**Extended Reflection on Learners and their learning**

**The Sling shot!**

Throughout all that deep stuff teaching brought during my second week here, I had realized something that changed my perception about what learners give us as an invisible but present gift, improvement. No matter where or when you take the lead for doing something else for your teaching, it automatically will bring amounts of new questions and expectations, and you start thinking, do you fulfill your and your students’ real needs? Then, it comes to my mind the following quote “connect before you teach” and I would add “connect with yourself before you teach” that something else is waiting for your around the corner, learners’ learning, as a sling shot.

You do not really know what the direction of the shot will be. Even when you pretend yourself having controlled and planned what you are supposed to, it does not always come in the way you wished because it is not you but your students’ learning. You, as teacher, are not only able to predict the intensity of learners’ desire for learning, but also you are not able to control all the details, it would be always something missing and valuable. Then, looking teaching with different lenses, it is necessary to brainstorm deeply inside our own learning, and then, take some time to investigate what facilitates learners internalizing things and put them into practice. It is not much different from what we are doing on our course, and probably, the most surprising fact is that we are trying to get rid of puzzles as well as our learners do, doing what they think works for them by doing their best. So that in the way we, as teachers, learn may help us to understand and identify what learners require in order to achieve their real needs in learning and language.

Narrowing what the implications of teaching are and what goes beyond form meaning and use of the language means, I think teachers must considering the role of reflection on our daily duty brings to our lives when we expect to find in our learners. This reflection on our teaching make teacher realize about options we have for having our students teach us how we can improve our own practice so that when adapting alternatives, it helps learners to create their own strategies and it is showed in the following lesson practice-example.

So, during two days a week, my colleges and I were given the opportunity to apply a different framework, ECRIF, I did not use to with real learners. Our group was a low intermediate level in which I found interesting to teach vocabulary about internet and how different words such as network, firewall, hacker, spam and others worked into the technological world computers and then, having those learners get through my objective which was using vocabulary related to internet in modern life in order to describe different network problematic situations in groups of 2 or 3 people. At the first moment, I planned to have students make pair work and match pictures and descriptions and make pairs (pictures and names and also descriptions) as a memory game. First, by choosing the names and pictures and then description, they were using the words in context based on their experience and they tried to offer new ideas about the topic by using the new vocabulary. So, when the class started, I felt a bit nervous due to we (the group of teachers or co-workers) have two new students and we notice they had a lower level of English than their other partners in the group. Even though when we were on time, students arrived late to the class and that made my classmates to get aware about the time. Also, I thought students were having some trouble finding the descriptions and I’d never realized that they were doing it in the other way around, choosing first the description and then the pictures and the different names.

I feel really satisfied with the class, even when there are some puzzles I have to work on such as time some activities consume, the sense of level of students and how I control activities based on what students learned. In the same way, I noticed that my objective was almost totally accomplished because they were using the vocabulary in context based on their experience and they tried to come up with new ideas about the topic using the new words by their own. So, I can realize that they learned because they were applying the vocabulary in a conversation during other stages even when some other students were struggling with the word, but after some time they started making associations. For example, they were talking about how difficult is to have access to internet in different places where they live and how their experience with internet has been.

As well as in my learning, again the presence of the sling shot was clearly presented during my class and my co-workers’ lessons. The direction of our learning is set up for our objectives, but something I cannot control is that students are designing every single second a different strategy for learning so that they feel successful with their performance. It is really interesting, for instance, to see how students behave and learn when other teacher is on the spot, but what I noticed is that they are always elaborating techniques to make language their own and then, demonstrate they can speak and communicate what they want.

As a conclusion, I realize that learners teach us in the same flow when we are teaching them and this happen due to nothing on learning is determined to be. So, we as teachers can elaborate almost perfect lesson planning and we can play with guessing and predicting what might happen, however, in a realistic way different sling shots are the one that make our teaching and learning interesting at any moments during our sharing with learners.

**Time, it’s the time!**

**DESCRIPTION**

On Thursday Jefferson was sitting next to Ceil and Johnny during the grammar class. During that Remember and Clarifying stage, Johnny and Jefferson were struggling about the task they have to perform due to they had some trouble with finding the correct order of the sentences for before and after usage in a sentence. Then, he was asked about giving the corresponding example of sentences. So, they were given the chance to arrange the incorrect sentences in the correct way. When the activity almost finished, Jefferson and Johnny were asked to say if they got the idea about before and after, and then, they later demonstrated their knowledge. They were taking the lead and started saying and applying the use of before and after with their classmates. They were clarifying their doubts in groups and saying what they did after and before class. Finally, Jefferson was asked to say what Donay did before coming to open class and they said *¨I think I slew a chicken for soup¨, ¨I shrank my papers all the time¨* without any help.

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| **INTERPRETATION** | **GENERALIZATION** | **PLAN ACTION** |
| Something that hindered SS was that fact that there were pictures together and the emphasis was in picture not in the target language. | It is important to consider the amount of information on pictures we offer to SS when having an activity. | I will provide students pictures or photos related to the target language we are teaching. Also, I will consider include verbs or other extra info depending on which stage I am working on. How will you make a sure that the emphasis stays on the TL and not the pictures? |
| SS were also hindered by the fact that they weren’t given more practice during the stage of clarifying. | It is important planned beforehand some extra time when practicing on the first stages on a framework. | I will get every stage in a framework time enough for developing our content and make SS more confident. How many clarifying activities will you do? How will you give enough time? |
| Something that helped SS was that they had visual aids as providers of information. | Learners in general feel more confident when having pictures or other visual aid for supporting their language | I will provide SS the opportunity to have visual aids as a beneficial factor in a class. |
| Another thing that helped SS that they were working in pairs as part of the worked and helped each other. | It’s important to compare answers with other person in order to get a better understanding about what we are learning. | I will work more on having SS in pairs and small groups. How many times? When? |

**Passing the Past!**

**DESCRIPTION**

On Monday Jefferson was given some pictures of different situations in order to tell a story. He and his partners worked in pairs, and start talking about what it was illustrated. After finishing the activity, Jeff and his classmates were asked to write about different questions in past tense. Then, Jefferson and his classmates started commenting on different things out of what they were expected. Then, T asked them to say different verb tenses. They feel good during the repletion and matching of the different verbs and a well-known option they were given for making the relationships with the knowledge they already had. Later on, T presented some pictures about different steps for having the class and making some sentences or story orally by their own. In this way, they were paying attention to the different verb and having drills on pronunciation. As they were giving some pictures, they were supposed to use the verbs provided on the target language according to their knowledge on past experiences. So, they were guessing about what the order of the events took some time on this activity.

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| **INTERPRETATION** | **GENERALIZATION** | **PLAN ACTION** |
| Something that hindered SS was the fact that they were given many pieces of pictures which did not really match with the purpose established on the objective. | It’s important giving SS chunks of information in a written way since sometimes SS get confused with pictures and they get also disappointed about tasks with lots of information together and not having the opportunity to complete it. | I will not give pieces of information or even pictures out of context in scrambled way but giving them smaller chunks of information with reference on the target language in order to help them to combine the oral and interpretations skills. |
| SS were also hindered by the fact that some of the SS were given the target language quickly way and then were asked to perform by themselves. | It’s important to have everyone’s attention before starting to give instructions so that the students are ready to receive new information.  Your interpretation is about target language, but your generalization is about instruction. | I will plan to extent more activities in which students need more practice in order to let them feel more confidence through the development of other stages. |
| Something that helped SS was the visual aids used for the development of the activities. | Students feel more comfortable to be next to someone who they can get some help from without asking the teacher. | I will take advantage of visual materials due to great majority of learners like those kind of aids as complement of our learning. |
| Another thing that helped SS was to have the experience by testing what they knew throughout a brainstorming activity about the topic | It’s important to experience more through testing and see what learner can add to our pool of knowledge | I will take into consideration that it is important what SS already know and let them know by themselves how they know and provide them more opportunities to express ideas by their own. |

Dear Karol,

Thank you for sharing this past week’s experiences with me. Reading them gave me some insight into what has been going on in your heart and mind. I noticed that you shifting your paradigm from teaching to learning and it un-earths the vulnerability that comes with teaching. There are situations and questions that arise that catch us teachers off guard. They create uncertainty, frustration, and perhaps even embarrassment. I was wondering what was your sling shot experience this week? What caught you off guard? You never explicitly mention it, but it is present is in your essay. I hope that as the course continues, you are able to connect with yourself, as you wrote in the first paragraph of your essay, or are able to confide in someone that you trust.

Karol, I noticed that both of your descriptions are very student focused. You are able to give great detail to what the students said and did, but what is missing is you. It makes me wonder if these two moments are from a class that you taught? The difference is that when we teach, we have a million thoughts a minute, which makes presence challenging. It also conjures up emotions that one might not feel if they are not giving the class. Even though this week’s assignment is to focus on the students, your perception as the teacher is just as important. It is this moment that directs our decisions as teachers. What will we do next?

Your interpretation, generalizations and plan actions aligned in the theme. The interpretations were well formed, but sometimes lacked evidence from the description. I also wrote some comments in the plan actions because they are valid ideas, but I was wondering how to make them more measurable.

Karol, you’ve met the requirements for this assignment. Good luck this week.

Pura vida,

Amanda