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Systematization of pedagogical experiences

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my wife Jessica, my son Jacco and my daughter Neyti; I could not have done this without their unconditional love, devotion and support. Thank you for encouraging me, for all the help, and for being by my side during this process.

Gwen

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Gwen

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

In this report, 'Systematization of Pedagogical Experiences' I describe the first teaching practice I did at the end of my university career. I carried out all my internships in the same private institution in Salinas, province Santa-Elena, Ecuador. First, I did teacher observations, then I was a teachers' assistant, and finally, I performed as the main teacher. This systematization work consists of three parts. First, I did a thorough review of scientific literature to have a scientific base to compare with my teaching experiences. In the second part, I describe the settings and the participants involved, together with the procedures of gathering and analyzing data. In the last chapter, the results and discussion, I describe my teaching experience; and then reflect on it by analyzing the data obtained during all my internships. After this reflection, I could come to important conclusions and recommendations. The most important conclusion is that teachers in many occasions use too much mother tongue in English classes, which resulted in poorer learning outcomes compared with the classes where only English was spoken, and not achieving the lesson goals.

Keywords: Systematization, Students' motivation, Teaching practice, Teaching experience, Mother tongue

RESUMEN

En este informe, "Sistematización de las experiencias pedagógicas", describo la primera práctica docente que hice al final de mi carrera universitaria. Realicé todas mis prácticas en la misma institución privada in Salinas, provincia de Santa Elena, Ecuador. Primero hice las observaciones del docente, luego fui asistente de decente y, finalmente, me presenté como el docente principal. Este trabajo de sistematización consta de tres partes. Primero hice una revisión exhaustiva de la literatura científica para tener una base científica para comparar con mis experiencias docentes. En la segunda parte, describo el marco y los participantes involucrados, junto con los procedimientos de recopilación y análisis de datos. En el último capítulo, los resultados y la discusión, describo mi experiencia docente; y luego reflexiono sobre ello mediante el análisis de los datos obtenidos durante todas mis prácticas. Después de esta reflexión, pude llegar a conclusiones y recomendaciones importantes. La conclusión más importante para mí es que los maestros en muchas ocasiones usan demasiada lengua materna en las clases de inglés, lo que resulta en peores resultados de aprendizaje comparado con clases donde solo hablaban inglés, y no logran los objetivos de la lección.

Palabras clave: Sistematización, Motivación de los estudiantes, Experiencia docente, Practica Docente, Lengua materna

INTRODUCTION

When I heard of the possibility to do this Systematization report as the final graduate work, I immediately knew this was what I wanted to do. The idea that I could reflect and write about my internships made me realize that it would discover what my weaknesses and strengths are.

This report contains valuable information and conclusions about my teaching experience that will be useful not for me only, but for all people in the English teaching environment. Especially beginner teachers can benefit from this report because it contains situations that they will also experience in their own teaching practice.

For the execution of the internships and to write this report was a large process that took a lot of effort to realize, but at the end it turned out very educational for me. There were various steps to follow in order to get the information and to write this report. To begin, these were three internships in a real classroom environment. The first internship consisted of thirty classes in elementary and high school grades where the English teacher was observed, this was the first acquaintance with English teachers. The second internship consisted in being the teachers' assistant in ten classes, and later perform as the a main teacher in ten classes in elementary grades. The third internship, consisted in being the teachers' assistant in ten classes, and later perform as the a main teacher in ten classes in high school grades.

Before writing the report, the literature review was done in order to have a scientific basis to relate to. During the writing, predetermined steps were followed, to make it possible to come to a well-structured and a very complete work. To collect all the data, registers provided by the university were filled. After each class, a resume and a reflection of this class was made; feedback was also given by the teacher that was present in the classroom. After comparing the experiences with the literature, conclusions and recommendations could be made.

Participants involved were in the first place the school principal who gave me the chance to do all my internships in the same school. There were several English teachers that took the time to converse with me before and after each lesson to give me feedback on how I performed and on my progress. The students involved were in elementary and in high school grades.

I must say that all the information here should be helpful for other teachers, both new and experienced ones, and for anyone else in the education field so that they can ideally benefit from the theories and concepts shared here along with my own contributions.

CHAPTER I.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. What is teaching?

A definition of teaching has to include a variety of aspects like teacher behavior, teaching activities, and a number of variables. All these elements together form part of the teaching process. In theory, to achieve proper teaching we must strive for an adequate planning, a good organization and the control of all the aspects involved in teaching. This, together with the manipulation of the variables, will allow teachers to accomplish the given educational objectives and it helps the teachers to make a positive change in their students' behavior; therefor, students' potential will be exploited to the maximum. For the teaching process to be successful, it must provide the answers for all teaching related questions, and the used teaching methods need to be selected in order to present the teaching material as effectively as possible (Kumar 2012).

Furthermore, when Hollins (2011) defines teaching, he does this by explaining the teaching process and by describing what is quality teaching. For the teaching process to be successful, a teacher not only needs to have good knowledge in many diverse areas; he also is required to be able to apply this knowledge in different situations and with a variety of different student groups. For the teaching process to be successful and to become quality teaching, a lot of variables come into play. The teacher is the most important factor in this, the quality of the teaching will depend mainly on him. He has to put into practice all the teaching science he learned in his training like pedagogy, evaluation, curriculum, people-knowledge, methodology, etc. Furthermore, the teacher needs to be committed, positive, and passioned. With this attitude, he will create opportunities for the students to use the knowledge they already have to create new knowledge. Only when students create new knowledge, we can speak of quality teaching.

Consequently, this process of creating new knowledge by the students is described more detailed in the work of Freire (2006). The most important statement from the author is that teaching may not be seen as simply passing on knowledge from the teacher to the students. The teaching process that Freire describes is comparable to the process of how children grow up. Young children use the knowledge they have and link it with new input they receive from all different sources to construct new knowledge. Therefore, it is of critical importance that the teacher provides the students, inside or outside the classroom, with the opportunity to construct new knowledge. In this process, the teacher has to support and guide the students, giving them adequate new input like didactic material, new information, theory, grammar rules, etc. Only with the correct type of input, students will be able to link it with their own knowledge to produce construction.

Additionally, in classroom or group teaching, Cruz and Thornton (2013) mention that to reach an effective teaching experience, all students need to be included and not only the most active and collaborating among them. The students that are more passive and introvert also need to be involved in the teaching process. Only by doing this, the teacher will get important information on the learning situation of each student. Therefore, he will be able to take action

when needed with one or more students to finally reach the goals as a group.

Finally, Rickheit and Strohner (2008) explain an important factor in the acquisition of English as a second language. Since English is the most spoken second language, students that reach a high level of English language knowledge, will have advantages in their professional career. The authors state that teaching English to very young children through exposure is the most successful method to reach this high level. Situations in which children are taught English in the same manner as their mother tongue, the results are significantly better than teaching them the language in school. This can be done through the early exposure to the language and, obviously, in bilingual families that live in a non-English speaking country and where one of the parents is a native English speaker. This parent is a great English teacher to his child because of the opportunity of early exposure and the fact that the child is growing up bilingual.

1.2.   What is learning?

Just like teaching, there is an almost endless source of literature about learning, due to the fact that many scientists have different opinions and definitions about this complex process. Ultimately, the focus is on learning through understanding the knowledge rather than just memorizing a list of facts. Understanding the knowledge is obviously a good objective to strive to, on the other hand, for scientist it is a difficult element to study. Decades ago, curricula focused more on the memorization of facts and information; however, these facts are important, there was little focus on understanding the knowledge. If we take a look at experts, they are able to think and solve problems through connecting the knowledge and facts they possess. This understanding of the knowledge goes far beyond the facts alone because of the interconnection; being able to do this, turns the facts and knowledge into usable knowledge (Bransford, J.D. & Brown, A.L. & Cocking, R.R. 2010).

Equally important is what Amineh and Asl (2015) state that in cognitive constructivism, students are viewing the learning process in a personal way. They will use their own experiences and knowledge to interpret the surroundings, what they hear, what they see, what they read, new input given by the teacher, etc. All this new input is being processed by constructing new knowledge through connecting their previous experiences with the new situation on a personal basis. According to the authors, new situations occurs each time a learner is confronted with new input, with the result that the learner will experience a state of imbalance, for which he will try to find a solution. The process of trying to understand the new input by connecting it with the own knowledge to attempt to produce new knowledge, is a personal cognitive process that will lead to the assimilation of the new input or the rejection of it.

Additionally, Aina and Langenhoven (2015) mark the importance of authentic learning in which the focus is on real-world problems and their solutions. To accomplish this, we use techniques like role-playing, problem-based activities, participation in discussions, etc., and these activities make that students enjoy learning because they give students real-world

experiences. Authentic learning is learning by doing in where students are active, this is important to develop critical thinking skills. Ideal classroom activities allow maximum student-to-student interaction.

Also important is how Svinicki (2018) describes the importance of the goals in learning. There is a big difference in goals set by the learners and goals set by the instructors. Most of the goals that are set by the learners lead to better intrinsic motivation and persistence. On the other hand, without the guidance of a teacher, students can get lost in the difficulty of the exercise, which can lead to frustration and less learning efficiency. When the goal is set by the instructor, he can guide the learners on a successful path. Although, the motivation will be extrinsic and less effective than intrinsic motivation. Different goals can be set by different parties according to the author; she concludes after investigation that the most important factor is the level of the goal. High-level goals are more motivating if chosen by the learners, while, lower-level goals are more motivating if chosen by an instructor.

1.3. Modern methodologies, strategies, techniques, materials (current trends)

One of the most popular modern learning methods is the Communicative Language Teaching method. It emphasizes on the understanding and use of the English language through the active learner interaction. Typical classroom activities are role-plays, interactive games, information gaps, etc. The advantage of this method is that virtually any realia can be used as didactic material as long as the level is adapted to the learners' level. The focus of the teacher is on the passing on of the message and communicative competence; not so much on studying grammar or perfectionating students' pronunciation. Nevertheless, this method does make use of language functions and therefor students learn to use the language correctly in different situations. The Communicative Language Teaching method can only be successful if the learners are exposed as much as possible to the language. This way, the learning occurs more naturally because of the communication that happens in a natural way and in real-life situations. The goal of this learning method is that students get interaction through social activities (Harmer, 2012).

In the Cooperative Learning method, students have to cooperate in a group or pair work. Their input is valuable for the group to reach the goal, at the same time, they can ask other members of the group for help. This cooperation stimulates students' relationships among each other and their abilities to work in group. It also motivates them because they get the feeling that they can accomplish an assignment as a group. In this method, the teacher's task is to present the exercise and set the goals. He also monitors the students' cooperation, their skills, and involvement in the group; if necessary, he interferes if problems occur or if students need more explanations about the task or have grammatical questions. The mayor advantage of this method is that it stimulates students in working together towards a mutual goal. As a negative point, students with a lower level of language knowledge might fall behind the higher level students

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(Vrhovec, 2015).

The Task Based Learning method is based on the completion of a task. Mohammad (2016) describes the different stages of this method; the pre-task, task, and post-task stage. In the pre-task stage, the teacher presents the task, the instructions needed to execute it, and new vocabulary or grammar to complete the task. In the task stage, the students are making the task and the teacher monitors the group, answers questions, and clarify any doubts. In the post-task stage, the students report back to the class. The teacher then highlights relevant parts to analyze and selects the parts to practice based upon the results of the task. There are several advantages of the Task Based Learning method. Students must use all their language skills they already have. A natural context is developed from the student's experiences. Students will have much exposure to the language. It is a strong communicative approach where students spend a lot of time communicating. In conclusion, with this method the language develops through its use and it becomes a tool for the students to achieve a goal.

A very popular language learning method is the Total Physical Response where students listen and respond to teachers' commands. It is based on the principle how learners learn their mother tongue; students learn best when they are actively and physically involved. Hereby, listening competence comes before speaking abilities. Students first develop a listening foundation to build upon their speaking skills that will evolve naturally and effortlessly. The teacher is in charge in the classroom and directs the lesson, therefor, he needs to be well prepared. As far as evaluation, the teacher preferably waits with corrections until after the exercise; this in order to not interrupt the students nor the activity. While the teacher is in charge, the students have little influence in the development of the lesson or in learning content. They listen actively and respond physically to the teachers' commands. In the beginning, they are not pushed to speak but encouraged to respond when they feel ready. The Total Physical Response method can be used in large and small classes and does not need a lot of preparation or materials. It is more suitable for beginner levels and cannot be used to teach all aspects of language learning. To sum up, first when students are not so verbally, they respond physically to the teacher. Then they develop more speaking skills and the interaction with the teacher is more verbal (Widodo, 2005).

The Natural Approach incorporates naturalistic principles. It is based on the use of language in communicative situations without using the native language and without grammar structures. The focus is on the exposure, optimizing the preparedness, and a long period of hearing the target language. Less focus is placed on the teacher giving monologues, direct repetition, formal questions and answers, and accuracy. Using the Natural Approach, students will be able to function in real-life situations, understand the speaker and give answers. There is no need for perfect applicated grammar or vocabulary; the meaning of the message has to be clear and understood. This method is designed to develop oral and written communication skills

wherein goals may be expressed in terms of situations or functions. The purpose of the lessons will vary upon the needs of the group; at the end of the course, the student will be able to deal with particular situations. Therefore, it is important to create a low affective filter, interesting topics, and a relaxed atmosphere. Characteristics of the Natural Approach are the use of familiar techniques that focuses on providing comprehensible input, minimize learner anxiety and maximize self-confidence. Students are processors of input in which the input is of a slightly higher level, and is able to assign meaning to the input. Whereas the teacher provides the input, chooses the activities based upon realia, and creates the classroom atmosphere (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

1.4. Communicative competence

Yano (2003) mentioned that in order to be successful in communication, the speaker has to develop communicative competence; this is to be able to use and understand the language effectively in real-life situations. The language users –, ESL, EFL, as well as native English speakers - need to have sufficient knowledge of the four elements of communicative competence: linguistic, socio-linguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Wherein linguistic competence is the use and understanding of the grammar rules, vocabulary, syntax, sentence formation, etc. The socio-linguistic competence is the awareness of the culture within the language, the social rules, and the nonverbal behaviors. By strategic competence is understood the use of techniques to overcome language gaps and achieve fluency. In discourse competence, we are able to identify how the context affects the meaning. Without these four pillars, a speaker will have difficulties to express his message.

Also, communicative competence prepares language users for a constant change of situations. It is an ideal instrument to create real-life situations in the classroom and steps away from a curriculum that consists of more theoretical knowledge. This implies that students need more than phrase lists and language utterances to be effective in communication. Learning the abilities of communicative competence, enables students to deal with new language challenges, explore the options, and use opportunities (Molina & Calderón, 2013).

Further, in her graduate thesis, Dvořáková (2012) states that the mayor aim of teaching-learning English is to enable students to express themselves correctly. Knowing English is knowing how to communicate; having receptive and productive skills for particular purposes. In communicative competence, the teacher's role has changed significantly. It is no longer the main goal of going through a structural syllabus, especially with the easily accessible language information. The teachers' aim has to be teaching communication and the student's aim has to be the ability to communicate in the target language fluently, naturally, and effectively. Lower level students do not yet have enough spontaneity and naturalness to interact instantly, flawless, and fluently. Nevertheless, these students gain confidence through exposure to the language and therefor become more fluent. Higher level students use chunks of language that is easy for

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them to actualize and adapt to the new situation. The author also concludes that, whether more focus on flawless language, or more focus on continuous language with errors is the choice of the speaker and depends on the personality and approach to communication in general. Although, the more advanced the learner, the more natural his communication.

Another important view comes from Kamiya (2010), when he describes the role of communicative competence in second language learning, where a communicative orientated syllabus design has a positive influence on the learners' motivation because of the in-class training. Therefore, the learning is more comfortable, confident, encouraging, and has a clear purpose which is communication. Traditionally, learning strategies are more a cognitive process of language learning, nevertheless, learners have a strong drive to practical communication, and not so much to understand literally the grammatical structures presented by the teacher. Consequently, there is much attention given to what a learner does to develop communicative competence. Important to take into consideration designing the syllabus, is that there is a difference between students who learn English as a second language and students who learn English as a foreign language. Learners of English as a foreign language have significantly less exposure to the language outside of the classroom as the students who learn English as a second language. Therefore, the success in obtaining communicative competence of students with less target language exposure, is not as easily as understanding the grammar.

1.5. Teacher's roles

Bajrami (2005) states that the teachers' role in learner autonomy is of vital importance. Students at some point in training have to make decisions, and the teacher is the person who has to guide them in this process in order to make autonomous learning effective, and not let it fall into disorder. This learner autonomy is gaining popularity over the last decades and provokes learner flexibility, adaptation, initiative and self-direction. The key principle is to shift the focus from the teacher to the students. To accomplish this, the teacher needs to have insight, has to stimulate and guide the learners in this process to make it successful. In this process, the teacher has to provide the learners with the skills and ability to practice what they have learned. He has to implement diverse learning strategies and assist the learners in finding the method that best suits him. In autonomous learning, the teacher has to give important feedback to the students, nevertheless, this feedback is also given by the other students in group or pair work.

One of the most obvious roles of the teacher is the role of facilitator. As a facilitator, the teacher provides the students with all possible resources like books, tools, information, didactic material, etc., that is needed to give the students the best possible chances to succeed in their learning process. To be a good facilitator means, that the teacher needs to make the learner aware of what is expected of them in order to successfully complete with these objectives. It is important that the teacher knows about the learners' goals and select material that matches those interests. This can be done by observing students, conversations, questionnaires or

interviews. A good facilitator involves their students into setting goals and learning methods. For example, the teacher can ask students if they prefer making an activity in the classroom or at home, alone or in group (Nola, 2016).

Additionally, teachers have the important role of manager or controller. Kelly (2005) notes that in this role, the teacher is in charge of the class and of the activities. As the word says, he has to manage the class and everything that happens in it. Tasks of the teacher as to control what students do, when they speak, what language they use, etc. The teacher needs to be a good manager in order to organize exercises, convey important messages, restore order, give explanations, answering questions, etc. Only when the teacher is in control of all the stages of the lesson items, the classroom will be running in an orderly way, leading to more quality time for learning, if not, valuable teaching time gets lost in dealing with situations to keep order. Key factor to reach a good classroom management is to be well prepared by organizing a good lesson plan. To get a good start of the lesson, the warm-up activity can be of a greater help than some teachers would think. When the teacher does a warm-up activity, the students will start the class lesson-centered, therefor, students have less free time at the very beginning of the lesson to chat and become disruptive.

For the next role of the teacher, the assessor role, it is sometimes a bit underestimated when the teacher has to assess students' work to see how they are doing at that moment or to know if they are progressing. The important underlying thought here is that students expect an indication of how they are performing, therefor, teachers have to organize the feedback, give corrections, grade the students, show where errors occur, and help the students understand what went wrong, so they can learn from it and put it right in the future. The students' reactions must always be taken in mind, and the assessment must be communicated in a supportive and constructive way. Good teachers are able to recognize patterns in the results and plan the future lessons toward the learners needs (Looney, Cumming, van Der Kleij, & Harris, 2017).

As the last role of the teacher, Harden and Crosby (2000) see the teacher traditionally as an expert in his field where he transmits his knowledge or information to the students. The students expect the teacher to educate them and that it is his responsibility to pass them on the information. This leads to the role of the teacher as the provider of information. This information or knowledge can be passed on in a variety of methods such as multimedia, printed texts, electronic lessons, lectures, etc. The information provider has to be familiar to the didactic material, he has to be able to connect the theory and practice, and update the contents according to new regulations, therefor, he has to be in constant gathering of new information. Important to mention is that the teacher has to relate the information to the corresponding learning method in order to transmit the knowledge in an adequate manner.

1.6. Motivation and its roles in language teaching

In their study, Kaur and Chadha (2014) describe occupational efficacy as one of the

important factor a good teacher has to have. With occupational efficacy is meant how a teacher feels about his ability to do their job. A teacher is considered highly efficacious when he believes strongly in his ability to teach students in all situations, regardless race, background, social status, etc., and reach the objectives. These teachers tend to try new teaching methods, persist after failure, take more risks in curriculum, obtain better achievement with students and therefor have more motivated students. Characteristics a good teacher must have are confidence, control, adaptability, optimism, and personal effectiveness in order to fulfill his task which is performed for the development of the students. According to the authors, teachers who accomplish this efficacy will be motivated themselves and automatically reflect this motivation onto the group of students.

Additionally, Al-Ghamdi (2014) states that the teacher's enthusiasm and commitment is one of the important factors that affect the learner's motivation. When the teacher works hard to succeed, this will motivate students even more. The author identifies different types of teachers' motivation. First, the social influences of the environment have an effect on the teacher, for example, the classroom, the students, the curriculum, etc. Secondly, the teacher's motivation is related to the motivation to teach as a profession, in other words, how the teacher is looking at a career in education. If the teacher is not fully interested in the profession, and he only is a teacher temporally until he finds another job, his motivation will not be optimal. Lastly, the personal situation of the teacher influences directly his motivation, for example, his stress level, possible lack of training or experience, the lack of possibilities for improvement, and insufficient job structure.

Further, one of the most knowable types of motivation is the extrinsic motivation, it makes the learner perform in order to receive external reward like good grades, or to avoid punishment. This extrinsic motivation can undermine the intrinsic motivation; students can lose their interest in a topic or activity if they have to do it to reach an external obligation. This error can be made very easily in traditional schools where the teacher gives instructions, tests and grade the activities. On the other hand, if students are sufficient self-determined, external motivation can lead to intrinsic motivation, where the self-determination is a requisite for any motivation to be intrinsically rewarding. In this viewpoint, extrinsic motivation is not seen as the counterpart of intrinsic motivation; especially when the learner shows interest in the topic then he accepts the process and sees its usefulness, depending on how important the learner considers the goal of the learning to be in terms of personal outcome (Dornyei, 1994).

On the contrary, intrinsic motivation is widely accepted to be more effective than extrinsic motivation, therefor, understanding how this motivation develops is important. A language learner can gain interest for a topic over time, and through various environmental factors like teachers, family, friends, books, activities, social clubs, etc. Interest development can be divided into four stages; activation of interest in a topic; maintain interest over time; develop

individual interest; get well-developed individual interest. In all these stages, interest is gained through triggering. At the beginning, the trigger can be a fun activity or a personal connection to a topic. At later stages, the learner has to have curiosity to maintain and develop further interest. Almost no student has developed interest in a topic, therefor, teachers sometimes take situational interest triggered by a fun activity, for this developed interest. More adult learners may be able to develop interest without intrinsic motivation, nevertheless, learners can benefit from support to get them engaged with the topic. This can be done with a well-constructed curriculum. Appropriate triggers should be present during all stages of interest because interest can stagnate or lessen (Renninger, 2009).

Also, Gilakjani, Leong & Sabouri (2012) conclude their study on the role of motivation in foreign language learning and teaching with stating that motivation is a crucial factor in learning a foreign language, influenced by variables like personality, learners' attitude and their learning styles. Teachers sometimes think that by simply encouraging learners, their motivation will grow, or that with sticking to the language materials and trying to teach students, a classroom environment adequate for learning will be created. The error here is that teachers will fail to motivate the learners unless they accept learners' personalities. Therefore, language learning has to take into account various factors that influence learning. To conclude, language learning has a big effect on the social situation of the student because of the implementation of new social and cultural behaviors.

1.7.   Teaching experience (gift or acquired skill)

Traditionally, teaching has been seen as a calling and many people still go by this idea. The reason for this is that in education, the profession of teacher originates form a religious environment where only people with this calling were allowed to enter this profession. Many people have expressed the importance of this calling in any profession, because of higher efficiency in the job and to lower the risk of disappointment in the career choice, because this calling determines the most adequate people for the job. Over time, these ideas have changed with the social transformations, a more advanced education, and the changing professional needs. In the case of an educational profession, it is obvious that one needs to have certain competencies to perform as a teacher, although the desired profile of a teacher is at reach for all who want to dedicate to the profession with knowledge, ethics, interest and passion (Larrosa, 2010)

Consequently, the Ministry of Education in Guyana (2017) states that having specific skills and talents helps to succeed in the classroom, but if one does not have these skills, they can be learned. First of all, there has to be passion to teach, as the students need to get excited about learning through the teachers' enthusiasm. It also helps that you love what you are doing. Second, organizational skills help with the teaching process. A lot of time can be wasted if the teacher has no organizational skills, he has to apply strict routines and procedures to make the

classroom efficient. This skill also can be perfectionated through the years of experience. Additionally, patience is much needed in working with children. It is a great responsibility for the teacher to reach all students despite of their different personalities and backgrounds. The more patience the teacher has to stay calm in circumstances, the more the students are going to trust the teacher. This skill develops through the years. Finally, presenting the material requires creative skills. It is not enough to present the knowledge; it is important to present it in a way the students understand it. This skill is also one that develops automatically over time.

In addition, Reif-Lehrer (1993) describes effective teaching as a skill that researchers can learn. In her paper, the author states that university professors are highly trained in their field, but often they had no teacher training because these skills many times are not a requisite in research institutions. Therefore, some great scientists are not great teachers, nevertheless, the lack of teacher training can be compensated by experience, trial and error, having discussions with other teachers, etc.

Equally, Pain (2015) confirms this when she writes that in research academies, when researchers become professors, teaching is rarely part of the training. Although teaching can be rewarding, only having knowledge of the subject is not enough; for these new professors, the learning curve in obtaining confidence and knowledge in pedagogy can be steep. What helps is that new teachers choose an institution that best fits their professional desires. Overtime, counseling centers have arisen to advice and help these beginning teachers to get up to date with their teaching skills.

1.8.   Links between experience and teaching

In her letter in the Scholars Strategy Network, Liadd (2013) points out that in North-America in the late 1980s only 17 percent of the teachers had less than five years of experience, by 2008, this number has doubled. Although a constant flow of new recruits is good, research showed that experience makes a difference in teaching. There are some obvious advantages experienced teachers have. They are more efficient in reaching learners' achievement. Teachers also perform better as they gain experience, especially during the first years of their career the improvement is significant high, nevertheless, teachers with twenty years of experience still have advantages over their colleagues with ten years of experience. Also, experienced teachers are able to influence education in other areas outside the curriculum like motivate students, reduce absence, etc., and they are more often like a mentor to young teachers.

King (2010) describes the impact of teachers' experience in her study, wherein she states that many professions recognize experience as an important factor because experience enhances knowledge, skills, and productivity. She examined the relationship between teacher experience and teacher productivity. In the experiment, the impact of experience is the highest in the first few years of the career, after that, there is still an impact but in minor proportions, until eventually there could be a stagnation in the impact of experience. This is in line with the findings

of the previous author. Even more, the early career experience has a greater impact on teacher effectiveness than other variables like advanced degrees and certifications.

Correspondingly, Sawchuk (2015) goes further by pointing out that studies come up with the findings that teachers not only improve significantly over the first three years in the classroom, but the teachers' ability to boost student achievement increases for at least the first ten years and likely longer. Important to know is that teacher quality is not a fixed thing, it does develop. Analyzing the test results, the author comes with the fact that teachers' experience between 10 and 30 years improved their ability to boost test scores on an average by 40 percent. What is more, teachers with more years of experience, can boost more than test scores, and also, they improve attendance and lead to fewer infractions. To conclude, the author emphasizes that teacher quality can be developed over more than a decade rather than it is static, formed in the first years on the job.

Finally, in a more extensive study, Kini and Podolsky (2016) come to the same conclusions that teachers have the most gain in effectiveness during their first years in classroom, and continue to improve in later years. The authors compared more than 30 studies of this topic and came to the conclusion that all have the same outcomes. Additionally, they conclude that teachers' experience has an influence, not only on students' scores, but also on absences, discipline, amount of time spent on reading and completing homework, promote positive classroom behavior, classroom management, and motivating students. This study also found that teachers with prior experience in the same grade as they are going to teach, show greater returns to experience than teachers with no prior experience in the same grade. More is that, experienced teachers are more likely to benefit other colleagues because they are more open to sharing knowledge.

CHAPTER II.

METHOD

2.1. Setting and Participants

All my internships for my university career were carried out in the same institution. It was in Salinas, Ecuador, where I did class observations and teacher practice, in a private institution that covers all the elementary and high school grades. In total there are approximately 550 students, boys and girls, who attend classes in the morning from 7:10 am until 13:15 pm. This school is well known for its emphasize on English, all classes have two school hours of English course per day. The schools' location is in the center of a small town, therefor, on a social economic level most of the students are from middle to upper class. This reflects on the schools' infrastructure and personnel. There are enough classrooms and the classes are with an average of 25 students much below the national average. Classrooms can count on all the implementations necessary to teach, like i.e. air-conditioning, comfortable tables and chairs, a TV set, internet connection, etc. There are also enough English teachers, all with a teaching degree.

For the practicum 1, I did 30 class observations. In the first part, I observed 15 classes in elementary grades where I could see 4 different English teachers. In the second part, I observed 15 classes in high school grades, also performed by 4 English teachers. In this practicum, I had the chance to observe classes in all grades, from first elementary, until third grade high school.

In the first part of the pasantias 1, I was the teachers' assistant in 10 classes in elementary grades from fourth until seventh. In the second part, I performed the role of the main teacher in 10 classes in the same grades with the same students. This pasantias was performed with the same English teachers as in the practicum 1.

The pasantias 2 was in many things the same as the pasantias 1. I was a teachers' assistant in 10 classes from grades one to three bachelor. Later, I was the main teacher in 10 classes in the same grades with the same English teachers. Doing these three internships in the same institution, gave me the advantage of getting to know the teachers and the students.

2.2. Procedures

Quality sources like academic literature, scientific books, and online articles from scientific magazines were used to write the literature review in the first part of this report. This was a great way to summarize the information related to the topic of this work. The study and review of these literature works helped me to get a greater insight into the topic, which was very useful in the second part of this work. Also, the bibliographic cards made it possible to relate my reflections with the literature review

For the execution of the internships, I talked to the school authorities and the English teachers in order to inform them about my role in the classroom and the type of activities I

was going to perform. Each new class, the teacher introduced me to the students to get to know each other and break the ice.

During the first practicum, my role was to observe the English teacher in 30 classes and kept detailed records of everything that happened. After each class, I evaluated the class and wrote a reflection part, a negative and positive comments part, and concluded each class report with suggestions to improve it.

In the first part of the second and third internship, I took the role of the teachers' assistant. This was a very good exercise to prepare me for my role as the main teacher. Before each class, the teacher and I made clear what I was going to do during the class. I carried out tasks like reading texts aloud, helping students with exercises, explaining grammar, correcting tests, etc. As in the first practicum, I also kept records during each class. After the classes, I wrote an evaluation and reflection about what happened. Also, I noted positive and negative points to give suggestions.

In the second part of the second and third internship, I had the role of the main teacher. I prepared each class with a similar structure. I made a lesson plan which was a theoretical setup to define the objectives, the goals, the planification, methodologies, contents and strategies. It consisted of three parts, the introduction, the construction, and the evaluation with feedback. Before executing the lessons, the English teacher corrected my lesson plan and gave suggestions about it. The lessons were carried out trying to follow the lesson plan as strictly as possible, in order to narrow down any room for errors. At the end of each class, records were filled in and a class summary and a class reflection was made. Data was collected directly after the class was given, and feedback from the tutor was noted.

Going through all these steps from observations to teachers' assistant and eventually the main teacher, was a great learning process for myself, and a logical method to obtain qualitative and useful data to analyze. To gather the necessary data, I made use of registers like class summary sheets, observational sheets with positive and negative comments, follow-up conversations with teachers that gave me suggestions, taking important notes, taking photos, and teacher interviews. From the sheets that were filled in after each class, I could make a summary and an analysis of that class in order to reflect on it. Also, a detailed description of all the activities, the lesson plans, the didactic materials used, and the goals of the lessons were carried out. These reflections bring positive and negative points to the surface and give room to improve the next classes.

All the data was reviewed by critical observation in order to separate the most useful information. The most important factor in this process was to stay objective. This data was then discussed with the teachers involved so that they could give me feedback on my

teaching experiences. To write the report of this data, I took into consideration how the lesson content was presented, how the classroom environment was managed, and the methodologies used during classes.

CHAPTER III.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1.   Description of My Teaching Experience

In the first internship, I did observations of English classes in all elementary and high school grades. I was very pleased that this was my first contact with a classroom environment. By observing other teachers first, I had a first impression of what it would be like to be a teacher. I did not really know what to expect because I had no classroom experience at all. These observations made it clear to me that all teachers used the lesson plan as their main guideline to teach a lesson. Most of the teachers I observed were also motivated and liked their job as an English teacher. Unfortunately, I could witness that some teachers were not motivated at all and it showed in their teaching style and it reflected onto the students. Signs of demotivation were lack of lesson preparation, reading literally the text in the book and not give any explanation unless the students explicitly ask for it, and inappropriate teacher behavior like showing up late for class and ending classes early. Despite this negative factor, my general impression of the first internship was positive; mainly because it made me clear that teaching English is what I want to do as a profession, and that with the right attitude and motivation, it can be reached.

The second internship I did in the elementary grades of the same private school. It started with ten classes where I performed as the teachers' assistant. With the general ideas I got from the observations, the tasks I had to carry out went relatively easy. The teachers let me do different kind of tasks and each time I had to perform a task, the teacher introduced it to the students. Being it the first time I stood in front of a group of students, I did not feel nervous and I could perform all the tasks I was asked to do. In the second part, I was the main teacher in ten classes. Although the idea of teaching a whole lesson by myself made me feel a little nervous, it went very well with the help and advice of the teachers. The third internship was in high school grades, where I performed in ten classes as the teachers' assistant and in ten classes as the main teacher. This went in a very similar way as the internship in the elementary grades.

During all the internships, I could witness teachers make use of different kind of methodologies, strategies, teaching techniques, activities and didactic materials. Since all English teachers in this school use the books of the same series, all the lesson plans are structured identically; therefor, many of the same methodologies are used throughout all the grades.

The most commonly used methodology for teaching and explaining grammar was the Grammar Translation method (GT). Rhalmi (2006) states that in this method, grammar explanations are given and word lists are studied in order to learn the language. This was exactly what I saw in these classes, teachers gave grammar rules and presented words. Practice consists mostly of translating sentences from the mother tongue to the target

language. In the classes that I observed, the teacher did not need didactic material because they followed the contents of the textbook and exercise book. Using this strategy, the students and teacher mostly spoke the mother tongue and little time was spent on the target language. In the classes where I was the main teacher, I made little use of this method because I did not want to speak Spanish most of the time, so, I made little presentation posters with a very brief explanation of the grammar; this way, I could explain the basic rules in much less time and keep the focus of the lesson on practicing the target language. Although I did not use this method many times, I noticed that students' attention fades away if grammar explanations take longer time. What I learned in the classes I observed, was that many students did not understand the difficult grammar structures explained by the teacher, for this reason, a lot of time went into clarifying these rules at the cost of the practice time. For me, this was highly valued information because I could prevent this problem by organizing the grammar structure in a more understandable way, adapting it to the students' age and language level. In a lot of classes, I saw exercises like fill in blanks, translation exercises, synonyms and antonyms, etc. I adopted the same type of exercises, although there is little focus on communication or fluency, the emphasis is on practicing the newly learned grammar and vocabulary. These exercises are designed to practice very small pieces of the language and most of the time they only focus on writing.

Another widely used method was the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) method. In this method, the teacher presents the new lesson material that the students need to know to complete a task. In the practice stage students do different kind of exercises. Finally, in the production stage, students have the freedom to use their imagination to produce language, using the newly learned grammar (Ellis 2006). The advantage is that students have to make use of the target language and communicate to resolve the task. Activities of this PPP method I witnessed in the class observations were based on real-life situations like role-plays, many exercises were done in groups or pairs. Having observed this method convinced me to use it in my classes as well. I spent only a few minutes on introducing the task in order to have more time for the students to practice and present the exercise. Typical practice exercises were filling in blanks, unscrambling sentences, completing missing words, etc. In many occasions, I let the students practice in pairs or small groups. As they worked in pairs or groups, each student could interact and bring knowledge into the group in the practice stage.

Aside from the GT and the PPP method, I frequently used the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in the classes where I was the main teacher, although I did not have the chance to observe a teacher using this method. According to Widodo (2005), this method is based on the fact that the students first respond physically to the teacher while

developing language knowledge. Later on, when the students understand more language and develops more speaking skills, they start to respond verbally. This way, the students are more actively and physically involved in the class, which also prevents them from getting bored easily. Successful activities with young learners were exercises where the students were actively involved, like pointing out parts of the body or action songs where the students had to sing along and follow orders in the song. For the more advanced students, there were exercises like 'Simon Says' where I first gave the orders and the whole class responded, later on, I let one student at the time give an order and all the others responded. This method made it possible to focus on the students and made my role as the teacher more passive.

In all these methods, the strategies and techniques I mainly used throughout my internships were group work, pair work, role play, brainstorming, storytelling, etc. Didactic materials were designed in accordance with the students' age. I tried to use simple grammar rules and explanations with young students and focus on real-life situations with adolescent students. The lesson plans were of great help during the execution of the classes. It helped with the timing and the order of the activities.

After first observing English teachers giving classes, and later, being the main teacher in the same private institute, I have to mention that my idea and attitude toward teaching has completely changed. Before, I had the idea that being a teacher was about having a good knowledge of the subject, transmit this knowledge to the students, and that it would automatically lead to good learning results with the students. Now, with these internships, I learned that there is much more that comes to play. A teacher has to be aware of the many differences in the students, their motivation, characters, attitude, behavior, etc., since students see the learning process in a personal way (Amineh and Asl, 2015). As far as the teacher, he does not only transfer knowledge, he has many roles to fulfil with a high level of responsibility like being a provider, role model, mentor, facilitator, observer, evaluator, etc. Furthermore, it is of vital importance that the teacher makes a good planning, organization and is able to control the classroom situations (Kumar 2012).

In general, I can state that all the students reacted positively towards my presence in the observational classes. A great advantage for me was, when I began my teaching classes for the second internship, all the students already knew me from the last semester, and it was easier to enter the classroom and start teaching, they were no longer complete strangers to me. The differences between students from elementary grades and high school grades is what stood out most. There are some general differences that are of great influence in the classroom. The students in elementary grades are more directly in their speech because they have less fear to make mistakes, they are also more willingly to follow

orders. On the downside, they are more playful and therefore, it takes several repetitions to call them back to order. High school students are more open in class, they are more intended to ask questions if they do not understand something, this makes it easier for the teacher to know if elements of the lesson are not understood. These teenagers are more rapidly distracted from the task than younger children, and if teenagers are not motivated, it is difficult to motivate them again. A hurdle in both categories is that some students learn very easily and some might have learning problems and could get behind. The problem with the first students, is that they need less time to understand the new lesson than their peers, and therefor get bored rapidly.

As for motivation, it was not very difficult to know who was not motivated because I already observed these students in the previous observational classes, and it was rapidly noticeable who got distracted. When I started my teaching classes, I entered the classrooms with a positive attitude towards the students and the English language as a subject. I wanted to let the positivism reflect to the students. Of course, it was not that easy to get them motivated and to keep them motivated. As I quickly witnessed, students lost motivation after giving a wrong error, after reading a passage with bad pronunciation, or saying they do not know the answer. Mostly, the students who knew the answer were the ones that started laughing or making fun of the students that made errors. After thinking for a while what I could do about this, I started to use a different strategy to get the answer from a student. If someone did not know the answer, I started to make questions that the student could resolve and after a few side questions, students came to the right answer. Immediately after I said that this student did a great job, I told him that he is able to come to the right answer and that gave him a real boost in his confidence. The direct consequence of this action was that these students were immediately motivated again and paid attention for the rest of the lesson. Also, the students that were laughing with wrong answers could see that these students can do it. This also gave me a boost in my confidence because the action that I took, paid off well.

Another example of a positive motivation change in the classroom was the use of different teaching methods. I spent less time on explaining grammar and making exercises in the form of translating sentences; instead, I simplified the grammar on a poster and only spent a few minutes on it, if necessary I repeated them later in the lesson. Also, the exercises were less boring, I let them do crosswords, ordering sentences, filling in gaps, etc. The practice part of my classes were almost never individual, I gave students a lot of pair work or group work like role plays or conversations so that they could work together. By doing this, I witnessed that students started to correct each other and really had fun in working together. There were cases of problems in pronunciation wherefore I applied

another strategy, I made use of the TV set and the internet each classroom has, and played a well-known song where the difficult words could be heard. As all the students knew the songs, they recognized the words and afterwards their pronunciation was good. Students also like these little play pauses, it gets them to relax for a few minutes and benefits their motivation.

A very important factor in the teaching world is experience. In the classes that I observed, the experienced teachers had less difficulties to take back the control of the classroom after a situation. They were able to improvise quickly and knew what to do to ease the students. On the other hand, less experienced or beginning teachers, spend more time on getting control of the students and struggled more to be heard by the students. They had considerably less time to spend on the actual lesson. If the classroom got in a situation where the students were not willing or able to produce language, the more experienced teachers had the ability of adapting the lessons or change teaching techniques in order to get the attention from the students. Experience also lets a teacher recognize if students are having learning problems. Above all, experience helps the teacher to overcome hurdles, it is something we cannot learn at the university, but real life internships are needed to get to know the practical side of the teaching profession. Even this is not enough, during the first years of teaching, the teacher is getting more experience and will be able to organize the lesson in a way that he has control, and spent much more time on actual teaching.

The knowledge gathered in these internships has to be reflected on because it is of vital importance to learn from it. It is knowledge from the field that cannot be learned from theoretical books and courses; therefore, it is of great value for the future. This is because it completely changed my view of the profession in a positive way. The practical knowledge will help me as a teacher to perform better, not only in a classroom teaching students, but also while interacting with colleague teachers because exchanging experiences and giving feedback to others helps us to be better professionals. This teaching experience also gave me some answers to questions like: Am I suited to be a teacher? Do I have enough knowledge to share? Do I have enough theoretical background to deal with classroom environments? Having an answer to these questions, I feel much more confident for my future as an English teacher because now I know my weak and strong points and the things to work on in the future. It is easier to understand the theories about methodologies if you have experienced these in a real classroom environment and it helps to know what to do in teaching and why we do it. In the beginning, teachers were learners and teachers can learn from each other and use others' knowledge in the classroom.

3.2. Reflection on Experience

After these internships, I can affirm that my teaching experience is overall positive.

I now have much more knowledge about the practical side of the profession, and I can state that this experience was a confirmation for me that I want to be an English teacher. I got a very positive feeling about the fact that different teachers have different characteristics, and therefore, deal with situations each in their own way; but they all have the same goal of teaching students in the best possible way. For me, this means that I can settle in in the profession finding my own teaching style and this always with the higher goal in mind.

In my experience, I noticed that there were aspects that were difficult for me, and others were easier. To name the most difficult aspect I went through during my teaching period, I have to say it was the presence of the English teacher in the classroom. Although I did the same in my first practice when I was the observer, I did not feel like I was watching the English teacher to criticize him. In my teaching classes, I had the feeling that he was observing me to look for my errors and that made me a little uncertain at the beginning. Secondly, during classes I felt that the situation needed a change and I started thinking about how to accomplish this change and this distracted me from the lesson. After the first classes, I had a conversation with the English teacher and he told me that it was better to stop the lesson for a brief moment and implement the change before continuing with the teaching. This strategy paid off very well because I was no longer worried to lose sight of the lesson. Lastly, I had to search a bit how to enter the classroom with confidence in my first lessons. Although I knew the students and teachers from the observations and I entered the classroom without feeling nervous, inside I did not feel a hundred percent confident. Eventually, after a few lessons I overcame this by rehearsing the lesson completely at my house in front of my family.

In this practice, I also witnessed some aspects that were relatively easy for me. The one thing that stays in my mind is that my knowledge of English as a subject is more than sufficient to accomplish my task as a profession, which is an important requirement of the teacher (Harden and Crosby 2000). I did feel confident about this, even before the internships began, I knew that I had a very good base of knowledge to teach students. Therefore, speaking English during the whole lesson time was easy for me. What also helped me to make my teaching experience easier, is the years of study at the university. All the theoretical knowledge gathered over the years was most definitely a great support for me. I cannot forget to mention that the observational classes before the teaching practice was the ideal way to get to know the practical side of the teaching profession. Although during observation of other teachers, we cannot learn or witness every possible situation that will happen later on in classes, they certainly made it easier and more relaxed for me to go to the next stage of the internships.

As far as theoretical knowledge, I can say that the university courses were a very

broad base to have a general idea on how the teaching world works. On the other hand, the lack of practical experience makes it difficult to say that I have enough knowledge. Without a doubt, this will come with the years and the more knowledge I get, the better my teaching quality will be because effective teaching can be learned over time (Reif-Lehrer 1993). For some easy parts of lessons where everything went well and the situation proceeded like I had in mind, it did feel like I had enough knowledge. On the other hand, when a situation went different than foreseen, I could notice the lack of knowledge and experience to deal with it in a more natural way. Eventually, I could handle the situation but it was not a natural process of change.

The most widely used teaching methods during the classes I observed and the classes were I was the teaching assistant, were the Grammar Translation method and the Total Physical Response method. The disadvantage of the Grammar Translation method was that the students get distracted easily because it is more a boring academic exercise than it is a method to actively use language (Bowen 2016). I saw numerous times that the teacher started the lessons with the attention of the students but after explaining grammar rules, the students were already starting to lose concentration, then the teacher had to struggle to be able to finish the exercises because these type of exercises tend to be repetitive translation exercises, which gets students bored and non-cooperative. The outcomes of this learning method never had much success.

On the other hand, the Total Physical Response method was used many times and did have a much higher success rate. The teacher is in charge during most of the class time, at the beginning he communicated the lesson content to the students along with very few grammar rules. The teacher then started interacting with the students where they responded to the questions asked. The students were much more actively involved in the class; therefor, they stayed more concentrated. The downside of the use of this method was the constant use of the Spanish language by the teacher and the students. The teacher was forced to constantly switching from English to Spanish because the students many times could not understand what the teacher wanted from them. The students, although they were very active in class, they constantly needed to be reminded to talk in English by the teacher. If there was more use of the English language, this method would have been very effective for the students to get more verbal in their communication (Widodo 2015). I also used this method in the classes where I was the main teacher. I liked this method very much because there is less lesson preparation needed. When I made use of this method, I only communicated in English to the students. Although I needed to repeat many parts when I was speaking, it was worth the time and effort because I could see that after my instructions, the students could grasp the new language parts faster and with forcing them to speak

English, they could respond to me verbally in a correct way.

During my classes as the main teacher I liked to use the PPP method where the students are given enough freedom to resolve an exercise using the new grammar parts (Ellis 2006). I kept my explanations as simple and short as possible, but making sure all students understood the new grammar and words. By making sure that the theoretical part of the lessons was very short, the students did not get bored or lose concentration. After the theoretical part, I interacted with the students to make sure they were ready to do the exercises. Many times I used word game exercises because exercises that have a little fun factor were more successful, the students did not lose motivation. As I presented the information as simple as possible, the students kept more interested and were more active during the rest of the class. For the production stage, I mainly let them do debates, solve a situational problem, or a quiz. The most rewarding part is the production stage, in almost all cases, the success rate of this learning method was high.

It is extremely important for me as a teacher trainee and in the near future as an English teacher to improve my teaching skills. There are plenty of methods to do this. The emphasis in the beginning of my teaching career will be on obtaining practical experience, getting a strong attitude to keep order in the classroom, and being fully in charge of the class (Kelly 2005). This experience will obvious come with the years practicing the profession but can also be strengthened with additional education like seminars, conventions, courses, etc. What I witnessed during my teaching practice is that at the end, I was doing a better job than in my first classes.

There will be a point in time where I will keep students' motivation and attention during the whole lesson. There are ways to obtain a better level of students' motivation. The teacher's enthusiasm and commitment is one of the important factors that affect the learner's motivation (Al-Ghamdi 2014). It was very clear that in the classes with teachers that were enthusiastic in the way they teach, the students were more actively involved and listened more to the teacher. In the classes that I observed where the teacher had a less dynamic teaching style, the students were less enthusiastic.

There are a few things that I would like to change after my first teaching experience. The first change would be using more body language in classes. My teaching was more static and this felt less natural. In the first lessons, I found myself in front of the class almost the whole time in the same place, concentrating mostly on what I said. I would like to change this in a more natural way so that it would not feel like a forced movement. Afterwards, interacting with the English teachers, they gave me the advice to rehearse this at home in front of a mirror. In the later lessons, I noticed that after losing the nerves and concentrating less on strictly text and putting the focus on the classroom, it was going much better.

Second, in some grades, there were students that obviously had some type of learning problem. Because I was only a few lessons with this group and I did not know much of the students' background, I had no time to deal with this. If I could work a whole year with the same students in my English classes, then I could make time to understand their personal situation and to follow closely the students´ progressions. The teachers told me that these students were followed closely, there was even a full time employee that was concentrated on the learning situation and the personal situation of these students and regular meetings with the parents were organized.

Through this teaching experience, I learned more about the profession itself. For example, I learned that being a teacher is more than just transmitting knowledge to the students. Besides the knowledge of the language as a subject, a teacher also needs to acquire psychological and pedagogical knowledge. He or she needs to know how to handle the different learning methods, strategies, techniques, and classroom situations. The most important fact that I learned through this experience is that the teaching profession is what I really want to do in life.

3.3. Teaching Environment

The environment where I did my internships turned out very positive for me. I had the chance to do all of them in the same private institution that is willing to allow internships. After an explanatory conversation with the school principal, I was allowed to start my teaching experience here. It was the perfect place for me to get to know the profession because this school puts the emphasize on English, it is well known for this since all students get two hours of English classes each day. I began with getting to know all the English teachers before I would even enter a classroom. All teachers were very friendly and cooperatively; they gave me directions and advice to take into account.

The classroom environment in this institution was overall positive. It had tables and chairs that were comfortable for the students to use. There is plenty of light entering the room because of the big windows. Air conditioning was present in all classrooms so the heat in this coastal town did not affect students´ learning experience. Also, every classroom has enough facilities for the teachers to make use of like a TV set, CD player and internet connection.

On average, the seating arrangement of the classes was in evenly rows, with the teacher's desk in front, next to the white board. An important factor is that the classes were not overcrowded, at an average there were around twenty-four students in one classroom. In line with the findings of Wong (2013), this made it easier to change from one seating arrangement to another. When teachers let students work in pairs, the students only had to shift their tables together, I could witness that it was a very common thing for them. Also,

when working in small groups of four to six students, three students turned their tables and then with the six of them, they shifted the tables to form one big table. They clearly do this often because when the teacher said: work in groups of six, the students automatically grouped themselves.

I want to mention a few things from these internships that I would not change. The use of technology was a great help for me and had a very positive influence on the students' motivation, because at this age, it is something that they are interested in and it showed off since every time the TV set or a computer was used, the students kept their attention to it; therefor, if the infrastructure is present, I would like to keep making use of these technologies in my career.

Also, I would like to keep speaking only English in classes, unless it is absolutely necessary to clarify an issue in Spanish. The outcome of the lessons, where the teacher mainly spoke Spanish, was not in line with the objectives of the lessons; in the practice stage, it came clear that a lot of students did not reach the goals of the lesson plan. Investigation done by Cummins and Davison (2002) demonstrates that when a teacher only uses the target language in class, students enhance oral interaction and develop higher levels of communicative skills. This is completely in line with the outcome of the lessons where the teacher mainly spoke English. Students were able to communicate in English at a much higher level. Although Mahboob (2002) comes to the conclusion that using the native language in some occasions will not constrain the target language learning. Several times, I noticed teachers start speaking Spanish to explain the more complex grammar part of the lesson. This had no effect on the outcomes of the lessons, the students also reached a high level of communication skills.

When writing a systematization report, it is important to know that experiences are the key factor in this process. We have to reconstruct these experiences because they provide all the information in the report and we have to take this into consideration in order to analyze it and turn these experiences into conclusions and recommendations. A systematization report can be a great resource for teachers because it explains experiences and it turns them into theoretical knowledge; it compares practical facts and relates them with the theory. The systematization report can also be a test to see if the practice from the experiment follows the theory. Systematization reports also have the benefit that it is possible to share knowledge, and to help other teachers to get new insights through the practice of the author. A good systematization report describes both the successes and the errors of the experiment.

CONCLUSIONS

- My body language was too static and this caused that students in some lessons loose attention faster. In other lessons where I did not need a very expressive body language, students kept longer attention.

- Technology and a good infrastructure in the classroom were a great help in various ways. It can be used to give extra information from videos, CD, pictures, songs, among others. The main finding about technology is that students keep focused longer on lesson material presented this way.

- In many occasions, teachers were using too much mother tongue in their English classes. Sometimes it was used more than the English language itself. They were talking almost the whole lesson in Spanish, in many cases they said it was to gain time because giving explanations only in English takes too long for the students to understand; therefor, they cannot execute the whole lesson plan. This resulted in lower communication skills of the students.

- Motivating students is always a challenge. Different classroom situations, students' personalities and abilities, difficult lessons and other situations can be a big influence on students' motivation. I found out that students get easily distracted in classes, the most common reasons why students got demotivated were boring grammar study or boring repetitive exercises. Also, when students make an error, they tend to loose intrinsic motivation.

- Theoretical knowledge learned at the university to obtain the teachers degree is not enough to be a successful teacher. At the beginning of my teaching practice, there was an obvious lack of practical experience. This practical experience cannot be learned from books; therefor, these teacher internships have a very important contribution to my teacher skills. I got to know more about myself in a real classroom environment, how I performed, how I reacted to situations, and how my knowledge was.

- Some classes have a student that has a learning disorder and needs more attention from the teacher. The teachers who worked with these students throughout the year recognize these students and together with an extra staff member, they help them to get the special attention they need.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- I strongly recommend teachers to use the target language as much as possible during classes. The more a teacher uses this target language, the more the students will use it; which leads to better communicative skills and more success in reaching the goals of the lesson. The use of the native language can be allowed in some circumstances for a short period of time, but the teacher has to reach back to the target language as soon as possible. This way, a minimal use of the native language does not affect the learning outcomes.

- Students' motivation is a very difficult issue. The teacher has to let all students get the impression that they are important, and let them feel what success is by demonstrating them their own qualities. A teacher has to work with students in a way that they guide the students towards positive results, this will also have a positive influence on the students' motivation. Evenly important to get a high level of motivation is to let them work in group so they can build cooperative learning skills, this will get the students to help each other, which changes small negative items into positive feelings.

- Body language is a factor that should be taken in mind by all beginner teachers. A teacher has to be in front of a class with the adequate body language, if not, the teaching style will come over like very unnaturally. Beginner teachers should practice on their body language, this can be done in several ways. Experienced teachers advice to rehearse in front of a mirror, or have an experienced teacher observing the class and give feedback.

- The last recommendation I want to mention comes from a positive finding I witnessed several times during my internships. The use of technologies resulted very positive, when teachers used modern technologies like big screens, computers, or internet, they immediately called the students attention. Nowadays, students are grown up with these technologies and it is of great interest to them. In these modern times, technology should be part of and incorporated into the lessons because it is yet an important part of the students' environment outside the classroom. Bringing it into the classroom will result in more focus, interest, and motivation from the students.

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ANNEXES

Class observation sheet Practicum 1:

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja
ESCUELA DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
TITULACIÓN INGLÉS
PRACTICUM ACADÉMICO 1
FICHA DE OBSERVACIÓN DE CLASE

1. *DATOS INFORMATIVOS:*
   Docente observador: …………..…………………..….….. Docente observado:
   ………..…..
   Institución Educativa:
   ..
   Año: .... Básica ( )   Bachillerato ( )   Fecha:
   …….…………….….…………………….…………
   Tema de la
   clase:..
   Objetivo:
   …….………

2. *ASPECTOS A OBSERVARSE:*

ASPECTOS	VALORACION				
	E	B	R	M	N/A
CONTENIDOS:					
Presenta el tema de la clase					
Presenta los objetivos de la clase					
Muestra dominio del tema					
Presenta los contenidos de manera clara y organizada					
Lo contenidos son adecuados al nivel de los alumnos					
Los contenidos son relacionados con la realidad de los estudiantes					
CONDUCCION DEL APRENDIZAJE					
Crea el clima adecuado para el aprendizaje					
Dirección del grupo					
Considera el ritmo de aprendizaje de los alumnos					
Usa vocabulario y estructuras gramaticales adecuadas y de acuerdo al nivel de los estudiantes					
Produce el lenguaje oral de tal manera que permite el entendimiento del mismo					
Considera los estilos de aprendizaje					
Despierta y mantiene el interés de los alumnos					
Responde a las inquietudes de los estudiantes de manera clara y precisa					
El docente integra más de una destreza en cada actividad propuesta					
Permite la participación de todos los alumnos					
Demuestra habilidad para superar situaciones imprevistas.					
Evalúa el aprendizaje de forma continua y con la debida retroalimentación					
Comprueba que los alumnos comprendan las explicaciones					
METODOLOGIA					
Manejo de métodos, técnicas, estrategias y actividades de enseñanza					
Las actividades son adecuadas para el objetivo de la clase					

Las actividades permiten que el estudiante se apropie de los contenidos					
Maneja técnicas actividades y estrategias pertinentes y apropiadas					
Las actividades y estrategias son de acuerdo a las tendencias actuales: communicative competence)					
Usa el material básico (libro, cd, pizarrón)					
Usa material complementario					

3. **NOTAS ADICIONALES:**

_____
_____
_____
_____

4. **REFLEXIÓN:** *Escriba en este espacio una reflexión de los aspectos positivos y negativos de la clase y sugerencias para mejorar la misma.*
Aspectos Positivos: (fortalezas)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Aspectos negativos: (debilidades)

_____
_____
_____

Sugerencias: (luego de observar esta clase, ¿Qué sugeriría usted en vías de una mejora o cambio a la misma?

_____
_____
_____
_____

_____
Estudiante de Prácticum

_____   _____
Rector /Inspector de la Institución educativa   *Docente Observado*
(firma y sello)

Class summary sheet first bimester Pasantias 1:

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja

DEPARTAMENTO DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

TITULACIÓN DE INGLÉS

PASANTIAS PRE-PROFESIONALES Y DE VINCULACION CON LA SOCIEDAD

RESUMEN DE CLASE

DATOS INFORMATIVOS:

Nombre:

Institución educativa:

Grado: Paralelo:

Nivel de inglés de los estudiantes:

Texto básico:

Tema de clase:

Objetivo:

Fecha:

Nombre del profesor de inglés:

DESCRIPTION

Experience as an assistant teacher:

Activities done during the class:

_____

_____

_____

REFLECTION

Experience as an assistant teacher:

Positive and negative points:

_____

_____

_____

Contents of the lesson plan:

Positive and negative points:

_____

_____

_____

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions :

_____

_____

_____

Recommendations :

_____

_____

_____

Photos

Class summary sheet second bimester Pasantias 1:

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja

DEPARTAMENTO DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

TITULACIÓN DE INGLÉS

PASANTIAS PRE-PROFESIONALES Y DE VINCULACION CON LA SOCIEDAD

RESUMEN DE CLASE

DATOS INFORMATIVOS:

Nombre:

Institución educativa:

Grado: Paralelo:

Nivel de inglés de los estudiantes:

Texto básico:

Tema de clase:

Objetivo:

Fecha:

Nombre del profesor de inglés:

DESCRIPTION

Experience as a main teacher:

Activities done during the class:

_____

_____

_____

REFLECTION

Experience as a main teacher:

Positive and negative points:

_____

_____

_____

Execution of the lesson plan and the use of didactic material:

Positive and negative points:

_____

_____

_____

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions:

_____

_____

_____

Recommendations:

_____

_____

_____

Photos

Class summary sheet first bimester Pasantias 2:

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

DEPARTAMENTO DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
MENCIÓN INGLÉS
PRE-PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIP 2
Class Summary
First Bimester

Informative data:

Name:

School:

Class:

Level:

Textbook:

Topic:

Objective:

Date:

In-class tutor:

DESCRIPTION

Teaching Assistant

Class activities:

_____

_____

_____

Content:

Describe the teachers' lesson plan:

_____

_____

_____

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Positive and negative aspects of your work as an assistant teacher:

_____

_____

_____

Positive and negative aspects about the lesson plan:

_____

_____

_____

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions:

_____

_____

_____

Recommendations:

_____

_____

_____

Photos

Class summary sheet second bimester Pasantias 2:

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja

DEPARTAMENTO DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
MENCIÓN INGLÉS
PRE-PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIP 2
Class Summary
Second Bimester

Informative data:

Name:

School:

Class:

Level:

Textbook:

Topic:

Objective:

Date:

In-class tutor:

DESCRIPTION

Experience as a main teacher:

Activities done during the class:

_____

_____

_____

Content

Describe your lesson plan:

_____

_____

_____

REFLECTION

Experience as a main teacher:

Positive and negative points:

_____

_____

_____

Execution of the lesson plan and the use of didactic material:

Positive and negative points:

_____

_____

_____

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions:

_____

_____

_____

Recommendations:

_____

_____

_____

Photos