

# Teaching Internship Program (AMITY): Contributions to Non-Native EFL Teachers of El Salvador

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## Abstract

The advancement of a skilled labor force in El Salvador has been significantly supported by the professional development of English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly among teacher candidates in their senior years of study. A pivotal contributor to this growth is the United States-based Amity Institute. This qualitative study explored how non-native English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers perceive the internship program experience, AMITY. This qualitative study, cemented in hermeneutic phenomenology, analyzed participants' experiences using Atlas.ti software. Through homogeneous sampling, eight individuals with shared characteristics were selected. Interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams, using a phenomenological interview protocol. There were two main themes derived from the participants' experiences: their perception of the program and their professional development. As part of a minority group, while living in the United States, they have now a better understanding of the issues that diverse population go through, making them more empathetic with their students. Professionally, it has helped them open their minds to the adaptation and integration of non-traditional teaching approaches, for El Salvador; such as games, stratified classroom areas, and the integration of ICT (Information Communication Technologies) into their sessions as teachers in El Salvador. All these shifts seem to interject in their students' learning of English as a Foreign Language, leading to increased engagement, cultural sensitivity, and adaptability in their approach to language acquisition.

**Keywords:** English as a Foreign Language; hermeneutic phenomenology; perception; professional development