

JOURNAL

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TEACHING PRACTICUM II

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OBSERVATION REPORT

What I learned during my time observing at Institución Educativa
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- All the classrooms are in great conditions. Temperature, light, seating and space are appropriate for teaching and learning.
- There are approximately 30 students in each of the two classrooms where I intend to carry out my teaching practicum.
- The relationship between the teacher and the students is good and based on mutual respect. However, students constantly insult each other and the teacher does not seem to notice.
- The teacher seems to be very knowledgeable of the language and likes to promote oral production and interaction between her students.
- The teachers remains calm throughout the class and never raises her voice to call the attention of the students no matter how noisy they get.
- The students who misbehave the most tend to seat at the back of the classroom. They happen to be the tallest students in the class as well.
- Students have a low level of English, as expected. However, the majority shows interest towards learning it.
- The girls behave better than the boys.
- Some of the male students have a bad language and show a tendency to be violent.
- It will be difficult to keep watch on the students who seat at the bottom of the classroom because I will not be able to see them or listen to what they say.

FIRST ENTRY

MARCH, 14TH, 2016

8-1

The first time we talked, the school teacher advised me to prioritize oral activities with their students to promote the retention of the language, because she considers that students acquire very little language when writing due to their lack of interest. I am in agreement with her, because I think that activities that foster oral production are essential for learners who are not used to speak in the language. However, I also consider that they should get used to writing in their target language as well. As a result, I decided to teach the topic countries and nationalities by encouraging them to write them down first and then asking them to practice their pronunciation in a short oral activity.

8-3

One of the things that I noticed during my time observing this class was that the students who sit in the back of the classroom are the ones who misbehave the most. In order to fix that problem, I decided that arranging the chairs in a semicircle would be a good idea, and I was right because I was able to keep an eye on them all the time. Additionally, since the teacher sat near them, they did not dare to misbehave as much as they are used to. I will use this seating arrangement as much as possible because it has proven to be useful for disciplinary purposes. However, I will sometimes change it in order to promote variety in my classes.

SECOND ENTRY

MARCH, 18TH, 2016

8-1

In order to practice all the topics of the unit at once, I prepared some flash cards with information about famous people so that students would have to say their names, ages, nationalities and professions in English. I gave a random card to each student, but some of them did not like the ones they got because of their color. After convincing them that the colors did not matter, I told them to make a circle. Then, I showed them how they should do it and asked if there was someone who wanted to volunteer. Surprisingly, more than one wanted to do it, so I let them take control of the class for a moment and allowed them to pick who would do it next. I had to intervene only when someone refused to participate, but that rarely happened. In summary, I think it is important to give students certain freedom when they are enjoying themselves, otherwise they will think that I am too strict and not their friend.

8-3

The circle formation happened to be successful again. It helped me to keep control of the misbehaving students one more time. However, I won't be able to always rely on it. Something that I really liked about the class is that the students were very happy with the activity, especially the girls, and as a result, the class ran smoothly. Students were totally engaged with the class so it was rarely necessary for me to raise my voice. Unfortunately, there were few students who did not enjoy the class that much because they either did not like it or were not totally sure of how to use the structure. I will have to do some more reinforcement activities in the following classes.

THIRD ENTRY

APRIL, 4TH, 2016

8-1

I started the class by writing the topic "Countries and Nationalities" on the board and then pasting the flags of some well-known countries. Then I asked volunteers to go to the board and write the names of the countries in Spanish. It was nice that most of the students participated. After that, I started to write the names of the countries in English, also explaining how some countries have the same spelling in both languages but different pronunciation. When I gave them the worksheet, some of them complained; however, all of them seemed concentrated on the task after a while. As a reflection, it is possible to say that although these students seem reluctant towards writing tasks at first, they will commit to them if I give them enough motivation.

8-3

Since one of the aspects that students needed to include in the description they made in the previous class was a person's job, I decided to teach them some new vocabulary in this topic, as I noticed that they needed more. I used some of the most common endings (*er*, *or*, *ist*, *ess*, *man/woman* and *player* in the case of sports) because I consider that this method will facilitate the memorization of the language. All in all, what this class taught me was that it is a good idea to find strategies that aid students in the process of memorizing the language. In this regard, suffixes have proved to be remarkably effective. Now it's up to me to design activities in which students use the language.

FOURTH ENTRY

APRIL, 7TH, 2016

8-1

I gave the worksheet back to the ones who hadn't finished and told them to complete it in ten minutes. They were clearly rushing to finish it, which means that they cared about the grade they could get from it. After that, I gave them instructions on how to describe someone's nationality. In doing so, I pasted the pictures of some famous people (James Rodríguez, Lionel Messi, etc.) on the board and showed them an example. I did it step by step and asking students what to write next so that they felt involved during the explanation. I will continue using famous people because they are effective at catching students' attention.

8-3

The purpose of this class was to measure how much students have learned in the previous one. To complete this objective, I told them to get in pairs and complete a worksheet in which they were required to match the different jobs with their corresponding pictures without looking at their notebooks. At first, it was easy for them because they started with the ones they knew best; however, after a while, things got more complicated as students struggled to remember the jobs left. Positives aspects of this class include the joy that students showed during the activity, their collaboration with each other and their behavior.

FIFTH ENTRY

APRIL, 8TH, 2016

8-1

Today's task consisted of having students describe the nationality of famous people. To that end, I pasted again the pictures of the famous people on the board. There were about 8 students who did it quickly and without having to ask me for further instructions. The rest of the students, however, needed clarifications in some aspects. The overall performance of the students in this task was satisfactory, especially because I noticed that there is collaboration rather than competition in the class. In the following classes, I intend to complement this writing task with an oral task.

8-3

Following the recommendation from the teacher, I decided to put into practice an activity that encouraged students to orally use the language. I decided to continue using the same worksheet from the previous class. Using the attendance list, I called students one by one and gave them a number. Each number represented a job in the worksheet and their task was to form a complete sentence using the job and the structure presented in the previous classes. Students also had to make between male and female characters by using *he* or *she* appropriately. I consider that it is good to use activities that complement oral and written production effectively. However, I still need to find strategies to keep the class under control during the speaking activities as it is common that students stand up from their chairs or make noise while their partners are speaking.