

Título

LEARNING HOW TO BE A TEACHER WHILE TEACHING

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Course

Practicum IV

As the saying states “You don't know until you try”. So, the same happens to us, students of English teaching who have been studying and researching on didactics and pedagogy, students who know about teaching theories but who have lack of experience in a classroom. Our teaching experience actually began when we started facing the circumstances of being part of the school, of being an institutional agent who belongs to the school community, not only for teaching students a subject but for educating them from a holistic perspective.

This holistic perspective must be one of the characteristics of a new teacher, since each school is a different context with different needs, different populations with different issues which will be determining the situations that affect our students and our interventions in the classroom. Kumaravadivelu (2003) illustrates how new teachers must analyze the school context when he stated “Teachers need to have a holistic understanding of what happens in their classroom. They need to systematically observe their teaching, interpret their classroom events, evaluate their outcomes, identify problems, find solutions.” (2003, p. 2) Based on what we, as new teachers, observe in the school context where we develop our practicum, we start identifying the needs to respond as educators, which will affect the decisions we make and how the classes will be planned to have our students learning and motivated at the same time.

Anyway, it is not only motivating the students while we teach them. Our teaching interventions will be sometimes against students' comfort, as long as educators will exercise their authority in order to remove disruptive behaviors from the classroom, which affect a healthy learning environment for all the students. Nevertheless, these interventions must be respectful and effective at the same time; as it is proposed by what Freire called “*Problem-posing education*” (1972, p.) when he calls teachers to humanize pedagogy establishing a permanent relationship of dialogue with the students. What Freire (1972) actually suggested to

exercise teacher authority instead of authoritarianism, without the need of oppressing the student.

So far, it has been a love and hate relationship for me and my students while I learn how to be a teacher for them, in which I have been learning how to exercise authority in my interventions, as Freire previously suggested (1972). Coping with disruptive behaviors and exercising the authority in the classroom is one of these things teacher does not learn from theory; it is all about experience. When it comes to me, I execute authority from respect and proper communication, so when I face disruptive behaviors within and outside the classroom, my interventions are as respectful as I can be; however, some of these students do not react properly when you call their attention. Such situations led some students to try to generate a bad class environment in the classroom, like trying to ruin my classes. To cope with this kind of situations as a new teacher, Van Manem (1991) and his *pedagogical tact* recommend educators must have pedagogical influence on the students, and such influence occurs if the authority is exercised not from power but from love and affection. If authority is exercised from a respective approach, students will not be likely to confront the teacher, so they accepted the teacher as someone to respect as a person and as a teacher itself.

By considering the aforementioned recommendation, I started calling their attentions respectfully and without yelling or raising my voice, without justifying nor accepting disrespect to the someone in the classroom. Then, it was a matter of time for them to understand they were not ruining my classes; instead of it, they were ruining their classroom environment. It was a matter of making them realize their disruptive behaviors would not have a negative impact on me – such behaviors will affect their performance and their process in the school.

It is important to highlight how susceptible most of the students are, as it is illustrated in which what Claire Fox (2016) have called “Snowflake generation”, a term which refers to the young adults of the 2010s who are more likely to taking offense and less resilient than previous generations. Disruptive behaviors are a consequence of how conflictive students are and how they manage their emotions. By knowing our students and connecting with them, teachers are successfully responding to students and school’s needs, as Kumaravadivelu previously suggested as holistic understanding (2003). As a response to the way I approached the students, I consider they realized their disruptive behaviors are not only disrespecting me or any teacher in front of the classroom; they were disrespecting the whole classroom. Of course, teenagers are most of the time looking for the acceptance of their group, so respecting people was a key element of it. These students belong to a wealthy social class in most of them are having overprotective parents, who makes the students.

Concluding, first teaching experiences in a school require new teachers to observe the context they are working in, where the school is located, who the students are, who their parents are, what the school’s pedagogical approach is, among other factors which will help teachers to identify school needs. Teacher who know their school and their students are the ones who make better decisions about the course planning, and the ones who cope better with the disruptive behaviors, looking for conflict solving instead of punishing. Most of our students are part of the “snowflake generation” so teachers and parents are called to give young people enough tools for them to live, facing all the annoying circumstances that life will bring for them.

References

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