

THE IMPORTANCE OF A USEFUL LESSON PLAN TO TEACH AN
ENGLISH CLASS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

by

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THANKS TO GOD, MY FAMILY, MY UNIVERSITY AND MY FRIENDS; I
HAVE NOTHING TO PAY FOR EVERYTHING YOU MADE FOR ME

ABSTRACT

IN THE PROCESSES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE THERE ARE SOME VARIABLES SUCH AS METHODOLOGY THAT INFLUENCES THESE PROCESSES. INSIDE METHODOLOGY, THE LESSON PLANS ARE FOUND. THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY IS TO PROVIDE THE PRINCIPAL STAGES USED IN AN ENGLISH CLASS THAT SUIT THE NEEDS OF PRIMARY ENGLISH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS. BY MEANS OF DETAILED OBSERVATIONS AND THE APPLICATION OF AN INTERVIEW TO SOME TEACHERS THE DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE WAS DEVELOPED. THESE RESULTS SHOWED THAT MOST OF THE TEACHERS USED SOME STAGES TO DEVELOP THEIR CLASSES, THESE CLASSES HAVE ORGANIZATION, SEQUENCE AND AN EXCELLENT MANAGEMENT THAT IS REFLECTED ON THE STUDENT'S ATTENTION AND IN CONSEQUENCE THEIR EFFECTIVE LEARNING. A WELL STRUCTURED LESSON PLAN BRINGS THE TEACHER SECURITY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN THE TEACHING OF AN ENGLISH CLASS.

RESUMEN

EN EL PROCESO DE LA ENSEÑANZA-APRENDIZAJE DE UNA LENGUA EXTRANJERA, EXISTEN DIFERENTES VARIABLES COMO LA METODOLOGÍA. DENTRO DE LA METODOLOGÍA ESTÁN UBICADOS LOS PLANES DE CLASE. EL OBJETIVO DE ESTE TRABAJO ES OBTENER LOS DIFERENTES PASOS QUE SE UTILIZAN PARA DESARROLLAR UNA CLASE DE INGLES EN PRIMARIA. LA RECOLECCIÓN DE LA INFORMACIÓN SE LLEVÓ A CABO MEDIANTE DIFERENTES OBSERVACIONES Y UNA ENTREVISTA CUYOS RESULTADOS NOS MUESTRAN UN PLAN DE CLASE BIEN ESTABLECIDO Y SU INFLUENCIA DENTRO DEL SALÓN DE CLASE, YA QUE DE SU BUEN DESARROLLO DEPENDE LA MOTIVACIÓN Y EL EFECTIVO APRENDIZAJE DEL INGLES EN LOS ESTUDIANTES DE BÁSICA PRIMARIA.

CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM

In this chapter the bases of the research are presented, that is, the introduction and description of the problem, the respective delimitations including: terms, population and location, the objectives, the importance or significance of this study and the difficulties or limitations found; these aspects will provide a general idea of the development of this study.

Introduction to the Problem

English teachers in primary schools have to face the task of working in a new area in which there are few models and research studies.

Last semester and by means of some observations, it was possible to realize that teachers of this subject matter were not prepared to teach children, their classes were missing something, there was not concordance between lesson plan and its development inside the class. So, it was decided to focus this research study on this analysis.

It is important to show that lesson plans are very necessary in our teaching, we have to follow its objectives and carry them out. It does not mean that we have to follow the plan step by step, because the best teachers' quality is **CREATIVITY** which we have to develop when working with children; however, the lesson plan should be at least a guide for English classes for children.

Problematic Situation

With the new General Law of Education (1994) teachers have to teach English as an obligatory subject in the institutions. Then teachers had to confront a real problem,

because they were not prepared to do it. There is a gap in their methodology which has to deal with their low knowledge level. In recent observations a discrepancy between the lesson plan and its execution was noticed. The problem comes to class when the teacher goes away from the real theme, when he or she improvises the activities; and it is known that improvisation is a problem that influences on learning of any subject, more if it is English, where teachers must have a clear idea and dominion of the topic. The lesson plan helps not only to organize ideas but also the time, it can be well distributed according to the activities. Without a lesson plan some objectives are missed, the activities are forgotten and obviously the purpose of the class is not achieved.

Tentative Problem Statement

Is there a lesson plan that can be carried out according to the teacher and students' needs and expectations in teaching and learning English?.

Problem Analysis

In the study of teaching and learning English in primary school, there are some aspects such as: Teacher, students, methodology, material, motivation, atmosphere, quality of the mother language and the target language. The lesson plan which is the core of this study, was located inside the methodology . These variables determine the performance and learning of English. See figure 1.

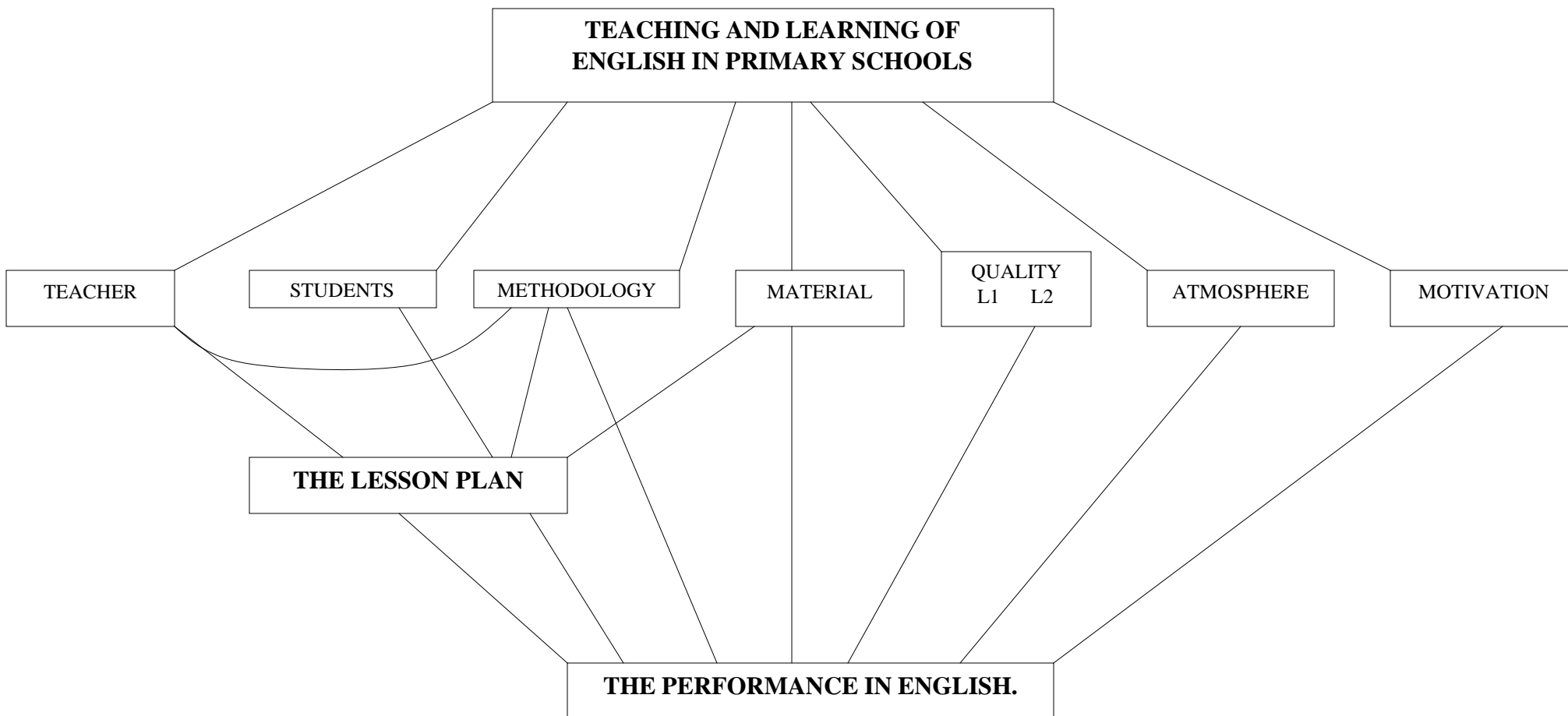


Figure 1. Aspects that influence on the performance in English in the process of teaching and learning this subject.

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As we can see in the model, two indirect aspects or variables are presented: The teacher has a big influence on the method, and of course, on the lesson plan because she/he has to achieve it. On the other hand, this material depends on the method to be used. It is important to say that the lesson plan could be a material because it is a tool used in order for people to learn in an organized way.

Problem Statement

The importance of a useful lesson plan to teach an English class in primary school.

Problem Evaluation

The lesson plan is an excellent tool to have in our daily work as teachers. This research study is a qualitative one, which consists on making a good description of this aspect. It tries to show us the importance of having a concordance between what we say and what we do in the classes. It also shows us if English teachers develop a lesson plan according to their expectations and overall the students' expectations. By means of observations, a real situation inside a classroom was researched; its development depends on the collaboration of the teachers to be observed and the institutions where they work. Time was agreed according to the necessities of the study and the schedule of the teachers; they provided the availability to carry out this study, including technical and human resources.

In this work all the ethical issues that people and institutions deserve were taken into account.

Delimitations

In delimitations, the concept of lesson plan, the population and location are defined.

Conceptual Delimitations

Lesson

It is a period of time when you learn or teach something (Oxford. Dictionary, 1997)

Plan

It is an idea or arrangement for doing or achieving something in the future; it can be a list, drawing or diagram that shows how something is going to be organized (Oxford. Dictionary, 1997)

Lesson Plan

It is a series of decisions made by the teacher, during and after the lesson, decisions about the activities to be included in order to know what the teacher should do in the development of the class. (Richards and Lockhart, 1994)

Population

The people entailed in this research are English teachers; they are three women and one man aged between 30 and 45 years old, they belong to a middle socioeconomic level or class. It is necessary to mention that the results of this research were drawn from their participation in the study.

Location

The institutions where this study took place are located in the south-west part of the city. They belong to a middle social class. They are surrounded by old buildings, although the locations of the school are practically new. Classrooms and playgrounds are big, and well-lighted.

Objectives

General Objective

To establish a plan of class that suits the needs of primary school English teachers and students by means of observations.

Specific Objectives

- To identify the different stages in a lesson with their respective lesson plan.
- To establish a comparison between an English class with a lesson plan and another one without it.
- To design a lesson plan.

Significance of the Study

The learning of English is a real necessity around the world because every place is influenced by the North-American culture, for its socioeconomic power and technology; so it is important to value studies that contribute to the learning of this language.

With the Colombian Law of Education that demands the implementation of English as a subject matter in all educational institutions, we have to face theoretical, methodological and overall practical problems. This research study is based on the practical problem where the lesson plan is located.

It is important for teachers to adopt a plan, when they have the responsibility to bring up a class. If they like to have order in their classes, if they want to achieve the purpose of the class, they should adopt a lesson plan without missing any of its steps. They have to realize that to follow a lesson plan does not mean inexperience, it means responsibility and organization.

Limitations

In this work some difficulties were found , but they were easily solved in the development of this study, although they are important to take into account:

Strikes were an obstacle because they did not permit to develop the practice and the corresponding data collection.

Another limitation was that teachers only prepared the lesson plan when they knew they were going to be observed.

Some difficulties were found in looking for the corresponding literature about this research problem.

The previous chapter was the presentation of the problem with all the characteristics to follow up the research; this problem is going to be supported with the respective literature, which is established in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter shows the importance of the literature review because it contextualizes the problem in order to present a theoretical framework of this study.

Research Context

There are a lot of theories that contribute to clarify the complicated aspect of learning the first language or mother tongue. Below, some of them will be presented and analyzed.

Learning the First Language

After reading about learning the first language (Bandura, 1961) the author of this research work can conclude the following statements about this theory.

The first language in children is presented as a necessity to establish communication with the people who are around, in that way the first language is a social factor; children depend on a big part of the environment where they are living for the acquisition of a determined language and the context in which it is used.

Children in their first months of life look for a way to be understood by their parents (or the person who takes care of them). They express their necessities to be satisfied. They accumulate and improve the mother tongue with the model of their parents; then children express their first words which are an important tool to get what they want, these words are going to be improved step by step. When children already have the typical structure model of their mother language, they are understood by any person in any context.

It is clear that the acquisition of the aspects mentioned above is influenced by the social context, and the innatism that exists in everybody. We were born with the

arrangement to learn and develop a determined language. Here the importance of the environment in which we have grown up during our first years of age is primary.

Another important aspect to take into account is the cognitive one. It has to do with the relationship between language and thought, so, people can reduce the variety of phenomena that occur in their surrounding, then they have the possibility to express themselves in a clear way to other people.

There are a lot of theories about the first language acquisition. The sociological theory suits the first language process by children. It argues that children, since they are babies, can catch and internalize the language, then they discover its rules.

Bandura (1961) affirms that:

- What children learn is the result of observation and imitation from a model
- Modeling has influence on the development of children in the social life.
- Children can not acquire their mother tongue in the absence of a model.
- When parents interact with their children, they model the speaking presenting well constructed expressions.
- Children infer about the use of language and its meaning without direct rewards.

According to Bandura (1961) children are able to process any kind of cognitive relation like the linguistic system: The specific properties from any language are not innate, so, the learning of the mother tongue depends on the environment and context in which children are developing.

Finally, we can say that every human being has the capacity and necessity to communicate in a good way. To achieve this communication, it is essential the interaction

with the surrounding people; it does not matter who they are, parents, uncles, friends; they give the model to the child and he or she follows it.

Learning a Second or Foreign Language

In the book “*HOW LANGUAGES ARE LEARNT*”, Lightbow and Spada (1993) establish that second language learners from different ages have different characteristics and access to different conditions of learning. In this book, four important theories of second language learning are presented:

Behaviourism: According to Lightbow and Spada (1993) “language development is described as the acquisition of a set of habits”.

These habits interfere with those needed for second language speech, and new habits must be formed; of course errors form part of this learning.

Cognitive theory: In this theory, the most important is the attention that the learner pays to some aspects of the language which they are trying to understand or produce. Through experience, and practice learners become able to communicate automatically. However, this theory can not predict what structures will be automatized through practice and what can be restructured because this is an incomplete theory without a linguistic framework. (Lightbow and Spada, 1993).

Creative Construction Theory: This theory is proposed by Stephen Krashen (1982) and cited by Lightbow and Spada (1993). He argues that learners try to construct internal representations of the second language (mental pictures); those representations are thought to develop in predictable stages to complete the second language system, so that this acquisition takes place internally while the learner reads and hears something and they do not need to speak or write in order to acquire it.

Krashen (1982) cited by Lightbow and Spada (1993) forms his “monitor model” with five central hypotheses which can explain the acquisition of a foreign language in a constructive way; they are:

1. The acquisition –learning hypothesis: It says that we acquire language as we engage in interacting with the second language; and we learn, in a process of study and attention to form an error correction. This could be done in formal language classrooms.

2. The monitor hypothesis: It says that the acquired system acts to initiate the speaker’s utterances. The learned system, on the other hand, acts only as a monitor, polishing what the acquired system has produced.

3. The natural order hypothesis: It states that we acquire the rules of a language in a predictable sequence.

4. The input hypothesis: According to Krashen, we acquire language in only one way: by receiving comprehensible input, that is, by understanding messages.

5. The affective filter hypotheses: It is an imaginary barrier which prevents learners from using input which is available in the environment.

The Second Language Interactionist View: According to Long (1985), cited by Lightbow and Spada (1993) “Modified interaction” refers to the modifications which take place in the conversations between native speakers and non-native speakers. This modified interaction must be necessary for seeing language acquisition.

Comparing L1 and L2 Acquisition

First of all, we have to know that first and second language acquisition have the same approaches: Phonology, grammar and the conceptual knowledge in children. Brown, G.

et al. (1992) establish that first and second language acquisition are the same processes but they have different expressions in development.

There is a big difference between biological and cognitive influences on the development of both languages, because the biological approach could be very important in the acquisition of the first language and the cognitive one could be important in the learning process of a second language. Every aspect is necessary in every case. In the acquisition of the first language in children most of the variance is left to the innate biological factors. The necessity of the cognitive intervention is in the development of semantics, even in innate meaning components, in the same way some cognitive reorganization is necessary to represent the syntactic system, although a great part of that structure is influenced by innate constructions. (Brown, G. et al, 1992)

Brown, G. et al. (1992) argue that for adults the cognitive aspect is more tied to the intentional learning which is apparent in the three aspects of the linguistic competence which are the syntax, semantics and phonology.

As a conclusion, first and second language acquisition follow similar processes, but they are very different in their own development, although when you want to learn something like a foreign language, your willingness plays an important role in getting it.

Teaching a Second or Foreign Language

According to Vanegas, L. and Zambrano, L. (1997) to have established the teaching of English as an obligatory subject in Colombia has been an important step to accede to other cultures and try to maintain a communication with the world in order to have good relationships which benefit our country.

One important tool to carry out this work is the methodology in context that the teacher uses to develop that teaching.

Some researcher-teachers have investigated some methods in the teaching of a foreign language. Guzman, N. and Insuasty, E. (2002) present us four known methods in their book and these are:

Total Physical Response: This method was developed by James Asher (1982) cited by Guzman, N and Insuasty, E. (2002) who center it in the following aspects:

1. Comprehension goes before production: Children first develop their hearing ability, then they develop their oral ability.
2. Comprehension is evident by means of the corporal movements: The hearing ability is acquired when the child is able to ask to some commands.
3. Delay of the oral production facilitates learning, because it reduces anxiety: When the child understands what he/she makes, then He/she speaks naturally .

Although this method is initially centered on the teacher, the method is going to become an interaction with students when they feel secure to speak and they interact with others. Correction of mistakes is flexible and indirect as in the learning of the first language.

Communicative Approach

The principal goal in this method is the acquisition of the communicative competence; this communicative competence has four sub-competences which are: The grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discursive competences.

One important feature of this approach is the integration of the four linguistic skills to get a real context that demonstrates the appropriate use of the language.

The communicative instruction is given with individual activities, then students participate in social activities and finally they share information. (Guzman, N. And Insuasty, E, 2002)

Natural Approach

In this method students develop the second language attending to the input, verifying hypotheses, and using this language through interaction.

The natural approach focuses on aspects like:

1. The silence period, which precedes the production of language, results in the learning of vocabulary and acquisition of new structures.
2. Teachers should attend the meaning of language before grammar.
3. Reading is important as a source of input.
4. Writing should be practiced in functional purposes.
5. Special materials are not necessary.

Krashen and Terrel (1983) cited by Guzman, N. and Insuasty, E. (2002) have pointed out that the natural approach was created to give learners some tools to exchange oral information. The responsibility to introduce vocabulary and concepts in the curriculum depends on the teacher.

The Whole Language Approach

Guzman, N. and Insasty, E (2002) argue that this approach is a good alternative to teaching the foreign language. The activities could be developed in both languages. If it is in English, the teacher could relate his speaking with some gestures or references. Communication facilitates the natural learning of this language. The learners process what they hear and they try to answer appropriately without being interrupted with

corrections from the teacher, although this method is focused on the four skills with a continuous guide from the teacher.

In this approach the students choose the material they need to assimilate the new language, in that way they are motivated and they point to the achievements to get.

The Teaching and Learning of English in Primary School

Bastidas (2002) establishes two points of view from different authors in his article about the usefulness of teaching English in primary school in our country. In this article he presents a positive and a negative argument. The first one is supported by some theories about the early years which are thought better to learn a foreign language; however, Bastidas thinks that old people could be good learners too if they want to learn, so it depends on their motivation. On the other hand, the negative point is supported with the theory that first language has to be learnt without distractions (second language).

According to the author the results of early research in second language acquisition showed that young learners learn languages better or more efficiently than older children or adults; some reasons to support this assumptions are:

- a. That the brain is more adaptable before puberty than later, and that acquisition of languages is possible without self consciousness at an early age.
- b. That children have fewer negative attitudes to foreign languages and cultures than adults and that consequently they are better motivated than adults.
- c. That children's language learning is more closely integrated with real communication because it depends more on the immediate physical environment than what adult language does.

- d. That children devote vast quantities of time to language learning, compared to adults, and they are better because they do more of this learning. (Brumfit, 1991 cited by Bastidas, 2002)

In the teaching and learning of English there are some factors which have an influence: Teacher's preparation, student's motivation, method used, etc. It is important to see that there is no sufficient material, research studies, or adequate methods in this field, because it is very different to teach children from teaching adults.

In the teaching and learning processes, teachers of primary school require a professional competence. Insuasty and Guzman (2002) establish this competence based on some foundations like:

1. Dominion of the foreign language.
2. Integral knowledge of children.
3. Actual conceptions about the nature of language and learning.
4. Pedagogical foundations.
5. Evaluation of process management.
6. Knowledge of ethical issues.

According to Schimek, F. And Prochazka, A. (1985) the teaching of English in Primary schools should: 1) motivate and encourage work with the new language and 2) initiate communicative abilities in that language. These two aims are closely connected and influence each other. Primary foreign language teaching should present that language in an enjoyable and relaxing atmosphere, give children a sense of joy in learning a second language and thus create a positive attitude toward the foreign language.

Genesee, F. (1994) has presented some steps or things that the teacher can take into consideration to help second language learners in their efforts to achieve linguistic and academic proficiency:

First, **examine and recognize your own perception and behaviors toward children from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.** The teacher should be a self-observer as well as an observer of the children in their classroom. Teachers should reflect on their own teaching practice, particularly with regard to the ways in which students from different linguistic and cultural groups interact.

Second, **teachers can make their classrooms authentic.** To establish the second language for authentic communication in the classroom will help to foster an atmosphere conducive to language development. It means that the foreign language will be used in meaningful and purposeful ways. It also means that activities will be planned that include listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Third, **integrate language teaching with content learning.** In a content-based foreign language learning model, the content provides both a “motivational and cognitive basis for language learning”.

Content objectives and language skills provide students with the opportunity to continue their academic growth while they are learning the foreign language. (Snow, Met, and Genesee, 1989)

Fourth, **realize that not all foreign language learners are alike.** Teachers must recognize that Linguistic minority children are different from one another. Children from a particular language and cultural group must also be seen as individuals as well as

members of that cultural group. The teacher can create classrooms that eliminate cultural barriers.

Finally, **find someone to help you acquire the skills and knowledge that will allow you to facilitate learning**. Teachers should talk with a colleague they respect who seems to have good success with students. It might be a source of inspiration and insight. Observe him or her, it is another way of learning.

It is a fact that many teachers are teaching in primary school even though they have not been trained for this level; or if they have been trained, there is a lack of material concerning this important area of teaching, so the importance of including some studies which contribute to do a good job in teaching children.

Lesson Planning

According to Richard and Lockhart (1994) lesson planning is a series of decisions made by the teacher in all the contexts of a class. These are about the activities the teacher uses in order to know what he is doing at the beginning, during, and at the end of the lesson.

Celce-Murcia, M. and Gorman T. (1979) affirm that the first step in lesson planning of an ESL class should be determined from essential background information such as: Who are your students?. How old are they?. What is their proficiency level?. How motivated are they?. Who is their regular teacher?. etc. This information influences on teacher's strategies and on the selection of materials to use in determined lessons.

Wendy A. Scott and Lizbeth H. Hytreberg (1998) affirm that all good teachers adapt their plans, and they know that they have to be prepared to supply emergencies.

Why good teachers plan their work?

1. Lesson plans make life much easier for the teacher in the classroom.
2. It saves time.
3. The teacher knows what he will need for each lesson.
4. The teacher can see how to balance his / her lessons.
5. The lesson plan gives the teacher security and confidence which is transmitted to students.
6. It allows the teacher to use a lot of energy and enthusiasm to enjoy what they do.
7. The teacher can sit back and observe what is going on instead of planning the next activity in his / her head.
8. Students realize how well-prepared the lessons are and they like it.

In an important article of the magazine “Hechos y proyecciones del Language” Bastidas (2002) establishes five phases in a lesson plan which should follow a sequence. However any lesson plan depends on the teacher’s methodology:

Introduction

This is an important stage because the teacher has to remember the last theme and present the new one. In this stage the principal psychological factor is *motivation*, that is known as a set of beliefs, values, affections and goals that a person has to do something. (Bastidas, 2002)

Presentation of the theme

The principal factor to take into account is the presentation and explanation of the new theme, the next phases depend on the comprehension of this one. The principal psychological factor is *attention*; here we can observe the importance of using good

materials because the teacher must explain the new topic in a clear, detailed, concise and pleasant way, so that students understand it.

According to Bastidas (2002) Attention is the human being capacity to concentrate on something during a specific time.

Practice of the theme

The importance of this stage is to guarantee that students understand the exercises they are going to do. The principal psychological factor to take into account is *memory*, because students can learn in a mechanical way or in a meaningful one. In the first case, students learn through exercises, such as: mechanical repetition, memorizing words and their respective translation, etc. Students learn in a meaningful way when the new knowledge is connected with the previous one.(Bastidas, 2002)

Application of the theme

This stage is focused on getting students to put in practice the presented themes; they are going to apply the new knowledge in real situations of communication. Here the psychological factor is *reason* because reasoning starts working when a person has to infer something that he does not know, when he gets the information he is able to look for solutions to a determined problematic situation.

Review of the theme

This stage is important because it guarantees the consolidation and knowledge of the new theme in all of the students.

Bastidas (2002) affirms that this stage allows the teacher to realize if the topic has been understood, or if there are doubts about it.

Reflection

When the teacher finishes the lesson plan he/she should give a self- evaluation of the lesson. This reflection helps us to improve or change our pedagogical strategies.

Finally, it is important to say that the previous steps of the lesson plan are essential to be taken into account. Teachers should not leave out one of these, because in a complete context, they guarantee the success of the lessons.

Another author who talks about lesson plans is Kennedy , F. (2003) who establishes a sample format of a lesson plan which has the following stages:

Goal (s)

The teacher should be able to identify an overall purpose or goal that she or he will attempt to accomplish by the end of the class period. This goal may be quite generalized, but it serves as a unifying theme for the teacher.

Objectives

It is very important to state explicitly what the teacher wants students to gain from the lesson. Try to avoid vague, unverifiable statements. In stating objectives we have to distinguish between “Terminal” and “Enabling” objectives. Terminal objectives are final learning outcomes that the teacher needs to measure and evaluate. Enabling objectives are interim steps that build upon each other and lead to a terminal objective.

Materials and Equipment

It refers to having all what the teacher needs ready for the smooth transition of the lesson, (tape-recorders, T.V , V.H.S, handouts, posters, etc).

Procedures

Here, lessons clearly have tremendous variations. But, as a very general set of guidelines for planning, the teacher might think in terms of making sure the plan includes:

- a. An opening statement or activity as a warm – up.
- b. A set of activities and techniques in which the teacher has considered appropriate proportions of time for:
 - Whole class work.
 - Small group and pair group.
 - Teacher talk.
 - Student talk
- c. Closure

Evaluation.

How can the teacher determine whether her/his objectives have been accomplished? Every lesson does not need to end with a quiz, nor does evaluation need to be a separate element of the lesson. But evaluation is an assessment, formal or informal, that the teacher makes after students have sufficient opportunities for learning, and without this component the teacher has no means for: (a) assessing the success of students, or (b) making adjustments in the lesson plan for the next day.

Extra-class work.

Sometimes misnamed “homework”, extra-class work needs to be planned carefully and communicated clearly to the students. The teacher can almost always find applications or extensions of classroom activities that will help students do some learning beyond the class hour.

Teacher evaluation.

This component is very important if the teacher wishes to improve professionally. She/he should reflect on her/his methodology, transition and pacing of lesson components, classroom administration, etc. Besides she/he should always be involved in Classroom Action Research and keep a diary of the teaching activities. The diary should be well organized and structured.

These two models of a lesson plan are complete and they present us the steps that an English teacher should follow to develop his/her classes, but they have to be analyzed in context and to see what steps are more useful to teach in primary school. This study shows the two models linked in one because one lesson plan has steps that the other does not have.

Related research

What are the stages that the English teachers usually follow in the development of their lessons?

Arteaga, L. and Cifuentes, C. (2002) based on classroom observations detected the missing of a real structure in an English lesson which causes some problems on the student's motivation, attention, and interest. Teachers did not use an appropriate technique in all their lessons; so the significance of this work was focused on the amount of learning when the teacher is attempting to organize and manage a lesson. We can find some difficulties presented in the lesson process and we can identify its stages.

The principal purpose of this study was to analyze how English lessons were organized and how the stages of a lesson were structured for a good development.

In the specific objectives Arteaga, L and Cifuentes, C.(2002) wanted to know what the teacher did in a complete lesson, They determined how English lessons were organized into sequences and finally they identified how long each phase of the class lasts, and how they advanced in each phase.

Results showed that most English teachers neither plan nor organize their English lessons. Results suggest that English lessons must be previously structured, planned and organized; besides, it would be better to develop more activities to catch and hold the students' attention, interest and motivation. A structured lesson and an appropriate development of activities are fundamental bases for reaching an effective teaching and learning process.

In this chapter the different processes in the teaching and learning of a foreign language including the lesson plan were analyzed. These aspects are based on a related literature which is going to be set on the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

In the previous chapter the literature review was presented in order to contextualize this study. Now in this chapter, the method to develop the research study together with the participants, procedure, sample, data analysis and the ethical issues is presented. These aspects are important to be known in order to understand the detailed method in this investigation.

Research design

This investigation is going to be a qualitative one. It is considered as an active process in which the researcher interacts with the subject being researched by means of observations and interviews. Researchers have to be prepared to describe and to understand the different phenomena, therefore the importance of observation.

Qualitative research is composed by a specific design: it is the ethnographic one which is based on the description of places, people and objects through analysis of the environment. About people, the ethnography study lets us examine their behavior, customs and ways of life; through the observation and description we can show other people those cultural aspects. The importance of ethnography is that the researcher is a participant observer by means of immersion in the group.

This kind of investigation was chosen because it permits the interaction with people. It lets the researcher participate in the institutions collaborating in some way in the process of learning English. The paper follows the steps that the qualitative research offers: the identification of the problem, and its corresponding description. Taking into

account some parameters, and the point of view of the author of this work the problem was analyzed.

Participants, setting and sample

These aspects are fundamental in qualitative and ethnographic research because the readers of this paper have to know in some way the people, places and sample entailed in this research.

Participants: For this research, a group of four teachers from four different schools from Pasto was selected. These institutions belong to a low social status, but it can be inferred that teachers are in a middle status. They are three women, and one man aged between 30 and 45 years old.

Setting: Three of the schools are public institutions, located in the South West part of the city . The neighborhoods located near these schools are very poor, they belong to a low social class. The characteristics of these schools are very similar, they have big buildings, wide, colorful and clear playgrounds, their classrooms are lighted, they have lots of pictures and they are roomy, but the number of students is very high so these places seem to be small.

One of the institutions is private, it offers primary and secondary education, the number of students is smaller than in the public institutions, there are classes with 15 or 20 students. Teachers have access to all of the resources that the institution offers.

Sample

These institutions were chosen because some observations of English classes were developed there, and the presence of some problems that needed to be observed and described were noticed. Four teachers who represent other teachers from the city were

chosen. The results of this research were obtained by means of the collaboration of these teachers.

Procedure

First, permission was asked in the institutions. Different schedules were used to develop the observations.

Participation in the English classes was the first stage. Notes were taken about the different lesson plans, their steps, the activities, etc. but emphasizing every observation in the way the teacher carries them out. A comparison between two classes were done: one in which the lesson plan was carried out, with another one in which the teacher did not introduce this technique; then the differences were pointed out.

Two classes were observed in different days, but with the same teacher, one class with all the steps of a determined lesson plan and the second class without it. Then the conclusions of this phase were drawn.

Finally, a lesson plan was adopted with all the steps and characteristics to teach an English class in primary school. It was explained to every teacher of the institutions where the research was developed. It was the way to thank the teachers for their help.

Factors

The teaching and learning of English in primary school is the general study in which this work was developed; there are some aspects that have a great influence on the process of teaching and learning . Methodology is one of these aspects and it is composed of some factors, among them, the lesson plan and it is considered as a necessary tool in the teaching of any subject to get better results in this process.

Data collection

In this paper the necessary information was collected to get a clear idea of this investigation, by different means such as: observations, interviews, books and readings about the theme.

Triangulation

Triangulation is used to get more validity, so this research study was focused from different angles or points of view, some techniques were used such as observations, in which the real work in the English classes was seen, with books and readings about the theme that give the necessary information about the investigation and finally with participants who gave their points of view and their opinions, so they could collaborate in the development of this study.

Pilot study

The pilot study is a good way to identify possible difficulties, it guarantees the exact or objective data collection process. In this stage an English class was observed and analyzed, although the teacher did not have a written lesson plan, she said she had a mental plan to follow in class.

Observation

The teacher began his class by greeting her students; then she asked the children to sing a song about the body parts; the teacher continued with a game called “Simon says” but the teacher only made children touch their body parts; continuing with the class she reminded the parts of the body, then she made an activity of drawing and writing the most important parts of the body. The teacher evaluated her students with an oral test which consisted in going to the front of the class and children had to say their body parts.

Finally, the teacher drew a crossword on the board and children had to draw it in their notebooks to be developed at home.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data was taken into account as a result of the observations and interviews, which were analyzed, ranked and interpreted according to Bastidas (2002) analysis model.

Bastidas (2002) proposes an analysis of the information joined to the corresponding data collection. It lets the researcher make a spiral, because he/she takes the information, analyzes it, and if there are some doubts he/she should focus on the research and he/she has to repeat the procedure. Bastidas proposes some steps to analyze the collected information: Data organization, the generation of some categories, themes or patterns, the analysis of the emergent hypotheses, the interpretation of the information and, finally, the writing of the results. This is a systematic and ordered process which lets the researcher have an excellent management of the collected data.

Ethical Issues

The Principals of the schools were requested for permission to carry out the observations.

Teachers participation was voluntary, so they could leave the research whenever they wanted.

This research study avoided any physical or psychological damage against teachers, students and institutions.

In the same way the people entailed in this paper could have anonymity if they wanted, although it was not the case; but confidentiality was respected to prevent any kind of problem.

To be grateful with the institutions, a lesson plan was reported to the teachers, based on the importance to implement this technique in their respective schools.

In this chapter the design that was applied in the institutions, during the research has been included. The characteristics of participants, which are significant in a research problem where qualitative features are involved were presented. At the end, we could find the procedure of this research with all its characteristics.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains the results obtained through the continuous observations in four institutions of primary education and one interview applied to the teachers in charge of the English lessons in these schools.

These results were analyzed according to the main objective of this research which is to establish a lesson plan that suits the needs of primary school English teachers and students. The specific objectives are presented in the development of this analysis, through observations the different stages of a lesson plan were identified, its importance into the class, and a lesson plan with steps or stages was designed.

About lesson plans there were a lot of them which can help us to analyze what the teachers presented in their classes, but there is no one which could be used in primary school. Two lesson plans that help achieving the main objective in this research were chosen: the ones presented by Bastidas (2002) and Kennedy (2003) with similar propositions but some differences, too.

An organization was needed to develop this analysis, which consists of the following steps:

- To select the most representative observations.
- To analyze the different stages that teachers present in their classes according to the lesson plans presented by Bastidas (2002) and Kennedy (2003) with similar propositions but some differences, too.
- To group the answers of the interview.
- To analyze these answers.

- To compare a class with the stages of its respective lesson plan with another class without these stages.
- To analyze this comparison.
- Presentation of the obtained lesson plan.(Pedagogical proposal)

Observations

The observations were chosen according to the observational register (see annex 1); they were selected because they are the most complete and representative proof of the observations.

The observed classes were divided into the stages they were developed, then their corresponding analysis.

Motivation

Colegio Militar Colombia

Teacher: A

Course: 1st.

Date: March 19th 2003.

Time: 7:50 – 8:40

The teacher began the class with a song which was about the body parts.

Then she greeted her students, and she asked how they were.

Then the teacher made her children play “Simon says” (touching their body parts)

Concentración Escolar La Rosa

Teacher: B

Course: 5th

Date: March 31st 2003

Time: 7:30 – 8:30

The teacher greeted the students.

Then she made the students pray.

Then she began giving the students some commands, while she used the command she made a contest or a competition. All the students had to follow some commands and the one who lost the game had to pay a penalty.

Instituto Agustín Nieto Caballero

Teacher: C

Course: 4th

Date: April 4th 2003

Time: 8:30 – 9:15

The teacher greeted the students.

Then the students began singing the last song they had learnt which was “We all are different”.

- In the three schools the teachers presented a stage of introduction as Bastidas (2002) determines or an opening statement as Kennedy (2003) establishes in Procedures. As seen in the observations the teachers develop activities in which their students get involved in the class and participate without problem.

Recapitulation of the last theme

Colegio Militar Colombia

Teacher: A

Course: 1st.

Date: March 19th 2003.

Time: 7:50 – 8:40

The teacher reminded the parts of the body that children had learnt in the last class, while she was repeating these words she pointed at her body parts.

Concentración Escolar La Rosa

Teacher: B

Course: 5th

Date: March 31st 2003

Time: 7:30 – 8:30

To remember the last class the teacher asked her students to go to the front of the class to speak about their family, telling the names of the family members they had learnt before.

Instituto Agustín Nieto Caballero

Teacher: C

Course: 4th

Date: April 4th 2003

Time: 8:30 – 9:15

When the students were singing the teacher wrote some opposites on the board, these opposites were in the song and the teacher told his students that these words were the opposites to the synonyms that they had studied in a previous class. The teacher reminded the students that the opposites were the antonyms in Spanish.

- All the teachers used a stage in which they reminded their students the last theme they had studied. This stage was not found in the two proposed lesson plans, but it is important in the sequence that one class has with the following one, in the development of the themes, and specially because some students reinforce the theme of the last class.

Presentation of the new theme

Colegio Militar Colombia

Teacher: A

Course: 1st.

Date: March 19th 2003.

Time: 7:50 – 8:40

To continue with the class, the teacher drew a boy on the board and she wrote the parts like: head, shoulders, arms, legs, knees, feet and toes; the children had learnt these parts orally but they did not know how to write them.

Then the teacher wrote the parts of the head.

Concentración Escolar La Rosa

Teacher: B

Course: 5th

Date: March 31st 2003

Time: 7:30 – 8:30

The teacher wrote some words related to the family on the board, then the teacher asked her students to look for the meaning of these words in their dictionaries.

Instituto Agustín Nieto Caballero

Teacher: C

Course: 4th

Date: April 4th 2003

Time: 8:30 – 9:15

The teacher made his students open their books to page 68 where they read the instructions “Look and read”. The reading was about hobbies, and the teacher began to read it.

- The teachers presented the new theme in different ways, they used some activities in which the students could deduce that theme. Bastidas (2002) explains that in this stage the principal factor to be taken into account is the presentation and explanation of the new theme, here the importance of using good material which catches the attention of the students.

Development of the theme

Colegio Militar Colombia

Teacher: A

Course: 1st.

Date: March 19th 2003.

Time: 7:50 – 8:40

When the teacher wrote on the board the parts of the head, she made her students repeat these words but touching their own parts, then children had to write them in their notebooks.

Concentración Escolar La Rosa

Teacher: B

Course: 5th

Date: March 31st 2003

Time: 7:30 – 8:30

When the teacher wrote the names of other family members, she made her students look up the meaning of these words in their dictionaries, these words were: mother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law etc; and some students did not find those meanings in their dictionaries although some others found the meaning of “in law”.(en ley) The students deduced that meaning with all the family names they had, but the teacher explained that it means “suegra”, “cuñada”, “nuera” etc. When the students knew the meanings they wrote them in their notebooks.

Instituto Agustín Nieto Caballero

Teacher: C

Course: 4th

Date: April 4th 2003

Time: 8:30 – 9:15

When the teacher had finished his reading he asked the students to do the same one by one. Then the teacher asked his students about their hobbies and they gave answers such as: To watch T.V, to listen to music, to go to the park, etc.

- The teachers presented the development of the theme in which they included the activities they had prepared for the class. Kennedy (2003) presents this stage as a set of activities and techniques in which the teacher has considered appropriate

proportions of time for class work, small group and pair work, teacher talk or student talk. The most used activities by teachers in this phase are repetition, translation, meaning of unknown words, picture descriptions, readings and dialogues.

Evaluation

Colegio Militar Colombia

Teacher: A

Course: 1st.

Date: March 19th 2003.

Time: 7:50 – 8:40

The teacher made her students go to the front of the class where they had to say the parts of the body, they had to point at them and she graded the pronunciation and memory while she realized if children had learnt the theme.

Children had to say: My head, my eyes, my nose, my mouth, my arms, my hands, my legs and my feet.

Concentración Escolar La Rosa

Teacher: B

Course: 5th

Date: March 31st 2003

Time: 7:30 – 8:30

When the students had written the new words, they had to make a role play where they had to represent all the family members they knew. The teacher divided her students

in four groups and one student had to present his or her family while every one of them said his or her name and the place he or she occupied inside the family.

Instituto Agustín Nieto Caballero

Teacher: C

Course: 4th

Date: April 4th 2003

Time: 8:30 – 9:15

Teacher C said he did not evaluate his students every class, but he took into account motivation, participation, and development of activities inside the classroom.

- As noticed, in this stage, two of the teachers evaluated their students. This stage is considered in the “review of the theme” by Bastidas (2002) and the evaluation where Kennedy (2003) affirms that the teacher in this stage determines if her/his objectives have been accomplished. One of the teachers thought that it is one of the most important stages in the lesson plan because she realized the understanding of her students

Homework

Colegio Militar Colombia

Teacher: A

Course: 1st.

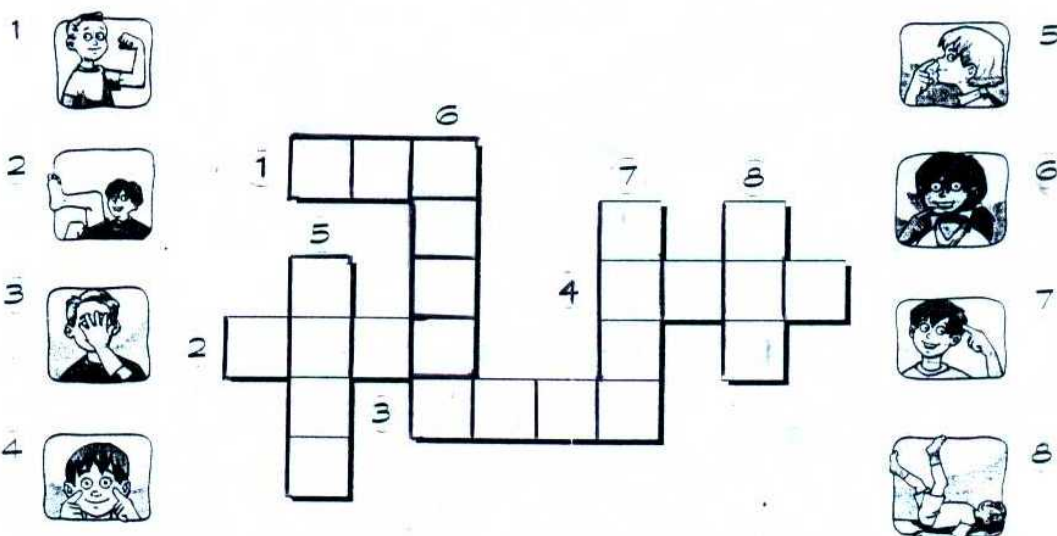
Date: March 19th 2003.

Time: 7:50 – 8:40

When the teacher had graded her students, she presented the following activity that they had to develop at home.

1. LOOK AND COMPLETE

1 Look and complete.



Concentración Escolar La Rosa

Teacher: B

Course: 5th

Date: March 31st 2003

Time: 7:30 – 8:30

The teacher B did not give students any homework in this class because the time was over, but she usually gives a homework or a research task to her students.

Instituto Agustín Nieto Caballero

Teacher: C

Course: 4th

Date: April 4th 2003

Time: 8:30 – 9:15

When every student had spoken about their hobbies they had to draw their favorite one, but they did not finish the activity so the teacher asked them to finish it at home.

- Finally, at the end of the class, two of the teachers gave their students a homework to which Kennedy (2003) gives the name of Extra-class work referring to the activities that will help students do some learning beyond the class hour. In other observations most of the teachers gave their students a homework; one of them affirmed : “Homework is the way to complement and reinforce the theme”.

Reflection

At the end of the class, the two proposed lesson plans presented a last stage that is called “Reflection” by Bastidas (2002). In this stage the teacher should implement a self-evaluation of the lesson, which helps the teacher to improve or change his/her pedagogical strategies. Kennedy (2003) proposes the Teacher evaluation stage which is important for the improvement of the teacher’s profession.

About this stage teachers agreed in determining that it helps them to analyze the motivation of the students, their participation during the class, the development of the different activities and their results. They thought that this last stage is important to omit some things or continue with other ones.

Comparison

When the observation was done it was possible to notice that one of the teachers involved in this research did not use a lesson plan. One of the teachers did not follow some steps to develop her classes which was useful to compare with a teacher who followed the complete steps.

Observation of the class with the lesson plan

Colegio Militar Colombia

Teacher: A

Course: 1st

Date: April 7th 2003

Time: 7:50-8:40

Motivation

The teacher greeted her students, she made them pray, then she gave them two commands (sit down – stand up) while they were smiling and enjoying the game.

Presentation of the new theme

The teacher called two students to the front of the class, she took the first one and she said “**He is short**”, then she took the second boy and she said “**He is tall**”. In that moment the rest of children shouted “**Uno es grande y otro pequeño**”. Then the teacher called eight students from different sizes, she took one couple and she asked her students “**Who is short?**” and the students answered “**David is short**”; then the teacher asked “**Who is tall?**” and the students answered “**Jose Manuel is tall**”. The teacher finished the activity with the four couples of students.

Development of the theme

Continuing with the activities teacher B made her students open their notebooks where they had to draw two different boys, one should be tall and the other one short. When children had finished their drawings they had to write “Omar is short” and “Alvaro is tall”.

Evaluation

Because children did not finish the activity, the teacher told them “**You have to finish right now, because I will pick up your notebooks to grade the drawings and the sentences**”. So, while children were finishing their task they were showing it to their teacher for getting the grade.

Homework

While the teacher was grading her students she wrote a homework in their notebooks, this homework consisted in sticking two objects of different sizes.

Reflection

At the end of the class the teacher asked the author of this research for her opinion about the class, she told her that she was impressed with the motivation and the activities that she used in a short time; teacher B explained that children in this course were so young that she had to change activities very frequently.

Observation of the class without the lesson plan

Escuela Nro. 5 El Carmen J. M.

Teacher: D

Course: 2nd

Date: March 31 2003

Time: 9:00 – 9:45

The teacher greeted her students, she told them “Hoy vamos a estudiar los días de la semana”, and she began saying the days of the week with a bad pronunciation, then the students had to repeat with the teacher, (they repeated with the same bad pronunciation) in this moment some students were playing with some cards but the teacher did not notice it.

When they had repeated the days of the week for four times, the teacher wrote the names on the board and she made her students repeat individually, while some students were studying the pronunciation, others were bothering, speaking or arguing in a low voice, so the teacher did not realize the situation.

When every student of the class had finished the activity they had to write the days of the week in a complete page of their notebooks; in that moment the teacher went out of the class and most of the children began to shout and play all over the classroom.

Ten minutes later, the teacher entered to the class and she told her students that they had to finish the activity at home because it was the time of the break.

- As it can be noticed in the previous description, it is difficult to deduce some of the stages presented in the other observations, but this one helps us to analyze the students' behavior. When the teacher is not prepared and her classes do not have a structure, the students notice the improvisation, the teacher has not dominion of the class and she thinks of the activity to present while children lose the contact with the topic and they get easily distracted.

The interview

In the interview with teachers, questions and answers were analyzed. The purpose of this interview is to inquire the information about lesson planning in a disguised way because it was thought that teachers could lie about the given information when they were asked about their classes, their preparation and their planning. Here is the interview with the answers and their respective analysis.

1. Do you think that you have a good development of your classes?. Yes, No, Why?.

Two of the teachers answered yes. They thought that it was because they used different activities that motivated their students, the dynamism they put to teach their classes motivates the students to learn English.

One teacher answered **“Yo pienso que falta mejorar más, aprender más, en algunas clases me va bien, en otras no”**

“I think my classes are missing something, I have to learn and improve very much in my classes”.

According to the observations it could be said that these three teachers had an excellent development of their classes, because they use a variety of activities that follow a sequence, these activities involve their students knowledge by means of songs, contests, drawings, role play etc.

2. Do you finish all the activities that you plan to make in the class?

One of the teachers affirmed **“Planning is only a guide to teach my class but in most of the cases the activities could change because children sometimes propose the activities and we as teachers have to be flexible”**.

To this question the three teachers said that they generally did not finish the activities they had prepared, because they had some difficulties in the class such as time, motivation of the students and so on. They had to repeat something, or simply they had to change activities because their students asked for other different activities.

3. Do you follow some steps to develop these activities?. If so, Which are they?

The three teachers answered “yes” to this question, they agreed on some of the steps they develop such as 1) Motivation, 2) Recapitulation of the last theme, 3) Presentation of the new theme, 4) Development of the theme, 5) Evaluation, and 6) Homework.

The stages that the teachers present are easily proved in the observations when the teachers change the activities.

4. Which of these steps do you think is the most important one?

To this question two teachers agreed that Motivation is the most important stage; one of the teachers said **“when the students are motivated they want to learn, so motivation has to be in accordance with the theme to develop”**.

Another teacher said **“La motivación es muy importante porque uno debe dar confianza a los estudiantes desde un principio”**.

“Motivation is very important because it gives the students a lot of confidence at the beginning of the class”.

The last teacher answered **“The most important of the stages is the recapitulation of the last theme, because in this stage I can realize if my students have learnt the last theme to follow with another one”**.

When the time passed, and some other observations were made, it was possible to realize that the information was real and it was possible to follow with the last question of the interview which was a direct question about the lesson plan.

5. What is your opinion about Lesson planning?

To this question the teachers said that the lesson plan is very important in the development of their classes. One of the teachers said **“The lesson plan has to be prepared in advance. Then, step by step, with experience you internalize the stages of this lesson plan and you don’t need to bring it to class”**.

Another teacher affirmed **“El plan de clase es la herramienta más importante para el éxito de la clase, si no planeo no tengo control del tema.”**

“The lesson plan is very important for the success of my classes; when I do not plan my class I have no control of the theme”.

The last teacher said **“the steps of a lesson plan are a guide to develop my classes but the anticipation of the activities, or their planning is not real because I take into account the interest of the students, what they need, what they want and the creativity that I need to change the activities in the moment”**.

According to the lesson plan the teachers agreed that they are very important for the development of their classes, the different stages they offered to this work serve them as a guide for every English class they have, they only have to change activities that motivate and integrate their students in the different topics to be developed during the whole year.

Pedagogical Proposal

Once the analysis of the results has been completed it is possible to finish with the proposition of the lesson plan that has been presented in the development of this chapter.

Here are the stages:

1. **MOTIVATION:** Conventional activities developed at the beginning of the lesson, as greetings, songs, praying, etc. These activities would stimulate children's motivation.
2. **RECAPITULATION OF THE LAST THEME:** The review of the previous topic is useful for helping the teacher notice the preparation of the students.
3. **PRESENTATION OF THE NEW THEME:** This stage is useful for teachers to introduce the new topic, they have to tell their students what the coming lesson is about. When students deduce the theme by means of different activities it is more advantageous for them because they build their own knowledge.
4. **DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEME:** The teacher have to carry out different activities to let their students assimilate the new topic. The students should practice and apply the new topic in those activities.
5. **EVALUATION:** This stage shows the teacher how their students assimilate the presented topic, it lets the teachers determine if the learning goal was achieved.
6. **HOMEWORK:** Extra-class work needs to be planned carefully and communicated to the students. The teacher should find activities that help their students do some learning beyond the class hour. (Kennedy, 2003).
7. **REFLECTION:** When the class has finished the teachers should evaluate themselves to improve their methodology.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

>The lesson plan is a set of activities which make up a class grouped into stages.

Every stage has its significance which is focused on the introduction of new knowledge through different techniques to stimulate the students' attention, interest and motivation.

> The lesson plan is an important tool in the development of an English class in primary school because it allows the teacher to have dominion of the theme.

> A lesson plan is a compulsory instrument for a teacher, which depends on the context where the classes are developed. However, in some institutions, it is not a required element to be presented . This does no mean that teachers should discard the use of this important tool.

> The lesson plan has to be developed according to an established theme or project which is necessarily linked to another one; and the most important is that it should be made according to the necessities and expectations of the students who are the center of the learning process.

> This research work presents the different stages of a lesson plan, that derive from a previous planning in which some extra-activities should be included in order to achieve the planned objectives without affecting the topic proposed to the students or their interest and motivation.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

> This research study presented the previous lesson plan which has been analyzed only in primary school, it would be interesting to replicate this study in secondary school in order to compare results.

> This research was a qualitative one which presented a description and analysis of the lesson plan that teachers of primary school use to teach their English classes. It is possible to recommend a quantitative study which presents a pre-test and a post-test. The results could be analyzed to get a more specific study about the development of the English learning and teaching processes.

> English teachers should include didactical material and activities which allow them to increase motivation and interest in the students. For example “Motivation” is the first stage in the proposed lesson plans. As seen in the observations, some teachers use activities that really motivate their students, here the significance of being in contact with new games, songs, dynamics and so on.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX A

OBSERVATIONAL REGISTER

DATE: _____ **REGISTER NUMBER:** _____

INSTITUTION: _____ **LEVEL:** _____

TEACHER: _____

Time: _____	COMMENTS
Minute 10: _____	
Minute 20: _____	
Minute 30: _____	
Minute 40: _____	
Time: _____	

ANNEX B

ORAL INTERVIEW

1. Do you think that you have a good development of your classes? Yes, No, Why?
2. Do you finish all the activities that you plan to make in the class?.
3. Do you follow some steps to develop these activities?. If so, Which are they?
4. Which of these steps do you think is the most important one?
5. What is your opinion about lesson planning?