

Trabajo fin de Máster (modalidad A)

Especialidad de lenguas extranjeras (inglés)

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Obligatoria, Bachillerato, Formación Profesional y Enseñanza de

Idiomas, Artísticas y Deportivas

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1) INTRODUCTION

The decision to undertake the “Máster Universitario en Profesorado de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, Bachillerato, Formación Profesional y Enseñanza de Idiomas, Artísticas y Deportivas” was motivated by the necessity to hold this title to be able to take the civil service entrance exams to work in Secondary Education, or to work as a Secondary School teacher in State Schools.

At the beginning of this master, my expectations were, on the one hand, the desire to achieve the title, and on the other, to gain access to the secondary school teaching world which I did not know up to then, since I only have the qualification required to teach in Primary School. It is worth mentioning that after finishing this master I have realised that there is a great similarity between both fields, secondary and primary. A similarity which is expressed in a wide range of academic criteria. Apart from this, teachers have the same important role in the classroom, in both contexts, taking into consideration the diversity that is encountered, something which is both challenging and complicated, as well as rewarding.

My final project for the Master, which represents the end of my teaching training, commences with a short introduction explaining briefly the sections which make up the contents, to make it easier to follow. Furthermore, the introduction shows the teaching profession from a theoretical point of view and from my experience in the education centre, taking the changes which have been produced in the present society into account their influence in education, as well as, the role of the teacher in the face of the present diversity in the classroom.

The second chapter deals with the purpose of the assignments and projects developed throughout the Master. The tasks and projects are analysed , as well as the relationship between them in the third chapter.

To finish this end of the Master dissertation, some conclusions are drawn as well as some proposals for the future and the bibliography used throughout the

task. The research project and the practicum portfolios are also included in the appendix.

1.1 The Teaching Profession

We are living in a social context where some parameters such as progress and innovation are in constant change, for this reason teaching has become a complicated profession which is developed in an uncertain framework and in a world of constant technological innovation. This dynamic system not only affects the way we understand our job, but also the family unit and the media. In this context, one of the numerous challenges is to offer quality education to provide society with highly qualified professionals. I do not mean we will discriminate against students with less potential. The idea is to treat everyone all the same irrespective of their differences in aptitude, social class and ethnic origins, thus promoting the idea of social equality.

Teachers are the essential actors to promote quality education (paragraph 69 of Dakar's declaration, (World Educational Forum on Education, April 2000: paragraph 69). (My translation)

To be more precise, as the Dakar declaration states, our aim as teachers is to provide education in order to promote individuals who will contribute to a future society based on the human rights Principles. To guarantee sustained social development, it is also necessary to reinforce social values such as a sense of justice and solidarity.

This makes reference to quality education available for everyone, a claim based on the inclusive principle that every human has the right to be educated.

This is a complicated task which a teacher has to perform. From my own experience on teaching training and from the input received in teacher training tutorials, I can say this is a hard job, but we have to do our best to succeed.

For some subjects of this master, for example "Diseño Curricular de las Lenguas extranjeras, procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje", the Official

Curriculum establishes key points to follow in the development of the teaching process.

Teachers have to be aware of the necessities of their students who are the main factor to take into account in order to develop their work as teachers.

The latest approaches towards successful language teaching and learning aim to focus on communicative competence as the main goal. Moreover, the Information Technology society we live in has modified education forever. These facts bring with them meaningful changes in the role of the teacher not only regarding preparation, planning and assessing but also in classroom management. Approaches such as task-based or communicative teaching imply social interaction and therefore everybody is involved in the process of learning. The responsibility of the learning and teaching process is no longer on the teacher who has to share that responsibility with his/ her students as well.

1.1.1 The teacher as a guide

Current methodology demands an active role from the students and they may contribute explicitly and implicitly with their previous knowledge and understanding of the world, as does the teacher (Legutke and Thomas: 19). Therefore, in the core of the interactional process, negotiation becomes a key element that will inevitably lead to a greater autonomy of the students while the teacher acknowledges his/ her role as a guide within the learning process as well. Contrary to the traditional classroom, the teacher does not provide the input for the students to copy. In my opinion, the idea is that s/he should not be a model for learners to imitate but an inspiration for them to create their own pieces of work. For this purpose, the teacher must push the students out of their comfort zone in order to get them to think critically enabling them to become lifelong learners. Thus, s/he will facilitate the necessary tools and situations for students to learn by doing. All these strategies will contribute to create the appropriate atmosphere where the students will be willing to learn.

As we have seen all along this Master, some of the main teaching challenges are to get students engaged, so that they feel motivated when speaking, and to provide them with meaningful communicative situations. Language is a vehicle of communication and the teacher is a facilitator of the learners own natural potential. However, that raw material on the side of the learners needs to be conducted towards autonomy and responsibility in the process of learning. Therefore, providing opportunities for students to become autonomous and responsible and helping them expressing their preferences on the topics and tasks to work on is vital. It is at this point that negotiation takes place changing the way classes are planned as it involves more flexibility in order to fit the students' needs. To meet these requirements is also important to place emphasis on the process of learning which allow students to progress along the way. Otherwise, students might not be aware of their strengths and weaknesses and won't be able to improve their performance, which is the main goal.

1.1.2. Assessment and feedback

Regarding teaching and learning processes I think feedback is crucial. Formative assessment may change the way students study and learn. Pilar Mur once said in class that changing testing should make everything change. She was referring to the university entrance examination which turns Bachillerato classes basically into rephrasing courses. In my opinion testing is neither fair nor meaningful. Therefore, feedback needs to be constant in order to let students know how they are doing and leave room for improvement. Some useful tools I have discovered during this course are rubrics and checklists. These prove very efficient tools of assessing as they can give students an idea on what is expected of them. Moreover, teacher assessment is not in contradiction with peer-assessment which, in my opinion, proves even more useful because it raises students' awareness.

1.1.3. Updating and Researching

However, how can we ever become competent professionals if we do not keep on educating and training ourselves? Something I realised during this year, and which I think it is a shame, is that many teachers do not make the most of the opportunities and resources at their disposal.

The LOE National Curriculum has amongst its principles the idea to finance and promote research, experimentation and educational innovation, and it even considers research and innovation as factors which favour quality, together with the training and qualification of teachers, team work, etc.(My translation)

I strongly believe that self-recycling should be a must in this profession. Keeping updated not only regarding the knowledge of her/his subject matter but also of the tools, trends and resources is part of the teacher's job. In fact, to truly ensure a quality education, teachers have to keep on updating and adapting themselves to the changing reality and its current needs. This links with the recent role of the teacher as a researcher. I came across this idea at the beginning of the course and I like it more every day. It seems logical that teachers might want to investigate more deeply what s/he is daily experimenting with. As previously mentioned, this leads to teacher performance improvement. This new role makes even more sense in collaboration with other colleagues as they can share impressions and findings that might be useful for the educational community as a whole.

To conclude this chapter I think it is interesting to say that the new policies derived from the evident inability of the educational system to make students fluent in foreign languages have brought with them new approaches to language teaching.

As the " Conserjería de Educación y Ciencia " states: "Teaching staff are a key element in every educational process, and for that reason their active participation in the centre and positive personal motivation towards the development of education, as well as their professional development, recognition of the importance of their work, and their commitment to promoting its social appreciation are considered to be of special transcendence.(2000) (My translation)

I think the teacher becomes a guide rather than a model transferring knowledge to a receptive student. Nowadays the classroom is an interactive space where knowledge is actively created by the group. Bearing this in mind, the teacher has to provide students with the tools, resources and strategies that will enable them to take charge of their learning.

2) RATIONALE OF THE CHOICE: RESEARCH PROJECT AND THE II AND III PRACTICUM EXPERIENCES

Throughout all the academic Master year, numerous tasks and projects have been undertaken. Some of them have been of special relevance in my academic training as a teacher, and others have not. For that reason, my selection of the two tasks for the elaboration of an in-depth analysis is based on the importance that they have had in my training. That is to say, they are the ones I was able to learn most from and which made me grow as a teacher, as well as the ones I was able to carry out with greater ease.

On the one hand, the investigation and innovation project carried out for the subject "Teaching Evaluation and Innovation" seemed to me to be an interesting challenge. At the same time it seemed to be a project in which I was free to choose the topic about which I had to investigate in the Centre where I was to carry out my teaching practice. This is the main reason why it is one of those chosen to talk about in the following chapter.

On the other hand, the II and III Practicum experiences have been quite important in my academic development as well. It is interesting to know real contexts which you can find in your work as a teacher.

In my opinion, theory is necessary to become a teacher. To learn some theoretical aspects is essential to develop your work in a correct way. However, it is also needed to put all this theoretical knowledge into practice in real contexts in order to know which aspects are necessary to improve and which are more useful. On some occasions, theory does not fit with reality. Because of that, to know the real contexts of education allows you to learn some aspects which are not possible to learn in the university lessons. Apart from that, in the development of your teaching practice you can also learn from other professionals, and above all from your students. This can make you reflect about different aspects of your teaching approach,

For all these reasons, the second assignment to analyze was the II and III Practicum experiences where I carried out two portfolios which hold my personal reflections. Throughout them I could also know in-depth the context

where I had to put my research project into practice, because it is necessary to know the contextualization of your teaching practice in order to achieve a better pedagogical innovation. In the next section, as in case of the research project, I will talk about the most important and relevant points which appear in these Practicum portfolios.

3) CRITICAL REFLECTION

As aforementioned, these two assignments (the project research and Practicum Portfolios) have been the most constructive ones throughout my education as a teacher. First I will talk about each one separately, and then the connection between them will be explained too.

3.1. Research project

This project was carried out in the second term for the subject "Evaluación e innovación docente e investigación educativa en el ámbito de la especialidad de inglés" and it dealt with the topics of evaluation and innovation on the teaching practice. The subject was divided into two different periods: the first one, concerning the preparation for the research that we carried out in the teaching place; and the second one that involved the implementation and creation of the research project. This subject helped me to understand the importance of evaluating a teaching-learning process and of innovating through a previous stage of collection and analysis of data.

The subject made me think about the terms 'Evaluation' and 'Innovation' and their relation with the process of research. These are some of the reflections on the topic:

Evaluation describes the process through which you become aware of your own work as a teacher or a student. It is the phase in which the teacher and the learner can see how the process of learning is getting on. Evaluation must be quite frequent and well-framed by the teacher in order to be effective for all learners. Evaluation also involves materials, tasks, classroom dynamics, decisions taken, etc.

We can evaluate through a variety of resources such as exams, activities, observation, feedbacks... but it is important to take the learning process and the effort into account, not only to assess the final results because each student has different a rhythm of learning and capacities.

Innovation is the contribution of new elements or strategies in any process or context. In education, it has to do with the evolution of the teaching process in order to bring in new contexts for the improvement of the process itself. Innovation is a really important quality which all teachers should have. It consists of creating and changing some aspects in the teaching-learning process in order to engage and keep our students motivated, and to reach better results. It has to be an instrument to improve the methods and learning process. So, innovation must be seen as an improvement in the learning outcomes and teaching methods, not only in terms of results but also in terms of conditions.

I think innovation in the class has to be connected with the characteristics and preferences of the students. Teachers can discover this kind of things through for example: feedbacks, portfolios, negotiations... An innovative teacher is someone who is open-minded, practical, creative, and imaginative and engaged in his/her work in class.

Research is the activity which is directed to get new knowledge to solve or improve some aspects. Research involves investigating, observing, exchanging ideas; it is the instrument to innovate. Research, thus, is the objective proof of the outcomes of innovation in one of the elements of the teaching process.

As aforementioned, one of the activities of the subject was the carrying out of a Research Project. The one that I carried out with a classmate dealt with the topic of "The importance of music in second language acquisition".

This research was put into practice at the State High School Miguel de Molinos, situated in a working-class neighborhood called Actur, in Zaragoza. This is not a large High School due to the fact that it is located in a newly built neighborhood. Their students come from a nearby state Primary School, Miguel Labordeta, which is a bilingual Primary School.

Miguel de Molinos has a bilingual program regulated by the British Council in 1st and 2nd year of ESO. This program can be studied by the students who come from the school Miguel Labordeta because it has a bilingual program as well.

Students must pass an exam if they want to participate in the bilingual program and they do not come from a bilingual School.

The bilingual program (1st, 2nd ESO) follows the CLIL project which refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focussed aims, namely the learning of content, and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language'. (Marsh,1994). In the case of this High School, this program consists of five lessons of English and three lessons of Science and History (L2) every week. These five lessons of English are divided in the following way:

<i>Monday</i>	<i>English textbook: they follow the ordinary textbook.</i>
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Foreign language assistant: they can interact about different kind of topics with a British language assistant.</i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>English textbook: They follow the ordinary textbook.</i>
<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Literacy: they develop all skills with a workbook elaborated by the teacher.</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>Literature book: they listen and read different books.</i>

The students chosen to carry out the research project were from 2nd year of ESO. After knowing the context of the research, I consider it important to explain the purposes and the process of elaboration of that project being critical in some aspects I should improve.

Second language acquisition is a complex and an important process. There are lots of approaches, methods, materials to learn and ways to teach a new language, but actually there is not an “infallible” technique to learn it.

As teachers, we should know that each student is different and we have to take their personal characteristics and interests into account to decide the best combination to carry out the best teaching and learning process with our students. In the research, one of the most important goals was to know the interests of our students in order to adapt the materials for them. I think it is always important to keep them motivated and to promote their participation and their interest in the English language.

Krashen's second hypothesis, the "Affective Filter hypothesis," According to this hypothesis, the extent to which linguistic input is received from the environment depends largely upon the learner's "affect", that is his inner feelings and attitude. *(Stephen D. Krashen, 1987:31)*.

Taking this hypothesis into account, we decided to relate the use of music as a resource to this learning environment. Using music in lessons promotes a positive mental attitude. This positivism has to be present in the interest of the second language teacher to provide an environment which evokes positive emotions. Music does precisely that. Whether learners simply listen to instrumental music, vocalize in the target language, or sing in unison, it is always a pleasurable experience.

All humans are born with a propensity to excel in all of eight distinct types of intelligences, yet their ability to bring these up to date is largely dependent upon the influences of culture, motivation level and experiences *(Howard Gardner, 1998)*.

As a result, most individuals tend to excel in only one or two of these areas. There are several implications for educators. First, Gardner believes that it is the responsibility of educational institutions to cultivate these intelligences. Also, educators need to be reminded that historically schools have focused on the development of only two of these intelligences: linguistic and logical/mathematical skills. Such a perspective is narrow since humans possess a greater number of intelligences,

According to Gardner, schools need to acknowledge and foster a broader range of intelligences. Therefore, teachers need to instruct in ways that tap a wide variety of intelligences. Although it is impossible to tap all intelligences at all times, teachers need to incorporate a variety of strategies. Using music as a

vehicle for second language learning is consistent with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Music can be used in any number of ways to teach the second language to second language learners. Students may listen to instrumental background music while writing an essay. To elicit verbal responses, students may be asked to listen to classical or jazz music. In order to acquire new vocabulary, students may listen to a song that tells a story while the teacher points to pictures, illustrations of key vocabulary words. Students may learn to sing songs with lyrics containing key target language structures. Clearly, there are numerous ways in which music can be used to teach the second language, so students will also cultivate the musical intelligence which Gardner speaks of. Furthermore, those students who have average musical intelligence will benefit even more.

La inteligencia musical encuentra su antecedente más claro en la Sugestopedia, que se servía de la música por su valor terapéutico: con el fin tanto de relajar a los alumnos, como de estructurar, organizar y dar ritmo a la presentación del material lingüístico (Richards y Rodgers, 2003:102).

Music has a positive impact on students. Most educators do not know the benefits of music on second language acquisition. As teachers, we should develop this intelligence because it promotes concentration, creativity, relaxation and motivation.

These were the main reasons to carry out this research about music with the students. Among other purposes we wanted to demonstrate the effectiveness of music in the English learning process using it as a tool of encouragement and motivation.

The research project was created through our observation and the results which we obtained during the Practicum II and III at the State High School Miguel de Molinos.

Apart from that, we designed a questionnaire and submitted it to a group of senior students to find out the interests of our students, because, as I said

before, we consider it very important to motivate/captivate their interest in the activities. These surveys show their interests and also their habits with regard to music. This was a complex process.

To design surveys is not a simple task, it is necessary to take some aspects into account before starting to carry them out. They have to be made up of open and closed questions, being more important the closed ones. Some open questions appeared in our surveys. These kinds of questions are always more complete but also more difficult to analyze in view of the statistical study. In relation with the surveyed students, I can say that the size of the sample was not enough to get effective results.

Due to the fact we are not professionals in designing surveys, it is advisable to look for some information before starting this task. Otherwise it is possible to use different types of instruments to carry out an investigation, such as interviews or our own observation.

Regarding to the collection and analysis of the information from the questionnaires, it is relevant to say that although the obtained information was useful and reliable, a long period of time is required to carry them out, and they give a limited and simplified view of reality.

We considered it interesting to elaborate another survey addressed to the teachers from this High School. This focused on how they used music in their lessons, and what their opinion was about it. It is important to mention that the collaboration from the teaching team to fill the questionnaires was totally unsatisfactory with regard to collecting any information. It could have been more efficient to conduct some individual interviews or to be present in any class to get reliable information.

As for the results of the students' surveys, I must say that we collected valid results that allowed us to prepare some activities with songs which met their interests and needs. These activities were successful being the students the main protagonist of their learning process in a motivated and participative way. To be sure of the success of the activities, I carried out "one minute paper" to

know their feelings and thoughts after the development of the activities. They have to answer with their own words to the following questions: what have you learn today?, and I have still doubts about... They answered sincerely, and the feedback was satisfactory. There were not many doubts to solve, so I can say that I was very pleased with the results.

In conclusion, I have to say that one of our research goals was achieved: to carry out creative and original activities to motivate and encourage our students. I can say that to develop a research project is not an easy task. I have to admit that some aspects need to be improved. In general, I have felt self confidence carrying out this project because as I said before I was free to choose the research topic and I liked that fact. It was a great and enriching experience and I have learnt a lot during its development such as the elements which are important to take into account when researching.

Tanto la bidireccionalidad de la interacción entre profesor y alumnado, como el reconocimiento de las características de aprendizaje individuales de cada estudiante son variables que influyen en el proceso educativo, pero existen otras muchas, como indica Donald Freeman (1998:77).

This refers to the five main elements which are important to do research and to influence on the classroom environment. These five elements are the following: the teacher, each student, the activity, the place and the contents.

Attitudes and actions of teachers are influenced by their opinions, experiences and beliefs. Activities are made up by actions which are carried out in class, the interaction patterns, correct language and the students' workclass. Contents are determined by the subject's program, planning and materials. The last element, the place, refers to the context where the interaction and work between students and teachers take place.

Although researching is a hard and complex work, it is necessary in the learning-teaching process as a tool for innovation and improvement.

3.2. The II and III Practicum experiences

The second practicum experience took place at the State High School Miguel de Molinos in the same context where the research project, mentioned in the previous section, was developed. After carrying out the first practicum experience, which consisted in forming an awareness of how the centre functioned, it was then time to go more deeply into the working of the classrooms, to know how the teaching-learning process functioned – the one that we had heard of so much.

The practicum teaching experience was a pleasure to me. It was a real opportunity to learn about the students and about myself as a teacher, about the relationship and the connection which is established between teacher and pupil.

The observation period was the most important for me, since it gave me the foundations to be able to develop my teaching goals and numerous ideas about how to put into practice the activities which I had prepared in my learning unit to be taught to the pupils.

Although I had nearly finished a complete learning unit when I arrived at the centre, it was in this second period of observation when I could really see the dynamics of the lessons, and I had to make numerous changes to adapt my learning unit to the characteristics of the context where I was going to put it into practice, since the unit that I had designed was thought up with the ideal class in mind. I thought it was important not to change the dynamic of the lessons which they were used to. However, I liked the dynamics of this bilingual program which I was unaware of until then. Above everything, teachers used a communicative methodology, carrying out very participative and active lessons. The main present element in each lesson was the interaction between the teacher and the students. They developed oral skills much more than written skills. In my opinion, they lacked the latter, because students were not used to writing activities, but to mostly oral. They had a really high oral level; they were capable to answer any question which was asked without any problem and to

talk about different kind of topics.

After making numerous changes to my learning unit, I finally managed to adapt the activities and the contents to the necessities and objectives of my pupils, with the aim of achieving a successful implementation.

At the time of putting the sessions into practice, the activities met with a favorable response from the students, demonstrating that they were very participative and motivated during their implementation. I carried out some peer assessment with the students in order to know the results of my activities.

One of the aspects to be improved, at the time of planning and putting into practice in the sessions, was the time of implementation, or “timing” since I found it really complicated to be able to anticipate the time required for each activity. In my opinion, knowledge of the context and the characteristics of your pupils is always a very important aspect when it comes to programming the time aspect of a lesson and planning productive activities which are well suited to their needs.

In general, the carrying out of this work experience was very rewarding, since as I mentioned before there is a big gap between theory and practice. In a real situation it is possible to put the theoretical knowledge into practice that has been acquired and to study the results to analyze which ones have to be improved.

In order to finish this critical reflection about my II and III practicum experiences I would also like to emphasize again the need for careful observation which also was performed during this period.

I really felt very lucky to be allocated in the Center and the tutor I was assigned, since I could see perfectly how an excellently organized bilingual system worked. We are talking about a recently implanted program which requires a great effort and commitment for its correct implementation. The teachers who participated in this program were very involved, always trying to carry out projects and activities that were stimulating for the pupils. It is really a hard and

difficult job which inspires me with admiration and respect.

The group of teachers of this bilingual program was composed of some teachers from different departments. They worked in a cooperative way because they had to establish the contents for each group taking into account their levels, and also to carry out different projects for the different subjects, such as English geography or English culture. These teachers also kept in touch with the teachers from the Primary School, Jose Antonio Labordeta, to correlate the contents of primary education with the Secondary Education. I liked this fact because I think it is very important to be in cooperation with Primary Education teachers, since this way it is possible to know the previous knowledge of your students and they can continue with a more effective learning process.

The third and last practicum experience, which came immediately after the Second, has a very direct relationship with the research project aforementioned. What I am talking about is, on the one hand, putting the research projects into practice at the Centers whilst at the same time reflecting on its process, the ease and the difficulty which we found in its implementation; and, on the other hand, reflecting on the EPOSTL document, which allowed us to carry out a self assessment of our performance in the implementation of our teaching practice.

As I have clearly specified in my critical analysis of the project about the use of music in the L2 acquisition, it was a hard task, but at the same time a rewarding job, with numerous aspects which have to be improved and to be taken into consideration in potential future educational research.

Before starting my teaching practice at the Educational Center, I devoted time to fill in the EPOSTL document. It is a very complete document, a very useful tool for self assessment. It contains a check list of all of the aspects of teaching and it helps you to know which areas need to be improved and which areas you are properly qualified for. Moreover, it is a manual where you can consult along with the time. It can help you to reflect objectively about the way you teach.

Of course there are numerous aspects that I must improve to become an outstandingly effective teacher; from my way of planning to the way I evaluate. After my teaching practice I could see the difference between my style of teaching and the ideal style set out in the self evaluation document (EPOSTL), being at the same time able to trace my improvement along the time. Even though we did not have a lot of time to be able to improve in all of the areas, I was indeed capable of correcting certain important aspects to improve my lessons and use them as a point of reference to progress in the future.

It goes without saying that it is not a simple thing to be a teacher. The ideal teacher is an expert motivator, with optimum efficiency which means being perfectly *tuned into* or aware of the uniqueness of every class. To put it in another way, the teacher must have his or her "*finger on the pulse*" of the class: this means instantly knowing the response to input, activities, controlled practice, an instinctive sense of how one activity leads logically into another, the motivation of the students, and points when this is fading, and so on. It is my view that these abilities are only completely acquired with experience.

Putting it, the teacher must learn good classroom management, to be an effective communicator and planner, I mean to develop a charismatic personality which is able to inspire the class. Once these obstacles have been overcome, the road is open to effectively teach students so that they genuinely learn and then be able to accurately assess that learning. Involved in this whole process is the concept of *feedback*: effective teaching means that the teacher gives positive information to the students about how they are doing a specific task, the progress they are making, and how to do something better in the future. Here effective correction becomes an important factor: a teacher must know when to overlook a mistake, when to gently correct it, and when to make an issue of an important error – but being careful not to cause any embarrassment to the student involved. Positive correction boosts a student's confidence and makes them more effective learners, insensitive, rough-handed correction can cause students' alienation, feelings of hostility, lack of motivation, and at worst cause disruptive behavior and student failure.

Having the “finger on the pulse of the class”, as I said before must be an ongoing thing. Every class is like a *living organism*, its activities, reactions, situations, and the feelings manifested as a consequence of certain outcomes must be carefully studied and procedures developed to be able to deal with unpredictable outcomes. On the side of the teacher, his duty, as well as that of assessing the class is to be able to assess his or her own performance according to the guidelines set out in the EPOSTL document.

To conclude this section about the critical analysis of the previous documents and experiences, it is important to reflect on some connections which exist between them:

The research project is closely linked to the two practicum experiences explained previously. The reasons behind these relations would be possible to summarize in the following way:

As I have already specified, the II practicum experience enabled me to enter into the classrooms, to know the pupils, their characteristics and needs, and the dynamics of the teaching and learning process which they were used to.

Taking all of this data into consideration, the research project was put into action with the students named before with the aim of motivating them and grabbing their attention during the lessons.

I am aware of the fact that without the previous knowledge of the class, in spite of its shallowness because of time limitations, the putting into action of the project would have been much more complicated and ineffective.

Thanks to the results obtained in the research, I was able to carry out different activities with the students in my lesson plan which had a successful result.

Finally, once the research had been carried out and put into practice in the lessons, it was then the time to reflect on the results obtained. These reflections which appear in the practicum portfolios II and III were helped by the self-evaluation document EPOSTL.

4) FUTURE PROPOSALS AND CONCLUSIONS

A good teacher should possess the teaching competence. This competence is characterized by the capacity, which is the predisposition to teach. That is to say the right mental attitude previous to the activity of teaching. Such a predisposition gives the teacher inevitably the competence to be able to carry out certain actions. Another element of the teaching competence is to have an officially recognized University Academic Degree.

That is not to say that having the right attitude and an academic title you automatically have the ability to teach. In my opinion, this is only the start point of a long teaching apprenticeship.

It could be said that this is the stage I find myself at. I always thought that I would be a good teacher because it has been my vocation from a very early age. Moreover, I believe that my personality will have a positive influence on my lessons, that I will be someone with a special impact on the lives of my students, or at least that is what I aim to achieve.

After demonstrating my ability, my predisposition to teach, and to finish my university studies which accredit my competence to be able to teach the English language in particular, and which give me the right to be able to teach this subject in the primary and secondary sector, now it is time to obtain the whole teaching competence.

Professional Competence is the combination of personality traits, attitudes, knowledge and abilities which make it possible to carry out certain professional functions recognized in the academic world and the work market (Alvarez, 2010)(My translation)

There is no competence without application. For this reason, the elements associated with competences are knowledge (to know), skills (to do) and attitudes (to be). Such an educative competence is not acquired in any other way than experimenting in the professional field of education. At the moment, there are many things that I could improve in the future whether through formal investigation or direct experience. Of course, I think that, by now, I have to work

hard to improve almost every aspect of teaching, from the very first moment of planning to the assessment of learning.

It is also important to name the cognitive dimension of the personal and professional competence, which is necessary for the educative function to have a sense. The cognitive competences of the teacher refer principally to the four principal areas of the teaching profession.

These fields are the following: the relational area of each pupil and as a group, the relational area with other teachers, directors and other professionals, the relational area with families and the community, and finally the relational area with themselves. In this process the stage of initial training is fundamental, the moment in which I find myself. But this moment is definitely not the most crucial to be competent, since, as I pointed out before, the title is not everything, rather it is the experience, the ongoing training of oneself as a professional which counts.

To continue, and basing this on all that has been said before, one of my proposals for the future could be summarized by the need to continue training as a professional teacher with the passage of time, learning from everything that could be around me, from my pupils, right up to the professionals in the same educative field. I strongly believe that it is very important to be continually growing, both professionally and personally since it contributes to one's own personal satisfaction.

Las TIC ofrecen la posibilidad de interacción que pasa de una actitud pasiva por parte del alumnado a una actividad constante, a una búsqueda y replanteamiento continuo de contenidos y procedimientos. Aumentan la implicación del alumnado en sus tareas y desarrollan su iniciativa, ya que se ven obligados constantemente a tomar "pequeñas" decisiones, a filtrar información, a escoger y seleccionar. Palomo, Ruiz y Sánchez (2006)

In my opinion, the use of ITC in the learning and teaching process is very important. Up to now, the information and communication technologies have been marginalized because of the necessity of knowing their use, and there is also a lack of resources in this aspect.

From my own experience, I can say that I have seen large number of teachers in my Primary and Secondary school teaching practices who were unaware of the use of the ITC. They do not know anything about these technologies which are necessary to know in the actual society. The problem is that teachers have not received the necessary information about ICT.

For all these reasons, other of my proposals for the future will be to promote the education on ICT for teachers.

To conclude, I would like to say that throughout this academic year I have been able to acquire a lot of knowledge which has been transmitted to me by the teachers of the different subjects, but above all I have learnt through experiences, from doing team work projects with classmates, from establishing connections with teachers, putting my own learning unit into practice, having talks with different professionals from the educative field, and above all I have been able to learn from my students during the teaching practice experiences, without which it would not have been possible to correct my errors and to know my strong points.

In short, I believe that the sentence which best defines my feeling about all this year of effort is the following: "Nobody said it would be easy, but in the long run it would be worth the effort".

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6) APPENDIX

6.1. Research Project

6.2. The II and III Practicum portfolios