CAPÍTULO XXIX

INSPIRING PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS TO SET UP THEIR LESSON PLANS: TAILORING STUDENT'S ENGAGEMENT TO ENSURE LEARNING GOALS

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Abstract

A lesson plan is a logical sequence of detailed description of activities, goals, materials, methodology and assessment to teach a topic. The main purpose of a lesson plan is learning. Moreover, the designing of lesson plans is a challenging task, especially for pre-service teachers. This study aims to guide a group of pre-service teachers tailoring their lesson plans by including the student's cultures, learning styles, the policies of education, and suitable and realistic situations. The research questions this study focuses to answer are how are pre-service English teacher inspired to design their lesson plans? How do pre-service teachers tailor their school students to reach the lesson plan goals? Collaborative action research steps helped pre-service teachers to reflect critically, design and implement the lesson plans while engaging their students throughout their English learning process. Results highlighted the importance to connect the designing of lesson plans with school student's needs and the new policies about teaching and learning English as a foreign language, as well as with pre-service teacher's experiences and knowledge in order to reach the goals and have flexible lesson plans. Implications of this study had to do with the impact pre-service teachers' had on their conceptions and carried out of lesson planning, the changes and time devoting to prepare and implement the lesson plans, and the work they had with student's struggles when accomplishing the learning goals.

Key words: lesson plan, pre-service English teachers, student's engagement, learning goals.

INSPIRAR A LOS PROFESORES DE INGLÉS ANTES DEL SERVICIO PARA CONFIGURAR SUS PLANES DE LECCIONES: ADAPTAR LA PARTICIPACIÓN DE LOS ESTUDIANTES PARA ASEGURAR LOS OBJETIVOS DE APRENDIZAJE

Resumen

Un plan de lección es una secuencia lógica, descripción detallada de actividades, objetivos, materiales, metodología y evaluación para enseñar un tema. El objetivo principal de un plan de lección es aprender. Sin embargo, el diseño de planes de lecciones es una tarea complicada, especialmente para los maestros en formación. Este estudio tiene como objetivo guiar a un grupo de profesores en formación en el diseño de sus planes de lecciones que incluyera las culturas de los estudiantes, los estilos de aprendizaje, las políticas de educación y situaciones concretas y realistas de los estudiantes. Las preguntas de investigación de esta investigación son: ¿de qué forma se inspiran los profesores en formación para diseñar los planes de clase?, ¿cómo los profesores en formación direccionan a sus estudiantes para el logro de los objetivos de los planes de clase? Se utilizó la investigación acción colaborativa para ayudar a los profesores en formación a reflexionar críticamente, diseñar e implementar los planes de lecciones e involucrar a sus estudiantes en su proceso de aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera. Los resultados que se resaltan son la importancia de conectar el diseño de los planes de lecciones con las necesidades de los estudiantes, el contexto escolar y las nuevas políticas sobre la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera, como también con las experiencias y conocimientos de los profesores en formación para lograr los objetivos y tener planes de lecciones flexibles. Las implicaciones de este estudio muestran el impacto en las concepciones de los profesores en formación sobre la planeación de las clases y en la implementación de las mismas, el tiempo dedicado a preparar e implementar los planes de las lecciones, y las dificultades de los estudiantes en el cumplimiento los objetivos de aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: plan de lección, reflexión y desarrollo profesional.

Introduction

Preparing English teachers in these times of changing means a challenge process. A process, which includes not only to know and use the language as a channel of communication but also to learn about the pedagogical and didactic methods to teach it throughout the different Colombian levels of education. In our case, the pre-service English teachers are prepared to teach English to primary and secondary levels of

education. So, as a part of their pedagogical preparation, in one of the practicum courses, they have to design and implement lesson plans for the courses they have under their responsibility. The courses are from 6th to 11th grades at secondary public schools.

The process of lesson designing is pre-class activities such as reading assignments, class discussions, class observation, and the implementation of a needs analysis as a tool for the lesson plans. In designing the lesson plans, the pre-service teachers need to be aware of different issues. One of them is about their student's contexts, needs, likes, preferences and knowledge. The second deals with the policies of teaching and learning English as a foreign language and a third one is about the didactics on how to design and implement the lesson plan. This process generates backs and forths due to pre-service teacher's lack of expertize conceptions and knowledge, which make the process arduous.

This topic is relevant to study since is the base knowledge future teachers must have not only as a compulsory duty but also as a day to day future professional task. Learning to design and implement successful lesson plans demands time, knowledge and creativity. In this sense, this research deals with guiding pre-service English teachers to cope with the lesson plan design and implementation by following the principles of collaborative action research, which states the steps of observing, reflecting, designing and implementation. The purpose of this study is to affect the action of pre-service and in-service English teachers in the process of lesson plan designing and implementation to improve the level of education in Colombia.

Theoretical framework

Some concepts about lesson plan, suggested curriculum, professional development and reflection were the theoretical support of this research project.

Lesson Plan

A lesson plan is understood as a teacher's detailed description of all the actions, instructions and activities with the purpose to explain guide and teach a specific topic. The goal of a lesson plan is that the students learn. At this point, Farrell (2002) states that

a lesson plan is: “a unit in which is a sequence of correlated lessons around a particular theme or it can be specified as a systematic record of a teacher’s thoughts about what will be covered during a lesson” (p. 30). Moreover, Jamali & Heidari (2014) affirm, “Lesson plan is a written description for this process; where the materials, the method, the time and the place of education as well as methods for evaluating the students are described in detail”. (p. 25)

Furthermore, a lesson plan guides the teacher, since it formulates a systematic process with the end of getting the aims and learn the language. Some of the necessary aspects to design a lesson plan are: identification, type of plan, grade, length of lesson, number of students, average age, area, English level, curricular focus, axes, language focus, approach, aims, material, stages (warm up, introduction, practice, production and wrap up), procedures, time and patterns of interaction (see annex 1).

Pre-service English teachers

Preparing future teachers is not just teaching them content available. Future teachers need to teach not only their subject matter but also to be taught about other important issues related to their specific area of study and related subject matters. In the case of English teachers’ preparation, learning to teach the language is not enough it goes beyond. The teaching and learning process includes all around the school context, the curriculum, the methods, the strategies, the students, the communities, the policies of education, the culture, the social environment among other aspects. In this side, Britzman (2003) states:

The concept of teaching, which is defined as ‘the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing and what one can become’ is perceived as a professional practice rather than a technical one. (p. 31)

Teachers are models for students and transformers of problematic situations. Ersanli (2016) at this respect argues: “Pre-service EL teachers are expected to acquire knowledge about how languages are learnt, methods and approaches of language teaching, classroom procedures, young learners, educational psychology and pedagogy”. (p. 124)

Student's engagement

One of the aspects that play an important role in the learning process is students' engagement because if students are motivated and interested in the activities that are developing during the classes the successful of the learning process is possible. There are some valuable aspects about students' engagement for instance emotion, feelings, sense of belonging among others, (Kahu, Nelson & Picton, 2017) consider that:

Four important psychosocial constructs mediate the relationship between student, institution, and the student's engagement: self-efficacy, wellbeing, belonging, and emotion. For example, feedback can lead to higher engagement because it increases the student's self-efficacy, or a high study and life load can inhibit a student's engagement because of reduced wellbeing. (p. 56).

Learning goals

Learning implies changes, reinforcement, aims, attitude and some elements that can allow pre-services teacher to know the aims that students need to achieve during the teaching process. The idea is that at the end of the class the students can get the competences to use the English language as a vehicle of communication. There are two kinds of aims: the main aim, which is general and try to involve the macro aspects of the class. The subsidiary aims that take into consideration specific skills to teach during the class.

Sturt (2004), defines aims,

Aims are broad statements which let the students know what you will teach them in the subject and what they might learn. They can be general and should give your students an indication of the scope of your subject and its relationship to other subjects or the course in general. (p. 1).

Suggested curriculum

Curriculum is defined as a group of basic competences, objectives, contents, methodological and assessment criteria that students should achieve in certain educational level, CEDEFOP defines curriculum as:

a normative document (or a collection of documents) setting the framework for planning learning experiences. Depending on the country, the type of education and training, and the institution, curricula may define, among other, learning outcomes, objectives, contents, place and duration of learning, teaching and assessment methods to a greater or to a lesser extent (European Centre For The Development Of Vocational Training, 2010, p. 20).

As a result of different studies done by the National Ministry of Education (2016) the idea of offering a Suggested Curriculum came out, and the concept of curriculum was taken in an integral form, that is to say different perspective and components were considered, namely: scope and sequence, programs of study, content scheme, standards, texts books, learning paths, planned experiences. Moreover, the macro, meso and micro curriculum have been kept in mind; National Ministry of Education in Suggested curriculum defines the terms in this way:

Macro refers to the curricular and methodological principles and theoretical guidelines related to the vision of education, learning and language.

Meso refers to the structure of scope and sequence of the didactic progression of the English teaching-learning process by levels of language, grades, number of hours and macro competences that must be ensured for all students in their path through the school as established in Guide 22: Basic Standards of Competences in a Foreign Language: English. **Micro** refers to the curricular structure proposal by grade. Modules to be developed in each grade comprise the suggested curricular structure. The main learning goal, the basic standards of competences implied the performance indicators and the related discourse and linguistic aspects. (p.20)

One aspect that it is important to highlight is that the proposals intent to link the curriculum and the contexts, through these axes: Democracy and peace, health, sustainability, globalization. Moreover, the Suggested curriculum sets out some paths to work with the different grades: in this sense the idea is to use problems with 10th -11th level, projects with 8th -9th level and task with 6th -7th level. If teacher takes time

to analyze carefully the proposal, it is possible to achieve the goals and attain the competences to learn the English.

Metodology

This project was embedded in a qualitative study and Collaborative Action Research. It allows the opportunity to influence and tailor pre-service English teacher's practicum and to improve the quality of education in Colombia. Brown and Dowling (2001) consider that: "Action research is a term which is applied to projects in which practitioners seek to effect transformations in their own practices". (p.152).

Moreover, collaborative action research invites the teachers to reflect on their practices and try to identify a problem and think in a way to figure out the possible answers to it. In this sense, Burns (2009) affirms that:

Action Research is part of a broad movement that has been going on in education generally for some time. It related the ideas of 'reflective practice' and 'the teacher as researcher'. AR involves taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring your own teaching contexts. (p. 2).

The focus of the participant was on a quest for knowledge, about how to improve teaching practices and contribute to enhance students' learning process. To achieve better results, it is valuable to keep in mind some stages like: identification of the problem, collecting data, taking action based on the data collected and reflection on the findings. In this regard, there are different authors that consider the importance of using some stages during the research project.

Collaborative action research deals with working together to reach social purposes. At this point, Burns (1999) states:

Collaborative action research processes strengthen the opportunities for the results of research on practice to be fed back into educational systems in a more substantial and critical way. They have the advantage of encouraging teachers to share common problems and to work

cooperatively as a research community to examine their existing assumptions, values, and beliefs within the sociopolitical cultures of the institutions in which they work. (p. 13).

In addition, the collection of data was by means of different texts such as three learning logs with the purpose to write and reflect about a given situation. A needs analysis to have information about the pre-service teachers' knowledge, beliefs and expectations. A systematic reading about the policy of education (The New Law of Education, Law 115 of 1994; the Decree 1860 of 1994; Pedagogical Principles and Guidelines-Suggested English Curriculum; Basic Learning Rights).

Data was analyzed by using conceptual and relational analysis. Then, there was a process of coding, condensing and categorizing data. Labels were assigned to the information collected with the end of finding important pieces of content, to know the frequency and the importance of words, the context in which data was collected and the boundaries of the analysis. (Krippendorff, 2004).

Table 1. Conceptual and relational analysis of data.

LESSON PLANS		
Data	Conceptual Analysis	Relational Analysis
Tools		
Learning Transcriptions	Grammatical Issues. Time constraint. Students' vocabulary. Four or more activities. Print texts for activities to develop in class. No books guiding the class. Homogeneous groups. No good resources. No checking understandings. Culture and language are not keeping in mind. Students' skill abilities are lack of development. Connect students' real life context with planning the lesson assessment plan. Assessment time is not evident. The method to develop the class is not clear.	Linguistic relationship: A grammatical model, little vocabulary, connection between language and culture. Resources: print texts, no books in class, and no good resources. Students: lack of vocabulary. Students do not know to follow instructions, no assessment, students' context and experience. Theoretical support: methods and approaches in class, different resources to prepare the class, the development of communicative competence, plan and implement the lesson, time to develop the plan.

Source: own resource (2019).

Table 1. Conceptual and relational analysis of data (Continuation).

LESSON PLANS						
Data Tools	Conceptual Analysis			Relational Analysis		
Needs Analysis	Pre -services teachers' motivation. Pre -services participation. Using English in class. Difficulties in time management. Pre -services teachers' preparation and develop the plan. The use of variety of texts to plan the lessons. Inclusion of students' needs and preferences in the lesson plan.			Linguistic relationship: Pre-services knowledge about the school students' level according to the course they are. Resources: Strong difficulties to teach English, no books, no access to electronic tools Students: No motivation, lack of knowledge to use the language, lack of strategies to approach language. Theoretical support: the use of different texts to guide the class and motivate students' participation and learning. Class preparation.		
	General la of education	Suggested curriculum	Basic learning rights	General law of education	Suggested curriculum	Basic learning rights
Policy Of Education Documents	Article 23 A foreign language is a mandatory a n d fundamental area Article 14, 33, 38 Curricular orientations	Fundamentals of the curriculum proposal. T h e organization for students' evaluation inter and multi disciplinary	The progressive development of language skills in English, communicative goals to reach, to design the lesson plan.	English in Colombia is a mandatory foreign language. The ability to express ideas in a foreign language.	A government guide to organize school curriculum. The curriculum t o p i c s : transversality, sustainability education, s e x u a l and health education.	Guidelines for the different grades , based on the four language s k i l l s , vocabulary a n d grammar.

Source: own resource (2019).

Results

After condensing and organizing data, a category emerged as the figure 1 shows.

Lesson plans based on the students' needs and the community as a source of knowledge

For the pre-service English teachers, it was relevant the connection between the knowledge the students have to learn and the role of the community in the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language. It is visible too in the regulations the National Ministry of Education states mainly in the General Law of Education of 1994 and recently in the suggested curriculum and in the learning rights. Institutions unchanged of preparing teachers have to include all these documents in their curriculum and the schools have to base their PEI (Institutional Educative Project) under those national guidelines. However, for most teachers those legal documents are seen as government impositions and a way to control the teachers' actions, meanwhile for others, they are well-organized ideas for the clarification and standardization of education in all regions of our country. For pre-service teachers, the documents are guidelines to understand their future labor and an appropriate manner to organize the content, activities, time, resources, and abilities.

Figure 1. Analysis of data.

Source: own resource (2019).

On the other hand, the pre-service teachers saw the lesson plans as organized procedures to cope with student's struggles with learning English since they do not have any motivation to learn English and so, they have to tailor them while preparing their lesson plans.

Conclusions

The process of reflecting about the class and how the lesson is doing is very valuable, because allow pre-service teachers to understand the importance of checking the details concerning with the aims, activities, skills and the idea to be coherent with the lesson plan in all the aspects that it involves. The lesson plan gives the teachers the opportunity to control time, choose the resources according to the topic, grade, students' needs and interest and especially the chance to keep in mind different activities to avoid students be bored during the class.

Assessment and evaluation are two contradictory terms for teachers and administrators of education. It is due to the confusion of both terms and the indistinctly way they are used. For most in service teacher both terms are equal in meaning. It brings difficulties among students and teachers. Therefore, pre-service teachers were explained on it, and they must include them thorough the planning of the lessons. Finally, it is outstanding to mention the work done by pre-service teachers during their practicum. They looked for innovative methods and approaches to teach English and to motivate their students to learn the language.

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Appendix

Topic	Sustainability		
Module / Unit	Suggested Curriculum. Page 82 English Please: Book Three. Module 4 Unit 3 Lesson 8 page 152		
Language focus	Functional language	Language skills	Vocabulary
	Use of the third conditional to describe hypothetical situations in the past.	All the skills are intertwined but there is an emphasis on reading and writing.	grey area until you are blue in the face black look to get the green light catch someone red-handed have green fingers whiter than white
Principles / approach	Inductive approach / Task-based learning / Transversality / Assessment		
Learning objectives			
Aim	By the end of this lesson, students will be able to ... Support points of view orally and in a written way about sustainability actions.		
Subsidiary aims	✓ Identify explicit and implicit information in different types of texts about sustainability actions. ✓ Differentiate the structures of real and unreal conditionals ✓ Recognize specific information in a written text by previewing (images/titles), skimming and scanning technique. ✓ Supports points of view orally and in writing, about topics of general interest, making use of expressions and structures studied. ✓ Identify specific information about eco-friendly in a listening exercise		
Materials needed			
Texts about sustainability, pictures, markers, highlighter, eraser, tape, glue, dictionary, computer, video beam.			
English Please 3: https://aprende.colombiaaprende.edu.co/sites/default/files/naspublic/colombiabilingue/ep_sbook/student_ep3.pdf			
Suggested curriculum:			
https://aprende.colombiaaprende.edu.co/sites/default/files/naspublic/Anexo%2013%20Suggested%20Structure.pdf			

Stage	Procedure	Time and interaction
Warm up	The teacher shows some pictures and asks the students to describe what they see (Appendix 1).	T_SS 15 min
	The students may identify the situations related to the sustainability and problems with the water. The teacher lists the students' answers on the board. The students discuss about the situation that they have observed on the images and teacher fosters them to talk about possible ways to avoid it.	
Introducing language	After the warm up activity, the teacher presents the: Pre reading	T. SS 20 min
	First, the Teacher gives a sheet with a matching exercise (see Appendix 2) for them to join column A with column B. Second, the students organize groups to memorize the words and participate in a competition.	T. SS 10 MIN
	Then, teacher shows some pictures and words and students match them (see Appendix 2).	
	During the reading	
	Once students have participated in the activity with idioms the teacher gives them the reading (Water, water ... everywhere?) to students (see Appendix 3) and asks the students to read the text quickly, reading for gist (to have a general idea of the text). Teacher asks some students to participate by giving ideas that they have understood after reading for gist.	
	In order to continue with the activity, the teacher tells the students to circle the "transparent" words, underline the unknown words, and highlight the vocabulary known. Then, the teacher asks students to read again in order to identify the main idea: What is the main idea of the text? (see Appendix 3)	T. SS 15 MIN
	Students write their answer on the board, and at the end they choose the best answer. Then, the students verify if their predictions were right or not (check for general understanding orally).	
	Later, the teacher asks students to read individually paragraph by paragraph in order to identify specific information (by using scanning technique).	T. SS 15 MIN
	After reading the text, they have the opportunity to answer some questions: (see Appendix 3).	
	Once the answers have been socialized, the teachers explains that students must participate in the listening exercise, first identifying words that they hear and second answering an exercise from English please 3, (Module 4, exercise 8, page 154) (See audio script - Appendix 4).	T – SS 20 min
	After the students have heard the reporter about eco-friendly status of the two countries, they are invited to do a comprehension exercise (see appendix 4). First, they listen to the audio individually and then they compare answers in pairs.	

Controlled practice	Once students have had the opportunity to read a text and listen to a recording about two countries, the teacher presents them a video which contains the explanation about third conditional.	SS-SS 20 MIN
	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHe3runur3M , the teacher invites students to ask questions about the topic and she clarifies them.	SS-SS 15 MIN
	Later, teacher gives time to students to practice the Third conditional.	
	The students are going to practice the third conditional by playing in pairs a game called “what if...?” (They will have to answer some hypothetical situations using the third conditional), at the end, the answers will be shared with the group. (see Appendix 5).	SS-SS 15 MIN
	Meanwhile, teacher monitors them and takes notes in order to give the feedback, at the end of the exercise.	
	Following the lesson plan, the teacher gives feedback to students about the exercise and especially about the use of the third conditional.	SS-SS 20 MIN
	After that game, a chart with some questions will be handed to students. The idea is to complete the chart by asking the questions to 4 different classmates (the answers of the chart will be shared at the end). (see Appendix 6)	
	Finally, a board game called “snakes and Ladders” will be handed to the students. They have to play the game by using the third conditional.	T-SS 15 MIN
	(see Appendix 7)	
	The teacher observes the students, at the end of the game; she provides feedback about the activity and the grammar point. In regard to the writing exercise, the teacher provides an explanation about fishbone diagram (see Appendix 8).	
Freer practice	Students create a text on the topic “Is it possible to be a green citizen?”	
	Students must include at least 3 sentences using 3 rd conditional.	
	Students have the opportunity to elaborate a draft keeping in mind the fishbone diagram, and they exchange the text with their classmates and receive some comments before editing the final product.	SS-SS 30 MIN
	The teacher monitors and takes notes.	
	Students stick their texts on the wallpaper.	
	Students receive feedback according to the rubric (see Appendix 9)	

	When all the exercises have been done, then the teacher:	
	a) Asks students to organize the classroom for a round table.	
	b) Encourages students to share their answers, experiences, comments and opinions about the text that they have written, reading and listening exercise that were done during the classes.	
	c) Takes notes and gives the general feedback highlighting the positive aspects and the areas to work on.	
Wrap-up	d) Explains to students about the importance of assessing themselves in order to analyze the learning process and to try to improve the different skills, after the explanation Teacher uses techniques for self-assessment: "Three things" or "Exit Tickets" (see Appendix 10).	SS- TS 10 MIN
	e) Later, the teacher uses one technique related to peer assessment: Two stars and a wish, and explains to students that they needed to assess one of their classmates and they have to say two positive aspects about the homework and something that they want his/her classmates do next time. (see appendix 11)	
	f) At the end, the teacher uses the "Muddiest Point", and tells them they need to answer two questions, but it is not necessary to write their names. After, the teacher socializes the answers with them (see Appendix 12).	