



UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL

UNIDAD AJUSCO

PROPUESTA DE INTERVENCIÓN EDUCATIVA

**Cultural awareness and intercultural competence in my
English teaching 3er. Grades Elementary School**

TRABAJO RECEPCIONAL

**QUE PARA OBTENER EL DIPLOMA DE
ESPECIALIZACIÓN EN ENSEÑANZA Y APRENDIZAJE DE INGLÉS COMO
LENGUA EXTRANJERA, MODALIDAD EN LÍNEA**

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UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL
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EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION PROPOSAL

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English teaching 3er. Grades Elementary School**

THESIS

**IN PURSUANCE OF THE DIPLOMA
TEACHING AND LEARNING SPECIALIZATION AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
ONLINE COURSE**

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When people from different backgrounds interact with each other, using proper language —be it just a very few words, or gestural or body language—, considering the proximal distance, showing interest and respect for the interlocutor and its culture, interculturality has begun being exercised.

F Baíza

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Introduction

Interculturality has existed and practiced for thousands of years ago when dominant peoples invaded and conquered other ones. Mithridates VI of Pontus conquered 22 towns, and only spoke each of the 22 languages of these peoples, but it is for sure he learned about their habits, costumes, beliefs, and manners. This happened more than two thousand years ago, as some registers evidence it, but that does not mean similar events have not happened along the centuries.

Why is that until recent years interculturality has been included in EFL/ESL curricula?

Interculturality and globalization go hand in hand. Both concepts in our academic context do not mean to include most or all of the cultures and countries in this world. It also means places so close to, for example, Mexico City, like Xochimilco, where habits and costumes, beliefs, and social manners, are so different to most of those who live in the Capital City of this country. Humans are, by nature, by excellence, social beings, and interact among them just as Lucy (or her ancestor Ardi) did more than 3 million years ago and behave not only by their genetic code but mainly by survival reasons. More than 3 million years ago.

Why Mexican and Central American immigrants adapt within USA culture? Just because they need to survive. And this does not only mean to learn the American-English language. When intolerance and prejudices are discarded in the classroom, it will be the first solid step to learn interculturality. If the children learn intolerance and prejudices, they are also able to unlearn negative patterns. Respect for oneself, for others, for own culture, and for other cultures. This is a primordial issue.

When people from different backgrounds interact with each other, using proper language —e.g. be it just a very few words, or gestural and body language—, considering the proximal distance, showing interest and respect for the interlocutor and its culture, interculturality has begun being exercised.

Interculturality, especially in ESL, is a must to be included, as the students must swim or sink. It is a matter of survival. Most of it depends on themselves, but teachers play a big role and have a great advantage: to teach English in the real world, with lots of actual contexts, situations, and circumstances.

In the EFL classroom, things are quite different. Learn or not, the students will pass the subject in Mexican elementary schools, due to SEP, Secretariat of Public Education guidelines. This is Mexico. This is the Mexican Education Policy. What should be committed, and devoted English teachers do? To recreate as close as possible those contexts, situations, and circumstances with whatever we have at hand: all the possible realia and authentic materials we may get: magazines, brochures, newspapers, postcards, letters, stamps (not all is the digital world), as well as videos and photographs showing real-world situations. Some examples are food, art, religion, greetings, holidays (national, religious, costume), school, music, literature, values, dressings, wardrobe, social manners. The list is long. But the main issue must be first treated: to motivate, inspire and engage the students in the learning of the English culture and language.

Chapter 1 Philosophy and theory

1.01 Teaching identity and philosophy

1 Teaching identity

The professional identity of an EFL teacher includes the set of academic preparation, experience, values, self-esteem, motivation, and adaptation to every day changing processes, which should not affect the teaching quality. When a teacher has an achievement-oriented and disciplined focused attitude, as well as continuous self-evaluation ([Cooper & Olson, 1996](#)), no doubt his/her practice will have solid foundations.

2 Teaching philosophy

For more than a couple of decades, what I had been considering as my teaching philosophy was the following:

I do believe that a teacher leads the students to discover what is good, beautiful, fair and true. The more we educate our students sharing our academic and daily life knowledge the better we can help them have a life of realized dreams. As teachers, we must be willing to be respectful of, patient with and considerate of every student. All students can learn given the proper instruction and environment. As teachers, we must be willing to be respectful of, patient with and considerate of every student.

Along the years I had made some slight changes, and the knowledge acquired with the study of this Specialization, as well as a deep reflection, has led me to re-write, as an EFL teacher, the following version, not a final but a *floating* one because it needs to be adapted to everyday changes:

When considering our EFL students' interests, attitudes, skills, previous knowledge, and specific contexts, learning together cultural awareness and interculturality, in a frame of inclusion and diversity, goodness, beautifulness, fairness and truth concepts will be respected and exercised, and EFL learning and teaching will be pleasurable done.

1.02 Theory underlying teaching practice and identity

1 Theoretical basis about language, language learning and language teaching of my model

General overview

There are several schools of thought —three of them are Behaviorism and Structuralism, Generative Linguistics, and Sociocultural Theory—, and some other theories and hypothesis which deal with SLA, second language acquisition, whose main features will be exposed to have a general overview.

Behaviorism —a psychology field of study, which focus on individual behavior, and the mechanism or model of stimuli-response— considers language learning as a habit formation. Behaviorism has been criticized because it has been demonstrated that language is not only learned by imitation. Structuralism, a school of linguistics, deals with aspects of the language such as phonology, syntax and morphology, habits that the students have already developed in their phonological, syntactic and morphological systems of native languages or L1.

Generative linguistics, introduced in the late 1960s, claims that language cannot be explained as simple responses to stimuli. It focuses on the processes of language performance principles, not precisely in *how* SLA is produced.

The sociocultural theory, which focuses on learning and human development, is inspired by Vygotsky researches, who states that languages are learned as a result of interactions between social and cognitive factors. This theory has led to research in cooperative learning, construction of meaning, and sociocultural variables. [Krashen \(2003\)](#) acknowledges that “...cognitive development, including the acquisition of concepts and facts, is more likely to occur through problem-solving than through deliberate study”.

Other theories and hypotheses that have focused on SLA, are:

The Contrastive Analysis, which describes the language similarities and differences that may help L2 learning, has been criticized because the students produce language forms that they have never been exposed to.

[Stephen Krashen \(2013\)](#) developed five hypotheses related to SLA, as follows:

Acquisition learning

Monitor

Natural Order

Input

Affective filter

The acquisition-learning is the most influential hypothesis that considers acquisition as a subconscious and incidental process and learning as a conscious and intentional process.

Acquisition learning hypothesis states that while acquisition is a subconscious and incidental process, learning is a conscious and intentional process. In other words, learning will be present if the person is aware of the new knowledge he/she has intended to obtain.

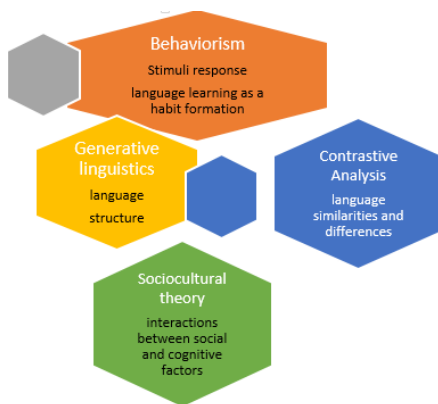
The monitor hypothesis considers that learners use their previous knowledge to test or verify —*id est* to monitor— what is called the grammaticality of their language once it has been produced. If language production is monitored learners are able to modify their output, their own new language creations, only if this complies with a) *focus on the form* of the target language, conditioning the meaning to the form; b) *knowledge of the rule*, grammar rules, and c) *time*, which is needed to reflect and assimilate the rules to be properly applied.

The natural order hypothesis maintains that children acquire morphemes —the smallest meaningful units in the grammar of a language— in a fixed and predictable order. Consequently, L2 acquisition shows a “natural order” for grammatical morphemes. This concept is of such importance in SLA that it is considered a learner with a deficient basic structure he/she will not be able to acquire a more complex one or will have difficulties in naturally acquiring that in L2 development.

The input hypothesis acknowledges that language is acquired by means of exposure to comprehensible input, or what the learners are surrounded by in terms of the language environment. This comprehensible input, written or oral language, is the one located just beyond the learner’s current linguistic development. Krashen assigned *i* to the learner’s current level of development, and *i + 1* the level just beyond that mark. Therefore, learners should be exposed

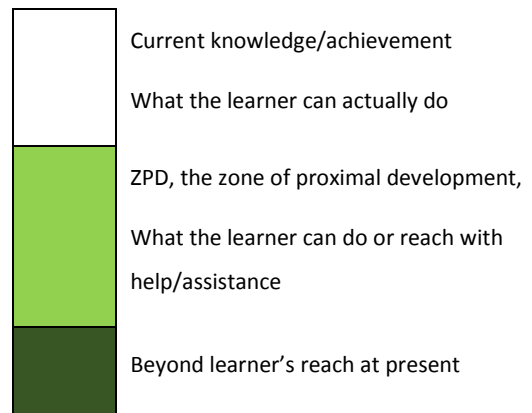
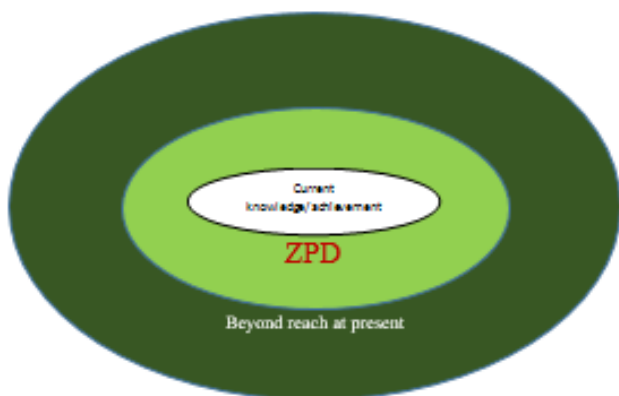
to $i + 1$, the comprehensible input, important reference point, as anything below that level has been already acquired by the learner, and above that level will be too difficult for him/her.

The affective filter hypothesis acknowledges the importance of motivation, attitude, confidence, and anxiety in SLA. An improper or uncomfortable learning environment will demerit learning, while a proper and comfortable one will propitiate language acquisition and learning. For instance, the lack of interest in the learner will raise the affective filter and demerit learning; the desire to study abroad will increase interest —and consequently, L2 learning— and lower the affective filter.



Zone of proximal development

[Vygotsky \(1978\)](#) proposed the ZPD which in his own words defines the existence of a developmental zone as "...the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers". In other words, ZPD is the difference between a child’s actual developmental level and the level at which he/she could perform solving tasks with the assistance of a teacher or o more capable peer. The importance of ZPD in SLA lies in the fact that new learning should be positioned in it, or in other words, teaching actions should be located in it, in the ZPD.



ZPD, the zone of proximal development

The inner zone of the diagram illustrates what learner independently can do or perform; the middle zone, ZPD, is what the learner can do or perform with help, and the outer zone what the learner cannot do or perform. Tasks belonging to the inner zone may cause boredom, and those located in the outer zone may cause anxiety.

Another way to explain the ZPD is: in the center is located what is known; in the middle zone, ZPD, what learner cannot do but may be done with help, guidance or assistance from a knowledgeable person (teacher, tutor, even a peer); in the outer zone what is not known.

Theoretical foundations of the Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan is intended to open the perspective of the students to a foreign culture, with the characteristics mentioned in the [Introduction](#) of this paper. As I have mentioned, the knowledge of the students' context is the first step, as [Singer \(1975\)](#) and [Brislin \(1981\)](#) point out.

The purpose of projecting of the video at the opening moment of the session was to engage the students' attention and is based in [Bennett \(1993\)](#), who states that rejection cultural differences may induce difficulties in intercultural communication. How can we avoid it? Just developing the skills of perceiving and valuing similarities and differences of unlike cultures in our students enough? The more they learn from different cultures, the better they will begin to learn how many different cultures have the world we live in. What if they do not understand all the dialogues? At this level, elementary school, it does not matter. They simply have to begin listening to different sounds, words, and languages.

Emic approach), which focuses on the intrinsic culture distinctions, is the foundation for the projection of the video *American Culture*. In this way, the students may develop their skills by observing how different a geographically nearby culture is. Most of Mexico City inhabitants have gone to Xochimilco, and do not observe how many differences in this town, so close to Mexico Capital city, there are; yet fail to appreciate the cultural differences in this part of the city. How can they develop observations skills in their children if they do not have —or *do not want to*— develop their own?

In the above-mentioned video, *American Culture*, different singers appear, just to show how times change, evidence of the dynamic, always changing culture. The role-play activity, in which two students facing each other perform examples from Mexican and American cultures, makes them experience different emotional situations: fear, insecurity, and empathy. This is in line with Kolb's ([Humphrey, 2002](#)) research on Experiential Learning.

The purpose of intercultural education is not to overwhelm you. The purpose is to motivate and heighten your enthusiasm for the intercultural adventures ahead.

Humphrey, D. ([Humphrey, 2002](#))

It seems — but yes, it is quite possible— for an elementary school student to experience what Kolb states in the fourth stage of the experiential learning cycle:

4. Active Experimentation (the learner applies their idea(s) to the world around them to see what happens), ([McLeod, 2017](#)).

How can my students apply their ideas to the new world that is opening for them?

It is a very easy task. As I have said in my post, I have invited some English native friends to my classrooms and the conversations held have been very comfortable. Even though some students have initially shown fear, as in the role-play activity, they have also applied their ideas to the world around them when holding a conversation with the guests. It is a new world for them ...even if it is in a crowded classroom in Mexico!

Same happens when in the at moment 2c of the Lesson Plan, Instruction, Teacher modeling. The students look at the teacher acting like those three characters, they imagine, apply the ideas, and ask questions about those characters, the context and the accent each one has.

Their imagination has been awakened, creativity has been turned on, and immersion in a different culture has begun. This is my classroom, and they are my students, eager to learn.

The Lesson Plan moment, 2d, Students modeling, playtime, the students really enjoy: just the act of recreating the characters their teacher has modeled minutes ago provoke wide smiles in their faces, if not hearty waves of laughter.

«Play creates a zone of proximal development of the child. In the play the child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior; in play, it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of magnifying glass, the play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and in itself is a major source of development» ([Hakkarainen, P](#)).

This also sustains the moment 3 Practice c, Check and feedback, ZPD moment, of the Lesson Plan.

How my students would not be happy learning just a very few aspects of a foreign culture?

3 Evaluation Model

Rubrics are the assessment instruments used in my classroom, as they have the following features:

- Designed in accordance with the students' level
- Clear for the students
- Helpful for self-assessment
- Analytic or holistic
- Subjectivity is widely reduced
- Provide almost immediate feedback.

Chapter 2 Methodology and Practice

2.01 A practical and useful lesson plan.

1 Lesson Plan

Objective, Resources,

Procedure: opening

LESSON PLAN

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL THIRD GRADE

A

OBJECTIVE

To motivate, inspire and engage the students in the learning of the English culture and language.

LESSON TITLE

A little bit of USA culture and language

B Resources

Realia, authentic materials, printed matter, photographs, paper money, stamps, videos.

C Length of the session: 2 hours

Number of students: 32 Female: 18 Male: 14 Grade teacher always present, according to code.

D Procedure

1 *Opening*

- a. Engage attention:
Projection of the video: Playground for Kids at Legoland Amusement Park
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRlwEex_BX4)
- b. Check previous knowledge
Open-ended questions about the video
- c. Lesson preview
Projection of the video: American Culture
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BH1aOd_SB5k)
- d. Standards or indicators
Knowledge, attitudes, and skills
- e. Anticipatory set
Role-play
- f. Projection of images of Mexican and USA cultures

Procedure: 2 Instruction

2 **Instruction**

- a. Lesson goals
 - i. In this lesson, you will learn about the United States of America Culture and language
 - ii. At the end of the lesson, you will know some similarities and differences between what is called *American Culture* and the Mexican one.
- b. Teaching strategies
 - i. Videos and roleplay
 - ii. A game with Venn diagram
- c. Teacher modeling
Who is dressed, and will interpret, like:
 1. A Texan cowboy (just wearing a hat)
 2. A Mexican descendant Californian farmer
 3. A New York white-collar employee
- d. Students modeling, play time
 1. A Texan cowboy (just wearing a hat)
 2. A Mexican descendant Californian farmer
 3. A New York white-collar employee
- e. Guided questioning
 1. What are the most evident similarities between both cultures?
 2. What are the most evident differences between both cultures?
 3. Should we be tolerant of other cultures?
- f. Check for understanding
 1. Model some Mexican and USA language expressions
 2. Listen and repeat the following song: Lovesick blues
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxc3mo5AYIA>)

Procedure: 3 Practice

3 **Practice**

- a. Guided group and individual practice
 1. Write down some sentences in Spanish and their English equivalents
 2. Read aloud one sentence of your peer to your left
- b. **Collaborative work**
 1. Working in teams, students separate Mexican and the USA printed materials (magazines, newspapers, photographs, pamphlets, and the like)
 2. Working in teams, each student describes with own words an image he/she selects
- c. Check and feedback
ZPD moment
 1. Teacher shows some material that might belong to both cultures, and students must decide what culture does that belong to
- d. Reteaching (critical or core aspect, together with the very previous one)
 1. Reteaching is primordial in class, as a way for students to recall new knowledge
- e. Standards or indicators
Knowledge, attitudes and skills, feedback

4 **Closure**

1. Summary
Teacher asks students to give short explanations of what have learned, and make all necessary corrections
2. Independent practice
Students separate Mexican and the USA printed materials (magazines, newspapers, photographs, pamphlets, and the like)
3. Generalization
Teacher shows similarities with other cultures the students suggest

5 **Assessment**

1. Due to a large number of students, all along the session assessment will be being performed; 5 Rubrics will be used.

D

- Farewell
1. Students sing in Spanish and later in English short typical songs of each culture

2.02 The session

The session was developed almost as planned. Not any lesson plan is ever executed exactly as designed. Lesson Plan adequations have been made through the session, like adjusting the number of students for each team, as not all them attended the lesson that day because did not go to school.

Activities

Some relevant students' and teacher's activities are discussed in this section

Role-playing

Once the students are engaged in the lesson, once their attention has been captured, they begin a role play trying to act like if they belonged to the American culture. (Lesson Plan: D, Procedure, 1 Opening, e anticipatory set, Role-play): Several American-and-Mexican realia (costumes, in this case) have been placed in a desk close to the whiteboard, and four students are asked to take them an act as if they were two Mexican students and two Americans ones. These role-s respond to the Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, previously mentioned.

Watching, observing, analyzing, choosing

The projection of American and Mexican images will prepare the students for another game: a large Venn diagram plotted on the board, on which the teacher will write the students' answers, after watching, observing, and analyzing the images, then choosing which one corresponds to the questions about which image belongs to which culture (Lesson Plan: D, 2 Instruction, b Teaching strategies, ii A game with Venn Diagram).

Watching, modelling and playing

Teacher will perform the roles of a Texan cowboy, a Mexican descendant Californian farmer, and a New York white collar employee (Lesson Plan: D, 2 Instruction, d Students modelling, play time), while the students watch and observe, and afterwards they model those characters. Country music accompanies performances in the first case. Again, this role-play responds to the Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory.

Listening, repeating, and interpreting

Students (Lesson Plan: D, 2 Instruction, f 2 Check for understanding, Listen and repeat the following song: Lovesick blues [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxc3mo5AYIA>]) listen to the

song, and try to repeat it. It is certain it will not be easy neither for the student nor for many let's say Bostonian people. The intention here is the students watch the video and interpret the joyful and sticky melody. This is an example of communicating approach.

Writing down and reading aloud

The students write down and repeat aloud (Lesson Plan: D, 3 Practice, a. Guided group and individual practice 1 & 2) some sentences in Spanish and their English equivalents.

Hands-on collaboratively working, separating, describing

The students, in teams, separate magazines, newspapers, photographs, pamphlets, and the like, to decide which culture belong which piece of printed image (Lesson Plan: D, 3 Practice, b. Collaborative work)

Checking and feedbacking

The students (Lesson Plan: D, 3 Practice, c. Check and feedback) must decide what culture does that belong to while the teacher shows some material that might belong to both cultures. This is the **ZPD** moment, a crucial one in the session, as the teacher includes materials that do not belong neither to Mexican nor to American cultures.

The previous ones are only some examples of the teacher's and the students' activities, which reflect the spirit of the session.

¿How can we ask third grade students to perform all these activities?

It is easy and clear. The students ages vary from 7 to 9 years old, and L 1 is developed enough to imitate L 2 sounds; they have learned to write in L 1, and ready to identify and copy and write English words; their phonological apparatus is developed enough to reproduce English sounds with own Spanish accent; and to listen and interpret English sounds and words, as well as body language.

2.03 Assessment tools

1 Rubric, the instrument of learning assessment

The following Rubrics have been designed and are used for this session.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

		EXCELLENT	GOOD	IN PROCESS
Knowledge	Cultural self-awareness	Recognizes and is aware of own culture and existence of others	Recognizes some aspects of own and other cultures	Recognizes some aspects of own culture
	The existence of other cultures			
Skills	Empathy	Shows nice empathy and communication	Shows signs of developing empathy and communication	Shows reluctance to interact with others
	Verbal and non-verbal communication			
Attitudes	Curiosity	Shows wide curiosity and openness	Shows signs of developing curiosity and openness	Shows shyness and reluctance to interact with other persons and cultures
	Openness			

LISTENING

Criteria	Not yet	Beginning	Developing	Well developed
Listening	Learner with severe difficulties in answering questions	1 question answered	Two questions answered	All questions correctly answered

SPEAKING

Criteria	Not yet	Beginning	Developing	Well developed
Speaking	Barely intelligible	Some difficulty to be understood	Understandable, L1 interference	Understandable, L1 interference, clear voice

READING

Criteria	Not yet	Beginning	Developing	Well developed
Reading	<p>Does not understand the message or text</p> <p>Does not identify elements of the message or text</p>	<p>Partly understands the message or text</p> <p>Identifies simple elements of the message or text</p>	<p>Understands most or all the message or text</p> <p>Identifies most or all the elements of the message or text</p>	<p>Understands the full message or text and paraphrase it</p> <p>Identifies all the elements of the message or text and provides examples</p> <p>Understands vocabulary and constructs sentences with it</p>

WRITING

Criteria	Not yet	Beginning	Developing	Well developed
Writing	<p>Learner in pre-alphabetic level with no coherence in sentence</p>	<p>Attempt to use some words with prompting and guidance</p> <p>Attempt to use capital letters in title or at the beginning or the sentences</p>	<p>Uses some words and a few common expressions</p> <p>Uses capital letters, punctuation and exclamations signs</p>	<p>Uses a variety of both words and expressions</p> <p>Expresses own ideas with creativity and originality</p>

2.04 Evidences

1 Materials and Resources

Along with the session, several kinds of resources were used, some in a hard paper, and others in digital format. Being large the number of students, images, and videos projected on the screen controlled by the remote-controlled device allows the teacher to provide individual attention to those who require it.

The videos and some images were obtained from web sites.

Other images are photographs of books, magazines, and brochures.

Some other ones are photographs of realia.

Some of the images projected are as follows:



Books and magazines



Realia



Videos projected

Playground for Kids at Legoland Amusement Park
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRlwEex_BX4



American Culture
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BH1aOd_SB5k



Lovesick blues
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxc3mo5AYIA>



2 Session pieces of evidence

Different Moments of the Session



INPUT

COLLABORATIVE WORK

READING & LISTENING

PLAYING



STAGING

COLLABORATIVE WORK

ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

TEAM WORK

Chapter 3 Experience Report

1 Report of the lesson given and critical analysis

Development of the session

The session began greeting the students and welcoming them to a new lesson. Lesson Plan 1a and 1b were projected, and the students showed interest, not all of them with the same quality and attitude. When lesson goals were told communicated to the students, most of them showed interest, which was demonstrated when the teacher projected a Venn diagram and they began saying what culture each realia object belonged to.

Many smiling faces, as well as some laughs, began creating a nice learning environment when the teacher, appropriately dressed for the occasion, modeled the three characters described in 2c. Laughs increased when, during playtime 2d the students modeled those characters. When the video of the cow-boy was projected, surprise faces arose in the air, as the language was too difficult for them (and for the teacher) to be understood. This was made on purpose: what the teacher wanted was the students comprehend that body language may be used as a rich complement to spoken language.

During the individual and group practice, collaborative work was performed in an orderly way. The teacher waited for the proper introduction and exercising of the ZPD moment. Reteaching is a primordial issue all the sessions. Assessments by means of 5 different Rubrics was made all along the session. The way the students sang the brief songs in the Farewell moment was a clear evidence of a nice, fluid and fruitful session.

Critical analysis

Two hours are good and enough time to deliver a session like this. Even though the children have short span attention, the variety of activities make most of them to be engaged in them. Motivation is needed all along with the session, both for the students and teacher. It is, however,

tiring for the teacher when many activities have to be performed, but it is rewarding, especially when the lesson goals are met by most of the students. It took me years to learn that there is no group in which *all* the students participate. Mexican children, particularly those from deprived or depressed areas, have so many learning barriers that are beyond the teacher's hands. Even when individual attention is intended to be given, it is not always possible. One of the changes I have to do is to increase the collaborative work, get parents involved, increase the students' spoken language, and trying to think like them... which is not easy.

Chapter 4 Conclusions

1 Conclusions

All along with this lesson, students' curiosity has been awakened, aroused, as they have been slightly but at a steady pace, introduced to some representative concepts and images of two different cultures which have some common aspects, however. Tolerance concepts have also been discussed, and even they are elementary schoolers, they have begun to comprehend this value. Tolerance is the first step to develop the students' interculturality and cultural awareness. Once this begins to happen, stereotypes will be comprehended and tend to disappear. The intercultural process will lead to intercultural communication.

Chapter 5 References

1 References with Module and Unite where considered, be them within the lessons or within assignments

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