

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN PORTFOLIO FOR STUDENT
TEACHERS
OF LANGUAGES AS A SELF ASSESSMENT GUIDE IN A PRE SERVICE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM

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Abstract

The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) is a document developed to help pre-service teachers to reflect on their didactic knowledge, assess their own didactic competences, and keep a record of their progress and experiences throughout language teaching. Different from the original EPOSTL which contains six (6) sections, this document only focus on two of them. First, a personal statement section that leads pre-service teachers to reflect upon general questions regarding their teaching experience. And second, a self-assessment section divided into seven categories that comprise 154 descriptors of competences and knowledge related to language teaching. There are some insights regarding the results of developing the descriptors; that is, how did this reflection exercise affect a student-teacher in terms of professional and personal growth?

Resumen

El Portafolio Europeo para Maestros Estudiantes de Lenguas (EPOSTL, por sus siglas en inglés) es un documento desarrollado para ayudar a los profesores en formación a reflexionar sobre sus conocimientos didácticos, evaluar sus propias competencias didácticas y mantener un registro de su progreso y experiencias a lo largo de la enseñanza de idiomas. Este documento se enfoca en dos de las seis secciones del EPOSTL original. Una primera sección de declaración personal que invita a reflexionar sobre preguntas generales con respecto a la experiencia de enseñanza. Y una segunda sección de autoevaluación que comprenden 154 descriptores sobre competencias y conocimientos relacionados con la enseñanza de lenguas. Con respecto a los resultados obtenidos del desarrollo de los descriptores, se encuentran algunas conclusiones sobre cómo influyó este portafolio reflexivo al docente en formación en términos de su crecimiento profesional y personal.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Resumen	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
Rationale	1
Objectives	3
Descriptors.....	4
PERSONAL STATEMENT	4
SELF ASSESSMENT.....	10
Context.....	10
Resources	46
Lesson planning.....	50
Conducting a Lesson	60
Independent learning.....	76
Assessment of learning.....	91
Conclusions	107
References	109

Rationale

This reflective tool known as the EPOSTL was developed between 2004-2007 by the European Council of Modern Languages (ECML), whose aim is to encourage student teachers to reflect upon the knowledge and competences of their undergoing teaching experience (Newby, D. Allan, R., Fenner, A-B, Jones, B., Komorowska, H., Soghikyan, K., 2007). These aforementioned authors supported their writing by existing documents such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), Council of Europe (2002) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP), Little & Perclová (2001). Keeping this in mind, this portfolio for use in teacher education consists of a series of self-reflection items designed for helping teachers to self-assess their competences. Furthermore, it contains an overview related to specific competencies for planning and teaching lessons, for assessment, methodology, use of resources, among other headings.

Reflection is identified as a key benefit of using the EPOSTL which contains a checklist of the didactic competencies needed by teachers. On this basis, this work provides a large set of responses that answer to simplified descriptors in an 'I-can' form. One of the main aims of answering such statements is to address areas of knowledge that are of quite importance for those involved in language education as for the ones intended to use the EPOSTL in their teacher education. Notwithstanding, and as stated by Newby, D. et al., (2007), the most important function of this EPOSTL is to use it as a tool for reflecting on the competences which teachers strive to attain. A further educational significance of this unique document is that it seeks to describe competences, be them linguistic or didactic.

As mentioned above, the general purpose of the EPOSTL is to help student teachers reflect on and assess the development of their language knowledge and skills. Therefore, it seeks to fulfil the aims, which are defined along the different sections of the EPOSTL (Newby et al., p. 83-84, 2007). In light of this, it is fair to say that a pre-service teacher can witness three main objectives when using this portfolio language document. First, as a reflection tool; second, as a self-assessment instrument and third, as a way of acquiring information on student-teacher competences in teaching English as a foreign language. Additionally, the aforementioned reflective portfolio served not only as an effective tool for self-reflection but also as a key element to monitor the development

of my teaching skills. Accordingly, it was crucial in identifying strengths and weaknesses in my teaching English practicums, which led to the consideration of improving my teaching competences.

Focusing on this work and the diverse issues addressed across, the EPOSTL plays a significant role for providing guidance on expected challenges when meeting with the numerous teaching components. On this regard, one of the potential problems seen throughout the entire self-assessment section was how repetitive many of the can-do descriptors were in concern with the language abilities a teacher is able to perform. In this consideration, it was necessary to look for different ways throughout the document to address the same language aspects but in distinct areas of knowledge or competence. Hence, so as not to be redundant when responding such items, it was important to find other academic sources such as articles, studies or books in favor of providing stronger arguments that support my claims about the particular points covered along this educational instrument.

On top of that, there are some descriptors that may need to be re-evaluated given that they do not take into account the overall educational policies in Colombia that present teaching boundaries for pre-service teachers. In other words, there are certain constraints in the Colombian academic context which makes impossible for a teacher to replicate language immersion activities in during their teaching practica. This type of issues, the same as others a tad unrealistic to the Colombian teaching environment were handled upon the basis that as teachers in development there are several things not being done or experienced yet.

Objectives

The following include the objectives provided in EPOSTL page 5 which are adapted to this reflection format. As such, it pursues to fulfil the following aims, as defined throughout the sections of the EPOSTL:

:

- To reflect upon the competences a teacher strives to attain.
- To develop teaching underlying knowledge in different scenarios.
- To self-assess and reflect on competences as an ongoing English teacher.
- To help keep a record of the progress as an undergoing English language teacher.
- To help students and pre-service teachers develop an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses related to teaching.

Descriptors

Your name: Juan Carlos Moreno Angulo

Institution: Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira

Date of beginning to use EPOSTL: May the 9th of 2018

The aim of the personal statement is to help you to reflect on aspects related to teaching in general and to think about questions that may be important at the beginning of your teacher education. Below you will find some questions concerning the teaching of languages which you may like to reflect on. At the end of this section, you can read some comments on the role and value of reflection.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

- 1- As learners of language in school, you already have had a lot of contact with teaching. What aspects – teacher’s qualities, practices etc. – of your own language teaching might influence how you wish or do not wish to teach?

Experiences of being taught
<p>Positive:</p> <p>As a learner and teacher to be, I have encountered with both positive and negative experiences throughout my teaching profession. Regarding positivity in teaching, one of the greatest things that have influenced the way I look forward to teach is a teacher’s capability of using good communication skills in the classroom. On one hand, a useful ability that a teacher can possess is the one of conveying message and making clear his points when speaking, especially when those points are concerned with giving instruction. On the other hand, he also needs to be able to hear students’ insights, consequently, he can develop empathy skills in the classroom and consider things from a different perspective. By taking these aspects into account, I consider, as a teacher in development, that students can use discussions as a communication tool for improving</p>

their listening and speaking skills. As a matter of fact, Palmer (2014) noted that “Discussions also improve intellectual agility and help develop skills of synthesis and integration (Brookfield & Preskill, 1999)” (p. 12). In this perspective, discussion activities can encourage learners to take part in more oral interaction in which they develop certain skills without feeling the pressure of a stressful environment.

Negative:

Regarding the particular aspects of my teaching practices, I do not wish to encounter standardized testing due to the fact that I do not think is the best way to score/grade a variety of learners that possess different needs and abilities to deal with learning. From personal experiences in my learning process, I have coped with situations in which my scores in standardized tests have been overestimated and taken as a potential indicator of how good or bad I am whether in my language skills or something else. Teachers’ performances and effectiveness should not be judged and measured based on exams that are scored and administered in the same way in every learning environment, others external aspects affecting students should be considered. In this respect, learners should explore more aspects or skills from the 21st Century Skills book by Fadel and Trilling (2009), aspects such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity, among others.

(Try to analyze why these points were unsuccessful and consider what steps could be taken to improve the points you have mentioned.)

Reflecting on the previous point, made may be due to poor time management skills that do not allow teachers to cover all the important parts of subjects in their classes. Owing to time is limited, steps/strategies that a tutor can take ahead in order to deal with these issues is self-monitoring and planning. First, it is important to keep track of your own process in the classroom by assessing how much time you spend on each section of a class and try not to waste time in small conversation in order

to save time. Second, planning is a main key point in having a well-organized lesson and not procrastinating, one may find helpful to decide what to do and when in each stage of the task he will develop in class to give priority to the real important things.

2- a) What aspects of teaching are you most looking forward to?

Teachers usually have their own considerations when it comes to the different aspects in which teaching is involved, and all of these aspects change according to own individual experiences and interactions in diverse settings. In my case, the aspects that I am most looking forward in my teaching process are concerned with critical thinking skills and real life problem solving. As far as I see it, these aspects are aligned with a more realistic environment that requires students to reflect upon their learning process. Samacá Bohórquez (2012) refers to classroom as a “places of hope, where students gain glimpses of the kind of society we could live and where students learn the academic and critical skills needed to make it a reality (Christensen et al., 2000, p. 4)” (p. 196). This point makes sense because a classroom is a prominent setting in which learners can develop their skills, behaviors and creativity. The same way, it is not impossible to contextualize tasks and activities in the classroom to real life challenges. Therefore, it is important for students to develop certain skills that are helpful not only within the classroom environment but also outside, in real life situations where they can become active participants of society.

b) What aspects of teaching are you least looking forward to?

Despite of the fact that no one cannot say for sure whether or not there are wrong/bad aspects in teaching; it is also important to highlight the fact that some people consider ones more suitable than others giving the objectives they wish to accomplish in teaching. In this respect, the aspects that I am least looking forward to when teaching is assessing based on standardized test in the classroom. As previously mentioned, teachers’ performances and effectiveness should not be judged and measured based on exams that are scored and administered in the same way in every learning environment, others external aspects affecting students should be considered. In this sense, Meador

(2018) argues that “Standardized testing only evaluates one-time performance instead of a student's progress and proficiency over time. Many would argue that teacher and student performance should be evaluated for growth over the course of the year instead of one single test.” Since learning is not a short process that can be measure once, students ‘language competences also need to be considered more as a progressive development rather than a one-time accomplishment.

3- Expectations of your teacher education course.

a) What do you expect most from your teacher education?

Being able to cover a range of topics in education considering the policies, curriculum, procedures knowledge, techniques, skills and others aspects in teaching is something that requires a lot of work and that may not fit with the reality of in and out of the classroom settings school. In this sense, what I expect the most from my teacher education is to explore different situations, approaches and techniques that best fits with my teaching style and the reality of problems faced in the classroom. The reasons why I say this is because in previous teaching practicum classes of my Bilingual Program, it has been not possible for me to teach what I want in concordance with the school parameters or at least I have not found a suitable approach that align aspects of my personal teaching register with the Colombian policies or school curriculum. It is expected to have several challenges in my teacher education, however, this one challenge decision making depends on higher entities such as the Minister of Education in Colombia. Thereupon, I expect to overcome this core challenge through the exposure to different effective methodologies that fits my needs and that are lined up to the Colombian context.

b) What do you want most from your teacher education?

What I want the most from my teacher education, more than passion, is to be able to make my way managing time in my professional and personal fields. What this refer to is that even though I want to be motivated and engaged in what I teach, I am most looking forward to have good time management skills within the classroom and the outside. In

connection with this, my personal experiences in teaching young learners (in my *Teaching Practicum Course*) have showed me that teaching seems to be a full time job. On one hand, to take into account materials, organization, activities, methods, planning, revisions among others things for a lesson are aspects that involve a lot use of time of your personal one. On the other hand, time is quite imperative for people when developing different relationships, learning new things, having personal interest and having others experiences different from the ones regarding the teaching environment. It is not possible for me to cover all these previous aspects in my teaching and be able to arrange my own personal schedule without having good time management skills in both settings.

c) What do you think that your teacher educators expect from you?

Being up to expectations in any area can be counterproductive and disappointed when enrolling and learning in a course. As far as I see it, the most distinguishing aspect educators expect from learners, despite of most things, is to show evidence of student language ability and what they have learned in their career. Personally, my experience as a teacher to be have taught me that when you teach in a classroom, you want your students to reach the learning aims you have proposed but most importantly, you want them to be able to exhibit the abilities they have acquire during the learning period. For instance, in my lesson plans implementation I made use of activities such as role plays to see what children were able to perform, I expected them to produce language in context based on what was presented in class. Taking this into consideration, I think that a teacher main objective in teaching is to see that their students are able to apply, in different situations, what they learned in the course and based on that knowledge develop an autonomous learning later on in their life. Therefore, I consider that my mentors may focus on similar aspects concerned with teaching and what they expect from me to evidence in future experiences.

4- How important do you consider the following for a language teacher? Add your own ideas. Discuss with a partner and give reasons for your choices.

- 1- How important do you consider the following for a language teacher? Add your own ideas. Discuss with a partner and give reasons for your choices.

	How important? Not → very important				
1-Cooperating with others			X		
2-Good organizational skills				X	
3-Being able to explain grammar				X	
4-Good communicative skills					X
5- <i>Classroom management</i>				X	
6- <i>Innovative and creative</i>					X
7- <i>Real life language tasks</i>				X	
8- <i>Empathy</i>					X
9- <i>Critical thinking</i>					X
10- <i>Flexibility</i>				X	

Reflection

The **purposes** of your reflection was not just to answer the question but also to justify your response in a principled, reasoned and informed way.

The process of personal reflection enhances your ability to think independently, in parallel to learning about teaching and learning. Reflecting and collaborating with others when exploring and experimenting with methodologies will also help you to widen your horizons.

In responding to the statement, you may also have looked at a book on grammar to see how the word 'grammar' is defined. Reference to resources is another process in developing your critical and enquiring approach to teaching and learning.

This extended example, focused on grammar, leads to the question of which aspects of teaching and learning another language you should reflect on, engage with

and explore. Although it is the content of your teacher education course which will provide the framework you need, the EPOSTL will help you to focus on specific questions that student teachers need to address. By asking you to think about a comprehensive range of aspects, features and issues related to teaching and learning a language in different countries it also seeks to enhance your ability to reflect not just on your own context but on similar contexts in other European countries.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Descriptors – Contents

Context

- A. Curriculum
- B. Aims and Needs C. The Role of the Language Teacher
- C. Institutional Resources and Constraints

Methodology

- A. Speaking/Spoken Interaction.
- B. Writing/Written Interaction.
- C. Listening.
- D. Reading.
- E. Grammar.
- F. Vocabulary.
- G. Culture.

Resources

Lesson Planning

- A. Identification of Learning Objectives
- B. Lesson Content
- C. Organization

Conducting a Lesson

- A. Using Lesson Plans

- B. Content
- C. Interaction with Learners
- D. Classroom Management
- E. Classroom Language

Independent Learning

- A. *Learner Autonomy*
- B. *Homework*
- C. *Projects*
- D. *Portfolios*
- E. *Virtual Learning Environments*
- F. *Extra-curricular Activities*

Assessment of Learning

- A. *Designing Assessment Tools*
- B. *Evaluation*
- C. *Self- and Peer Assessment*
- D. *Language Performance*
- E. *Culture*
- F. *Error Analysis*

Introduction

Decisions relating to teaching are strongly influenced by the educational and social context in which teachers work. This context is mainly predetermined by the requirements in the national and/or local curricula. However, there may also be international

recommendations and documents, which will need consideration. Institutional constraints are another factor to be considered as they may have considerable impact on the work of teachers.

A further dimension of the language learning context includes the overall aims and specific needs of learners, which, when identified, determine what the teacher does.

Language teachers have a number of roles to play. In addition to teaching their subjects they may need to promote the value of language learning among learners, parents and society in general and build on and make the most of what learners bring with them.

Teachers need to ensure ongoing professional growth through self- and peer-assessment, as well as keeping up with information available in the field.

A. Curriculum

1. I can understand the requirements set in national and local curricula.

Being able to read, interact and apply standards and other criteria regarding curricula has been part of several of my Bilingual Program courses. In this sense, I am able to understand the requirements set in national and local curricula. I understand that a curriculum whether a local or a national provide a framework which set some specifications and guidance for teachers on what students should learn or achieve at each stage of their learning process. In fact, the Suggested Curriculum Structure offers an outline “that materializes each of the principles of this curriculum through the articulation of goals, objectives, standards, language functions, discourse and linguistic contents, and indicators: the curricular structure or study plan from sixth to eleventh grade this, as a requirement for each subject” (MEN, 2016, p. 16). This structure makes sense since any curricula requires some parameters that involve many different aspects of teaching such as organization, context, level, students, etc. Hence, it is necessary to take into account what it is meant to achieve whether local or nationally speaking

2. I can design language courses around the requirements of the national and local curricula.

Even though I was exposed to different curricula in previous courses of my career, I cannot design language courses around the requirements of the national and local curricula. Throughout my English language career, I certainly was said to understand and take into consideration certain curricula when designing lesson plans and teaching English. However, in the many courses I was in, I have not recollections of me been taught how to design language course based on any curricula requirements. As far as I am concerned, some of the language courses that I took were the product of hours and hours of designing and examination by educators of my Bilingual Program, also Colombian policies, the course objectives among others important things must be taken into account. The reason I say this is because, in a smaller scale, I have bearded in mind similar things when designing lesson plans or

language projects. Conclusively, I consider that designing courses is quite a challenge and demand that I am not still able to manage even though I have had some basis on how to create different ways in which a foreign language is taught.

3. I can understand the principles formulated in relevant European documents (e.g. Common European Framework of Reference, European Language Portfolio).

In several language courses of my Bilingual program, I have been exposed mainly to the European document referred as CEFR (the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), Council of Europe (2002). This relevant European document serves as a reference that allows me to understand the principles formulated in it. In this respect, I am aware that this CEFR is concerned with promoting linguistic and cultural diversity, intercultural learning, learner autonomy, communicative competence, among other language aspects. I have recollection of this document being used in previous language courses such as Professional development, Applied Linguistics, Sociolinguistic and others. The same way, the mentioned aspects were explored and exemplified in context. Therefore, now I have a better perspective of what European documents like this are about and what to use them for according to their purpose in language teaching.

4. I can understand and integrate content of European documents (e.g. Common European Framework of Reference, European Language Portfolio) as appropriate in my teaching.

I think that as a teacher to be is vital to take into account contents and principles concerning the Common European Framework of Reference, Council of Europe (2002). In this regard, I can understand and integrate content of European documents as appropriate in my teaching. Through my experiences of teaching English, it has been clear for me, as teachers in development, the necessity to have a framework that work as reference for assessing learners' language ability, developing language competences and providing guidance for teachers of language. In recent years, it is required the creation of a document that worked as a reference for learning a second

language but that was more adapted to the Colombian learning context. In this matter, the Suggested Curriculum by the MEN (2016) is used more often as guidance for teaching English in Colombia educational schools. However, this document contains aspects such as language levels and communicative competences from the CEFR that are integrated in some of the contents that I have been able to teach in my teaching practicum. Thereupon, I can integrate content from any of the mentioned documents when teaching English or assessing individual's language proficiency.

B. Aims and Needs

1. I can understand the personal, intellectual and cultural value of learning other languages.

After spending much time learning and teaching others, I became aware of understanding the personal, intellectual and cultural value of learning other languages. The reason I say this is because in several of my language courses, I have been told how understanding the aspects above plays a major role throughout the process of language teaching and learning. In this perspective, learning and communicating better in a language also implies being aware of the different customs and standards that surrounds it. In simpler words, learning a language is a complex process that involves others unbreakable pieces of a whole. For example, in courses such as Anglophone Culture, Cultura Hispanoamericana and Sociolinguistic my professors often emphasized on how it was almost impossible to learn a second language without learning some aspects of culture, value or identity from such language. Thus, understanding the values and traditions under consideration is crucial for studying other languages.

2. I can take account of overall, long-term aims based on needs and expectations.

Currently, in my *Classroom Language Assessment Course* (CLAC), I have been taught about the important use of a diagnostic assessment which allow teachers to determine what language aspects the student can manage and which ones he needs to develop further ahead. From this point, I can have a better view of the needs and expectations of a course concerning language ability. Moreover, in the same CLAC, I was also introduced to the importance of assessing student progress and achievement in a course by making use of achievement assessments which take into account the long-term aims of the course. These overall aims can even be based on the results obtained from the diagnostic assessment mentioned above. In this respect, I am able to take account of overall, long-term aims based on needs and expectations.

Furthermore, throughout different events of my career I have been exposed to other supporting materials associated to the consideration of learning objectives based on either needs or expectations. Such helpful resources have been referenced and acknowledged in my academic practices. With no further ado, documents such as the Suggested Curriculum, MEN (2016) offers overall aims that varies depending on the student proficiency language level and language performance achievements after finishing such a level. This means that this curriculum serves as a framework that provides a more realistic view of the Colombian teaching context when it comes to language learning. In conclusion, it has been vital for me to make use of previous knowledge from my courses as well as the methods or frameworks at my disposal that are more appropriate to implement in my teaching experiences.

3. I can take into account differing motivations for learning another language.

Before I had my first teaching practicum class, I was exposed to particular cases in which practitioners implemented activities in their classroom using diverse strategies to teach. This was quite relevant for me since it allowed me to consider variety in activities due to the fact that learners learn differently. One of the reasons for saying this is how often some of my professors talked about Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in the classroom. In this respect, I can take into account the differing motivations, factors as well as the environments involved in learning another language. After I started to implement my first lesson plans, I realized that the reality

of a classroom did not fit with some standards and parameters set by the Colombian government, many of the students seemed more interested in some activities than others as well as some of them had more difficulties learning with a particular methodology or approach. Moreover, I had to cope with other challenges such as classroom management and engagement time before finding suitable ways to keep learners motivated towards learning English. Since students reacted differently to activities, it was necessary to explore a variety of them from time to time so differing motivations in the schoolroom could be enclosed within the lesson implementations.

4. I can take into account the cognitive needs of learners (problem solving, drive for communication, acquiring knowledge etc.).

Throughout my teaching experiences, classroom observations have played a major role when recognizing the different capabilities learners possess and the ones they need in order to effectively read, write, analyze, understand, solve problems and others that will help them in their learning process. In previous courses such as Academic Writing and Professional development, it was required to do a report based on observations conducted in classroom environment, even before beginning my teaching practicum, it was also needed to do observations of the respective grade I was going to work with. These observations were concerned with whether student or teacher-centered in which different needs, including cognitive ones needed to be evidenced within the activities developed in the schoolroom. These particular experiences helped me to take further considerations when teaching. In this regard, I can take into account the cognitive needs of learners in a classroom. Furthermore, the 21st Century Skills book, Trilling & Fadel (2009) which I also interacted with in my *Professional Development and Teaching Practicum Courses* serve as a great example for exploring such cognitive skills.

5. I can take into account the affective needs of learners (sense of achievement, enjoyment etc.).

Another important need's type that I have experienced up to this point of my career is the effective one. First as a learner and second as a practitioner I am aware

of the existence of affective needs such as enjoyment, engagement and motivation towards a class which are also involved in the students learning process. As a learner, I interacted with activities in which it was needed to recognize my own emotions and others in order to manage such emotions to develop the task in question in a more emotional and collaborative manner. Likewise, in some of my practicum lessons, I observed how my students look sometimes bored and disengaged throughout various activities. They were get distracted when I was explaining the topic which made harder student participation and class development. In this case it was needed to reflect upon the things that went bad after the lesson implementation in order to find different ways to fulfill those needs. Hence, taking into account affective needs of learners is also one of the important foci in applying my lesson plans in the teaching practicum.

6. I can take into account and assess the expectations and impact of educational stakeholders (employers, parents, funding agencies etc.).

As previously seen, there are several factors that may influence a learner's performance in the learning process, accounting stakeholders as also important may be relevant in such aspects. Even though it may be hard to understand the complexity of the role stakeholders play in the educational setting, I can take into account parents being aware of the impact they have on their children performance and on how they can support their child while learning a language. However, I have not been induced properly to this type of assessing and as far as I am concerned, it has not been an exhaustive approach in my career to such matter of assessing the impact of educational stakeholders, at least not in my recollection of knowledge. As a matter of fact, stakeholders that are beyond parents have not been much concerned for me as a novice teacher since I consider that the educational effects of others individuals involved in teaching are the responsibility of a higher body. In this sense, I can take into account basic parent implications regarding the education field, anything tangles than that would be something new to explore.

7. I can take into account attainment target levels set in curricula (e.g. deriving from the Common European Framework of Reference).

Taking as a really significant European document in my Bilingual Program, the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference), Council of Europe (2002) have been claimed to have descriptors and a system used by language educators to measure learners' ability in a language. In this respect, I can take into account the use of the CEFR as reference for target levels since it has been of quite relevance and content based throughout previous courses in my career such as *Applied Linguistics*, *Curriculum Design* and *Professional Development Course*. The same way, it is relevant to highlight the fact that in recent years, documents such as the Suggested Curriculum, MEN (2016) have been used as an adaptation of the CEFR offering similar student language level and what is expected he can perform when finishing such level. Despite of the fact that I can refer to either of these documents as a curriculum for attainment target levels, the second one is more suitable for the Colombian language learning context. In conclusion, it is prominent for me to take into account the target levels set in the Suggested Curriculum, MEN (2016) since its framework works as a more viable path for what I may encounter in my teaching experience.

C. The Role of the Language Teacher

- 1. I can promote the value and benefits of language learning to learners, parents and others.**

Being that it comes with the job, showing students the benefits of learning a new language is a really important aspect in engaging them into different activities. In my role as a teacher, I had to cope with the idea of fostering language throughout my lessons by making them more dynamic, realistic and cultural inasmuch as I noticed it served as a key component to encourage pupils' language learning. Moreover, it is important to highlight the fact that pupils seemingly profited more from tasks and games they were related to such as filling gaps, matching words, drawing actions and others in which they showed a better language understanding of the topics. However, since my experience was that of a novice teacher, I did not have the chance to interact with parents or experience with them the language advantages that their role plays in their children early and later life. In conclusion, the encounter with such situations added a substantial value to my teacher practicum and the learning process in which students' knowledge and language are drawn together.

2. I can appreciate and make use of the value added to the classroom environment by learners with diverse cultural backgrounds.

When facing a multicultural classroom, it becomes a brilliant occasion to explore the diversity of human experience and the richness that cultural diversity provides. Throughout my teaching practices, it has been clear for me the existence of students' diversity within the classroom. Before being able to teach, topics like these has been a relevant focus on my English courses since they play a major role in students' equality and empathy. In this sense, I am totally aware of the cultural diversity of such settings and how it is quite important to take part and embrace learners' backgrounds in order to build a bridge between what students know and need to learn from others to overcome stereotypes and develop cultural awareness in the classroom. Taken as an example, I was personally in contact with university partners who were from a diverse culture than mine which led to several sharing conversations about each other's custom and so. The same way, I have observed how students seemed to be more interested in interacting with others when there were a variety in their partner's origin and accent. Therefore, being exposed to such classroom environments have added perspective and knowledge to my personal curriculum. This way, it has allowed me to promote inclusiveness of different learners background in order to have a better sense of identity.

- 3. I can take into account the knowledge of other languages learners may already possess and help them to build on this knowledge when learning additional languages.**

Living in a diverse cultural country it has not been much of a secret for me that I may encounter with diverse learners that have been exposed to other contexts of language learning. Fortunately, having the opportunity to teach others have been just the right path for experiencing such thing as learners already possessing Knowledge about the English language. In my teaching practicum, I first experienced this with preschool children who surely knew how to express some words in English as well as their meaning. This certainly worked as a reference point for me to start creating my lesson plans topics and from there to think about helping students to learn more about English. A similar situation occurred with students from second grade of my academic practice who happened to have knowledge about some topics in English even though the school was not bilingual respectfully. Events such as these added quite evidence to my expectation of learners' existent knowledge about language which served as a support for teaching them new things.

- 4. I can draw on appropriate theories of language, learning, culture etc. and relevant research findings to guide my teaching.**

Since it seems that is needed in language teaching to have a certain approach for guiding us, the teacher, it is quite imperative to have some basic research findings in such an approach to do it so. From own learning-teaching experience as a student and as a practitioner, I have been in contact with the application of methodologies such as CLIL (*Content and Language Integrated Learning*) by Coyle, Hood, & Marsh (2010) which has been a method under the magnifying glass of our bilingual field when teaching a language. On the one hand, I have worked with CLIL methodology (Coyle et al., 2010) in the classroom which appears to be efficient inasmuch this approach provide a dual focus of language and culture combined. On the other hand, before applying this methodology or any other theory regarding language teaching, it was noticed that real students' needs are first taking into consideration when drawing attention on teaching. Finally, the method used was of significant enrichment for my

teaching guidance since it quite fitted to the context in which I applied it in but it is important to consider that some may work better in some context than others.

5. I can critically assess my teaching on the basis of experience, learner feedback and learning outcomes and adapt it accordingly.

One of the fundamental points of having a teaching practicum is to reflect upon our teaching experiences in order to analyze what went wrong, what went well and what needs improvement respectively. In terms of my own experience, pondering upon this allowed me to think critically and focus on my strengths, effectiveness and development as a teacher to be. moreover, I was also exposed to a set of requirements I needed to achieve after my entire practicum. In this sense, I can critically assess my teaching on the basis of experience. Nonetheless, being able to assess learner feedback and outcomes is a bit more of a challenge for me due to the fact that I have interacted more with formative than summative assessments type until this stage of my career, in my knowledge recollection at least. Taking into account assessment adaptability, the students' grades set in the Suggested Curriculum, MEN (2016) works as a framework reference path in order to adapt to every learning level accordingly. Consequently, assessing whether my teaching or learners' experiences vary according to the instrument used to collect information about language ability.

6. I can critically assess my teaching in relation to theoretical principles.

Thinking about my experiences teaching young learners, I find it a bit difficult to assess teaching without contemplating some qualities of it, especially when it is my own tutoring process we are referring to. For me, the issue of self-assessing has been concerned with how can I produce auto-feedback about teaching without falling into the circle of making the same mistakes? In fact, this is one of the teaching matters I still have trouble coping with. Nonetheless, bearing in mind theoretical principles related to education can make things easier by supporting me with valuable information about how I am complying with particular requirements in my teaching. In this matter, if I put those principles at my disposal, I might be able to analyze them and proceed accordingly to the aspects related to such particular fundamentals. It is also worth mentioning that in former courses of my career, the assessment of my

teaching has been done mostly in a reflective and analytical way in which I needed to think of different strategies in order to fulfill what I was lacking.

7. I can accept feedback from my peers and mentors and build this into my teaching.

As I grew older, I have interacted with more and more feedback from others whether teachers or peers. As a matter of fact, in different classroom settings my mentors have exposed me to be in contact with some of our partners' works, that way we could draw attention upon each other mistakes which might need improvement. This type of opportunities has allowed me to see things from a different perspective, and consider taking other measures and strategies that help me build more awareness into my teaching. However, things sometimes got a bit messy when receiving or providing feedback since being told what we need to do by colleagues is not always well taken, even by our own professors. I personally have had problems coping with others opinions when they do not give a supportable reason why I may need to correct something. Therefore, an effective strategy I have observed for kindly feedback is to base suggestions on principles studied in a course that may help us to teach better and improve our performance in teaching.

8. I can observe my peers, recognize different methodological aspects of their teaching and offer them constructive feedback.

Throughout the several experiences I had in some of my courses, providing feedback have made me aware that peer observation is a two-way process in which classmates cooperates mutually to reflect upon the content, issues and matters regarding academic subjects. Correspondingly, a system of methods has been needed in order to assess peer's performance in a certain activity. In other words, a way of offering constructive feedback to my classmate have been through the usage of guidelines or principles regarding the subject in matter. As a matter of fact, many of the aspects assessed in my practicum have also followed such rules as a pattern concerning my teaching observations. In essence of this, I can offer different

corrections, opinions, suggestions and ideas to my peers in benefit of their teaching betterment. By doing this, I have kept a better record upon approaches and reflections obtained from mistakes when observing others. In conclusion, giving feedback has also given experience to my initial knowledge in teaching.

9. I can locate relevant articles, journals and research findings relating to aspects of teaching and learning.

Some of my bilingual professors have provided different sources and data base where to locate academic information useful for our teaching and learning advantage. I can certainly find and interact with primary and secondary sources of such matter that can even provide firsthand evidence of educational and academic work. Regarding legal documents, research finding or any relevant data for my field, I have been granted with resources such as How Journals, Íkala, UTP Resources among others of importance for aspects of teaching and learning. In fact, in the first project I had before this one, I made use of these sources as well as physical ones in order to find scholarly material that were related to my topic and interest too. However, locating such articles with updated information was not an easy task, it took time, effort and could be accomplished owing to the collaborative work of my team back then. Thereupon, even though it is hard to support projects and other academic documents, I am able to locate different studies papers that keep relation with aspects of my career.

10. I can identify and investigate specific pedagogical/ didactic issues related to my learners or my teaching in the form of action research.

Typically, in my educational field, I have been in contact with different methods and approaches carried out in courses such as *Language Acquisition*, *Academic Writing* and *Applied Linguistics*. In point of fact, in order to establish a relation between

teaching and learning, research principles and methods have been of use for my personal and practical experiences. For instance, academic writing has been one of the issues identified and later investigated as part of the lit review made in my AWC (Academic Writing Course). In this perspective, this type of action research showed interesting results and conclusions concerning language competences and how students could incorporate that knowledge in the actual classroom settings. This may be just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to pedagogical / didactic matters related to my learners or teaching; however, I consider that research experiences such the ones implemented within my career have made me able to address issues or solve problems that individuals deal with in teaching.

D. Institutional Resources and Constraints

1. I can assess how I might use the resources available in my school (OHP, computers, library etc.).

In both of my academic practicas, one of the main purposes of having a classroom observation, before implementing any lesson plan, is to identify the resources available in the school/classroom and how they can be of valuable use for a more efficient learning. And indeed, I have developed a large number of activities and tasks with the particular selection of sources such as video beam, screen, computer, cardboards and others that usually add more dynamic and enjoyment to the classroom sessions and student learning. In this connection, I can assess students formatively (providing feedback) so they can cope with authentic material at their disposal for a more realistic language use in context. Notwithstanding, sometimes after a lesson, I have made the decision of keeping a suitable balance between pupils' amusement and content learning since some resources have caused distraction or boredom while teaching. Regardless of previous inconvenient, my academic practicum courses and my current CLAC (*Classroom Language Assessment Course*) have backed me up with a certain awareness of how I might use school resources conveniently.

2. I can recognize the organizational constraints and resource limitations existent at my school and adapt my teaching accordingly

I personally think that the school restrictions in which my teaching experience took place made such events even harder for me, in the sense of how I wanted to teach and some of the expectations I had about what education is capable of. Even though I considered that some organizational systems did not fit with a more realistic setting of an institution, I could acknowledge what can or cannot be done at my school in concordance with the parameters of such entity. On the one hand, after understanding certain rules, I could make some decisions about which of the teaching methods I had seen could be applied to my academic context. In a small scale, I even considered what choices were more preferable in terms of my personal and teaching satisfaction. On the other hand, the resources limitation was not much of a deal inasmuch as the activities were flexible and easy to adapt accordingly. As far as I see it, the only conclusion I can reach so far about a school constraint is that they are not only under the limitations and conditions set by its committee but there are also other external factors that may influence the way we teach nowadays.

Methodology

Introduction

Methodology is the implementation of learning objectives through teaching procedures. It is based on principles deriving from theories of language description, language learning and language use.

Specific teaching procedures may be applied to support the learning of aspects of the language system, such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. However, methodology should reflect the fact that these aspects of language are always present when skills are being practiced and are therefore inextricably linked to communication. Also, the teaching of culture and its relationship with language will require specific methodological insights.

Methodology may focus on how teachers can deal with the four main skills of speaking, writing, listening and reading, as reflected in the categorization of this section. However, in written and oral communication in the classroom two or more skills will usually be integrated and are rarely treated in isolation.

It may be the case that sets of principles and teaching procedures together comprise a coherent method or approach. A method refers to fairly fixed sets of teaching procedures (e.g. 'audio-lingual', 'suggestopedia'), in which the teacher's role is closely defined. An approach is 'the theoretical rationale that underlies everything that happens in the classroom.' (H.D. Brown, 2002: 11). It is usually manifested through sets of principles which, in turn, guide the choice of teaching procedures. Examples are 'the communicative approach' and 'task-based learning'.

A. Speaking/Spoken Interaction

- 1. I can create a supportive atmosphere that invites learners to take part in speaking activities.**

As a practitioner of English language teaching, one of the first things I have experienced has been observing videos of others practitioners teaching. This exposure, in conjunction with firsthand schoolroom observation worked as the seeds for my future class atmosphere. Thereby, it was from such events that I could think about some of the situations I could involve in order to encourage students to take part in classroom speaking activities. For example, some of the activities learners liked to work were the *Telephone game*, *Last Man Standing* and *Word Chain*. This way, I could not only motivate them to learn, but also check speaking aspects such as their pronunciation and fluency respectively. Moreover, promoting actions related to the daily basis was a core feature for engaging children since they needed the use language and authentic content for the performance of the task at hand. After the implementation of each lesson, some conclusions about the class execution were made so they could be considered in the following session for children to be motivated to participate and produce language.

2. I can evaluate and select meaningful speaking and interactional activities to encourage learners to express their opinions, identity, culture etc.

Another meaningful aspect that I needed to consider in my teaching is the incorporation of interactional topics within my activities in order to avoid whether boredom or disengagement through the lessons. As I go through my recollection, I remember that even though many students were used to the traditional teaching methods, most of them showed more interest in class when they were merged in actions related to their immediate context. Thereby, in certain proficiency levels, I am able to make use of intercultural activities such as asking questions, sharing cultural knowledge, performing role plays and others activities concerning cultural aspects. This is claimed since this is what I did when I was teaching at preschool and second grade in my *Teaching Practicum Courses*. However, in matters of assessing the activities mentioned, I usually did it more in a formative manner; that is to say, providing feedback about cultural misconceptions learners may have. Taking this into account, it would have been a bit harder for me to maintain students engaged in class without adopting alternatives in which they are required to share their thoughts or play games.

3. I can evaluate and select different activities to help learners to become aware of and use different text types (telephone conversations, transactions, speeches etc.).

As far as I can recall from experiences in my Bilingual Program, I have not had the opportunity to encounter with the selection of activities regarding text types in either of my both academic practicums. Although in previous language courses I was exposed upon the awareness of different texts use when teaching, for me, the issue of selecting text types activities is as complex as the sum of its parts. On the one hand, I may be able to cope with raising awareness in learners through different activities whether in the Suggested Curriculum, MEN (2016) or even regarding my own experiences teaching. On the other hand, the grades that I have worked with so far did not showed the required language competences for dealing with such complex activities. Moreover, evaluating and selecting the type of activities from the above may require a bit more experience different from the ones I already had at to this point of my practical section. Therefore, the idea that I am able to perform such activities might need at least from a group of things that work together in order to help learners become aware of and use different text types.

4. I can evaluate and select a variety of materials to stimulate speaking activities (visual aids, texts, authentic materials etc.).

Since I have been acquiring more teaching experience, I learnt that an important step in designing a good lesson plan was to be aware of the use one can give to the available materials in the classroom. From this point, the idea was to find what strategies were more suitable for establishing a connection between the usefulness of those materials and the content of the activities carried out in the lesson. In fact, during the implementation of my practicum, I was able to utilize different resources such visual aids (images, sequences, mind maps) and technological materials such as slides, audio-visual aids (videos) and others. Such resources always seemed to be more suitable and dynamic for the so called Digital Natives as stated in the 21st Century Skills book by Trilling & Fadel (2009). These were some of the steps I particularly followed when motivating young learners to speak considering that they showed more excitement and engagement to learn when these aforementioned resources were involved. In concern with evaluating, the assessment of such activities was done more in a formative sequence, that is, providing feedback or correcting pronunciation among others.

5. I can evaluate and select a range of oral activities to develop accuracy (grammar, word choice, etc.).

Based on the graders I worked with, there are a set of activities that I might consider over others when talking about language accuracy. Initially, I am able to use and recycle oral activities I have been exposed within previous experiences and courses of my bilingual education. As a matter of fact, one of my favorite oral activities that comes to mind is “Speaker, Runners and Writers”. Here, the Speaker was given a vocabulary word that he needed to whisper to the Runner, who ran and told the Writer what he must write on the board. Through this activity, children were able to check some accuracy aspects such as pronunciation, spelling and word order. Additionally, students also worked on their listening and grammar skills by playing Bingo about diverse animal names said by the teacher. In some cases, a summative assessment was applied which means that learners were given a grade according to the amount of writing mistakes they made. These, in conjunction with others activities, made my way through interacting with features of language accuracy. All in all, students usually showed more and more understanding over actions, vocabulary, games, questions and answers in English.

B. Writing/Written Interaction

- 1. I can evaluate and select a range of meaningful writing activities to help learners become aware of and use appropriate language for different text types (letters, stories, reports etc.).**

As previously argued, I have not had the opportunity to interact with the selection of activities regarding such text types in either of my practical sections. Regardless of this, I am certainly able to select from a variety of pretty basic writing activities concerned with language production. For example, in some of my teaching sessions, students were required to practice their basic writing skills and other aspects of it through crosswords, filling gaps and alphabet puzzles, among others. Nonetheless, most of the activities carried out in class based on speaking production, mainly because of students age and English proficiency level. Since these activities were usually done in worksheets, there was not much difficulty in assessing them in a summative manner, i.e. providing a score

based on their performance in the task developed. In regard to the mistakes made on the tasks, feedback was provided and even interactions were made among learners so they could raise awareness over what they might need corrections. After some lesson executions, it was considered that student writing in English was something that still needed improvement.

2. I can help learners to plan and structure written texts (e.g. by using mind maps, outlines etc.).

Another of the experiences I have had in my *Academic Writing Course* particularly, was how much good written texts required from drafts, revisions and even more revisions. Such experience as a learners served as a referential point for me to take into account the most and less important parts of written texts. In this sense, approaching writing by planning and structuring my ideas before the real writing makes sense to me since writing texts was quite a complex process. In fact, this process often comprises many features such as grammar, coherence, cohesion, word order among other things that are incorporated in writing a text. Otherwise, I think it would very hard for most of us, learners, to focus on all these aspects while we write a text. Therefore, through the eyes of my experiences, I am able to help learners to plan and structure their writing by applying several of the strategies I encountered. In this line, I can help accomplish such thing by adapting and using strategies like the ones mentioned above (mind maps, outlines etc.). Nonetheless, since I have not taught in a higher level than second grade within my language teaching career, structuring more complex writing texts will be considered in future experiences.

3. I can help learners to monitor, reflect on, edit and improve their own writing.

Another important step for producing a good version of any writing assignment has been the self-assessment of it, or at least that is one of the things I have collected from previous involvements in my bilingual education. Observing the growth, I have had in writing since the beginning, I think that it is partly thanks to some of the actions made by my professors. As part of the decision making of the courses, my professors were often concerned with the process, revision and development of our writing production respectively. Certainly, it was a tedious and long process to which they used to pay close attention allowing us to interact through peer review, writing reflection and even tutoring

sessions that were key in the improvement of our own writing products throughout the courses. In this connection, I am able to adopt and adapt such writing approach for helping learners to monitor their writing process. Again, this would be something to be done in other coming teaching encounters because of the courses I have taught so far have only interacting within the basis of self-assessing their writing.

4. I can use a variety of techniques to help learners to develop an awareness of the structure, coherence and cohesion of a text and produce texts accordingly.

Using techniques for raising awareness upon the structure, coherence and cohesion of a text was just part of the writing process I have executed in my academic texts. However, going beyond the responsibilities of my own awareness is more composite of what I learnt and expected so far from my practicums. Even though I have worked upon the awareness concerning texts production, when it comes to using methods for helping students develop their knowledge on generating texts, my response towards fostering text awareness do not go beyond the basis of just making sense in writing. As a matter of fact, the grades that I have worked with earlier did not performed the language competences level for dealing with such complex activities. In this respect, I am not able to use certain techniques, as claimed above, since it may require a bit more of experiences different from the ones I already had to this point of my practical sessions. Accordingly, it is necessary for me to develop the skills required for being able to support pupils in future writing assignments, but most importantly to raise consciousness on such important characteristics of writing.

5. I can evaluate and select writing activities to consolidate learning (grammar, vocabulary, spelling etc.).

Upon the basis of my teaching experience, there are a couple of writing exercises that I can bring to memory when organizing and integrating students' prior knowledge into the topics explored in class. As a matter of fact, I was able of replicating and recycling activities I have been exposed within previous experiences of my academic formation. To begin with, one of my favorite writing activities performed in the classroom was called complete the sentence in which the teacher writes on the board pieces of entire sentences so students could complete them based on what they saw that day. This was a particular way in which I was able not only to review vocabulary but also to check some aspects regarding spelling and syntax. In addition, students' performance through activities as this was also an opportunity for observing what writing features they were lacking of as well as what to work on in future occasions for the purpose of their improvement. In concern with assessing such writing activity, it seems needless to say that a summative assessment was applied accordingly. In conclusion, such experience, in conjunction with other activities, are evidence that I have been able to consolidate learning through writing activities implemented in my academic practicums.

C. Listening

1. I can select texts appropriate to the needs, interests and language level of the learners.

Being that in my teaching practices it has been certainly required the conveyance of the four main language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), the use of texts clearly took part in the learning process. As this was aforementioned before, it is needless to say that due to the language proficiency level of the grades I have worked with to this point, the usage of texts has been required only in its simplest form. In other words, the reading texts needed for the development of an activity were mostly vocabulary words and simple phrases at most. Since students usually interact with a dual learning focus, they were learning English through familiar topics of their immediate cultural and foreign environment. By integrating activities such as *Crossword*, *Pictionary* and *Word search*, learners were able to read and write pieces of vocabulary in relation to the topic content of Colombian costume, food, celebration and others. It seems to me, that more than selecting a contextual theme and a reading activity, the hardest part was to adapt such

activity to learners' language level as well as finding a balance between action enjoyment and content learning.

2. I can encourage learners to use their knowledge of a topic and their expectations about a text when listening.

One of the objectives frequently set in my lessons, was to motivate learners to participate in the tasks on a proposed topic, as well as allowing them to tell what they know about the subject. Initially, one of the first steps taken in class was to let students share their prior knowledge before even presenting the lesson topic. Such thing was made by addressing questions and even reviewing previous exercises. Moreover, students watched interactive videos in order to learn language content by relating the actions with the vocabulary in matter. Notwithstanding, it is fair to say that apprentices did not performed any activity that demanded them to use their expectations about a text when listening since any pieces of reading was approached to them in a more directed way. Despite of this, student would often show interest towards sharing what they knew so the need for encouragement was not such a bit challenge in this sense. As a matter of fact, sometimes the development of the class was shortly obstructed by the overrated voices of learners' opinions. At last, it is also important to highlight the fact that apprentices in general reacted differently to the topics they were introduced to, that is to say, their motive for sharing knowledge varied according to their interest on the topics.

3. I can design and select different activities which help learners to recognize and interpret typical features of spoken language (tone of voice, intonation, style of speaking etc.).

Giving the fact that in several occasions diverse expositions were performed throughout my career, it would be redundant to say that different techniques were applied for improving such aforementioned features of spoken language. As personal experience in my *Academic Discourse Courses*, many activities were focused on raising awareness upon our language register, academic discourse, speaking style among other aspects regarding our academic speech. In a sense, being able to recognize and use such

discourse features was just part of the daily basis of the course. Notwithstanding, replicating such events in a classroom would require more research different from the basic knowledge I have about designing activities concerned with these spoken language characteristics. Even though I have worked upon the interpretation of the features above, again, the grades that I have taught so far did not showed the language competences level for dealing with such complex activities. Thereupon, I am not able to design and select different activities to help learners acknowledging language aspects as tone of voice, intonation, style of speaking, etc.

4. I can help learners to apply strategies to cope with difficult or unknown vocabulary of a text.

Based on my particular experience across the interaction with reading activities it was imperative to use different methods for dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary throughout the text. In this regard, one of the strategies I was able to take advantage was the use of context for finding out the meaning of unknown vocabulary. The same way, I was able to manage such difficulties by referring to the roots of any strange words without the need of utilizing a dictionary. On the one hand, I have not had the opportunity within any of my practical sessions to apply such strategies since students did not work with text sections because of their English level. On the other hand, I did have the chance of giving students context by performing actions related to unfamiliar words as well as using Spanish as a mean for describing what the terms meant. In addition, the use of antonyms is also a tip that I learned over my reading experiences and that also was adapted for such teaching context. In this respect, using these techniques shows proof that I am able to help learners apply reading strategies in order to cope with vocabulary difficulties, even if it is not a text we are referring to.

5. I can evaluate and select a variety of post-listening tasks to provide a bridge between listening and other skills.

Thinking about this descriptor, it comes to mind how my teaching practicum professors frequently argued that with the intention of promoting listening, it was

significant not just to allow learners listening to something but also to engage them and make them reflect upon the activity in matter. I take as an example how one of the most common post-listening activities in class was having discussions. Here, we were asked to have a short conversation in order to exchange information upon the basis of a task previously made. Taking this experiences into account, in one of my lesson implementations students were exposed to the learning of the Hail Mary prayer through listening and reading following the practitioner. After some exercises practicing the prayer, they were asked to perform it by themselves. The same way, students were gather in a round table to assess the completion of the task in which the aim was to motivate learner to speak in English in order to also foster such skill. In this perspective, such post-listening task provided a bridge between the listening and speaking skills. As this activity was based on the comprehension and monitoring of learning a familiar item; again, the evaluation of it was based in pure formative assessment so feedback provision and pronunciation mistakes could be corrected.

D. Reading

1. I can select texts appropriate to the needs, interests and language level of the learners.

The exposure to my practical teaching served as opportunity to familiarize myself more with how student's interests play an important role in classroom engagement. While I have certainly been in contact with motivation strategies in several of my courses, the selection of text has always been one of the hardest skills to manage when arousing curiosity or interest about a particular subject, at least in my concerned. In fact, I genuinely found it a bit difficult to cope with the responsibility of searching for a proper reading that covered my interest in language. On the other hand, time helped me to realize the several possibilities a language curriculum can offer when encountering challenges regarding students' needs. In this respect, I might be able to interact with suggested topics for fostering language through text in the case it is needed. Nonetheless, I have not been in the position of selecting texts appropriate to the needs, interest and language level of the learners I have been assigned to in my academic practicum. The reason why of this matter, is because texts were not chosen as an imperative part of my lessons activities.

2. I can apply appropriate ways of reading a text in class (e.g. aloud, silently, in groups etc.).

Although reading in class have not been a prominent custom in most of my English courses, I am fully aware of the great relevance many professors have showed towards it. In fact, there has been a guild of educators in my Bilingual Program who have used diverse alternatives in order to allow learners to interact with different reading passage. Moreover, a particular professor of my *Professional Development Course* presented a set of methods in which reading texts could be executed in a class by making it more enjoyable, dynamic and interesting. In other words, there are other options in which a reading session can be carried out in pro of improving reading skills. Based on this and others reading experiences of my English degree, I can apply strategies such as reading in groups so students can work collaborative, in which learners may have the chance to share among them and draw attention on personal connections with the texts. Nonetheless, in my practical sessions, the floor was not opened for applying most of the reading strategies experienced since the students´ proficiency level did not allow it so.

3. I can set different activities in order to practice and develop different reading strategies according to the purpose of reading (skimming, scanning etc.).

The fact that I interacted with different reading techniques throughout college provided me a set of reading activities for my teaching experience. As a teacher in development, I often needed to apply diverse strategies when reading such skimming, scanning, inferencing and predicting just to name a few. It is also worth mentioning that by using some of these strategies I was able to work better with understanding what the texts were about. In this perspective, I am able to go through the basics of setting activities for practicing such reading approaches. However, it would require more research for coping and implementing practices regarding reading purposes. In addition, it is fair to say that although I have the capability of drawing connections between my language learning and my teaching practicums, the line for finding an appropriate balance between both may not be as narrow as it seems. In fact, I still draw attention upon the matter that my experiences are the ones that added skills for dealing with the teaching challenges I have encountered up to this point of my academic life.

4. I can help learners to develop different strategies to cope with difficult or unknown vocabulary in a text.

As a student who often dealt with many new terminologies in readings, I have the need to use different methods in order to overcome such language adversities. In this regard, some of the strategies I was able to take advantage were the use of context for finding out the meaning of unknown terms and the use word patterns for understanding strange words. Following this, I am able to impart various tips I acquired through my language experiences such as the ones above. Likewise, explaining the use of antonyms and others for helping learners develop this strategy and cope with difficulties regarding vocabulary in a text. Notwithstanding, I did not have the opportunity in any of my practical sessions to apply the aforementioned strategies owing to students did not perform the required language level of skills for interacting with text sections. Even so, there is no certainty of what I might be able to help students achieve in a course. The true is that, it was my own experience that taught me that the context in which some strategies are applied, sometimes do not fit with the reality of what a teaching environment is about.

5. I can help learners to develop critical reading skills (reflection, interpretation, analysis etc.).

How can someone help learners to develop such skills by only going through the basic principles he is aware of? Well, since I have been enrolled in my *Language Assessment Course*, I have learned and worked on designing materials for allowing students to reflect upon their products. As a matter of fact, in this same course, I have had to develop various analysis and reflections after interacting with an e-portfolio and other tasks. Based on the expertise obtained from those experiences, I can help learners to reflect upon difference pieces of work they have selected, collected and used in a course. This way, I can see such products as an essential source of their self-assessment. However, if there is something I have learnt is that the reality of developing critical skills goes beyond the strategies a teacher can provide students with. Even though I can implement a set of activities for helping learners in certain processes, there is a lot involved in the awareness and understanding of a critical reading. Therefore, it is imperative for me the acquisition of more experience in this particular topic for helping English language learners in their critical reading process.

E. Grammar

1. I can introduce a grammatical item and help learners to practice it through meaningful contexts and appropriate texts.

One of the things that contributed to my understanding in the way English language is structured and encoded is the use of grammar. Traditionally, as a student, I used to think that being aware of grammatical features when using language was the key for learning English. Nonetheless, introducing interactive grammar within my English courses help me to be more aware of the system in which reading, writing, speaking and listening are developed in agreement with real life language use. Now, regarding my work as a practitioner, recognizing grammatical items that fit with the lesson content and students interest was not certainly an easy task. In this regard, finding a balance between students learning the content and enjoying the class was a bit challenging since there were also some academic aims to fulfill as a teacher. Moreover, practicing grammatical items seemed to be hopeless if the activities were not performed through dynamic games or amusing exercises. On the other hand, due to the fact that learners did not have the level for using reading texts, grammatical items were not introduced by this mean, this applied for both of the grades I worked with.

2. I can introduce, and help students to deal with, new or unknown items of grammar in a variety of ways (teacher presentation, awareness-raising, discovery etc.).

Something I learnt from being a language learner is that when it comes to grammar, everyone has a problem dealing with it at some point. Certainly, I am not an exception to this particular trend. In fact, I fully endorse the fact that I still cope with certain grammatical items in language even though they have been addressed in previous

academic occasions. Despite of this, I consider that the contact with a variety of teaching strategies used by my professors were key for helping understand unfamiliar grammar items. In connection with my academic experience, I noticed that a common approach for assisting students with unknown items was the teacher presentation. Here, the teacher usually solved misunderstandings by explaining all learners being that he is also aware that others may have the same issues. In this respect, I have also used this technique as an effective way of clarifying doubts or misconceptions within the classroom. Besides, I have designed mind maps as a way of providing a concise and brief understanding of a topic in particular. In general, I can present different ways of illustrating new or unknown grammar items so students can benefit from it.

3. I can deal with questions learners may ask about grammar and, if necessary, refer to appropriate grammar reference books.

Understanding that grammar is one of the most important factors for learning a second language, could save time and effort for many people, at least from my point of view. While some educators in my career do not find imperative to refer grammatical items to book, some others find it quite essential to do it so. For example, my instructor in the *Professional Development Course* frequently drew attention upon mentions of authors, books and studies made in a particular field of education. In this connection, using such references in the classroom served as a supporting tool not only for giving credit to copyright but also for learning from factual information. As far as I can see it, my ability to clarify grammatical doubts depends mostly on the complexity of the topic and the level of students in language. In any case that I cannot cope with different grammatical concerns, the right step for me to make would be supporting explanations with other reference materials. However, so far, I have not been in the situation of referring to any appropriate grammar reference book in neither of my practical sessions.

4. I can use grammatical metalanguage if and when appropriate to the learners' needs.

Using language to analyze and explain language itself might be seen as one of the most frequent learning strategies used in English. From personal experience, I think that without the advantage of using Spanish to explain basic grammar rules/items used in English, children language learning would be a much slower process since the students mother tongue was Spanish. In most situations, it was needed not only to adapt language to developmental level but also to use Spanish as a means of explaining terminologies, nouns, verbs, among others. Such grammatical items sometimes were interrelated and then gather so they could be presented as a whole component of a phrase structure or a simple sentence. In point of fact, in my Curriculum Design Course I was able to create lesson plans in a Project Task-Based way where students had the chance to learn grammar little by little. Here, the goal was to study a particular language item in each single lesson in order for learners to learn and perform a final product from the interrelated topics viewed. Moreover, in order to facilitates student's comprehension, I needed to constantly focus on providing connections among meaning, form and use of language in context. Even though grammatical issues were a tad difficult compared to vocabulary explanations, they usually occupied a position in the understanding and development of lesson tasks.

5. I can evaluate and select grammatical exercises and activities, which support learning and encourage oral and written communication.

There are those who believe that a good communication between learners and teacher is a key component for the engagement and advancement of a class. In this connection, I as well make part of this particular group. While trying to apply communication strategies I have previously seen in academic settings, I learnt how important was the dynamism of body language for promoting classroom engagement and motivation toward learning. In addition, although most of the activities carried out in my practicums were not directly grammar focus, some features of it were implicitly implicated. On the one hand, the main learning aim of my lessons was in respect of fostering oral communication among learners since this skill was the most suitable for graders age and language level. On the other hand, encouraging written communication was a tad challenging due to the fact that learner's writing competences, even in Spanish, were pretty plain and needed improvement. In fact, some of them did not even know how to write yet. Nevertheless, I was able to find exercises in which they needed to fill gaps, search words and write down terms in order to foment writing skill, at least in a simple scale. With all things considered, again, the matter of assessing learners varied between

formative and summative assessment depending on the complexity of the exercises and tasks.

F. Vocabulary

1. I can evaluate and select a variety of activities which help learners to learn vocabulary.

There is simply no way that I can respond to this descriptor without referring to the learning process I have had in my Bilingual program. To begin with, thinking of my academic life, I remember going through a set of exercises where I had the chance to practice and implement certain techniques for learning vocabulary. The same way, it is fair to say that such learning methods were different from the old fashion ones I was used to, the ones that view dictionaries as an irreplaceable source for acquiring vocabulary. On the contrary, one of the activities I familiarized with in my courses was the usage of synonyms and antonyms for expanding our vocabulary repertoire as well as finding relationships among certain terminologies. In connection with this, in some of my lessons as a practitioner, I introduced diverse activities such as *Bingo*, *Pictionary*, *Last man standing* and *Charades* as a way of allowing students to have fun while learning new vocabulary. In fact, being that learners were too young, the lessons executed in class were not mainly speaking-focused but they were also vocabulary-based.

2. I can evaluate and select tasks which help learners to use new vocabulary in oral and written contexts.

Taking into account my exposure to the teaching atmosphere I was in, there were by all odds some activities that fit better than others within the classroom. In this regard, there are certain events that I could think of when encouraging students to take part in classroom speaking activities. With the intention of fostering and practicing new vocabulary through oral performances, I incorporated some interactive activities for doing it so. For instance, some of the speaking activities learners usually interacted with were

Telephone, Last Man Standing and *Word Chain*. This way, besides learning and using fresh vocabulary, speaking aspects of pronunciation and fluency were checked. On the other hand, inasmuch as writing played a secondary role in the lesson exercises, promoting the use of new terms through it was mostly done within the speaking context itself. This mean, that oral activities usually required the use of writing. This argument, however, serve to highlight the fact that even though oral context were prioritized in the tasks, the integration of writing items was essential for developing the schoolwork at hand. Hence, such narrative give evidence that I have selected and assessed classroom tasks in relation with new vocabulary learning by oral and writing paths.

3. I can evaluate and select activities which enhance learners' awareness of register differences.

Another of the experiences I have had in my educational field has to do with different features of one's academic discourse. Throughout my academic life I have developed activities regarding the social and functional variations in a discourse. As far as I can remember, these variations depended mainly on the domain and someone style in a conversation. Actually, professors from my *Academic Discourse* and *Academic Writing Courses* often focused on aspects of written and spoken discourse in language. Despite of this, I can barely remember all register differences previously studied. Moreover, in neither of my practical sessions I took into account the integration of such discourse discrepancies, at least not consciously. In this sense, although my ability to cope with the descriptor above can be re-learned and developed, the truth is that in my current stay, I am not able to select and evaluate activities concerned with register awareness. In a way, this not much of a surprise to me since being aware of register differences is quite a complex process that certainly did not fit with the language competences of students from my academic practices.

4. Culture

- 1. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source materials and activities which awaken learners' interest in and help them to develop their knowledge and understanding of their own and the other language culture (cultural facts, events, attitudes and identity etc.).**

One thing I learnt from my language experiences was that it is almost impossible to learn a second language without developing a sense of knowledge about the foreign culture. At first, I was not aware of such matter until I started my career. In my *Sociolinguistic Course* in particular, I could explore diverse cultural features in relation to language itself which helped me to be aware of other cultural behaviors. With no exception to the rule, I had the opportunity to implement and highlight cultural aspects in connection with language students both native and foreign. As a matter of fact, some of the core topics of my lesson plans in second grade were about cultural dance, typical food and even national symbols. The use of cultural activities as these in the schoolroom served as a mean for contextualizing learners to both language environments. Besides, the authentic material used in exercises and games made things more interactive and approachable to students' interests. Nevertheless, the evaluation of such events was mostly concerned with how much children know about their own culture. With all things considered, such experiences showed evidence that I can comply with the descriptor above.

- 2. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts, source materials and activities which make learners aware of similarities and differences in sociocultural 'norms of behaviour'.**

In relation to the effects language has in society, it is important to draw attention to the regional similarities and differences inasmuch as they made part of the socio-cultural factors I saw in previous courses. As I grow older, I learn more about what one can do with an appropriate knowledge of other people's language and culture. To begin with, I have used a set of materials as reading and videos for helping me become more conscious of others cultural norms and context. Furthermore, the exposure to others sociocultural sources such as news, articles, music and customs contributed to the establishment of a bridge between my first and second language. Following this path, my intention towards practical teaching was to apply similar approaches and adapt them to

learners' needs in order to raise cultural awareness across their learning process. Nonetheless, making learners aware upon the specific feature of socio-cultural norms of behaviour was not a main focus in my teaching topics. Despite of this, some of these aspects were implicitly included in various activities performance.

3. I can evaluate and select activities (role plays, simulated situations etc.) which help learners to develop their socio-cultural competence.

As with any other learning factor, the development of socio-cultural competence has been most definitely an educational aspect for me as a teacher to be. With all the cultural aspects involved in language teaching, it seemed that most of the content of my lesson executions were pointing to socio-cultural values of the English language. For starters, in one of my lessons, the aim of the activity was to learn about the members of the family and the importance of the role that each member played in such collective group of society. Here, there is already proof of the integration of cultural competence in the classroom. In addition, in one occasion, students performed an activity of typical dances of Colombia, allowing them to add new traditional knowledge to their prior one. Apparently, in a country with different norms, values, customs and behaviors it was a bit challenging covering socio-cultural competence as a major key for attaining language proficiency. In general, I have fostered socio-cultural competences through activities that require teamwork, cultural knowledge, cultural identity, among other characteristics.

4. I can evaluate and select activities which enhance the learners' intercultural awareness.

The ability to communicate accordingly between languages had more emphasis as I progressed in my academic field. As a matter of fact, in terms of values, behaviours and beliefs, having an understanding of both of my language cultures was key on being aware of others cultural backgrounds different from my own hometown and country. However, the exposure to my practical experiences taught me how unaware we are about what is in front of us. Even though some of my students had different traditions and backgrounds within the classroom, I do not think that most of them were slightly conscious of their cultural surroundings or their important role as social individuals. Actually, it seemed to me that they usually learned regardless of the existence of others ethnicities in their classroom. Since the lessons implemented on my practicums had a dual focus of

learning a second language and a subject content, school graders were certainly exposed to cultural information through both languages. In this perspective, several activities for acknowledging students of cultural aspects were introduced, such events included traditional holidays, leisure activities, typical food and others. All in all, I believe that by interacting with activities that increase learners' cultural knowledge contributed to their intercultural awareness respectively.

5. I can evaluate and select a variety of texts and activities to make learners aware of the interrelationship between culture and language.

The interaction with several activities and materials across some of my courses was key when I first started to acknowledge other individuals' language culture. Since it was significant to teaching practicum professors to establish a relationship between language and culture, it was certainly required the integration of main intercultural skills in my lesson plans activities. Nevertheless, as this was mentioned before, it is needless to say that because of my graders proficiency level, the usage of texts has been required only in its simplest form. In other words, the reading texts needed for the development of an activity were mostly vocabulary words and simple phrases at most. Despite of this, I can use suggested or reference documents if I have the responsibility to evaluate and select a variety of texts for raising awareness on the interrelationship between language and culture. In point of fact, although it was done in a slightly way, by integrating activities such as *Crosswords*, *Pictionary* and *Word search*, learners were able to read and write pieces of vocabulary in relation to language cultural topics.

Resources

Introduction

This section is concerned with a variety of sources teachers can draw on in the process of locating, selecting and/or producing ideas, texts, activities, tasks and reference materials useful for their learners. The national context with its curricula and recommendations plays an important role in the process of taking decisions related to the use of a course book. The local context with the institutional resources and constraints influences the equipment used as well as the process of selecting and designing appropriate materials. Aims and needs of the learners, their age, language level, motivations and interests guide the type of resources and ways of using them. Therefore, not only ready-made materials, texts and activities, but also those produced by teachers and learners find their place in the learning process, which might take place either in the classroom or in the course of independent learning.

- 1. I can identify and evaluate a range of course books/materials appropriate for the age, interests and the language level of the learners.**

My language teaching experiences have allowed me to develop a sense of knowledge towards how some material were more suitable for students when learning the universal language. At the beginning, although I had trouble implementing some suggested activities in real academic situations, I was able to manage those situations by acquiring more experience in such aspect. To be honest, selecting, organizing and adapting materials was not quite an easy task in my practicums. However, I did have the opportunity to draw attention upon cultural activities in connection with students' language level and immediate environment. In fact, some of the interests of my lesson plans included cultural games, typical food, dynamic exercises and even leisure activities. In this regard, I can identify a range of materials appropriate for the age, interests and level of the learners. Nevertheless, the evaluation of such events was mostly concerned with how much children know about their own culture. With all things considered, such experiences served as an imperative source for complying with the descriptor above.

2. I can locate and select listening and reading materials appropriate for the needs of my learners from a variety of sources, such as literature, mass media and the Internet.

Due to the global accessibility of materials found in the internet, this has been the main source used for teaching young people in my practical sessions. Since I started teaching others, I viewed digital resources as the simplest and fastest way of finding activities, exercises or any other sort of information that best coupled with the digital native needs as stated in the 21st Century Skills book by Fadel and Trilling (2009). In fact, pupils from both of my teaching practicums showed better responses to diverse activities when technological materials were involved in the development of the class. In the view of input skills such listening, modern cultural materials related to television, movies and so forth were included in the lessons. Nonetheless, selecting a variety of reading resources for the sake of students learning process was more of a teacher's designing work owing to the students' language level. In this sense, even though internet provided a huge amount of sources appropriate for covering students' needs, most of them were adapted or recreated. The performance of such digital sources were not only used as interacted materials but also as renewable way of approaching learning different from the traditionally one used in the classroom.

3. I can make use of ideas and materials included in teachers' handbooks and resource books.

As a teacher to be, one of the resources that I have been in contact with is the information guide used for maintaining order while teaching and creating a good learning environment, also known as a teacher handbook. In my *Applied Linguistics Course* I had the duty to present as a final product the creation of a Natural Science Primer that included the teacher handbook. Despite of the various aims of designing such product, I learned that it was mainly a reference to be aware about the importance of having a supporting material while dictating lessons. Actually, in my *Pratica Conducente* project I was even allowed to use this primer as a reference for teaching apprentices. In this perspective, I can make use of ideas or materials included in a teacher's handbook. However, as far as I am concerned about other different books for teachers, I have interacted and used mainly as a resource book the Suggested Curriculum by the MEN (2016). The same way, supporting documents as the Common European Framework of Reference, Council of Europe (2002) were considered when coping with student's linguistic competences. Certainly, because of students' language performance, it was needed to adapt some activities when taking into account such reference documents in my practical teaching.

4. I can design learning materials and activities appropriate for my learners.

Based on my learning-teaching experiences, it is fair to say that integrating activities that are appropriate for learners implies much more than simply designing materials and using teaching guides. When I think of my academic practices there was certainly a diversity of learning materials and activities I made use of. However, designing them was a process that took time and effort due to the fact that existed several factors to consider before implementing any lesson in class. An example of this can be evidenced when aspects such learners age, language level, learning need and even students' background needed to be consider when designing lesson plans. Moreover, after carrying out such events, some conclusions were made in order to improve content that did not fit

much to students' necessity and interest. In this respect, I have been able to design learning materials and activities appropriate for my learners in terms of needs and motivation. Even though materials found in diverse sources were useful in most of the lessons; sometimes, the creation and arrangement of more suitable tasks was required because of children language performance.

5. I can select and use ICT materials and activities in the classroom which are appropriate for my learners.

In terms of resources, it is not a secret the huge impact that ICT (Information and Communication Technology) have nowadays in the educational settings, I, as a learner and later as a practitioner acknowledge such thing. First, as a learner I interacted with diverse teaching applications such as computer, video beam, phone and others that contributed to my future teaching process. In regard of my future teaching practices, platforms and tools as *Educaplay*, *Duolingo* also added knowledge on how to use materials at my disposal in order to incorporate dynamic to classroom exercises. Second, as a practitioner I took advantage of technological devices at the schools I taught, this were mainly video bean/screen and computer in conjunction with others non-tech materials like cardboard, posters, scissors, clippers, etc. The selection and usage of materials and activities were based upon the awareness of how children seemed to work better with some than others. All in all, I am able to select and use ICT materials and activities in the classroom which are appropriate for my learners.

Lesson planning

Introduction

Planning lessons or periods of teaching deals with the main didactic questions of why, what and how: why one should focus on a specific learning objective, what material to choose and how to use the learning material.

For the teacher the most important of these is to know why he or she makes a decision on which material to bring into the classroom and which activities to choose. The

decision is dependent on curriculum requirements and on specific groups of learners. Teachers need to know the curriculum and how to transform aspects of it into transparent aims and objectives which can be understood by the learners.

Choice of content is closely linked to the objectives. Following a textbook is usually not sufficient since textbooks only represent the author's interpretation of the curriculum and rarely take individual learners into consideration.

Planning activities depends on both learning objectives and content and requires teachers to consider how learners can reach the objectives through the material chosen. When planning a lesson, the teacher's knowledge of language learning theory, a wide scope of methodology, resources and learner activities are as important as knowledge of the individual learner's abilities.

A. Identification of Learning Objectives

- 1. I can identify curriculum requirements and set learning aims and objectives suited to my learners' needs and interests.**

One of the most important parts of planning a lesson in my practical teaching was to consider what students will be able to do at the end of such lesson executions in connection with English curriculums. As I was acquiring more teaching experience, I learnt to focus on specific learning objectives since, in both of my practicums, graders exhibited different difficulties, needs, abilities and awareness about the English language. The same way, the learning objectives were also developed in connection with the emphasis several of my professors put on standards of competences set in La Guía 22, MEN (2006) and the aims within the Suggested Curriculum by the MEN (2016). Notwithstanding, since documents as these do not fit with the reality of a learning environment, it was imperative for me to go beyond of such ideal or expected classroom scenarios. This way, I could be able to take into consideration more appropriate learners' needs and interests. In fact, the designing of teaching materials such as activities, games and tasks were based on the what learners were able to perform more than the curriculum requirements itself.

2. I can plan specific learning objectives for individual lessons and/or for a period of teaching.

Considering that all lessons plans developed in my language degree had learning objectives, we can say that the lessons executed in my practical classes required specific ones that fitted into students' necessities. Even if such aims were applied in a short or long term, such experiences certainly contributed to my understanding of what learners were able to achieve or not in language. In fact, the important thing that I was able to acknowledge myself was about the amount of time student took to accomplish a goal instead of an established period. Since I have been teaching, I have been able to work with planning learning objectives for individual lessons, especially because the subjects of my first academic practice were chosen between a colleague and me. Moreover, even though in the second academic practice, we created in couples a teaching syllabus to follow up, an overall goal to reach during such teaching period was not set. As far as I can see it, all the specific learning objectives of my classes were centered in the learning of English through individual lessons. Unless of course, such objectives were seen from

the perspective of what students learnt in general about English during the teaching period.

3. I can set objectives which challenge learners to reach their full potential.

In connection with the descriptor above, I can recall some experiences about challenging learners when teaching. When learning about teaching methodologies in my *Language Acquisition Course*, one of the activities focus was to set class objectives in a way that learners interact not only with prior knowledge but also with challenging tasks. In other words, learners required to get in contact with exercises and/or tasks that were related to previous learning and the new information at hand. Such encounter served as a basis for future activities of my practicum in which students needed to cope with similar levels of difficulty. Actually, I became more aware of such conditions when I observed how children responded differently depending on the task challenging level. In this sense, the objective was not to present the tasks in matter neither too simple; to avoid boredom, nor too hard; to prevent stress. Thereupon, although I cannot be sure what are the appropriate objectives for reaching learners' full potential, I can certainly set some that fit well to students' motivation and needs.

4. I can set objectives which take into account the differing levels of ability and special educational needs of the learners.

After being exposed to several teaching situations, it became more clear to me the complexity involved in students' educational abilities and needs. When I first started teaching, I noticed how some learners already exhibited more understanding or knowledge of the English language as well as showing more interest than others when it comes to participation. However, increasing motivation among learners was exactly one of the aspects I had to cope with when teaching. Even though most objectives were not set upon such particular motivation matters, their achievements were certainly based upon learners' levels of ability. In regard to any sort of learners' educational need, I had the chance to work with a student in second grade that did not know to read even though she should according to the course requirements or parameters. In this respect, special attention was paid to her when performing reading or writing activities, but again, the objectives were not specifically focused on overcoming such need. Despite this, some

aspects to help improving such skills were addressed through some activities carried out in the classroom.

5. I can decide whether to formulate objectives in terms of skills, topics, situations, linguistic systems (functions, notions, forms etc.).

Due to the fact that decision making have taken place in all subjects of my academic and personal field, it is not a wonder that it also was present in most aspects of my teaching job. Since I have been in the position of a teacher to be, I have had the duty to do what I consider better for the sake of my teaching and learning purposes. More specifically, I have made emphasis where I consider is most needed in concerned with what I observed in the classroom and student performance on tasks. As a matter of fact, I remember how much time I spent trying to teach basic linguistic forms in a dynamic way that could facilitate understanding to my second graders. However, things were easier planned than done inasmuch as most children from second grade did not show evidence of a moderate understanding of creating simple sentence. What is more, I even decided to draw attention on such issue but this particular feature prevailed until I finished this practical teaching period. All in all, it is needless to say that I have showed evidence of performing the aforementioned descriptor in my practical experience.

B. Lesson Content

1. I can structure lesson plans and/or plan for periods of teaching in a coherent and varied sequence of content.

As far as I remember, I have not arranged lesson plans for periods of teaching in any of my academic practices. Even though the lesson plans created for my English classes exhibited a sequential order of topics, they certainly did not were structured in regard to my period teaching young learners. In other words, they were created in aid of reaching class objectives instead of planning for the entire teaching experience. However, within my repertoire exists one single experience that I am aware of when structuring

lesson plans for periods of teaching, such event was approached in my *Curriculum Design Course*. Since I had the duty to design a Project Task-Based in this course, I created six lessons plans that were developed in a project manner that allowed students to be able to perform something at the end of each lesson implementation. In fact, each out of the six lesson contents needed to be sequential, coherent and all related among them in order to have a final product at the end of the hypothetical teaching situations. In this perspective, I was able to structure lesson plans arranged for a period of teaching in a coherent and sequential learning of content.

2. I can vary and balance activities to include a variety of skills and competences.

My initiation to teaching practicum granted me with important knowledge that we, as practitioners, must be aware in order to help students learn as much as they can through exploring different possibilities in the activities carried out. Frequently, one of the key factors my professor used to emphasize on was the variety we must perform in activity creation since all learners show different abilities, needs, interest and competences when doing things. Based on this, a good way of fomenting such teaching principle was to present a variety of skills within our lessons so students could take advantage of the diverse activities and could feel motivated while performing them. Due to the fact that my first experiences applying variety and balance were in preschool, such qualities were exhibited through the execution of games and exercises in class. The same way, it seemed hard to separate the exploration of some skills from others being that most of them were closed related or dependable from the other. Therefore, I can conclude that learners can benefit well by discovering more alternatives in which content learning can be applied and transmitted in non-traditional ways.

3. I can plan activities which link grammar and vocabulary with communication.

In relation to my learning-teaching experiences, there are certain events that allowed me to view grammatical features closely associated to vocabulary. For starters, just by referring to countable and uncountable nouns in grammar, I began to think of both

strands as areas hard to separate one from another when it comes to reading alongside with communication in English. That is to say, I started to see general patterns in terms of qualities and topics of the two individual items at hand. In regard to my academic practices, I learned to focus on exploring vocabulary majorly through speaking activities because of students' proficiency level in English. However, grammar was an aspect that children showed some difficulties coping with, especially if the learning content was introduced to them in a traditional way of explanation. Therefore, the approach taken here was to plan activities in a way that children could focus on vocabulary without the pressure of learning particular grammatical items that could obscure or confuse their learning process. With all things considered, it is hard for me to talk about vocabulary without observing particular instances of grammar, learning it is a natural process that happens in a more unconscious way for learners.

4. I can plan to teach elements of other subjects using the target language (cross- curricular teaching, CLIL etc.).

First in my Initiation to Teaching Practicum and then In my *Academic Practice Course*, the main approach used for teaching was the CLIL methodology (Coyle et al., 2010). In this regard, having a dual focus in which students have the chance not only to learn English but also items about a particular subject area of education was like killing two birds with one stone. By introducing topics such as animals, customs, food and more, planning lessons with the main objective of learning English became an effective and enjoyable experience that now is hard for me to segregate both teaching systems from each other. In addition, alongside with achieving two things with a single action, implementing lessons upon such principle was more practical for my teaching since it saved time and effort when using meaningful and contextualized materials in activities. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that I am able to use language to learn while learning to use language in context. All in all, interacting with the aforementioned methodology in my practical experiences contributed to my professional development awareness.

5. I can vary and balance activities to enhance and sustain the learners' motivation and interest.

One thing I started acknowledging, mainly due to my *Professional Development Course*, is the importance of focusing on motivation and engagement qualities in the classroom. To begin with, even though I went through the process of designing learning activities in various of my courses, I really became aware of motivation and interest features when I truly began my teaching practicum. At its current condition, the reality of my teaching settings was quite different from the expected environment usually shown within certain references documents. observations, reflections and conclusions were vital for creating more balance and included activities in which students could interact accordingly to the learning content and collective interests. In this perspective, children had the opportunity to perform more dynamic activities through familiar events such as singing along, following the leader and dancing to the beat. Carrying out exercises as these were beneficial for vocabulary learning since speaking and listening skills were also involved in their development.

C. Lesson Organization

- 1. I can select from and plan a variety of organizational forms (frontal, individual, pair, and group work) as appropriate.**

The most effective forms of organizing students from my practical teaching were according to the activities, tasks and fluency in class. In this respect, frontal organization was the general classroom arrangement since such organization offered a better view and communication towards the class. The same way, my classroom arrangement skills permitted other organization forms as appropriate to the type of activities at hand. Firstly, individual work was planned for checking every single student understanding about a particular topic studied in class. Secondly, pair work was arranged for sharing knowledge and discussing about the task performance. And thirdly, group work was done in order to apply collaborative skills among learners as well as motivating to compete through

games. It is also fair to say that children reacted better to playgrounds which involved kinesthetic stimulation and speaking skills for the performance of the exercises. In spite of this, it was required to establish a balance in activities due to sometimes learners focused more on aspects of the class enjoyment than in the lesson content.

2. I can plan for learner presentations and learner interaction.

In the perspective of my teaching experiences, I can fairly say that a significant part of the sessions development was focused on the performance of learners, mostly through speaking and writing skills. In other words, the lessons were planned in connection with the class functional environment and students' proficiency levels. On the one hand, by introducing activities such as *Pictionary*, *Telephone* and *Crosswords* learners could put in practice their speaking-writing skills in English. In addition, learners had the chance to collectively present when learning about traditional customs, dance and music in the schoolroom. On the other hand, interaction among students was performed through group discussion or while playing games. The same way, listening-speaking interactions were exhibited in class by listening to songs and singing along. It is also important to add that classroom activities were focused on teacher-student and student-student interaction as a way of exploring diverse teaching methods different from the usual lecture-focused one. In this sense learners could acquire knowledge from both, presenting their knowledge and interacting with others.

3. I can plan when and how to use the target language, including metalanguage I may need in the classroom.

When planning lessons in my academic teaching, I always had to think of different ways of integrating and using the target language in a simple but also a descriptive way. Throughout such practical experiences, it was imperative to consider whether or not using Spanish was suitable to correlate components from the target language and vice versa. In a first instance, the appropriate moment for using English was from the beginning to the end of a class which included warm-ups, reviews, introductions and other stages that allowed language content input. The same way, WH-questions were employed when asking for language elements such as vocabulary, nouns and adjectives. On the other

hand, the way in which English was approached to students was through class enjoyment, visual support and authentic practice across activities, games and tasks in the classroom. In addition, when planning, I took advantage of different types of grammar metalanguage that could be found in reference documents such as the Suggested Curriculum by the MEN (2016). This alluding book include suggested content such as grammar, expressions, vocabulary and other language items that were used in my lesson plans according to the level and module explored in a course. A conclusive anecdote from all this is that, while introducing English, I not only discovered new teaching techniques but also the language content that children were more attentive to.

4. I can plan lessons and periods of teaching with other teachers and/or student teachers (team teaching, with other subject teachers etc.).

In any course of my Bilingual Program, it was common sense to know that, at some point, all of them required to work collaboratively with others whether we like it or not. Regarding my academic teaching, I experienced such thing in my Initiation to *Teaching Practicum Course*. In this respect, I, alongside with another practitioner had to plan, distribute and carry out lesson plans according to the amount of hours given for teaching youngsters. First, after deciding the topics to teach, we usually divided the hours into two classes weekly. Second, every week each student teacher had the responsibility to plan and design the lesson plan for one of the classes and while the other worked as support within the sessions. And third, for the last sessions we agreed to make a review and compilation of all the topics studied throughout the entire team teaching experience. The aim of doing this was to observe students' understanding and achievement in the period of teaching English. Even though there were some duty difficulties along the way, we both managed to make our way through teaching and learning from such team teaching events.

Conducting a Lesson

Introduction

The section on conducting a lesson focuses on what teachers do in Modern Language classrooms and on the skills required. The first of these, expressed as a broad category, is the implementation of a lesson plan. This takes into account an ability to sequence activities in a coherent yet flexible way, to take account of learners' prior learning and to be responsive to individual performances in class.

This section also identifies as significantly important teachers' interactions with the class during the teaching and learning. Within interaction consideration is given to an initial settling down and to maintain attention, as well as to encouraging learner initiatives and responses, and to working with and being responsive to a range of learning styles and learning strategies. Also identified in detail is the teacher's ability to manage classroom events, organize different ways of working and use a range of resources, instructional media and ICT.

The final group of descriptors focuses on the teacher's use of the target language in class. Experience and research tell us that the skills involved here have to do with

deciding when it is most effective in terms of learning to use the target language and for what purposes, and when recourse to the home language might be more appropriate. Also involved is the teacher's ability to help learners understand what is said or written, as well as to encourage them to use the target language when communicating with the teacher and with each other.

A. Using Lesson Plans

1. I can start a lesson in an engaging way.

Bringing back memories, I acknowledge the fact that by cheering children up I could connect children to the lesson content which permitted having a more efficient teaching in the classroom. As a matter of fact, one of the first stages of my class sessions was to engage and encourage students before introducing the topics at hand; this mean, warming students up through diverse playgrounds. Taking this step was a usual

requirement since pupils reacted more actively and attentively towards such introductory stage. In this respect, singing along, following actions, playing the *Postman* among others served as first motivational tools for engaging learners to the lessons. However, in several case scenarios, students experienced disengagement or boredom which often led to shortly introducing backup activities as a break time. Furthermore, I am aware of the fact that I faced some troubles finding an appropriate balance between class enjoyment and lesson content among learners. Despite this and some others inconveniences catching children attention at first, I was certainly able to handle such responsibility and get used to students' common behaviors when learning.

2. I can be flexible when working from a lesson plan and respond to learner interests as the lesson progresses.

Out of the different aspects already considered to this point of my practical teaching experience, another important one has to do with the flexibility put into my teaching environment. In fact, alluding to both of my practical teachings, I consider my interaction with students as enrichful experiences in terms of being more flexible, understandable and aware of their interests. Nonetheless, even though some of my professors drew attention upon such features in lesson planning; at first, I was not fully aware of the many things involved in them, such acknowledgement came with experience. In this respect, in various case, it was necessary to be more flexible in the classroom scenarios being that students experienced frustration or boredom. In order to deal with such encounters, short backup activities were introduced as a break time. Moreover, taking into account their opinions and suggestions in several cases served as communication bridge and a motivational instrument for engaging children, given that learners' ideas for activities add more value to their interest in the lessons. On this account, working alongside with students have contributed to my personal and professional development by adding awareness and knowledge to what I can improve in my coming academic practice.

3. I can ensure smooth transitions between activities and tasks for individuals, groups and the whole class.

The experiences I have had so far while teaching have showed me how important is to make effective transitions between activities for allowing learners to be engaged and

get involved in learning. As a matter of fact, my own learning experiences have made me aware of how hard is to keep a constant focus on activities, this is why it was needed for me to move smoothly among exercises, playgrounds and tasks carried out in class. Since it was clear that children reacted cheerless if they were told directly the tasks to be developed, one of the most common transition patterns was using related questions from one topic to forthcoming ones. However, I am also aware that each learner's organizational form varied and had its complexity. For a start, when the task was planned for checking individual understanding, the termination of one task was announced before initiating the next one. Then, if the exercise was arranged for group performance, it was needed to transit from comparing thoughts to sharing ideas. At last, when the activity was assigned for the whole class, the 1-2-3 questionnaire was used so student can consider what they had learnt from the lesson. All in all, I cannot guarantee I used the smoothest strategies; notwithstanding, I am able to allow learners to move from competing to working collaboratively through activities.

4. I can adjust my schedule when unforeseen situations occur.

An appropriate time distribution throughout my entire career has certainly played a major role in any activity or goal accomplished in my learning-teaching process. Due to the fact that time is present in every moment of our daily routines, it was surely imperative for me to take advantage from every single minute I had teaching. Nevertheless, sometimes it seemed hopeless to comply with my academic schedules without sacrificing my own personal time. That is to say, that in order to fulfill with my teaching practicum courses requirements, it was necessary to dedicate time out of my spare one. In point of fact, I had a couple of situations in which my teaching sessions were canceled without even one previous day notice from the in-service teacher. Additionally, in my last practical experience, I had the accountability to cover unforeseen events such as the overdue time of my practicum ending. In other words, taking time out of my own one in order to cope with the mandatory amount of hours of such practicum. Despite of this, as a practitioner I am aware that although it was not settled in my teaching schedules or academic timetables, there were unexpected situations that were out of one's control. In conclusion, I am able to adjust my time schedule in benefit of my befitting professional growth when unpredicted events occur.

5. I can finish off a lesson in a focused way.

Observing how much I advanced since the outset of teaching others, I cannot help but wonder about the many things I did from the beginning to the conclusion of my lesson implementations. From the eyes of a future educator, I acknowledge that it is not reasonable possible to maintain complete attention in class from beginning to end of a lesson. This is why, going from one activity to another in my practices required a smooth transition in which students can be engaged to learning as much as possible. However, by keeping children constantly interested through the whole lesson made a bit harder to finish class in a focused way. After all, often the last stage of my lessons was used to mark the end of the studied theme that will connect with the upcoming ones. Moreover, I had the chance to apply some ideas for closing class such as providing corrections and feedback, making questions about what was learned or sharing with the class about confusing or difficult topics students encountered during the lesson. All things considered, I am aware that a beneficial lesson emphasizes not only on opening but also on closing the sessions effectively since it might lead to retain and remember really important points.

B. Content

- 1. I can present language content (new and previously encountered items of language, topics etc.) in ways which are appropriate for individuals and specific groups of learners.**

Being able to teach young learners in my academic teaching practices showed me that every student has particular needs and skills in diverse learning areas. In this perspective, being able to identify learning deficits was a starting point so I could not only implement teaching methods but also choose from a variety of suitable contents that fit with students' interest. However, it did not seem enough just to present content but likewise to make sure that all topics were related or reviewed in order to reinforce what students studied in class. Additionally, learning which ones were learners' interests came mainly from observing and interacting with them which also led to finding difficulties they had in certain areas. In fact, it was acknowledged that some language items needed more emphasis than others. Such thing includes second graders having troubles to manage basic writing in English or understanding simple sentences. For reasons as these, various lesson contents exhibited in the schoolroom were mainly focused on overcoming such

problems. The same way, most lesson contents presented in class were done in an overall form since students in general had issues encountering the same items of language. Thereupon, by considering this, I was able to relate previous topics with upcoming ones in lesson executions.

2. I can relate what I teach to learners' knowledge and previous language learning experiences.

The different encounters I had teaching put me in a situation in which it was necessary to connect components learners were familiar with further knowledge for presenting a lesson that fits with students' knowledge. As a matter of fact, in both of my practicum experiences, I noticed that some of my learners already had some basic knowledge regarding English vocabulary at least. For instance, before my first teaching sessions, students from preschool and second grade had already learnt vocabulary items which was useful for me since from that point I could review and reinforce what they have previously acquired from learning. On top of this, certain pupils exhibited additional knowledge to the English language that they learned out of the classroom environment. In this respect, trying to integrate new content knowledge to children preceding one required from building relationships with them so they could share their prior English understanding. Therefore, some of the strategies implemented were using fun and entertaining ways to engage learners as well as designing material to explore things they may know from their previous learning process.

3. I can relate what I teach to current events in local and international contexts.

Speaking from experience, I am aware of the fact that information has been key in knowing the events that influence different ambits of my personal and academic life. By all odds, my career is not an exception to this rule; after all; it has been part of the job to relate what we teach to current events in local and international contexts. Regardless of this, I honestly have not faced a current event in such perspective, at least not in my recollection of memories. Despite of this, I consider myself capable of dealing with this requirement as long as I have the necessary tools for carrying out such a task. In fact, as a learner and teacher to be, I acknowledge the fact that educators need to adapt to the different circumstances that surround the educational field; this includes laws, regulations, curriculum among other things. In regard of international context, so far I can only think

of witnessing the adaptation made from the European documents as the Common European Framework of Reference, Council of Europe (2002) to the Colombian context. Even though it was not far ago, being aware of such change was quite relevant in my Bilingual Program since new aspects and methods needed to be considered before teaching others.

4. I can relate the language I am teaching to the culture of those who speak it.

Is it even possible to teach a foreign language without the need of relating the native culture with the foreign one? I sincerely have not experimented this, what is more, my experiences teaching indicated that it is hopeless to do it so. Actually, my lesson plans were founded on a dual focus of teaching language and content at the same time but not without taking into account knowledge and manifestation from the first language. In other words, my teaching consisted on comparing and contrasting context aspects from both cultures through the lesson. Besides, it was easier to focused on things that fit into student's maternal reality and world view. The same way, in order to avoid uncertainties in the foreign language, switching from Spanish to English was also part of the class methodology, that is, in several cases the use of the mother tongue was required undoubtedly. Hence, cultural features were integrated into the lessons through events, activities and playgrounds that students were familiarized with in their natal culture. If I see things from the perspective of my teaching methodologies used so far, it seems impractical to separate both language cultures. This basically mean that teaching them jointly has become something adhered to the core of my teaching register.

C. Interaction with Learners

- 1. I can settle a group of learners into a room and gain their attention at the beginning of a lesson.**

The structure in which my lesson plans were usually based included a beginning stage that gave me the chance to apply my classroom management and motivation skills. In the first place, warm-up activities were without a doubt one of the best strategies I used not only for motivating learners but for engaging them through the different following stages of the lessons. Warming up children oftenly consisted of performing moves, singing songs or following the practitioner's actions in order to foster learning skills such as speaking and listening. Another way of gaining students' attention at the beginning was by reviewing previous topics before introducing new content. Such step was done with the intention of reinforcing content understanding. In this connection, learners exhibited engagement or active responses in class when dynamic activities such as Warm-up Your Voice, Jump in-Jump out, Step Forward, Yes/No Stand Up, among others were incorporated. Thereupon, experiences as this show evidence of my motivation and engagement skills as well as adding knowledge to my teaching repertoire.

2. I can keep and maximize the attention of learners during a lesson.

In search for promoting classroom management skills, various educators from my Bilingual Program presented different strategies for keeping learners engaged to the lessons. Although I had great positive experiences teaching, it is fair to admit that several times I lost the students' attention despite of all the effort I put trying to regain their focus. Sometimes boredom among children simply seemed to be inevitable. However, I think that experiences as these were exactly the most relevant ones that helped me improve my classroom management skills. It was from those mistakes made while teaching that I became more aware of how some activities worked better than others for my learners. For instance, when I started to observe tedium or frustration in class sessions I tended to take a break and allow students to be exposed to freer exercises that encouraged them to interact with learning through games. Such back up activities technique was included as part of my lesson plans with second graders. It is also worth mentioning that, with all things involved in teaching such as learners' needs, skills, interests, age, etc. it is out of question to think that maintaining students focused during a lesson is a total realistic and achievable situation.

3. I can be responsive and react supportively to learner initiative and interaction.

After being in contact with learners from preschool and second grade, it became unquestionable for me how much children like to participate (or intervene in some cases) in activities performance. Speaking from the perspective of my academic learning, I am certainly aware that part of the role of a teacher is to take students ideas and/or opinions into consideration as long as it does not interrupt or is counterproductive to the fluency of the class. In this respect, I have reacted supportively towards learner initiative and interaction in the schoolroom. As a matter of fact, there were different times in which students contributed to the development of activities by making suggestions about how games and exercises should be best performed. In several occasions, I did not put resistance to such prompts owing to they were reasonable and also because students usually know their classroom settings better than someone who is there for a certain period of time. Besides, another significant thing I acknowledged myself was not to underestimate learners based on their age, especially when many of them exhibited good English knowledge despite of the grade they were in. Being honest, I believe that still exist some negative aspects regarding learners' consideration and support that I hope to improve in my coming future teachings.

4. I can encourage learner participation whenever possible.

The fact that I have had active students in my practicums does not mean that it is not a challenge dedicating time and thoughts to the idea of increasing all students' participation. In short, it is imperative not only to observe some student taking part in class discussions and answers but also to see them all having the opportunity to contribute and learn. Even if it does not mean that they will do it the same way, at the same rate. In this sense, it is fair to say that by listening and responding to students' initiatives I had promoted a communicative bridge for helping students to speak up. In addition, in my first sessions teaching the environment in which lessons were carried out was shaped or adapted, that is to say, I used classroom arrangement skills in a way that I could work better and engage pupils to the learning content. Another example about fostering participation was to call students by their names, this way, I could connect with them and encourage them to come up and speak. Last but no least, making clear my expectations towards students' participation was valuable for taking advantage of activities implementation.

5. I can make explicit and help learners to develop appropriate learning strategies.

When it comes to learning strategies across my learning-teaching experiences, I was certainly exposed to items that allowed me to take advantage of diverse methods for learning English as a second language. Despite of such exposure, I ponder that I am not an expert in the use learning strategies but I am not a total stranger to them either. On the one hand, I did not have the chance within any of my practical sessions to apply most of the complex strategies I was taught since students did not exhibit such demanding English level. On the other hand, I presented some techniques to help pupils memorize and learn vocabulary among other things. In this regard, I was able to take advantage of context and performing of actions related to unfamiliar words as well as using Spanish as a means for describing terms. Furthermore, for such teaching contexts I adapted some strategies I learned over the course of my learning experiences such as antonym usage, dual coding (combine word and image) and even interleaved practice for memorizing items. Clearly, I still have a long way to go in my teaching, but I think that such experiences added vital information for teaching students how to learn instead of just repeating the same content in a different way.

D. Classroom Management

1. I can take on different roles according to the needs of the learners and requirements of the activity (resource person, mediator, supervisor etc.).

One of the things I acknowledge from my practicums is that, as a teacher, my job was not simply to instruct students and standby but also to go beyond and perform other roles around the classroom and even the school itself. Even though I have accoutered with the descriptor above, it would have been really hard for me to fulfill such requirements of activities if not for my first teaching experience. After acquiring more experience, it became a bit more manageable to identify learners' needs and play different roles as a teacher. In this context, as a resource individual I was in charge of providing apprentices the right tools and knowledge in order for them to develop the tasks at hand. Not only this, I also served as a means of communication and agreement among teams. And of course, it was quite imperative to monitor learners while they perform and progress through the activities in class. In fact, I have anecdotes in which by supervising children's work I detected misunderstandings, difficulties and doubts they had while performing

exercises. From here on out, my role was one of clarifying and giving feedback to learners.

2. I can create opportunities for and manage individual, partner, group and whole class work.

After copying with classroom management skills in my teaching practicums, I became aware of particular ways every practitioner had of doing things since every schoolroom was vastly different one from another. From this time forth, I presented situations where students had the chance to show what they learned in class individually and others where they required to work with some else as well as to share ideas or opinions collectively. In general terms, these types of student arrangements had to do with monitoring them while performing any sort of activities in the lesson. Although learners were differently divided from individual to whole class work, in most occasions, I passed around clarifying doubts, answering questions or providing additional feedback to any concern they had about the tasks at hand.

When things got a bit rough or out of control, I was able to establish order by referring to ground rules, addressing bad behaviours, giving slight sentence such as performing actions in front of the class and others. Notwithstanding, dealing with individual unexpected conducts was not as easy as they make it look in educational books and teaching guides. As a matter of fact, regardless of the experience acquired in my first academic practice, I still struggled to managed children behaviors in my second practical teaching, it was necessary to come out with new and different classroom management strategies.

3. I can make and use resources efficiently (flashcards, charts etc.).

The exposure to teaching academically showed me that there were resources which seemed more appealing than others when it comes to students needs and interest. In such perspective, what I oftenly used while teaching were technological supplies inasmuch as digital natives showed much interest when they were introduced to attractive

and modern resources. Despite of this, traditional materials such as worksheets, flashcards and charts were used to provide source variety in students' interactions and activities. In the case of worksheets, they were used mainly for developing exercises and grading children. For the following case, in my second year practicum, I introduced a role play activity with flashcards in order to learn about the members of the family. In simple words, the goal here was to reinforce the vocabulary shown by practicing it through the use of flashcards and asking simple questions such as "who is this?". The same way, a family tree was created based on the images presented in a video and the role play. Furthermore, in my first practical experience, I had the opportunity to make a chart and a poster with visuals for summarizing information as well as appealing to the eye of the beholder. All things considered, making and using resources efficiently depended above all from learners' necessities and skills I intended to foster in a lesson.

4. I can manage and use instructional media efficiently (OHP, ICT, video etc.).

One of the main outcomes of having my first classroom observations before starting the real teaching practices was becoming aware of my surroundings. By doing this, I could identify the resources available in the school/classroom and how I could use them in favor of a more efficient learning. From there on out, I was able to develop most of my activities by selecting sources such as video beam, screen, computer as well as cardboards and others. Such tools usually added more dynamic and enjoyment to the classroom sessions and student learning. Furthermore, by introducing videos and slides I was able to teach vocabulary terms and make children move around or use their body language whilst learning.

In both of my academic practicums, one of the main purposes of utilizing technological devices was to make classes more appealing and interesting for learners. However, it seemed unavoidable for children to get bored after a while so when this happened, I moved to freer exercises where I could use whether ICT or physical materials to perform playgrounds or sing along. In this connection, students could take advantage of authentic sources at disposal in order to have a more realistic language use in context. All in all, managing instructional media in my lessons also implied founding a balance between pupils' amusement and content learning since some resources exhibited more distraction than benefit.

5. I can supervise and assist learners' use of different forms of ICT both in and outside the classroom.

The importance of accessing information through technological mediums has certainly been imminent in both my learning and teaching experiences. In point of fact, the telecommunication I have had among language practitioners, in-service teachers and my practicum professors has been vital for developing and executing my lesson plans in both academic practices. In this respect, I certainly took advantage of the limited technological materials at the schools and integrated them to my teaching. However, because the schools did not possess the necessary technological resources for assisting learners in using ICT, It would seem senseless to say that I did supervise pupils in managing different means of communication in the schoolroom. Moreover, I did not have the opportunity to interact with students outside the classroom settings since my interactions were directly with the in-service teacher or my supervisor professor. Therefore, inasmuch as my practicums were exactly that, practical experiences, I did not supervise or assist children through any social network or instant messaging tool that a professional educator would use with his students.

E. Classroom Language

1. I can conduct a lesson in the target language.

Certainly, one of the things that have contributed to gain teaching experience in my profession has been the ability to use the target language as much as I could through the lessons. In fact, lesson activities were meant not only as a chance for introducing English across exercises and games but also as a way of allowing learners to use it for speaking mainly. Besides input content, English was used in the classroom for warm up, review, vocabulary and playgrounds purposes. However, seeing that my practicum students were from preschool and second grade, it would be irrational not to think that their first language was highly integrated into the lessons. In general terms, the aim of using such native language was to understand, relate and learn the new meaning system of the foreign tongue. In this regard, instructions and explanations were mostly done in

Spanish interchanging to English when needed. After all, even though my vision was to behave according certain English teaching/learning objectives, it was unrealistic for me to ignore the particular context in which English was being taught.

2. I can decide when it is appropriate to use the target language and when not to.

Having the ability to use interchangeably L1 and L2 in my teaching lessons was both a requirement and an opportunity for taking the best out of students' language use. In concordance with my criteria in practicums, children knowledge towards English was not enrichful enough if the language used was not suitable to their needs or if lesson activities were not immiscible. On the first hand, the use of Spanish was primordial for students to understand and appropriate of the new knowledge that they were been exposed to. This mean that when confusion or frustrations was noticed, the reasonable alternative for me was to use the native language where they have a better comprehension of things. On the other hand, in most occasions, learners showed signs of enthusiastic behaviors when interactions across games were done in English. Moreover, children exhibited more excitement expressing words in English while listening to songs and warming up through actions. In both events, students performed speaking competence. Feeling comfortable producing the target language sometimes depended not only on how much students were interested in the topics but also on how much Spanish was mandatory to be used.

3. I can use the target language as metalanguage.

In order to study and learn the target language, it was need the use of metalinguistic interactions or language items my audience was expected to know in their natal tongue. During class time focusing on meaning and form was primordial for students' understanding of technical terms. In consideration of this, I was able to introduce activities where children required to say characteristics of animals, people or objects which included size, shape and color of such nouns being described. Upon the intention of having a better comprehension, body language was used while performing such activities. Furthermore, English was employed to define the basic structure of simple questions based on topics previously saw like personal pronouns, WH words, singular/plural objects and simple verbs. Moreover, while learning about occupations,

pupils were shown a list of particular objects professionals oftenly implement in their daily life. Here, learners needed to answered to the questions “whose tools are these? /who uses these tools?” so they could identify and say which person uses such instruments in their job. This way, the target language was used for learning about both, the professions and some features of them. Therefore, it was quite hard to think about teaching language without using a specialized system for complying with the job, that is, using language to talk about language.

4. I can use various strategies when learners do not understand the target language.

As a teacher to be, it has always been important to be aware from the beginning what strategies might fit better to learners understanding of the target language. Looking back to my practicums, I can think of various methods that may or may not allow learners to have a better view of their uncertainties about the L2. To begin with, one of my signatures moves to help students comprehend something was the use of my body language while expressing terms that they found hard to get. This include different actions, gestures and movements that were self-explanatory. Another useful strategy I oftenly used was to give pupils context through the content that is been explained. In this line, any flash card or visual aid also served as medium for adding context to children misunderstanding.

Furthermore, an additional technique frequently used among practitioners of my course was checking understanding by raising fingers from one to five, one meaning poor and five excellent comprehension of a theme. If none of the aforementioned strategies worked, as final resource Spanish was introduced for clarifying any confusion. Conclusively, being that my academic practices focused on language teaching, it was not surprising that as practitioners we needed to consider all the inconveniences learners may have along their learning process.

5. I can encourage learners to use the target language in their activities.

When fostering the use of English within the learning environment, as a practitioner, I had to be able of giving support to students so they could feel as confident

as possible while expressing themselves. In this regard, one of the first approaches when planning was to make activities interesting so learners could take part in interactions using language while learning simultaneously. This was done by introducing familiar topics, authentic content or cultural activities/hobbies. The same way, students from both of my practicums showed more amusement and participation in class when activities were presented through playgrounds. Additionally, stimulating youngsters on speaking up required from applying strategies such providing visual aids and contextualized examples for them to feel more comfortable while speaking or doing exercises.

Opposed to the previous statements, the different reactions some children had along activities might be influenced from other factors such as the age or behavior towards learning in general. In other words, usually one out of all learners was more difficult to be encouraged in class because of his constant disruptive conduct. Despite of all the ups and downs of my academic practices, I still managed to create a language-rich environment in which infants were encouraged to communicate through the target language. Thereupon, I am able to encourage learners to use the target language in their activities.

Independent learning

Introduction

Language learning in a school context is both a matter of learning individually and in cooperation with peers, as well as independent learning with the guidance of a teacher. This means giving the individual learners or groups of learners a chance to take charge of aspects of their own learning processes in order to reach their full potential.

As far as learner autonomy and project work are concerned, taking charge means choosing objectives, content, activities, outcomes and forms of assessment. It could be some of these aspects of learning or all, depending on the situation. Autonomous learning is an integral part of learning foreign languages, not an additional method of teaching. Teachers need to know how to structure lessons and design tasks which assist the learners in their choices and their ability to reflect on and evaluate their learning. Portfolios can provide valuable insight into the individual's progress both for the teacher and the learners themselves.

Homework and various extra-curricular activities provide valuable additions to language learning at school. It is the teacher's responsibility to provide real learning opportunities for students beyond the classroom.

ICTs play an increasingly central role in foreign language learning and require teachers to be familiar with information systems and computer-mediated communication. Collaborative learning environments as well as individual use of ICT information sources foster independent learning and, if appropriately employed, promote learner autonomy.

A. Learner Autonomy

1. I can evaluate and select a variety of activities which help learners to reflect on their existing knowledge and competences.

Regarding my experience teaching young learners, one of the indispensable segments in the practicum was to show evidence of assessment ways in which learners had the chance to be exposed to reflective features in a session. In view of this, I took advantage of self-assessment leads that consisted on motivating learners to share with the class what they knew about a topic studied in class. This was done by gathering students in a circle and asking reflective guided-questions. In this regard, such assessing approach integrated questions such as what did the students learn? what were their favorite tasks? and what difficulties did they have while performing those tasks? Additionally, this part of the lesson plan had as an objective to prompt children to take part on the proposed activities and exercises. It is also fair to say that this reflecting initiative was in concordance with the module and assessment path set in the Suggested Curriculum by the MEN (2016). Implementing appraising strategies as this was key, not only on motivating children but also in knowing what they were lacking of when learning a new subject.

2. I can guide and assist learners in setting their own aims and objectives and in planning their own learning.

My language learning career have provided me with a certain set of anecdotes that have contributed to my academic learning as to my teaching practice aims. For starters, when it comes to my academic process, it has been imminent to assist myself and set my own learning and teaching objectives in previous courses. As pointed out by educational experts Morrison, Ross, Kalman, and Kemp (as cited in Wesolowski, 2015, p.40):

Student learning objectives serve two purposes: (1) to offer a means for the educator to design specific, appropriate, and organized instructional activities that facilitate effective learning and (2) to provide a framework for devising ways to evaluate student's learning.

This claim makes sense since I have observed how setting particular aims as a learner had worked as a guide and have helped me to focus on what is really important in a course. However, from the learning view of my practicum students, the reality is that the children age, their English competence and their academic level have been some of the adverse factors for supporting them on such process. Therefore, I have not been able to guide or assist learners on setting and planning their own learning aims.

3. I can evaluate and select tasks which help learners to reflect on and develop specific learning strategies and study skills.

As previously argued, one of the important aspects of my academic teaching had to do with exposing learners to any reflective item that they could benefit in a session. In account of this, it sounds a bit redundant to say that the use of self-assessment served as a motivating tool which allowed learners to share and participate in the class, as well as to reflect upon what they learnt from the learning session. Regarding specific elements of a lesson, they were performed in a similar learning pattern when developing activities in the schoolroom; that is to say; the stages of activities and playgrounds were carried out in an identical way in most sessions. Nonetheless, selecting appropriate tasks that would lead children to work on specific learning or study methods was something a bit unrealistic being that learners did not show such a high level of critical thinking skills. As aforementioned above, children's profile and academic competence played a major role on working with complex descriptors as this one. In other words, I was able to fulfill the descriptor above in slightly manner when the development of complex students' learning elements were not involved.

4. I can assist learners in choosing tasks and activities according to their individual needs and interests.

As a learner and a teacher to be, I think that supporting others to select appropriate pieces of work requires from the pre-service teacher a certain amount of critical thinking skills. Nonetheless, this amount of critical thinking skills is not yet part of my current

practice at this point of my academic life. Even though these skills in conjunction with collaboration and teamwork are essential critical areas for development according to the 21st Century Skills book, Trilling & Fadel (2009), in my teaching practicums, I have only accomplished a certain level of the skills required to help learners choosing tasks and activities based on their needs and interests. In this perspective, I have been able to take into account some suggestions students had in mind about particular activities concerning playgrounds or the like. Such approach was taken as a way of considering learner's interests and amusement. Notwithstanding, tasks and most activities in the classroom were developed upon the basis of learning objectives and teaching criteria. This mean that even though I have covered some aspects of assisting pupils while learning, I have not totally fulfilled the descriptor above mentioned. Thence, supporting students in choosing tasks and activities based on particular conditions goes beyond my academic knowledge and teaching experiences.

5. I can help learners to reflect on and evaluate their own learning processes and evaluate the outcomes.

Being able to reflect and assess own learning process and performance has surely played an important role in my becoming a professional in the educational field. As it has been noted:

reflection is one strategy which is used extensively in professional education to facilitate learning and professional development and is a critical skill for functioning effectively in diverse and complex practice situations (Asselin, 2011, Lasater and Nielsen, 2009, McGuire et al., 2009, Nielsen et al., 2007, Tanner, 2006, Wald et al., 2012). (Canniford & Fox-Young, 2015, p. 292).

On account of this, round table exercises allowed me to implement guided questions, in a more autonomous and freer way, to self-assess learner's performance based on the activities developed in class. This basically means that in a pretty basic way, I was able to help reflect on and assess students at the same time. Nevertheless, helping students to evaluate their learning outcomes certainly requires a higher level of pedagogical expertise than what I am currently aware of in concern with my teaching practices.

B. Homework

1. I can evaluate and select tasks most suited to be carried out by learners at home.

Based on recollections I have from my academic education, homework was certainly so stressed on a daily basis that it became a habit for me, a routine in my life. In view of my teaching experience, only one out of my three practicum mentors has certainly put an emphasis on such activity as a complementary element for students' learning. However, as a learner and as a teacher to be, I do not consider pretty convenient to settle this approach as a custom seeing that it would take more time out of the student's life to perform such academic work that could be better developed in classroom hours. As a matter of fact, Archer (2018) noted "that multiple attempts improve homework grades, but not exam grades, leading to artificial grade inflation without increased learning (Rhodes & Sarbaum, 2015)" (p.2). In other words, unless the implementation of such extra task-initiative guarantee the development of autonomous or awareness upon learning, I consider best suited to carry out tasks during class. Therefore, even though in my current practicum I have been able to select tasks, for learners to do at home, the results have not been fruitful since most of those have not been completed or fulfilled.

2. I can set homework in cooperation with learners.

3. Thinking about how far I have come in my teaching experience, I have become more aware of how flexibility can set a better learning atmosphere in the classroom. In this perspective, there has been a couple occasions in which accounting children suggestions on certain activities made the session more enjoyable since those opinions best suited their interest. I considered such ideas from students not just because they were mostly the focus in such performances but also because those improved the dynamic of the exercise carried out in class. Despite of this type of collaboration in the schoolroom, the few times that I have assigned homework to my present-day learners, we have come to an agreement only in the amount of homework that has being required. Thereby, in general terms, I can set homework in cooperation with learners.

4. I can provide the necessary support for learners in order for them to do homework independently and assist them with time management.

Speaking from my perspective as a learner, I certainly believe that appropriate homework assignments somehow have been crucial components in increasing my scores in exams. As cited by Archer (2018):

The pedagogical goal of multiple graded homework attempts, as stated by Butler and Zerr (2005), is to increase student engagement outside the classroom by replicating the “. . . attempt-feedback-reattempt sequence of events which often occurs in a teacher’s presence . . .” (p. 51-58). (p.2)

However, in concern with practicum policies there are pertinent situations in which providing support to students goes out my control being that having particular contact with learners implies going beyond certain educational boundaries. In view of this, the support that I have been able to provide children for raising autonomy is either during the English lesson in situ or thru suggesting them some information sources when at home. Regarding time management, I have not had the chance to assist pupils on the administration of their time, mainly because I consider a bit excessive to demand more from them during their spare time.

5. I can assess homework according to valid and transparent criteria.

Based on my previous experience with the CLAC (*Classroom Language Assessment Course*), there are certain principles that we, as teachers in development, need to consider when assessing students’ language products. In this respect, I am aware that some language assessments can be valid when it has empirical and supporting evidence and the language elements claimed are the ones assessed in the course. This means that if the element was writing, we should assess that ability and nothing else. Notwithstanding, in consideration of such validity proposition, so far in my academic teaching I have only used homework as a way of providing learners extra practice. This has been done with the purpose of allowing them to have a better performance in the tasks to come. Thereupon, up to this period of my practice, I have not had the opportunity to assess pupils’ homework upon the consideration of the aforementioned descriptor.

C. Projects

1. I can plan and manage project work according to relevant aims and objectives.

One of the most essential components that I pay attention to while designing my lesson plans has been language objectives, whether from the learning or the instructional view. Considering this, even though in my practicum experience I have not planned or managed a project work heretofore; in my *Curriculum Design Course*, it was a requisite to design 6 lesson plans in a Project Task-Based way. At the time, learners had the chance to learn grammar elements by studying particular language items in each single lesson so they could have a final product from the interrelated topics viewed. In addition, with the purpose of facilitating children comprehension, it was needed to constantly focus on providing connections between meaning, form and the use of language in context. Put differently and based on the mentioned experience, I am able to plan and manage project work according to relevant aims and objectives if my academic teaching requires it so.

2. I can plan and organize cross-curricular project work myself or in cooperation with other teachers.

Another important thing that I have learned so far from my career is how much time planning and organizing usually takes, especially if we are referring to doing projects and working with others. In this respect, when it comes to cross-curricular work, I think that there is a certain level of demand to properly arrange and implement this type of projects. As previously stated, different from designing a cross-curricular project in my Curriculum Design Course, I have not encountered such requirement during my period in teaching young learners. As far as I am concerned, the only experiences in which I have worked myself or collaborate with another partner in a cross-curricular approach was in my first teaching practices. As pre-service teachers, my partner and I needed to plan, design and teach alongside by implementing the CLIL methodology (Coyle et al., 2010) in our lessons. Such tasks based on CLIL allowed us to integrate other subject areas to our language teaching-learning. Despite of this, involving curricula in more than one

educational subject, as a project, is not an event that I have been exposed to, whether alone or in cooperation with other teachers.

3. I can assist the learners in their choices during the various stages of project work.

My anecdotes, from the learning view, have shown me how long and demanding a project process can be. Being able to receive feedback and make corrections can be sometimes pretty exhausting and time consuming, even if the task or project at hand is in a basic level. On the one hand, as a student under advisory sessions, I consider that being a project tutor requires a certain degree of expertise in the particular field of education that is been addressed. On the other hand, as pre-service teacher, I had served as a mediator and a guide in different task development during class sessions. In addition, I have previously encountered with such a thing as a Project Task-Based product in my *Curriculum Design Course*. Notwithstanding, such experiences do not seem to fulfill the requirements of assisting learners in the various stages of a project work. On account of this, I have not experienced the level of monitoring students' choices in the aforementioned descriptor.

4. I can encourage learners to reflect on their work (diaries, logs etc.).

Using reflection as a learning element has been certainly a significant instrument in the development of my academic and professional skills. In view of this, in my CLAC, I developed a couple of tasks that illustrate such need for student's reflection. In point of fact, as a learner I had reflected upon several pieces of works integrated into an e-portfolio. But most importantly, I was in charge of creating a task that invited learners to reflect upon their own or their peers' writing product in relation with a particular subject. This was done by implementing questions such as what went well, and what needed improvement according to particular assessment criteria. As claimed by McGuire, Lay, & Peters (2009), "reflective writing has the potential to facilitate both self-reflection and integration of theory with practice" (Canniford & Fox-Young, 2015, p. 292). Therefore, I have been able to create works that will foster learner's reflection on language skills, even though I have not used those in my practicum so far.

5. I can assess the process and outcome of project work in cooperation with learners.

One of the things that I valued from observing professors of my Bilingual Program is how they guide, support and provide feedback while learners develop either tasks or projects. Sometimes, we as learners have come to an agreement with such educators on what could be best to have a better well balanced-result between a project and our interests. Somehow, this assisting focus has influenced my way of teaching or how I would like to approach students in a project work. Notwithstanding, so far in my career, I have only been exposed to elements of a project in a hypothetical manner. In this line, in my Curriculum Design Course I created different lesson plans focused on accomplishing deeper understanding of particular academic knowledge. Despite of designing such Project-Based item for children, I did not apply it in any real context of my teaching practices. Therefore, even though I have had experience regarding project works in my bilingual profession, assessing either those processes or outcomes is not something that I have been able to do yet.

D. Portfolios

1. I can set specific aims and objectives of portfolio work (for coursework, for continuous assessment etc.).

Seeing things from the perspective of my CLAC course, I think that the different e-portfolio tasks I was exposed throughout this course raised awareness upon the importance of them and the aims of having either a digital or physical material of assessment. As a matter of fact, having an e-portfolio as a learning tool helped me to be more organized in collecting, selecting and using information regarding my own works. In this respect, one of the tasks that was able to develop had to do with selecting and designing an assessment instrument that allowed me to check student's language progress in conjunction with a cross-curricular subject. The same way, some objectives needed to be considered before the creation of such assessment implementation. Hence, I can use my previous knowledge in order to set specific aims or objectives of portfolio work that will help me to keep a continuous track of learners' course work.

2. I can plan and structure portfolio work.

Another particular aspect of using an e-portfolio in my *Classroom Language Assessment Course* was that it made easier for both the professor and the learners, to keep work organized and to keep track of our tasks. Even more, such experience made me aware that before having a work plan, it was imperative to think of some features involved in assessing learners. Such characteristics include learner's age, proficiency level, assessment instruments, assessment principles, etc. Furthermore, it was important to consider how the arrangement of elements was focused on the aims of such portfolio. From here on out, it was easier to ponder about the things or assignments that needed to be covered in the portfolio. I acknowledge this, since in the mentioned course, I was assigned with the design of a portfolio work for students that had language and chemistry as subject foci. On this account, I am able to plan and structure portfolio work.

3. I can supervise and give constructive feedback on portfolio work.

Until this point, it seems impossible to talk about these portfolio descriptors without constantly referring to my *Classroom Language Assessment Course*. After all, the several academic experiences I had in such a course are mostly related to this matter in as much as they integrate most of my portfolio knowledge. In consideration to this, the clarification

and reinforcement of key terms and concepts made by the course professor were crucial for applying such pieces of learning in my future work experiences. In other words, based on the different tasks developed in CLAC, I think I can use my repertoire as a good example for assisting learners throughout their portfolio materials. In fact, and as previously mentioned, I presented a portfolio project work that included the performative characteristics of it as if being in charge of a real one. Hence, experiences as this serve as evidence that I am able to cope with the descriptor above even though I have not applied such knowledge in a real teaching scenario so far.

4. I can assess portfolios in relation to valid and transparent criteria.

Having diverse portfolio assessment experiences allowed me to acknowledge certain principles to consider when measuring student's performance across portfolio works. Considering this from my point of view as a learner, valid and transparent assessment criteria and learner's rubrics were demanding for professors when assessing my folder products whether digital or physical. As from my teaching viewpoint, trying to apply such principles through my instructional practices in real life settings, it was easier said than done. From the perspective of my current practicum, so far I have not fulfilled such descriptor since not all students have kept their portfolio works as material evidence of their assessment processes or evidence. Taken this into account, a different approach was taken leading to assessing pupils based on other material works. Thereupon, even though I am able to use some assessment criteria as items to be considered for validity and transparency in portfolio assessment, until now I have not successfully done it.

5. I can encourage self- and peer assessment of portfolio work.

Up to this point of the European Portfolio, I have already explained several times how I designed peer assessment works in my CLAC besides having used self-assessment in my academic teaching. In such consideration, it is fair to say that the performance of such language assessment tasks helped me as a learner and as a pre-service teacher to reflect upon aspects and activities developed across a course assessment. For instance, I was able to encourage second graders to reflect on their own

performance by implementing proposed assessment paths presented on the Suggested Curriculum by the MEN (2016). Such approach integrated guided questions that allowed students to reflect on the different activities carried out in the lesson as well as what they learnt from those. A similar focus was taken in my *Language Assessment Course* when designing an alternative assessment in order to allow pupils to collaboratively provide feedback to their partner work. As a result of these previous experiences, I am capable of encouraging self- and peer assessment of portfolio work.

E. Virtual Learning Environments

1. I can use various ICT resources (email, web sites, computer programmes etc.).

Nowadays, either as a student or as a teacher, being able to manage Information and Communication Technologies has clearly become an essential requirement for the digital world that we live in. As long as I can remember, when professors implemented a balanced technological approach in the courses, such plan of action fitted into my curiosity as to my interests in certain topics. In this sense, the usage of websites, platforms, pages and other sources provided by my academic tutors were vital in my language learning process. Additionally, acknowledging and applying such digital information concept in my teaching practices was advantageous for students since it provided a more dynamic and entertaining learning focus. As a matter of fact, Trilling & Fadel in their *21st Century Skills* book (2009), talk about the importance of considering the so called Digital Natives as agents of change of the world. In this consideration, I can use various ICT resources as interactive tools for making lessons more attractive and interesting for learners.

2. I can advise learners on how to find and evaluate appropriate ICT resources (web sites, search engines. computer programmes etc.).

Viewing things first from the role of a learner and then as a teacher, I think that there are some information resources that fit better than others to student's interests. In point of fact, it seems more and more than traditional ways have less participation in our future careers. On the one hand, I find easier to search and locate much more information on Internet than doing it in a conventional manner. Based on this and other experiences regarding information sources, I can think of different web pages that students can benefit from while learning English. On the other hand, seeing that most public schools do not have the required technological resources for assisting and assessing learners in such field, it seems that the only viable option is to suggest or assign them the use of ICT resources at home. However, doing this implies extra work that, as I have observed, many pupils do not care to do, unless they are monitored somehow. Therefore, I am able to advise students on the finding and use of digital sources as long as the scenario allows it to be done.

3. I can initiate and facilitate various learning environments (learning platforms, discussion forums, web pages etc.).

Seeing that as a practitioner I am limited to particular interactions with learners in concern with digital sources, providing them assisting and dynamic learning settings, it is a bit unrealistic due to such restrictions. To begin with, even though I have some experience using the learning resources described above, re-creating those learning scenarios in my practicums would require going beyond some policy boundaries set in the schools I have taught so far. In other words, I am not allowed as a teacher in development to have such multi media contact with students outside the classroom. Even if these learning activities were planned for the schoolroom environment, it is commonly known that many public schools in Colombia usually do not have the appropriate materials to perform such events. Consequently, although my experiences would allow me to initiate and facilitate various learning environments, I have not been able to do it up to this point of my profession.

F. Extra-curricular Activities

1. I can recognize when and where the need for extra-curricular activities to enhance learning arises (learner magazines, clubs, excursions etc.).

It would be hard for me to think about my English learning process without at least having been part of any extracurricular activity as the ones seen above. In fact, as a learner I benefited from participating in speaking and writing clubs such as Let's Talk and AWAC (*Academic Writing Assistance Center*). The same way, I joined excursion trips as the one experienced in my course *Cultura Hispanoamericana II*. Being Exposed to these type of first-hand experiences served as a way of reinforcing my understanding and learning outside the normal curriculum activities. Considering this, I am aware that participants involved in certain extracurricular events are able of developing other social skills as well as learning beyond the box. Nevertheless, even though I wish I could say that I can recognize when and where the need for extra-curricular activities to enhance learning, my limited teaching practicum experience make it impossible to do so. Colombian pre-service teachers are not allowed to lead visits or excursions or the like activities unless with the presence of the in-service teacher.

2. I can set aims and objectives for school trips, exchanges and international cooperation programmes.

Talking from personal experience, I acknowledge the fact that performing activities outside the academic setting can be found beneficial and enriching for a learner's expertise. In this respect, I have been exposed to extra-curricular activities outside the university campus in my *Cultura Hispanoamericana II Course*. Having experienced excursions as the one lived in this course was rewarding not only in the academic field but also in the cultural immersion. This means, that being in contact with the real environment where things happen, where the theory become the practice fostered a more engaging learning. Nonetheless, replicating events as this one have not taken place in any of my academic instructional doings due to the fact that the involvement of such extracurricular activities would imply giving more of my faculty as a teacher. In simpler words, complying with this descriptor would require more responsibilities and commitment from pre-service teacher and administrative staff of my English Program. Hence, I have not been in the position of setting aims and objectives for school trips or other curricular activities so far.

3. I can help to organize exchanges in cooperation with relevant resource persons and institutions.

Since I have played the role of a teacher in development, my duties have mostly been associated to what happens inside the schoolroom setting regarding learners. Administratively talking, my responsibility has been linked to organizing, recording, selecting and evidencing the work that has been developed across my academic teachings. After all, such duties have been part of my assignments as a practitioner under the cloak of a mentor from my Program in bilingual education. I surely have seen the type of organization exchange claimed in this descriptor. However, saying that I have either the authority or the ability to perform such a task would be a false statement. As previously said, there are several aspects involved in this sort of decisions in the Colombian educational context. In this account, such decisions take into consideration education policies, Colombian government, school regulations among others things. As a result, helping to organize exchanges in cooperation with relevant resource persons and institutions is not something that I am neither allowed nor able to do so far.

4. I can evaluate the learning outcomes of school trips, exchanges and international cooperation programmes.

Having experienced different learning assessment methods throughout my career has allowed me little by little to be more conscious of such procedures in my teaching practices. Even though I am aware that school trips and exchanges programmes have a bigger purpose than just observing or recording the experiences lived, in none of my teaching anecdotes I have been in control of evaluating the outcomes of such accounted events. As a matter of fact, such decisions have been already addressed in previous descriptors. Thereby, it seems unreasonable to talk about this segment without referring to or paraphrasing previous arguments. Considering this, although as a novice I have

experienced school trips as part of late immersion learning methods, there are some constraints in the Colombian academic setting which have made a gap in the possibility to replicate such immersion initiatives in my practica. Thereupon, I cannot evaluate the learning outcomes of school trips, exchanges and international cooperation programmes.

Assessment of learning

Introduction

This category is concerned with the choices which the teacher has to make when assessing learning processes or outcomes of learning. These choices relate to broad questions such as what to assess, when to assess, how to assess and how to use the information provided by the assessment process to support learning and to improve the practitioner's own teaching.

Assessment may consist of tests and examinations, which take a snapshot of the learner's competence or performance. They may focus on a part of the student's knowledge of language or culture or on performance, the ability to use language in real

contexts. When designing tests, teachers will need to consider how valid a particular test is in terms of the aims and objectives of learning a language and will need to pay attention to the reliability of grading procedures. It is also worth taking into account how practical a test is in terms of design and administration and how to avoid a washback effect, which may adversely influence teaching.

Assessment forms such as portfolios will provide a continuous picture of the learner's ongoing progress and may be used both by the teacher and the learner. An instrument such as the European Language Portfolio provides a valuable tool for self-assessment.

Assessment procedures may be used mainly for the purpose of summative evaluation - for example, for end-of-term grading or certification - or for formative evaluation - for example, to provide information on the learner's strengths and weaknesses and to help the teacher and/or learner to plan further work.

A. Designing Assessment Tools

1. I can evaluate and select valid assessment procedures (tests, portfolios, self-assessment, etc.) appropriate to learning aims and objectives.

In past events of my career, I have selected and decided upon certain assessment methods that best suited to my learners' language level. Regarding my teaching anecdotes, when assessing some children's overall language ability, they were assessed

based on what was previously set to achieve in my lesson plans. Without further ado, in my *Language Assessment Course*, I designed a portfolio assessment task that allowed me to collect students' works in order to keep a record of their progress. Additionally, since many topics in my practica were based on cultural aspects, self-assessment was evidenced by assessing learners' performance throughout the tasks. This was done through guided questions about the subjects studied in class so that children could discuss and reflect on the content already seen. Such assessment procedures were mostly used for reflecting on the content learned and providing feedback on them in order to move forward in the learning process.

2. I can negotiate with learners how their work and progress should best be assessed.

Seeing that my practicum learners reacted differently depending on the assessing method used, the assessment of their products was mainly influenced by their language competences so far acquired/learnt. On the one hand, based on what I observed in the classroom, I considered some aspects before assessing student's works. These include how much pupils progressed or improved on the development of their language skills and how much they could do up to a certain point. On the other hand, assessing students' work and progress requires certain academic standards or parameters that evidence the association between what is in a curriculum and what is being assessed. That is to say, that there are established assessment paths or items to be considered when assessing these types of learning results. Notwithstanding, to a certain extent, I have not only maintained such assessment criterion but I have also negotiated with my learner's language performance ability; that is, what they are really able to do.

3. I can design and use in-class activities to monitor and assess learners' participation and performance.

When we as teachers in development think of planning a lesson, it is commonly known that designing interactive in-class activities is such a fundamental part in language content learning. Hence, it is hard to imagine giving lessons without even considering an

interesting activity that facilitates learner's comprehension of the topic at hand. Without further ado, I have designed activities in which learners were able to explore language learning skills through cultural activities or playgrounds. Such doings included *Telephone*, *the Postman*, *Simon Says*, *Holidays* among others that served as attractive games as teaching tools. Regarding the monitoring aspects, in most of these activities I was able to check student's understanding of vocabulary, listening and pronunciation respectively. Furthermore, since most activities in my practicums have been done in the classroom, I have been able to monitor collaborative work across poster sessions, traditional dance performances and other group works. However, learners' participation was not assessed but taken into consideration as an overall aspect that might or might not need improvement based on my student's involvement in class.

B. Evaluation

1. I can identify strengths and areas for improvement in a learner's performance.

Moving forward in my learning-teaching process sometimes depended on how good I was at recognizing and solving problems that might have interfered with such educational processes. Notwithstanding, not just as a teacher but also as a learner, I think that the academic circumstances in which learners' performance occurs partly influence what is being valued and what is being underestimated. Hence, identifying student's strengths and weaknesses can be a little bit subjective being that learners have different backgrounds, needs and skills when it comes to learning. This is why having valid assessment criteria as a supporting tool to identify strengths and weaknesses may be crucial for knowing what learners are good at or what they lack in a performance. Despite such, I have provided feedback to my once students' products based on what has been observed; this means that I have formatively assisted them on correcting mistakes they frequently performed.

2. I can assess a learner's ability to work independently and collaboratively.

Thinking about my teaching experiences, one of the key factors that I have paid attention to is the diverse ways a teacher has to assess students' performance in the classroom. In this perspective, it is fair to say that the different results obtained from students' performance were linked to the various assessment paths implemented in my classes. On the one hand, I am a first-hand witness of how working independently has been one of the major leading causes of autonomy learning throughout my career. In fact, as a teacher to be, this is one of the first aspects I have been aware of when assessing learners' ability. On the other hand, since there may be bigger challenges or tasks to face in the classroom, sometimes it seems imperative working together to solve issues of common concern. As pointed out in the *21st Century Skills* book, Trilling & Fadel (2009); working collaboratively with others establish better social and academic relationships that benefit students learning through the act of communication. In simpler words, such interactive practices illustrate how teamwork in the classroom can lead to students' goal achievements.

3. I can use the process and results of assessment to inform my teaching and plan learning for individuals and groups (i.e. formative assessment).

Based on the fact that students in my practica obtained bad results in some academic performances was a clear sign for me that something was missing either from the instructional or learning view. Usually, being aware of such mishap led to implementing a different approach when assessing learners. Therefore, after giving instructions in class, it was important to go further than just checking and clarifying doubts students might have. In this sense, providing feedback on learners' performance has been a pretty useful strategy that have helped me to foster students' language improvement. Furthermore, using formative assessment-related activities such as a quiz headed to focus on what happened and what to do after the quiz, so learners could push their understanding even further. Depending on the activities children had to carry on in class, how they were going to be assessed was determined.

- 4. I can present my assessment of a learner's performance and progress in the form of a descriptive evaluation, which is transparent and comprehensible to the learner, parents and others.**

Up to this point of my teaching career, I have referenced and made use of several assessment materials explored in my *Classroom Assessment Course*. By reasons of this, I am always trying to make classroom assessment as transparent as possible, that is to say, to provide a valid judgement of a learner's performance either in a task or any other product. Thereby, it has been quite important to take into account certain principles for assessment criteria. For this reason, when designing a rubric I have tried to be as descriptive as possible in concordance with what I know so far about assessment. Despite the fact that such rubric descriptions may be clear for some people, as expected they may not be that simple or comprehensible for someone different to the field of education. After all, there are terminologies and aspects that may be alien to people out of a particular field. Despite of this, I am able to present my assessment of a learner's performance in a descriptive form.

- 5. I can use appropriate assessment procedures to chart and monitor a learner's progress (reports, checklists, grades etc.).**

Part of employing classroom language assessment in my language courses or my teaching practices have been understanding what procedures worked better when keeping record of students' learning. On account of this, my experience regarding assessment procedures have been evidenced across grade's control of students' language performances. Another associated method considered when monitoring pupils progress has been the designing of a student portfolio in my *Language Assessment Course*. Such a work was meant to collect learners' work and monitor their progress throughout their portfolios. regarding other elements of tracking learner's progress, my lesson plans integrated a reflective section in which I was able to think of what was observed during the language learning session. In retrospective, this among other assessment procedures have served as a pedagogical instrument to chart and monitor a learner's progress in my practica.

C. Self- and Peer Assessment

1. I can help learners to set personal targets and assess their own performance.

Part of being a pre-service teacher has certainly been to help learners in their language learning process as to give them the opportunity to self-assess their own performances. Notwithstanding, guiding students through setting goals or self-assessing their performance in my academic teaching was a bit demanding owing to the level of critical thinking skills students exhibited. On the one hand, the only way that I can think of learners addressing their own performance is when they were asked questions concerning what was done throughout the lesson. On the other hand, setting personal targets in class was more subjectively managed; this means that as a practitioner I did not emphasize on learners writing either academic or personal targets. In view of this and thinking toward a better teaching, one of the next instructional moves is focusing on realistic and reachable goals that agree with students' abilities up to a certain point of their language learning.

2. I can help learners to engage in peer assessment.

Thinking of all my educational experiences, I believe that once a teacher has helped learners to self-assess their performance, an appropriate follow up step is allowing them to review other works. With this in mind, I remember that in my *Academic Writing Course* a way of producing a good assignment was by implementing a self and peer coaching method in which learners were able to make drafts, receive feedback, correct mistakes and revise their product several times. Strategies as such allowed us as learners not only to reflect upon our work but also to improve our writing products due to the assessment feedback provided by our mates. However, trying to follow a similar approach in my practica do not go far beyond pupils working collaboratively in group or the teacher socializing mistakes others did. Thereby, so far my ability to help learners engage in peer

assessment is associated with what could be considered as basic parameters of peer review.

3. I can help learners to use the European Language Portfolio

When it comes to language teaching documents in my *Bilingual Program*, one of the most common reference origins explored was the European one. In fact, the roots of this reflective portfolio itself come from the same European source. In spite of such, I do not think that I can righteously answer this descriptor since my understanding of the European Language Portfolio do not go beyond the definition found in the EPOSTL glossary, Newby, D. Allan, R., Fenner, A-B, Jones, B., Komorowska, H., Soghikyan, K. (2007):

European Language Portfolio (ELP) is, as its introduction states, a 'personal document (and) at the same time an information tool and a companion to language learning. (It) enables all language proficiency – whether acquired within or outside formal educational settings – and intercultural experience to be documented and presented in a comprehensive, complete and internationally comparable way. It also contains guidelines for reflecting on one's own language learning and for planning and monitoring further learning'. Council of Europe (2002)

Considering the previous claim, I am not able yet to provide appropriate support or guide learners through the use or interaction with the ELP being that even I have not been exhaustively introduced to such European content. Notwithstanding, if we refer to this type of student teacher portfolio reflection, I believe I am able to help learners based on the different experiences acquired while responding to these portfolio descriptors.

D. Language Performance

- 1. I can assess a learner's ability to produce a spoken text according to criteria such as content, range, accuracy, fluency, appropriacy of register etc.**

As far as I am concerned, understanding criteria elements when assessing learner's language ability usually means having more valid and reliable results out of students' performances. Using as a reference my *Academic Discourse Course I and II*, acknowledging the above language components was quite important since it determines how well you had developed and executed your academic discourse. The degree of attention you gave to these spoken language principles simplified your ability on producing vigorous discourse. Nevertheless, when it comes to teaching young learners, things across my practicums have been a tad rough on this language performance aspect. In this respect, in previous teaching events spoken elements were considered as units that required closer attention to positively being improved. Up to this point of my third teaching practice experience, I have not used any criteria assessment that integrate the specific spoken elements described above.

2. I can assess a learner's ability to produce a written text according to criteria such as content, range, accuracy, cohesion and coherence etc.

For someone that has been in contact with writing at an academic level, it is generally known that there are several writing items we need to account when creating any written text. In this perspective, in some of my courses the process of writing consisted on using strategies such as *Brainstorming, Drafting, Outlining, Revising, Re-writing* among others that would help to get better final products. Regardless of knowing such techniques, I am aware that my practicas' students did not exhibit the required language ability to produce a written text even if they had an assessment criterion to be based on. In point of fact, the written piece pupils usually developed in class followed some basic standards that were not beyond phrases or simple sentences creation. Heretofore, I have not assessed a learner's ability to produce a written text according to particular criteria components.

3. I can assess a learner's ability to understand and interpret a spoken text such as listening for gist, specific or detailed information, implication etc.

Analyzing and comprehending either general or specific elements in spoken text is certainly one of the several skills any learner of the English language need to be aware

of. trying to explore such skill in my practicum was not an easy job being that graders from my first two practicas were 5-8 years-old in average. So basically the only pieces of information they could possibly understand were isolated words or short phrases. Nonetheless, in my current third academic teaching I have been able to assess and grade the understanding of specific information in a listening task developed in the classroom. Even though it was not a really complex activity, learners had the chance to listen to a song and fill up the blank spaces by writing down the terms they heard. Thereupon, at a certain degree I am able to assess a learner's ability to understand and interpret specific or detailed information in a listening item.

4. I can assess a learner's ability to understand and interpret a written text such as reading for gist, specific or detailed information, implication etc.

Too often, learners of my third practica only focused on the speaking aspects of language performance instead of engaging to the different skills that complement such language experience. Seeing that it was not an easy task to engage students to interact with other contents such as reading text, I tried to encourage them through the use of some reading strategies that I have picked up throughout my learning experiences. Some of those techniques included contextualizing, *skimming*, *scanning* and others that could help them fill the missing words or guess the meaning of unknown vocabulary. As a way of fostering students' interest in reading, they were invited to share a familiar experience that was closely related to the reading topic at hand. Concerning how learner's ability was estimated, their reading performance was assessed based on how well they got a general idea of written statements or how well they did in understanding the correct meaning of a word. To such sort of performance is added how correctly learners filled the gaps either they wrote the words in English or Spanish, they would be fairly assessing only on the reading skill area.

5. I can assess a learner's ability to engage in spoken interaction according to criteria such as content, range, accuracy, fluency and conversational strategies.

When it comes to my English learning experience, most of the speaking elements stated above were surely addressed in some of my language courses. In concern with the basis of this descriptor, my response does not go much further than previous claims regarding spoken interaction taken place in my teaching sessions. Thereby, when referring to this type of academic experiences, I have only been able to assess speaking interactions in terms of content, pronunciation and voice projection. As a matter of fact, the way in which these language items were usually estimated was informatively; this means that feedback provision and corrections were crucial in the classroom speaking activities. In terms of participation, students' ability to engage in speaking was not much of a challenge because most of them seemed to be interested in interacting in oral performances. All things considered, at a certain degree, I am capable of assessing learners' ability to engage in spoken interaction according to criteria aspects.

6. I can assess a learner's ability to engage in written interaction according to criteria such as content, range, accuracy and appropriacy of response etc.

I think that when it comes to helping students to improve their writing skills, practice certainly makes the master. Thereby, finding different way of encouraging learners to be involved in this particular activities has been just part of my role as a practitioner. Under this consideration, introducing activities such as *Hangman*, *Gap Filling* or *Missing Word* apparently has been a boost for learners to take part in writing interactions. In this sense, the ability learners had to be engaged to such learning events depended more on their interests or the way the aforementioned interaction was approached to them. In spite of this, writing interactions in the classroom has been oftenly the afterward activity from other language skills such as reading or listening. Taking into account the fact that most of these interactions were informal, those activities were formative assessed accordingly. Even so, in my practicas I have been able to assess several learners' written products based on some of the criteria above (content, range and accuracy).

E. Culture 1.

1. I can assess the learners' knowledge of cultural facts, events etc. of the target language communities.

As a teacher to be, I think that nowadays learning a second language' cultural aspects is clearly not a big secret for most bilingual educators. As a point of fact, it is certainly hard to think of learning an L2 without using the cultural context while doing it so. Notwithstanding, at the beginning of my practicums, bringing and introducing cultural items into class was a tad challenging since many learners did not acknowledge some cultural settings of their language or the foreign one. Luckily, throughout my learning experiences I have been exposed to different teaching reference sources as the CLIL methodology (Coyle et al., 2010) which have a dual focus for learning a subject through the medium of a language. This same methodology integrated a 4C's model in which culture have a particular emphasis. Even though I had such material as support, assessing learners' cultural knowledge about the target language communities played a secondary role on learning as the main focus was English itself.

2. I can assess the learners' ability to make comparisons between their own and the culture of target language communities.

As time goes by in my career, I have become more and more aware that there are much more implications into learning a language than just being able to communicate through it. With this being said, the relationship that sometimes I see between two languages or two cultures are based on how remote or close related their societal relations are. Trying to acknowledge learners about different aspects of their own or a foreign culture was done through the integrated language learning as seen in CLIL methodology (Coyle et al., 2010). Accordingly, I was able to immerse students into another language by establishing similarities and differences about both languages. Such thing was performed across cultural dances, traditional costumes, typical food, typical music/dance among others cultural activities. These mentioned events were formative assessed by first offering students a cultural background for better understanding/learning and then enriching their knowledge by reinforcing or providing feedback.

3. I can assess the learner's ability to respond and act appropriately in encounters with the target language culture.

Either it is as a learner or as a teacher, my experiences have taught me that it is never easy to let aside the diverse cultural or social judgement and implications that bring encountering with a new language. I personally think that such inappropriate cultural communication usually lies upon the consideration that many learners are not aware of the essence of communicative language competences. As found in the EPOSTL (Newby, D. et al., 2007) this type of competences refer to:

Communicative Language Competences: 'Competences are the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions; (...) communicative language competences are those which empower a person to act using specifically linguistic means'. (CEFR p9).

Understanding the meaning of this language competency has certainly been crucial in my language learning/acquisition process. Nevertheless, when it comes to assessing students upon the above ability, things were scratched on the surface of it. This means that awareness on cultural responses was not exhaustively addressed to the point that learners were able to answer and act appropriately in encounters with the target language culture.

F. Error analysis

1. I can analyze learners' errors and identify the processes that may cause them.

One of the most important processes in teaching an L2 in my practica has to do with error correction of students' products. In view of this, there has been few occasions in which language errors were examined in-depth during my teaching sessions. Even so, when I as a teacher found out that nearly the whole class was having the same problem when performing a task, one of the first things I did was to wonder about why and how learners were missing that particular language complement. For instance, when giving instructions, sometimes pupils got confused because of the lack of exemplification or context provision which often led them to make mistakes on the activities. After acknowledging this, the next step was to double check their understanding in order for children to proceed with the following stage of their work. Taking this as evidence, I am able to analyze learners' errors and identify the processes that may cause them.

2. I can provide constructive feedback to learners concerning their errors/interlanguage.

I think that it is part of our responsibility as teachers in development to help the apprentice audience through its learning experiences. In this perspective, feedback provision can certainly be a good pedagogical tool on supporting such learning process.

As pointed out by Xie (2019), a diagnostic test based on linguistic errors can be a helpful tool for recognizing learners' English writing gaps which can lead to positive feedback on linguistic challenges (p. 49). In my particular schoolroom scenario, part of the session was dedicated to this correction matter in order to give students a better learning development. Thereby, I usually addressed error problems while students were performing the task at hand or I socialized the common mistakes made among the class. Such initiative gave me not only the chance to provide feedback but also to improve my teaching methods by reflecting on how some students did better than others when doing a task.

3. I can deal with errors that occur in class in a way which supports learning processes and communication.

Being a teacher in my practica have certainly implied many essential things along the way, and one of them has been nurturing student's learning by providing them with feedback to help them feel good towards learning English. In this perspective, socializing several mistakes made in any language performance was an opportunity for me to indirectly ask students what was the right way of doing something. This way I was able to check some learners' understanding compared to their other partners who made mistakes in a task. Referring and interacting about the wrong doings with all students was crucial to determine how effectively language was approached to young learners; that is, why and how some pupils were doing better than others. Experiences as this showed me that I am able to reinforce learning the same as establish a communication with learners in which they were able to receive encouraging-positive feedback thanks to their own doing.

4. I can deal with errors that occur in spoken and written language in ways which support learning processes and do not undermine confidence and communication.

Part of my being a pre-service teacher was not just providing adrift feedback but consider other aspects while doing it, especially if we are referring to learner's performance on the output language skills. On the one hand, errors occurred in spoken language were usually addressed right at the moment in order for the learner to raise awareness upon such speaking mistakes so in time those could not become errors. On the other hand, when it comes to written language, things seem to be a bit complex due to the different things that need to be considered on writing issues. As cited by Xie (2019):

Given the enormous number and types of errors in ESL writing, it is important to distinguish recurring and grave errors from random and trivial ones that are not due to gaps in writers' knowledge of the target language but result from performance factors, such as 'memory lapses, physical states/tiredness, and emotion' or 'a slip of tongue or pen' (Corder, 1981; p. 48). (p. 48)

Notwithstanding, being that only students from my third teaching practica have developed focused writing, it is fair to say that the mistakes made in their performance were influenced mainly due to factors of memory and practice. Regarding pupil's confidence, since I am a learner and a teacher to be, I am aware that being surprisingly under the spotlight in any scenario is not an easy situation to deal with. For reasons like this, I tried as much as I could to be sensitive on such matter and indirectly deal or talk about the errors made by students. A good way of doing this was by giving feedback privately or omitting names when socializing errors.

Conclusions

After developing the 154 descriptors across this reflection, I found concordance between this portfolio's objectives and the knowledge and competences student-teachers reflect on. That is to say that I am aware that the EPOSTL encourage me to self-reflect and self-assess my teaching experiences by addressing the development of my teaching competences, didactic knowledge and language skills. It is also important to express that as a teacher I found a great need to work on the development of other teaching competences regarding learning assessment, student's autonomy and teaching strategies. Such claim lies over the consideration that this portfolio incorporates a clear and understandable structure which make easier to identify areas that need improvement. Thereby, the portfolio covers a large range of language teaching skills that many professional educators strain to obtain.

Even though this language portfolio works as a reflection tool, it also left me with an uncertain feeling on what is the proper way to approach teaching as a professional educator. It also affected how unreasonable or unrealistic some descriptors might seem in comparison with a real teaching environment in the Colombian context. As a matter of fact, Dropulja (2015) in a research about the perspectives student-teachers had on the EPOSTL found that:

student-teachers pointed out that it would be necessary to clarify certain descriptors which are found to be ambiguous. For example, the descriptor "I can observe my peers, recognise different methodological aspects of their teaching and offer them constructive feedback." (Newby et al., 2007, p. 17) refers to three different competences dealing with the role of the language teacher. Therefore, students can feel uncertain how to fill the space on the bar – whether to take into consideration all three competences at once or one competence at a time. In addition, some descriptors are found to be similar and, thus, harden the process of self-assessment even further. (p. 34)

It is crucial to take such statements into account being that while interacting with the document at hand, similar events were experienced. However, it is not quite surprising to find inconsistencies as such since when it comes to something as complex as teaching languages, fallacies are just a chance for improvement. Despite of encounters as the previous one, the EPOSTL largely complied with its objective of being an effective tool for self-assessment. This means being helpful when recording progress and growth, helping to develop awareness on my own teaching and most importantly, being a useful instrument for my professional development growth.

Personally talking, this reflective exercise left an awareness growth in terms of teaching aspects. First, this document provided an autonomous view of both learning and teaching experiences. Otherwise stated, it allowed me to consider my teacher education from the learning and instructional view not only for responding to the portfolio statements but also for dealing with future teaching issues. Second, it left me with the concern that I need to improve my monitoring and assessing skills in order academic progress and become more autonomous as a teacher. Third, many of the portfolio language descriptors were closely related to different challenges explored throughout the spreading line of my professional practices; thus, I was able to review such difficulties as to think of new ways to approach them.

From the view of someone, this writer in particular, who has already been in contact with the EPOSTL along his teacher education, there are some further considerations when it comes to meeting this portfolio reflection work. On account of this, Dropulja (2015) indicated the following about the participants from the aforementioned research study:

They also highlight some problems while using the EPOSTL for self-reflection, such as the large number of descriptors, pointing out the time it takes to fill them out. They express a problem to find a connection between the descriptors and competences that can be achieved in real teaching situations. Due to this, a doubt about the usefulness of the EPOSTL is expressed. (p. 18)

Therefore, it is highly advised that the reader acknowledge the fact that one of the biggest problems of this EPOSTL is that it may not be applicable to all educational contexts, or it does not necessarily cover all the skills and competences described in it. All in all, it may be too long or too vague for some people and confusing when assessing pre-service knowledge for some others.

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