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Introduction: reflection about the formative process

This dissertation contains several parts. First of all there is an introduction about my previous studies and my motivations to enrol in this Master. In the second part, I talk about the reflections on the knowledge acquired in each module. Finally, in the last part I talk about the conclusion of this dissertation and future approaches. I decided to develop this model of the dissertation since I had already done the part related to the first semester when the proposal was changed. I found the new proposal more interesting and innovative but I decided not to start again because I had devoted much time and effort to this dissertation.

During the year 2010/2011 I finished my degree on English Philology in the University of Zaragoza. While I was studying my degree, I passed the advanced exams of English and German in the Official Language School. I did my last year of my degree in the University of Cologne, since I wanted to improve my English and my German. I have always considered that a teacher-to-be has to keep improving his or her speciality, so I took several courses on German in the University of Cologne and I passed the B2 exam in the Goethe Institute. I have done as well a teaching training course on Spanish as a foreign language offered by the Instituto Cervantes in the University of Zaragoza, since I am interested in teaching Spanish to foreigners.

When I started this Master, I did not know much about teaching as a profession because the degree I had studied is not focused on teaching. When I finished it last year I decided to enrol in this Master because I have always been interested in teaching and this Master was a good option to continue with my studies. As I do not have any experience as a teacher except for private lessons, I thought that this Master was the best option to learn about this profession.

In this course we have been taught about the education and legal framework in Spain and also how to design a learning unit of work and a summary using as a reference the Organic Law of Education and taking into account the curriculum of compulsory secondary education.

We have also been taught how schools are organized, which laws regulate education, how they have evolved in time, how competitive examinations are organized and the requirements you have to fulfil to sit these exams.

In these studies, emphasis has been given to the importance of creating a good atmosphere in class, using different activities that can be used in class or in a tutorship. To design these activities, we have to take into account physical and psychological characteristics of teenagers, which were also reviewed in this Master.

Furthermore, we have learnt many resources that we can use with ICTs to improve our way of teaching and to engage students in the learning process. These resources will be useful when we become teachers and probably students will appreciate if we provide them with more resources than the ones used in class.

Thanks to this course, we are now aware of many education theories that were unknown for us previously and that we should bear in mind when we become teachers. We should, for example, design our activities so that they follow a communicative approach, since communication must be the main goal when learning a language.

We are capable of carrying out a research project, bearing in mind all the steps necessary and making proposals for the future in order to improve education aspects. I had never developed a research project before enrolling in this Master and it was a challenge for me.

We are able to address students using the appropriate language and taking into account the context where we are teaching. We can also teach our students how to speak English with accuracy, bearing in mind such aspects like intonation, stress or the communicative context.

This Master is divided in the following modules:

- **Module 1:** *Contexto de la Actividad Docente.*
- **Module 2:** *Interacción y Convivencia en el aula.*
- **Module 3:** *El proceso de aprendizaje.*
 - o Course: *Procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje.*
- **Elective subject related to module 2:** *Prevención y resolución de conflictos.*
- **Module 4:** *Diseño Curricular en la especialidad.*
 - o Course: *Diseño curricular de las asignaturas de las especialidades de Lengua Extranjera.*
 - o Course: *La comunicación oral en lengua inglesa.*
- **Module 5:** *Diseño y desarrollo de actividades de aprendizaje en la especialidad.*
 - o Course: *Fundamentos de diseño instruccional y metodologías de aprendizaje en la especialidad de Lenguas Extranjeras.*
 - o Course: *Diseño, organización y desarrollo de actividades para el aprendizaje del Inglés.*
- **Elective subject related to module 5:** *Tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación para el aprendizaje.*
- **Module 6:** *Evaluación, innovación e investigación en la especialidad.*
 - o Course: *Evaluación e innovación docente e investigación educativa en Inglés.*
- **Practicum I**
- **Practicum II**
- **Practicum III**

Therefore, this dissertation consists of the descriptions and reflections of all the knowledge and abilities learnt throughout this course and the conclusion and future approaches. Furthermore, a learning unit of work and a research project have been

included as appendixes. The learning unit of work is about “Television and advertisement” and it was designed and implemented by me during my second school placement. The research project is about “The effectiveness of role-play to improve oral communication in English among secondary school and Official Language School students” and it was carried out during my third school placement.

1. Reflections on the knowledge acquired in each module

1.1. General training period

1.1.1. Module 1. *Contexto de la actividad docente*

This module was divided into two parts: the first part dealing with school organization and the second one dealing with sociology. In the first part of the module *Contexto de la actividad docente*, we worked with the legal and institutional framework of secondary education. Although we also reviewed the legal framework of Official Language Schools and of *Bachillerato*, the lessons were mainly centred on secondary education. The main documents that we worked with were *Ley Orgánica de Educación* and Bernal, J.L. *Comprender nuestros centros educativos*. Mira, 2007. J.L.Bernal's book was a useful tool to understand how educational centres are organized and also to understand the previous laws of education.

Another important aspect that we dealt with in this subject is the organization of educational centres, that is to say, who takes part in the board of governors and which are the main functions of the head teacher, the head of studies and the secretary. Before studying this, I had a rough idea about this topic, and in this course I became acquainted with the structure of an education centre and the functions of each person in the board of governors.

A competence that is part of this subject is to analyze the relationships between the educational centres and the families: we learnt how we have to deal with families and what to do in case we need to talk to the parents. We also became aware of taking into account the different social and familiar contexts. A good aspect of this course was that we did a lot of practice, since the teacher presented us lots of cases and we had to decide what we would do bearing the law in mind. This practice was really useful to establish a link between theory and practice.

I consider that our first school placement was really useful to understand the contents of this module, because we could apply the theory in a real context, and our mentors in the first school placement explained everything more individually. However, it was essential to have some previous knowledge before starting our first school placement so that not everything was new for us.

Another competence that I achieved is to know the Spanish education system and its evolution. I learnt to identify, recognize and apply the regulations relating to educational centres of different levels (*ESO, Bachillerato, Escuela Oficial de Idiomas*). Although we mainly worked with the laws regulating ESO in this course, I had to work with the ones regulating the Official Language Schools during my school placement, so I got to know both very well.

The second part of this module dealt with sociology. I had never studied anything in connection with sociology, and that is why this part was a bit difficult for me at the beginning since it was new for me. However, I learnt to know, analyze and value the connections between society and education.

I also learnt to describe, relate and interpret how the different familiar contexts have an effect on education. We also dealt with the different social functions that education has. To cover this topic, we read an interesting text, which was: Guerrero Serón, Antonio (1996). *Manual de Sociología de la Educación*. Editorial Síntesis, Madrid. Capítulo 5: Las funciones sociales de la educación (103-117).

Another topic that was covered in this course was multiple socializations that there are in society and in education. We studied this topic having as a reference the following text: Lahire, Bernard. *Childhood and Youth: Socialization Periods subjected to Multifold Constrictions*. Revista de Antropología Social, 2007, 21-38.

We also studied the relation between education and economy and the different theories that deal with this topic, for example Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1960 and Becker, 1964), Correspondence Theory (Bowles and Gintis, 1976) and Credentialism Theory (Collins, 1979). To deepen in this topic, we read Pac Salas, D.; Minguijón Pablo, J. (2011) *Materiales de sociología de la educación para maestros*. Capítulo 3: *Economía y educación*.

In addition, we also talked about social differences and how they affect education. As a general rule, the existing social differences are reproduced in education, and it is very difficult to stop this phenomenon. The literature we used to cover this topic was: Pac Salas, D.; Minguijón Pablo, J. (2011) *Materiales de sociología de la educación para maestros*. Capítulo 4: *Educación y desigualdades sociales*.

We did a lot of practice in the second part of this module as well, and we learnt how to design surveys to know the sociocultural dimension of a city, how to check the census of a city and the municipal register, and how to analyze the sociodemographic context.

1.1.2. Module 2. *Interacción y convivencia en el aula*

The second module, *Interacción y convivencia en el aula*, was divided into two different parts: Social Psychology and Evolutionary Psychology.

In the field of Evolutionary Psychology, we dealt with the physical and psychological characteristics that adolescents go through: we learnt that it is important to identify them and to be conscious about them. In this part, we also dealt with the development of personality and how this affects the learning process.

We also became acquainted with different activities, strategies and class dynamics that could be useful to interact with a class and to create a good atmosphere, especially when working with adolescents.

This module was also centred in the activities that could be used in tutorships to help or to advise our future students in case they needed some help. We practiced these activities in class and we also did several class dynamics as if we were adolescents, so that it would be relevant and enlightening for us.

We also worked with real cases of problematic children: we worked in groups suggesting how we would help them, what would be the steps to be followed and what we could do for them. It was very useful to do this in groups, since we could share ideas with the other people in the group and then with the rest of the class and it is always enriching to know other people's point of view.

We also dealt with several topics that are relevant through all our life but specially in adolescence, for example, love, sadness, addictions, self-esteem or sex. We learnt how we could cover them with adolescents and how they feel about these topics.

In the area of Social Psychology, we dealt with several topics in this discipline: its definition, its object of study, different historical tendencies within social psychology, psychosocial theories and how social psychology contributes to interaction and communication.

Within the topic of interaction, we also studied group work: how individuals and people work in groups, what influences group work, how the rest of the group influences individuals and finally, groups' characteristics.

Other important points in this part of the module were the different processes of interaction that happen in a class, which include complexities and difficulties in classroom communication, communicative strategies, learning groups (types, stages in a group, how they work and how leadership works.)

In this last part, we designed in groups a didactic guide for students about the neighbourhood "Casablanca". My group based this project on the use of English in a neighbourhood, since we all belonged to the speciality of English and we thought this was a suitable use for our subject.

This module has been useful to know more about psychological characteristics of adolescents, how they differ from adults and how this has an influence in a class. Furthermore, it has also been useful to know in detail how individuals influence the group and how the group influences individuals.

Thanks to this module, now I am able to know, identify and comprehend the main characteristics of adolescents' personality. I can design motivation strategies in relation to learning and school environment through observation of the students' behaviour. I am capable of designing strategies for students and their families that improve their personal, educational and professional development. I can also plan, apply and evaluate teaching-learning methodologies that are active, participative and collaborative, adjusting them to the group.

1.1.3. Module 3. *El proceso de aprendizaje*

1.1.3.1. *Procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje*

The course *Procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje* in the third module had different parts that were: 1) processes of teaching-learning, 2) the use of ICTs in the teaching-learning process, 3) strategies to motivate our students while we teach our subject, 4) different types of assessment and finally, 5) learning theories.

In the first part of the subject we dealt with the instructions to design a learning unit, since we had to design one in groups. We also learnt in this part what a syllabus should contain, what the differences between a learning unit and a syllabus are and what the stages that we have to follow to design a syllabus and a learning unit are. We have also dealt with the differences between LOGSE, LOCE and LOE, and how we have to contextualize our work according to the last Law passed. Another important topic of this part was the basic competences. We learnt what they are, why we have to work with them and how we can make our students develop them. We were also taught how to write objectives properly, that is to say, using the infinitive and writing them clearly. To write the objectives in the learning unit of work that we developed in this subject, we had to study the general objectives that students must acquire in compulsory secondary education. Other important points that we have worked with are methodological aspects, assessment and attention to student diversity. These aspects were important because they had to be included as well in our syllabus and in our learning unit.

In the second part of the subject, we dealt with the use of ICTs in the teaching-learning process. We saw the different characteristics and social and educative impact that technologies have had and the different projects developed to incorporate technologies in the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, we also worked with educative materials online and we studied the different possibilities that mass media and Internet offer, as well as different virtual environments for teaching and cooperative learning. In relation to the different projects developed to incorporate technologies in the teaching-learning process, we did not only study the ones implemented by the Spanish Government, but also the ones implemented by the Aragonese Government. Some of these projects have been really important and thanks to them lots of schools in the rural and urban environment have access to technology. Moreover, we became acknowledged with very interesting WebPages where we can find lots of materials and resources to use them in our classes. We also had the possibility to see some electronic devices that we can use in class to incorporate ICTs in our lessons, as for example digital blackboards and projectors. We also worked with different for and against arguments about the use of ICTs in teaching and some of the positive contributions that they have had in education.

In the third part of this subject, we dealt with different strategies to motivate our students while we teach our subject. We learnt different types of motivation, which factors are involved in it and the sources where students can get motivation from. This part was useful to know how we can engage our students and keep their attention in

class. The main literature that we worked with when dealing with this topic was: Tapia, A. (2005): *Motivar en la escuela, motivar en la familia*. Madrid: Morata. Segunda parte: *Factores del entorno que facilitan la motivación para aprender*.

In the fourth part we also became familiar with different types of assessment to assess our students in a correct way. In addition, we learnt different tools that we can use to assess our students and different instruments to measure our students' progress. Thanks to this part of the module, we learnt how we can design good assessment tools that assess our students in a correct way and what we should avoid doing when we assess them.

Last but not least, in the fifth part of the subject we dealt with different learning theories, like behaviourism, cognitive theory and constructivism. The most important point here was to learn how these theories have contributed to teaching and learning.

Although in this module we learnt how to design good assessment tools, I consider that the exam itself of this module did not fulfil the requirements that we were taught that an exam should have since we were assessed with a multiple choice test in 35 minutes with practical questions that had not been worked in class.

1.2. Specific training period

1.2.1. Module 4. Diseño curricular en la especialidad

1.2.1.1. Diseño curricular de las asignaturas de las especialidades de Lenguas Extranjeras

In this subject, *Diseño curricular*, we learnt how to elaborate a learning unit of work. As the two subjects *Diseño curricular* and *Fundamentos de diseño instruccional y metodologías de aprendizaje* were so alike and we had the same teacher, we developed our learning unit of work in the subject *Diseño* and our syllabus in the subject *Fundamentos*.

In the subject *Diseño*, one of the main points was to learn the basic elements that a learning unit of work and a syllabus must contain. In order to learn these basic elements, we worked with the Aragonese curriculum, specially the one for compulsory secondary education which can be found in *Orden de 9 de mayo de 2007* del Departamento de Educación, Cultura y Deporte.

One important element to learn was the eight key competences that students must achieve at the end of the compulsory secondary education period. This was important in order to design our learning unit of work and our activities with these goals in mind, since all students should acquire them.

We also learnt to write correctly objectives, contents, methodology, assessment criteria and procedures that a learning unit of work must contain. It was essential for me to understand these main points, as I had never designed a learning unit of work and I

did not know what I had to include. The instructions for the design of a learning unit of work that we were taught in *Procesos* were also useful to fulfil this task.

We designed our learning unit in groups, which was positive because we could help each other in our group and shared our views in the designing process. However, I think it would be better to work in smaller groups, because 5 people are too much and sometimes there are communication problems.

An important point in this module was the section about student diversity. There is a special section in the Aragonese curriculum which specifies that student diversity must be dealt with in class. We practiced designing different activities to deal with the student diversity that we can find in a class and in our learning unit we adapted some of the activities bearing in mind this diversity. In the designing process of our learning unit, we also tried to avoid gender differences; we did not use only masculine names, since we designed the learning unit of work in Spanish and neutral pronouns for subjects do not exist.

Thanks to this course, I learnt the main objectives and competences of secondary education as well as the key competences. I am also capable of adapting activities to students' diversity and I can design a learning unit of work.

1.2.1.2. La comunicación oral en lengua inglesa

This subject helped me achieve several competences when teaching English to students, especially when teaching students how to speak English correctly. We designed one activity to teach students segmental features and one to teach students suprasegmental features, which was very helpful for making me aware of the steps we have to bear in mind when we have to design an activity. Moreover, we implemented one of the activities in front of our peers and the teacher gave us feedback so that we could know what we did right and what we had to improve. We also wrote an essay in pairs in which we had to analyze a piece of oral discourse.

First of all, we dealt with expectations, challenges and difficulties of teaching and learning oral skills. This topic was useful to share my point of view with other people and try to reach an agreement on several statements that we were provided. These discussions can help students make them realize if their expectations will be fulfilled or not.

Moreover, we also worked with teaching and learning English oral skills in the Spanish Secondary Education and Official Language Schools curricula. When designing an activity in any of these kinds of centres, we have to take into account these curricula and we have to adjust to their objectives. We should also bear in mind what our students are and are not supposed to know when designing appropriate activities for them.

Furthermore, we also learnt how to teach English vowel and consonant phonemes. Firstly, we reviewed English vowel and consonant phonemes: their

descriptions and their different associations with letters. Although I had already studied this topic in my degree, it was very useful to review all these contents. Secondly, we were taught how to teach English vowel and consonant phonemes. We designed an activity in pairs to work with this matter. The activity my peer and I designed was aimed at reviewing English short and long vowels, and we designed this activity for a group in the Official Language School number one, since both of us had done our school placement in that centre. This was the activity that we chose to implement in front of some peers of our class.

We also worked with the topic on English suprasegmental features (stress, intonation and rhythm) and how to teach them. We learnt the different patterns of word stress and the importance of stressing words correctly in a sentence. Besides, we dealt with intonation and the importance of uttering sentences using an adequate intonation so that we convey the correct meaning. We also learnt that the speaker's attitude can be appreciated by the intonation of an utterance and that we have to convey different types of intonation if we want to stop talking or to keep on talking when speaking. Furthermore, we were taught the main features of connected speech, that is to say, assimilation, elision, linking and intrusion, juncture and contractions. We learnt as well that we have to teach all these suprasegmental features to our students. To put this into practice, we designed an activity in pairs to work with word stress.

In addition, we learnt some distinctive features and communication strategies in the oral discourse in English. We dealt with the types of speech events, patterns or structures in communication exchanges, turn-taking, the cooperative principle and speech production. Another important point in this topic was the learners' communication strategies that they use to overcome difficulties, for example. We wrote an essay in pairs about the features in an oral discourse in English and we found many of these features, since we selected our text from an authentic interview in English.

The last topic in the course was about teaching speaking and interaction. Some important aspects to take into account when teaching speaking and interaction are not only fluency, accuracy and complexity but also the topics, text types, performance conditions and the different types of speaking activities. Finally, we were taught how to give feedback, assess and test our students when they speak.

Thanks to this course I am now more capable of expressing myself in English in a correct, fluent and intelligible way bearing in mind the context. I am able to analyze, identify and describe the most relevant aspects in English discourse. Moreover, I can elaborate, plan, put into practice and evaluate activities to teach phonetics and speaking.

What I liked the most about this course was that we did a lot of practice when we were in class. Therefore, it was easier to understand and to apply the theory to the practice. I also liked the activities we did as assessment since they made us be aware of the importance of designing good activities to practice everything learnt in this course and they gave us the opportunity of learning along the course, and not at the end of it.

1.2.2. Module 5. *Diseño y desarrollo de actividades de aprendizaje en la especialidad*

1.2.2.1. *Fundamentos de diseño instruccional y metodologías de aprendizaje en la especialidad de Lenguas Extranjeras*

The main point in this subject, *Fundamentos de diseño instruccional y metodologías de aprendizaje en la especialidad de las lenguas extranjeras*, was to learn how to design a syllabus. This syllabus was based on a book of our choice and all the steps we had to follow were explained to us in class. Within this syllabus, we also developed a learning unit, adapting some of the activities to the possible student diversity. As this module was carried out when the module *Diseño* was finished, everything learnt in it was useful to design our syllabus.

One of the points we dealt with was the methodological approach. We compared how we have evolved from a traditional methodology to a more communicative methodology, in which being able to communicate is the main objective when somebody learns a new language.

The teacher explained some different methods to pass on knowledge as well as the different criteria to choose the appropriate method. We also studied the different types of groupings and the different criteria to work or not in the class with these different types of groupings. Bearing in mind these types of grouping, we learnt that we should try to make students work cooperatively, because learning can be more effective in this way. We also dealt with the advantages and disadvantages of the several types of groupings.

Another important point in this module was the use of communicative approach in class: we should try to design our activities and our lessons so that they are aimed at communicating in real contexts, because this is the main important goal when learning a foreign language.

We also learnt in this module what is required in competitive examinations and we took it into account for the design of our syllabus. We took this and all the theory seen in *Fundamentos* and *Diseño* into account to design our syllabus and our learning unit of work.

This module was useful to know the components of a syllabus, the requirements in competitive examinations and the different methodological approaches. I had never designed neither a syllabus nor a learning unit of work and I had never sat competitive examinations, so everything taught in this module was new for me.

1.2.2.2. Diseño, organización y desarrollo de actividades para el aprendizaje del Inglés

In this course we deepened in the knowledge we had acquired in the first semester in methodology and in the developing of learning units of works. The teachers taught us how to design good activities for the learning units of works we had to design to implement in our centres and they also taught us many educational theories that we had to bear in mind when designing activities.

I learnt how to apply a communicative approach (Widowson 1990; Savignon 1997) to the activities I designed, since this approach is the most important when teaching and learning a language. Besides, I learnt that cooperative learning was really important in a class, so I also took it into account when I designed my learning unit of work. Before taking this subject, I was not aware that this approach to learning was so important and that students could learn a lot if we designed good activities that promoted it, so we learnt the principles of cooperative learning that we have to follow when promoting it. I was also not aware of task-based language teaching before it was taught in this course. I think it is an interesting way of teaching, but in my opinion teachers that have more experience could do it much better when applying this method.

In this course I also learnt some aspects that make somebody a good teacher and some other aspects that should be avoided if you want to be a good teacher. For example, the activities prepared should match students' interest and the teacher should provide opportunities for students to use the language they learn. This was connected to the steps we have to follow to design good learning units and to teach effectively (for example, a teacher should encourage and communicate high expectations for all students and for all learning, establish and communicate learning goals, track students' progress, celebrate success and help students interact with new knowledge).

We also discussed the myths and misconceptions about second language learning and I must say that this discussion was very enriching since many of us took these myths as true and we were very surprised when we realized they were just myths.

We became acquainted with learner differences and multiple intelligences. Students can be differentiated taking into account their different learning styles, multiple intelligences, readiness levels or interests. If we bear in mind these features, we can get to know our students through different techniques: observation, personal interviews, public presentations, making them verbalize their thinking processes or allowing them to form their groups. Therefore, we have to bear in mind these aspects when designing our activities, since we should take into account every student's needs.

We also learnt how to design good listening, reading and writing activities. We were told that we should prepare pre-listening, reading and writing activities, while-listening and reading activities, post-listening, reading and writing activities and follow-ups. I did not know the importance of following these steps and I was surprised to see how useful to design all of them is. We did some brainstorming in little groups in class

about every type of these activities and about each skill and then we put it in common as a whole class, which was very interesting, since I learnt many things from the other students and they gave me ideas to design my own activities.

The concept of “power teaching” was unknown for me until our teacher used these techniques with us and I was surprised how well they worked, not only in our class but also in some videos that we watched in class about this concept. I hope I will be able to carry out these techniques in the future when I become a teacher.

Another important point in this course was to learn how to assess our students. We learnt the importance of carrying out a formative assessment during the course and the importance of using appropriate tools like rubrics to assess some of the activities, like for example writing. I designed one rubric to assess the compositions of my learning unit of work and it was very useful to assess the writing task more efficiently.

We did many warm-ups during the class that could be useful for us as teachers. When I taught my lessons in the Official Language School, I decided to start each lesson with a warm-up because I had realized how important was to start the lesson with an engaging activity.

When we finished with the theoretical part of the course, each of us presented his or her learning unit of work to the rest of the class. It was interesting to listen to other people who had done their school placement in a different context like a secondary school. I liked many of the activities my peers presented and I am sure I will use in the future some of the activities they showed or at least I will use their ideas.

Thanks to this course, I am capable now of identifying and evaluating in a critical way my own beliefs and expectations about the teaching-learning process of a second language. I can also evaluate critically the activities or materials for teaching the different skills as well as grammar and vocabulary, taking into account the communicative and teaching principles. I am able to evaluate, adapt, develop and implement materials and tasks for the teaching of the five skills as well as grammar and vocabulary. In addition, I am also capable of implementing in front of a class activities to practice the five skills as well as grammar and vocabulary activities. I am able to plan and elaborate a sequence of learning taking into account communicative principles. I can design different activities, techniques and resources to assess writing and oral skills. Finally, I am capable of organizing the work in class in an efficient way, giving priority to cooperative learning.

I learnt many things in this course that I had never heard of and I am satisfied with everything I have learnt. Before putting all the knowledge acquired into practice, I thought that it would be impossible for me to integrate all this knowledge in a class and to manage a class efficiently. However, I could design my learning unit of work taking into account the knowledge acquired and I was satisfied with the results, especially with my teaching in the Official Language School.

1.2.3. Module 6. *Evaluación, innovación e investigación en la especialidad*

1.2.3.1. *Evaluación e innovación docente e investigación educativa en Inglés*

In this course we learnt mainly how to carry out an action research. We started the course by defining and differentiating the terms “evaluation”, “innovation” and “research”. We did this activity in groups and it was a good idea to share our opinion with other people so that we could see how our definitions varied.

We also analyzed some pieces of action research so that we could see their structure and how they had been developed by their authors. The teacher divided the class in eight groups of six people and each group had a different action research. After reading the research, each person in the groups had to look for one peer of the rest of the groups. In this way, new groups were created with new members, and every one had different information about an action research. Then, we had to explain in our new groups what the action research we had read was about and how it had been carried out. I consider that it was a good idea to do it this way since we learnt from the things our peers told us.

The main goal in this course was to develop a project. I decided to carry out the project with three other peers that were doing their school placement in other centres. We developed a research project on the effectiveness of role-play to improve oral communication in English among secondary school and official language school students. We chose this topic since we realized that there are many centres where English is not approached in the most efficient way and speaking is not given much importance. We worked together four people of different centres because we wanted to compare the results not only among the students in each centre but also among centres.

Thanks to this course, now I am capable of describing, distinguishing and assessing the fundamental characteristic and components of pieces of educational research project, evaluation project and innovation project. I am also able to look for, select and classify information using different sources. In addition, I am able to identify questions of interest at an individual and at an educational level that can be an object of investigation and I can make innovation proposals.

What I liked the most about this course was the research project we had to carry out. I liked designing the surveys we included in the research with my peers and passing them round to our students to see what their opinion was about the use of role-plays in the classroom. I also liked investigating some pieces of literature to see what had been written about this topic. I consider that the development of this research encouraged me to keep on investigating more topics on education matters.

1.3. Elective subjects

1.3.1. Prevención y resolución de conflictos

My elective subject was *Prevención y resolución de conflictos*. I chose this subject because there are generally lots of conflicts in high schools and I wanted to know how I could prevent and resolve them. Most of the students that chose this subject were waiting for a magic clue that could prevent and resolve conflicts. However, this does not exist. We learnt how to identify the basic components of conflicts and also how to deal with them in case there is a conflict. This module was divided into two parts, one that dealt with the conflicts themselves and the other one that dealt with the regulations of conflicts.

In the first part of the module we dealt with the nature of conflicts. First of all, we worked with our own conflicts in order to think about how we have solved them and how we have felt. This helped us realize that there are several ways of solving conflicts and it made us think about how other people could feel when there is a conflict.

Another important point was to work with how conflicts start and people's attitudes towards them. We compared the advantages and disadvantages between these attitudes and we tried to identify not only negative but also positive elements in conflicts. In order to illustrate the basic components of conflicts (interests, necessities and positions), we learned them as if they could be placed on an iceberg: positions and interests over the water and necessities under the water.

Another point that we worked on was the intensity of conflicts, that is to say, if there was violence and what kind of violence. We also worked on the different personal levels that there are in conflicts and on the three spatial levels of conflicts.

To check if we had understood these basic points, we had to analyze either a film or a book, basing our analysis on the basic components of conflicts of each part involved in the conflict. Furthermore, we also had to suggest a possible positive solution of the conflict: how we would act as mediators. In connection to this point of our analysis, we have learnt some different attitudes and strategies we can adopt to solve a conflict in a positive way. We have also worked on different techniques that we can use to solve our own conflicts.

In the second part of the module, we dealt with the document that regulates the education community's rights and duties and community spirit at schools (*Carta de derechos y deberes de la comunidad educativa y la convivencia escolar*). We studied the principles in which coexistence is based, the objectives of the school community plan and the contents of the internal school regulations that should be included in it. We also studied how these community spirit rules are set up and how and what the objectives, functions and components of the Coexistence Committee are. To make these contents clear, we analyzed in groups some points of a Coexistence Plan of a secondary school of our choice.

In this second part we also dealt with the principles, characteristics, stages and advantages of school mediation. Thanks to this point in the module, we are now conscious of how important it is to create a good community spirit and to apply the principles of school mediation in case there is a conflict.

Although everything I learnt in this module was really useful, I could not see it applied in my Practicum, as I did it in the Official School of Languages and there are normally no conflicts there.

1.3.2. *Tecnologías de la información y la comunicación para el aprendizaje*

My elective subject in the second semester was *Tecnologías de la información y la comunicación para el aprendizaje*. I chose this course since I wanted to wide my knowledge about the technologies a teacher can use in class to improve his / her lessons and motivate students.

In this course I learnt how to use several tools that can be useful as a teacher and for students. First of all, we learnt how a PowerPoint can help us as teachers and also how to design a good PowerPoint: we were given strategies and tips to design an effective presentation: the colours that suit best, the best font, the most suitable length of the text in each slide and the contents that should be included. If we want to support our lessons with a PowerPoint presentation, we should bear these tips in mind so that our discourse would be effective and the students would benefit from our presentation. We had to design a PowerPoint presentation for our speciality and I decided to prepare a PowerPoint presentation about the learning unit of work that I implemented in the Official Language School.

Furthermore, we learnt how to use some tools to design mind maps. These tools can be very useful for students when they have to design one and for teachers if they want to provide them to students. Mind maps can be a great help when trying to learn any subject at school, so it is important that we teach our students how to do it and that we provide them with the tools they can use to create their own mind map. The mind map I designed in this course was about modal verbs and I designed it for students of second year in the advanced level in the Official Language School.

In addition, we learnt how useful an educational video can be and also for what purposes we can use a video with our students. We also talked about the advantages of using a video in class and how we should use it (introducing the topic and the video, stopping from time to time, preparing a debate or some questions after the video...).

Moreover, we became familiar with several online programmes that can be used to create online documents. These online programmes are like the programmes we use in our computer, but you do not have to save anything in your computer and it is always available in any other computer. One of the advantages of these programmes is that you can design surveys, which can be very useful to evaluate yourself as a teacher, or to evaluate the activities you do in class. I designed one survey to evaluate a role-play. This survey must be answered by students after putting into practice the role-play. We

also worked with some tools to create quizzes, cloze tests and other types of activities. Besides, we learnt how to design a well-structured Webquest and which type of Webquest would be more suitable for the subject of our speciality.

Another important tool that we now master is the blog. We were told what a blog should include and the different uses a blog can have. Then, we designed a blog for the subject of our speciality, deciding what we wanted to use the blog for and trying to use as many resources as possible in it: pictures, videos, mind maps or PowerPoint presentations. I designed a blog for the students in the Official Language School that I taught and the purpose of my blog was to create a site where students could have a look at the activities we did in class and also to ask questions if they have any doubt.

We were taught how to design a web for our subject and then we had to design one taking into account what we had been taught. I bore in mind all the sections that an educational web should contain and I designed one in which students could download the activities we had previously done in class, more activities just in case they need to practice more, the syllabus of the subject, some questionnaires to evaluate the subject and some useful links.

Finally, the teacher explained what a wiki was and we had to design one bearing in mind our future students. I decided to create a wiki as if it was a glossary in which students had to collaborate and write some definitions of the words that came up in class. They also had to write their phonetic transcription and a picture whenever possible.

Thanks to this subject, I can describe ICTs' characteristics that influence learning. I am able to develop materials for learning and to find resources that are adequate for teaching. Besides, I am capable of making and maintaining some resources like web pages, blogs or wikis. Furthermore, I can use appropriately those technological resources for teaching.

In conclusion, this course has taught me many educational uses of these tools that I did not know. I have enjoyed using these tools thinking how I could use them in the future. If a teacher uses these resources in an appropriate way, students can really benefit from them and they can be more motivated to participate in class.

1.4. Practicum

1.4.1. Practicum I

My first school placement took place in the Official Language School number 1. In my opinion, this first school placement was one of the most positive experiences of the first semester, because we could observe the lessons and work with real documents in a real environment. We could observe our mentor's classes and somehow participate as well. Another enriching aspect was the fact that we could share our views and ideas not only with our fellows but also with the teachers.

During these two weeks, the management team explained to us the legal framework more clearly, as for example, how the School Council, the Teachers Council and the teacher coordination bodies work. Furthermore, we also dealt with the specific law for Official Language Schools (*Orden de 3 de mayo de 2007 and Orden de 7 de julio de 2008*), which we had not seen in class. Thanks to the teachers and to the management team, I was able to understand better the legal framework.

Moreover, we could establish a first contact with the groups we taught in the following school placements. This first contact was very useful when we had to design our activities for our learning unit, since we got to know the students and we also knew more or less what could work with the groups or not.

1.4.2. Practicum II

In the second school placement I had to put into practice the learning unit of work that I designed for the course *Diseño, Organización y desarrollo de actividades para el aprendizaje del inglés*. During the first weeks, we observed the groups we were going to teach. I already knew the students, since I met them in the first school placement, but it was very positive to work with them again before teaching them so that we could know them better, know what activities they liked, which ones they did not like, people who got along with the others and people who did not like working with other people. All the information that we got during the first weeks was very useful to design the learning unit of work that we implemented in the following weeks.

My mentor suggested me the topic of my learning unit “Television and advertisement”. I liked this topic and I thought that it could be very wide to work with and therefore I could do many things about it. Furthermore, almost everybody watches nowadays somehow TV (on the Internet, for example) so I thought it should not be difficult for students to talk about this topic.

As the students in the classes I taught worked always with the book when my tutor taught them his lessons, I decided to change the methodology and I avoided using the book, since I preferred designing my own activities or taking them from other sources like the Internet. I followed these steps: first of all, I looked for a lot of activities on the Internet that I could use in my lessons and I also had a look at their book just in case I liked any of the activities. I decided to use two activities from the book: one was a short text about the BBC and the other one was a vocabulary activity. I did not change the short text, since it was the first activity of the first lesson and after reading the text we did not use the book anymore. I adapted the vocabulary activity from the book to make it a card activity in which students had to match two parts to form a question.

Secondly, once I had collected some activities from the Internet and I had designed some others, I put them in order since I wanted to devote two of the three days I had available to television and the last one to advertisement. The reason for this division was that I had more activities for the topic of “television” and the topic was

wider. I tried to use a communicative approach in all the activities that I prepared and I also tried to promote cooperative learning with my activities.

Finally, I developed my lesson plans adjusting the time for each activity. I also prepared all the materials necessary, making sure everything was ready for both groups I was going to teach and taking into account that the groups were different (the second group needed more time to do the activities).

I had to put into practice my learning unit of work in two different groups of the second year of the advanced level. Although both groups belonged to the same level, the first group had a higher level of English and were generally more talkative than the second group. However, the difference in the level was not so high and I did not have to change or adapt the activities for the other group.

The first day I had to teach, I was a bit nervous since it was the first time that I had to teach a big group. Everything went well, although it was very hard for me to control timing, as I did not have the practice and I did not want to interrupt students. However, with the second group the control of timing was a bit better and in the second day it was better as well, although this is one of the aspects in which I have to improve. All the activities that I prepared worked well and I think that students liked them. Furthermore, they appreciated not to work with the book for some days, as they found the book a bit boring sometimes.

The students told me that they were happy with my teaching and that they liked the activities that I had prepared. I was happy to hear nice comments from them because before teaching them I was afraid that they would not find the activities interesting or that they would not feel motivated. There was one student that told me that she did not have a TV at home, and she never watched TV on the Internet. I was worried that she would get bored in my lessons, but she told me that I did not have to worry because she was going to use her imagination to talk about the topics I suggested.

Thanks to the second school placement, I am capable of planning English lessons. I am also able to teach in English and I can design a form of assessment for the subject I taught (English). I think that teaching in this centre gave me a great opportunity to teach adults in such a centre where people are really motivated to learn English and they are really involved in the learning process. Although I taught six lessons of 120 minutes each, I would have loved to teach more lessons and I hope that I have the opportunity to work in a centre like this one in the future.

1.4.3. Practicum III

The third school placement was devoted to our research project of the course *Evaluación, innovación e investigación en la especialidad*. During the first week of the school placement, every person in my group looked individually for information, since we were doing our school placement in different centres and we could not meet in the mornings. We read some literature about the topic we wanted to investigate (the use of

role-plays to improve oral communication) and when we gathered together we shared what we had found and we started writing our research project.

During this first week we decided that we would implement at least one role-play in each centre taking into account the topic we were working with at that moment. Besides, we designed the surveys we wanted to pass round in our centres: we designed one survey for our mentors, in which they were asked about how they worked speaking in the lessons, if speaking was an important part of their lessons and their opinions about the use of role-plays in their lessons; the second survey we designed was for students and we gave it to students before doing a role play. In this second survey they were asked about how they practiced communication inside the centre and outside the centre, if they took part in speaking activities in class and if they enjoyed doing speaking activities. The third survey was given after the role-play was put into practice and students were asked about the usefulness of the role-play to improve pronunciation, intonation, to increase their lexis, their feelings when implementing the role-play and if they would like to do more role-plays.

When the third school placement was finished, we gathered together again and we shared the results each of us had collected in the centre. We finished writing our literature part of the project and we analyzed the results. After analyzing the results, we wrote the research project and prepared the presentation. We noticed that there were different results depending on the centre and on the age as well. We enjoyed carrying out this project, since it was interesting to compare four different centres and the opinions of so many students.

During this third school placement, I also did a self-evaluation taking as a reference the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL). It was very useful to analyze our teaching with this guide, since it helped me realize my weak points that I had to improve and the ones I was doing right.

Thanks to this school placement I was able to focus on an area of learning which was particularly relevant to the teaching of English and I can also develop a research project on it. Furthermore, the research project has helped me to develop a critical approach and be more analytical with my teaching; establishing clear differences of work level, students' levels and other key aspects.

Conclusions and future approaches

Everything that I know now about education I have learnt it thanks to all the courses in this Master. Before enrolling in this Master I did not know many things about laws that regulate education, the regulations at schools or the different methodologies that a teacher can use. I also did not know how ICTs could be used in educational contexts and now I am able of designing activities or resources using ICTs.

Therefore, I consider that I have improved in many aspects as a future teacher and that I have acquired a huge knowledge on education. I have acquired a great knowledge about the curricula that regulate different types of education (*ESO, Bachillerato and Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas*) and this is due to the learning of them in these studies, since I had never read any of these curricula before.

I also consider that now I am capable of designing activities for students, taking into account all the knowledge acquired in the different courses. In my opinion, I have learnt a lot in this field and I would like to keep on designing activities for students when I become a teacher, since I have realized that students appreciate doing different activities and not only using the book. I consider that this is one way of engaging students in the learning process and it is important to make them feel part of it. I have also become acquainted with other ways of engaging and motivating students that I would like to incorporate to my teaching, such as giving feedback to students, celebrating success, establishing clear learning goals or tracking their progress.

Regarding the use of different materials, I think it is also positive for students to use real English materials since they get used to the English that is spoken in real contexts. Apart from using materials that contain real English, it is also important to design and use activities that could be applied to real life, such as role-plays or dialogues that take place in contexts which students are likely to confront. If teachers use this kind of materials, students will feel that they are learning something practical and they will make a greater effort if they consider that what they are learning will be of use in the future.

One of my areas of interest is cooperative learning. Before I enrolled in these studies the concept of “cooperative learning” was unknown for me but I have realized how important it is to promote it. Consequently, I would like to continue researching into this area of teaching and learning and to incorporate it to my own procedures. An active methodology can be more appealing for students since it involves them in the learning process and it is a more efficient way of learning.

As far as the school placements are concerned, I think they are necessary in this Master and they have actually been some of the best parts of this academic year. It is very enriching to be in a real education centre and to be in touch with students and with teachers who have been working for so long and their experience is so wide. In the centre where I did my school placements, Official Language School number one, I felt

very comfortable every moment and I learnt many things from the teachers and from the students there.

I have also become familiar with many resources like different web pages where I can choose activities and use them in class. Furthermore, I can also design activities using ICTs that can be engaging and motivating for students. I consider that the use of ICTs is essential in education and I would like to continue designing activities with these tools. Moreover, I would like to use ICTs on a regular basis in my lessons, since I think they are a great support to teach any subject and they help most of the students understand what you are explaining.

Besides, I have realized how enriching it is to share what we have designed with other students or student-teachers since other people can benefit from our activities and we can benefit from theirs. I have appreciated that we have shared in some subjects the activities we have designed since it can be useful in the future to use these activities or to adapt them to the ones we want to use.

I had never developed a research project before I did it in the course *Evaluación, innovación e investigación*. However, I consider that research projects are very useful to improve our own teaching or to help other teachers improve their methodology and I would like to keep on researching different fields, for example, which types of activities help improve oral skills or how writing can be improved.

Regarding lesson plans, I am capable now of designing, following and adjusting them to timing or to students. When I taught the groups in the second school placement, I had prepared too many activities because I did not know exactly how long it would take to do each activity. However, I changed the timing devoted to each activity or I ruled out some activities as the lesson went along. For the following lessons, I prepared fewer activities since I was more capable of calculating and controlling the timing.

As far as other future approaches are concerned, I would like to keep on improving all the aspects that I can improve. I would like to be able to use “power teaching” techniques in my lessons, since it is an effective way of gaining students’ attention and making students learn more effectively due to the active methodology used. As these techniques may not be widely known in Spanish education system, I would like to use them when I become a teacher and maybe other teachers will like them and use them.

I would also like to improve in the field of lesson planning: what learning objectives I should focus on in every moment, how I can deal with them or what materials are the most appropriate. I would also like to keep on designing activities that have a communicative approach and that promote cooperative learning taking into account students’ needs and likes.

Regarding the research project I carried out with my group and taking into account that role-plays seemed to be useful to improve oral skills, I would suggest that

role-plays should be an important part of every learning unit and they should be practiced more frequently. Furthermore, I think it would be a good idea if students had a short list or rubric to assess their peers' performance so that everybody would have feedback at the end of the activity and everybody would know what their strong and weak points are. In this short rubric students could be asked about their peers' accuracy (intonation, pronunciation, use of register and style...) and about their peers' fluency, for example.

Concerning assessment, I would prefer to follow a formative assessment than a summative assessment in my lessons, since it is fairer for students and it provides immediate information about the learning process. When I was a student at primary and secondary school, every teacher used a summative assessment and I would prefer avoiding it with my students because I think they can learn more effectively if a formative assessment is used.

Although my school placement took place in a centre where all the students were adults, I would not mind to teach other students who belong to other age ranges. I think that secondary schools are very different from Official Language Schools and I would also like to become familiar with this educational context since teaching in this kind of centres is a new challenge that I want to face up as a teacher.

One of the aspects in which secondary schools and Official Language Schools differ is differentiation. In the latter centre, differentiation is not taken into account but there are normally differences in students' level that should be born in mind and dealt with them. In my opinion, extra activities could be prepared for students that need some help but also for the ones who have a higher level and would like to continue improving their English at home.

In conclusion, this Master has broadened my knowledge and has also opened up new areas of knowledge. Although I have linked my knowledge with practice, I see the need for improvement in this profession so that I fulfil the expectations of the teacher I want to become. Life-long learning is a must so I would like to keep on improving my teaching procedures and to incorporate everything new that I learn to my methodology.

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APPENDIXES
