Developing EFL self-reflective teacher identities in Chile: Practical steps and emerging results

Dr. Paula Charbonneau-Gowdy & Monica Frenzel
XIV Formation Inicial Docente
Santiago, 2015
Looking from the outside..
What I observed..
What I heard..
What I learned..
My questions were...

How can I promote a change in teacher identity?

What are the tools that will support that process?

What kind of context will promote long-term changes?
Sociocultural theory behind......

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE THEORY (Lave & Wenger)

SOCIAL LEARNING THEORIES
Vygotsky, Bakhtin

IDENTITY AS DYNAMIC (Norton)
The steps:

- Classroom Materials
- Assessment
- Special Support
One step...

UNAB Language 7

This is our UNAB Language 7 Community Site – a place where we can share information and communicate with each other during the course and develop your language skills at the same time.
Changes to materials that promote reflective practice...

Movement away from textbooks

Authentic materials that matter

Greater use of social media to share thoughts and ideas

Teacher/student negotiated course plans
Another step...

Social collaboration
Promoting reflective practice in the classroom

- Expectations verbalized
- Daily personal journal writing
- Weekly blog interactive comments
- Group projects on global issues
- Emphasis on learner generated text
- Interacting with experts
A further step...
Reflective assessment...

Self assessment
Peer correction
Peer negotiation of ideas
Peer assessment rubrics
Case study-based
Extra steps...
Help to reflect on challenges...

E-reader program to support literacy development

Personalized feedback

Online peer mentoring by upperclassmen
Emerging findings...

“Our students are different... they have changed”

(Personal Communication, M. Frenzel, September, 2015)
An emerging teacher identity...

SEEKS OPPORTUNITIES

SEES POSSIBILITIES

IMAGINES DIFFERENCES
This data provides solid evidence of a new professional identity evolving among many of these future teachers - from passive deliverers of teaching methods to adaptable, self-directed and reflective leaders and drivers of change.
Evidence of evolving reflective individuals..

I hope Chilean organizations would have a better role in the future. Nowadays, Chilean people are losing their fear to defend what they want and think if its [things] are correct or not. What we really need as a country is to open our minds to the different opinions and try to be tolerant ...and aware of what is happening around us.

(Online post, Marcela, April 2013)
“Actually, through a strategy called Circle Time I am making them speaking only in English once a week. This time they had to speak about their pets to the whole class. *I recorded everything because I would like to do an study about this. How this dynamic affects students' performance and marks from now to the end of the semestre for showing the school if there are improvements.* As you know a lot of research, do you think if it is possible to carry out something like that?” (Camilla, E-mail, Sept 2015)
I have realized that they are really creative and innovative with their ideas. I made my students create a dialogue about the impact of social media on friendship and I was surprised with the amazing pieces of work that they created. My students also developed their listening skill that was left behind for my mentor teacher because she said that she was not patient enough to look for the right listening activities. They also started speaking in English during our classes and they thank the opportunity to do it.

During this whole year I have been having contact with several teachers from different subjects and I realized about the kind of teacher that I don’t want to be in terms of the way they face the students. I have realized that I love teaching and that I like giving them the change to choose among projects. I know that looking for the right material for the students is difficult and it is a time consuming activity but it is totally worth it. I believe that the problem is that teachers do not have the time to prepare for the right material and they decided to give all the students the same material. I want to be the teacher that care about the students and that is able to understand that every student learnt in different ways. I hope that this experience help me in understanding the challenges that I will have as a future teacher.

(Fernanda, November 2015)
“As I am going through my third week, things seem to be adjusting. All the same, I still feel that I lack the confidence native speakers are so evident about. I know it requires time, but I am hopeful. I have already noticed a very positive change compared to the previous weeks, especially in relation to my ability and disposition to include more “academic” words in my speech.

... And I thank you for the skills I developed and the knowledge I built that today allows me to stand and face this MA with some steady ground under my feet.” (Rosana, September, 2015)
What matters when encouraging a reflective practice...

- Technology-infused pedagogy
- Instructor guided & modeling
- Rich opportunities for identity construction
- Sustained over time and disciplines
- Context specific


THANK YOU!