**Journal – Nelly Giraldo Gil**

Forest teacher - Medellin

This journal was made during the Project Course oriented by the teacher Luis Pizano. In this I had the opportunity to reflect upon my own teaching process. The teacher Pizano proposed us three questions as a guide: *what did I learn in this session?, how it can help me?*,  *how can I apply it* ?, in every session each teacher wrote a short reflection covering the mentioned questions. Here are mine:

**June 2nd – 2012**

After my Forest class I have been thinking the idea “*you have to change paradigms”* said by the teacher Luis Pizano; I thought in my paradigm “it is almost impossible to work all my classes talking English only, that is zero Spanish in my classes”. That idea was rounded my mind “I have been justifying myself with says as: that is too much difficult, I tried to do it before with no good results, the students do not understand me… and so on.

When my students said to me “teacher, we don’t understand” I abandoned the idea and explained them several things in Spanish. Another reason to give my class speaking in Spanish could be that it was easier for me to explain the grammar topics or maybe I did not want to do enough effort. Now I believe I should be more persistent! I will try once and again and I will not give up so fast.

**June 7th – 2012**

I think the most important learning today was to recognize the six steps about process in learning, because every time I plan my classes I can take into account these steps: lack of knowledge, exposure, noticing, understanding, practicing and active use of language.

A short explanation about each step is:

* Lack of knowledge - Ignorance: I don’t know about that.
* Exposure: it is the first contact with the topic, it could be in writing, speaking, reading or listening way.
* Noticing: I see something particular, but I still don’t understand.
* Understanding: I recognize the pattern (how)
* Practicing: it could be through a control or a free practice
* Active use of language: I use the language spontaneous, autonomous.

I realized in some of my lessons I carried on my students to the practicing step very fast and so they couldn`t understand the topic I wanted they learn. Now with this knowledge I will prepare my workshops including the six steps with every activity interconnected with the topic.

**June 8th**

The most practical learning today was the fact we should begin to develop a lesson with our personal experience, example “last weekend I went out to the shopping mall and bought a beautiful jacket, then I visited my grandparents and had a delicious cake my grandmom made”. Then ask for students personal experiences with questions as *what did you do last weekend*? or *Lucas, what about you?* This activity works well to introduce an oral practice in simple past, but it can be adapted to any other topic.

**June 15th**

One of the most practical thing I refresh today was about Reading process, specially the fact to understand vocabulary from context. In my practice I will emphasize in that point giving to my class several examples of the word in isolation and the same word in sentences.

Other useful tip is to carry out my students to find referents in the text by the way asking them questions that imply they look a word that represent other in the text we are working.

**June 16th**

About multiple intelligences I stressed in this session the fact of my students have all of them, one more developed then others and it is practical for me as a teacher to identify what kind of intelligences are more relevant in my class, so I would prepare my lesson according to that diagnosis.

I need to know more about my students. They are heterogeneous, but I can grouping according to learning styles.

**June 22nd -2012**

Some strategies that is very useful in my class is to establish **the purpose** of the class and write it in a visual place on the board. In this way I and my students can watch it all the class. I did it in my classes before but in oral form, now I began to copy it and say to my students several times during the class what I hope to get in each specific class.

Another practical strategy is to start each class with a short review of the last purpose and the main things did in the last class, we can assign one student per class to do this. This is a way to bring up the thread of the last topic, remember homework or pending duties.

**July 9 -2012**

The way how to work short stories was meaningful for me today. The story is read it by the teacher, but he can involve the students in the reading process asking they make sounds or repeat a short expression of the story as an example: the half of the class says **is the soup ready? /** the other half says **No, not yet;** moreover the teacher body language is important so the teacher can act out some parts of the story to help with the motivation.

When the students take part in the reading, they show more interest and the teacher gets to involve them in the story, so the result is UNDERSTANDING!.

**July 14 – 2012**

Improve myself all the time should be my main propose as a professional. This idea is always present for me, but today it has different connotation because I am aware about my weaknesses. As a result I am practicing some recommendations other colleagues made me:

* Read aloud
* Listen English news, so I am listening CNN Chanel, dialogues from the book Touchstone and reports from Speak up magazine.
* Listen more: so I walk and travel to my school listening songs and a special course “Learn Real English” that I have in my audio player.

I hope to be constant with all of these strategies.

**July 6th -**

Identify two kinds of paragraphs was a new learning for me today.

1. Descriptive: are focused on qualities, adjectives, how the person is like.
2. Narrative: are focused on actions, what people do.

I can apply this in my class with short exercises about almost any topic and additionally to guide the writing activity copying questions on the board is a good help for my students too.

July 7th – 2012

The sequence of a lesson in both: content and pedagogical process, is establishing in clearer way for me.

“Festivities” and “Childhood remembers” as examples of content with the six steps of the pedagogical process were excellent examples made for my team and other teachers in trio who develop a lesson with all the steps and all language skills.

Every activity was interconnected with the topic, different strategies, develop all abilities in the same lesson. This is a learning I will apply from now in my classroom.

**July 13 th – 2012**

How to record a reading was powerful activity I learnt. Some benefits to my students have to be with confidence, develop awareness about how they are pronouncing. This practice takes short time and the students can use technological tools they have.

I can implement this in my classes doing the record in pairs about a dialogue from a book, internet or their own creations, so it get in an activity to develop several skills.

**July 28th**

**The teacher I want to be and the teacher who I am**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **I am…**  **I…** | **I want to…** |
| * very responsible with everything I compromised. * disciplined with the routines that help me to improve my knowledge and my health. * love my life, my job, my family. * A reflective teacher, I believe it is necessary to study each day because students change daily and the world too. * aware about my weaknesses and strengths * polite with students and colleagues. * teaching for me is an act of love. * what stress me in class: to fight with my students or let me to connect in their fights, so I avoid this. * show a permanent interest in growing as a professional, nowadays I am interested on improve my oral language skill. * happy with my job. * My teaching method is basically communicative, cognitive, with emphasis in grammar, peer center trough collaborative work and self-assessment. * have a healthy personality, I like to go out, to eat healthy, to talk with my friends, go shopping, and see movies or plays. | * Get a balance between the job, the family and personal interests. * Develop my sense of humor in class. It could help me to manage tense situations, especially with teenagers. * Visit different places, to do more trips. * Improve my personal business. * Maintain good relation with my daughters, husband and friends. * have better skills in English * Visit USA as a tourist and do a short immersion in English in order to improve my fluency. * Continue my professional growing. * do my best in every class * Maintain a good relationship with my students, but with authority. * Do a course to growth my knowledge in TIC. * Watch more TV, especially more programs that increase my general culture, because it is very poor. * See my daughters with a satisfactory and happy life. I want to emphasize how important they are in my life, so if they are ok I am ok too. |

August 3rd

**My trip into the project course with Luis Pizano**

In the journey of this course was so valuable for me to assume the permanent attitude to re-examinee my past assumptions about teaching; in many occasions I have found myself questioning and reinterpreting teaching acts, techniques, students behavior in the classroom.

I got elements for successful English learning, for example: the six steps about how do people learn, establish the purpose of the class in a visible pace, the way how to work stories, to develop a lesson with every activity connected with the topic. These are some strategies I am trying to incorporate in my classes now.

My mind is not closed to the possibility of change and renewal because I understood a teacher never stops learning.

I appreciate so much this opportunity and I am very grateful with Centro Colombo Americano, The Embassy and the teacher for this opportunity.