

Title

THANKS PRACTICUM!

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Program

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Course

Practicum IV

On this piece of writing you will experience how I ended up studying this wonderful career, how despite all the adversities and struggle have gave me strength to continue and finish it. How I have enjoyed this amazing voyage and how I have not regret not even a single second of experiencing this way of living, because you will realize that this is more than a regular profession, it is most beautiful one as there is not such feeling as the one of inspiring people to do, study, change, in whatever aspect you play in people's lives.

The idea of studying this program came out from the interest of improving my English as I was supposed to needed to learn economic sciences in USA. This journey began in 2008, while I was finishing my last year of high school, at nights I used to go and study an additional English course. It really opened my mind as I realized myself that learning English could actually be something doable for me, in contrast to how it looked like during elementary and at the beginning of high school. For that reason, I decided to continue studying this Academic Bachelor so I could actually continue equipping myself to set off. During first semester, it continued to seem easy as many of the subjects were familiar on what I have already went through in the other course. But, was during second semester that I absolutely fall in love with teaching and learning English, as I was advised by a professor to give advisory to brand new students in first semester because of my level and it definitively seduced me. Likewise, as perfect timing, my father started having some economic issues and he ended up telling me that my trip to USA to study economic sciences at least for the time being was not going to be possible. Thus, this reading has the purpose of narrating how this wonderful profession changed my life and has helped me modeling the person I am today.

My family context and close circle have not really influenced me too much as in my family for instance there are just two teachers, one cousin as a matter of fact is also finishing her bachelor in English. In the same vein, I have always wanted to do my best on whatever I do. Correspondingly, I put a lot of effort on improving my skills.

On the other hand, my close circle has changed a little bit as the older friends I had when I started this career in 2009 have pretty much lost contact with. Regarding, my current friends, none of them are teachers and on the contrary are studying economic sciences. Yet, finishing off with my family, their perception is that I have taken too long to finish this bachelor, and until certain extend they might be right as in fact by this time I should have actually ended my masters in Teaching English. However, because of economic situations I needed to start working, which in fact, my current job has to deal with teaching in a pretty dynamic and new way, and truly by reason of this terrific profession I would not be in the position I am today.

Getting back to my initial teaching, the first days were during second semester and they were really amazing. I used to give advisory to the new students and I remember practicing speaking with one girl who was fairly afraid on doing it. We started a plan with a slogan on "mistakes are welcome" and everything we talked was in English, it was a great experience because she improved her speaking skills tremendously, hence, it was the first rewarding feeling experienced, and I love that feeling that I wondered in fact at that time to keep building as many as I could. In a way, now I realized I had the first contact with the satisfactory feeling on witnessing somebody to learn-improve something you are teaching, explaining or even mentoring. Likewise, in the following semesters I started potentiating my strongest strength which was writing, we were being taught on how to write formally in English. At first, it was not easy, as the structure of writing in English is absolutely different than the way it is in Spanish. Fortunately, I had great teachers that found a way of explaining it didactically enough that I became good at it, in fact, I had the chance on getting high grades that helped me teaching some of my classmates at that time with their obstacles. Simultaneously, this was my second experience with teaching.

Moving on to my expectation for the practicum process, it really opened my mind as only during this process you get to know whether you are cut off to be a teacher or not. This is the opportunity to put in practice everything you have been learning

and preparing for, to challenge yourself against the adversities given on a daily basis during classrooms. Additional expectations were for instance to have the practicum on a regular school with more than 40 students, but it was different as I am having it on Ferrini school and there, the pedagogical model is distinct: The school manages CLEI programs and there are not more than 10 students per course. Similarly, something that shook me at first is that as I have been advised by the cooperative teacher, school pedagogy mechanism is to fill out a book that must be actually bought by students, in other words some sort of kits that contains not only the monthly payment students must contribute but the book to be worked out. Moreover, the classes are managed to revise the task assigned on the previous one and to develop the next unit ahead, poor explanation is provided to the students, nor supportive activities that might encourage students to engage on the learning process.

Furthermore the classes are held in Spanish, and attendance is the biggest issue in my opinion. Students hardly come to class and when they arrive to the next one there is not valid excuse as of the why they did not show up on the previous one. Thus, follow up on areas of opportunity to be worked and developed become harder to be resolved, speaking, listening and reading skills are almost absent of being worked, the most pedagogical tool used is the book that contains units to be filled out in which assignments are revised next class, but not fact finding is faced when tasks were not developed. However, and bearing in mind all previous difficulties, it was the thoughtful feeling you sense when a student thank you for what you just taught him, when you have the beautiful chance on observing them using and putting in practice that teaching topic that lead me to surf within the curriculum doing some things differently. I will narrate next a couple of instances I decided to change as something really did not feel right. In like manner, as far as I am concerned pedagogy is that basically it, being able to apply theory, practices that have worked previously as tools to overcome adversities while a successful learning process can be perceived.

Although I needed to follow the area plan with the guided book, I incorporated a more collaborative pedagogy “Virginia A. Woodward (November 1985), Language Arts Vol. 6 with the students. I started using more the board, posters along the classroom, video beam, as well as English laboratory, also, they needed to present lessons in front of their classmates. It was very spectacular to see the student’s faces when you were actually reading something to them in English, when they had to try on reading something they have never really tried before. To be able to measure their exams seeing their grades being better than before. Nonetheless, not everything happens as you expected, and during the same practicum you also realize that despite the planning you have done, there are certain circumstances in which just your common sense and instinct if you can call it that way will help deal with and of course overpass them. An illustration of this can be seen on Kumara post method 10 macro strategies, how maximizing learning opportunities can actually help you yielding better results, facilitating negotiated interaction when it comes about not translating all the time for instance, or fostering language awareness taking as an example English illustration and its need nowadays, showing the students what is in it for them while learning it “Kumaravadivelu. (1994). *Tesol Quarterly*. Spring: VOI 28”. In spite of anyone telling me this was wrong for me on changing it, there isn’t more rewarding feeling than a student telling you, “thank you teacher because now I am learning”. And because of that, I continue following the curriculum but using a didactic that is actually fun so they can learn every day.

Regarding my preparation for teaching, planning is really crucial in order to be able to follow a specific area plan, institutional PEI/project or even a simple lesson plan. The warm up for instance is linked with the way classes are welcomed, I tended to do it fun trying always to connect the students with previous lessons. That way, they stayed tuned during the beginning of the classes so they also remained engaged for the rest of it. It is not a secret that right at the very first class they can be feeling sleepy or for instance when they return from a break feeling on the contrary hyperactive. Thereby, it is relevant that you perceive how they are in order

to know what and most importantly how to act next. Besides planning, preparation is key to have a successful teaching process, because you can actually follow the planning through the area plan the coordinator or the curriculum provides but if you do not prepare yourself for a mere lesson plan, the planning overall falls. At the same time, it is really important to make sure every student meets the general objective of the unit by guarantying that the daily activities to reach the specific objectives are being carried out properly, and by this word I mean that pragmatically speaking, we as teachers not only focus on the theory to be taught but most importantly on the content in praxis itself. “Brodsky, G.: 1982, ‘Rorty’s Interpretation of Pragmatism’, Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society 18, 311–337”

To sum up, this reading intended to narrate how wonderful this profession is and how has changed my life modeling the person I am today. Also, I related where all this journey of teaching began, how my family and close circle has influenced my teaching. Moreover, I described how my initial teaching looked like, the expectations I had for my practicum, what were the adversities on it and most importantly the way I overcame them, too, last but not least the relevant roll planning and preparation have within teaching. In accordance with, I will like to end this narrative by thanking professor Cesar who has always been supportive and assertive on making sure us as students within this practicum really find ourselves the answers wondered in terms of do you really want to be a teacher? And how it looks like in reality? Bringing down to earth all the theory we have studied throughout the whole subjects. At least, speaking to myself that’s the ground I have gained through the practicum process and has helped me to take one of the more important decisions in my life.

References.

- “Virginia A. Woodward (November 1985), Language Arts Vol. 6
- “Kumaravadivelu. (1994). Tesol Quarterly. Spring: VOI 28””Brodsky, G.: 1982, ‘Rorty’s Interpretation of Pragmatism’, Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society 18, 311–337”