Trabajo Fin de Máster

Modalidad A

<u>A CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS</u>

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this final project, my principal objective is to elaborate a critical and personal reflection on my own learning during the Master Degree in Education, on my experiences in the three Teaching Practice periods in a high school and on a global vision of the Master (and the expected effects it has had on me). All of which have helped me in the acquisition of new knowledge and different tools to work with as an English teacher in a real educative context.

My final reflection follows a concrete structure. In the first part, I will reflect on the teaching profession as an introductory part according to the educational theoretical framework, taking into account the Aragonese Curriculum, ELP, EFR, CEFR etc. and using my own experiences during the Teaching Practice periods at the high school called "*Pilar Lorengar*" where I was able to see and understand better the real goals of a teacher, their work conditions and their relationship with the students, among other aspects. In the second part, I will elaborate a critical justification on the two works, "Course Plan" and "Learning Unit", that I have chosen in order to demonstrate how useful they have been during my own learning process in the Master, and also how helpful they are going to be in my future labor as an English teacher.

 It is very important to analyze them in a deeper way with critical reflection, trying to create as many possible connections between both of them, and with my Teaching Practice periods, where I was able to implement the second one. At the same time, I will take into account my teachers´ feedback and my own opinion about the most important aspects that I have learnt before, during and after their implementation. I will relate both to the most important literature seen in the Master.

It is essential to consider in my reflections the different concepts and authors that I have seen in all the subjects of the Master to elaborate as critical a work as possible. Also, I want to explain some relevant decisions that have influenced the selection of my final project, when I was writing them, justifying why I chose them and not others as a self-assessment of my own work related to the competences and objectives that I have learnt in the Master´s lessons and activities. As I have learnt during the Master, this last aspect is an important and useful tool for a teacher because it allows him to evaluate objectively how he teaches and helps him to improve his teaching and be implicated in the learning process. Reflective teaching is a new concept which foments a process of introspection and retrospection, focusing on the teachers´ actions in different moments, before, during and after the lessons. There are many definitions of it, but there is one with a broader stance which introduces the concept of reflection, taking into account the social and political contexts of programs, schools, and communities given by Zeichner and Liston (1996, p.33). For them, reflective teaching is "*a recognition, examination, and rumination over the implications of one´s beliefs, experiences, attitudes, knowledge, and values as well as the opportunities and constraints provided by the social conditions in which the teacher works*". In the last part of my final reflection, I will expose some specific conclusions about the whole learning process that I have acquired throughout this school year. These final conclusions will help me to show how all these general and specific aspects have influenced me as a future English teacher.

Before starting with my final reflections, I want to give my personal reasons about why I decided to study this Master Degree in Education. Since I was a young student, I have felt an unusual connection with languages, and especially with English and Anglo-Saxon culture. But, there was a mentor who emphasized the necessity of being an English teacher. In general, a teacher shows and explains different contents, but there are others who teach incredible things and transmit to their students amazing feelings which influence their future decisions. Hence, I decided to study this Master Degree in Education because one day I want to be that teacher who gives rewarding experiences to his students, that they will never forget. Last year, I finished my University studies in Primary Education, and I felt that my knowledge was not enough in order to be a good teacher. I thought that I knew different methodologies and teaching resources, but that they was not practical enough. During this Master Degree in Education, I have really learnt what teaching new languages means thanks to many interesting theories and concepts that I have seen participating in the different subjects that compose the master. Kumaravadivelu (2012, p.5)´s definition of language teaching establishes that "*Language teaching is much more than teaching language. It is not merely about transmitting phonological, syntactic, and pragmatic knowledge of language usage, but it is also about transforming cultural forms and interesting knowledge so as to give meaning to the lived experiences of teachers and learners.*" Here, we can see the importance of integrating in the same way contents and culture in the teaching of a second language in order to create a new way of learning which will help learners to understand in a meaningful way the importance of learning a foreign language with a real purpose.

Throughout my last four years at the university, I have worked as a private teacher in several houses helping students with their studies in different subjects. It was an incredible experience, where I have learnt a lot about the importance of meeting my students before choosing my conduct and the way in which I taught the lessons, in order to create a good environment in the teaching-learning process. Before starting the Master Degree in Education, I had some ideas of how the current way of teaching and learning a language has evolved throughout history thanks to the Primary Education degree that I had studied before. But, thanks to this Master, I can complete them, and also my education as a teacher which is an essential, interesting and useful tool in our society.

In general, the Master Degree in Education consists of several subjects which focus on the process of teaching and learning, including its main components. Consequently, I have learnt the most important aspects for a teacher and the factors to be considered about how to plan and implement a lesson, a Didactic Unit and a Course Plan. Nowadays, I completely agree with the importance of students´ needs, the essential role played by psychology at these ages, which could determine the motivation of the students, their learning process, and also, the fundamental role of the relationship between teachers and students, which influences learners´ self-confidence in the learning of a foreign language process as the affective filter hypothesis by Krashen (1982) determined.

The Master Degree in Education´s subjects are divided into two different terms. In the first part, there are three subjects: "*Contexto de la Actividad Docente*",

"*Interacción y Convivencia en el Aula*" and "*Procesos de Enseñanza - Aprendizaje*" which are common to all specialties as core classes. .

Thanks to the first subject, I have learnt the most important aspects about the internal organization of Spanish High Schools, such as: the official documents created in the schools which are the most important and regulate the teaching process, the legal and institutional framework of Education, how the society can influence the teaching and learning process, etc. In the second aforementioned subject mentioned, I have made my skills and techniques more meaningful in order to promote my social psychology and to stimulate teacher and student coexistence in the classroom to help my students in their own development and enrichment. With the last subject, called "*Procesos de Enseñanza - Aprendizaje*" I have studied and developed my studies about the most important teaching theories in the students´ learning process. And, at the same time, I have reviewed the different techniques about how to evaluate the students and teachers´ formative learning process using objectives, critical and informative tools in a reflective way.

Moreover, I had two specific subjects according to my specialty which were "*Diseño Curricular de Lenguas Extranjeras*" and "*Fundamentos de Diseño Intruccional y Metodologías del Aprendizaje*". In the first, I have learnt one of the most important aspects of a teacher´s work, which is how to plan, design and develop a Course Plan for a specific level for the English subject. With the second subject, I have learnt the most important principles and differences between the learning approaches used from the 60´s and those used currently including the language teaching process as a review of the evolution in teaching methods. With the final project in small groups, I was able to explore a specific topic in detail related to the benefits and uses of the ICT´s according to the most important and actual teaching approaches giving my own opinion in a critical way and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

Thanks to these subjects and the teaching methods analyzed, I developed my critical view because they taught me what I have to do and not as a future English teacher. Consequently, I have a strong belief in the importance of promoting the communicative approach in the English lessons because I agree with the five communicative principles established by Nunan (1991). And also, analyzing the Communicative Language Teaching, I agree with Harmer (2007, p.32)´s principles. He states that the CLT has "*two guiding principles: the first is that language is not just patterns of grammar with vocabulary items slotted in, but also involves language functions [...] and the second principle is that if students get enough exposure to language, and opportunities for language - and if they are motivated - then language learning will take care of itself.* "

Whereas during the first part I only took two specialty subjects according to the English language, in the second period I had three interesting subjects directly related to this future labor: "*Comunicación oral en Lengua Inglesa*", "*Diseño, Organización y Desarrollo de Actividades para el Aprendizaje del Inglés*" and "*Evaluación e Innovación Docente e Investigación Educativa en Inglés*". All of them helped me to acquire the competences and the knowledge more relevantly required for an English

teacher. As I will explain after in a specific and in-depth analysis, in the second subject mentioned, I have learnt different tools that are very useful and meaningful for a teacher in the terms of how to exploit, adapt or make the most out of materials and the tasks, how to evaluate our process and our students learning. In addition, I will explain two important work tools, which are how to elaborate and design my own learning unit according to the communicative principles and a methodology based on tasks considering our students´ preferences and levels, the contents and the objectives which appeared in the Aragonese Curriculum as something specific and compulsory but in a flexible and open way.

All the aforementioned subjects have helped me in my personal development, but the most interesting, important and professional aspect of this Master was the three different Teaching Practice periods which included three subjects, one from the first term and two from the second. During the first Teaching Practice period, I was able to apply and check all my learning about the most important and official documents which established the Aragonese Curriculum and, at the same time, those documents which are competences from the High School. Both made me able to analyze and understand in a practical way the internal structure, the educative regulations, the most important laws, etc. of an educational center of Secondary Education as is the High School, "*Pilar Lorengar*".

But the most enriching experience for me has been the second Teaching Practice period because I was able to work in a real context and felt integrated into the teaching profession thanks to my colleagues at the High School. During the first week, I went with my tutor to all her classes to learn about her techniques, methodologies, relationship with her students, how to organize the lesson according to the students´ timetable, etc. Then, in the following weeks I was able to put into practice my own Learning Unit called "*The Incredible World*" in a specific level and use all the relevant knowledge acquired during the Master.

In the last Teaching Practice period, I investigated the use of ICT´s, and focused on the use of blogs in the improvement of reading skills in the High School´s students. In this research project, I evaluated an investigation about this topic in order to elaborate a critical essay about the integrations of blogs in the English classroom innovating it in the lessons.

Thanks to all this new knowledge acquired, I now know the importance of the teachers´ role in the acquisition of a foreign language as well as some essential characteristics necessary in a teacher to develop successful learning. One of the most important aspects in our society to try to promote in each lesson a real connection between the contents and the objectives of each subject with real daily situations, as Kumaravadivelu (2012, p.4) proposes in an interview: "*we must uncompromisingly forge a connection between the word and the world, and also unrelentingly help our learners see and benefit from that connection.*"

Finally, I want to say that my decision to study this Master Degree in Education has been an important decision in my professional development because it helped me to

improve my theoretical and practical knowledge. In short, this year taught me the importance of using the language to develop competence in communication in real contexts, and not only being aware of it as is described by Canale and Swain (1980). Foreign language teachers have a big responsibility because they are responsible of teaching a second language, and at the same time, they have to integrate new cultures in their learners´ minds, creating new thoughts and points of view.

2. JUSTIFICATION

I have chosen two different projects which are related to each other. They are the Course Plan from the subject of the first term called "*Diseño Curricular de Lenguas Extranjeras*" and the Learning Unit from the subject of the second term called "*Diseño, Organización y Desarrollo de Actividades para el Aprendizaje de Inglés*" which I implemented during my Teaching Practice periods at the High School "*Pilar Lorengar*" located in Zaragoza in the neighborhood of "*La Jota*".

I have chosen these two final projects because they are the most important and useful that I have done during this Master Degree in Education. With the Course Plan and the Learning Unit, I learnt important tools before starting my Teaching Practice periods.

With both final projects, I exploited and understood better the use and the importance of the Aragonese Curriculum, which is open and flexible because it only establishes in a global way the objectives for the entire Secondary Education Stage. This educative order introduces the Key competences too. This, along with the CERF, is one of the new elements that have appeared in the educational framework as a result of the convergence of the national and local framework with the European framework (House 2011). The Aragonese Curriculum also classifies the contents in a specific way, into four different modules called: Listening, Speaking and Conversation; Reading and Writing; Language awareness and reflections on learning and social cultural aspects and intercultural awareness. These four modules are based on three main principles, which are the following: Developing language skills, understanding the constitutive elements of the target language and engaging with the social and cultural dimensions of the language. As House (2011, 68) said "*The curriculum is not an instruction manual for producing perfect results, but a framework which provides teachers with a structure they then give character and content to.*"

As I have indicated before, one of the main reasons why I have chosen these two final projects is the close relationship that exists between them. Both are based on several documents from the High School as "*Documento de Organización de Cetro*", "*Proyecto Educativo de Centro*" and "*Programación General Anual*" which is the most relevant document focused directly on the organization of the aims, content, skills, evaluations criteria, etc. of each subject according to a specific course in general terms. Also, all the elements mentioned before are classified into a concrete and detailed way

taking into account the sequence of didactic units established by each department of the High School.

On one hand, when as part of my first term tasks, I designed a whole Course Plan, it was written in a cooperative way as it was a team activity. It was developed in a global way without designing each lesson plan. On the other hand, in the second term I had the opportunity to create, design and implement a whole learning unit in the High School *"Pilar Lorengar"*. This opportunity was a very enriching and complete experience for me and I consider it really important for my future labor as an English teacher.

I want to justify the main reasons which have guided me to chose the Course Plan, they are the following:

I elaborated and designed this project at the beginning of the Master Degree in Education, so it was very useful and challenging to me because I was able to improve on my previous knowledge about these items and use all the new contents learned during the subject. It was an incredible experience to appreciate the importance of the assessment criteria, general objectives, contents, key competences and teaching methods designed and selected for a specific level of Secondary Education. All of them are basic aspects, but at the same time, very important for each learning unit drafted. All of them are established by an official document, Ley Orgánica de Educación 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, in a general way, and in a more specific way for our community, in the Aragonese Curriculum.

Taking into account all the new knowledge acquired, lately I have had a more global and coherent perspective of those contents appearing on the different official documents mentioned before. So, I can elaborate a critical analysis of my work focusing on the most important errors that I would not make as teacher. As I said in the introduction, as teachers, we must reflect on and during our personal work in order to improve the teaching and learning process.

Finally, there is something I would like to comment on regarding the Course Plan. It was a difficult task, as many of the students of the Master had little knowledge in the field of Education, and we were required to design such an important project in groups. In our case, two of the members of the group had prior knowledge in the field of Education because we had studied a Primary Education Degree.

The reasons why I have chosen the Learning Unit are diverse. First, I consider it is one of the most important projects of the Master as it is essential for teachers to know what they will teach to their students and how to organize, relate, etc. that information in a way that is consistent and effective in the teaching and learning process. Also, I implemented the whole learning unit during my Teaching Practice period at the high school *"Pilar Lorengar"*. So I checked that most of the activities designed worked perfectly. Although I perceived that there were some aspects that I could improve, such as to give clearer instructions or classroom management when carrying out debates or

role-plays, and so on. In general terms, I am very satisfied with the final result because the lessons were fun, the students acquired all the objectives, the timing was well adjusted, the tasks were all connected, etc. Finally, it must be said that the Course Plan (designed in the first term) was aimed for second year students of Compulsory Secondary Education, as well as the learning unit (designed in the second term).

Therefore, as in the Master, I have worked with activities, materials, etc. aimed for students with this level, it was a great opportunity to implement my learning and also, it was a challenge for me where I could to demonstrate my improvement as a teacher.

3. ANALYSIS

In this next part of my final project, I will analyze and reflect on the knowledge and the different skills that I have learnt firstly by preparing, then by designing and finally by doing in a cooperative way a Course Plan for the second grade of Compulsory Secondary Education for the subject called "*Diseño Curricular de Lenguas Extranjeras*" from the first part of the Master, and also, with the Learning Unit called "*The Incredible World*" elaborated during the second part of the Master for the subject called "*Diseño, Organización y Desarrollo de Actividades para el Aprendizaje de Inglés*". This second project was developed in pairs also for the second grade of Compulsory Secondary Education. I had the opportunity to implement it during my second Teaching Practice period in the High School "*Pilar Lorengar*".

3.1. Didactic Course Plan

Even though the Course Plan has several things which could have been done better such as the elaboration of the objectives in order to connect them with all the contents of the Aragonese Curriculum or the relationship between some aspects of the methodology and the suitable literature. The learning unit is well designed and elaborated, maybe because I designed all the activities, and it allows me to devise correctly the objectives and relate the activities with the evaluation criteria, competences and contents in a correct way. By analyzing and reflecting on the different skills and knowledge acquired designing these two final projects, they can be considered good reflections of what I have learnt during this academic year in the Master.

- Definition

As I have said before, I studied to become a Primary Education teacher at the University, so I had some ideas and knowledge of the field of Education and the teaching profession when I began at this Master. But to design a Didactic Course Plan during the first term was one of the most difficult activities I carried out in this Master.

My previous knowledge was focused on how to design a learning unit according to the context, students ages, taking into account the Aragonese Curriculum, but I had never designed a whole Didactic Course Plan, which is a key document for teachers working in Aragón, and also, they have to know how to do it perfectly because their teaching will be based on it.

Before starting with a deep analysis of the Course Plan, it is very important to explain what a "Course Plan" or "Syllabus" is. From an etymological point of view, syllabus means "label" or "table of contents". White (1988, p.78) said that: *"The term syllabus is used in many different ways, but the central concept is of a statement of a programme´s aims and contents (and for some methodology and evaluation also)"*. A similar definition is that of Candlin (1984, p.30): *"syllabuses are concerned with the specification and planning of what is to be learned, frequently set down in some written form as prescriptions for action by teachers and learners. They have, traditionally, the mark of authority. They are concerned with the achievement of ends, often, though not always, associated with the pursuance of particular means."* During the last decades, there have been diverse approaches to syllabus design within literature. White (1988) established two different types of syllabuses: Notional and Functional syllabuses, which are arranged according to the notions (concepts) and functions (uses) thought to be required by the learner. Developed partly as a reaction to overemphasis on structural teaching, N/F is associated with the Council of Europe team, particularly David Wilkings (1976). N/F syllabuses were predominant in many parts of the world during the latter part of the 1970s for providing learners with "useful phrases" but no generative knowledge of how the language works. Nowadays, the term notional/functional syllabus is more common as the umbrella term, though the labels semantic syllabus and communicative syllabus are also used in this sense. N/F introduces structures through their uses that are central to communicative language teaching in programmes for all students, including those without any prior grammar. Notional syllabuses are concerned with the contents and the aims that should be learnt, without taking into account the students´ characteristics or how languages are acquired by them. Conversely, functional syllabuses are concerned with how the second language is learnt and how to integrate it with the students´ experiences. The learning process appears from a negotiation process between teachers and students oriented around the process.

The Course Plan analyzed in the following pages was designed according to the functional syllabuses in a global way, but also it had some characteristics of notional syllabuses, as for example the definition of the objectives, contents and grading criteria. By trying to explain it in a more specific way, this Course Plan was designed following a syllabus called "Task-Based Model" (Nunan, 1989) which is considered an alternative to the communicative curriculum focusing on students´ actions and processes in the classroom. According to Nunan (2006, p.5) a task is *"a piece of classroom work involving learners in an understanding, directing, producing or interacting way in the target language while the students' attention is focused on activating their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the aim is to express meaning rather than to manipulate form."*

3.1.1. Preliminary period before designing the Didactic Course Plan

Before starting with the Course Plan design, I decided to elaborate a table of contents including the most important and useful knowledge learnt thanks to the two specific subjects of my mention "*Fundamentos de Diseño Instruccional*" and "*Diseño Curricular de Lenguas Extranjeras*". Both were the most helpful and useful subjects studied when I started to prepare the Course Plan, because they gave me important theoretical aspects such as the Aragonese Curriculum value, the evolution of the different methodologies, etc. and also several tools to help me analyze the official educative laws and curriculums. It is very important before creating a Course Plan to examine minutely the official documents (LOE, Aragonese Curriculum, CEFR) and to know how to adapt and transform them into a coherent program of working activities in the English as a Foreign Language classrooms.

We decided to start with this project doing an introductory activity in order to determine those "key principles" we wanted our Course Plan to follow. This acted as 'preparation' in order to analyze and review the most important methodologies, approaches and ways used in language teaching. I took this part under consideration because it is something indispensable in guiding us as English teachers. In that moment, this activity was very important for me when we were designing the Course Plan. At the end of the Master, these subjects and other ones form the second part of the academic year. I have acquired a global view towards the most meaningful aspects in the learning and teaching process. During the second term of the Master Degree in Education, I attended a class in which I was able to complement the knowledge I had acquired previously. This subject was "*Diseño, Organización y Desarrollo de Actividades para el Aprendizaje de Inglés*", in it I learnt how to design activities according to the Task Based Model (Nunan 1989) and also how to develop properly a Didactic Unit. So, after some months learning new contents I achieved the ability to design a new Course Plan better structured and more coherent for a whole English academic year. Now I see that at the beginning, when I was elaborating this document, I had some misinterpretations and an unclear understanding of this topic.

Before starting to design a Course Plan, it is important to bear in mind the idea promoted by Krashen, who said "*the language features that are easiest to state (and thus to learn) are not necessarily the first to be acquired*" (Lightbown and Spada, 2006, p.36). In order to teach and learn a second language in a motivating and meaningful way, we as teachers have to elaborate and foment activities which promote real communicative situations. This idea is really similar to the one explained by Brown "*classroom tasks must equip students with the skills necessary for communication in real contexts*" (Brown, 2007, p.46). Learning a second language should be seen by our students as an important and useful tool in their lives, so it is very important to properly select the topics of each unit according to their ages, preferences, interests and levels. Also, as I have said before, the topics should be introduced with specific purposes which reflect the final objective and real uses. Although, when I arrived at the Master, I had been influenced by my previous experiences as a student where the methodologies used were more traditional: based on writing and reading practice and never promoting speaking and spoken interaction. I believed that it was very important to teach simple structures first and then follow with more complex ones. Now, designing this kind of

work, I know that it´s more important to develop a Communicative Approach, which emphasizes the interaction between the means and the main aim. (Widdowson 1984)

3.1.2. Critical analysis and reflection on the Didactic Course Plan

The main aim of this project was to design a complete Course Plan according to a table of contents given by the teacher. During the theoretical and practical lesson we learnt , reflected and identified different aspects of the most important methodologies, activities and techniques used in a real English Classroom, but almost nothing about how to design a Course Plan. As a future English teacher, before elaborating the Course Plan, we need to take into account the level of the students, their characteristics, their ages, likes, needs, etc. This previous part, will help us to determine the competences that they are going to gain during the academic year, the best way to do that, the final purposes, their individual evolution in the acquisition of the target language, etc. As Kumaravadivelu stated, we "*need to know, with a reasonable degree of certainty, which features of method A, which features of method B, etc. can be combined, how, for what reason and with what result […] taking into account the particularity of a given learning-teaching context*" (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p.3). Hence, if we want to promote successful teaching we need to focus our Course Plan on these aspects.

Before starting with the design of the Course Plan, we decided to carry it out, according to the indicators and principles stated by the official documents as the Aragonese Curriculum, Organic Educative Law, English Language Portfolio (ELP) and Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). After that, regarding the "*Proyecto Educativo de Centro*" of an educative center where we stayed during the first Teaching Practice period, we established the school setting which is subdivided into three different parts: Characteristics of the school, Socio-cultural context and Students´ characteristics and needs. To set the context before starting to design was a helpful decision. As Bailey (2001) suggested, a reflective teacher must reflect on what happens in the educative context, in the lessons and think about alternative means to achieve goals. So, the syllabus was designed to be flexible, taking into account the experiences of the students in order to make the teaching more effective.

The following step was to reflect the key competences, which are, the cognitive, procedural and attitudinal skills that the students from second grade of Compulsory Secondary Education should have achieved after dealing with the contents included in the Course Plan. The syllabus design was focused on the competence model which is a type of curriculum design that begins with a specification of learning outcomes and which uses desired learning outcomes as the basis for developing instructional processes (activities) and input (content). According to Richards (2013), it is also called Backward design and in the last years it has re-emerged as an upcoming curriculum development approach in language teaching.

On the one hand, regarding the national and autonomous official documents and on the other hand taking into account the Council of Europe´s documents   which

regulate the Educational System according to the English subject, we analyzed the Course Plan following these legal documents:

-Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

-European Language Portfolio developed by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe to support the development of learner autonomy, plurilingualism and intercultural awareness and competence.

-Order May 9, 2007, which establishes the Secondary Education Curriculum for Schools in the Autonomous Community of Aragón.

-Royal Decree 1631/2006, of December 29, which establishes the minimum educational standard in Compulsory Secondary Education statewide (as our Course Plan was oriented to students of 4th year of Compulsory Secondary Education).

-Spanish Institutional Act 2/2006, of May 3, of Education, as it regulates the current Spanish educational system.

During the first Teaching Practice period I had the opportunity to analyze and reflect upon the most important documents that I had to take into account designing my Course Plan. These documents did not have several specifications to comply with the laws that I thought they should have. So, as I have learnt it is very important to *"leave plenty of room for teachers to develop their own topics and themes, and allow them to place the emphasis on skills and procedures according to their own pedagogical principles, and, importantly, the particular features and characteristics of their teaching environment"* House (2011, p. 69).

The methodology was designed in an unspecific way without references to the English subject. However, the methodological aspects were explained in detail. All the activities designed were explained in a general way according to the principal skills (vocabulary, reading, grammar, pronunciation and writing) and also, as I have learnt in the different subjects, it is very important to take into account the ages, the likes, the needs and the motivating aspects of the students in order to select and modify the activities. But we did not take into account the principles established by the Aragonese Curriculum, such as, using authentic materials, integrating the skills throughout the whole unit, unifying the grammar points in a real meaningful context, the teacher acting as a monitor promoting autonomous learning, etc.

Finally, in relation to this part, methodological aspects, of the Course Plan, it is important to remark that although we took into account the level and the previous knowledge of the students, we did not do the same with the language skills. We purposed several resources in order to practice the grammatical tenses, forgetting the traditional grammatical teaching. But we ignored the communicative abilities the learners had before designing the Course Plan in order to select resources to improve their language skills. As Gattegno (1972, p.89) said, *"Learning is not seen as the means*

of accumulating knowledge but as the means of becoming a more proficient learner in whatever one is engaged in". According to him, at the beginning of the planning of the Course Plan, we should take into account what they have learnt in the previous levels and what they are able to do. This way that will help the teacher to choose the best methodology to improve their fluency in oral communication, their understanding of oral and written texts, their capacity to produce their own texts or conversation, etc.

In addition, we should take into account a functional point of view, where the language is presented as a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning, where it introduces a specification and organization of language teaching objectives and contents according to different categories based on meaning and function, and not as a classification of elements according to the structure and the grammar. The Notional Syllabuses elaborated by Wilkins (1976) is an endeavor to explain the different points implicated in this view of language because it not only introduces grammar and vocabulary about specific topics, it also includes notions and concepts needed to create meaningful communicative situations in the target language by the students. As Noonan (2004, p.1) stated "*Explicit grammar knowledge can foster the acquisition of implicit knowledge through noticing. Teachers can draw students' attention to certain language features of input through explicit instruction, increasing the frequency and perceptual salience of the structure, and/or designing tasks that require the students to notice a structure to complete it*". Hence, grammar is an important point of a foreign language, but in order to promote meaningful learning in the students, as teachers, we should promote this use in real situations.

In the next point of our Course Plan, Grading Criteria, we also had problems because we did not connect them with the stage´s aims, which is necessary because they will determine the teaching-learning-evaluation-grade process proposed to the students. We wrote about the idea in the document, but we decided to change the grading criteria established in the Aragonese Curriculum, so that they were non-curricular. Although, we have studied the different types of evaluation in a global way, their importance, their principal characteristics and their implication in the evaluation process, in the subject "*Procesos de Enseñanza-Aprendizaje*"; personally, I had doubts about this aspect, so it was a bit confusing in the Course Plan because we had the idea of relating them to the stage aims but in the end, we changed the grading criteria established by the Aragonese Curriculum so the result was not correct. It was in the second term of the Master Degree in Education in the subjects called "*Diseño, organización y Desarrollo de Actividades para el Aprendizaje de Inglés*" and "*Evaluación, Innovación Docente e Investigación Educativa en Inglés*" in a lesser degree, where I had the opportunity to learn what the evaluation really is. I was able to define the evaluation criteria and I discovered the importance of defining them in a clear way, if as a English teacher I want my teaching to be effective.

To elaborate the grading criteria connected with the stage´s aim, firstly, we needed to understand the meaning of Evaluation because it is a complicated concept which includes other aspects which are very important to understand the first meaning. As Stufflebeam (1985, p.175) said "*Evaluation is the systematic assessment of the worth or merit of some object" or "an evaluation process is an ongoing check on the implementation of a plan*".

Nowadays, analyzing all my experiences and knowledge acquired during this Master, I can affirm that an useful evaluation is one which establishes and permits students to know the objectives of the learning process from when they start to work on it. We cannot believe that assessment and evaluation work in different ways because both are part of the same process. As our teacher of the subject "*Diseño, Organización y Desarrollo de Actividades para el Aprendizaje de Inglés*" taught us, assessment is defined as the process of gathering data of what students are able to do, while evaluation is the process of collecting, analyzing and reflecting on the data. So, if we do not anticipate and elaborate a qualified and clever evaluation system, it is very difficult to check the evolution and the results of the students, verify and assess if the teaching promoted by the teacher has been effective and has developed the cooperative and collaborative learning, etc.

In relation to the last part of the Course Plan, we designed nine different learning units whose topics are very interesting and motivating for the students according to their level, age and likes. There are topics such as: friends, sports, cinema, hobbies, etc. which are stimulating for them, but at the same time we tried to chose others issues, more specifically about global learning, that they should know as for example health, story-telling or new technologies. Although in a general view the unit plans try to be as innovative as possible, we can find different aspects that could be improved. When we searched for exercises according to the different topics we selected those which were more curious and entertaining for the students such as: games, songs, debates, videos, etc. One of the most serious mistakes we have made, was not establishing a link between the topics of each learning unit. We can see a clear example at the beginning, while the first learning unit is entitled "Friends", the topic of the second learning unit is "About town" which have not got any relation between them. Besides, if we take into account what is said by Kumaravadivelu (1994, p.34) according to Ellis (1992) "yielding control over the topic is a way of tapping learners' intrinsic motivation, of ensuring an appropriate level of linguistic input, and of stimulating extensive and complex production on the part of the learner", it is very important to design the Course Plan in relation to a general topic according to the context. Analyzing the learning objectives of each learning unit, we had a serious error because some of them were formulated as contents and not as objectives. For example, in the first learning unit we proposed the following content as a learning objective:

- To know personality adjectives and hobbies, and use them in real contexts.

Or in the fourth unit "Prodigies":

- To know different body parts, and use them in real contexts.

But it is important to say that we classified and related all the learning objectives of each learning unit to their corresponding General Objectives established in the Aragonese Curriculum, giving a relation and an according justification. To elaborate and specify clear and specific aims will promote effective teaching, "students respond best when they know where they are going in a lesson and how they are going to get there" (Bult, 2006, p.34). Regarding this aspect, it is very important to emphasize that

due to our inexperience we elaborated several learning objectives for each learning unit, but we did not take into account if they covered the forty contents established by the Aragonese Curriculum for the Second grade of Compulsory Secondary Education. At the end of this Course Plan we only included close to twenty five contents.

Finally, I want to comment something about the resources selected. We searched on different web sites in order to select the best exercises and we also used materials from two different texts books. According to this aspect, we can find different points of view, in favor of and against, about the use of the textbook in the English lessons. On the one hand, Allweight (1981) affirms that textbooks are the most inflexible didactic resources, so they do not foment the competence "learn to learn", our students do not learn by themselves. The textbooks need to change their methodology and propose more attractive activities which develop the learning of the second language with real materials and in real contexts. On the other hand, O´Neill (1990), who is in favor of the textbooks´ uses, because they help students to review and study each lesson although they are not elaborated for a concrete context. Besides, the textbooks permit the teacher to readapt and improvise each activity to his principal purpose or aim, without lost time.

When we were designing the Course Plan and selecting the materials and the resources, my previous conceptions about the use of the textbooks in the English lesson changed. Probably, I was influenced by my previous learning as student, so, at the beginning of the Master Degree in Education I believed that the textbooks were indispensable in the acquisition of a second language. But now, I see them as another material used by the teacher in order to motivate and develop in the students different abilities and competences. Hence, in the Course Plan, we purposed the use of two different textbooks, several WebPages, different books, etc. because we understood the importance of selecting the materials and resources with good criteria according to the students´ level, needs, previous knowledge, etc. and not only to follow a specific textbook which can develop a lack of motivation in the learners.

3.1.3. Contribution of the Didactic Course Plan to my learning

As a final conclusion for this first work, I will reflect on the experiences, the skills and the educational knowledge acquired when I was working on the Course Plan. This final work was the most difficult of the Master because I did not have well-structured knowledge about it. But at the same time, it was the most helpful because it made me reflect on what I have learnt during the lessons and their elaboration. Also, I discovered new documents, such as ELP (English Language Portfolio) and the EPOSTL (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages) and analyzed others, like the Educative Law (Ley Órgánica de Educación 2/2006) and the Aragonese Curriculum, which are the most important documents to take into account during our continuous formation as teachers.

As it is said by EPOSTL (2007, p.20) "*Methodology may focus on how teachers can deal with the four main skills of speaking, writing, listening and reading*", so the design of this Didactic Course Plan helped me to select the best materials according to

four main skills. And as it is said by the Aragonese Curriculum according to the needs, interests, ages and learning level of the students. During the Teaching Practice periods in a real educative context and also in the different lesson of the Master, I discovered the importance of establishing a criteria which is something that all the teachers agreed on, in order to select the best materials according to the main purpose.

Finally, I have learnt how to design correctly a Course Plan taking into account the educative principles established by the Educative National Law and the Aragonese Curriculum for the Secondary Education (Order May 9, 2007), changing them according to the different educative contexts and learners. Also, I improved my knowledge about the Royal Decree 1631/2006, of December 29, where the minimum educational contents and objectives that the students should learn by in order to promote to the next grade are found. And I also learnt about the most important European documents such as ELP and CEFR, and the principles and skills which are explained in them to acquire a target language in a cooperative and collaborative way, promoting the communicative skills of the students. Hence, I discovered the importance of combining both documents, National and Autonomous, with the European certificates. Moreover, I learnt how important is to recognize the characteristics, the previous knowledge and the needs of the students before determining the aims, the competences and the contents that the teacher wants to achieve with the Course Plan, in order to develop competent teaching.

3.2. Learning Unit

In this second analysis, I am going to reflect on the design of my learning unit entitled "*The Incredible World*" and the influence that it had on my teaching experience. I had the wonderful opportunity of implementing it during my second Teaching Practice period at the High School "*Pilar Lorengar*". This final project is from a subject taken in the second term of the academic year called "*Diseño, Organización y Desarrollo de Actividades para el Aprendizaje de Inglés*". While I was designing and elaborating it, I was conscious of my evolution with regards to my previous knowledge and all the new concepts that I had consolidated and integrated, which allowed me to understand the purpose of this project well. From this experience, some concepts, principles and knowledge that were previously completely unknown to me, changed and became clearer and more evident.

- Definition

Before starting with the analysis of my Learning Unit, I consider it very important to understand the meaning of this concept. Regarding the theoretical background, we can find different meanings of it. According to Rivers (1981) and Ur (1996) a learning unit is the process of deciding, in advance, what and how to teach according to the aims of a specific unit. Taking into account syllabus and learner characteristics, good lesson planning promotes a clear progression of interrelated activities. Learning units range from detailed notes, with specified aims and descriptions of each stage, to a short

outline of activities. A plan is a teaching guide, not a blueprint to be followed slavishly; plans are often adapted according to what happens in class. A Spanish pedagogical writer, A. Escamilla (1993, p.39) proposed a complete and detailed definition of this concept, *"The Learning Unit is the way of planning the teaching-learning process according to a content or aim which come to be the integrated axle of the process giving it consistency and meaning. This way of arranging the knowledge and the previous experiences has to consider the diversity of the elements that contextualize the process (students´ level of development, the socio-cultural and familiar context, the Proyecto Curricular, the accessible resources, etc.) in order to regulate the practice of the contents, select the basic aims that students have to achieve, the methodological steps with which the teacher will work in the lesson, the previous teaching-learning experiences and the control mechanisms of the teaching-learning method required to improve this process"*.

It is very important to take into account both definitions before starting with the scheme of a Learning Unit because they guide the teachers in the process of language teaching. I decided to focus my learning unit on the methodology suggested and described by the Communicative Approach and the Task Based Model. The CLT was established during the 70s and in is mainly associated with British applied linguistics. In terms of syllabus, CLT is associated with the Council of Europe´s work and with the attempts to list language concepts and uses. In terms of methodology, it focuses on message-focus: the ability to understand and convey messages (Brumfit and Johnson 1979). This methodological approach promotes the important of using the foreign language with the employment of authentic materials and resources. In the same way, the Task Based Model is a syllabus that develops a specification of activities designed to engage learners in language-using work, usually without regard to the precise linguistic features such activities are likely to involve.

3.2.1. Preliminary period before designing the Learning Unit

In the second semester, thanks to the subject *"Diseño, Organización y Desarrollo de Actividades para el Aprendizaje de Inglés"*, I improved upon my previous knowledge and acquired new knowledge. This was very useful and indispensable in elaborating a correct design of a Learning Unit, such as: how to elaborate and design different resources, materials and activities taking into account the students' level and characteristics; how to integrate all the communicative and language skills according to the different kinds of activities; the importance of establishing a clear and complete evaluation and assessment system including all the educative components and the learning-teaching process (teachers, students, activities, methodology...), etc. In addition, each student had the opportunity to research and reflect on an interesting topic related to the language teaching with the objective of writing a final essay about it. In my case, it was an interesting activity because I got to investigate the correct use of the students´ mother tongue in the English lesson. These were some of my major fears: not knowing how to use it in several situations and forgetting the principal purpose of learning a foreign language. According to Atkinson (1987, p.241) "the mind of the learner as he or she enters the classroom is not a 'tabula rasa', highlighting the importance of using the mother tongue only for concrete intentions and at specific moments in the English lessons. So, this previous exercise helped me and allowed me to

investigate in depth one of the most important aspects in the process of language teaching for me.

3.2.2. Critical analysis and reflection on the Learning Unit

As I said before, regarding my Learning Unit, I am going to reflect on the design, the implementation and the final reflection on the improvement of my learning-teaching process. My Learning Unit entitled "*The Incredible World*" was designed for a group of twenty students from the Second grade of Compulsory Secondary Education, at the High School "*Pilar Lorengar*", located in a small neighborhood, in Zaragoza.

In most of the subjects, we have learnt different aspects about the Aragonese Curriculum (Orden de 9 de mayo de 2007) in the Secondary Education, so it was so easy for me to draft and complete the whole Learning Unit always taking into account the Aragonese Curriculum and establishing the connections between the most important principles established in it with the specific topic, contents, aims, competences, methodology, etc. of my Learning Unit. And also, adapting all of them to the specific educative context where I implemented and taught the unit.

During my Teaching Practice period, I taught English in a small class of only twenty students where all of them were very interested in learning English. It was very surprising for me to listen to four girls say that they wanted to be English teachers in the future. Hence, I had a great opportunity to implement my Learning Unit in a motivated group where learners loved showing their enthusiasm and participating actively in the all the communication activities.

Before choosing the topic and the design of the Learning Unit, I talked with my High School tutor in order to create a unit integrated into the Course Plan of the center including the grammatical points established by the textbook but changing the vocabulary and all the materials and activities. Finally, I created a Learning Unit according to the Course Plan, including new contents and also reviewing others that the learners had learnt during this academic year. The title of the Learning Unit is "*The incredible World*". Before choosing it, I took into account the students characteristics and likes in order to create an interesting unit to work on. Also, this topic helped me to review previous contents learnt by the students, such as: descriptions, physical characteristics, likes and dislikes, etc. For these reasons, I elaborated a dossier for each student where all the materials that they would needed while I was teaching them appeared.

This project was the most interesting and useful one elaborated in the Master Degree in Education because it gave us the opportunity to develop and elaborate all the materials and activities required for our Learning Unit. In my opinion it was the best way to improve and confirm our knowledge, make a judgment about the best activities according to the principal purpose of each lesson, and also to reflect on the importance of building a connection between all the lessons and the Learning Unit. For this reason, I would like to explain the most interesting and effective materials employed.

During the first Teaching Practice period I was able to assist in several English classrooms so I had an idea about the digital resources that I could use when I taught my Learning Unit. "*Pilar Lorengar*" High School foments the use of the ICTs in all the levels, so in all the classrooms there is a computer with internet access, a Digital Board, a projector, and also in few classrooms they have tablets. According to Dede (1998), all of these resources allow for the improvement of the learning of the students and permit the teachers to elaborate more motivating and efficient lessons. For that reason, the use of ICTs is a motivational tool in the educative contexts which enriches the teaching-learning process, increases the memory of the students and improves the understanding and the acquisition of the new knowledge. As future English teachers we need to make our teaching correspond to the new educative programs and methodologies. In the last years, internet has become the most interesting and powerful tool in social and academic contexts. So, the learners are constantly using new technologies to access social websites, films, blogs, websites, wikis, news, pictures, songs, etc. Due to this phenomenon, teachers need to include the new technologies in their lesson, taking into account the advantages and the disadvantages that their use can have in the students´ learning process. To incorporate the ICTs in the English lessons, opens to the students a wide range of possibilities because they can develop and improve their own learning, share with other students from all the parts of the world, use real materials, etc.

One of the most significant aspects of my Learning Unit is the use of authentic materials. The majority of the students have a lack of motivation in the English subject because they feel that the textbook does not bring them opportunities to learn the new language and to develop their communicative skills for real life situations. In general, all the English units have the same composition which is structured according to the topic of the unit and the grammatical point. As it is known, we learn our mother tongue by listening to daily life situations, and the same circumstances happen if we want to learn a new language in a meaningful way. If the teacher does not use authentic materials in his daily English lessons, and he only follows the textbook, the learners lose their motivation and interest in acquiring a second language because they do not see progress their learning process and they do not sense a real use of it. Some authors and specialists as Oura (2001) have investigated the benefits and the improvements in the learning process, of using authentic materials in the English lessons. Brinton (1991) affirmed that the use of authentic materials creates a special connection between the educative context and the real world. This association should be one of the principal aspects taken into account by the teachers in order to promote it in the lessons, which sometimes is forgotten. While I was designing and implementing my Learning Unit, I always thought about the principal purpose that I wanted to achieve with each activity. With each task that I designed I tried to establish a connection between the educational context and the real contents using several authentic materials and showing my students their application in a real communicative situation. To conclude with the use of authentic materials I want to mention that the use of these kind of resources creates the prefect connection among the task, the principles and the objectives established in the different curricular orders. With authentic materials learners see a future use of the task in their lives, so they pay more attention, enjoy the activities and develop meaningful learning. In order to promote the use of the real materials that we had used in the lessons, as a final project of my Learning Unit, students had to create an imaginary character and present it to the rest of the students. It was an innovative and motivating activity because they could feel that they were able to use the target language by

themselves in communicative situations and explain to the rest of the partners their own incredible character.

In order to create a Learning Unit which could be integrated in the Course Plan of the High School, I followed the principles, the general objectives for the course and took into account the specific needs of the students when I was designing all the activities, and more concretely, with the communicative activities. Regarding the principal aims established for this academic year, one of them was to improve students´ writing and speaking skills in the foreign language, so in each lesson I tried to improve them through speeches about their favorite heroes, the use of the new vocabulary and the grammatical structure learnt in order to write compositions about incredible characters or fantastic stories and present or relate them to the rest of the class, debates about Nessie´s existence in which each student had to express their opinion with arguments in favor of or against, etc.

Before starting with the design and development of the Learning Unit, following the advice of my teacher I elaborated a draft about the eight lessons, where I decided the subtopic of each lesson, which were always related to the general topic, the tasks and the skills developed in each one. This activity helped me a lot when I had to write up the learning objectives; decide the methodology for each activity; the interaction patterns (work in pairs/ small groups); and one of the most important things, the timing necessary for each part of the lesson, between other things. Once my teacher gave me the feedback I started to work on my learning unit assuredly.

In each lesson of my Learning Unit we can find at least one activity designed using authentic materials, for example, short stories about superheroes, songs, fragments of news programs, documentaries, etc. One of the most important aspects that I wanted to reflect in my Learning Unit was the importance of using "authentic materials" due to the their relevance and the advantages that they have in the learning process. Hence, an interesting authentic material is one that we can use in the English classroom with the students without making any changes to it. Although, I also elaborated other activities using adapted materials, for example, a reading activity in which I gave to the students a piece of paper with some lines from the story that they would read after, in order to develop their imagination and the use of the second language. The learners had to imagine how the story continued according to the short fragment that they had read and then explain to the rest of the class how the story that we were going to read would be. For the last lesson, I prepared two different kinds of cards, some with the names of different heroes and others with the names of their sidekicks, in order to create different couples in the classroom and prepare a global speech to review the vocabulary and the grammar learnt during the Learning Unit with a possible real communicative situation. Furthermore, to introduce the unit in a different way, I prepared a PowerPoint Presentation with some incredible characters in order to have an enjoyable first contact using their previous knowledge and developing their communicative and oral skills. When I was selecting all the resources and materials, I had a clear idea in my mind they should be varied, interesting, motivating and develop the communicative interactions among the students. So, I selected and exploited all the materials carefully taking into account their level of knowledge and likes in order to achieve meaningful learning.

As I have learnt since the first semester, it is very important to forget the traditional methodology of teaching grammar and introduce it in an implicitly and inductive way, as is said in the Aragonese Curriculum. According to it, I prepared different activities, for example: watching a short fragment from a news program and then elaborating sentences about it, in order to use the new grammatical point with the final purpose being to compare two different pictures of London. My role in the classroom was as a guide of the learning-process, solving some doubts about the grammatical structures, lexical doubts about the texts, doubts about the activity because perhaps one explanation was not enough, etc. When I was teaching my Learning Unit I tried to use the foreign language all the time but it was very difficult to maintain this idea in my mind when the doubts appeared because I felt the necessity to clarify and exemplify them perfectly in order for all the students to understand the concept, the grammar, the meaning or the purpose of the activity perfectly. Firstly, if they had a lexical doubt I gave them a synonym or I used gestures to explain to them, but the majority of the time they did not produce the desired result, and I could not avoid the quickest method, the translation.

In short, to conclude with the analysis of the activities and materials that compose the Learning Unit, I consider it very important to explain why I decided to propose several activities where the students had to work in pairs and in small groups to achieve the aim of the exercise.

According to Vygotsky (1978) and Coleman (1990), who are two of the most important researchers about the cooperative work, to work in pairs or in small groups improves the interaction among the students in the foreign language, so the knowledge is built and acquired during the interactions with others, they can learn together, using and expanding their knowledge about the new language and improving their communicative skills and abilities. Cooperative learning also develops three of the most important competences according to the Aragonese Curriculum, which are: learning to learn, personal initiative and autonomy and intercultural and civic competence. In addition, Vygotsky (1978) stated that the language is the most important instrument to enrich knowledge, expand the ability to reason and reinforce educative and constructive activities such as reading and writing. Thus, I created several activities where the interaction among the students was indispensable, such as: group conversation in which students had to explain their opinion about some superheroes; group conversation in which all together, teacher and students, talked about the influence of the superheroes in real life; or work in pairs where both members had to give their opinion and work collaboratively to create and present their own superhero. But, as teachers, it is necessary to focus on the most important aspects of it, which are the quality of the language input and the interaction. Before starting to promote the interaction among learners it is crucial to create a relaxed environment in the class, in which students are not worried about mistakes, and the most important thing is to participate actively in order to construct an interesting conversation using the language in a real context. The topic of the unit is very motivating for the students, so it helps the teacher to prepare communicative situations about others subtopics such as: Incredible Singers, fantastic stories, cultural myths, etc. As I mentioned before, my role during the implementation of the Learning Unit was as a guide of the learning process, but in order to promote the communicative situations as the CEFR (2001, p.144) established *"Teachers should*

realize that their actions, reflecting their attitudes and abilities, are a most important part of the environment for language learning/acquisition. They present role-models which students may follow in their future use of the language, and their practice as future teachers." So, in the talkative activities depending on the conditions, the students´ needs, and the objective of the exercise, I worked as a supervisor of the activity, as an arbitrator of the debate/conversation or as an assistant when it was necessary. According to the students´ roles, as Nunan said, it is very important to know the characteristics of the students and to give them roles according to it, "*it requires them to be adaptable, creative, inventive and most of all, independent*" (Nunan, 1989, p.81). This method helps to control the interactions in the big group and motivate the participation of all the members of the class. This kind of activity caused improvements in all the students, because while some of them started to use the language in a creative and spontaneous way, other learners found out new ways to use the English language in order to improve their previous knowledge. From the first lesson, they were very enthusiastic toward the new work form, and it worked perfectly. All of them participate actively, they enjoyed the learning process. I was able to observe it, in the final work in pairs, in which they had to describe and present an imaginary incredible character that they had elaborated at home; and also evaluate all the presentations in an objective way. All of them listened carefully, asked questions and took notes before deciding the final mark that they gave out each pair.

Finally, I want to comment on three relevant academic aspects, learning objectives, methodology, assessment and evaluation, because they are very important in the Learning Units and I had some problems with their elaboration. Regarding the learning objectives, there are some of them which are very long and can be divided into three or four different aims, for example:

-To use and classify phonological aspects correctly and properly (such as/d/, /t/and /id/) related to some regular verbs in the Past Simple , which appear in the song, according to their pronunciation in real communicative contexts, allowing them to express themselves comfortably and pleasantly for any potential speaker.

-To acquire, through the use of the foreign language, a global vision about the cultural and linguistic environment, taking into account their own learning and personal development, eliminating discrimination, linguistic and cultural stereotypes.

In order to design a complete and useful Learning Unit, the learning objectives should be clear, specific and connected to the activities. This is another problem that I had, because I did not establish a direct relationship between the learning objectives and the activities of the lesson. For example in the following case:

- To take notes about the most important and relevant information about Nessie´s video.

I focused extremely on the aim of the activity, forgetting the global idea that I wanted to teach to my students, which was to select the relevant information from some

videos. So, it is very important to propose less objectives for each lesson and write them in a specific way never focusing only on a concrete reading or a video.

According to the methodology employed in the Learning Unit, one of the most meaningful aspects is that it was designed in flexible way in order to take into account all the students´ necessities and the educative context. Although in the Learning Unit I tried to express all the principles established in the Aragonese Curriculum, for example:

-Learner responsibility for his own learning process is promoted. Cooperative and collaborative work as a tool for developing learner personality.

-Learner responsibility for his own learning process is promoted. Cooperative and collaborative work as a tool for developing learner personality.

-Methodology integrates formative evaluation, including reflection on individual and collective processes (adequacy of objectives, tasks, procedures, resources; difficulties, causes and strategies to tackle them; role of learners and of external factors) to contribute to improvement of the teaching and learning process).

With the methodology I tried to focus on cooperative learning (Kagan 1988) designing the majority of the activities in pairs or in groups. During the implementation of the Learning Unit I had the opportunity of employing and checking it, and I could almost not see any disadvantages. All the students worked perfectly, although if I created the groups, in some situations they were not satisfied, because they preferred to create the groups. If in the class there are different levels of knowledge, the teachers have to group the class according to the students´ levels of knowledge, in order to promote a "learning together" among the strongest students when mixed with the weakest. Especially at the end of the day, the use of this methodology created management problems, because students were tired and were not familiar with this kind of group. Closely related to the principles of the group in the work and the methodological aspect established in the Aragonese Curriculum, it is found that the Communicative Approach which was one of the most important approaches studied since the first months in the Master Degree in the subject "*Diseño Curricular de Lenguas Extranjeras*". As I have explained previously the Communicative Approach tries to develop the students´ Communicative Competence, which is the knowledge that enables someone to use a language effectively and their ability to actually use this knowledge for communication (Hymes 1972). This approach promotes the use of authentic materials, the creation of real communicative situations in an educative context, the meaningful and rich foreign language input, maintaining the real and cultural characteristics of the foreign language. I have tried to express all of them in my Learning Unit and throughout this final reflection. According to this approach Hymes (1966), established five sub-competences which are Grammatical Competence, Sociolinguistic Competence, Strategic Competence, Socio-Cultural Competence and Discourse Competence. But, some years later Canale and Swain (1980) introduced a new version about the relationship of the notion to other socially oriented theories; a balanced discussion of the implications of the notion for language teaching and testing. Having discounted any psycholinguistic component they presented a three-part

competence consisting of Grammatical Competence, Sociolinguist Competence and Strategic Competence further broken down into Socio-Cultural Competence and Discourse Competence. With this active methodology, and taking into account his competences, in the English lessons where the teacher uses it in a correct way, the interactions among the students and the collaborative and cooperative work will be employed in a meaningful way giving them fluency and accuracy in the acquisition of the English language. But, to get this objective it is indispensable to create a comfortable and peaceful educative context in which the teacher and the students can enrich and expand their autonomous learning strategies in order to improve their knowledge of the target language and the autonomous learning ability. When I taught the Learning Unit, from the first moment I tried to create a relaxing environment in the classroom, because I considered it essential to promote students´ confidence and security to increase their participation and interactions in the lessons. In my opinion, this is one of the most important things to take into account before starting to give a lesson. And, as the teacher of "*Diseño Curricular de Lenguas Extranjeras*" wrote on the blackboard the first day "Before teaching something, we need to meet our students." This is one of the most important aspects that I learnt in the Master and which I hope to improve upon with experience and I did not know how to reflect this neither in the Course Plan nor in the Learning Unit.

In relation to the assessment and evaluation of the Learning Unit, I designed a formative evaluation (Scriven 1967), selecting five evaluation criteria according to those established in the Aragonese Curriculum, but I did not adapt them to the Learning Unit purpose and the educative context. That is one of the most important aspects that I did not reflect in this point. I designed this kind of methodology in order to check if the students acquired the contents, the objectives and the skills of the learning unit. To do it, I used some main evaluation instruments in order to evaluate students´ progress such as: Teacher's daily notes (observing specific details of all the students), Teacher's observation rubric for spoken interaction in the oral exposition and a rubric for writing activities, teachers' feedback. and the final Exam.

According this definition, rubrics were the most useful instruments used, due to the fact that they showed students what they had to do in each activity and also helped me in order to mark in an objective way.

3.2.3. Contribution of the Learning Unit to my learning

In this last section of the Learning Unit´s analysis, I am going to reflect on the knowledge that I acquired thanks to its elaboration and implementation during the second Teaching Practice period in a High School.

Regarding the methodological characteristics used in the learning-teaching process, all the different aspects and principles which form a Learning Unit: the stage goals and the learning objectives, the contents, the skills, the evaluation criteria, etc. should be taken into account and modified according to the educational context and the individual students´ needs, in order to select the most appropriate methodology. Taking

all of them into account, I decided to focus the most part of the activities on a communicative purpose according to the learning outcomes of the Course Plan, their educational level and their aspirations. In addition, I learnt the importance of focusing all the elements according to the educational context, the long-term aims and the skills, in order to properly chose the topic of the unit according to the learners' level. And also, to establish correctly the learning objectives of the unit in relation to the activities. But the most important aspect I learnt was the use of authentic materials in order to motivate the learning process of my students because with them I can show a real use of the foreign language as a useful tool in a real context. In short, with the design of this Learning Unit I learnt the importance of the Communicative Approach (Richards and Rogers 1986) which in terms of methodology, the emphasis is placed on message-focus, on the ability to understand and convey messages; and the Task-Based syllabus, which consists of teaching a second language by designing specific activities to engage students in language-using work. (Candlin and Murphy 1987, and Nunan 1989)

Thanks to the design and the implementation of the Learning Unit, I understood the laborious work that it is to elaborate and design all the materials and activities, which takes a lot of time and a big effort from the teachers. But it is an important and necessary change, which brings the opportunity to create materials with a higher quality that are designed for a concrete context. This is a big change, which needed variations in the teaching process to make it possible. To elaborate the dossier of my learning unit, I spent a lot of time searching for the adequate materials, and also designing each activity in order to create a motivational Learning Unit where all the lessons were connected, in order to show the learners their progress in the learning process. Hence, after elaborating and teaching my Learning Unit, I can make a critical and objective evaluation about different materials, resources and activities according to the level, ages, likes, needs and interests of the students without forgetting the important use of authentic materials and the ICTs, which are two important tools to promote meaningful learning and motivation in the learners. About the lesson planning, I learnt the importance of creating a well structured lesson according to the Task-Based Model: Pre, While and Post Task, in which all the tasks try to engage learners in language-using work, relating all the tasks to a final purpose, in which students reviewed all the contents learnt during each lesson. On the other side, I had few problems according to the timing and the planning of some activities. But in general, I calculated good timing in relation to the task and the final purpose.

According to the teaching period, I learnt the importance of introducing each lesson with an attractive activity in order to catch the learners´ attention, where they would have to participate actively to obtain the new information through the interaction, as for example: brainstorming, PowerPoint presentations, videos, etc. Flexibility was always present in each lesson, although I had specific planning for each class, in case it was necessary due to external circumstances or because students were very interested in a specific activity, I adjusted the timing in order to respond to learners' interests and needs. An important aspect, I tried to express in the Learning Unit, is the connection among all the lessons, and also according to the learning objectives, the methodology and the skills, in order to show the learners their progress in the foreign language learning process.

Finally, I want to reflect on the most important aspects of the classroom management that I discovered and used during the implementation of my Learning Unit. Since the first moment, I saw the importance of taking into account my students' needs in each part of the lesson in order to adapt to different roles as monitor, guide, arbitrator, learning support... in order to increase the interaction among the students in the English lesson using the English language as much as possible. Although, at the beginning of the Teaching Practice period, I was worried about an excessive use of the mother tongue, in the end it was only a previous restlessness, which did not reflect the reality.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE

From my point of view, studying this Master Degree in Education has been the best way to complete and reflect on my previous university studies in Primary Education. Thanks to it I have learnt different aspects of English such as: phonetics and pronunciation, linguistics theories, rubrics assessment, etc. until now unknown to me, but which are very important elements in our future labor as English teachers. Every single subject has taught me different knowledge about the Educational System and the importance of educating. Although it has been a wonderful academic year, in different situations, I felt in need of more time because there are a large amount of important knowledge to acquire in only few months. Now, I understand the importance of knowing and understanding the educative process and system, perfectly. During this Master Degree in Education, as future English teachers, we have come to understand the principal idea f the teaching process from a theoretical and practical point of view, which said that a teacher not only has to teach and transmit knowledge to his students about his subject, but he also has to take into account how to do that, who will attend the lessons, and why he decided to teach and not others contents according to the students´ needs and interests about the learning process and the personal development. Nevertheless, all these perceptions were applied little by little during the three Teaching Practice periods, where we had the opportunity to implement the theoretical knowledge acquired in the different subjects, in real educative situations.

One of the most important things that motivated me to study this Master Degree in Education was the feeling of needing to know all the aspects related to the English language such as grammar, lexicon, Anglo-Saxon culture, literature, pronunciation, etc. So, this Master has helped me and has made me aware of knowledge, educational ideas and concepts that were in my mind and others that I have acquired during these nine months, but I never took into account before. Now all of them are very important aspects taken into account, considered and integrated during my Teaching Practice periods, particularly during the second one where I had the opportunity to implement my Learning Unit, and also I viewed the relation with the Course Plan of the High School, and in connection with my own Course Plan´s elaboration and errors made during its designing in the first semester.

Although at the beginning of this Master Degree in Education I thought that being a good teacher meant having lots of knowledge about grammar, lexical and

culture; after some months my perspective has changed a lot, and now I believe that two of the most important things to be a good teacher are: to know each student and to create an agreeable atmosphere in the classroom, before starting with the learning process, in order to be a model and not only just another teacher. Hence, to be a good teacher means more than explaining grammar or vocabulary, we also need to show and teach some skills and cultural values which will be very useful and helpful for the students in their future lives in our society which is changing constantly in the few decades. To achieve these purposes it is very important to increase the self confidence of each student driving out the tension in the class which will be possible only if the teacher feels comfortable and likes his labor. On the other side, thanks to the Master Degree in Education I learnt that defining a teacher is a difficult task because there are several important aspects that a education labor has to take into account before starting with the learning-teaching process such as: the planning, the reflection, the methodological adaptations, the process of learning centered around the students´ needs, the purpose of the teaching and the flexibility. According to them, I am going to elaborate my future proposal in relation to two aspects mentioned above, which are reflection and flexibility.

Since the first semester, I started to think about the importance of reflective teaching which is defined by Richards and Lockhart (1994, p.1) as "*teachers and student teachers collect data about teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching.*" This idea has been present during the entire Master but more concretely during the second and the third Teaching Practice periods where I really acquired it through the implementation of my Learning Unit entitled "*The Incredible World*", and I developed the reflection-in-action (during my teaching) in order to improve the learning process during the tasks, and also the reflection-on-action (before or after my teaching), which is defined by Zeichner and Liston (1996, p.1) as "*by critically examine my practical theories and by considering these theories in light of public academic theories*". In order to analyze the materials and my own teaching to improve them according to the educational context and the students´ needs in order to elaborate an investigation about my own Teaching Practice periods.

From my point of view, as a future teacher it is necessary to work on the reflexion about the teaching and the learning process in order to develop meaningful learning in the students, and also in order to improve each day as teacher. According to the previous reflections, my future proposal to improve the learning and teaching process is to use and elaborate observations tasks which help the teacher to assess his teaching process in order to improve it according to the different educational contexts, the principal aims of each activity and the students´ needs. As I have learnt during the second and the third Teaching Practice period, Somogyi-Toth (2012) proposed several observation tasks which are very useful to develop this future proposal. I used some of them in order to investigate and evaluate my teaching period and I could verify the advantages that they provide to improve the teaching in an objective way by analyzing real data and not only simple suppositions. It is for this reason why I would like to keep on researching and using them in my future labor.

My second future purpose is related to the flexibility which is established and presented by the Aragonese Curriculum. And also directly related to the previous concept analyzed, reflection, because both of them are directly joined with to Reflective Teaching and the Communicative Approach. One of the most important characteristics of the Aragonese Curriculum is that it is flexible and open, so as future teachers we need to reflect both distinctions in our teaching.

According to the flexibility of the Aragonese Curriculum, the importance that it gives to the communicative skills and the new methodologies proposed since the 70s, as I have said before, the Communicative Approach can be the best way to teach English in our society because it is the approach which best shows the importance and the utility of learning a second language if the teacher uses it in a correct way promoting real and interesting communicative situations according to the educative context and the students´ characteristics and needs. Hence, as Finney (2002, p.77) stated "*a communicative curriculum puts an emphasis on process and product as well as focusing on the learning itself and in the integration of the different aspects of the design process. So, the syllabus provides the framework, but learning ultimately depends on the interaction between the teacher and learners in the classroom, and on the teaching approaches, activities, materials and procedures employed by the teacher. (...) The emphasis is on using the language in stimulating communicative activities*".

From my point of view, as a future English teacher it is necessary to work on and to take into account the flexibility on which the Aragonese Curriculum is based and also which promotes the teaching-learning process of a second language in the Compulsory Secondary Education. Hence, before starting with the designing of a Course Plan, Learning Unit or only a concrete lesson, I will take into account the principles, the objectives, the contents, the methodology, the skills and the grading criteria established in it. And also, I will adequate them to the educational context, students´ previous knowledge, ages, characteristics and needs. Always creating a relation among all of them. As I have learnt during the Master, that is one of the most important and difficult tasks developed by teachers, which demands a lot of effort because in addition to taking into account the directives of the different educational laws, he also has to know each student, the context and the environment of the classroom and the necessary adaptations to elaborate a process of learning centered around the students´ needs. Due to all of these important and meaningful aspects I need to take into account their importance in the acquisition of a foreign language as a future English teacher I have a clear idea what that is before going to teach a lesson I need to have a clear organization of the lesson and a final purpose of it according to all the aforementioned aspects.

Both concept, reflection and flexibility, are closely related to the definition stated by Zeichner and Liston (1996, p.11) about what a reflective teacher and which I completely agree with and which I hope to represent one day, "*a reflective teacher examines and attempt to solve the dilemmas of classroom practice; he/she is aware of and questions the assumptions and values he or she brings to teaching; he/she is attentive to the institutional and cultural contexts in which he or she teachers; he/she tales part in curriculum development and he/she is involved in school change efforts and he/she takes responsibility for his or her own professional development*".

Although at the beginning of the year the organization of the Master was confusing, it has taught me essential knowledge to complete my education as a future teacher. I have completed and improved my previous perceptions about the field of Education and it also showed me the importance of teaching by vocation and not as something imposed since teaching is a labor with many difficult responsibilities which require a lot of effort but at the same time which is very rewarding. Besides, I had the opportunity of living together with other professional partners and to share experiences in a High School for almost three months, where I felt and understood the importance of the continuous training and learning in order to be a competent teacher. I understood the importance of research in the field of Education in order to improve the my own teaching practice too. Finally, after a long academic year full of interesting projects where I could express all the knowledge acquired in the different subjects coursed and thanks to the Teaching Practice periods where I could implement all the knowledge acquired inside the four walls of the classroom, I feel that I am ready to be a teacher but with the idea of continuous training always in my mind. Now starts a new period in which I hope to find an interesting job in order to improve my English as much as possible inside an Anglo-Saxon culture with the final purpose of being a teacher which transmits more than just grammatical and lexical contents.

5. WORKS CITED

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6. APPENDIX

6.1. Course Plan

Course Plan 2th Year of Secondary Education; Subject: 68515 "*Diseño Curricular de Lenguas Extranjeras*" (2013/2014); Teacher: Violeta Delgado Crespo. [pp. 1 - 30].

6.2. Learning Unit

Learning Unit: '*The Incredible World*'; 2th Year of Secondary Education, High School "*Pilar Lorengar*", Zaragoza; Subject: 68564 "*Diseño, Organización y Desarrollo de Actividades para el Aprendizaje de Inglés*" (2013/2014); Teachers: María José Luzón Marco and Enrique Lafuente Millán. [pp. 1 - 36].