

**Title**

BELIEVE IN YOU AND DISCOVER YOUR PASSION

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**Course**

Practicum IV

Each of us was shaped by other people who in some way allowed us to have a vision of what we wanted to be later as professionals. Others as they sought answers about their future found their passion and there are those who are still beginning to discover themselves to know what to do later. Faced with this, I can say that I am in the group of those who, in the midst of so many uncertainties today, enjoy what they do, and I can sustain it with a lot of security because during my formative process I discovered how valuable and rewarding it can be the teaching profession.

Feeling comfortable with this work was not easy. Everything started when my mother decided to enroll me in the Higher Normal of Sincelejo to do my high school studies. During the last years I had a training based on certain pedagogical and investigative concepts that led the “normalista” student in the teaching profession. However, that was not my case, since I had not decided yet what to do with my professional future. As a result of various family circumstances and after finishing high school I started four semesters of pedagogical training to obtain the title of Normalista Superior. It was then that during the practices, the diploma of Action Research and the accompaniment of my advisers, my perception of the teaching profession changed. Being in a classroom allowed me to recognize my abilities to create a pleasant environment of mutual learning, and I say mutual because each day of practice became for me an opportunity to reflect and to achieve my purposes as a teacher in training.

Finishing my studies in the Program of Complementary Teaching was the door that opened in my life to enter the labor field. Because of economic situations, I had to move to the city of Medellin where I started working as a teacher of early childhood. It was two years that, despite being such an arduous job, my desire to be a teacher still persisted. During that time, I was still unclear on what to focus my university studies on, and in the meantime, I started an English course. In the place where I took my classes, I met a teacher who was a student of the English

Teaching at the Luis Amigó Catholic University. It was she who told me about her experience and how English had given her better job opportunities. Therefore, the desire to continue teaching was reaffirmed in the third year when I started working in a school located in the Santo Domingo Savio neighborhood, a sector where children are surrounded by social problems such as drug addiction and where they, unfortunately, suffer of abuse in their family. I remember very well that in this school I was hired for my studies done in the English institute to be the teacher in the area of Humanities and English as a Foreign Language from the third grade to the fifth grade. Hence, halfway through that year, I made the decision to enter the English Teaching at the Luis Amigó Catholic University.

Working for three years in this school allowed me to recognize one of the tasks of the teacher in the classroom, which is to ensure that the students have a motivation to go to school and learn even when the context in which they are immersed in shows them the other side of the society with which they have to face daily. I believe that teaching in an environment full of physical and verbal abuse makes you stronger and fills you with courage to show this population that there is an exit called dedication and effort with which you can break down the wall of failure and suffering. I used that same position to try and teach my students through activities where they could express what they felt and wanted for their lives.

Each day with them was a different experience. I remember a class of "My Favorite Hero" in which a fifth-grade student without fear of ridicule or rejection of his classmates showed an image of his mother expressing at the same time that she was his superhero for all the effort she made to get her children ahead and because she was always there for him whenever he needed her. To this day, I still remember how all his classmates were amazed when he finished his presentation they congratulated him with a strong applause while he went to his chair with a big smile to see the whole ovation of his classmates. In many occasions I had to seek

help from the principal due to the aggressive behaviors of some students. Even more, when I started the adaptation process with them because my way of managing the group was very passive and the vast majority tended to take advantage of that. Faced with this difficulty, I relied on the group management approaches of the theorist **J. S. Kounin (1970)** who posed five key aspects to keep students focused on learning and reduce disruption in the classroom. These include:

- **Worthiness.** *Communicating that you know what the students are doing and what is going on in the classroom.*
- **Overlapping.** *Attending to different events simultaneously, without being totally diverted by a disruption or other activity.*
- **Smoothness and momentum in lessons.** *Maintaining a brisk pace and giving continuous.*
- **Group alerting.** *Involving all the children in recitation tasks and keeping all students “alerted” to the task at hand.*
- **Stimulating seatwork.** *Providing seatwork activities that offer variety and challenge.*

Each of these aspects that I implemented simultaneously allowed me to attend to diverse situations in the classroom at the same time, along with other strategies such as the semaphore of the discipline and the doll of the word, because the vast majority did not respect their turn and the environment got tense when everyone wanted to give their opinion at the same time. One of the strategies that I used for a classroom management was cooperative work, with which I created groups that the students had a partner or several to support the performance in each of the activities to be executed. Cooperative learning groups are heterogeneous and with long-term stability. The purposes of the group are to provide the support, encouragement and assistance each member needs to

progress academically (attend class, complete all assignments, learn) and function effectively and productively (**Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2013**).

When it came time to do my practicum at the Santo Domingo school, the first thing that came to my mind was to hold a conversation club with the fifth-grade students in light of the difficulty that the vast majority of students presented when speaking in English. To carry it out, I had to inquire with the students what they liked to do or those things that caught their attention and could be learned in another language. I did not imagine that their reaction would be positive. They enjoyed each other's company and without fear of making mistakes they expressed their ideas or sometimes helped the partner to finish a sentence. As a teacher in training and a student of English Teaching, it is important to me that students feel comfortable speaking a Foreign Language because making mistakes is a tool to correct their errors and they should not feel afraid of it.

Following my previous experience, it is relevant to mention that during these last two years I have had the opportunity to be in two private schools where the strategies implemented with the students of the Santo Domingo neighborhood were also of great help in these new schools because it was essential to the principal to maintain a harmonious and calm school climate. Being in a different context has allowed me to recognize that regardless of the sector or socioeconomic stratum in which a school is located, students have the same needs in terms of lack of affection because in both contexts the vast majority do not live with their parents. In other cases, the parents work and the time to share afterwards is minimal, and in some cases many children go to bed and return to school without interacting with their parents.

Consequently, every experience I have had in the field of teaching reaffirms my passion and allows me to enjoy every day the teachings I receive from students and people who have worked many more years than me. Being a teacher requires

me to be clear about the reality of my students, to act in an empathetic and assertive way when interacting with them, to be aware of their learning needs in order to transmit knowledge objectively and the last and no less important is to listen to them. This is a practice that as a teacher has contributed to the reconstruction of my work and to recognize my strengths and weaknesses not only as a teacher but also as a human being.

## References

- Christopher Dunbar. (2004). Best Practices in Classroom Management. 2004, de Michigan State University.
- David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson. (2013). Cooperative Learning. 2013, de University of Minnesota