

05

TASKS BASED ON COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS TO DEVELOP PROFESSIONAL PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES STUDENTS

SITUACIONES COMUNICATIVAS BASADAS EN TAREAS PARA EL DESARROLLO DE HABILIDADES PEDAGÓGICAS PROFESIONALES EN ESTUDIANTES DE LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS

IREgla Nurelys Espinosa Martínez¹

E-mail: nespinosa@uniss.edu.cu

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9423-9597>

Hilda Rosa Castillo Izquierdo¹

E-mail: hrcastillo@uniss.edu.cu

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1430-5238>

Elia Mercedes Fernández Escanaverino¹

E-mail: mfernandez@uniss.edu.cu

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3577-5637>

¹ Universidad de Sancti Spíritus “José Martí Pérez” Cuba.

Suggested citation (APA, seventh edition)

Espinosa Martínez, R. N., Castillo Izquierdo, H. R., & Fernández Escanaverino, E. M. (2020). Tasks based on communicative situations to develop professional pedagogical skills in foreign languages students. *Revista Conrado*, 16(76), 38-42.

ABSTRACT

The Integrated English Practice Lessons constitute fundamental scenarios to contribute to English Language Teachers' effective preparation. The general goals declared in the Professional Model of the foreign language major show the type of professional to be formed to lead the Teaching Learning Process of the English subject in the different subsystems of Education in Cuba. The Integrated English Practice syllabus belonging to the curriculum responds to this purpose, to contribute to the development of the four basic skills of the English language in foreign languages students and to potentiate the development of professional pedagogical skills for their future work. In this paper some procedures are presented to contribute to the successful learning outcomes in the subject and essentially the formation of qualified professionals for leading of the English teaching learning process.

Keywords:

Language basic skills, English language, professional pedagogical skills, communicative situations.

RESUMEN

Las clases de Práctica Integral de idioma inglés constituyen escenarios fundamentales para contribuir a la preparación efectiva de los profesores en este idioma. Los objetivos generales declarados en el Modelo del Profesional de la especialidad de lenguas extranjeras muestran el tipo de profesional que se formará para dirigir el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje de la asignatura de inglés en los diferentes subsistemas de Educación en Cuba. El programa de Práctica Integral de inglés que pertenece al plan de estudio responde a este propósito, para contribuir al desarrollo de las cuatro habilidades básicas del idioma inglés en los estudiantes de lenguas extranjeras y potenciar el desarrollo de habilidades pedagógicas profesionales para su trabajo futuro. En este artículo, se presentan algunos procedimientos que favorecieron a los resultados satisfactorios en la asignatura y especialmente a la formación exitosa de profesionales calificados para liderar el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje de idioma inglés.

Palabras clave:

Habilidades básicas, idioma inglés, habilidades pedagógicas profesionales, situaciones comunicativas.

INTRODUCTION

Our society is facing an increasing and an extraordinary development in science and in technology; new circumstances demand the existence of organized ideas, projects, and goals for the progress of societies, new conditions demand deep and fast changes in education. The educational systems contribute to prepare generations according to the necessities and aspirations of nations to face all changes and to live properly in the new times.

It has been a priority since the 60's in Cuba; this idea has been highlighted in the leading documents of the Cuban Government, it is stated the necessity of strengthening the teachers' role to increase the effectiveness in the teaching learning process and to update the new programs to form teachers and to investigate according to the necessities of the economic and social development of the country. These issues related to this important matter had constantly been re elaborated and consulted with the population for their ideal achievement.

The mastery of foreign languages has also been a concern and a tradition, from the thought provoking teachers from XIX and XX centuries to our times with the strong and forward looking thoughts of outstanding personalities from the educational field, with the main objective to encourage the population to master foreign languages. The English language therefore was included as one of the subject of the curricula of the different subsystem of Education and different decisions had also been adopted to perfect the way is taught and learned.

The formation of foreign languages teachers was necessary due to the changes of modern world, to guarantee the communication and the interaction with different nations where the English language is spoken and as a way of developing the economic, politic relations among nations.

So, Teachers training colleges have a great challenge due to the mission they all have: the preparation of the future professionals of education to fulfill the objectives stated before.

English language teachers from these colleges need to center their labor to develop the necessary professional pedagogical skills in their students, so they will lead the English teaching learning process in the different subsystems of education effectively, future English language teachers should have a great development of the cognitive communicative competence, and the appropriate pedagogical, linguistic and didactic skills to face and find solutions to all the challenges of their job.

On the other hand, English language teachers' challenge is to put into practice different procedures to make the

students think, act, to communicate in the language, to teach them how to study and how to solve professional problems.

Related to this matter, general formative objectives are stated in the General Professional Model to define the kind of teacher our society is needing, a teacher who can lead the foreign languages teaching learning process in the different subsystems and to communicate with correction, properness and fluency in the foreign language.

Two main ideas are taken into account in the main general objectives of the Professional Model of the Foreign Languages career, how to lead the English teaching learning process and to communicate effectively in the language, so, if teachers apply suitable procedures in their lessons and they bring communicative situations based on the problems they have to face as future English language teachers in their classrooms, students will enjoy practicing the language and they will increase their interest towards their future profession finding solutions to the problems they daily face in the different subsystems of education.

Related to this, the didactic treatment of this matter for the success of the English teaching learning process in the teachers training colleges is essential, teachers should take into account the difficulties the students are facing in the development of the language skills to lead the teaching learning process is essential.

However, in the applied scientific methods, such as interview to teachers and students of the Foreign Languages career in Sancti Spiritus, the observation of some teaching activities so as the methodological analysis of the leading documents of the syllabi, some limitations about the students' qualities and preparation related to the development of the language skills in the English language and the professional pedagogical skills to lead the teaching learning process were confirmed.

This issue presents as the objective the socialization of the obtained experience with the practice of a group of methodological suggestions for the teachers' labor on Integrated English Practice Lessons to develop professional pedagogical skills in the students from the foreign languages career at "José Martí Pérez" University in Sancti Spiritus province.

DEVELOPMENT

In the groundwork of the Integrated English Practice syllabus belonging to the curriculum of the Foreign Language career is stated: the necessity of developing the basic skills to use the language in their study activity, professional development, and mainly to teach the new generations.

So, teachers of Integrated English Practice subject have to determine the didactic procedures to facilitate the development of the language skills and the preparation of future English Language Teachers.

Some of the difficulties in planning lessons were:

- They not always select or plan the appropriate tasks or activities to practice the four basic skills in an integrated way in relation to the peculiarities of the group to achieve students' participation.
- They not always take advantage of the precedent content or what the students already know to practice the language through a variety of communicative situations.
- They face difficulties showing the students how to teach the students to learn how to learn, and how to teach what they learned.

As a consequence:

Students sometimes are not interested to learn, so the development of the four basic skills of the language is affected and they do not have the enough preparation to face the English teaching learning process in schools.

The solution of these aspects is really important to better English language teaching and the development of the four basic skills of the language, to make them feel conscious of their learning process using the English language, to involve students in doing things, making decisions and assessing, to contribute to the preparation of the future English language teachers.

The Historical-cultural approach is the base of the Integrated English Practice lessons in teachers training colleges because students take an active participation in the process; they learn and grow, teachers work to improve their language level based on the teaching approach, skills development, the type of tasks and activities, lesson components and lesson plan stages.

The teachers of Integrated English Practice have to prepare students teaching them how to communicate themselves knowing when to speak, when not, what to talk about, with whom, when, where, in what manner'. It means to have a communicative competence.

Communicative competence as one of the main learning outcomes of the subject can be present through design of task to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teachers should master that each of these skills is formed by a set of sub skills, that is, to understand the message globally (listening), to put the words together to form sentences (speaking), to infer meanings of words in written texts (reading).

The communicative competence implies not only the knowledge of the linguistic code but also to know what to say, whom to say it, and how to say it, in an appropriate way in a given situation.

Cabezas (2015), stated that communicative competence means:

a. Linguistic competence, i.e., "knowledge of vocabulary items and mastery of certain structural rules through which they are processed into meaningful utterances'.

Socio—linguistic competence, i.e. 'the ability to use and interpret language forms.

Discourse competence, i.e., the ability to perceive and to achieve coherent meaningful communication patterns.

Strategic competence i.e., "the ability to establish a communication, to begin, to interact and to finish a communication.

Socio-cultural competence, i.e., certain degree of familiarity with the socio-cultural context, the social character of communication in which the language is used.

All the theoretical aspects derived from the studies done by different methodologists, linguistics such as Chomsky (1965); Hymes (1972); Finocchiaro & Brumfit (1983); are essential to achieve communication and to become the English lesson in a language community.

So the principles of Communicative Language Teaching exposed by Acosta, Pérez & Vasconcelos (2016) are closely related to this important aspect. Teachers of English at teachers training colleges should take into account some methodological procedures to succeed in the development of language and pedagogical skills, among them.

1. Know the peculiarity of the group, taking as a point of reference the class profile. (Be aware of the students' development in the skills of the language, the appropriate level they have, that is to know the students need interests, motivations, potentialities, weaknesses and the actual state of development of the four basic skills of the language).
2. Know the learning outcomes of the lesson, the selection of the topic and the flexibility to treat different the content from different subjects of the year to encourage the students to learn and enjoy practicing in the classroom.
3. Contextualize the main topics and tasks to their future job.
4. Be creative enough to increase students' interest, challenge and enjoyment while modeling the activities first by the teachers and then by the students to potentiate professional pedagogical skills).

5. Check the students' progress.
6. And students should:
7. Get interested and involved during all the different lesson plan stages.
8. Practice the language through the interaction between or among students (communicative situations using pair work and group work, discussions, reflexive analysis, problem solving).
9. Develop their creativity, logical and critical thinking (solving not only real life problems but those they can face in their profession).

Procedures:

1st. Know the peculiarity of the group, taking as a point of reference the class profile

The teacher will create all the necessary conditions to start practicing in the classroom, emphasizing on the importance of learning and practicing the content related to the main problems they can face while teaching.

By means of having a conversation with the students, asking how they feel, organizing the classroom, and creating a good atmosphere to start.

To make the students feel comfortable and reinforce on the necessity to practice and learn, to practice some grammatical rules and vocabulary studied.

2nd Know the learning outcomes of the lesson, the selection of the topic and the flexibility to treat different things, to encourage the students to learn and enjoy practicing in the classroom.

An important aspect in this part of the lesson is to determine what is going to be taught and why should be taught by the teacher, by means of asking some questions to make them think of the possible topic, or participatory techniques Brainstorming, speculating about the content of the lesson.

Students analyze the questions asked by the teacher, answer, work in group and try to understand what is going to be taught and why is needed and how to learn the content for their future job.

Set the atmosphere to start learning, working with the situations

3rd Contextualize the main topics and tasks to their future job

He/she can also mention the necessity of mastering the content for the development of the skills and for the preparation as future teachers. Students reflect on the

importance of knowing where this content is (Professional pedagogical skills)

The teacher asks questions about the main topic (to motivate and to make them feel interested in what is going to be taught, audio-visual method an effective way to learn by observing images or pictures)

4th Be creative enough to increase students' interest, challenge and enjoyment while modeling the activities first by the teachers and then by the students to potentiate professional pedagogical skills).

Students are supposed to read the situations and to think of the possible solution, to work in pairs, they can copy the main ideas in their notebooks, they can make an analysis of the possible solutions with creativity.

5th Check the students' progress

The teacher is checking what they are doing giving the necessary help, the teacher will ask the students to go to the blackboard and to write all the solutions they thought, to reinforce on the importance of using the blackboard correctly as a professional pedagogical skill

Teacher can also involve the students in the process of communication by means of asking about their personal experience.

Example of tasks to develop language and professional pedagogical skills

Exercise No. 1 Read the following message. Get ready to answer the questions below.

Hi! I am Sandra I study at Martha Abreu University in Santa Clara, at the Foreign Languages career, I am in third year now, I am doing great at school, I love what I learn every day and it has been successful for me, I taught at junior school. I have a very enthusiastic group but they do not pronounce English sounds correctly, they misbehave, they do not love to learn and I feel bad, although I have try several ways to help them, I do not see any change and when I go to talk to my classmates they say that experiences like mine. Can you help me? Please, I will appreciate it. Thanks!

Based on what you read and all the professional experience you have got learning from different subjects and working at junior high schools. What are the teacher's main mistakes?

Mention some of the subjects you studied from first to third year which can help this teacher to solve a situation like this one. Write down some suggestions taking into account the studied contents in these subjects.

Exercise No 2. Read the story

Get ready to answer the questions bellow.

Hi! I am Jessica. I study at Martha Abreu University in Santa Clara, I am in third year now, this school year has not been incredibly successful for me, I had to teach in a junior high school and it was pretty tough. Sometimes, I felt sad with the majority of my students, though I planned very nice lessons to motivate my students and to encourage them to learn the English language, most of the time I did not feel like teaching and I could not do my best, I wanted them to change and above all I wanted them to feel the necessity to learn all I taught.

- Speak about the story and mention some of the subjects you studied in first, second and third which can help her to solve the problem she or he has. In which way these subjects help you in your teaching training period at schools.
- Recommend your teachers what to do to help you in your preparation as future teacher of English.

Exercise No 3. Read the following message. Get ready to answer the questions bellow.

Hi! I am Robert. I study at “José Martí Pérez” University in Sancti Spiritus, I am in fifth year now, this school year has not been successful for me, I teach in a senior high school. I have a very enthusiastic group but they misbehave sometimes and I hate them, when I go to talk to their families they say that it is my responsibility. Once I read on a Pedagogy book ...” Life, families and education are strongly tied. Families are institutions and education is an activity but both of them favor the formation of new generations” This has been really a new experience for me Can you help me? Please, I will appreciate it. Thanks!

a) Based on what you read and all the professional experience you have got working in senior high schools. State your opinion about this story. In which way you can help this teacher to face a situation like this one?

b) What is your viewpoint about this teacher’s main problem? Do you agree with the phrase taken from a Pedagogy book? ... “life, families and education are strongly tied” ... Why?

CONCLUSIONS

The necessity of planning tasks based on communicative situations related to their future job in which students not only have the chance to practice the language to practice grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary efficiently but also to reinforce the professional pedagogical skills, are important aspects to be taken into account in order to lead successfully the teaching learning process at teachers training Colleges.

When teachers planned activities where students have the change to interact, to practice contents studied in the different subjects, where students learn from their classmate’s experiences, where they learn how to work in pairs, in small groups, respect their people’s view points and get involved in their formation process, they feel the need of learning and to know what is needed to progress in their preparation.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

- Acosta, R., Pérez, J. E., & Vasconcellos, A. (2016). *Professional Tasks for Pedagogical Training of Foreign Language Teaching*. ABOVE: Editora e Publicações.
- Cabezas Santana, E. (2015). La competencia comunicativa en la construcción del texto escrito. Apuntes y concepciones para la enseñanza de la lengua inglesa en Cuba. *Atenas*, 1(29), 136-147.
- Chomsky, A. N. (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. MIT Press.
- Finocchiaro, M., & Brumfit, C. (1983). *The Functional-Notional Approach: from theory to practice*. Oxford University Press.
- Hymes, D. (1972). *Competencia comunicativa*. Editorial Pride and Holmes.