

SUMMER TEACHER TRAINING COURSE 2018

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

By Antonio Arellano Segundo | Teacher Training Institute | July 14- August 11

INTRODUCTION

A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instill a love of learning.

Brad Henry

I am a teacher of English working currently in an Elementary school, secondary school and in a language school and I love to teach English because it is a great way to inspire my students to change their life in a meaningful way, I am creative and try to develop my student's imagination and as well a big desire in them of learning.

During the summer 2018 I had the opportunity to go to study for a month to the University of Texas at Austin. The course was about methodology in teaching English to EFL students. The course lasted for four weeks and the subjects I studied were: culture, grammar, listening and speaking, reading, methods, technology and writing.

During this course I was living again the role of a student; this helped me to understand how my students feel when they are in the learning process inside the classroom. To be in my students shoes allowed me to be even more aware of the importance of my teaching methodologies and the design of each of my lessons.

Most of my professors have studied traveled and lived around the world. Moreover they have been teaching English for many years so that they are experts in teaching English to speakers of other languages. All of them were sharing their teaching tips and the importance of teaching the subject they were teaching.

CULTURE CLASS

In this class I did several activities in order to know and understand culture.

As I was living in Austin, Texas; I was in contact with a new culture. A better way to deal with that new culture was to know about it and understand it. In this class I did some surveys to people who was around the campus and I was using the language to communicate. Language is part of a culture and it allows people to understand each other's culture.

Apart from the interviews I read a book about American culture. I read a chapter then I had to share all I have understood with a group of classmates and so did they. When we were talking about the chapter we had read I realized that American culture is based on many legal laws and that they follow them. They are organized and the laws permit them to live in a respectful way.

American people teach their children to grow independently because they know that in the future their kids will need to be able to do everything by their own. This fact made me think that in my culture this is not developed. So that I will help my students to learn first with my guidance and then independently as well.

Finally my teacher developed a lesson in which we did a toast. We drank some wine and have a cookie representing food. Every member of the class was telling something to toast for. After this activity I discovered that culture has to be part of my classes and that my students will love to learn about it inside the classrooms.

Another activity was done in groups of four three Mexican teachers and one Iraqi. As Mexican I received a map from Iraq and my classmate from Iraq had map from Mexico. I had to describe some cities I knew about Iraq, some countries that are around Iraq, languages that are spoken in there, economic activities, food etc. I shared all info I knew about it however I saw that they were just stereotypes. The main aim of this lesson was to elicit the stereotypes people tend to have about certain countries.

Not always stereotypes are true or false. That is why by the time I had to share some info about my country to my Iraqi classmate. I told him that not all people wear a hat and boots here in Mexico. In this activity I could see the importance of the knowledge we should have about our own and different cultures mainly because it is not good we depend a lot on the internet and search almost every time we need some info.

GRAMMAR CLASS

In this class I had a doctor as my professor. Her name is Elsa and she is a daughter of illegal Mexican parents. She was born in the USA and studied very hard until she finished her Ph. D. in the University of Texas. I was inspired by her that all dreams come true. Even though she is American by nationality she is very proud of Mexican people who go and study in the US. She mentioned that it is tough or implies a lot of hard working to go and study there. All Mexican people are able to do so.

I learnt the importance of teaching grammar to students who are learning English in not only in Mexico but around the world. It is mainly because of the importance of organizing words to form a communicative sentence. I could see that as a teacher I need to know much more different grammar rules to help my students to learn better the language.

My professor was teaching most of the times grammar advanced grammar, and some new vocabulary words that are used by native people in real life. Well I am sure I will teach grammar in a new way in my lessons. I have a book now about American grammar rules that would definitely help me to teach better and some websites I will use to teach in a creative way. I am sure my students will have fun by studying grammar from now to the future.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING CLASS

This class was one of my favorites because my teacher was so dynamic. One of the activities she was using every class was mindfulness. This is a strategy being used in the United States to reduce problems in students who are in risk of dissertation. My teacher mentioned that this strategy is reducing problems at school and students' grades are better. Mindfulness consist in getting very well concentrated about what students are doing and forget about the problems they might have.

In this class I learnt the importance of working in groups and how to do it with my students. Every person inside the classroom is important and plays a role. If they do what they have to do they will definitely learn in relevant way. as a teacher using a variety of speaking and listening activities will allow me to attend my students learning styles therefore my students will appropriate of the new knowledge easily.

Active listening is another form to determine if we are understanding to a person ww are talking to. I will use this strategy with my students in an intermediate and upper intermediate level. Games will motivate my learners as well and I now now some apps I can use in my listening and speaking activities.

READING CLASS

In this class I discovered that reading is one of the greatest pleasures we can experience as human beings. Reading everyday allowed me to know more about education and allowed me to communicate better. I know now that it depends on me as a teacher how well my students will read.

In my reading class my professor gave us an article to read about Federick Douglas it was about slavery 1840. Federick Douglas was a slave who wanted to learn how to read and write. He decided to teach himself how to do it by copying a big dictionary on paper. When he learnt how to read and write he stop being a slave. His quote is knowledge makes you free.

I was impressed how Frederick Douglas did to stop being a slave. Now a days many of my students don't have that desire of learning even though they have access to education through books, internet, and school. As I am a teacher I will motivate my students to have a great desire of learning through reading and with the strategies, and websites my professor of reading have shared I am sure my reading classes would be very productive.

In this class I could see how my professor was very careful with the time management. She did not ask my group to do any homework; however all the activities I did in this class were relevant to me. I could see how well planned my teachers classes were. Now I will do something similar about planning my reading classes in Mexico with my students.

Other aspect that influences students reading development is the reading ability in their first language. By the time students are able to read and understand well in their first language it is going to be easier in a second or foreign language. I will tell my students about the importance reading has in Spanish their first language.

My professor as well mentioned in class that English and Spanish share 80 percent of academic language, it means that for Mexican people English should be very easy to learn. I am now eager to develop new lessons using comprehensible input to make my students understand better every class. Now I know it is possible and easier for native speakers to learn English.

METHODS

Well this was my favorite class because I had some lectures about the use of technology to teach English and the development of pronunciation through a method called Pronunciation Learning with Online Resources and Strategy Practice.

The stress is a challenge I face with when teaching however now I have explored plenty of websites I can use with my students to train them and be aware of the stress of words in English.

With the lecture of using technology I was surprised to see how many websites, games and apps can be used to teach English. Assessment is another aspect I can make easier and more effective with the use of technology at my school. The challenge now is to use all technology I have at the schools I work.

My professor of methods told me that there is no recipe to teach English but an amount of methodologies to teach. I am sure I will vary all activities in my lessons so that my students can learn easily and in an agreeable way.

TECHNOLOGY CLASS

In this class I was able to practice different skills such as writing. In this activity my teacher was evaluating how many words per minute I could type. She mentioned that this allows students to be better at writing and at typing faster every time. I had the opportunity to know how to create a screen cast about giving instructions to my students about doing an activity. In case my students do not understand the instructions they can play the video as many times they want.

During this class I had time to explore many websites and design a test online to be applied with a group of students. In this way I do not have to spend time making copies or grading tests. The use of technology is fantastic and more when we know how to use it properly.

WRITING CLASS

In my writing class I learnt how to grade a text made by my students. Using specific symbols will help my students to understand what their corrections would be. My teacher shared a variety of activities to develop the writing skill in students from elementary until university.

The importance of writing is that we need to be clear and make the text understandable to our reader. I learnt how to write an essay, a short story, and some poetry. I have now new and funny ideas to teach this skill which has been a bit hard to teach before.

In general this course permitted me to open my ideas in terms of teaching in a different, modern, creative, and effective way. The best way to see it is putting into practice everything I have learnt in this course in every lesson I teach.