TRABAJO FIN DE MÁSTER

(MODALIDAD A)

LEARNING UNIT AND RESEARCH PROJECT: CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Máster en Profesorado de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, Bachillerato, Formación Profesional y Enseñanzas de Idiomas, Artísticas y Deportivas

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1. INTRODUCTION

First of all, I decided to study this Master because I have always loved languages and I have always wanted to become an English teacher. Apart from that, during the five years I spent at University, I also worked as a private teacher of English and it helped me realize that I love teaching. In this sense, enrolling on this Master has been a very good idea because it has given me a basic knowledge about teaching, but learning to teach seems to be a life-long process, depending on the teacher´s personal aims.

Secondly, this Master is divided into two terms: general content modules and specific modules. In the first term, from the beginning of the academic year to January we dealt with those theoretical aspects that must be known for a student teacher such as official documents, psychological aspects, relevant theories in the teaching-learning process and emotional education. Whereas the main objective of the second part of the Master is to meet specific training needs that English teachers may have.

From my point of view, the second term was the most relevant. It is mainly based on English lesson planning and new ways of learning. Moreover, I also had the opportunity to put into practice all the knowledge acquired in the specific modules in the Practicum II. The Practicum II and III were the most valuable experiences in my academic life. First, it was very useful to observe other people teaching and to get in touch with the educational institution. Second, I enjoyed the opportunity of becoming a teacher in an Official Language School. I think it was a very positive experience and it really helped me for my future teaching.

This final project carries out an analysis about the competences and knowledge acquired in the specific modules. In this written paper I will analyse the two main assignments that I wrote in this academic year, the learning unit and the research project. I will reflect not only on theoretical aspects, but also I will describe and analyse my learning process throughout the second half of the academic year. Therefore, I have added as appendixes my learning unit and my research project on "authentic" games in the L2 classroom. The last section of my final project deals with some conclusions and suggestions for the future.

To conclude, attending this Master's degree was a good decision, because I learned many important concepts and ideas and I also had the opportunity to broaden my theoretical as well as practical knowledge of the field. After this Master, I will study for Oposiciones and I believe that I am now much better prepared to be an English teacher for the next years which will be mainly characterized by many budget cuts in Education.

2. JUSTIFICATION

Here I will explain the reasons why I chose the learning unit and the research project as the focus of this final project:

I chose the learning unit mainly because:

- ↓ <u>During the Practicum II I had the opportunity to put into practice many activities of the learning unit and I can say that it works, at least with my students</u>: I am quite happy with the work I did in my teaching placement, for instance, speaking activities were particularly successful. Nevertheless, there are some aspects that I need to work on such as classroom management.

- ↓ <u>I created the whole learning plan from scratch, and it was challenging for me because I did not take any activity from my students´ course book</u>: Rather, I found very interesting materials on the Internet and other interesting books that I saw in the school.

- ↓ <u>Designing a lesson plan is probably one of the hardest responsibilities of the teaching profession, since the teacher must take many aspects into account</u>: It is important to consider the students' needs and interests, to cater for their different learning styles, and to understand the principles of planning.

I chose the research project on "authentic" games in the L2 classroom mainly because:

- ↓ <u>During the Practicum III I had the opportunity to implement some games with my students and to observe the implementation of other games with my classmates´ students</u>: We implemented "authentic" games such as Who Wants to be a Millionaire, The Alphabet Game, Donkey, Pictionary or Taboo. In general, students were very enthusiastic and a feeling of competitiveness arises in most cases.

- ↓ <u>We designed the games and adapted them to the context and needs of our students</u>: We implemented games in both a secondary school and an Official Language School. In both cases we adapted the games to the contents we previously taught to our students. We also used games as a tool for assessment.

+ Teachers must reflect on their beliefs and research in order to innovate and help students to develop their knowledge: We, as teachers, must analyse and reflect on our on work in order to improve the teaching-learning process to help our students to progress in their learning process. In our particular case, our research on the use of games in the L2 classroom can enhance classroom practice and break the monotony in the English lessons.

3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this broad section I will analyse and reflect on all the knowledge and the competences I acquired creating a learning unit for my students in the Second Intermediate course in the Official Language School and a research project on the use of "authentic" games in the L2 classroom in which we implemented games in the EOI I mentioned before and in a secondary school in Huesca.

3.1. LEARNING UNIT

Personally, it was the second time I created a learning unit in my life. The first time was in the first semester of this Master and for the subject *Procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje* in which I learnt how to use the Aragonese curriculum to plan a learning unit in Spanish. We followed a scheme containing all the elements a learning unit should have: key competences, objectives, contents, methodology, etc. However, when it comes to English many aspects change.

The first thing to take into account is the terminology. When I started writing my learning unit some doubts arose when thinking about the sections it should contain. Therefore, my teachers of *Diseño, organización y desarrollo de actividades para el aprendizaje del inglés* provided us a possible index for a learning unit which is available on Moodle. Another thing to have in mind is how to organize a learning unit according to the teaching placement in the Practicum II.

For instance, my teaching placement was not in a secondary school but an Official Language School. And after being told of all the key competences and the Aragonese curriculum, when I arrived there they told me that they did not have key competences because students were adults. Instead, they had general learning aims which I reflected in my learning unit rather than the key competences to be achieved at the end of the learning process.

In the following lines, I will explain first how I selected the materials and designed the activities for my learning unit. Second, I will analyse the implementation of some activities during my Practicum II. Then, I will talk about the teaching of the five basic skills in an Official Language School and finally, I will analyse the competences I acquired during the process of designing and implementing my own learning unit.

3.1.1. Selecting materials and designing activities

In the following paragraphs I will comment on the materials and resources used for my teaching in Second Intermediate level in the Official Language School. My students used a coursebook in their English class which was Outcomes Intermediate. At first, I thought that it was not bad for them to have a reference book, but I saw that the book ended up conditioning their learning process. As a result, I decided to create the whole learning plan from scratch, and it was quite hard because I did not take any activity from their course book. Rather, I found my own materials on the Internet and other interesting books that I saw in the school.

From my point of view, their coursebook was not appropriate at all for the ideas I had for the learning unit. I preferred to select more interesting activities that engaged my students. In my opinion, if you choose an activity that you find interesting you will transmit this feeling to your students. As a result, I decided not to select any activity from the coursebook because it follows a traditional methodology. On the contrary, I aim at a communicative use of the language so I designed my activities trying to provide my students with many opportunities for exchanging information in pairs or small groups.

I would like to say that my tutor helped me a lot to structure my learning activities as it was my first time teaching in life. She showed me different kinds of materials and resources, for instance a very interesting book entitled *Games for vocabulary practice: Interactive Vocabulary Activities for All Levels* by Felicity O´ Dell and Katie Head, which I used in my first session. She supported me and helped me with all my decisions although she followed a traditional methodology.

On the other hand, during my student teaching experience I also had the opportunity to use the digital whiteboard, so I used it as a traditional blackboard, or as a projector to show videos, power point presentations, images and texts. I really enjoyed this kind of smartboard because everything is clearer for students. To sum up, looking for your own materials in order to prepare lessons was quite challenging. On the one hand, I needed to find activities which were suitable for the level of my students and they needed to be interesting for them as well.

In this sense, the subject of *Diseño, organización y desarrollo de actividades para el aprendizaje del inglés* in the Master´s degree was very useful for me in order to prepare, select and organize all the activities. In general, I enjoyed the selection of my own materials. I work hard, but I was very happy because I think that the students learnt a lot in this way. In the future, I think I will probably be imposed a coursebook. However, I will adapt any coursebook-based teaching to my students´ perceived needs personalizing my own materials.

3.1.2. Implementing activities

During my teaching practice I was allowed to teach four hours. Therefore, I could not implement the whole learning unit but some of the activities were put into practice. First, I would like to talk about the methodology I used and then I would like to comment on some of the activities I implemented and suggest some improvements. After the Practicum II, I added other activities and ideas to the learning unit that I found interesting.

As I said before, I aim at a communicative use of the language. As a result, the activities that I prepared for the learning unit involve negotiation of information and information sharing. There is a wide variety of activities involving discussion, and exchanging information and opinions. Other kinds of activities assume different role relationships for the partners e.g. an interviewer and an interviewee.

In addition, I think it is important to create a context of cooperative learning in which the students have the opportunity to help each other in the achievement of the objectives of the learning plan. For this reason, the emphasis will be on student-student interaction, pair work and group work. I agree with R. Ellis (1994:598) in his view of small-group work and interaction when he affirms that:

"It increases language practice opportunities, it improves the quality of students talk, it helps to individualized instruction, it promotes a positive affective climate, and it motivates learners to learn".

In my case, I observed that those learners who have sufficient opportunities to participate in the exchange of information were very successful in developing fluency and discourse skills. Although they were not accurate, maybe because of their level of English, they managed to communicate what they wanted to.

The activities which were especially successful were the speaking activities. Particularly, the activity entitled "How do we learn best", probably because my students loved speaking activities. I appreciate their interest in communicating in English. They are adults and some of them need English for their job or to travel abroad. In this sense, they were very participative and they also made the most of the English lessons.

Finally, I would like to comment on the activities about the British Education system. They waited expectantly for the power point presentation because in the EOI they didn´t have explicit explanations on intercultural issues. They interrupted me many times asking questions and trying to compare the Spanish and the British Education systems. Some of them wrote in their one-minute papers that "the most interesting activity was the explanation about the Education in the UK, because it is a subject really amazing for me".

However, the least interesting activity for them was the fill in the gaps activity with the vocabulary related to the British Education System. In general, they found it boring. That was the only fill in the gaps activity in my learning unit. However, another way of checking my students´ understanding on Education would be more engaging.

3.1.3. Teaching the five skills

I decided to create a specific section for the teaching of the five skills (according to the Common European Framework) in my final project because after my Practicum II in the Official Language School I realised that it is impossible to be a good teacher if you do not understand which skills should be taught, how and why. At the end of this section I would like to add some comments on teaching socio-cultural aspects.

<u>**Teaching speaking skills**</u>

There are two aspects that I found especially interesting when it comes to teaching speaking skills: contextualizing the activity and correcting speaking. On the one hand, as I observed in the EOI speaking activities were implemented at the end of the lessons just to practice a specific grammar structure or new vocabulary. On the contrary, in my learning unit I tried to give speaking activities a central role within the lesson. In my opinion, it is much better learning English using it that learning how to use English.

On the other hand, I have realized that I tend to correct my students' production too frequently, not taking into account whether the focus of the interaction is form or meaning. I always try not to interrupt my students and not to make them feel bad at all about their mistakes, but I do correct almost every mistake they make. From my point of view, classroom correction is essential in the process of learning although teachers should not correct every single mistake unless it affects understanding.

<u>**Teaching listening skills**</u>

One of the aspects I learnt in the subject of *Diseño, organización y desarrollo de actividades para el aprendizaje del inglés* is that there is a clear difference between testing listening and teaching listening, listening for pleasure and the importance of comprehensible input. Most of the listening comprehension activities that I have ever done and all the listening comprehension activities I observed during my Practicum II were meant to test listening rather than teaching.

Therefore, in my learning unit I try to do both testing listening and teaching listening for understanding because I do not reject the idea of testing listening. In general, what I try to do is to divide the listening activities into pre-listening, to help the students prepare to listen, while-listening, to help the students to focus their attention on details and post-listening to help the students integrate what they have learnt with their previous knowledge.

<u>**Teaching reading**</u>

Here, the importance lies on the purpose and the intended response. Personally, I understand reading as a valid way to receive input. As for my learning unit, I selected the readings according to different factors such as the structures in the text, the skills students can practice in the text and selecting a topic because it was fun, interesting, engaging the students´ interest.

Teaching writing

From my point of view, writing is the most difficult skill to teach. Maybe that is the reason why teachers' general response to essays has been to correct the students' production by giving the right answers and providing a grade, with the result that the students look at the grade, put the essay away and never look at it again.

Here, there are three aspects that I would like to comment on: using a marking code, the importance of providing good models, and pre-writing activities. First of all, I think marking codes are the best solution to avoid the above mentioned situation, because their use will force students to revise their own written texts and edit them until they are perfect, which will help them learn a lot. Secondly, models can be very useful for the students, especially when it comes to writing a type of text which has a strongly fixed structure, such as formal letters or application forms. Finally, I believe that pre-writing activities can make the students' lives much easier.

Teaching spoken interaction

One of the general learning aims of my students in the Official Language School was "to express themselves and interact orally in everyday communicative situations in a comprehensible and adequate way and showing a certain degree of authority". In my opinion, before starting the lessons, teachers should have a perfect plan for teaching spoken interaction in the L2. The teacher should assist students to get to know each other early in the course. Students will feel more confident and more able to take risks if they know the group and feel comfortable with them. Moreover, student motivation is important in acquiring conversational skills. The teacher has to motivate them to speak in English. The motivation will make the students become confident in learning a foreign language. In this sense, I think that dialogues are the best way to practice spoken interaction as they cover a wide range of everyday situations.

Teaching socio-cultural aspects and intercultural awareness

This is another aspect that is usually put aside in the English lessons not only in secondary schools but also in Official Language Schools. From my point of view, making our students aware of the British culture is positive in the sense that they acquire a wider view of both the foreign culture and their own culture. The main reason why socio-cultural aspects are not part of the EFL classroom is maybe because of time and exams. Teachers tend to think that this is a waste of time as their main aim is to achieve all the contents at the end of the year before the final exams.

From my experience, my students seemed to be very enthusiastic when I explained to them the British Education system. They interrupted me many times asking questions and trying to compare the Spanish and the British Education systems. They felt curious about it and some of them wrote in their one-minute papers that "the most interesting activity was the explanation about the Education in the UK, because it is a subject really amazing for me".

3.1.4. Competences

Here I will mention all the knowledge and the competences I acquired through the whole process of creating and implementing my learning unit during my experience teaching in the Practicum II. For this purpose, I will use the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) to organize and formulate some of the competences I acquired and Design Questions from *The Art and Science of Teaching* by Robert Marzano (2007) in order to support some of them.

Context:

- I understand the requirements set in the Aragonese curriculum:

Since I try to facilitate the communication process in the classroom providing my students with different kinds of activities (readings, writings, role-play situations and listenings).

Methodology:

- I am able to establish learning goals, communicate them to my students, track my students´ progress and communicate effort to them:

According to Robert Marzano (2007) these are four aspects that we need to have in mind when designing our lessons. I enjoyed his four principles to describe effective teaching, to have a very high expectation for every student, establish learning goals and communicate them, evaluate our students´ progress and celebrate success.

- I can help students effectively interact with new knowledge:

According to R. Marzano, we need to help our students effectively interact with new knowledge. We are teaching them how to manage a lot of facts to produce communication. Consequently, in my learning unit I try to provide my students different kinds of input (visual, verbal) and ask them questions that force interpretation so I can check they understand[1].

- I can design activities to make the learners aware and build on their existing knowledge.

- I can take into account different learning styles and learners with specific needs: However, in Official Language Schools you cannot find adaptations.

Lesson planning:

- I know how to engage students:

In my learning unit I try to start every lesson with a warm-up activity that engages students. And I also try to make reference to current issues in class.

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[1] (See Learning Unit: Session 2, Listening task)

➕ I am able to implement activities for the students in order to develop the five skills in the foreign language as well as the vocabulary and grammar according to the communicative principles.

➕ I can plan and elaborate a learning unit taking into account the communicative principles:

As I said a few times in this final project, I believe in the communicative use of the language. Moreover, the Aragonese curriculum supports the idea that English has a real purpose, especially for communication.

➕ I can develop effective lessons organised into a coherent unit:

I think that the most important condition in a learning unit is coherence between learning objectives, contents, learning activities and assessment tools.

➕ I can select and implement meaningful and interactional activities regarding the four macro-skills to encourage learners to:
   - Express their opinions and their identity[2].
   - To help learners become aware and use different language for different text types and different communicative situations[3].
   - To understand the other language culture[4]
   - I can ensure smooth transition between activities

I try to start every activity with a pre-task, maintain the students´ interest while they are working and finally I include a follow-up activity or a post-task[5].

Resources:

➕ I can locate and select materials appropriate for my learners´ needs from a variety of sources:

As I commented on the section "Selecting materials and designing activities", I created the whole learning plan from scratch looking for activities or ideas in other course books and on the Internet. I believe that my students appreciated it since they followed their course book every day[6].

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[2] (See Learning Unit: Session 1, Reading task)

[3] (See Learning Unit: Session 2, Writing task)

[4] (See Learning Unit: Session 3, Vocabulary task)

[5] (See Learning Unit: Session 3, speaking task)

[6] (See Learning Unit: Session 1, speaking task taken from *Games for vocabulary practice: Interactive Vocabulary Activities for All Levels* by Felicity O´ Dell and Katie Head)

Assessment of learning:

➕ I am able to evaluate critically the basic aspects and principles in a learning unit.

➕ I can design and use appropriate assessment procedures to chart and monitor a learner´s progress:

   I prefer to design my own rubrics whenever possible because it forces me to clarify my own criteria in specific terms[7]. As for the students, I really think that rubrics improve their performance because in this way they know what is expected from them and how they are going to be evaluated.

➕ I can help learners to engage in peer assessment:

   I really think that peer assessment encourages student's involvement and responsibility of their learning process. So, I decided to include some peer assessment in my learning unit to provide more relevant feedback to the students as it is generated by their peers[8].

➕ I can accept feedback from my peers and mentors and build this into my teaching:

   I found extremely useful the feedback I received from my mentor and my classmates who came to each session to see me teaching. My tutor and my classmates suggested to me some ideas and highlighted the things that I did best. However, I talked to my tutor after each session in order to comment some aspects.

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[7] (See Learning Unit: Appendix III, Continuous Assessment Rubric)

[8] (See Learning Unit: Appendix III, Peer Assessment Rubric for the evaluation of the e-mail)

3.2. RESEARCH PROJECT

To begin with I would like to say that I am quite interested in research in general. I think it is due to the fact that I studied an English degree at University. There, critical analysis and research on literature or linguistics plays an important role. Apart from that, I really think that teachers should dedicate some time to reflect on their own work to evaluate themselves as well as their students´ learning process in order to improve the situation. In my opinion, Spanish education will be better if teachers take some time throughout their careers to think about what is going on.

On the other hand, in the subject *Evaluación e Innovación docente* we had the opportunity to choose the topic in which we were more interested. After some thought about the matter, Catherine Dolan, Mª Jesús Horno, Elena Chacón and I decided to research the use of "genuine" games in the L2 classroom, because this is an issue we all find fascinating.

Mainly, we chose this topic because we consider that authentic materials should be introduced in the L2 classroom, a principle set out in the Aragonese curriculum. As for the purpose of this research we try to demonstrate that textbooks do not offer real games at all but role-play situations which are unreal in most cases. In addition, we believe that introducing "genuine" games in the L2 classroom would be a motivating experience for our students, the idea being that if they are having fun they will learn better.

The research was carried out by analyzing the data collected among the students in First Intermediate and Second Intermediate in the Official Language School and 4th year ESO and Diversification students in a secondary school in Huesca. All this data was collected by means of a satisfaction survey in which we included multiple choice questions regarding the use of "genuine" games in the classroom and some other questions in relation to their personal habits when playing "genuine" games at home.

In the following lines I will explain our experience implementing games in the L2 classroom during the Practicum III, and then I will comment on the most relevant results we achieved. Finally, I will mention the learning outcomes I achieve after the research project.

3.2.1. Implementing "genuine" games

To begin with, I think that implementing games in the EFL classroom was a very positive experience for me. At the beginning I was afraid of implementing games in an Official Language School with adult learners. I thought they would think that playing games in the classroom was something childish or a waste of time. However, as I experienced, introducing games in the classroom creates class spirit and a relaxed and funny atmosphere.

Following this trend, we can base our thoughts on the use of games in the L2 classroom on two well-known theories on second language acquisition: Krashen´s Affective Filter Theory and Motivation and the Communicative approach respectively. The former deals with lowering the affective filter conditions during instructions incorporating games; the latter echoes learner-centre teaching and the use of the language without analyzing it.

Moreover, as our games implied group work and interaction, we also experienced some of the advantages R. Ellis states when doing small group work and interaction such as lowering anxiety, as I said before, games also help the students to become independent learners because each of them has a responsibility within the group and at the same time working as part of a team enables them to get to know each other.

On the other hand, we can state some differences we found when implementing games with our students. In the secondary school, games were particularly successful with PAB and Diversification groups. These groups tend to be considered low-ability and less 'academic' students but by introducing games they were taken out of the usual routine and able to use different skills.

As for adult learners from the EOI, they responded very well to games, although at the beginning we were afraid of their reactions. What is more, in general students seemed to learn new vocabulary or grammar structures quicker and better than in a usual classroom situation.

3.2.2. Results and conclusions

I would like to start this section by explaining that we all expected positive results after collecting the satisfaction questionnaires. I mean, we all expected not having a student who felt frustrated or anxious when playing "genuine" games in the classroom. Instead, we observed that, in general, a feeling of competitiveness arises in both adults and young learners. In addition, we could say that everybody feels involved and classroom spirit is one of the positive goals we achieved.

Another interesting aspect to comment on is how many times we should include games in the classroom. Predictably, 4th year ESO students and the Diversification group want to include games every day in the English lessons. Whereas adult learners generally agree with the idea that games should be included perhaps once a week or once a month.

From my experience in the EOI, the students seemed to be very enthusiastic when we told them that we were going to play "authentic" games in class, probably because they never play games. However, I observed that they spoke in Spanish when they discussed in their groups. I think that they used their L1 because of the excitement and the competitiveness arisen in the game. Nevertheless, we all had a good time in class.

After introducing several games in the L2 classroom and reflecting on previous research about this topic, I am clear about two main thoughts: firstly, the importance of giving clear instructions and modeling examples. Second, teachers need to have in mind specific didactic purposes for games.

First, giving clear instruction and modeling an example is essential for the student´s understanding of the game. As I experienced, it was not enough to prepare the instructions to be projected on the smartboard and read them aloud before they start playing. If the teacher models an example, maybe with a student next to him or her in the front row, everything seems to be much clearer.

Second, we agree with A. Wright (1982:1) when he states "it is essential to choose games which are appropriate for the class in terms of language and type of participation". It happens mainly with adult learners, they need to know what the aims are and what they are learning when playing the game in order to appreciate the use of games in the classroom.

3.2.3. Competences

After concluding the research project I think I achieve the following competences:

- I think that I can now *identify the problems related to the teaching and learning of the subject and curricular area and propose alternatives and solutions*:

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2008:6), the first step to carry out a research on a specific field is to identify a problem or a question. As he says: "Some disturbance in our lives that disrupts the normal or desirable state of affairs". As I mention in the introduction above, we found that, in general, there is no room for games or "genuine" games in textbooks. Textbooks offer only role-play activities which are unreal situations in most cases.

In general, secondary school teachers do not include "genuine" games in their L2 classroom. However, with the research project we want to demonstrate that "genuine" games are a valid way of teaching that should be taken into account. I am not saying that we should include games every day in the classroom but once a week or once a month as our students reflected on the satisfaction questionnaires.

- *Recognize and apply methodologies and techniques which are typical in teaching research and evaluation*:

As Fraenkel and Wallen suggest, almost all research plans include a problem statement, a hypothesis, definitions, a literature review, a sample of subjects, tests or other measuring instruments, a description of procedures to be followed, including a time schedule, and a description of intended data analyses. This is the structure we followed in our research project broadly speaking.

First, we state a problem as I said before. Second, we spent some time looking for previous literature on "genuine" games. Here, I would like to say that we did not find previous literature on "genuine" games as such. Therefore, using our logic we try to analyse the use of "genuine" games in the L2 classroom echoing Krashen´s Affective Filter theory and the Communicative approach.

Then, we analyse briefly the textbooks our students used in order to demonstrate they did not offer many games. After all this previous work, we decided to use a satisfaction questionnaire to collect data because we asked ourselves questions about feelings, opinions and frequency regarding the use "genuine" games in the l2 classroom and at home.

In this sense there are three main difficulties involved in survey research stated by Fraenkel and Wallen "(1) ensuring that the questions are clear and not misleading, (2) getting respondents to answer questions thoughtfully and honestly, and (3) getting a sufficient number of the questionnaires completed and returned to enable making meaningful analyses.

At first sight, it seems easy to create a questionnaire having many questions in mind. At first, we created a very brief questionnaire that we passed round with First Intermediate level in the Official Language School. However, our mentor at the University suggested us some changes in order to improve the questionnaire. So we add more questions regarding our students´ habits playing "genuine" games at home.

Finally, we analysed data and compare our results in the EOI with Catherine´s results obtained in the secondary school in Huesca. And then, we were able to state some conclusions and suggest ideas for future teaching.

- *Be able to design and develop research and evaluation project, and identify recognize and apply innovative teaching proposals in the field of the subject and curricular area*:

After so much work, I think I am able now to identify other problems in the teaching profession and evaluate them and develop a research to improve them or suggest new ideas or possible solutions.

In our case, we conclude that games should not be used as time-fillers although we used them as such in the EOI due to the circumstances as I explained before. And we also determine that "genuine" games are a valid tool for teaching secondary students and adult learners. From my experience, I was very surprised with the reception games had in the EOI.

To sum up, we invite teachers to use "genuine" games in their L2 classrooms because they have many benefits. From my experience, games create a classroom spirit, foster communication between students, relax classroom atmosphere and they also create a funny situation which differs from the "tension" in normal classroom instruction.

- *Evaluate, innovate and investigate about one's own teaching processes with the aim of achieving ongoing improvement in the teaching activity and in the educational role of the school.*

In my view, evaluating your own teaching processes to improve them implies personal and professional growth. Moreover, according to Borg (2006:22), through research teachers can begin to understand in deeper and richer ways what they know from experience. Therefore, they can explore the learning the learning processes occurring in their classrooms and attempt to interpret them.

4. CRITICAL REFLECTION

Near the end of this final project, I will establish possible connections between the learning unit and the research project. Firstly, I will talk about the time they were implemented in the L2 classroom. Secondly, I will explain the relationships that I found between these two projects and Communicative Language Teaching. Finally, I will comment on the idea of specific didactic purposes in both projects.

Both the learning unit and the research project were carried out during the Practicums; the former was implemented in the Practicum II, the latter in the Practicum III. As for the learning unit, I was allowed to teach four hours as I commented before in this project. Therefore, I did not put into practice the whole work. As for the research project, we implemented several games when we already finished our teaching.

Due to the fact that we were three students in the EOI who had the same mentor, and two of us taught to the Second Intermediate level, our mentor left us the last 20 minutes of some of her lessons to put into practice the games we prepared. I know that in our research we said we believe on games not as time-fillers in the L2 classroom but as the centre of the lesson. However, due to the circumstances, we had to carry out the games at the end of the lessons.

On the other hand, when thinking about these two projects as a whole, the first thing that comes to my mind is Communicative Language Teaching. I agree with Richards & Rodgers (2001:161) when they say that "activities that involve real communication promote learning". And that is what I did when I selected and prepared the materials for my learning unit and for the games as well.

I thought about engaging activities first, I prepared warm-ups in which we discussed real issues, and tasks which were useful for my students as future users of the target language. However, the use of games in the L2 classroom was the clearest example of real communication which promotes learning. When monitoring my students while they were playing cards, for instance, I felt very happy because I realised that they were communicating in English in a relaxed atmosphere and they were learning at the same time.

Finally, I would like to comment on the importance for teachers to have always specific didactic purposes in mind. From my experience in the EOI, at the end of each lesson or at the end of a game I asked myself: "What have my students learnt today?". Above all, adult learners are more demanding that young students in the sense that they study English for a specific purpose and not as compulsory education in their lives.

As a result, I think that teachers need to plan and be coherent with the learning objectives and the activities as well as providing their students with useful tools to communicate and gain fluency and accuracy through real communication.

5. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Reflecting now, near the end of June, on this academic year in which I set the base of my training during the first semester and received specialized knowledge to become a good English teacher in the second one, there are some aspects I would like to investigate if I ever become a secondary school teacher. However, some of them had already been studied during this Master. In the following paragraphs I will comment on our proposals for future teaching regarding the research project on games. Then, I will develop the idea of future research as I said before. And finally, I will deal with the role of the teacher in the future.

Research project´s proposals for future teaching:

"Games are not just time-filling activities, but have great educational value":

We believe that games should be treated as central, not peripheral to the foreign language teaching syllabus, as we also believe in a student-centred classroom. Probably teachers use games as time fillers, because they think they take too long to prepare and they have no time to do that. However, new technologies make it easier for us and we encourage teachers to use games for revising, introducing a new topic or even to assess their students at the end of a learning unit.

"Games are also equally valid learning tools for teaching teenagers and adults, but they need to have a specific didactic purpose":

Games are more interesting than traditional language instruction. Course books rarely offer any games or ideas for real situations in the classroom, neither additional ideas for games in the teacher's books. Following these trends, our research tries to demonstrate that games have an educational value and that they can provide a meaningful context for language use. Surveys have been very useful tools to strengthen our beliefs, since they have provided us with real data of their habits and opinions about how they learn best.

Suggestions for future research:

Along this Master we have been constantly told that assessment should be continuous and formative as much as possible, and that it should be approached as something positive, something which helps everyone to learn and improve. However, these ideas have nothing to do with the kind of assessment that I had when I was in secondary school. Thus, when these ideas about assessment were explained, I wondered whether they made much sense in the context of real secondary education.

As I said before, if I ever become a secondary school teacher I will try to be as innovative as possible. I am not saying that I do not agree with traditional assessment methods but I think they do not promote learning. From my point of view assessment must be continuous and formative. Therefore, I will try to assess my student in the future assessing the different learning styles I faced in a classroom and trying to be fair using rubrics and different tools for assessment.

<u>The role of the teacher in the future</u>:

Nowadays, we are experiencing a period of economic crisis and a reform in public education. In order to be prepared to undertake this, our society needs more than ever well trained teachers. However, apart from the training I receive in this Master´s degree I would like to receive more specific training regarding education psychology, learners with specific needs and adaptations and complementary formation on ICT and digital whiteboards. Above all, I believe it would be extremely interesting for me to receive some further training in the field of differentiation. This is a really important issue nowadays and I am convinced that this is something that teachers need to be carefully prepared for.

6. CONCLUSIONS

I would like to say that this Master helped me to acquire useful knowledge in relation to the teaching-learning process. I consider the teaching placement essential since it was the first time that I taught English to a whole class. However, the combination of both theoretical and practical lessons is necessary. Moreover, this final project has been useful since it has allowed me to reflect on almost all the modules of the second part of this Master.

Now, that June is already passing, I can say that I am prepared to be a good secondary school teacher. After many subjects and three Practicums, I think I received the necessary background training to get started in the teaching profession. In general, I am quite satisfied with the training I received although there are many things left for me to learn.

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