study aimed at describing CCCA teachers' perceptions of what TI is. This phase included the design of a questionnaire using a Google Form[2] and its implementation (*Appendix 2: Questionnaire: CCCA Teachers' Professional Identity.*) This questionnaire had four sections that are described as follows:

 In the first part of this questionnaire, teachers were required to provide some general information that was considered useful for further analysis: age, gender, total years of teaching experience, years of work at the CCCA, educational level, programs and levels taught at the CCCA. The second section of the questionnaire demanded that the teachers described in their own words what TI meant to them.

Inspired by the framework proposed by Beijaard et al. (2000), in the third section of the questionnaire teachers were asked to rank from 1 to 4 according to the order of importance they gave to the four areas of expertise proposed by Beijaard et al. (2000) and Marr and English (2019) that compose the teacher professional identity: didactical, pedagogical, proficiency of the language and knowledge about language in relation to their current perceptions and those they had when they started their teaching careers at the CCCA.

The last section of the questionnaire was designed for teachers to pick out of a list of 12 learning experiences, the ones they felt identified with because they might have had them during their teaching careers at the CCCA. Most of the statements on this list were also taken from the study conducted by Beijaard et al. (2000) and belong to each of the four areas of expertise mentioned in the previous section of the questionnaire because they are intended to find the correlations between these two points. In this section, teachers were also asked to provide their own learning experiences to be later classified into the four components of the teacher professional identity.

Stage Two: Correlations Between the CCCA "Mucho Más" and Teacher Professional Identity Formation

The second stage of this Master's report addressed the exploration of CCCA teachers' views on the mechanisms the CCCA has used to influence their teacher professional identity formation. To achieve this, interviews with the 9 participants of this research were conducted and recorded through Google Meet[3] (*Appendix 3: Interview on Professional Teacher Identity*.) Each of the interviews took about twenty minutes and teachers were asked the following questions:

a. In your own words describe what teacher identity means for you
b. Do you think the CCCA has contributed to your professional teacher identity formation?
c. Which mechanisms has the CCCA used to influence professional identity formation, considering the four areas of expertise: didactical, pedagogical, language proficiency and knowledge about language?

As it can be noticed, question a) was also included in the questionnaire given to participants on stage one. The explanation for this relied on the assumption that teachers could express some other ideas about their perspectives on teacher identity in a conversation-like encounter. Additionally, a couple of further questions were necessary to be asked to the participants who also work somewhere else in order to have more clarity on how the CCCA and the other institutions have contributed to their teacher professional identity.

Stage Three: Exploring Teachers' Professional Journeys at the CCCA

In the third stage of this research, the same nine participants were asked to individually record a 2 to 4- minute narrative of their teaching career at the CCCA. The main goal of this stage was to identify CCCA teachers' professional identities and a process of CCCA teacher professional identity formation. The recordings were done through Google Meet and consisted of a description of who they were as teachers when they first started working at the institution, and how their identities had changed or evolved through the time to become the teachers they currently are (*Appendix 4 – CCCA Teachers' Narratives*). It was also expected that the participants shared some of

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[3] https://meet.google.com/

the most significant experiences they have had in regards to their professional identity formation, and the four areas of expertise considered in this study as the chosen framework for professional identity.

Stage Four: Analysis of the Information Gathered

With the information collected through the questionnaire described in stage one, the answers participants provided in the interviews conducted in stage two, and the narratives of the participants' teaching careers at the CCCA, an analysis was carried out aiming to describe CCCA teachers' perceptions of what TI is, describe their views on the components of professional teacher identity formation, and explore the mechanisms teachers perceive the CCCA has implemented and that might influence their teacher identity formation. Additionally, the data analysis attempted to explore teachers' views of the contribution of the CCCA to their professional identity.

The information gathered was registered in different charts created in the Google Sheets[4] tool where it was possible to consolidate the data provided by every single participant and it helped visualize teachers' answers and information that was relevant to this study. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. In the first part of the questionnaire where the participants were asked about their definitions of teacher identity, a qualitative analysis was made on the clarity of the teachers' understanding of the concept. Later on, adding up the numbers given to the four types of expertise presented in the second part of the questionnaire helped to deduce the importance of those aspects for the participants when they started their teaching careers at the CCCA and whether it has changed now. The last part of the questionnaire provided quantifiable information about the participants' most meaningful learning experiences at the CCCA from the list given and from the ones they came up with, and to which of the four types of expertise given they are related to.

It is also important to mention that the information provided by the participants during the interviews and in the narratives was analyzed in the light of the text by Marr and English (2019) and the study conducted by Beijaard et al. (2000) in regards to teachers' perspectives on professional identity in correlation to their pedagogical, didactical expertise, knowledge about language and proficiency in the language. Furthermore, the data was evaluated in the view of the research carried out by Beijaard et al. (2004) in which the topics of teacher professional identity formation, characteristics of teachers' professional identity, and the representation of professional identity on teachers' stories are considered and are found correlated to the subject of this report.

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[4] https://www.google.com/sheets/

5.5. Ethical Considerations

Several considerations were made when asking participants to take part of this MA report. First, they were approached by an email in which they were explained what the report consisted of, and it was given a brief description of the stages in which they were going to be involved: filling out a questionnaire, being interviewed, and recording a narrative. It was specified that even if their names were asked in the questionnaire, they were not going to be used in the final report. Also, that the information provided by them was merely for academic purposes, it would remain confidential and that it was protected from unauthorized disclosure, tampering or damage.

Due to the context of the pandemic generated by COVID -19, all the data collection process was meant to be online. That is why, in the email sent to the participants, they were told that by answering the questionnaire, they would accept the terms established for their participation in this study.

In spite of participants being informed from the very beginning of the different stages for data collection and the terms for their participation, when doing the recordings of the interviews, they were reminded of the determined ethical considerations.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the results gathered from the different sources: questionnaire, interview and narratives in regard to the CCCA teachers' views of professional teacher identity and their perceptions of the contributions the institution has made to their TI formation are presented and discussed. The results have been grouped in such a way that they respond to the general objective and the specific objectives established for this report.

6.1. Defining Teacher Identity

"I think that this (teacher identity) refers to the development of one's awareness or self-knowledge in teaching, and also, understanding ourselves as teachers"
(Teacher 4 – Narratives, May 4th, 2021)

When asked to define teacher identity in their own words in both the questionnaire and in the interviews, in the former, participants provided a very general idea of what TI meant to them, while in the latter they kept the line of what they said in the questionnaire, at the time that they provided extensive information on their perspectives of what TI is. This could have happened because teachers might have found in the interview the ease the oral production provides to express one's ideas. The participants' responses were very aligned with the definitions shared in the literature review, which approached TI from different perspectives and are presented as follows.

For the CCCA teachers, TI represented a teacher's awareness or knowledge of the self; or in the words of Teacher 3: "the way you see yourself as a teacher", and Teacher 5: "The way I recognize myself as a teacher" (Questionnaire, Question 1). These comments could be related to Mead's (1934) definition cited in Beijaard et al. (2000). Teachers also commented on the several factors that constitute teacher identity: the values and beliefs a teacher feels identified with, the teacher's background, how he was raised, the type of education he received, life and teaching experiences, his personality, his teaching context and the people around it.

These views teachers had on TI, acknowledged some of the characteristics of TI described in the literature review section. For instance, its on-going process of formation or re-formation (Beijaard et al., 2000), as interpreted from the participants' answer who said that TI developed through time and that it evolved. This feature was exemplified by Teacher 3 in her narrative when she said that a teacher's identity would not be the same when compared from two moments within a 2-year period of time. Another feature of TI implied in the participants' responses was the social nature of it as evidenced in answers that mentioned the influence of a role model found at the

institution. These kinds of answers were also identified in the narratives where teachers strongly referred to the influence the interactions and negotiations, they have had with their colleagues had on their TI formation, as well as the impact the academic advisors, or other teachers that they saw as their role models, had on the type of teachers they wanted to become. It was also interesting to observe how the participants found in TI a differentiating factor; meaning that TI was composed of features that describe every individual teacher, as expressed by Teacher 6 in his definition of TI: "[…] constant negotiation to construct the uniqueness of who you are as a teacher, leading to memorable and significant learning experiences" (Questionnaire, Question 1).

Moreover, although most of the participants' related TI to the teaching style, it was difficult to distinguish whether they meant TI was one's teaching style or TI helped teachers with the construction of their teaching styles. Teacher 6, for example, expressed that TI was something that made of himself a "brand"; it even sounded as if there was some kind of ego involvement (Questionnaire, Question 1). However, it could be clearly observed that CCCA teachers perceived one's TI impacted on the decisions a teacher makes, his approaches to teaching and how he performs.

To sum up, the CCCA teachers participating in this study defined TI as the acknowledgment they have of themselves as teachers, and identified several factors that constituted TI. Besides, characteristics such as TI being an on-going, evolutionary process, its social nature, and TI being a differentiating factor of who teachers are were identified in the teachers' responses to the questionnaire and interview, and matched the features of TI asserted by Tsui (2007), Palmer (2017), Akkerman (2011), respectively, as mentioned in the literature review. Finally, participants related TI to teachers' performance in the language classroom.

6.2. Components of Teacher Professional Identity

> *"I am not a theory person. I am more a practical teacher"*
> (Teacher 9 – Narrative, May 6th, 2021)

The relevance of the didactical, pedagogical, knowledge about language and proficiency component of teacher professional identity was evaluated by the teachers through the questionnaire in which they considered the beginning and current moments of their teaching careers at the CCCA, partially following a model of data collection used by Beijaard et al. (2000) in their study on teachers' perceptions of professional identity.

	BEGINNING OF TEACHER CAREER AT THE CCCA										CURRENTLY AT CCCA										CHANGE IN RELEVANCE
	TEACHER									AV.	TEACHER									AV.	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
Pedagogical	2	4	4	3	4	4	2	4	2	3.2	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	2	3	3.5	0.3
Didactical	2	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	4	3.4	4	1	4	1	4	4	4	4	4	3.3	-0.1
Knowledge about language	2	4	3	2	4	4	2	3	3	3.0	4	1	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3.4	0.4
Proficiency in the language	2	4	4	1	3	4	3	1	4	2.9	4	1	1	2	4	4	4	1	4	2.7	-0.2

Graph 8 - Relevance of the Components of Teacher Professional Identity as Viewed by CCCA Teachers

In *Graph 8 - Relevance of the Components of Teacher Professional Identity as Viewed by CCCA Teachers* the average results of the points given by participants to each of the components are presented. Considering that the CCCA teachers who answered the questionnaire have been at the institution for more than two years, it can be deduced that their views on the different components of professional teacher identity has changed slightly to the low in aspects such as the didactical and the language proficiency; and more significantly raised in the pedagogical and knowledge about language components. This result could be associated with the dynamic feature of TI and the different interactions teachers have had with their community of practice as suggested by Tsui (2007).

The first component evaluated was the *pedagogical* one, which showed an increase of three tenths in the overall average score given by teachers in the current moment of their teaching careers at the CCCA. It could be deduced that it had to do with the focus given to the CCCA's professional development program since the beginning of 2021 that has created spaces for teachers to have more academic conversations on the pedagogical approach to language teaching at the institution and that teachers' have been encouraged to do some academic readings they were not asked before. Eventually, this score might have to do with the educational level of the participants and the educational moment they are going through.

The second component of professional identity teachers weighed was the *didactical*. According to the results, it can be deduced that this component had a tiny variation from the importance teachers gave to it at the beginning of their professional journey at the CCCA to the current time. This result could reflect the work done by the institution in giving teachers didactical tools, tech orientation and training, and the gains of the teachers' interactions with their peers. It could be thought that it is logical to emphasize on the didactics at the beginning of the teaching career because of different views mentioned by CCCA teachers in their narratives: their desire to comply with the didactical and methodological institutional authorities' expectations, a desire to show the kind of teachers they can be, or to follow their institutional role models. In contrast, based on the comments provided in their narratives and interviews, teachers seemed to be more aware of the need to place the student as the center of the class. However, at

this moment of their professional careers at the CCCA, teachers have already accumulated a repertoire of didactical tools that they now know how to use and adapt to the different levels they teach.

The third component which importance for teachers was measured was the *knowledge about language* as their discipline. The result of this component could also be correlated with the emphasis given since the beginning of 2021 to aspects such as the pedagogical approaches to teaching, reinforcement of CLT, the communicative competence and its components, which has created the need for teachers to arrogate aspects of their disciplinary field that they had not considered before. Nevertheless, the above-mentioned interpretation could be a mere assumption because there are not enough elements to clearly state whether teachers completely understood what the component referred to, although the question was formulated with a brief description of the component to make it clearer to them.

Language proficiency was the fourth component of professional identity rated by teachers. The result evidenced that teachers are not that concerned about it nowadays. It could be justified in teachers reaching their comfort zones because of the compliance with the institutional required level of proficiency in the language, which is the requirement of the national norm NTC 5558 under which the CCCA's Quality Management System has been certified; and a high degree of confidence in their skills. Even so, some teachers commented in the narratives how the institution evaluated their level of proficiency in the language on a regular basis, which might have indicated a different result for this component.

In order to contrast the relevance given to teachers to the different components at different times of their teaching careers at the CCCA, through the questionnaire, they were also requested to check from a list of learning experiences given, the ones they felt identified with (see *Graph 9 - CCCA Teachers' Learning Experiences*.) Those experiences were grouped into the four components of the professional identity framed in this report. In addition to that, teachers provided learning experiences they thought of on their own and which were also classified into the four components. The results were the following:

Teachers' Learning experiences at the CCCA			TOTAL PER ITEM	TOTAL PER CATEGORY
Pedagogical	1	I've felt the need of keeping pace with new developments	7	20
	2	I've been Interested on understanding more the approach/methodologies used at the CCCA	6	
	3	I've seen the relevance to students of having a knowledgeable teacher	7	
Didactical	4	I think is important to take into account the level of students	8	23
	5	I recognize the importance of identifying students' ways of learning	8	
	6	I've had the necessity of being alert to what is going on in class through listening and observation	7	
knowledge about language	7	I've had the need for becoming a language specialist and understand how language functions	3	15
	8	I understand the big responsibility that as an English language teacher I have with my students	6	
	9	I learned itis important to understand the teaching context	6	
Proficiency	10	I've seen the need for improving my own proficiency of the language	7	13
	11	As a teacher I cannot permit myself to make language mistakes in front of students	1	
	12	I need to prepare myself to answer all vocabulary questions my students might have	5	

Graph 9 - CCCA Teachers' Learning Experiences

In *Graph 9 - CCCA Teachers' Learning Experiences,* it could be seen that teachers' learning experiences throughout their teaching careers at the CCCA lied mainly on the didactical and pedagogical components, while the lowest number of learning experiences belonged to the proficiency of the language. When comparing these results to the ones in *Graph 8 - Relevance of the Components of Teacher Professional Identity as Viewed by CCCA Teachers* in regard to the relevance the components of professional identity had for teachers at the extreme ends of their teaching careers, it could be seen that they are consistent with how important the components were at the beginning of the CCCA teachers' careers, but somehow different to their current times. It seems that teachers might have emphasized on how important those components were in the past. In both graphs 8 and 9, the lowest scores were given to the proficiency of the language.

The significance the pedagogical and didactical components were given by teachers in the previous graphs, coincided with the teachers' learning experiences they shared on their own which were exclusively classified into these two components since no learning experiences were given in relationship to the other components. Some of the learning experiences related to the pedagogical component mentioned by the teachers are pretty much the same given to them in the list. The didactical-oriented learning experiences provided by teachers were diverse and could be seen as a very positive gain from their careers at the CCCA because they lie mostly on students' learning achievement. The didactical-related learning experiences contributed by teachers stressed the relevance students have in the classroom, and they were: authenticity in the language classroom, establishing positive rapport with students, making students the center of the class, identifying students' weaknesses, effective tutoring, teaching diverse students, giving feedback, creating a positive classroom atmosphere, and incorporating technology into class. The attention given to students as

the center of the class is also a finding in the narratives.

In this section where the components of teacher professional identity were evaluated through a couple of questions in the questionnaire, the CCCA teachers demonstrated that the pedagogical and didactical components are privileged over the knowledge about language and language proficiency. Although all the components of the teacher professional identity are important and need to be considered, the pedagogical and didactical that teachers have constantly emphasized on, favor students' language goals achievement. The learning experiences teachers felt identified with can be compared to the desired characteristics English language teachers are to have according to Brosh (1996) as cited by Borg (2006, p. 6) which in its majority could be placed in the pedagogical and didactical components and influence positively teachers' classroom practices.

6.3. Views on Mechanisms That Influence Teacher Professional Identity

"I've been working at the Colombo for so long. It has helped me build some criteria for me to become a better teacher every single day. I wouldn't be the teacher that I am if it wasn't for the Colombo"
(Teacher 6, Narrative -May 3rd, 2021)

After analyzing the answers given by the CCCA teachers in their narratives and to question number 3 of the questionnaire in regard to the contributions the CCCA has made to their professional identity formation, the mechanisms that were explicitly acknowledged by teachers as influencing the development of teacher professional identity were categorized as a) academic support, b) professional development, c) Institutional orientation and re-orientation, d) spaces for teacher-teacher interaction, e) institutional language proficiency policies, and f) course/level assignation.

a) Academic Support

This was one of the biggest categories of mechanisms identified by CCCA teachers as having a strong influence in the development of their professional identities. In this group of mechanisms, the didactic and pedagogical support and the support given through supervision have been considered, especially by the lead of agents such as the academic advisors, coordinators and colleagues. Those mechanisms were: informal conversations with academic advisors or coordinators, class observations, reading articles shared by coordinators and academic advisors, receiving teaching advice from the academic team, feedback sessions, mentor/mentee meetings (this used

to be the name for meetings each of the academic advisors had with his or her group of teachers.)

In the views of the professional identity formation, CCCA teachers shared in their narratives different factors addressing the compliance with the didactic and pedagogical expectations of the institution could be perceived as happening mainly during the early stages of their professional careers at the CCCA. First, some kind of fear and lack of confidence was noted in comments such as the one made by Teacher 1 (Narrative, May 5th, 2021) about how afraid he was of being caught playing games in the classroom because it could have been seen as if he was wasting his class time. A second perception teachers had could be related to an explicit need for approval from the "academic authorities," meaning coordinators and academic advisors, who at a certain point performed as supervisors as found in what Teacher 5 (Narrative, May 6th, 2021) stated: "I was really nervous in trying to get some approval from other people, that they liked the way I taught." Later on, she added: "I wanted my mentor to approve what I was doing." Another view teachers had of the role of the Colombo in their identity formation could be associated to how what teachers have found at the CCCA through the support received from the academic team surpassed the learnings from the undergraduate studies, as expressed by Teacher 9 (Narrative, May 6th, 2021): "I think I wasted my time at the University because I have learned more at the CCCA through teaching and through supervisors' help and guidance." These perspectives revealed the importance CCCA teachers have given mainly to the didactical component of their professional identity, as well as the pedagogical one, especially at the beginning of their teaching careers.

b) Professional Development

The mechanisms determined as contributions from the CCCA to the formation of their teaching identities in this category were: in-house courses, ELT conferences, webinars, Teacher Training and TEFL Certificate courses, workshops at in-service sessions, Communicative Language Teaching Course (course on methodology,) and peer observations. It is important to clarify that most of the above-mentioned mechanisms take place at the CCCA and are conducted by the academic team (coordinators, academic advisors and teachers.) Activities such as the conferences and webinars can also take place at other institutions and are sponsored mainly by the publishing houses, the net of binational centers and the Embassy of the United States.

In their narratives, teachers highlighted the importance of the mechanisms identified in this group to nourish their pedagogical and didactic needs as viewed in their necessity to comply with the methodological expectations, and get the pedagogical and didactic help required to solve their doubts and deal with classroom situations. The first view can be exemplified in the following comment:

> I wasn't good enough. I was very confused. I didn't know
> much about techniques, didn't know about methods, theories.
> It was about 2014. Then, I was very confused even at lesson
> planning. I did some observations and tried to understand the
> classes (Teacher 2 -Narrative, May 6th, 2021).

In his comment, Teacher 2 talked about the peer-observation that took place at the CCCA and could happen either because the teacher was new and was required to observe some classes, or because he requested the coordinator to allow him to visit some classes.

On a different view, the CCCA teachers referred to the mechanisms identified in this group as the help they needed to solve their pedagogical and didactical doubts and deal with classroom situations as found in the following example:

> The CCCA has encouraged teachers to develop their own
> creativity. That makes us different from other teachers. In the
> classroom we experience how cool it is students' joy. We
> have a power, we have magic tricks, and they work, even if
> you are not good with kids, teens or adults; but we all do have
> a bank of magic tricks. We use them, modify them, and that
> makes us different from others (Teacher 6, Narrative, May 3rd
> ,2021).

Although this teacher did not explicitly say the course or mechanism, it can be deduced it was any course or session at the in-service which was the most frequent activity teachers were involved in. Another example was provided by Teacher 2: "it has been challenging, even the human component" [referring to teaching.] "I've learned how to manage situations with students and parents. And now, I am doing more for my sts to help them achieve their goals" (Teacher 2 - Narrative, May 6th, 2021). The same teacher referred to other mechanisms from this group such as the in-house courses, and the advice received from the academic staff and his colleagues: "I took courses at the Colombo too, I would receive help from my friends, coordinators, coaches […] I started taking some courses on English teaching. And I decided I needed to learn more and started the University." In contrast to what Teacher 9 said in the previous section about wasting his time at the university because he felt he achieved the real learning at the CCCA, Teacher 2 considered he needed some more formal education to complement his learning at the CCCA and understand better what he was doing. These two examples showed two different perceptions in regards to the importance the pedagogical and didactical components of professional identity have for teachers.

Once again, teachers emphasized on the needs they had at the beginning of their teaching careers at the CCCA, which showed that it seemed to be easier for them to identify all the gains they had during the first stages of their teaching careers when they were just absorbing as much as they could to become the teachers they are now.

c) Institutional Orientation and Re-orientation

This mechanism consists of a series of sessions new teachers have with different members of the Academic Area to get information of different elements such as: the structure of the Academic Area, the role of coordinators and academic advisors, the English programs, the institutional policies, the different class documents teachers need to fill out, lesson planning, assessment, etc. Throughout the year, some of these topics are revisited at the in-service sessions or any other kind of encounter with the teachers. These institutional activities were acknowledged by the participants because of what it contributed to the formation of their professional identities: "They tell you what the methodology is and the structure the classes should have and what is expected teachers to do" (Teacher 3, Narrative - May 8th, 2021).

d) Spaces for Teacher-Teacher Interaction

Although this mechanism was not mentioned by the CCCA teachers repeatedly, it implied a high value because it represented the opportunities teachers had to interact with one another, learn from each other, and nourish their professional identities. The spaces for teachers' interactions among themselves are found at the teachers' lounges, cafeterias, materials' rooms, and the Academic Office. In the virtual environment, these spaces for interaction are promoted at the monthly in-service sessions, although they do not seem to work the same. Surprisingly, participants did not make any reference to this. Teacher 4 pointed out the fellowship found at the teachers´ lounge, where they could share activities with the rest of the teachers (Narrative, May 5th, 2021). Precisely, this interaction among teachers has also been mentioned by teachers as favoring their proficiency of the language, which is a very important component of the professional identity. For instance, Teacher 5 said: "The CCCA helps me with the practice because everybody speaks English all the time. I've felt immersed in the world of English, because in don't find that in public schools, they use Spanish all the time". So, as seen in this mechanism, teachers not only find the opportunities for interaction with their peers as a factor that nourishes their didactical and pedagogical components of their professional identity, but also their proficiency in the language.

e) Institutional Language Proficiency Policies

At the CCCA the minimum required level of English for teachers is C1. However, the NTC 5580 allows language institutes to have at least 20% of the teachers in B2. The norm also urges the language institutes to check their teachers' proficiency levels on a regular basis. The CCCA administers proficiency exams to its teachers every two years,

and every year to those teachers who might have scored B2. In the question 3 of the interviews, teachers mentioned this policy as a mechanism through which the CCCA has contributed to their professional development identity, in specific to the language proficiency component. Teacher 2 referred to it by saying: "the test the CCCA does every year that makes your work better and that helps you grow as a person and as a teacher". Other teachers have found in other mechanisms such as courses, the key to comply with the language proficiency requirement, but they also recognized the policy as something that influenced their professional identity formation:

> In a deductive way. When we are teaching higher levels at the CCCA you need to prepare yourself first and be ready to answer your students' questions. That helps you grow. At the CCA you also have the opportunity to study in advanced courses (Teacher 7 - Question 3, Questionnaire.)

This teacher did not only mention the Advanced courses provided by the CCCA as a mechanism to improve her proficiency level, but also discussed the course assignation as an element that forces teachers to be better prepared. Furthermore, Teacher 9 responded to Question 3 of the questionnaire with the following comment:

> "My proficiency level has improved. When you become a teacher, your English level improves because you have to be aware of pronunciation, vocabulary, etc. I took an English proficiency course (professional development courses) with Beth [former Academic Director.] That's the only thing I have done. I think the Colombo could do something to help teachers improve their proficiency".

Even though, in some of the professional development courses carried out by the CCCA language proficiency has been addressed, there seems to be more the institution can do to contribute to the teachers' development of this component of their professional identities.

f) Course/Level Assignation

As mentioned at the end of the previous section, teachers have found in the course assignation the challenge they have needed to improve their level of proficiency in the language. Several teachers pointed out that the fact that they have to plan their lessons, be prepared to answer students' questions and provide explanations, and use English at all times while at the institution, provided them with some good practice and more knowledge to improve their mastery of the language. Teacher 2 commented on this: "Every day you learn something new. The fact that you have to use English all the time, by planning lessons, that helps improve the proficiency level" (Question 3-Questionnaire.)

According to the answer provided in the questionnaire by Teacher 4 (Narrative, May 5th, 2021), it is not just a matter of having a higher-level course, but also being assigned a course. In his case, he has noticed his level of proficiency has been down when he has not been given a course. He suggested that the interaction with his students helps him maintain his level of proficiency.

All mechanisms considered, it could be said that based on the CCCA teachers' narratives and their answers to the questionnaire, there were six different elements clearly identified by them as influencing their teacher professional identity formation. Through these findings it could be analyzed how important the pedagogical and didactical components of the professional identity have been for teachers throughout their professional careers at the CCCA as evidenced in their perceptions on the need to comply with pedagogical and didactical expectations, and to be approved by others, especially at the beginning of their teaching careers. It is curious how teachers implied that part of forming their identities had to do with satisfying an expectation set by their own perceptions - and possibly influenced by the society - of the image the CCCA has as a language institute; besides, the views they had in regards to following a role model. These needs for approval and acceptance, in addition to the classroom situations teachers might have to deal with, can be considered "hidden" mechanisms since they were not explicitly mentioned by teachers, but somehow influenced their professional identity formation. These factors were recognized by Van Lankveld et al. (2017) in his five psychological aspects involved in a community of practice such as the CCCA, that influenced the construction of teacher identity.

Moreover, in the results some of the characteristics of teacher identity and professional teacher identity were noticed. The dynamic feature of TI (Tsui, 2007) was evident in the relevance given to the different kinds of interactions teachers had with the different members of the academic staff, and how they favored their process of professional identity formation. The continuing characteristic assigned to TI (Beijaard et al., 2000) was also implied in the narratives. It was noticed in comments such as the one made by Teacher 1 (Narrative, May 5th, 2021), where he mentions how he has changed the views towards his students, what they need, and his performance thanks to the CCCA in regards to his professional development. The definition and re-definition of professional teacher identity Beijaard et al. talked about, was noted in the narrative presented by Teacher 6 (Narrative, May 3rd, 2021) who mentioned different life and teaching experiences he has been through that might have influenced his teacher identity.

> "I see myself as someone who has learned from the dirt. I am the person that I am today because of the Colombo. I worked as a teacher in Argentina, and I thought: I have a lot! and started to see what was worth. I think I now have the tools. This pandemic made me reflect on what I was made of. It has

me question myself in many ways. I am finishing a career and
know many good things will come right after I finish it. I would
like to help other teachers."

        As suggested by Beijaard et al. (2000), teachers' reflections on their professional selves provide a valuable input for teachers' comprehension of their needs, strengths, and interests; and of course, a key factor in their professional identity development. Even though teachers did not openly talk about the reflection opportunities the CCCA has facilitated for them through the in-service sessions and other academic activities, in some of the narratives this element has been present as when they spoke up the thoughts, they have had throughout their careers that had influence their decisions on taking courses, looking for help, participating in academic activities, and so on.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Main Findings on Teacher Professional Identity and Teacher professional Identity Formation

Some conclusions were made after the discussion of the findings of this research which aimed at describing CCCA teachers' views of their teacher professional identities and the process of CCCA teacher professional identity formation; as well as, exploring teachers' views of the contribution of the CCCA to their professional identity. It can be concluded that CCCA's teachers have a clear understanding of the concept of teacher identity and the influence the CCCA has had on their professional identity formation. Besides, features of teacher identity formation such as it being an on-going, evolutionary process; its social nature, and it being a teachers' essence differentiating factor were evidenced in teachers' discourses as a consequence of the changes in their context such as the switch to a virtual learning environment, and the adjustments that took place in the Academic area in the year 2021. This understanding said a lot about the CCCA teachers' reflective practices and monitoring of their performance. It might also indicate CCCA teachers' better classroom practices that favor students' effective learning experiences. On the other hand, CCCA teachers' insights on who they were at the beginning of their teaching careers at the CCCA, how much they have grown, and the learning experiences they have had at the institution provided meaningful information that can be considered by the academic team to the redesign of the professional development program, and the new teacher's orientation at the institution.

Perspectives on the Components of Teacher Professional Identity

On the basis of CCCA teachers' perspectives of the components of their professional identities, the findings showed a strong emphasis on the didactical and pedagogical fields. This can be seen as the result of years of in-service sessions devoted to share didactical tools with teachers. Also, it can be due to the teachers' explicit desire to perform well in the classroom. The results also showed a trend for the CCCA teachers to move from more teacher-centered classes to classes in which the focus is on students. CCCA teachers also gave a lot of importance to the pedagogical component. It is thought that it might have to do with the fact that during the first trimester of the year the institution has open some spaces for teachers to read and discuss about the CCCA's teaching methodology and views of language. Even though, teachers expressed how the institutional policies in regards to their language proficiency has contributed to their professional identity formation, this component was not

considered highly in the scale of importance it has had for teachers. The component of knowledge about language basically had the same outcome. Teachers are not fully aware of their need to be experts of their subject matter: English language. This might indicate that teachers are comfortable with what they know already and since there is a book to follow, there is no need to make students explore the different aspects of language. Although teachers have acknowledged the CCCA's contributions to the development of these two factors of their professional identities, it seems to be necessary that the institution takes some more steps to make teachers aware of the relevance of these two components and provides teachers with more support on them.

Mechanisms influencing Teacher Professional Identity Formation

Moreover, the findings of this study determined 6 main groups of mechanisms through which the CCCA has contributed to its teachers' professional identity formation:

- Academic support system
- Professional development
- Institutional orientation and re-orientation
- Opportunities for teacher-teacher interaction
- Institutional language proficiency policies
- Course assignation.

According to the teachers' views, the ***academic support*** found at the CCCA is one of the most acknowledged mechanisms and has been key to the development of their professional identities, especially in the field of the didactics and pedagogy. This information is valuable for the academic administration and the academic support system to better comprehend what being a teacher is like and the kind of assistance teachers really require on a regular basis, as well as in times when they need to cope with changes like the ones they have gone through because of the situation of COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent implications in the Academic Area. These views could help the Academic Area member to strengthen the model of support they provide to both the new and the in-service teachers.

Another group of mechanisms widely recognized by the CCCA teachers as influencing factors of their professional identity formation has been named ***professional development***. This seems to be one of the strengths of the institution which through its in-service sessions and variety of courses has provided teachers with plenty of opportunities to reflect on their teaching practices, increase their repertoire of teaching tools, and foster meaningful and productive interactions with their colleagues. These features could make of the CCCA an institution of reference to schools and other

language institutes, and it seems to be a great option for novice language teachers because of its influence on teachers' professional identity formation and the inspiration it has given teachers to teach as commented by themselves.

The other four mechanisms were not repeatedly mentioned by the participants, but they represent some important influence in CCCA teachers' professional identity formation. The ***orientations to new teachers*** seem to play an important role on teachers' first understandings of different pedagogical aspects related to the institution and different didactic tools they can adapt and implement in their classes. Also, through the new teacher orientation and re-orientations, teachers establish their first interactions with the Academic support team, and they might start assigning them the features of the role models that would inspire their professional journey. Additionally, the orientations provide teachers with a comprehensive view of the institution, its policies, and its support system. On the other hand, as suggested by Akkerman (2011), through the mechanism ***opportunities for teacher-teacher interaction*** provided by the institution at its spaces, academic and social activities, teachers' professional identities are nourished. These spaces, as commented by teachers, allow them to learn from one another, exchange successful didactic tools and their pedagogical views, practice their English, and depending on their level of awareness, those interactions could also help them improve their knowledge of how English works and how to use that knowledge in their language classrooms.

Although the language proficiency component of teacher professional identity was not highly recognized in the questionnaire by CCCA teachers, in the interviews they did show their awareness of the importance it has to the institution. At the same time, they acknowledged that the CCCA's ***language proficiency policy*** makes them pay attention to their improvements on this aspect. A couple of teachers mentioned English courses the CCCA has given them through its professional development program. And some others said the CCCA should give them more of that. Having said this, it could be suggested that the institution designs more courses to help teachers work on their language proficiency. Therefore, by making students take proficiency exams on a regular basis, the CCCA influences its teachers' professional identity.

Course assignation was identified by teachers as a mechanism that influences mainly their language proficiency and knowledge about language components of their teacher professional identity. Planning classes for the highest English levels or the Advanced courses can become a challenge for teachers, as viewed by themselves. However, that also fosters improvement in the teachers' comprehension of how the language works, openness to the culture associated to the language used in those levels, and development of teachers' skills.

All in all, the CCCA has contributed to its teachers' professional identity formation through 6 different groups of mechanisms that were identified by teachers and that make them different from other teachers, as perceived by themselves and

suggested by Borg (2006) when he stated that the language teachers' distinctiveness lied on the teachers' own experiences in specific educational settings. However, that distinctiveness of the CCCA teachers in comparison with teachers from other institutions was hard to determine because of the outreach of this study. It could be interesting though, that these possible differences be taken into account in future studies.

Final reflection

From the roles I have played at the CCCA as a teacher, teacher administrator, and researcher, the development of this report meant a great opportunity to have an academic discussion on the following aspects: firstly, as a teacher I could see myself identified in the narratives of the teachers participating in this research. My teacher professional self has been meaningfully influenced by the CCCA from the very beginning of my teaching career. As experienced by teachers, the different mechanisms found at the CCCA have provided me with the tools to shape and reshape my teacher professional identity. In addition to the detected mechanisms there is the fact that I became part of the Academic team at an early stage of my teaching career. As a consequence, this new role has brought new learnings, experiences, interactions with colleagues that have presented new perspectives that have enriched even more the professional that I am.

Secondly, this research has given me a more comprehensive view of who the current CCCA teachers are, what insights they have in regards to the institution's contributions to their professional identity formation, and how important the components of the teacher professional identity are. With this in mind, the Academic support system can be strengthened to keep on providing teachers with the assistance they need at the different stages of their professional careers at the institution and to effectively accompany teachers' reflective activities. Also, the CCCA professional development program could be redefine so that it addresses teachers' actual needs and interests, and they offer teachers more opportunities to reflect on their professional selves. And, the orientation and re-orientation processes could be re-designed to make sure that new teachers are given enough tools that foster the development of the four components of teacher professional identity in which this project was framed, and that they have greater learning experiences at the earlier stages of their teaching journeys.

Finally, as a researcher, this paper has given me a meaningful academic view of my context and its challenges in regards to the understanding of the CCCA teachers' perceptions of themselves and the influence the institution has had on their professional identity. Besides, it provided me with concrete elements to acknowledge the strengths of the Academic Area and the institution, and the aspects that need to be improved.

Recommendations for further research

       To conclude, in this research there were some implicit elements influencing teacher identity formation that were not directly related to the framework of components of professional identity chosen for this paper, but they could be considered for further discussions. The first one has to do with the teachers' perceptions of the good-will of their working place, that seems to make them act in specific ways because it either make them feel afraid of the consequences of going against its policies and guidelines; because they do not want to be a disappointment, or they just feel a big responsibility in belonging to it. A second factor seems to be the need to emulate a role model found at the institution, as several CCCA teachers implied. On the other hand, it is also recommended that aspects such as the social and emotional ones are included in the research landscape of understanding teacher identity formation.

Caveats

       Throughout this study, a couple of limitations were found. The first one took place in the stage where the participants were chosen and sent the questionnaire. Due to teachers' time constraints because of their class assignation, the questionnaire was just sent to 20 teachers and just 9 out of them replied accepting to participate. As a consequence, the information collected was somehow limited and it could be said that it provided partial results. A second issue found in the development of this paper was the fact that some of the teachers' answers seemed repetitive, which lessened the opportunities to get more information. This might have been caused by a wrong formulation of the questions. A third constraint was identified in the missed opportunity to find out explicitly the implications the pandemics declared in 2020 and the adjustments made in the academic area, had on teachers' professional identities. Because of this, it is suggested that more attention be placed on it to determine how the academic support system or the institution can assist.

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9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: CCCA Teacher's Job Description 2021

Centro Cultural Colombo Americano Cali | Palmira | Buga *Inglés y mucho más!*	**FORMATO**	Código: F-S2-001
	MANUAL DE DESCRIPCIÓN DE CARGOS	Fecha: 2020-01-13
		Versión: 002

IDENTIFICACIÓN DEL CARGO	
Nombre del Cargo: Docente	**Proceso:** Gestión académica
Área a la que pertenece: Académica	**Depende de:** Coordinador de programa y de sede

Naturaleza del Cargo: Planear, ejecutar y evaluar la enseñanza de inglés del CCCA a niños, adultos, programas especiales y/o empresariales en los diferentes programas y modalidades, haciendo uso del enfoque metodológico CLT (Communicative Language Teaching), y políticas de la institución.
Perfil del cargo: Requisitos y/o condiciones para el adecuado desempeño del cargo

Competencia	Variables de Competencia	Verificación de cumplimiento
Educación	Estudiante de últimos semestres de licenciatura en educación Licenciado en lenguas extranjeras, idiomas o educación Profesional en otras áreas del conocimiento	Certificados de estudio, acta de grado y/o Tarjeta profesional
Formación	• Dominio de inglés nivel B2, C1 O C2. • Conocimientos en la norma ISO 9001:2015 Y NTC 5555. • Conocimientos en manual de convivencia y reglamento interno de trabajo. • Riesgos relacionados con su labor, procedimientos de trabajo seguro y manejo de emergencias. • Profesional: Certificación en pedagogía.	Certificados de Evaluación de conocimientos y/o de asistencia.
Experiencia	Estudiante: 2 años de experiencia en enseñanza de inglés Licenciado: no requiere experiencia Profesional: 2 años de experiencia en enseñanza de inglés	Certificados Laborales
Competencias Corporativas	**SERVICIO AL CLIENTE:** Demuestra empatía y disposición a la solución de las necesidades o demandas del cliente frente a la institución, brindando respuesta en el menor tiempo posible.	Evaluación del desempeño
	Escucha las peticiones de los estudiantes y da respuesta oportuna.	
	Establece diferentes canales de comunicación para que las solicitudes sean atendidas con la mayor efectividad	
	Es cordial en el trato con los estudiantes, padres de familia y compañeros de trabajo de todas las áreas.	
	RELACIONES INTERPERSONALES: Establece y mantiene relaciones armónicas, afectivas, basadas en el respeto con el fin aportar a un ambiente de trabajo que facilita el logro de los objetivos establecidos por la institución.	
	Establece relaciones basadas en el respeto mutuo y la confianza	
	Escucha, hace preguntas, expresa conceptos e ideas en forma efectiva y honesta y permite que los estudiantes hagan lo mismo	
	Aprecia y respeta las diferencias y la diversidad que presentan las personas.	
	Favorece la participación de la totalidad de sus estudiantes y promueve la integración de todos sus estudiantes	

	Negocia y resuelve desacuerdos, orientándose a mejorar el desempeño de los integrantes de sus grupos y la calidad de las relaciones.	
	Es prudente, reservado y concentra sus acciones y comentarios en los aspectos organizacionales y no en los aspectos personales de sus compañeros, jefes y colaboradores.	
Competencias de rol	**APROPIACIÓN DE LA METODOLOGÍA DE ENSEÑANZA:** Apropia la metodología CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) del CCCA y la utiliza en sus espacios educativos.	Evaluación del desempeño y/o control de Indicadores de
	Mejora continuamente la práctica docente	
	Planea y ejecuta las clases centradas en el estudiante	desempeño del proceso
	Fomenta la participación de los estudiantes	
	Implementa actividades autenticas	
	Implementa actividades de trabajo cooperativo	
	Realiza los cursos de desarrollo profesional establecidos por el CCCA.	
	Asiste a las reuniones con los academic advisors y/o coordinadores y aplica las recomendaciones generadas en estos espacios	
	Participa en las reuniones institucionales según la programación y asignaciones	
	HABILIDADES DIGITALES	
	Diseña actividades y entornos de aprendizaje auténticos que reconocen y consideran la diversidad de sus estudiantes	
	Aprovecha la funcionalidad de la tecnología para diseñar estrategias de aprendizaje conjunto e independiente en las plataformas digitales y/o entornos virtuales disponibles	
	Colabora con sus colegas para mejorar sus prácticas, descubrir y compartir recursos e ideas y resolver situaciones de clase	
	Apoya y empodera a los estudiantes para mejorar el proceso de enseñanza, mediante el uso de las herramientas tecnológicas	
	PLANEACIÓN	
	Realiza la planeación para cada clase teniendo en cuenta los criterios establecidos en el documento "cómo dictar una clase" (según la modalidad) y los pacings, presentando el lesson plan cuando se requiera	
	Planifica las estrategias evaluativas que utilizará con el fin de comunicarlas a los estudiantes al inicio de cada nivel.	
	EJECUCIÓN	
	Realiza inducción a los estudiantes al inicio de cada nivel, haciendo uso de las plantillas proporcionadas por la institución. Para el programa K&T realiza inducción a los acudientes, teniendo en cuenta las instrucciones proporcionadas por la Coordinación de programa	
	Dicta las clases de inglés a los grupos asignados, en los horarios programados siguiendo el enfoque metodológico definido y registrando las novedades de clase en el registro de notas del estudiante	
	Toma asistencia a cada clase y la reporta en la lista provisional digital. Anota las recuperaciones de clase en el mismo formato cuando corresponda	
	Entrega al coordinador oportunamente el respectivo lesson plan, materiales, y/o publicar las actividades para el desarrollo de la clase (en G-Suite), cuando requiere una sustitución	
	Ingresa notas a SOFI en las fechas establecidas	
	Fortalece el aprendizaje de los estudiantes usando apropiadamente los espacios disponibles: Multimedia Room, IdeaLab, biblioteca, galería, auditorio, etc., reservando el espacio oportunamente y a través del mecanismo asignado	
	Brinda tutorías a los estudiantes que lo necesiten o remite a la oficina académica previa información detallada de cada caso. Diligencia el reporte de tutorías correspondiente e informa a los estudiantes y padres de familia sobre los avances.	

Reporta a través de SOFI, los casos de estudiantes que ameritan acompañamiento especializado	
Informa a los estudiantes y padres de familia sobre los clubes de práctica del idioma, las diferentes actividades culturales, eventos institucionales, etc.	
Cumple con el protocolo de actuación ante situaciones que involucran niños niñas o adolescentes	
Participa en las actividades relacionadas con el Sistema de Gestión de calidad asignada por su jefe inmediato	
Aplica los lineamientos establecidos por la institución en materia de Seguridad y Salud en el trabajo y asegura que sus estudiantes los conozcan y los sigan	
Consigna en Gsuite los resultados de las actividades que se generan en la plataforma	
EJECUCIÓN (KIDS AND TEENS)	
Lidera la reunión con padres de familia en los tiempos indicados por la institución para cada semestre	
Reporta a coordinación las situaciones disciplinarias y/o académicas, informando a los padres de familia según las actas o compromisos establecidos	
Reporta estudiantes enfermos o que hayan presentado incidentes/accidentes a la oficina académica; estas situaciones deberán ser atendidos en enfermería	
CONTROL	
Verifica con sus estudiantes que hayan realizado el proceso de registro y reporta las novedades la lista provisional y a su coordinador	
Evalúa y retroalimenta objetivamente a sus estudiantes al final de cada unidad y de cada nivel, reportando los resultados en la lista provisional digital y en el reporte de notas en SOFI	
Diligencia oportunamente los formatos de Group Report, brindando información objetiva sobre el desempeño del grupo recibido	
Reporta al coordinador de sede los estudiantes que no se encuentran en el nivel deseado para el curso registrado.	
ACCIONES DE MEJORA CONTINUA	
Retroalimenta el desempeño alcanzado a los estudiantes oportunamente en los tiempos definidos por la institución	
Sigue el plan de acción establecido con el Academic advisor o coordinador para mejorar continuamente la práctica docente	
Realiza las encuestas institucionales	
Identifica fortalezas y necesidades para la mejora en el programa, proceso pedagógico y humano, mediante la realización de auto evaluación anual sobre el desempeño y la práctica docente.	
Participa activamente de las actividades académicas e institucionales	

Requisitos del cargo

	AUTORIDAD	RESPONSABILIDADES RELACIONADAS CON EL CARGO	RENDICIÓN DE CUENTAS
Acompañamiento de personas	No tiene colaboradores a cargo.	Tiene a su cargo un grupo de estudiantes menores y mayores de edad que desarrollan el proceso académico en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés, verificando la realización y la efectividad de dichos procesos. Promueve el desarrollo armónico de las actividades académicas, alcanzando los objetivos de cada nivel.	
Seguridad y salud en el trabajo	Es líder de evacuación de su grupo de estudiantes ante una emergencia al interior de las	*Informa acerca de los riesgos de su cargo en relación con la seguridad y la salud en el trabajo. *Verifica el cumplimiento de los procedimientos definidos para la prevención de riesgos y manejo de emergencias en las personas de su Área. *Realiza la inducción sobre el plan de emergencias, evacuación y bioseguridad a sus estudiantes.	*Cumple con los procedimientos definidos para Prevenir Riesgos relacionados con su cargo. *Cumple con los procedimientos definidos

	instalaciones del CCCA o satélites.		para el manejo de emergencias.
Bienes o equipos asignados		Responde por los bienes o equipos asignados. El efecto económico de su pérdida o daño será establecido de acuerdo con las circunstancias.	
Decisiones o procedimientos		Toma decisiones sobre las actividades a realizar en cada clase, los métodos de evaluación y alcance de los objetivos de cada nivel acorde con el enfoque metodológico.	Cuenta con el lesson plan de cada clase y diligencia la documentación asociada.
Manejo de información		Tiene acceso a información sensible sobre estudiantes, especialmente menores de edad. Se requiere reserva y discreción.	
Manejo de Dinero		No tiene autorizado el manejo de dinero.	

Riesgos relacionados con el cargo	Biomecánico, público, desgaste de la voz, psicosocial, biológico

Nombre: Firma: Fecha:

Appendix 2: Questionnaire: CCCA Teachers' Professional Identity

Dear teacher:
I'd appreciate your participation in this M.A TEFL research study which objectives are:

● To describe CCCA teachers' views of their teacher professional identities and the process of CCCA teacher professional identity formation.
● To explore teachers' views of the contribution of the CCCA to their professional identity.

Confidentiality
All the information you provide in this questionnaire will be used exclusively for academic purposes and will remain confidential and anonymous during all stages of the elaboration of the final report.

If you have any doubts, do not hesitate to contact me at marthao_fajardo@hotmail.com

This questionnaire may take 20-30 minutes of your time.
Thank you

Name_____

Age
20-25 years old___
26-30 years old___
31-35 years old___
36-40 years old___
41-45 years old___
46-50 years old___
51-55 years old___
56-60 years old___
61 or older___
Prefer not to say ___

Gender
Female___
Male___
Prefer to self-describe as non-binary___
Prefer not to say___

Total years of teaching experience

2-5 years____

6-10 years____

11-15 years____

16-20 years____

21-25 years____

26-30 years____

31 years or more____

Number of years you have worked at the CCCA

2-5 years____

6-10 years____

11-15 years____

16-20 years____

21-25 years____

26-30 years____

31 years or more____

What is your highest level of education?

No formal education____

High school diploma____

Associate degree (college, technical college, vocational school) ____

Bachelor's degree____

Master's degree____

Doctorate degree____

Programs you have taught at the CCCA

Kids and Teens only____

Adult program only____

Both Kids and Teens and Adult programs____

Levels you have taught at the CCCA

Beginner levels only____

Intermediate levels only____

Upper intermediate levels only____

I have taught more than one category____

Teacher Identity

In your own words please explain what you understand by teacher identity (TI)

_____

_____

Views on Teacher Professional Identity

Think back to the moment when you started working at the CCCA. Rank the following aspects according to the level of relevance they had for you at that time, 4 being the most relevant, and 1 the least relevant.
- My understanding of the correlations between the theory on learning, the methodology used and my actual classroom practices
- Lesson planning, implementation of activities and evaluation of lessons.
- My full understanding of what teaching a language involved (components of language, who my students were, what they needed the language for, the context, why they were learning, etc.)
- The necessary language proficiency level for me to carry out the class at the level I was assigned.

Now rank the same aspects from the previous question, according to the level of relevance they currently have for you, 4 being the most relevant, and 1 the least relevant.

- My understanding of the correlations between the theory on learning, the methodology used and my actual classroom practices
- Lesson planning, implementation of activities and evaluation of lessons.
- My full understanding of what teaching a language involves (components of language, who my students are, what they need the language for, the context, why they are learning, etc.)
- The necessary language proficiency level for me to carry out the class at the level I was assigned.

Career-long learning experiences

Think of all the time you have worked as a teacher at the CCCA. From the following list of learning experiences, pick the ones you have had and/or feel more identified with.

- I've felt the need of keeping pace with new developments.
- I've been interested on understanding more the approach/methodologies used at the CCCA.
- I've seen the relevance to students of having a knowledgeable teacher.
- I think it's important to take into account the level of students.
- I recognize the importance of identifying students´ ways of learning.
- I've had the necessity of being alert to what is going on in class through listening and observation.
- I've had the need for becoming a language specialist and understand how language functions.
- I understand the big responsibility that as an English language teacher I have with my students.
- I learned the importance to understand the teaching context.
- I've seen the need for improving my own proficiency of the language.
- As a teacher I cannot permit myself to make language mistakes in front of students
- I need to prepare myself to answer all vocabulary questions my students might have.

Share other learning experiences you might have had during your teaching career at the CCCA.

Appendix 3: Interview on Professional Teacher Identity

Introduction	Remind the participant the objectives of the research: ● To describe CCCA teachers' views of their teacher professional identities and the process of CCCA teacher professional identity formation. ● To explore teachers' views of the contribution of the CCCA to their professional identity.
Question 1	In your own words, please describe teacher identity
Question 2	Do you think the Colombo has influenced your teacher professional identity formation?
Question 3	What have been the contributions of the CCCA, from the four components perspective (pedagogical, didactical, knowledge of language, Language proficiency), to your teacher professional identity?

Appendix 4: CCCA Teachers' Narratives

Question 1: Tell me about your insights of your teaching career at the CCCA. How has your professional identity changed?

Teacher 1 (May 5th, 2021)

That's a wonderful question. And that was the question I tried to answer in one of my self-reflections a while back. I was a teacher who focused, as I said, I focused a lot on grammar, giving a lot of tips on rules, giving a lot of… more than lesson they were like a, like monologues, because I was basically talking to myself even though I had a class, and I had some students in front of me … I was a teacher who always went and played by the book. If there was a page 26, and there were 20 exercises, I wouldn't go to page 27 until I went through everything that page 26 had. I was a teacher who projected students' evolution based on a couple of students and not based on the entire need of the classroom. I was a teacher who was not very good at reading my students' needs, who taught and planned the different lessons based in how I would like to be taught and not based on my students' context and priorities and necessities. I was also a teacher who procrastinate a lot in regards to listening comprehension exercises, reading comprehension exercises, writing composition exercises, because I thought that all of this was only accompanied by a piece of paper, pen and a teacher led activity. I was a teacher who was afraid to promote authentic, productive activities such as probably games, some competitions, some research, some micro labs, etc. because I thought that that could be an opportunity to waste time and not apply appropriate time in the appropriate context and the appropriate topics. So, I was like afraid to like be playing specific games that had obviously an objective and a direction because I thought that if at any given time my supervisor or my mentor or my coach would go around my class and would observe that I would be playing I would be very afraid to get like a memo because I would not be using time appropriately. Finally, but not least, I was a teacher who as I mentioned before, took like 70% of time of the classes to speak and speak and speak sort of like I had lectures and I didn't have classes. And I had to give it to the Colombo the change that I have made, I am very thankful with this organization and I'm very thankful for the opportunity that it has given me not only to have a job, a stable job, that has provided me everything to me and my family, but also who has provided me in regards to my professional development.

Teacher 2 (May 6th, 2021)

At the beginning I might say that I wasn't good enough. I was too confused. Yeah? I was very confused. I didn't know much about what techniques were, what the techniques of a language class should be, I didn't know about methods, theories. Then, I was very confused even at lesson planning. So, I would try to enter to my colleagues' classes to try to understand everything. But I would also identify that there were some teachers, well a few teachers that were confused as well. But I can see it now that they were confused, like me. But then, I started taking some courses of English teaching. Then, there was a time that I said no, I need to learn more. And then, I enrolled at the University where I started learning about teaching techniques, motivation techniques, about didactics. Then, I would be applying all that to my English teaching. And, I took courses at the Colombo too, I would receive help from my friends, from the coordinators, from the coaches. To be a professional, to try to be professional, there is a long path and it's rocky, because you learn a lot, but you learn sometimes from failing. There are some times that you say Oh my God! I didn't do a good job. The student is not learning. I don't know what to do. I could give 20 tutoring sessions to some students and they wouldn't understand what I would say. And then also, I would identify that there were students that they won't understand no matter what you do. Because there is a learning component there that they do not match. And then, I understood about inclusion, I understood about learning and disabilities, and I didn't' know that would exist until I faced it. And I said wow! This is really different. You are different from the rest. And then, Colombo's coordinators and coaches are very open minded and I really like that. When I would get students who were like that I got really stressed and didn't k now what to do. And then, they thought me and I learned that learning disabilities exist and they are in our community as well. And they would send me some articles, some conferences about learning disabilities. And I said wow! The Colombo is very open minded towards that. Me, I don´t know what to do…But I learned that they cannot be graded the way we grade. I learned that, Now, I am more open minded. I don't' get stressed that much because I received support. And that's what I admire, that's really hard work, they are very open-minded people…Nowadays, I consider myself having a very decent English teaching methodology, but I am learning, and as teachers we need to adapt all the time. And we need to face difficulties and overcome some others. And this has been challenging, this has been a source of growth. And even the human component. I didn't know that. I've learned the human component that a class should have. I was very strict, I remember, poor students. The human component of teaching is important. I remember it was in the ELT, in one of the ELT workshops and one teacher said "you can't imagine how important the human component is in a class" … And then, from that I changed… after that workshop there was a student that was missing too many classes, she was quiet. Two weekends in a row she was quiet… the Colombo has

always said that we should try to talk to the parents. Then, I called the parents and an uncle answered the phone… He said the girl was not coming back because her parents were murdered…I said, I understand the situation. She came two more classes after that conversation and I tried to include her in the class a little bit more and then, I learned the human component is very important in my classes.

Teacher 3 (May 8ᵗʰ, 2021)

From the very beginning when you start working at the Colombo, they tell you what the methodology is and the structure the classes should have and that is expected teachers to do. You start working with those ideas in mind, with the time everything becomes natural and those elements have a big impact on your teacher identity. The Colombo show interests in your development as a teacher. How the classes are going, your teaching, your English, that also helps you. They help you in the development of different aspects not only on the ones you need to improve but also those you think are already good. They help you identify the different aspects you have as a teacher, sometimes we don't pay attention to that. However, the Colombo in the academic area they help you with those things. And when you work in a place for a long time you get so much experience on that place that if I go somewhere else, I am going to apply what I learned here. that is going to help me evolve on the identity as a teacher.

Teacher 4 (May 5ᵗʰ, 2021)

Creo que los profesores del Colombo son diferentes a los de otra institución. Eso me lo dijo también un compañero y también una amiga que ya no trabaja aquí. Siguen extrañando el Colombo. Hay una magia del Colombo que no la tienen otras instituciones. Que es chévere uno llegar, bueno cuando podíamos ir a las sedes, chévere llegar y ver esa, como camaradería, cuando uno llegaba a la sala de profesores y estaba el chiste e hice tal actividad y los estudiantes me dijeron esto, es algo único. De pronto en otras instituciones habrá lo mismo pero aquí, yo digo que si hay una diferencia. Osea, la gente lo dice. Yo creo que hay una identidad, algo diferente, hay un plus en el Colombo. ¿Qué será?, ¿la actitud de pronto de la gente? Hay una actitud bacana, se siente como chévere, si hay algo, una corriente chévere ahí. Hay de todo, los que cuentan el chiste, los que ven la realidad de una forma diferente, los que creen que enseñar hay que gozárselo cada clase. Cuando nos hablaron de nuestros perfiles, es algo que trato de recordar siempre, lo aprendí de la universidad hace varios años, crea la clase como si fuera la última de tu vida, todos los días. Y eso a mi me impactó mucho. Quiero que se acuerden "tal docente hacía tan bacano esto".

Esta narrativa no apuntó directamente a la pregunta porque se presentó un problema de conectividad y no alcanzó a responderla.

Teacher 5 (May 6th, 2021)

I started at the Colombo in 2011, as an assistant teacher. I remember I had some knowledge and experience. For me that was good, I was not new. But teaching English at that moment was a challenge, because of the language (level) and I was really nervous in trying to get some approval from other people, that they liked the way I taught. I had from the beginning the passion and enthusiasms I put in my classes. I tried to help the teacher all the time, very active, sometimes I did something without the teacher's permission. When I was given a course, I was observed. I was really nervous when someone watched my classes. I wanted my mentor to approve what I was doing. I was willing to learn, everything the CCCA asked me to do I did it without complaint. Then, I decided that I needed to study foreign languages to get the foundations of what to do in my class. I took the TEFL and training. Now, I can say I've gained some security (confidence) on what I am doing, I don't want to be the super teacher that everybody likes, but I do things based on my teachers, the tools i have, etc. I am the same in the essence, I am serious but I am enthusiastic and have energy. I have more knowledge, more tools, my level of English has improved a lot and I am not afraid anymore of what people think about my teaching or look for approval. The advisor observes my class but I also ask him or tell him what I'd like to work on. (reflection) I miss being a coach or being in the administrative/academic part. I've learned a lot because of the CCCA. who I am is related to what the CCCA has given to me. The good and the bad things.

Teacher 6 (May 3rd, 2021)

The CCCA has encourage teacher to develop their own creativity. That makes us different from other teachers. In the classroom we experience how cool it is students' joy. We have a power, we have magic tricks, and they work, even if you are not good with kids, teens or adults, but we all do have a bank of magic tricks we use them, modify them. and that makes us different from others. I entered to the CCCA when I was 20. I was in the process of discovering that I really liked being a teacher. That give us a sense of respect. The classroom is the best place for me to be. I knew I was struggling with pronunciation, but the Colombo saw my passion, my record. I remember back then I was teaching Teen 3, it didn't challenge me in terms of the language it was not that difficult, but then I was moved to Teen 1. I thought that there was something I was doing wrong. The coordinator told me I was doing a good job and the course 1 is even more demanding. I took the challenge and I loved it. Then, I was invited to teach in the adult

program. I thought that a selected group of people taught there, like the best out of the best, it was difficult for me to interact and to establish relationships, they didn't see me as a good professional and I said: I have to do something about it. Then, I volunteered to present at conferences of workshops because I thought that was the best platform. I was been asked for strategies and advice on how to teach things, and the relationships with my coworkers started to change. Most of the people at the CCCA knows who Cristian is. Maybe because I talk to people in other areas, I am a people person. People respect me because I have built this. Teacher identity consists of building a name, and that is full of many features: how good you are as a person, and how professional you want your students to be in the process of learning, teaching is not only about games, but using the language as a way to communicate. We have to deal with our own issues, every day. I know I am still learning, but I am a hell of a teacher. I see myself as someone who has learned from the dirt. I am the person that I am today because of the Colombo. I worked as a teacher in Argentina, and I thought. I have a lot! and started to see what was worth. I think I now have the tools. This pandemic made me reflect on what I was made of. It has me questioned myself in many ways. I am finishing a career and know many good things will come right after I finish it. I would like to help other teachers, like from a position (referring to the academic advisor position.)

Teacher 7 (May 6th, 2021)

When I started at the Colombo in 2018, I was a scared teacher. I was scared because in that moment I have had two years of teaching experience, in English. I didn't have enough knowledge about grammar, about how to teach a class. And, when I started at the Colombo. I remember that the coordinator told me "Don't worry", we are going to guide you step by step, you are not going to be alone. So, for me it was comfortable in that part. But at the beginning I was scared because I was insecure about me as a teacher, and especially in an institution like the Colombo that has prestige. In Palmira, it's the only good will language institution. And I thought that maybe it was the top to work there. And because I studied at the Colombo many years ago, I remember my teachers were amazing, outstanding, they were excellent professionals and I was thinking Oh my God! It's a big challenge for me to try to be like them. I wanted to be one of them. Throughout the years working at the Colombo, I noticed that the Colombo as an institution also had an educational area for teachers. So, in my mind I wanted to take all the professional development courses I could. I remember in those years we had to go to Cali to take those courses. I traveled twice a week to Cali to get all the information that I could. Because I love learning. I think that when you decide to be a teacher it's because you love learning every day. With the years at the Colombo, I've gained confidence in myself with the development courses, with the orientation of the academic

advisors, with the in-services. I think that more than being a teacher, it's also being a student. At the Colombo you can be both, both roles and I like that. And that has helped me to grow a lot as a teacher and that's why I decided to study my master in education.

Teacher 8 (May 6ᵗʰ, 2021)

I started as an Adult program teacher and I had to teach in Kids and Teens. Then, I was a teacher in a program in a public school. I had in my mind that the best way to teach a student was through the direct method. It was repeat, I teach a model, and they have to repeat it. Memory was important. And it was all, that's what I had in my mind. Not a methodology, not principles. Then, I learned that the student should be the center of my class. So, I must be a guide more than the center. Because sometimes we want to place ourselves in the middle. Everything goes around us; we are like the gurus and students don't participate. I had to change and adapt to new circumstances and put the student in the center. That was the first I learned and put into practice in my classes. And I could see that I was efficient. It worked well. I could see that my students liked it, and they were learning.   They were learning faster than with the other method. I created an environment in which students can feel free to make mistakes and feel free to participate. And they feel confident and they would learn. I felt better. I started to enjoy my practice as a teacher because I could see the results. Then, through the pieces of advice the coaches and supervisors gave me, the review of my lesson plans...My first lesson plan was a checklist. My first coach made me realize I didn't have an objective and the activities I had were not aligned to it. So, I learned how to write a lesson plan, to have a structure. I include transitions. I remember it was very hard to understand that... My coach was there helping me. I've grown professionally and in responsibility because it helps, when you understand there is a person helping you… I would like to be like my coach. She suggested that I took a course (a professional development). It was virtual, and the discussion and reflection, something I wanted which is to continue studying because then, I have more responsibilities. I have been growing also as a human being. This year, I want to continue studying... Now, the Colombo asked me to observe other teachers' classes. After a year, I am a support teacher. Sometimes I have to go to schools and if the teacher is not there, I have to be ready to teach the class. Sometimes I have to observe other teachers who were teachers at the Colombo for a long time. That's enriching. It really builds my identity… And sometimes new teachers are sent to observe my class. That's also a big responsibility. I have to do my best. And new teachers ask me now how to do this and that. And there has been a lot of changes and challenges, including virtuality, and coming back to face-to-face classes. Plus, the fac that I have to be aware of protocols and that I have to adapt to the new circumstances. It was a challenge again.

Teacher 9 (May 6ᵗʰ, 2021)

It all started when I was a student. I saw the teachers, the methodology that was different to other institutes. That was the first influence that I had. When I became a teacher, the mentors taught you how to teach, didn't judge you, they guided you, the fact that I had a person there watch my classes and rather than judge my classes, corrected me, and help me through I think that is the second influence and also, the fact that the Colombo is always looking for ways to help us improve as professionals, grow as professionals that is another thing that has helped find that teacher identity. I remember I handed my cv in 2014, Camilo who was an excellent teacher, I want to be like him, told me to bring my CV. A few weeks later I was called and started the process. I got the job. That had always been a dream to work at the CCA because I was a student. I remember the first class I taught. It was cool to see how organize the Colombo is. By the time I made a lot of mistakes as a teacher, I did a lot of teachers talking time, i wanted to impress my students, and show how much I knew. That was one of the things my mentor corrected me. I 've improved on transitions and lesson planning. I've been a lot of practice. There are many assumptions I am doing well and I am not being observed regularly now, I miss it. My English has improved a lot. I know I can still improve. I pick things from what I hear from my bosses and colleagues and built my own English, also strategies and activities to do in class. When doing substitutions, I see activities that i can adapt to my classes. As a professional I have to thank the Colombo a lot. I think I wasted my time at the University, because I have learned more at the Colombo through teaching and thorough supervisors' help and guidance. The perspectives I have as a teacher have changed for good. You are not the center of the class, but students. I am just there to guide them through their process, make corrections and share some knowledge. Before the Colombo I worked in 3 different places and I remember I did lectures. Now I do things in a different way. Virtual classes, I used to think it was impossible to teach a class in the virtual environment, but I know I can do this. Many things have changed in my mind for good.