

Journal Narrative Writing

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When I began this second practicum period, I arrived with a mix of excitement, nerves, and expectations. I knew it would be challenging because it was my first real experience as a teacher, even though I had already studied the theory. From the start, I had a clear goal: I wanted my students to lose their fear of speaking English. I wanted them to feel that making mistakes was not something to be ashamed of, but a natural part of the learning process. Because it was a small group, I was able to work closely with each student, listen to their concerns, and support them more personally. I also took advantage of the things we had in common to build trust and connection.

The methodology for the course was already defined by the university, but fortunately I always found a way to adapt it to our context, to the students' interests, and to the learning goals we established together, all aligned with the ASE Foundation curriculum (the institution that allowed me to carry out my practicum). At the beginning of each class, I explained how we were going to work, why we were using a specific method, and what we expected to achieve. Early on, I wrote down their personal goals improving vocabulary for work, becoming more fluent, strengthening memory, or simply overcoming fear. These goals became a compass that guided many of my decisions in the classroom.

However, the beginning was not easy. My first lesson plans were so extensive that I couldn't cover everything during one session. I had been used to teaching an advanced group, and moving to an A1 adult level forced me to completely change my pace. They needed more time, more clarity, and a lot of repetition. I needed more patience and better time management. Little by little, I understood that teaching at this level requires presenting less content, but in a much clearer and more meaningful way. This aligns with Scrivener (2011),

who explains that at beginner levels, language should be functional, useful, and closely connected to real-life situations.

One class marked a turning point for me: the gamification lesson. That day I realized that when my students play, they understand faster, participate more, and most importantly they feel safer. We learned vocabulary, practiced instructions, and reinforced simple structures without them noticing how much they were actually learning. It was proof that learning can be fun and deep at the same time.

There were also challenging moments. One day, I had to replace another teacher unexpectedly. The group had students with very different proficiency levels. I had to improvise an activity that worked for everyone, so I organized them in small groups: with some, I worked on advanced expressions, while with others I focused on social media vocabulary. That day taught me that teaching requires making quick decisions, listening to students' real needs, and adapting on the spot. It also reminded me of the importance of giving clear, step-by-step instructions, something highlighted in CELTA guidelines (Cambridge Assessment English, 2022), which state that the clarity of instructions has a direct impact on the success of an activity.

Throughout the semester, I learned to improvise, to complement ideas, to build on students' prior knowledge, and to make the most of the available resources. I improved my ability to observe my own teaching, to reflect on my decisions, to adjust timing, and to communicate more clearly. I learned that assertive communication in the classroom is not just helpful, it is essential to maintain a smooth flow without anxiety or confusion.

The most meaningful moment of the semester was the final presentation. Watching my students perform, laugh, make mistakes without fear, and speak English with greater confidence was the clearest reflection of our progress. That day, I felt a mix of pride, joy, and

gratitude. Comparing the first class to the last helped me see real growth, not only in them, but in myself as well.

There were two lessons I adjusted when I shared the classroom with another preservice teacher. Having someone observe me helped me notice mistakes from a new perspective. I reorganized my timing, refined my activities, and assigned some work at home whenever something felt overwhelming or rushed.

If I could start the semester again, I would do two things differently: reduce the amount of content and focus more on functional patterns. I would teach essential expressions for everyday life, asking for favors, asking for clarification, or checking meaning—and I would do it in a practical, repetitive way. Now I understand that teaching less content, but more clearly and meaningfully, produces better results.

This semester transformed me as a teacher. I discovered a version of myself full of dedication, patience, love, and commitment. I learned as much as I taught. Every class, every question, and every small achievement from my students motivated me to improve the next session. I tried to balance knowledge, games, reflection, evaluation, and a safe and warm learning environment.

Now that I have completed my practicum, I know exactly what I want to strengthen: improving my English proficiency, learning new technological tools to enrich my classes, opening myself to creativity, and maintaining the flexibility that teaching demands. I want to continue creating spaces where learning flows through respect, confidence, and enjoyment where students feel supported, heard, and encouraged to try, make mistakes, and try again.

References

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